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CRIMINAL PROFILING IN THE PHILIPPINES: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Criminal profiling has been a useful technique for investigations around the world, although it hasn't been used much or studied much in the Philippines. This study investigates the obstacles, opportunities, and prospective developments of criminal profiling in the Philippines through the analysis of contextual realities and empirical inputs from criminology stakeholders. The purpose of the study is to describe respondent demographics, assess perceptions of challenges and opportunities, and evaluate profiling's future directions within the country's criminal justice system. A historical-descriptive research design was employed, combining literature review and survey methods. Forty-nine respondents, intentionally chosen from criminology students, academics, and practitioners in the National Capital Region, participated via a structured questionnaire that was validated by specialists and assessed for dependability. Frequency counts, percentages, and a weighted mean with descriptive interpretation to examine the data. The results showed that most of the people who answered were young men who were academically involved and just starting their careers, which suggests that this generation will have a big impact on how profiling is done in the future. Some of the main problems that were found were not reporting crimes enough, not having enough resources, not getting enough help from institutions, and the possibility of profiles being wrong. On the other hand, profiling was considered as a way to improve criminology education, encourage analytical thinking, and improve the results of investigations. Respondents were also hopeful about profiling's ability to find serial crimes, help people get well, and use AI in a way that is safe for people. The study indicates that, despite considerable systemic obstacles, profiling in the Philippines has potential as an innovative instrument for modernizing investigations, preventing crime, and managing offenders. These results have consequences for the creation of curricula, changes to policies, and training for professionals.

KEYWORDS: *Criminal Profiling, Philippines, Criminology Education, Law Enforcement, Investigative Practices*

INTRODUCTION

Criminal profiling, also known as offender profiling or behavioral evidence analysis, is a forensic and investigative tool that is designed to produce hypotheses about the personality, behaviors, demographic traits, and occasionally the environmental or social background of unknown offenders, using evidence acquired from crime scenes. Globally, it is increasingly recognized as a tool to aid investigators in the following areas: reducing the number of suspects, comprehending the motivations of offenders, predicting future actions, and enhancing the efficacy of criminal investigations. Empirical research, standardized procedures, and interdisciplinary collaboration have all contributed to the development of profiling as a method in countries with strong legal, forensic, and psychological infrastructures. However, there are ongoing discussions about its ethical implications, reliability, and validity, particularly when it is implemented in environments with limited institutional resources or under conditions of varying cultural, legal, data privacy, and human rights constraints.

Policymakers and law enforcement in the Philippines have begun to contemplate the implementation of more sophisticated investigative tools in response to concerns regarding crime, which encompasses a wide range of criminal activities, including human trafficking, drug-related crimes, and cybercrime. While forensic science (e.g., DNA analysis, ballistic identification, fingerprint systems) has been progressively fortified, profiling itself remains underdeveloped. There are certain initiatives that suggest a shift toward data-driven investigation. The Philippine National Police (PNP) has recently undertaken projects to improve the capacity for criminal investigation, digital forensic analysis, and data management systems.

These projects have been supported by international cooperation bodies, including the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). In the same vein, local research has commenced the examination of crime incident datasets in provinces such as Pampanga, providing a foundation for pattern recognition, temporal and spatial mapping of crime events, which are essential for profiling or predictive policing activities. Although these advancements have occurred, there is still a scarcity of empirical research in the Philippine context that specifically addresses criminal profiling, including its methods, challenges, acceptance among law enforcement, and efficacy in enhancing case resolution rates.

The literature from 2020 to 2025 international reveals both promise and caution. Recent research conducted in Europe, North America, Asia, and other regions has demonstrated the potential of statistical and machine learning models (e.g., predictive modeling, social network analysis, and geographic profiling) to

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aid in investigations. Deep learning has been employed in recent research to address predictive policing, which has identified the advantages of such tools (pattern detection, scaling across datasets) and their disadvantages (bias, over-reliance, data quality issues). In addition, the validity of profiling methods has yielded variable results. Although specific crime scene typologies can be associated with offender characteristics (e.g., aggression, planning level), numerous profiling claims are either subjective, anecdotal, or broad. The general acceptance of profiling as a forensic science is impeded by the absence of rigorous validation, standard metrics, and replication, according to Snook and colleagues (2021).

