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SIGNIFICANCE OF OFFENDER PROFILING AS A KEY TOOL IN CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION IN PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Offender profiling is an investigative technique that integrates forensic psychology, and criminology to analyze crime scene characteristics, and offender behavior in order to reconstruct the profile of the offender. Although the technique widely utilized in global investigations; its practical application in Pakistan remains uncertain. This research work aims to explore the techniques used in making a criminal profile, challenges facing by the investigation officers in profiling process, and its admissibility status before the court of law. The study is guided and consistent to the Behavioral Evidence Analysis (BEA) theoretical framework, which focuses on forensic backed profiling through in-depth crime scene interpretation such as analyzing victim's features, modus operandi, and offender signatures. Further, Purposive sampling technique was employed to consider 25 respondents who are relevant stakeholders to offender profiling includes police investigation officers, forensic experts, lawyers, and judges. Data was collected through interview guide and analyzed qualitatively by organizing into six major themes including nature of profiling practices, perceived gaps in formal training, challenges faced in practical applications, and barriers to profiling being accepted as evidence in court. Findings revealed critical gaps like the absence of formal training on offender profiling, skepticism among professionals, and barriers to inter agency communication that hinder profiling effectiveness. Further, profiling remains inadmissible as primary evidence in court and used only for corroboration purposes. This research work underscored the urgent need for standardized training to Police investigation officers, enhanced collaboration among relevant stakeholders to recognize the importance of profiling, and adoption of forensic based methodologies like behavioral evidence analysis to enhance profiling accuracy and improve the efficiency of criminal investigation.

Key Words: *Offender Profiling, Investigation officers, Crime Scene, Qualitative study, Criminal Investigation.*

INTRODUCTION

Offender profiling represents one of the most significant tools within contemporary investigation process. It is the process of deriving conclusions about criminal characteristics based on an offender's behavior during the commission of an offence. This investigative tool identifies criminal features, crime locations, and the behavior of offenders on crime scene (Canter, 2000). The formal development of offender profiling gained significant momentum in the 20th century as the phrase coined by FBI in 1970, particularly with the establishment of the FBI's Behavioural Science Unit in 1972 (Denevi & Campbell, 2004). According to the FBI behavioral analysis is essential for understanding the complexities of criminal profiling and guiding investigative approaches. It integrates criminological theory, psychology, and forensic science into a structured

investigative approach that aims to construct a behavioral and psychological sketch of an unknown offender. Profiling serves as an investigative tool to help investigators make sense of unclear or complicated crime scenes, reduce suspect pools, and direct resource allocation rather than taking the place of traditional investigative techniques. Fundamentally, profiling is based on the idea that behavior is predictable and that characteristics, motives, and potential identities of criminals may be deduced from methodical examination of crime scenes, victim profiles, and forensic evidence (Resseler et al., 1988). This model emphasized reliance on investigative experience, case comparisons, and a structured analytical process that separated objective interpretation from personal biases. The interplay between personality and criminal behavior is crucial for understanding offender motivations. Eysenck (1977) posited that personality traits play a significant role in shaping criminal behavior, suggesting that understanding these traits is crucial for developing effective profiling methods. Further, Hazelwood and Warren (1987) revealed that successful profilers required more than investigative skills; they needed the capacity to interpret behaviors from the offender's perspective, essentially reconstructing thought processes behind actions. Douglas and Burgess (1986) stated that profiling as an investigative technique aimed at identifying offenders with recurrent behavioral traits by analyzing crime patterns. Further, it had evolved into a systematic approach capable of identifying offender attributes, crime locations, and behavioral tendencies with greater consistency. Moreover, Public imagination has frequently been shaped less by reality than by media portrayals. Television dramas such as *Criminal Minds*, *Mindhunter*, and *The Mentalist* popularized the idea of profilers as extraordinary individuals who could solve crimes almost exclusively through intuition (Bonn, 2017). In addition; Ferguson (2016) critically examined the media's influence on public perceptions of criminal profiling, suggesting that these perceptions can affect law enforcement practices and the overall effectiveness of profiling as an investigative strategy.

These dramatizations created inflated perceptions of accuracy and success, portraying profiling as nearly infallible (Greiwe & Khoshnood, 2022). In reality, profiling is far from absolute. It is a complex combination of scientific knowledge, experiential judgment, and interpretive analysis. Unlike media representations, which often suggest that a single deduction can unmask an offender, real profiling requires integrating criminological theories, forensic data, and investigative experience. This disjuncture between portrayal and practice complicates public and judicial perceptions of profiling and underscores the necessity of distinguishing entertainment from empirical capability.

