



What to expect in the interrogation room? The confession of sex offenders

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Abstract

Aim: The aim of the present paper is to provide specific techniques in the support of the interrogation of sex offenders beyond the basic level applying international and domestic empirical findings.

Methodology: The topic was examined by reviewing the empirical findings of interrogation in general, interrogation of sex offenders in particular, and the international and national literature on sex offenders and their typologies. The literature review concludes with an international understanding of the profiling nexus of the topic.

Findings: The literature review suggests that the interrogation of sex offenders may be influenced by factors related to the victim, the offender and the conduct of the criminal procedure. Recent results suggest that the distinction of research on interrogation by type of offence is necessary. Therefore, the interrogation of sex offenders should be treated as an individual field of forensic science. However, results focusing on interrogation only at the general level are not sufficient for practical application. Each interrogation situation is greatly influenced by the individual and unique circumstances of it and the outcome of them is determined by a number of situational and psychological factors.

Value: That is a widely accepted fact by forensic experts that confession is crucial during the investigative process, its significance therefore is unquestionable also during the criminal proceedings. Criminal profilers and behavioural experts have been developing technique of interrogation counselling for decades – since the very beginning of criminal profiling, although the method of

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interrogation strategy has only recently been supported by empirical findings. These scientific works primarily focus on aspects of the interrogation such as the dynamics between the participants of the interrogation – including interrogator and the subject, the confession and those factors that may increase the risk of false confessions. The summary and integration of such works may provide practical tools for interrogation strategy.

Keywords: interrogation, forensic science, interviewing advice, criminal profiling

Introduction

The significance of the confession during the investigation is well demonstrated by the fact, that the confession is the only type of evidence that can give an answer for all the seven fundamental questions of the criminalistic procedure or the so called ‘seven golden questions’; What?, Where?, When?, How?, Why?, Who? and With who? (Fenyvesi, 2013). The testimony provided by both witnesses and suspects during the criminal prosecution has great impact on the overall process, therefore the planning of an effective interrogation strategy is an essential task for all investigations.

The importance of the interrogation has been highlighted during an American research, in the frame of which law enforcement professionals from New York City were questioned about the most important aspect of the investigation and the most common response was the testimony of the witnesses and suspects. Based on the results police officers spent 85% of their working hours interviewing witnesses. The same research design was carried out with the involvement of an English sample with similar results (Sanders, 2003). Therefore, the reliability, the accuracy and the adequacy of the confessions is a crucial during the investigation (Ibolya, 2005).

Forensic expertise provides numerous recommendations for supporting the preparation of interrogations and as well for conducting them (Fenyvesi et al., 2022; Nagygyőr 2022). However, it is essential to keep in mind, that the process, the dynamics, the purpose and the specifics of each of the different interrogations can vary significantly along the nature of the crime case. This variance is the most significant correlation to the type of crime, the people involved and the situational aspects. The individual characteristics and behaviour of the participants – both the interrogator and the subject of the interrogation – have a great impact on the effectiveness and outcome of the interrogation. The knowledge

of certain general characteristics shared by the perpetrators of similar offences can increase the chances of a successful interrogation a great deal.

The goal of the present paper is to present specific recommendations for the interrogation technique of sex offenders based on the review of international and domestic empirical findings.

The Interrogation

In forensic terms interrogation by definition is a method of criminalistics proceedings, that involves the questioning of the person and aimed at obtaining a confession. The method of interrogation falls under the procedural rules. The confession is a series of statements that when properly conducted, leads to accurate data concerning relevant facts to the crime case (Bócz, 2004).

Investigative authority respecting the limitations of the forensic rationality has a significant autonomy in establishing the sequence and chronology of the necessary investigative actions, such as interrogations. During the interrogation the role of the person is determined by their role played in the course of the criminal act according to the current version of events and by the substantive criminal classification of this role. According to Act XC of 2017 on the Criminal Procedure Article 168 the person who may have knowledge concerning the fact to be proven may be questioned as witness. Those who can be reasonably suspected of committing a crime according to the data known by the authorities shall be interrogated as a suspect (Bócz, 2015).

The domestic literature and recommendations concerning interrogations usually focus on the following subjects: (1) the types of interrogations that distinguish the specificities of questioning of perpetrator, witnesses and victims, (2) the special approaches of interrogation such as confrontation, on-site interrogation and identification line-ups, (3) the stages of interrogation – preparation for interrogations, initiation of the interrogation, substantive interrogation, recording the results of the interrogation, and interim and subsequent evaluation of the questioning, (4) the types of questions, (5) the use of criminal psychology during the interrogation, (6) the interrogation of special subjects (e.g. children, juveniles), (7) instrumental evaluation of the statements and (8) special interrogation methods and techniques (Fenyvesi et al., 2022; Bárány, 2012; Petőfi & Tóth, 2015).

