

Terrorist Profiling Process and Psychological Attributes-Opinion of Indian Law-Enforcement Officials and Academicians

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ABSTRACT

Profiling is a method of identifying the probable perpetrator of a crime based on the crime scene information analysis. Terrorist profiling plays lead role in counter terrorism. In the present scenario terrorist profiling is a major tool for law enforcement officials' interims of detecting terrorist and for counter terrorism operation. The purpose of this study is to find out whether the law enforcement officials and Academicians include profiling process and psychological attributes under terrorist profiling. The data were collected from 212 respondents, of which 194 of them were law-enforcement officials, 11 retired law-enforcement officials and 7 academicians across all age groups. They were administered structured questionnaire to elicit the responses. The data were analysed through descriptive statistics and chi-square tests. The results revealed that in profiling process, 98.6% of the participants opined 'yes' on determining whether the crime was organized or not, 64.4% of the participants opined 'yes' on reconstruction of the crime scene A majority of 94.8% of the respondents agreed about inclusion of psychological attributes in profiling information. On Psychological Attributes, 88.7% of the participants opined 'yes' on efficient, Organized and Responsible psychological attributes, 61.8% of the participants opined 'yes' on Neuroticism, 62.3% of them opined 'yes' on Agreeableness and 62.7% of them opined 'yes' on extraversion.

Keywords: Law-Enforcement Officials, Terrorist Profiling Process and Psychological Attributes

Terrorist profiling plays lead role in counter terrorism. It based on information gathered and included in the process of crime investigation and it reveals who might prone to be a terrorist. Profiling is a method of identifying the probable perpetrator of a crime based on the crime scene information analysis. It includes all the evidence collected from scene of crime and then compared with the characteristics of known personality types to develop a practical working sketch of the offender.

The profile focus on the psychological attribute, modus operandi, victimology and crime scene characteristics observed at the crime scene. It is based upon an expert's useful

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Terrorist Profiling Process and Psychological Attributes-Opinion of Indian Law-Enforcement Officials and Academicians

experience, logical interpretation ability and formal understanding about the criminal investigation and psychology. It is only effective if some similarities are established between them (Holmes & Holmes, 2009). Douglas et.al, (1986), in his explanation on different stages of profiling in third stage he explains where the investigation officer would make a crime assessment. This involves a reconstruction of the crime scene to center attention on how the offender committed the crime. The advantages of this procedure can help the law enforcement officials to validate the evidence that were available at the crime scene. Since the crime scene might be not available throughout the process of investigation, it is suggested that a reconstruction of the crime at the law enforcement office would enable the officials to solve the crime more efficiently.

The terrorist inhabitants comprise numerous profiles which fit the different terrorist organizations and their particular nationalities of origin, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, religious affiliations and their psychological makeup (Anonymous, 2003; Zagorin and Duffy, 2005). A study by Turco (1990), revealed that Psychological profiling can help detecting the likely characteristics of the offender through a psychological perspective, later this can also help in understanding through psychological theories on why the offender committed the crime. In the present study an attempt is made to assess the opinion of Indian law enforcement officials and academics on terrorist profile system and psychological attributes.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The study comprised of 212 respondents among which 194 respondents were working as Law-Enforcement officials, 11 retired Law-Enforcement officials and 7 academicians of India.

Table 1 Demographic details of the sample selected

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Total		212	100.0
Age groups	21-30 y	33	15.6
	31-40 y	91	42.9
	41-50 y	60	28.3
	51 & above	28	13.2
Education	Graduate	182	85.8
	Post-graduates	18	8.5
	Technical Education	7	3.3
	PG & above	5	2.4
Gender	Male	193	91.0
	Female	19	9.0
Profession	Working	194	91.5
	Retired	11	5.2
	Related academicians	7	3.3

Tool employed

Researcher with the consultation of experts developed a structured inventory which was developed by the author in consultation with the experts and has been included in the current study. The profiling steps of this questionnaire are taken from Douglas literature on profiling (1986)

Terrorist Profiling Process and Psychological Attributes-Opinion of Indian Law-Enforcement Officials and Academicians

Procedure

- The first author personally visited all the respondent groups consisting of Law-Enforcement officials and academicians to collect data.
- After taking the prior permission and consent from the respondents, structured inventory was given to them along with demographic data sheet.
- Before administering the questionnaire, clear instruction was given and confidentiality was assured.
- In case of difficulty in understanding the item/s, in order to get good response, they were made clear in their local language.
- Once the data were collected, they were scored and fed to the computer. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for data analysis.

RESULTS

Table 2 Frequency and percent responses on profiling process by the sample and results of test statistics

Do you include the following profiling process?		Frequency	Percent	Test Statistics
Reconstruction of the crime scene	Yes	137	64.6	X ² =18.132 P= .001
	No	75	35.4	
	Not sure	-	-	
Do you determine whether the crime was organized or not?	Yes	209	98.6	X ² =200.170 P= .001
	No	3	1.4	
	Not sure	-	-	
How the offender behaved	Yes	206	97.2	X ² =388.792 P= .001
	No	4	1.9	
	Not sure	2	.9	
What could have happened between the victim and offender	Yes	186	87.7	X ² =284.642 P= .001
	No	4	1.9	
	Not sure	22	10.4	
How the victim was selected	Yes	194	91.5	X ² =323.132 P= .001
	No	6	2.8	
	Not sure	12	5.7	

On the whole we find that majority of 64.6% participants had responded “yes”, 34.4% responded no, on reconstruction of the crime scene. On determine whether the crime was organized or not 98.6% who responded yes, 1.5% responded no. On how the offender behaved 97.2% responded yes, 1.9% responded no and 0.9% responded not sure. On what could have happened between the victim and offender 87.7% responded yes, 1.9% responded no and 10.4% responded not sure. On how the victim was selected 91.5% responded yes, 2.8% responded no and 5.7% responded not sure. The chi-square test revealed a significant difference for all the profiling process which indicates majority of the respondents followed the profiling process indicating significantly more of ‘yes’ responses.

