



The Role of Criminal Psychology in Albania's Criminal Justice System

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Abstract: Forensic psychology is an emerging field that has gained increasing attention in the Albanian justice system. It encompasses the application of psychological knowledge and principles to aid judges, attorneys, and law enforcement officials in understanding complex legal issues, investigating crimes, and making informed decisions. The purpose of this paper is to explore the role and significance of forensic psychology in the Albanian justice system.

Forensic psychologists in Albania play a crucial role in criminal proceedings by providing expert psychological assessments of defendants, witnesses, and victims. They evaluate the mental capacity and state of mind of defendants at the time of the crime, which helps judges and juries to make informed decisions. Forensic psychologists also assist with profiling, risk assessments, and other investigative techniques to aid in criminal investigations.

One of the essential benefits of using forensic psychology in the Albanian justice system is to reduce prejudice and bias. Forensic psychologists provide objective, scientific evidence to the court, which improves the fairness and accuracy of criminal trials.

The challenge facing forensic psychology in Albania is the lack of specialized training and education programs in forensic psychology. There are few professionals in the field, and therefore, forensic psychology services are not widely available. Investing in more education and training programs would increase the number of qualified experts in the field, thus leading to more extensive and effective utilization of forensic psychology in criminal proceedings.

In conclusion, forensic psychology is a vital aspect of the Albanian justice system. Its use can help reduce bias and prejudice in criminal trials while improving the accuracy of decisions. However, the field faces challenges in terms of the need for specialized training and education programs for professionals. By finding the right balance between complexity and variation, we can ensure that our content is engaging and informative.



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1. INTRODUCTION

Criminal psychology is an essential element in the criminal justice system of Albania. It examines the cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes (Hare et al., 2002) of individuals who participate in unlawful conduct, utilizing insights from disciplines such as psychology, criminology, sociology, and other cognate areas of study. Data analysis can aid in the formulation of evidence-based policies and interventions aimed at preventing criminal activities and mitigating recidivism rates (National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, 2019). The field of criminal psychology assumes a crucial function in tackling these challenges by offering a systematic methodology for comprehending criminal conduct and devising efficacious measures for prevention and intervention (McNeil et al., 2014).

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Criminal psychologists in Albania are employed across various professional domains, such as law enforcement agencies, courts, and correctional facilities. The professionals in question engage in the administration of psychological evaluations, furnish specialized testimony in criminal court proceedings, and construct and execute programs aimed at rehabilitating individuals who have committed offenses (American Psychological Association, 2019).

In Albania's criminal justice system, criminal psychology plays a crucial role in comprehending, averting, and managing criminal conduct. The utilization of this tool holds significant potential for enhancing the capacity of law enforcement agencies and criminal justice professionals to safeguard the populace of Albania and uphold the principles of justice (Poli & Campobasso, 2016). Criminal profiling refers to the systematic approach of developing a psychological profile of a perpetrator by analyzing crime scene evidence, witness testimonies, and other relevant information (Turvey, 2017). The utilization of offender profiling can prove to be a beneficial technique in the resolution of criminal cases and the determination of culprits, as it offers valuable insights into the perpetrator's behavioral patterns, personality traits, and underlying motivations.

The utilization of criminal profiling within Albania's criminal justice system is presently in its nascent phase; however, it is progressively being acknowledged as a potent mechanism for resolving criminal cases. The Albanian National Police (ANP) has instituted a unit dedicated to criminal profiling, tasked with conducting investigations, scrutinizing crime scene evidence, and constructing profiles of perpetrators (Albanian State Police, n.d.). The department collaborates closely with various law enforcement entities and employs a variety of methodologies, such as behavioral analysis and crime scene reconstruction, to construct precise offender profiles.

An instance of effective criminal profiling in Albania pertains to the examination of a sequence of homicides perpetrated by a serial offender who was identified as the "Monster of Lake Ohrid". The identification of the offender was facilitated by the criminal profiling unit, which analyzed crime scene evidence and witness statements to construct a comprehensive profile of the offender's personality, motives, and behaviors. The utilization of the profile aided the ANP in narrowing down their inquiry to particular individuals of interest, culminating in the apprehension and sentencing of the perpetrator.