The field of criminal psychology related to interrogation encompasses a wide range of topics. That includes the psychological principles of memory, the typology of witnesses and suspects, the specific characteristics of testimonies from

victims, particularly children, juveniles, and women, the main types of suspects, the psychological components of the process leading from denial to confession, and the reasons for false confessions (Fenyvesi et al., 2022).

The Confession

In the Anglo-Saxon legal system, guilt can primarily be established in three ways: through witness testimony, physical evidence, or confession (Klockars & Mastrofski, 1991). Research indicates that in 8–33% of cases, the guilt of suspects could only be proven if they make a confession (Baldwin & McConville, 1980; Irving & McKenzie, 1989; Leo, 1996; Vennard & Williams, 1980; Wald et al., 1967; Beauregard et al., 2010). In England, approximately 60% of suspects give a confession to the police during interrogation, while in the USA, this proportion is about 45% (Gudjonsson, 2006).

Based on the results of a study led by Beauregard et al. (2010), interrogations are more likely to result in a confession if (a) the suspects choose to talk rather than remain silent and consult a lawyer, (b) strong evidence is available, (c) certain interrogation strategies are employed, such as moral justification, psychological tactics, the use of compliments, and the identification of contradictions, and (d) investigators adopt certain attitudes, such as empathy, respect, and patience (Beauregard et al., 2010).

In certain categories of crimes – such as property crimes (Mitchell, 1983; Neubauer, 1974) and less serious offenses (Evans, 1993; Leo, 1996) – suspects are more likely to make a confession. The same can be told about female or younger suspects (Baldwin & McConville, 1980), or suspects from certain ethnical background (Pearse et al., 1998; St-Yves & Pellerin, 2002). Subjects of interrogation who used illicit drugs within 24 hours prior to their arrest (Pearse et al., 1998), who have no prior convictions (Moston et al., 1992), and who exhibit an introverted personality (e.g., avoidant, dependent, schizoid personality disorders) (Gudjonsson, 1999; Beauregard et al., 2010) are also more likely to confess.

A thorough review of the literature, however, reveals numerous contradictory findings. For instance, some studies have not found significant correlation between the offender's age and the rate of confessions (Moston et al., 1992; Neubauer, 1974). Furthermore, although most studies have found a negative correlation between prior convictions and the likelihood of confession (Neubauer, 1974), some studies have found no correlation or even a positive one (Baldwin & McConville, 1980; Beauregard et al., 2010).

As mentioned in the chapter on interrogations in Csaba Fenyvesi's textbook of forensic sciences (Fenyvesi et al., 2022), criminal psychology and criminalistics study the typologies of witnesses and suspects, the factors influencing testimonies, the process leading to a confession, and denial. This paper will now focus exclusively on the specifics of interrogation of sex offenders. But who are sexual offenders, and what should we know about them and the interrogation situations involving them?

Sex Offenders

The term of sex offender – by the criminal nature of the offences covered by it – is primarily a legal category (Grady, 2009). Thus, sexual offence is a behaviour defined in the criminal code of the given country and in the actual criminal acts included within significantly varying along the legal terminology in different parts of the world. Similarly to the entire population of offenders, sex offenders also constitute a highly heterogeneous group in both criminological and psychological terms. Furthermore, different types of sex offenders exhibit significantly different patterns based on factors such as the age of the victim, level of acquaintance, and level of violence used during the criminal act. According to Hungarian criminal records (in Prison Service National Prisoner Population Information System [FONIX]), as of October 2021, individuals classified as sex offenders – encompassing all related criminal activities – accounted for 5,8% of the total incarcerated population (including both convicted and detained individuals) (Somogyvári, 2022).

Chapter XIX Act C of 2012 determines crimes against sexual freedom and morality in the followings: sexual assault, sexual coercion, sexual abuse, incest, procuring, facilitating prostitution, living on the earnings of prostitution exploitation of child prostitution, child pornography, and indecent exposure.¹ The proportion of violent sexual crimes (sexual assault, sexual coercion) is very high within this group of offenses: 89.6% (Somogyvári, 2022). Less than half of the victims of such crimes are adult victims (47%), so, those who have experienced violent sexual crimes are more likely to be minors. Breaking down the age of the victims further, results suggest that nearly a third of the offenders (32.2%) had victims under the age of 14. However, it is important to emphasise

¹ Act C of 2012 on the Criminal Code.

