

Intelligence and Information Management: Methods in Considering Information Types for Intelligence Purposes

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	<i>ii</i>
ABSTRACT	<i>iii</i>
LIST OF CHARTS	<i>iv</i>
LIST OF FIGURES	<i>vi</i>
LIST OF DIAGRAMS	<i>vii</i>
LIST OF TABLES	<i>viii</i>
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Introduction	<i>1</i>
1.2 Background of the study	<i>4</i>
1.3 Statement of problem	<i>6</i>
1.3.1 The sample	<i>8</i>
1.3.1.1 Ministry of Internal Security, Malaysia	<i>8</i>
1.4 Objective of the study	<i>9</i>
1.5 Research question	<i>9</i>
1.6 Significance of study	<i>9</i>
1.7 Limitations of study	<i>10</i>
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Literature review	<i>12</i>
2.2 Conclusion	<i>17</i>
2.3 Operational definition	<i>18</i>
2.4 Conceptual framework	<i>20</i>
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	
3.1 Design of study	<i>21</i>
3.2 Population and sampling	<i>21</i>
3.2.1 The subjects	<i>21</i>
3.2.1.1 Respondents	<i>21</i>

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Abstract

Of the diverse problems that impede accurate intelligence analysis, those inherent in human mental processes are surely among the most important and most difficult to deal with. Intelligence analysis is fundamentally a mental process, but understanding this process is hindered by the lack of conscious awareness of the workings of our own minds. A basic finding in cognitive psychology is that people have no conscious experience of most of what happens in the human mind. Many functions associated with perception, memory and information processing are conducted prior to and independently of any conscious direction. What appears spontaneously in consciousness is the result of thinking, not the process of thinking. Weaknesses and biases inherent in human thinking processes can be demonstrated through carefully designed experiments. They can be alleviated by conscious application of tools and techniques that should be in the analytical tradecraft toolkit of all intelligence analysts.