A further instance pertained to the utilization of criminal profiling as a means of resolving a bank robbery incident that transpired in Tirana. The offender's profile was developed by the criminal profiling unit through the analysis of witness statements and surveillance footage, ultimately aiding the ANP in the identification and subsequent apprehension of the suspect.

In the context of Albania's criminal justice system, criminal profiling is deemed to be a valuable instrument for crime resolution and the identification of suspects. Given the ongoing evolution and development of the field, it is probable that criminal profiling will assume an increasingly crucial role in law enforcement investigations and prosecutions (Douglas et al., 2016).

2. ETHICS IN CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY AND CRIMINAL PROFILING ALBANIA

The most important details in the realm of criminal psychology in Albania are ethics and professionalism. To ensure responsible and ethical conduct, criminal psychologists are required to comply with a set of professional and ethical standards established by the American Psychological Association (2002). The Albanian National Police² has implemented measures to ensure that

² From now on, ANP.

forensic psychologists operating within the organization comply with ethical and professional norms. The ANP has formulated a regulation ([Republic of Albania, Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2015](#)), which also refers to criminal psychologists, that draws upon the APA's code of ethics and delineates standards for ethical behavior, confidentiality, and informed consent.

The criminal justice system in Albania is hindered by insufficient resources, such as inadequate funding and training opportunities. However, there are prospects for enhancing ethical and professional norms, such as the establishment of instructional curricula for forensic psychologists that emphasize ethical and professional comportment. This could involve collaboration with international organizations that have expertise in the field of criminal psychology, allowing Albanian criminal psychologists to benefit from cutting-edge research and optimal methodologies.

An additional prospect involves the creation of a regulatory entity or organization that could supervise the activities of criminal psychologists in Albania, guaranteeing their compliance with ethical and professional norms.

In summary, despite the obstacles that impede the enhancement of ethical and professional norms within Albania's criminal justice system, there are prospects for advancement. Albania can enhance the ethical and professional standards of criminal psychologists operating within the system by allocating resources, providing training, and promoting collaboration. This measure can lead to an improvement in the quality of justice dispensed to victims and society at large.

The practice of criminal profiling also referred to as offender profiling, involves the examination of evidence found at a crime scene and other pertinent data in order to construct a comprehensive profile of the individual responsible for the commission of the crime. The utilization of this methodology can prove to be a beneficial instrument in the resolution of criminal cases, particularly those that are intricate and arduous to scrutinize. The utilization of criminal profiling can assist investigators in the process of narrowing down potential suspects, detecting patterns in criminal behavior, and gaining insights into the motivations and characteristics of the offender ([Jackson & Bekerian, 1997](#)).

Criminal profiling is a recently introduced practice in Albania that has demonstrated its efficacy in crime resolution. An example of this is the "Highway Killer," a serial murderer who preyed on young women along the highway. Albanian law enforcement collaborated with experts in criminal profiling to construct a comprehensive profile of the perpetrator, which led to the identification of the offender. An example of this is the occurrence of a bank heist in Tirana. Through a meticulous examination of the evidence found at the scene of the crime, encompassing the modus operandi and the specific implements employed, experts in criminal profiling were able to furnish law enforcement officials with a comprehensive characterization of the individuals responsible. This data assisted law enforcement in recognizing and detaining the suspects.

To sum up, the utilization of criminal profiling is an advantageous technique for resolving intricate criminal cases within the criminal justice system of Albania. Criminal profilers are capable of furnishing law enforcement agencies with significant insights regarding the identity, behavior, and motivations of perpetrators by scrutinizing crime scene evidence and other pertinent information. Although criminal profiling is a recent development in Albania, it has already yielded positive outcomes in the resolution of criminal cases.

3. THE ROLE OF CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN ASSESSING MENTAL HEALTH AND CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mental health is an important part of the criminal justice system in Albania, where legal statutes and directives oversee the management of mentally ill perpetrators and their culpability for criminal acts. An individual who perpetrates an offense while experiencing a state of mental illness or defect is exempt from criminal liability, but the determination of mental illness or defect requires the assessment of qualified professionals.

