

## The Use of Visual Drawing and Writing Techniques to Elicit Adult Perceptions of Sex Offenders

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**Abstract :** Public perceptions can play a crucial role in influencing criminal justice policy and legislation, particularly concerning sex offenders. Studies have found a proximate relationship between public perception and policy to manage the risks posed by sex offenders. A significant body of research on public perceptions about sex offenders primarily uses survey methods and standardised instruments such as the Community Attitude Towards Sex Offenders (CATSO) and Perceptions of Sex Offenders (PSO) scales and finds a mostly negative and punitive attitude informed by common misconceptions. A transformative methodology from the emerging sub-field of visual criminology is where the construction of offences and offenders are understood via novel ways of collecting and analysing data. This research paper examines the public perceptions of sex offenders through the utilization of a content analysis of drawings. The study aimed to disentangle the emotions, stereotypes, and myths embedded in public perceptions by analysing the graphic representations and specific characteristics depicted by participants. Preliminary findings highlight significant discrepancies between public perceptions and empirical profiles of sex offenders, shedding light on the misunderstandings surrounding this heterogeneous group. By employing visual data, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between societal perceptions and the realities of sex offenders.

**Keywords :** emotions, figural drawings, public perception, sex offenders

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