The literature on the prospects and constraints of criminal profiling is somewhat more extensive in Southeast Asian jurisdictions that are comparable. Malaysia, for instance, is the subject of ongoing discussions regarding the clarity of definitions, methodological standardization, the cultural adaptation of profiling tools, and the adoption of profiling evidence by the court (Azizan et al., 2021). Institutional constraints that are frequently observed in these countries are comparable to those in the Philippines. These constraints include inadequate forensic laboratories, inconsistent crime scene management, privacy and legal regulation concerns, inadequate training in behavioral science, and occasionally a lack of public comprehension or confidence in profiling. Thus, the Philippine case must be positioned within this regional context, which presents both the opportunity for criminal profiling and significant structural, legal, ethical, and cultural challenges.

The legal and regulatory frameworks are particularly pertinent. Republic Act No. 10173 (Data Privacy Act of 2012) in the Philippines establishes rights over personal data, regulates the processing of sensitive information, and provides for enforcement through the National Privacy Commission. This law has been proposed for enhancement in recent developments, particularly in the areas of biometric data, genetic data, and cross-border data sharing, which are directly pertinent to aspects of profiling (Digital Policy Alert, 2024). Legal approval of forensic evidence (digital, trace) is also contingent upon the quality of documentation, chain of custody, standardization, and judicial rulings. Concurrently, survey research conducted in the Philippines indicates that police officers regard forensic evidence (DNA, fingerprints, ballistic, toxicology) as highly pertinent to criminal investigations. This suggests an openness to scientific methods that could facilitate profiling (Castillo & Go, 2023).

Several clusters of challenges have been identified in the literature, including technical and methodological, institutional, legal and ethical, and cultural and societal. Many non-Western contexts face significant challenges in terms of methodology, including data quality (incompleteness, inconsistency, lack of digitization), crime scene contamination or mismanagement, absence of standard profiling protocols, and lack of specialized training. The following are institutional issues: inadequate interagency coordination, inadequate resource allocation (equipment, human capital), and inadequate connections between academic behavioral science and law enforcement practice. Privacy concerns, the potential for Profiling errors or misuse (e.g., racial or social profiling), the courts' skepticism regarding behavioral profile evidence, and the potential violation of constitutional rights are all legal and ethical issues. Public mistrust, poor awareness of psychological profiling, the absence of standardized curricula in forensic psychology and criminology, and perhaps an excessive dependence on conventional investigative methods are cultural issues. Internationally, scholars like Blomberg, Copp, and Turanovic (2024) underscore the necessity of empirical evaluation of these challenges in order to establish evidence-informed policy in criminology, particularly in cases where governance or capacity deficits are present.

In light of these developments, the Philippines is at a juncture: there is a developing opportunity and an urgent need to adopt, adapt, and incorporate criminal profiling into investigative practice—but only if the challenges are systematically addressed. The introduction of capacity-building initiatives (e.g., forensics, digital forensics, data systems), ongoing reforms in data privacy regulation, and rising academic interest are all promising signals. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of empirical research that has been peer-reviewed and that investigates the potential effectiveness of profiling in the Philippines, the constraints in the field, and the perspectives of stakeholders (law enforcement, judiciary, community). The objective of this article is to address a portion of that deficit by offering a thorough examination of the obstacles, identifying opportunities, and suggesting future directions for criminal profiling in the Philippines.

OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of this study is to analyze the status of criminal profiling in the Philippines by delineating its obstacles, investigating its prospects, and determining its prospective trajectories through the insights of selected respondents. Specifically, the study seeks to: (a) describe the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, civil status, educational attainment, and length of service; (b) determine the extent of agreement of the respondents regarding the challenges of criminal profiling, particularly issues such as non-reporting of crimes, the time-consuming nature of profile construction, limited public awareness, compensation concerns for profilers, and the risk of misleading or incomplete profiles; (c) assess the opportunities perceived in criminal profiling, including the role of academic training in criminology and criminal justice, the cultivation of analytical and critical thinking skills, the potential for career pathways in law enforcement, and the use of profiling in crime analysis and case resolution; and (d) evaluate the respondents' views on the future directions of criminal profiling in the Philippines, including its usefulness in detecting serial crime linkages, the need for an integrated and standardized framework, its application in offender rehabilitation, its role in crime prevention and community safety, and the potential transformation brought by artificial intelligence and machine learning. The study aims to ascertain the empirical perspectives

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of respondents concerning criminal profiling while situating these perceptions within contemporary discourses in criminology, forensic psychology, and the modernization of law enforcement. The project seeks to furnish evidence-based insights that could guide educators, legislators, and law enforcement agencies in enhancing investigation processes nationwide, ensuring alignment with scientific integrity, ethical accountability, and community confidence.