The intellectual history of profiling also reveals its complex relationship with early criminological theories. Siegel (2018) stated about Cesare Lombroso work referred as the theory of the *inborn criminality*, arguing that offenders could be identified by physical features including, but not limited to facial asymmetry, irregular skull shapes, extended jaws. The intellectual history of profiling also reveals its complex relationship with early criminological theories. Understanding early risk factors, such as high impulsiveness and growing up in deprived environments, is crucial for preventing individuals from embarking on a life of crime (Farrington & Welsh, 2007). Although discredited as deterministic and scientifically flawed, his work reflects early efforts to link biology to deviance. Moreover, Erich Wulffen examined the psychological and sociological conditions influencing female criminality. Similarly, William Sheldon linked body types and mental illness with criminal predispositions, arguing that physique could predict temperament and antisocial tendencies. While lacking scientific rigor, these theories represent attempts to classify offenders systematically, laying an intellectual foundation for later,

more empirical methods. Quinsey and Lalumiere (2003) explained the theoretical frameworks surrounding sexual offending, asserting that a thorough understanding of these theories can enrich profiling practices, particularly in cases of sexual crimes.

In contemporary profiling, forensic psychology and psychiatry are prioritized over deterministic physical typologies. Profiling incorporates these fields' frameworks for assessing risk factors, criminal culpability, competency, and recidivism into investigative procedures. Harris and Kaduce (2009) highlighted the intricate relationship between mental health issues and criminal behavior, emphasizing that effective profiling must incorporate psychological insights to improve its accuracy and applicability. Further, Anderson (2012) emphasized that psychological profiling enhances investigative effectiveness by providing insights into offender motivations and behaviors, ultimately aiding law enforcement in identifying and apprehending suspects. The concept of the homology assumption in offender profiling, explored by Petherick and Ferguson (2009), associated the drawing parallels between offender characteristics and crime patterns, reinforcing the need for caution in profiling practices.

Yet despite these advances, profiling remains controversial. One major criticism concerns subjectivity because profiling often requires interpretive judgments; analysts may unconsciously project personal biases or cultural assumptions. This can lead to investigative misdirection, wrongful suspicion, or reinforcement of stereotypes. In culturally diverse regions such as Peshawar, subjectivity becomes particularly problematic, as Western-based models may fail to capture cultural nuances influencing behavior (Ashkar & Khoshnood, 2020). Another criticism concerns its limited empirical grounding. Although profiling has been applied in high-profile cases, systematic studies validating its effectiveness remain relatively scarce. Much of the practice relies on case study analyses rather than peer-reviewed and replicable research, which raises questions about scientific legitimacy (Anderson, 2012). The potential for reinforcing stereotypes is another issue, as reliance on demographic traits such as ethnicity, gender, or class can stigmatize communities and distort investigative priorities. Because of these drawbacks, profiling ought to be utilized as an additional tool, and not as direct evidence before the court. As expert testimony in cases of profiling is admissible in the UK under the Criminal Justice Act, provided it is judged relevant and trustworthy, judges have the authority to reject it; if credibility is questionable. Because of worries about bias and scientific rigor, both systems acknowledge the investigative value of profiling, but are cautious about using it as evidence. Recent advancements in offender profiling underscore the importance of theoretical frameworks that guide investigative practices, as discussed by Petherick and Brooks (2021), who emphasized the necessity of integrating psychological insights with criminological theories. These debates illustrate the tension between profiling as an investigative aid and its contested status in judicial proceedings. Within Pakistan, and particularly Peshawar, offender profiling represents a field still in development. Investigation officers and criminologists have highlighted the need for profiling methods that reflect local socio-political and cultural realities. Crime in Peshawar cannot be fully understood through individual psychology alone; it is shaped by community structures, socio-economic deprivation, political instability, and the legacy of conflict in the region. Khan et al. (2020) examined the application of profiling in violent extremism investigations and revealed that profiling provided useful insights, it often overlooked socio-economic drivers of radicalization, thereby limiting its effectiveness. This demonstrates the necessity of adapting profiling to local conditions. Ashkar and Khoshnood (2020) asserted that cultural factors play a critical role in shaping criminal

profiling practices, advocating for culturally tailored approaches to improve the accuracy and relevance of profiles in diverse settings like Pakistan. Culturally informed approaches would require combining conventional investigative tools such as intelligence gathering, community engagement, and local policing methods with behavioral analysis.