The study was written based on the Hungarian Criminal Procedure Act, effective from July 1, 2013, with respect to interrogations.

that under Hungarian regulations [Act C of 2012 Article 197 (2)] crimes committed against victims under the age of 12 are considered violent even if they do not involve physical violence or genital sexual acts (Somogyvári, 2022).

The Types of Sex Offenders

Craig and colleagues (1994, 2006) examined the characteristics of sexual, violent, and general offenders. They found significant differences among the three types of perpetrators. Violent offenders were more likely to show signs of pathological personality traits than sexual offenders. Violent offenders were characterised by psychopathic tendencies and aggressive traits. This is consistent with the findings of Chantry and Craig (1994). In their study, sexual offenders were generally prone to high levels of deceitfulness and introversion, which aligns with the findings of Curnoe and Langevin (2002).

In the light of these empirical results, sexual offenders differ in certain characteristics from perpetrators of violent and non-violent crimes. These findings suggest that each type of perpetrators should be handled during the interrogations by different approaches.

Beauregard (2010) distinguishes child molesters from rapists and consider them as a different type of perpetrators. Due to this practice the potential overlap between the two groups is often ignored. Furthermore, studies frequently categorise and distinguish types of crime based on the presence of paraphilias, the online or physical nature of the sex crime, the age of the victim and the sex of the perpetrator, in addition to child molesters and rapists (Manlove & Terry-Humen, 2007). In her 2011 doctoral dissertation, Shannon Lynn Vettor treated child molesters, rapists, non-serial sexual killers, sadistic sexual offenders, and serial sexual murderers as different offender categories. Given the fact that these types of offenders cannot be considered homogeneous – for example, rapists often differ by the motivation, and typologies do not exclude each other clearly, as sexual offenders often show mixed behaviour and *modus operandi*, this approach has important disadvantages. These studies primarily focus on sexual acts involving children.

Heil, Ahlmeyer and Simons (2003) found that 52% of convicted adult sexual offenders admitted molesting children, and 78% of convicted child molesters confessed the sexual harassment of adults besides juveniles (Heil et al., 2003). Offenders who molested underaged family members also had minor victims who were not related to them (Heil et al., 2003). Therefore, typologies are best understood as a continuum rather than separate, distinct, and completely isolated categories (Robertiello & Terry, 2007).

When examining the differences between violent perpetrators, research typically focus on (1) the sexual or non-sexual nature of the motivation; (2) the lack or presence of sadistic tendencies; (3) in case of non-sexual violent crimes the emotional aspect of motivation such as anger, hatred, or a desire for control and power; and (4) the levels of impulsiveness during the crime (Robertiello & Terry, 2007).

In recent decades, numerous typologies of violent offenders have been created (e.g., Groth & Birnbaum, 1979; Knight & Prentky, 1990; Polaschek et al., 2001), and almost each of them found three basic types: the sadistic, the angry, and the opportunistic offender groups (Proulx & Beauregard, 2009; Beauregard, 2010).

The sadistic sexual aggressor carefully plans the crime. They pick the location and the victim by their deviant sexual fantasy and they make great efforts to make sure that the crime fulfils it the most accurate it is possible. They usually abduct and detain the victim; often tie them up and keep them captive. They take absolute control over the victim and force them to participate in various sexual acts. In some cases, the perpetrator may torture the victim and mutilate their body parts, especially the genitalia. Offenders of this category often verbally and physically humiliate the victim. The degree of injury is typically severe and can result in death.

Second type of sexual aggressors report intense anger and a desire for revenge against women behind their crimes (Beauregard & Proulx, 2009; Groth & Birnbaum, 1979; Knight & Prentky, 1990; Proulx et al., 1999). These crimes are not premeditated, and not targeted against specific victims. They typically attack their victims spontaneously and unexpectedly, and use extreme violence that generally results in severe physical injury to the victims.

Some typologies describe the opportunistic type of sex offenders (Knight & Prentky, 1990; Proulx et al., 1999). This kind of offenders are usually under the influence of alcohol or other substance during the criminal act. Opportunistic aggressors are described as psychopaths who cares only with their own immediate needs, they show the lack of empathy and respect for the needs of others. They do not plan their crime and do not choose a victim based on specific criteria. In fact, they attack impulsively and the crime is triggered by situational factors.

