iJRASET
International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 11 **Issue:** IX **Month of publication:** September 2023

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2023.55751

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International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 11 Issue IX Sep 2023- Available at www.ijraset.com

Consequences of Psychological Conflict on Handwritings

Ravindra Sharma[1], Deepak[2], Rajat Choudhary[3]
[1]*Deputy Director, Document, Central Forensic Science Laboratory, Bhopal*
[2]*Forensic Professional, Central Forensic Science Laboratory, Bhopal*
[3]*Scientist B, Document, Central Forensic Science Laboratory, Bhopal*

Abstract: ***Nowadays, stress management has become an important part of our daily life. The inability of an individual to manage stress results in psychological conflict, which ultimately lead to anxious behaviour. This anxious behaviour may cause domestic violence or sometimes results in suicidal attempts. The dying declaration in the form of suicide notes is the crucial evidence in such cases. The admissibility of this crucial evidence in the court of law depends upon the positive identification of the author of suicide notes. It is well established fact that the handwriting of an individual depends upon the neuromuscular coordination, hence handwriting is unique to every individual. Any conflict in brain and condition of muscles of arms and hand, affect the handwriting of an individual. The degree of such effect depends upon the grade of psychological conflict in addition to the condition of muscles of arms and hand. The study presents a exceptional case of suicide in which the Forensic Document Experts (FDEs) infer the effect of psychological conflict on the handwriting executed in the suicide note.***
Keywords: suicide, conflict, authorship, evidence, FDEs

I. INTRODUCTION

Suicide refers to intentionally ending one's own life. The reasons that someone attempt suicide are varied and complex but these often involve severe emotional and physical pain that a person finds unbearable. Generally, someone who is suicidal feels hopeless and pessimistic about their future.

Inability of an individual to manage real life stressors can lead to suicidal thoughts which increase the risk of suicide. Some of the situations which lead someone to commit suicide include: childhood trauma, domestic violence, legal challenges, financial troubles, job loss, break-up or losing a relationship, death of loved one etc.

The Dying Declaration in the form of suicide note is vital evidence in suicide cases. Although it is believed that a dying person will not tell lies, the admissibility of this crucial evidence in the court of law depends upon the positive identification of the author of suicide notes.

The marks or symbols written with writing instrument on some surface using muscles of hand and arms which ultimately convey message to others is known as handwriting. The writing is a conscious act during early stages of learning, but once handwriting develops, it becomes an unconscious act. During early stages of learning, teacher teaches us to write an alphabet written on blackboard, the students make the mental picture of that alphabet as per his/her observation skills, this mental image is known as master pattern.

The ability of the student to reproduce that master pattern on the writing surface depends upon the neuromuscular coordination of the student. This neuromuscular coordination varies from student to student and results in the arrival of some peculiar formations. With the passage of time, the handwriting develops and the execution of these peculiar formation changes from conscious act to unconscious act and these peculiar formations become individual to the writer. Some internal or external factors, which have direct or indirect influence on this neuromuscular coordination may also affect the handwriting characteristics of an individual. The present study depicts changes in the handwriting of an individual executed in the suicide note due to psychological conflict.

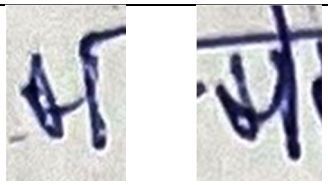
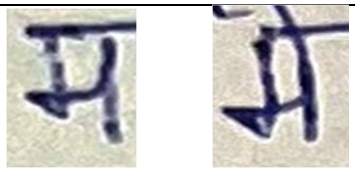
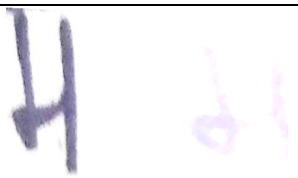
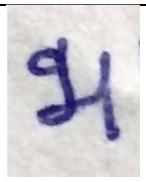
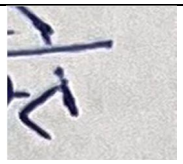
II. BRIEF OF THE CASE

A person hanged himself with a tree in open plot. The information in this regard was given to the local police station. During search, a suicide note was recovered from the scene of occurrence. The written contents in the suicide note depicts that deceased was in the stage of mental trauma caused by his wife and in laws. The suicide note along with admitted handwritings of the deceased was referred to the laboratory for the identification of author.

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III. LABORATORY EXAMINATION

Scientific examination of admitted writings of the deceased reveals consistency of features in both general and individual writing characteristics which are accompaniment of freely and fluently executed genuine writings. The writings executed on suicide note show certain similarities along with variations when compared with supplied admitted writings. The significant similarities in both general and individual writing habits were so forcefully present in the writings executed on the suicide note which strongly indicates the common authorship, but the variations in the execution of few characters which were not found in any of the admitted writings compel FDEs for inconclusive opinions. The detailed examination of such variations and their scientific evaluation revealed that they are accidental in nature and only observed in the execution of eyelets, curvature and relative location of the body parts. In addition to this, cuttings/overwriting and spelling mistakes were also observed in the writings executed in the suicide note. These variations are the outcome of mental/psychological conflict at the time of execution of writings in the suicide note (Table 1)

Suicide Note		Deceased Writings
Accidental (a)	Similarities (b)	Admitted (c)
		