According to the Qanun-e-Shahadat Order, 1984, criminal profiling is not acceptable as formal evidence in Pakistan as profiling has no legal standing as independent proof because the courts exclusively rely on direct, documentary, and forensic evidence. Since it is based on deductions, probabilities, and behavioral patterns rather than first hand observations of the crime, it is strictly categorized as indirect and circumstantial evidence. Moreover, Gilovich (2002) explored the role of heuristics and partiality in human verdict, illustrating how intuitive decision-making can lead to systematic errors. In Pakistani courts, profiling is only used during the investigative phase, where it may help law enforcement identify potential suspects or examine the behavior of offenders. Lastly, Shah (2024) demonstrated that offender profiling cannot be used as the foundation for conviction. Its probative value in court proceedings is almost non-existent, and the only evidence used to establish judicial results is physical, forensic or testimonial evidence.

Research Questions

1. How do Police investigation officers in Peshawar utilize offender profiling as an investigative technique in criminal investigation?
2. What is the legal status of offender profiling in the judicial process of the court?
3. What hurdles are confronted by investigation officers and judiciary in using criminal profiling as an investigative tool?

Methodology

This research adopted a qualitative analysis technique to examine the effectiveness of offender profiling from the perspectives of investigation officers, forensic experts, practicing lawyers and judges in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This study seeks to explore diverse viewpoints regarding the applicability and challenges of offender profiling within Pakistan's justice system. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 25 respondents with relevant expertise and affiliation to criminal profiling in legal cases, ensuring the inclusion of those actively engaged in investigations and legal decision making. The sample comprised twelve Police investigation officers, two forensic experts, seven lawyers, and four judges who were practicing criminal cases. This diverse nature of respondents enabled to capture a broad spectrum of insights pertaining to the practice, admissibility, and organizational constraints of offender profiling. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews lasting 30 to 40 minutes, supported by audio recordings and note taking. A pre-testing phase with two lawyers and two Police IOs helped refine and clarify interview questions, enhancing their relevance and effectiveness. Participants responded to around 25 systematic and ethically framed questions aligned with the research questions, allowing in-depth analysis of their experiences and perceptions. Interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed thematically. The process generated approximately 55 codes, which were consolidated into 6 major themes reflecting key dimensions of profiling practices, including its utility, limitations, and legal acceptance. Lastly, this research paper has been extracted from the BS Criminology thesis submitted as a requirement for degree completion. The first two authors were the research students, and the third author served as their supervisor.

Results and Data Analysis

The findings of this research work has streamlined core aspects of offender profiling within law enforcement organizations, focusing on its application in investigations, the role of the criminal record in providing valuable criminal history, and the importance of specialized training and expertise for effective profiling. The following themes collectively shed light on both the opportunities and challenges of integrating offender profiling into investigative practices, and showing the status of legal admissibility of profiling before the court of law.

Theme 1: Bridging the Gap: The Need for Systematic Education in Offender Profiling among Law Enforcement Officials

Offender profiling is inherently an applied discipline, as the findings are routinely used in active investigations by law enforcement around the globe (Homant & Kennedy, 1998; Snook et al., 2007). Further, according to Hazelwood and Warrren (1987) proficient profilers have a deep understanding of criminal investigations and can analyze behavior displayed during a crime, essentially thinking like the perpetrator. However, conceptual interpretations of profiling vary across different departments, influenced by training, practical exposure, and the legal framework governing its application. Across various law enforcement entities, offender profiling is understood differently. Some view it primarily as a psychological assessment method, while others emphasize its forensic and analytical components.

In this work, Police officials generally associate profiling with behavioral analysis aimed at predicting offender characteristics. As Police IO 1 stated,

"Offender profiling allows us to anticipate a suspect's next move based on past patterns, but in practice, we mostly rely on traditional investigative work rather than psychological analysis."

However, among judges, skepticism arises regarding its admissibility in court. In this regard, Judge 3 encapsulates,

"Offender profiling is insightful, but rarely admissible as definitive evidence. It can provide investigative direction as a corroborative evidence that must supplement other evidences with concrete proof."