Several researchers attempted to identify the differences between rapists and sexual murderers. From the developmental perspective, it has been found that sexual murderers were more frequently socially isolated during both childhood and adolescence compared to rapists, that indicated a general lack of friends, feelings of isolation or exclusion from their peer group, and a lack of sexual relationships (Oliver et al., 2007; Proulx, 2009; Beauregard et al., 2007). Sexual murderers more often came from violent families and experienced physical

aggression from the part of the father (Langevin et al., 2004). They were often victims of both sexual and physical abuse as children (Milsom et al., 2003).

As for the psychological characteristics of sexual murderers they more often suffer from antisocial personality disorder than rapists (Langevin, 2003; Proulx et al., 2007), although the presence of the disorder was relatively rare in both groups compared to other types of criminals (Proulx et al., 2007). It was also found that they more frequently exhibited paraphilias, such as sadism and transvestism. While rapists and sexual murderers differ by their histories of childhood abuse, sexual murderers began their criminal careers earlier than rapists (in their early to mid-teens), and committed their first sexual murder around the age of 20 (Langevin, 2003).

The typologies of sexual offenders, such as the classification of rapists and child molesters developed by Groth et al. (1977) and Lanning (1995) have been expanded and adapted for investigative purposes by FBI researchers (Rober-tiello & Terry, 2007). These typologies of sexual offenders provide a profile of the potential perpetrator hence a psychological bases for interrogation and questioning strategies designed for these cases. They enable the investigators to anticipate the offenders' emotional strengths and weaknesses and give a deeper insight into their behaviour (Napier, 2010; Beauregard et al., 2017). In their 2012 study, Beauregard and Mieczkowski analysed 624 sexual offenders and concluded that different characteristics were associated with the likelihood of confessing during the interrogation that varied between the types of sex offenders (Beauregard & Mieczkowski, 2012).

The Interrogation of Sex Offenders

The Significance of Interrogation Tactics

The findings of Kebbel and his fellow researchers suggest, that sex offenders are less likely to confess their crimes during interrogations compared to non-sexual offenders (Kebbell et al., 2006). Researchers estimate that 42–76% of offenders confess to committing the crime when interrogated (Moston et al., 1992; Baldwin, 1993; Bull, 2006). Among all types of crimes sex offenses one of those that mainly occur in interpersonal settings, that comes with certain disadvantages; there are few, if any, witnesses, and thus, the authorities must often rely on the victim's word against the offender's of course, only in cases where material evidence is not available (Beauregard & Mieczkowski, 2011). A further, rather problematic consequence of the personal nature of sex crimes that the objective severity of

sexual crimes may hinder confessions, as sexual offenses are often judged more harshly than other crimes (St-Yves, 2013). The fear of social stigma and shame typically associated with such offences (St-Yves & Deslauriers-Varin, 2009). Finally, sexual offenders are more likely to experience humiliation during interrogations, that can also lead to reluctance in confessing their crimes (Holmberg & Christianson, 2002; Beauregard & Mieczkowski, 2011).

Empirical results suggest that sex offenders' frequent reluctance against confessing to their crime can be turned into cooperation using certain types of interrogation strategies (Sigurdsson & Gudjonsson, 1994; Beauregard et al., 2017). Therefore, in the case of sex crimes identifying those crime-specific factors that can facilitate the offenders' willingness to confess to the police can be crucial (Beauregard et al., 2017).

Confession Specifics

In a study examining 496 Canadian sex offenders, St-Yves and Pellerin (2002) concluded that suspects were more likely to confess to the crime if they were white, single, had a higher IQ, felt guilt, showed dependent personality traits, or had committed non-violent sexual offenses. Gudjonsson and Sigurdsson (2000) investigated the relationship between factors related to the victim and the likelihood of confession. During the analysis they compared the personality, the role of alcohol, and confession rates between groups of offenders who committed violence against adults and those against children. A particularly important finding was that sexual aggressors of child victims were more likely to confess during trial compared to those who attacked adults or committed violent crimes (Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson, 2000; St-Yves & Pellerin, 2002).

According to the findings of Beauregard and colleagues (2010), sex offenders who were younger, educated, showed introversion, who targeted previously unknown male victims, and who did not come from criminogenic environments were more likely to confess to their crimes during police interrogation. Furthermore, sex offenders who committed their crimes both day and at night were more likely to make a confession.

Studies have reported controversial results regarding the relationship between age and the likelihood of making a confession. However, the majority of data indicates that as offenders age, they become more resistant to interrogation. Furthermore, introverted sexual offenders were more likely to confess to their crimes during police interrogation.