Shape of body eyelet	Shape of body eyelet	Shape of body eyelet
		
Finish of eyelet	Finish of eyelet	Finish of eyelet
		
Commencement of eyelet	Commencement of eyelet	Commencement of eyelet
		
Angular body part	Curved body part	Curved body part
		
Relative location of body	Relative location of body	Relative location of body

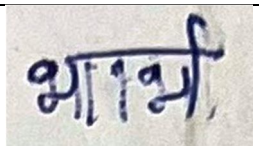
		
Cuttings & overwriting	Impulse in vowel sign, commencement and finish of letter 'Ha'	Impulse in vowel sign, commencement and finish of letter 'Ha'
		
Spelling mistakes	Movements and shape of body	Movements and shape of body

Table 1: Depicts accidental handwriting characteristics (a), significant similarities in handwriting characteristics (b) in comparison to admitted handwriting characteristics (c).

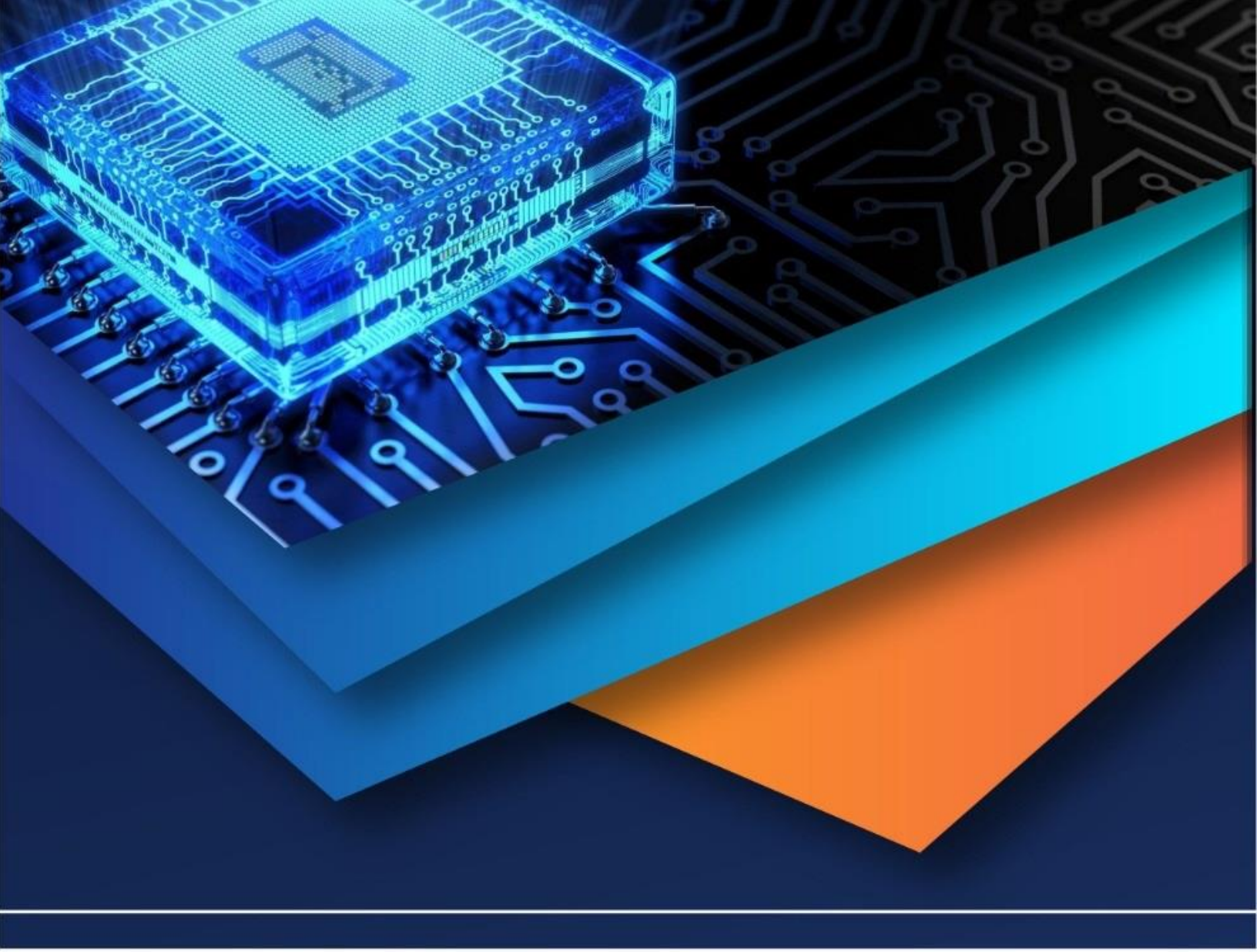
IV. CONCLUSION

The knowledge, observation skills and experience of forensic document examiners play a vital role in framing conclusive opinions. The scientific observation made during comparisons and their evaluation must be based upon scientific proof. The observations must be demonstrable and acceptable by the court of law. The FDEs should evaluate the observations in the light of well established principles of handwriting identification and detection of forgery. In addition to this, FDEs must also consider the intrinsic and extrinsic factors at the time of execution of writings which may affect the handwriting characteristics. The changes due to such factors are always superficial in nature and not the permanent habits of the writer.

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