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Psychological Profiling of Serial Killers

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of psychological profiling in the investigation of serial offenders, emphasizing its contribution to understanding criminal behavior and supporting criminal investigations. Situated at the intersection of criminal law, criminology, and psychology, the study highlights the growing importance of interdisciplinary approaches to increasingly complex forms of violent crime. Because serial offenses often involve limited direct evidence, recurring behavioral patterns, and offenders who adapt their methods over time, behavioral analysis provides valuable support to traditional investigative techniques.

The paper explores the theoretical foundations of serial offending by analyzing key concepts such as modus operandi and criminal signature, as well as major criminological and psychological theories explaining serial criminal behavior. It also examines the legal framework governing criminal investigations and the practical value of psychological profiling within the criminal justice process.

The research employs a qualitative methodology based on documentary analysis and a case study. Relevant academic literature and legal sources are reviewed, while the case of Ted Bundy illustrates the practical application of psychological profiling in identifying behavioral patterns and supporting investigative decision-making.

The findings suggest that psychological profiling should be viewed as a complementary investigative tool rather than an independent form of evidence. By assisting investigators in narrowing suspect pools, identifying links between related crimes, and organizing available information, profiling enhances investigative efficiency. The study concludes that integrating psychological profiling into criminal investigations contributes to a deeper understanding of serial criminality and supports the development of more effective investigative strategies for addressing complex violent offenses.

Keywords: Psychological Profiling; Serial Killers; Criminal Behavior; Behavioral Analysis; Criminal

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Investigation; Criminology; Criminal Psychology