Research led by Gudjonsson (2003) suggested that previously convicted offenders are more likely to show legal awareness during the interrogation, thus

more likely to consult with lawyers who may advise to remain silent. Additionally, offenders with criminal history are more likely to understand the consequences of self-incriminating statements and strive to avoid them. Finally, these offenders are more familiar with the police procedure and interrogation techniques and this experience may make them more competent coping with police strategies employed during the detention (Gudjonsson, 2003). Pearse and colleagues (1998) found that it is not the previous convictions that decreased the chances of confession, but rather it is the previous experience of imprisonment. Empirical results indicate that the nature of the previous convictions may have great importance. Beauregard and colleagues (2010) concluded that in those cases when the suspect had legal representation, the criminal record had a significant impact on confession. Among suspects with no prior convictions but with legal representation, around 40% made a confession; 35% of suspects denied the charges, and the remaining 25% neither confessed nor denied. In case of previous criminal record data showed different results. Only 25% of the suspects with criminal history admitted to the charges, 48% denied them, and 27% neither admitted nor denied them (Moston et al., 1992). These results suggest that considering various factors may be important (Pearse et al., 1998), but it is essential to take into account the interactions between them (Moston et al., 1992). Unfortunately, the methodology applied by Moston and his fellow researchers was not suitable to the simultaneous examination of multiple interactions (Beauregard et al., 2010).

Gudjonsson and Petursson (1991) found that neurotic individuals may be less able to resist interrogative pressure than individuals with more stable personalities or those with more extroverted temperament. Therefore, sexually offending individuals with extroverted personality traits (i.e., people with antisocial, narcissistic, impulsive, borderline personality disorder) were less likely to confess to their crimes than individuals described as anxious, emotional, and low self-esteem neurotics.

Some studies have also examined the specifics of victimology in relation to the confession. Sex offenders who previously knew their victim were less likely to confess to their crimes. It may be because the pre-existing relationship with the perpetrator may raise questions about the possibility of consent during the sexual activity (Myers & Hagan, 1979). Sex offenders can use this defence strategy to challenge the victim's testimony, hoping to influence the police during the interrogation. Similarly to this, the criminogenic background of the victim can be used to sow doubt in the investigators' minds. Thus, the likelihood of confession is significantly impacted by the victim's relationship to the perpetrator as much as their deviant background (Beauregard et al., 2010).

Summary

Summarising the aforementioned empirical findings, it can be established that several factors can impact the offenders’ willingness of making a confession. In the following spreadsheet the most significant of those can be seen:

Table 1
Summary of the factors influencing confessions based on the international literature

Factors influencing confessions of guilt
1. factors related to the victim: a.) the age of the victim: adult or minor, b.) the relationship between the offender and victim, c.) the criminogenic background of the victim,
2. factor related to the offender: a.) criminal history, b.) extrovert or introvert temperament, c.) the criminogenic background of the offender, d.) the level of violence during the crime, e.) employment, f.) IQ, g.) feeling of guilt, h.) substance use problems,
3. factors related to the procedure a.) the presence of a lawyer, b.) the strength of the evidence, c.) the attitude of the interrogator, d.) the use of interrogation techniques and strategies..

Note. The author’s own compilation.

The majority of studies focusing on confessions made by sex offenders suggest specific interrogation strategies for individuals committing this type of crime (Bowling & Resch, 2005; Ellis, 1954; Gudjonsson, 2006; Hershkowitz et al., 2004; Kebbell et al., 2006; Merrill, 1995; Connor & Carson, 2005; Oxburgh et al., 2006; Beauregard et al., 2010).

However, due to the uniqueness of the subjects of interrogations, it is impossible to create one interrogation tactic fits them all and the same is true to the evaluation of confessions. Only the basic psychological knowledge can be applied in all interrogation situations such as the scientific principles of memory and other cognitive or emotional functions. Specific characteristics such as personal ideas, emotions, morality or taste should be treated in unique manner in each individual cases (Fenyvesi, 2022). Therefore, it is essential to thoroughly examine the individual and the specific situation in all criminal cases according to the actual circumstances. That means that the findings and results presented in this study should be adjusted to the individual case when applied in practice so they can support the process of interrogation appropriately.

In addition to further research, the assistance of specialised professionals can also be beneficial during the investigation. That may include forensic psychologists as experts, as well as trained criminal profilers or behavioural analysts.