METHODS

This study utilized a historical-descriptive research approach to analyze the obstacles, opportunities, and prospective developments of criminal profiling in the Philippines. The historical method was utilized to contextualize the evolution of investigative procedures, particularly the significance of profiling in modern law enforcement, while the descriptive method was deployed to collect and analyze empirical data from selected respondents. The study was carried out in the National Capital Region (NCR), an appropriate setting owing to its aggregation of academic institutions providing criminology programs and the availability of law enforcement professionals well-versed in investigation procedures. There were forty-nine (49) people in the study group. They were chosen on purpose through non-random sampling and included criminology students, academics, and practitioners. This option was considered suitable as it offered varied yet pertinent viewpoints on profiling. A two-part structured questionnaire was used to gather data. The first part asked for demographic information, such as sex, age, marital status, level of education, and length of service. The second part had fifteen (15) statements meant to find out how respondents feel about the challenges, opportunities, and future of criminal profiling. The responses were graded on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 meaning "Strongly Disagree" and 5 meaning "Strongly Agree." To guarantee reliability and validity, the instrument was subjected to expert evaluation by criminology educators and preliminary testing with a limited cohort of responders. A Cronbach's alpha test verified the internal consistency of the items. For data analysis, demographic factors were summarized by frequency counts and percentages, while a weighted mean was utilized to assess levels of agreement with the survey statements. After that, the weighted mean scores were put into descriptive groups: 1.00–1.50 = severely disagree, 1.51–2.50 = disagree, 2.51–3.50 = somewhat agree, 3.51–4.50 = agree, and 4.51–5.00 = highly agree. Ethical protections were rigorously upheld: participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, confidentiality of replies was ensured, and anonymity was preserved throughout the research procedure. By combining historical analysis with descriptive statistics, this method helped the study get a good look at both the real-world context of profiling in the Philippines and the empirical insights of important stakeholders. This gave the study a strong foundation for looking at the problems, chances, and future directions of criminal profiling.

RESULTS, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile

The sex distribution of respondents showed that 67.35% were men, 28.57% were women, and 4.08% did not want to say. This data indicates that men constitute the majority in criminology programs and law enforcement-related fields in the Philippines. This gender disparity mirrors the overarching dynamics of policing and security professions in Southeast Asia, where women persistently encounter obstacles to entry and progression (Soriano & Reyes, 2021). The majority of male responders offers insight into the perception of profiling from a predominantly masculine investigative standpoint, perhaps influencing biases in practice. However, as more and more women enter the fields of criminology and forensic psychology, it may be necessary to focus on gender inclusion in the future to make sure that profiling practice gets a wide range of perspectives.

The age distribution showed that 69.39% of the people who answered were between 21 and 25 years old, 14.29% were between 31 and 35 years old, 10.20% were 36 years old or older, and 6.12% were between 26 and 30 years old. This shows that most of the people who answered were young adults, probably undergraduate or early post-graduate students getting ready for their careers. As a result, their perceptions may show both what they learned in school and what they hope for the future of profiling. Younger respondents are also more likely to know how to use technology, which fits with the global trend of using digital tools and AI in profiling (Liang et al., 2024). So, their answers show that they are not just aware of the problems with profiling right now, but they are also open to new technologies and methods.

The civil status of the respondents corroborates the age distribution, with 91.84% being single and merely 8.16% married. The lack of widowed or separated replies indicates the participants' nascent work stage. The uniformity in civil status indicates that respondents are undergoing transitional life phases, concentrating on academic achievement, professional readiness, and career initiation. Consequently, their views on profiling are more influenced by training environments than by extensive professional experiences. This presents both constraints and prospects: although their restricted exposure may hinder a comprehensive comprehension of profiling's intricacies, their status as forthcoming professionals renders their insights significant for influencing academic curricula and policy trajectories.

In terms of education, 59.18% of the people who answered had obtained postgraduate units, 38.78% had bachelor's degrees, and 2.04% had master's degrees. Also, 57.14% had worked for 1 to 5 years, whereas smaller groups had worked for longer periods of time (6 to 10 years = 16.33%, 11 to 15 years = 18.37%, and 16 years or more = 8.16%). These results show that the people who answered were intellectually advanced yet just starting out in their careers. This unique combination gives them an informed but hopeful view: they have theoretical frameworks but are still

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learning how to use them in real life. Their demographic profile shows that they are ready to accept new ideas like profiling, especially if academic institutions and agencies offer clear paths for doing so. So, it's important to know how they feel about profiling so that we can plan its future, as these people will be the next generation of police officers and criminologists.