Further, Forensic Expert 2 explained the gap,

"Most law enforcement personnel rely on experience rather than structured profiling methods (scientifically validated techniques). There's no dedicated curriculum for profiling within police training which leads to inconsistent application."

Moreover, Forensic Expert 1 recommended,

"Criminologists have the academic foundation to analyze criminal patterns. If they are formally trained in profiling, they can collaborate more effectively with forensic teams and police."

Currently, police stations and investigative units depend on forensic specialists for behavioral assessments, but the lack of dedicated profiling experts often results in delayed case resolutions. In this regard, Police IO 5 revealed,

"In complex cases, we rely on forensic teams to provide behavioral insights, but since we don't have in-house profiling experts, it slows down our investigative process."

On the other hand, lawyers debate its ethical implications, particularly concerning biases. In this context Lawyer 5 remarked,

"Offender profiling sometimes perpetuates prejudices. We must ensure it doesn't turn into a tool for wrongful convictions."

Despite its theoretical appeal, offender profiling faces implementation hurdles. Police IO emphasized resource constraints by stating,

"We lack the technology, skills, and training for advanced behavioral profiling. Most of our work is reactive, not predictive or proactive."

In summary, offender profiling serves as a valuable investigative tool, but its application varies widely across law enforcement branches and often underutilized due to lack of standardized training, legal clarity, and inter-agency collaboration.

Theme 2: Application and Effectiveness of Offender Profiling Techniques in Criminal Investigations

Offender profiling, though still developing in Pakistan, has been utilized by law enforcement practitioners to address complex cases of organized crime and terrorism. Officers incorporating profiling techniques into their investigative strategies to narrow suspects and anticipate offender behavior. Police officials often rely on behavioral analysis to examine recurring patterns in serial offenses (Hess, 1999).

Forensic Expert 2 remarked regarding the application of offender profiling in the local context,

"Offender profiling alone isn't enough; forensic data like fingerprints, DNA, and CCTV recordings are crucial for validating suspect identification."

Further, Police IO 4 encapsulates,

"Profiling terrorist suspects allows us to recognize behavioral traits linked to radicalization before they commit a crime."

Profiling terrorist suspects involves identifying behavioral traits linked to radicalization, such as isolation and expressed grievances. From a police officer's perspective, this proactive approach enables early intervention, effective resource allocation, and community engagement.

Despite the aforesaid applications, legal and ethical constraints were expressed by Judge 2,

"While behavioral profiling can provide valuable insights, it cannot serve as definitive evidence in court due to its subjective nature. Profiling relies on interpretations of behavior that may not always accurately predict criminal intent. Courts require concrete evidence, such as tangible actions or communications, to establish guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Thus, while profiling can inform investigative strategies, it should be used as a tool for early intervention rather than basis for prosecution."

Moreover, there are practitioners in both forensic psychiatry and psychology who gained their expertise through experience, but currently there is an expectation that one has taken some advanced education and training to qualify as an expert in these fields (Melton et al., 1997). In addition; Police investigation officers acknowledge profiling's role in tracking drug traffickers, but highlighted resource limitations,

"We, Police investigation officers, specifically in drugs trafficking cases can benefit from behavioral profiling, but we lack advanced skills and structured strategies to carry out profiling and to take maximum benefit from it,"

Law enforcement experts categorize offenders based on their behavioral traits that are consistently observed across multiple cases. In this scenario, Police IO 1 explained how repeated offenders demonstrate predictable tendencies by stating,

"Habitual criminals often repeat certain behavior such as specific group of victims, preferred locations, and even specific modus operandi and signature after commission of offence. This allows investigators to identify potential suspects based on established patterns."

Criminal signatures refer to specific elements unique to an offender's actions, separate from the crime itself. As Forensic Expert 2 described this concept in the context of violent crimes by revealing,

"Some offenders leave behind distinct signatures after committing serious crime such as symbolic gestures, specific injury patterns, or post-crime rituals. These details help us link multiple crimes to the same suspect from the past criminal records."

Modus operandi varies between offender types. In serial killing, offenders refine their methods over time, adapting their tactics based on experience. Law enforcement specialists track these behavioral evolutions to anticipate future actions and suspect movements.

With regard to organized crimes and terrorism related offenses, a Police IO who was counter terrorism specialist encapsulates,

"Behavioral profiling is instrumental in assessing risk factors. Further, recruitment strategies, ideological reinforcement, and attack planning follow consistent patterns; profiling helps in determining suspects' affiliations, training backgrounds, and likelihood of future actions."

