**Forensic Criminal Psychology: A Discussion of Various Topics**



**Question 1: *What are the limitations and strengths of the FBI approach?***

**Answer 1: Offender Profiling: Limitations and Strengths of the FBI Approach**

The FBI approach to offender profiling has both limitations and strengths. One end is that it heavily relies on typologies and generalisations, which may overlook individual offender variations. This approach assumes that certain characteristics or behaviours are common among specific offender types, potentially leading to stereotyping and oversimplification.

However, the FBI approach also has notable strengths. It incorporates organised and disorganised offender typologies, which have provided valuable insights into the behaviours, motivations, and characteristics associated with different types of criminals. These typologies have helped investigators narrow down suspect lists and focus their investigations more effectively.

Moreover, the FBI's approach combines psychological, behavioural, and investigative expertise, emphasising a multidisciplinary approach to profiling. This holistic perspective acknowledges that a complex interplay of individual, situational, and environmental factors influences criminal behaviour. The FBI approach seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of offenders and their actions by considering these various factors.

To strengthen the FBI approach further, ongoing research and validation of its techniques are necessary. Collaborations with academic institutions and integrating empirical evidence can enhance the accuracy and reliability of offender profiling methods.

https://youtu.be/mx6\_CVhn4Os

**References:**

www.ojp.gov. (n.d.). *Profiling Violent Crimes: An Investigative Tool | Office of Justice Programs*. [online] Available at:<https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/profiling-violent-crimes-investigative-tool-0.>

***Question 2: Geographic profiling: Please read Lundrigan & Canter's (2004) multivariate analysis of serial murderers' disposal site location choice (in the reading list). Please this​‌‍‍‍‌‍‍‍‍‍‌‌‍‍‍‍‌‍‌‌​cuss the critical findings from this study and how this can help us in GOP.***

**Answer 2: Geographic Profiling: Key Findings from Lundrigan & Canter (2004) Study**

Lundrigan and Canter's (2004) study on the disposal site location choice of serial murderers provides valuable insights into geographic profiling (GOP). The key findings of this study shed light on the spatial patterns and decision-making processes of these offenders.

The research highlighted that serial murderers tend to select disposal sites that are familiar to them, typically within their comfort zones. This indicates that geographic factors, such as the proximity to their residence or places they frequent, influence their decision-making process. Additionally, the study revealed that the selection of disposal sites is not entirely random but somewhat influenced by environmental features, such as topography, accessibility, and visibility.

These findings have significant implications for GOP. By understanding offenders' spatial patterns and decision-making processes, law enforcement agencies can create more accurate offender profiles and allocate resources more effectively. Geographic profiling techniques can narrow search areas, prioritise investigative efforts, and anticipate future offender behaviour based on their disposal site choices.

Further research is essential to refine geographic profiling methods and improve their reliability and validity. Integrating advanced technologies and statistical models can enhance the effectiveness of geographic profiling as an investigative tool.

**References:**

Manual Of Forensic Taphonomy. (2021). S.L.: CRC Press.

***Question 3: How has psychology contributed to the development of new methods of police interviews?***

**Answer 3: Psychology's Contribution to New Methods of Police Interviews**

Psychology has made significant contributions to the development of new methods of police interviews. Research in this field has emphasised the importance of utilising evidence-based interview techniques to enhance the accuracy and completeness of information obtained from witnesses, victims, and suspects.

One essential contribution is the development of the Cognitive Interview (CI). The CI is an interview technique that incorporates psychological principles to enhance memory retrieval and minimise the influence of external factors on eyewitness accounts. It employs various strategies such as context reinstatement, free recall, and open-ended prompts to encourage witnesses to provide a detailed and accurate report of their events.

Psychologists have also highlighted the significance of rapport-building, active listening, and non-coercive questioning techniques in police interviews. These approaches establish a comfortable and supportive environment, fostering better communication and cooperation between interviewers and interviewees. The focus is gathering reliable information while minimising the potential for false confessions or contamination of testimony.

Despite these advancements, challenges remain. Implementing new interview methods may require additional training and resources for law enforcement personnel. Moreover, complex psychological interview techniques must be accompanied by proper evaluation and quality control measures to ensure practical application.

**References:**

Schwartz, B.L. (2020). *Memory: foundations and applications*. London: SAGE Publications.

***Question 4: Why should we continue to use Eyewitness testimony in court to secure convictions?***

Answer 4: Eyewitness Testimony: Strengths and Weaknesses in Court

Eyewitness testimony is frequently used in court to secure convictions, but it is not without its strengths and weaknesses. Understanding these aspects is crucial to evaluating its reliability and appropriate use.

**Strengths:**

1. Persuasiveness: Eyewitness testimony can be highly persuasive, as it involves firsthand accounts of events, which can be compelling for jurors.
2. Crucial information: Eyewitnesses may provide valuable details, such as identifying perpetrators, that can aid in establishing guilt or innocence.
3. Emotional impact: Eyewitness testimony can evoke empathy and emotional responses from jurors, potentially influencing their verdict.

**Weaknesses:**

1. Memory fallibility: Human memory is prone to errors, distortions, and reconstructive processes. Factors such as stress, post-event information, and biases can influence the accuracy of eyewitness recall.
2. Inaccurate identifications: Eyewitness identifications are only sometimes reliable. Factors like lineup procedures, cross-racial designations, and suggestive questioning techniques can lead to misidentifications, potentially leading to wrongful convictions.
3. Confidence and credibility: Jurors may assume that confident eyewitnesses are more accurate, despite research suggesting weak correlations between confidence and accuracy. Additionally, eyewitness credibility can be influenced by bias, prejudice, or prior knowledge.

To mitigate these weaknesses, best practices in eyewitness identification procedures, such as blind administration and sequential lineups, should be implemented. Jurors should also be educated about the fallibility of eyewitness testimony and the potential biases that may affect their evaluations.

**References:**

Psychology, B., University, S., Ph D., Psychology, S. and University (1966). *Doctor of Philosophy, Honoris Causa*. [online] *Psychology Dept and School of Law*, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, pp.1975–87. Available at:<https://www.law.uci.edu/faculty/full-time/loftus/loftusCV.pdf.>