Challenges of Criminal Profiling

The first big problem that came out was victim underreporting, which got a weighted mean of 3.59 ("Agree"). Respondents acknowledged that victims frequently refrain from reporting crimes to save their privacy, dignity, or safety. This barrier makes it harder to find solid data that is needed for good profiling. Similar problems have been reported around the world, where underreporting makes crime data less reliable and makes criminal profile models less accurate (Delos Santos, 2022). In the Philippines, it is important to close this gap by making the witness protection program stronger and getting people to trust the police more. In terms of future directions, fixing underreporting is key to making accurate datasets, which are needed for both traditional and AI-assisted profiling.

The second problem was that generating profiles of offenders took a lot of time, with a weighted mean of 3.82. People who answered the survey agreed that full profiling takes a lot of work, which makes it impracticable in places where resources are limited. This is in line with criticisms that profiling generally doesn't have standard methodologies, which makes it less efficient (Snook et al., 2021). This view shows that the Philippines needs more streamlined frameworks because there are still a lot of investigations going on. Future directions should prioritize the use of standardized methodologies, such as the CRIME framework (Petherick et al., 2020), to enhance the efficiency, reliability, and contextual adaptability of profiling.

Other problems included not paying profilers enough (mean = 4.33), the fact that profiling is new to Philippine practice (mean = 4.27), and the possibility of false profiles (mean = 3.90). These results highlight systemic limitations, including inadequate institutional support, insufficient financial incentives, and a deficiency in knowledge or training. Lee (2025) stresses how confirmation and cultural bias can lead to wrong profiles, which is something that respondents also said. To fix these problems, institutions need to spend money on training, make profiling jobs more professional, and spread correct information about what profiling can and can't do. To develop confidence and trust, these structural problems need to be fixed. This is the only way to ensure the future of profiling in the Philippines.

Opportunities of Criminal Profiling

Respondents recognized significant educational advantages linked to profiling. They agreed (mean = 4.35) that being interested in profiling could make students want to work in criminology or law enforcement. So, profiling can be a motivating aspect in academic recruiting, which can help the criminology profession in the Philippines grow stronger. Academic institutions might capitalize on this by incorporating profile modules into curriculum, so promoting early specialization. Future directions include making profiling a formal subject of study so that students who are interested can learn both theoretical and practical skills.

Another chance was the acknowledgment of analytical and critical thinking skills as vital to profiling, with a weighted mean of 4.55 ("Strongly Agree"). Respondents emphasized the significance of these skills in recognizing intricate patterns and potential suspects. This is in line with what Bennell et al. (2022) found: critical thinking doesn't always lead to accurate profiles, but it does make investigative reasoning stronger. In the Philippines, profiling could be a way to help future criminologists learn these skills. The future approach here entails integrating cognitive skill development into criminology programs and ongoing professional training.

Respondents also stressed the importance of institutional and curricular opportunities. They all agreed (scores from 4.33 to 4.51) that you can become a profiler through law enforcement, that taking classes in crime scene investigation and criminology helps you get ready, and that profiling can help keep cases from going cold. These results indicate that Philippine institutions are prepared to incorporate profiling into professional practice via collaboration among colleges, the PNP, and the NBI. Future directions should encompass the establishment of professional routes, the development of standardized training programs, and the integration of academic research with practical application in agencies.

Future Directions of Criminal Profiling

The respondents were hopeful that profiling may help find serial criminals (mean = 4.71), that integrated frameworks could help (mean = 4.57), and that profiling could help criminals become better (mean = 4.57). These opinions show that profiling may be used in many ways, not just to solve crimes but also to stop people from committing crimes again and make communities safer. Navarro and Serrano (2023) assert that offender-centric interventions guided by profiling can mitigate recidivism. For the Philippines, the future involves broadening profiling beyond investigative frameworks to encompass rehabilitation and community policing, so augmenting its comprehensive significance.

The people who answered also agreed that technology has the power to change things, especially AI and machine learning (mean = 4.43). They thought that AI could find patterns in datasets that were too complicated for people to look at by hand. Nonetheless, apprehensions over bias and privacy persist, needing ethical protections (Liang et al., 2024). For the Philippines, using AI-enhanced profiling means making data governance stronger under the Data Privacy Act and teaching professionals how to critically analyze algorithmic outcomes. So, the future of profiling depends on finding a balance between using

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technology and being responsible, making sure that the information is correct without infringing on people's rights.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the obstacles, opportunities, and future trajectories of criminal profiling in the Philippines, utilizing the viewpoints of respondents who predominantly reflect the country's developing criminology and law enforcement experts. The findings indicated structural obstacles that impede the prompt use of profiling, alongside its considerable potential to enhance investigation procedures, academic curricula, and public safety results. The study emphasizes that the evolution of profiling in the Philippines is not solely a technological matter but also an institutional, educational, and ethical pursuit, by contextualizing the empirical findings within wider criminological discussions and contemporary worldwide trends. The conclusions below bring these findings together and show how they will affect criminal profiling in the Philippines in the future.