Terrorist Profiling Process and Psychological Attributes-Opinion of Indian Law-Enforcement Officials and Academicians

Table 3, Frequency and percent responses on Psychological attributes by the sample and results of test statistics

Psychological Attributes		Frequency	Percent	Test Statistics
Psychological Attributes	Yes	201	94.8	X ² =170.283 P= .001
	No	11	5.2	
	Not sure	-	-	
Introversion	Yes	186	87.7	X ² =286.425 P= .001
	No	25	11.8	
	Not sure	1	.5	
Openness	Yes	186	87.7	X ² =284.642 P= .001
	No	22	10.4	
	Not sure	4	1.9	
c. Efficient, Organized and Responsible	Yes	188	88.7	X ² =295.651 P= .001
	No	23	10.8	
	Not sure	1	.5	
d. Extraversion	Yes	133	62.7	X ² =118.142 P= .001
	No	75	35.4	
	Not sure	4	1.9	
e. Agreeableness	Yes	132	62.3	X ² =112.566 P= .001
	No	74	34.9	
	Not sure	6	2.8	
f. Neuroticism	Yes	131	61.8	X ² =112.934 P= .001
	No	76	35.8	
	Not sure	5	2.4	

A majority of 94.8% of the law enforcement officials responded ‘yes’ on psychological attributes while 87.7% of the respondents included psychological attributes such as introversion and openness in their profiling procedure. There were 88.7% of the law enforcement officials who included efficient, organized and responsible in their profiling procedure while the remaining did not include or were not sure about it. On the whole majority of the law enforcement officials have responded “yes” to overall psychological attributes and sub-factors which was confirmed by the chi-square test which revealed the difference in the responses on psychological aspects. But however, there were 35.4% of them responding “no” on extraversion, 34.9% of them responding ‘no’ on agreeableness and 35.8% responding “no” on neuroticism.

DISCUSSION

Major Findings

- Among profiling process, 98.6% of the participants opined ‘yes’ on determining whether the crime was organized or not, 64.4% of the participants opined ‘yes’ on Reconstruction of the crime scene, 94.8% of the respondents agreed about inclusion of psychological attributes in profiling information.
- On Psychological Attributes, 88.7% of the participants opined ‘yes’ on Efficient, Organized and Responsible n psychological attributes.
- 61.8% of the participants opined ‘yes’ on Neuroticism, 62.3% of them opined ‘yes’ on Agreeableness and 62.7% of them opined ‘yes’ on extraversion in psychological attributes.

Terrorist Profiling Process and Psychological Attributes-Opinion of Indian Law-Enforcement Officials and Academicians

The aim of the study was to find whether law enforcement officials and related academicians include the profiling process factor and psychological attributes in making of terrorist profiling. It was found they include these factor and sub factor reasonably. Were some factors like reconstruction of the crime scene is not given that much of preference, one of the reasons maybe it is time consuming hence they are not preferring it. But however, The Delhi high court (Sushil Arora Vs State on 8thFebruary,2017) had quoted the importance scene of crime and reconstruction of scene of crime. It suggested that importance of reconstruction of crime scene should be implemented by all the law enforcement officials.

Inclusion of other profiling process factor was highly supported by participants because the data is collected through report and interrogation mode. The law enforcement officials find it convenient to include the profiling process such as determining the crime being organized or not, determining on how the offender had behaved, trying to understand the victim-offender interaction and selection of the victim as it is easily available in the scene of crime.

Psychological attributes helps in police investigation in terms of better understanding of criminal behavior which is evident in the present study. Using of psychological profiling and adding psychological traits is important in crime investigation and some recent research suggested success rate of 77% incriminal profiling observed in conventional investigations (Chidambaram, 2011). These psychological attributes can help the law enforcement officials to find particular personalities and behaviors that can be related to the terrorism.

The current study found that the few number law enforcement officials did not give importance to extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. These personalities of an individual can help the law enforcement officials in determining the characteristics of likely terrorist. Terrorist are trained in a sophisticated environment which can lower there extraversion (Hegghammer, 2019) and agreeableness (Webster, 2018) while it may increase in neuroticism (Bienvenue, et.al 2007), finding these personality character in the person of interest can help in identifying the likely terrorist.

On the whole, majority of the law enforcement officials do give importance and follow the profiling process and also look into psychological attributes. However, very few number of law enforcement officials do not include few factors of psychological attributes and reconstruction of the crime scene. This certainly can be a drawback of the overall profiling procedure and missing these factors and attributes may also lead to missing important links to identify the likely terrorist.

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**Terrorist Profiling Process and Psychological Attributes-Opinion of Indian Law-Enforcement
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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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