Criminal psychologists in Albania play a crucial role in assessing mental health and criminal responsibility. They are responsible for evaluating the mental state of offenders and determining whether they are competent to stand trial and understand the nature of their actions. Criminal psychologists employ diverse techniques to assess the psychological condition of perpetrators, including:

- Clinical interviews are used by criminal psychologists in Albania to evaluate the psychological condition of a perpetrator. The interview is conducted in a secluded environment and can range from a few minutes to several hours. It is designed to elicit details about the offender's personal history, present psychological state, and possible mental disorders. In the course of the clinical interview, the psychologist may inquire about the offender's background, including their familial, educational, and occupational histories. The inquirer may also inquire about the present psychological condition of the perpetrator, encompassing their affective state, emotional disposition, and conduct. Furthermore, the psychologist may elicit information regarding any indications of psychiatric disorders, such as perceptual distortions or false beliefs. Clinical interviews are tailored to the unique requirements of the offender, allowing the psychologist to adapt the interview format or questions based on their cultural background, age, or language proficiency. The objective is to gather data about the perpetrator's psychological condition.
- Psychological assessments are utilized to assess the mental condition, personality characteristics, and cognitive capacities of offenders.
 - The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) is a psychometric assessment tool used to evaluate mental health disorders and personality characteristics (Pali & Sula, 2015). It is composed of 567 true/false questions that assess a range of psychological constructs, including depression, anxiety, hostility, and self-esteem (PsychTest, n.d.). The collected responses are then analyzed to determine the existence of any mental health disorders or personality characteristics. The MMPI is a valuable tool for detecting individuals who exhibit indications of prior mental health conditions, personality maladjustments, or psychopathic tendencies.
 - The Rorschach Inkblot Test (Rorschach.org, 2023) is a frequently employed assessment tool that is utilized to evaluate an individual's cognitive processes, affective functioning, and dispositional traits. In the course of this assessment, the perpetrator is provided with a set of ten inkblot cards and instructed to articulate their perceptions of each card. Subsequently, the collected responses are subjected to analysis to identify discernible trends in cognitive processes and affective operations.
 - Additional psychological assessments utilized by forensic psychologists in Albania comprise the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) (Genius Tests, n.d.), which evaluates the cognitive aptitudes of a perpetrator. The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) assesses an individual's cognitive aptitudes across multiple domains, such as verbal comprehension, perceptual reasoning, working memory, and

- processing speed. The utilization of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) can facilitate forensic psychologists in comprehending an offender's cognitive functioning and capacity to comprehend the essence of their conduct.
- The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) (Psychestudy, n.d.) is utilized by forensic psychologists in Albania as a means of evaluating the personality and cognitive patterns of individuals who have committed offenses. The assessment involves the presentation of a sequence of equivocal visual stimuli to the participant, who is then instructed to generate a narrative for each image. The narratives crafted by individuals have the potential to reveal their subconscious drives, convictions, and inner struggles. The utilization of the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) can provide valuable insights for forensic psychologists to comprehend the mental condition and personality characteristics of a perpetrator. This information can be utilized to enhance the effectiveness of treatment and rehabilitation interventions.
 - Observation is an essential technique employed by forensic psychologists in Albania to collect data pertaining to an offender's conduct, affective states, and social interactions. A forensic psychologist may conduct an observation of an offender during a therapy session to evaluate their aptitude for communication, emotional regulation, and the capacity to establish positive relationships. Throughout the session, the psychologist may engage in the observation of the offender's behavior towards the therapist, encompassing their degree of involvement, eye contact³, and body language (Psychology Today, 2021). Practitioners can observe and evaluate the reactions of perpetrators towards various therapeutic interventions, including relaxation techniques⁴ and cognitive behavioral therapy⁵. Observation can be used to evaluate an offender's conduct during interactions with correctional officers or fellow inmates. It can yield significant knowledge regarding their psychological condition, conduct, and likelihood of recidivism. Forensic psychologists can make informed decisions regarding treatment and rehabilitation efforts by observing an offender's behavior and interactions. Observations can help develop a more comprehensive understanding of offender behavior, facilitating the recommendation of appropriate interventions to mitigate the likelihood of recidivism.