1. Demographic information on the people who answered. Most of the people who answered were young, male, unmarried, and academically active. Many were working on postgraduate units but had only been in service for 1–5 years. This profile shows that the way people in the Philippines think about criminal profiling is mostly shaped by people who are academically prepared but just starting their careers as criminologists or police officers. Their demographic traits indicate a propensity for innovation; nevertheless, their restricted professional exposure may mitigate practical insights.

2. Problems with criminal profiling. Respondents concurred that profiling in the Philippines encounters several challenges, such as the underreporting of crimes stemming from victim privacy concerns, the labor-intensive process of developing offender profiles, insufficient remuneration for profilers, the unfamiliarity of profiling within the local context, and the potential for profiles to be misleading or biased. These problems are caused by systemic issues such a lack of institutional support, limited resources, and a lack of standardized frameworks. If these issues aren't fixed, profiling in the Philippines could be seen as untrustworthy or impracticable in law enforcement settings.

3. Possibilities of criminal profiling. Even with these problems, profiling may help schools, businesses, and individuals grow in many ways. It can draw students to criminology and law enforcement courses, improve their critical and analytical abilities, and give them clear career paths in organizations like the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI). Adding profiling to schoolwork, professional training, and relationships across institutions can help bridge the gap between theory and practice. Profiling has the ability to enhance case resolution, especially in the prevention of cold cases and the improvement of investigative efficiency.

4. What criminal profiling might look like in the future. People who answered the survey were hopeful that profiling may help find repeated crimes, set up integrated frameworks, help criminals get better, and make communities safer and less likely to commit crimes. Artificial intelligence and machine learning can help profiling even more by looking at huge, complicated datasets. But these kinds of technological advances need to be protected by ethics, solid data governance under the Data Privacy Act, and professional training to stop misuse and prejudice in algorithms.

Criminal profiling in the Philippines is in its early stages but has a lot of potential. The study indicates that profiling, despite considerable structural, methodological, and institutional hurdles, offers essential prospects to revolutionize criminology education, enhance investigative practices, and modernize law enforcement. Profiling can become a credible, useful, and future-oriented investigative technique in the Philippines if problems are systematically addressed and opportunities are seized, especially through education, professionalization, technological adoption, and ethical safeguards.

Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusions of this study, the following suggestions are made to improve the use of criminal profiling in the Philippines and help it grow in the future. The four main topics that were looked at are the demographic profile, the problems, the chances, and the future directions.

1. Engaging with different groups of people and getting ready for school. The survey showed that most of the people who answered were young, male, single, and academically oriented. Therefore, criminology programs and similar fields should take steps to make profiling education more open to everyone. Universities must to develop curricula that appeal to a broad student body, encompassing women and mid-career professionals, while offering mentorship initiatives and practical experiences. This makes sure that future practitioners have different points of view, which makes profiling in the Philippines better.

2. Tackle problems that are built into the system. To get over problems like underreporting, not having enough resources, not having standardized procedures, and not getting paid enough, law enforcement agencies and schools should work together to set clear rules for profiling practice. Policy changes must also make sure that people who do specialized work in profiling get paid well and recognized for their efforts. Victim support programs and community engagement campaigns that encourage people to report crimes should be used to increase efforts to develop public confidence. This will improve the quality of data for profiling.

3. Take use of educational and institutional opportunities. Profiling should be institutionalized as an integral aspect of criminology education and professional development. The PNP, the NBI, and universities should work together to make it easier for criminology students and young professionals to learn how to profile people. This includes using profiling in schoolwork, establishing certification programs, and connecting academic work with real-life investigations. With this kind of institutional

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support, profiling may be both an academic field of study and a good job path.

4. Promote behaviors that look to the future. Given the respondents' positive views on profiling's ability to find serial crimes, help people get better, and employ new technologies, it is suggested that agencies look at how to use artificial intelligence and data analytics responsibly in profiling. When technology is added, there must be ethical precautions and compliance with the Data Privacy Act. Profiling should also be used in programs to help criminals get better, stop crime, and keep communities safe, in addition to investigations. This would make sure that profiling stays useful in the Philippine criminal justice system for a long time.

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