While offender profiling provides valuable investigative insights, its accuracy depends on structured analysis, forensic validation, and real time intelligence gathering. Integrating these elements ensures law enforcement can more effectively anticipate criminal activities and strengthen investigations. Research has shown that certain profiling techniques can enhance investigative outcomes. Vorpagel et al. (2021) found that behavioral profiling techniques significantly improved the accuracy of suspect identification, particularly when integrating psychological theories with empirical data from crime scenes.

In short, it is safe to argue that offender profiling contributes to law enforcement efforts in Peshawar, especially in cases of serial crimes, counter-terrorism, and organized crime. However, challenges such as training gaps, technological limitations, and legal concerns hinder its full effectiveness. Strengthening inter-agency cooperation and formalizing methodologies could enhance its role within Pakistan's criminal justice system.

Theme 3: Empowering Investigations: The Role of Forensic Tools and Databases in Enhancing Offender Profiling

Offender profiling, though still developing in Pakistan, has significantly influenced investigative practices in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly in addressing organized crime and habitual offenders. Egan and McCarthy (2015) presented a novel methodology for profiling psychopaths, arguing that insights into personality traits can lead to more accurate predictions of criminal behavior, thereby improving investigation outcomes.

In this regard, Police IO 2 stated,

"Profiling helps us in anticipating a suspect's next move based on repetitive actions and geographical choices, but traditional investigative work remains our primary method."

A crucial aspect of profiling in the local context is its reliance on stored offender profiles maintained by the Offender Record Office (CRO). This initiative, launched in 2016, has proven effective in identifying habitual offenders. In this regard, Police IO 3 described its impact,

"Before CRO digitization, tracking repeat offenders was difficult. The CRO system categorizes crime data from individual police stations and consolidates it at the central police office, where offender files are digitized. Now, if a suspect is apprehended, we can immediately access their offender history, making convictions faster and more precisely."

Further, forensic experts emphasize the role of digital profiling in investigations, revealed that integrating behavioral patterns with historical offender records strengthens case building efforts. In this context, Forensic Expert 1 explained,

"Stored profiles allow us to analyze whether an individual fits a previously recorded offender pattern. It prevents wrongful convictions and focuses our attention on habitual offenders."

Counter terrorism department also benefits from CRO data in identifying suspects linked to terrorist networks. As Police IO 4 shared,

"Profiling isn't just about individual behavior, it's about mapping entire offender ecosystems. Using CRO records, we can trace connections between suspects and known offender groups."

Despite its advantages, there is some legal officials caution against over reliance on profiling without supporting forensic and direct evidence. In this context Judge 2 highlighted,

"Digital offender record is an asset, but convictions must still be based on legally sound evidence. Profiling should guide investigations, not dictate verdicts as we cannot rely on the digital record solely due to technical and legal complications of our justice system."

One case study involved the post-mortem examination of a female homicide victim, where forensic experts discovered an unusual fabric thread embedded in the victim's wounds. The thread did not match the victim's clothing, prompting forensic teams to investigate further. In this regard, Forensic Expert 2 stated,

"Given the nature of the fabric found on the body, it is highly probable that the suspect works in the craftsmanship industry; perhaps tailoring, upholstery, or textile production."

Another case demonstrated by the forensic expert after analyzing mud traces on a suspect's footprints detected specific materials unique to a particular quarry region of the province. The expert revealed,

"The soil composition suggests the suspect has recently traveled through or resides near a quarry containing limestone and granite particles. This allows us to estimate the suspect's movement patterns and geographic base."

Further, Forensic Expert 1 elaborated on the process,

"Our crime scene task group first analyzes the type of crime committed and expert start gathering the evidences and reconstruct the crime scene by observing different behavioral features there. The suspect's profession and overall personality can often be deduced from the crime scene; whether the attack was aggressive or pre-planned. We also inquire statements from nearby individuals to assess intent and motive, helping us categorize the murder as first-degree, second-degree, or third-degree."

In the aforesaid scenario, one of police investigation officers stated that,

"Call data record analysis allows us to monitor the suspect's location during crucial hours especially overnight or at times of seizure and search operations. This data helps validate profiling assessments and track movement patterns effectively."

To conclude, profiling techniques combined with the digitization of offender records through CRO, have enhanced law enforcement efforts in Peshawar and eventually in the whole province, but still acknowledgement from the judiciary is needed to enhance its evidentiary value.