Instances of mentally ill offenders have been observed within Albania's criminal justice system. An illustrative instance pertains to an individual who, while grappling with acute mental illness, committed murder. According to the assessment conducted by the criminal psychologist, the offender was deemed not criminally responsible on account of his mental illness. Consequently, the perpetrator was committed to a psychiatric facility for therapeutic intervention instead of receiving a custodial sentence. A further instance pertained to an individual with a

³ Offenders who are leaning forward, making eye contact, and nodding their head may indicate engagement and openness to discussion.

⁴ Relaxation exercises are techniques used to reduce stress and anxiety and promote relaxation. They can include deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, and meditation. During therapy sessions, a forensic psychologist may use these techniques to help an offender manage their emotions and behavior. The psychologist will observe the offender's response to each technique to determine which one is most effective for them and develop a personalized treatment plan.

⁵ Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is a therapeutic technique used by forensic psychologists in Albania to help offenders overcome their criminal behavior patterns. In CBT sessions, the offender works with the psychologist to identify negative thought patterns and develop strategies to replace them with more positive ones. The psychologist may also help the offender identify triggers for their negative behaviors and develop strategies to avoid or cope with them. By assessing an offender's response to CBT, a forensic psychologist can gain insight into their level of cognitive functioning, emotional regulation, and ability to learn and apply new skills.

mental illness who faced charges of assault and battery. According to the assessment conducted by the criminal psychologist, the defendant's mental illness rendered him unfit to stand trial. Subsequently, the perpetrator was transferred to a mental health facility to receive medical attention.

To conclude, the significance of mental health is paramount in Albania's criminal justice system. The evaluation of culpability in criminal cases necessitates the expertise of mental health practitioners, specifically criminal psychologists. Instances of mentally ill offenders within Albania's criminal justice system have been documented. The application of criminal psychology has facilitated the provision of suitable interventions for these individuals, thereby averting their exposure to punitive measures.

4. FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY IN ALBANIA

Forensic psychology is the application of psychological theories and practices in legal contexts, encompassing criminal inquiries, judicial proceedings, and the management of individuals implicated in the criminal justice system. It has gained recognition as a valuable tool in Albania's criminal justice system.

Forensic psychologists in Albania aid law enforcement agencies in their investigations by:

- Offering their expertise in criminal behavior and motivation, with the aim of providing valuable insights. The task at hand may encompass scrutinizing the evidence obtained from a crime scene and providing proficient assessments of the possible incentives, characteristics, and conduct patterns of the perpetrator. By comprehending the cognitive and motivational factors of the perpetrator, law enforcement officials can optimize their endeavors and allocate resources more effectively toward the detection and capture of suspects (Ministry of Justice, 2021).
- Assessing witness testimony and evidence entails the examination of the dependability and believability of witness accounts, in addition to the evaluation of the caliber and importance of any tangible evidence discovered at the site of the crime. Forensic psychologists possess specialized knowledge and skills that enable them to offer significant contributions in the form of insights and perspectives that can aid in the discovery of truth and the administration of justice.
- Conducting offender profiling - Offender profiling is a methodical approach to constructing a psychological profile of a perpetrator (American Psychological Association, n.d.) by examining crime scene evidence, which may include factors such as age, gender, personality traits, occupation, or lifestyle. In Albania, forensic psychologists employ diverse methodologies to construct these profiles, which can assist law enforcement agencies in their investigations by limiting the number of potential suspects. Notwithstanding, it should be noted that profiles do not serve as conclusive evidence of culpability, and the practice of offender profiling is not without its constraints.
- Providing expert testimony in criminal trials by evaluating the competency of defendants to stand trial - Forensic psychologists in Albania are instrumental in the legal system as they assess the mental health and competency of defendants to stand trial, thereby providing expert testimony in criminal trials. The evaluators determine the defendant's competence to comprehend the accusations leveled against them and their ability to aid in their legal representation. Upon completion of their assessment, they may offer professional testimony in a court of law to apprise the presiding judge and jury of their conclusions. The

aforementioned data is crucial to guaranteeing that accused individuals are granted a just trial and that the principles of justice are upheld.

