Criminal Profiling: A Qualitative And Quantitive Analysis Of Process And Content - Wayne Petherick

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the content and process involved in developing criminal profiles. To assess the material typically included in profiles and the way that the conclusions are developed, a qualitative analysis of the content of profiles was undertaken. This included among other things, the characteristics offered, their prevalence, and the most common characteristics by profiling method. A further quantitative study was undertaken employing Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) which revealed three general themes in the advice given. These included Crime Scene, Internal Offender and Offender Characteristic facets, each of which was comprised of features suggestive of that facet. For example, the Crime Scene facet typically described offender actions and their interpretation at the physical location of the criminal event, such as staging and methods of control.

The study employed a sample of 49 profilers reflective of the four main schools of thought; Criminal Investigative Analysis (CIA), Investigative Psychology (IP), Diagnostic Evaluations (DE) and Behavioural Evidence Analysis (BEA). CIA profiles were greatest in number with a sample size of 19. There were 14 BEA profiles and 8 each of DE and IP profiles. Together, there were in excess of 3000 individual variables ranging from age, sex and race to employment, geography, mental illness and risk.

Results indicate that the vast majority of profilers employ either research or personal belief in forming their opinions, and that physical evidence is used the least in justifying a profiler's opinion. However, when considering the individual methods, BEA placed the greatest reliance on physical evidence and its interpretation according with the forensic science

philosophy of the method. CIA, the method used by the FBI, produced the most characteristics of the sample at 312 across 19 profiles, followed by BEA at 166 characteristics across 14 profiles. IP and DE profiles, with a sample size of eight each, had 90 and 61 characteristics respectively.

Beyond these findings, the implication of the research will be discussed and some future direction for this research and the field in general will be provided. These areas include education, training, the scientific method and professionalisation. This thesis will also canvass the issue of whether profiling is an art or a science with particular reference to the research results and the existing literature that has bothered to address this issue.