Theme 4: Challenging Pre-conceptions: Addressing Stereotypes and Biases in Offender Profiling Practices

While offender profiling aims to provide objective investigative insights, preconceived notions and subjective biases often shape how profiling is applied in the course of investigation. The practice of racial profiling has far-reaching consequences for society. Further, Birzer (2013) critically examined the implications of racial profiling, arguing that it not only undermines public trust in law enforcement but also perpetuates systemic inequalities within the criminal justice system. Whereas Police IO 3 acknowledged how profiling can inadvertently reinforce assumptions rather than be purely evidence based,

"There are cases where we assume certain offender behavior are linked to specific social backgrounds, but this isn't always accurate, and we have to be cautious not to let biases override forensic evidence and systematic procedure of profile reconstruction."

Similarly, Police IO 5 discussed that offender activity often appears concentrated in specific communities, reinforcing investigative patterns over time,

"Every community has a certain socio-economic background, and offender reflects same attributes of the milieu based on a reliable crime trend. In some areas, snatchers are always in high numbers, and that's not random; it's a repeated pattern linked to economic struggles and local networks."

Counter terrorism investigations also reflect challenges in ensuring profiling remains objective. In this regard, Lawyer 2 voiced concerns,

"Profiling should be systematic and based on behavioral analysis, not generalized assumptions about people from a particular area or background. If profiling is misused, it leads to racial discrimination instead of accurate investigation."

Further, one Police IO, reflecting on his experiences in narcotics investigations near border regions, shared a candid observation,

"I wasn't a racist person before, but this field makes you one. Narcotics distributors about 80% of them come from the same ethnicity near border areas, like erstwhile FATA. Over time, you start associating crime with the people of the same geographic location, even if it's not fair."

This reality highlights how repeated exposure to patterns of crime can shape biases, even among officers striving for objective

investigations. While individual traits are important, the context in which crimes occur is equally critical. Bennett and Holloway (2004) highlighted the significant impact of situational factors on criminal behavior, suggesting that context plays a crucial role in understanding offending patterns. Forensic experts emphasize that profiling must be grounded in behavioral science rather than entrenched perceptions. As Forensic Expert 2 warned,

"Behavioral profiling is a valuable tool, but when stereotypes come into play, it can distort investigations rather than refine them."

Further, Police IO 4 emphasizes,

"We need specific guidelines to ensure profiling remains rooted in behavioral science rather than unverified assumptions. Investigative objectivity must be reinforced through formal education and procedural safeguards to avoid discriminatory practices."

The aforesaid views of the experts highlighted that offender profiling must be firmly grounded in robust procedural protections and empirical behavioral research. Unconscious biases can readily undermine investigative neutrality and can perpetuate discriminatory practices. However, contrary to expectations, Kocsis et al. (2002) found that investigative experience did not always correlate with more accurate offender profiles.

Theme 5: Integrating Perspectives: The Vital Role of Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Enhancing Offender Profiling

Effective offender profiling requires coordination between Police officials, forensic experts, psychologists, and legal professionals, however, in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa respondents highlighted persistent challenges in interdisciplinary collaboration, resulting in inefficiencies that hinder investigations and judicial processes. Concerning this matter, one of the Police IOs reiterated,

"Anti-Narcotics Force and Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control Department are like two swords that cannot fit into one sheath; always colliding, but never cooperating. Narcotics investigations demand synergy, yet territorial conflicts between departments prevent effective collaboration."

Forensic experts also raised concerns about law enforcement's disinterest in specialized training sessions. As the Forensic Expert affirmed,

"The police officials rarely attend the training programs we offer relating of fingerprint taking and preservation. Their lack of interest in forensic analysis and profiling is the main reason that hampers investigation process and eventually their service delivery remain insufficiently supported by scientific techniques."

The legal community's role in profiling has been another point of contention. Police officials reported frustration over the use of legal loopholes by defense lawyers, allowing convicted offenders to escape harsher sentences. As Police IO 3 criticized this practice and revealed,

"Lawyers are skilled at finding lacunae in the law to secure early release for convicted offenders. Some habitual offenders walk free not because they are innocent, but because of technical loopholes in the law that weaken the prosecution cases."