Investigative Support Methods and Criminal Profile

According to Beauregard and colleagues (2010), one of the most important factors during the interrogation is the offender's personality profile. For example, in case of introverted sexual offenders the loss of self-esteem, shame, and humiliation are the main obstacles that hinder the interrogator to get to them, whereas for extroverted offenders their social image and reputation are the key deterrents. Interrogators need to understand the significance of personality characteristics to be able to approach offenders successfully and obtain a confession (St-Yves, 2013).

Eric Beauregard, Irina Busina and Jay Healey (2017) examined victim and offender profiles in the context of victim-offender dynamics and its impact on the offenders' willingness to confess. The study focused on profiles based on empirical findings related to specific case characteristics and their applications in sex crime investigative strategies. In a sample of 624 incarcerated sexual offenders, the results indicated that certain offender-victim profiles are associated with a higher likelihood of confession.

According to Napier (2010), the basis of sex crime investigations should be the thorough analysis of the crime scene data and behaviour-oriented interviews, that provides a detailed description of the perpetrators' actions given by the victim (e.g., the way of approach, control over the victim, use of physical force, resistance shown by the victim and the perpetrator's reaction to it, the types and order of sexual acts).

Victimology is another important aspect of sex crime investigations (Napier, 2010). Information about alcohol or drug use by the victim, awareness of safety, sexual habits, and assertiveness can support the offender profile, as it gives a deeper insight into the perpetrators criteria in victim selection and motivation (Napier, 2010; Beauregard et al., 2017).

Additionally, profile based on crime scene behaviour and offender characteristics can be a guideline in the selection of interrogator, the place of the interrogation, its environment and settings and an effective psychological approach (Beauregard et al., 2017).

The Need for Research

The results of a research led by Horvath és Meesig in 1996 indicate that objective physical evidence does not necessarily provide reliable proof during sex crime investigations (Horvath & Meesig, 1996). Therefore, in the case of the lack of objective evidence or corroborative testimony, the outcome of sex crime investigations relies on victim statement. In such cases, the perpetrators confession is the optimal and sometimes the only evidence. However, most research on confessions focuses only on factors such as personal vulnerability or the contextual aspects of interrogation (e.g., interrogation style, availability of evidence, access to legal counsel, etc.). Since the empirical knowledge of other key factors of confession is limited, the need for further research arises (Beauregard et al., 2017).

Law enforcement authorities should consider the context of the interrogation, the circumstances of the crime, the type of perpetrator, and the individual characteristics of the offender when preparing for the interrogation. Doing so they can rely on offender typologies, that can provide the bases of interrogation strategies. For instance, Manlove & Terry-Humen (2007) classify the types of paraphilias beyond child molesters and rapists. Furthermore, they distinguish online sexual acts from those committed in physical spaces and categorise crimes by the gender and the age of the perpetrator. Basic interrogation recommendations applying perpetrator typologies can increase the chances of confessions. As seen in the results of Napier (2010) and Beauregard, Busina and Healey (2017), classification schemes of sexual offenders allow investigators to anticipate the emotional strengths and weaknesses of the perpetrators, as well as to understand their behaviour. These findings may have important implications for offender profiling and the potential for linking suspect profiles with specific interrogation strategies to improve the likelihood of obtaining confessions.

According to Beauregard, Busina and Healey (2017), future research should focus on the followings: (1) suspect profiles based on relevant characteristics of sex offenders that are empirically linked to successful interrogations; (2) victim profiles based on factors relevant to the offenders' selection of victim and empirically linked to confession or denial during the interrogation; (3) victim-offender profile combinations and their relation to confessions; (4) and possible interrogation strategies for different victim-offender profile combinations for sex crime investigations.

Practical Application of Results

There are factors that have been proven to influence the outcome of an interrogation (see Table 1). Until today no study has integrated all the relevant factors of general interrogation situations. However, the findings of the studies presented in the present paper can provide guidance for the interrogation of sex offenders and suggest the need for further research.

Given the vast number of potential factors shaping the interrogation, it is impossible to give an overall summary of them based only on empirical data. However, factors based on scientific findings can greatly increase the predictability of interrogations (e.g., the type of crimes, the profile of the suspect, the likelihood of true or false confession). Additionally, they can offer applicable interrogation methods, tactics, and approaches to suspects (e.g., empathetic versus confrontational attitude). Moreover, these findings can provide valuable information for profiler, investigative and interrogation strategy professional. They improve their effectiveness via providing a guidance for evaluating the unique situations and circumstances of each case.

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