- Assessing the mental state of defendants at the time of the offense - Forensic psychologists can assess the mental state of defendants at the time of the offense to identify potential contributing factors, such as mental illness, emotional distress, or other psychological factors. This data can be used in legal proceedings to determine culpability and determine appropriate penalties (American Psychological Association, n.d.).
- Assisting judges in determining appropriate sentencing and rehabilitation measures for convicted offenders - Forensic psychologists in Albania offer their expertise to judges in determining appropriate sentencing and rehabilitation measures for convicted offenders based on their psychological state. This data can help judicial authorities determine suitable sentencing and supplementary interventions, such as therapy or counseling, to mitigate the probability of recidivism.

Notable cases in Albania have seen forensic psychologists evaluate the mental state of defendants, contributing to the court's decisions (Taylor & Francis Group, 2016).

Overall, forensic psychology has become an important field in Albania's criminal justice system, providing valuable insights and expertise that can help ensure justice is served in criminal cases.

5. KEY POINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE CHALLENGES THAT FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY IS FACING IN THE ALBANIAN LEGAL SYSTEM

The field of forensic psychology encounters various obstacles in Albania. Insufficient resources, such as inadequate funding and personnel, represent a significant obstacle. The aforementioned circumstances can pose a challenge for forensic psychologists in carrying out exhaustive evaluations and furnishing all-encompassing assessments within a reasonable timeframe. Furthermore, forensic psychologists in Albania may have limited access to specialized training and opportunities for professional development. To mitigate the issue of scarce resources, it is suggested that the Albanian government increase its allocation of funding and resources towards forensic psychology services and research. Potential strategies to address the issue at hand may involve augmenting the quantity of resources allocated towards forensic evaluations, such as by bolstering the number of personnel and facilities and enhancing the provision of educational and training opportunities for forensic psychologists. Furthermore, the establishment of partnerships and collaborations with international organizations and experts may be considered a means to augment resources and expertise towards enhancing the caliber and efficacy of forensic psychology services in Albania. Ultimately, it is imperative to undertake initiatives aimed at enhancing public consciousness regarding the significance of forensic psychology and the requisite allocation of sufficient resources and assistance to guarantee efficacious and equitable results within the legal framework.

An additional obstacle pertains to the necessity for enhanced cooperation among forensic psychologists, law enforcement entities, and other practitioners engaged in the realm of criminal justice. This entails enhancing inter-agency communication and coordination as well as facilitating unfettered access to pertinent information and resources for forensic psychologists. To improve the collaboration between forensic psychologists and law enforcement agencies in Albania, it is recommended to establish regular training sessions and workshops that bring

together professionals from different fields to share their expertise and experiences. This will not only improve communication and coordination but also help identify and address any gaps or issues in the system. It is also important to ensure that forensic psychologists have access to all relevant information and resources, including up-to-date technology and equipment, to facilitate their work and improve the quality of their assessments.

Forensic psychologists in Albania may encounter cultural and societal obstacles that could potentially affect their professional endeavors. Instances of stigmatization about mental health and a dearth of comprehension regarding the function of forensic psychology within the realm of the justice system may exist. The aforementioned circumstances may result in a lack of confidence and an unwillingness to collaborate with forensic psychologists. In order to tackle the cultural and societal obstacles, it is imperative to enhance awareness and provide education to the general populace regarding the significance and function of forensic psychology within the legal system. Achieving this objective can be facilitated by means of public outreach and educational initiatives, in addition to forging partnerships with community leaders and organizations. Incorporating the participation of mental health experts and advocates from the local community in the formulation and execution of forensic psychology methodologies in Albania could prove advantageous. This approach may foster confidence and enhance comprehension among all parties concerned.

In Albania, the field of forensic psychology has demonstrated advancements; however, there remains a need to confront these challenges and enhance the implementation of forensic psychology within the nation.

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