Despite these challenges, experts agree that improving interdisciplinary collaboration could enhance investigative accuracy and judicial fairness. Establishing standardized coordination protocols between departments, ensuring law enforcement personnel receive mandatory profiling training, and revising legal loopholes would help ensure profiling is used as a legitimate investigative tool rather than a contested practice in Pakistan's judicial system.

Theme 6: Navigating the Courtroom: The Admissibility of Offender Profiling in Judicial Proceedings

According to Shah (2024), forensic evidences, is considered circumstantial evidence in court and not a direct evidence. While it can significantly aid in linking a suspect to a crime, it is not given maximum magnitude in the court while making a judgment. This means that expert opinion including criminal profiling must be corroborated with other

evidence to strengthen their admissibility in legal proceedings. Article 164 of the Qanun-e-Shahadat Order 1984, recognizes forensic evidence, but emphasizes that it should be supported by other existing evidences to be effectively utilized in court.

In this context, a senior Judge 3 explained the judicial limitations by stating,

"Offender profiling may assist law enforcement by helping them focus on potential suspects or understand behavioral patterns, but it does not hold independent evidentiary value in a court trial. Pakistani courts require evidence to meet the Qanun-e-Shahadat Order, 1984, whereas profiling being subjective and interpretive does not fulfill on its own."

In the context of legal proceedings, the admissibility of profiling evidence remains a contentious issue. Ormerod (1998) revealed the complexities surrounding the admissibility of profiling evidence in legal settings, emphasizing the need for rigorous standards to ensure its reliability in court. With regard to the criminal history there is no case study or precedent in Pakistan where profiling alone played a determining role in a judicial verdict. Pertaining to this, Judge 4 remarked,

"Investigative agencies such as FIA, CTD, and intelligence services may use profiling internally for cases like terrorism, serial murder, or kidnapping for ransom, but these profiles are rarely presented in court as standalone evidence. Profiling remains a supplementary tool rather than a decisive legal standard."

The Zainab murder case occurred in Kasur in 2018 showed that profiling could support investigations. Authorities used geographic profiling to narrow suspects based on location and behavioral tendencies, focusing on local offenders with a history of sexual violence. However, DNA evidence ultimately identified Imran Ali, linking him to several similar cases from DNA criminal database. His conviction and execution in 2018 reinforced that forensic evidence and DNA profiling is decisive in securing convictions.

In short, Shah and Hussain (2021) convincingly argued that forensic evidence plays a pivotal role in criminal investigation; it is crucial for establishing facts relevant to a legal case. When eyewitness testimony is lacking, expert opinion and physical evidence becomes more important since it allows for the conviction of criminals by using scientific examination of evidences. The assessment of offender risk is crucial for effective intervention strategies.

Conclusion

Offender profiling has emerged as a controversial, but potentially helpful investigative method in Pakistan justice system. As law enforcement officials become more aware of its significance to provide insight into sophisticated criminal operations, repeated offender tendencies, and behavioral patterns, its usage shows both importance and limitations. At the same time, its status within judicial proceedings remains uncertain, as courts emphasize reliance on concrete and verifiable evidence over interpretive assessments. The research work conclusions showed that although profiling can guide an investigation, its usefulness is limited by lack of training, technical constraints, and issues with admissibility in court. In order to predict criminal behavior and weed out possible suspects, Peshawar police officials have started using profiling techniques in instances involving terrorism, organized crime, and drug trafficking. By combining behavioral evaluations with tangible evidence and databases of offender records, forensic specialists assist in these initiatives. Consistent application has been hampered, meanwhile, by the absence of official curriculum, qualified specialists, and inter-agency cooperation. Moreover, stereotypes and biases often shape profiling practices, raising ethical concerns about fairness and objectivity in investigations. The judicial perspective further underscores these challenges. Profiling is not independently admissible in Pakistani courts and is treated as circumstantial unless corroborated by forensic reports, eyewitness testimony, or documentary proof. Courts

continue to emphasize adherence to the Qanun-e-Shahadat Order, 1984 thereby ensuring that convictions rest on evidence that meets legal standards of reliability. This cautious stance reflects both the subjective nature of profiling and the potential risks of misuse. Overall, offender profiling in the area remains in a developmental stage valued as an investigative aid, but not yet institutionalized as a scientific or legal standard. To enhance its significance; systematic education, interdisciplinary collaboration, and technological advancement are essential. Strengthening the aforesaid areas would enable offender profiling to evolve into a more credible, reliable, and legally supported tool for criminal investigation in Pakistan.

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