

**INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE USE OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINATIONS IN STUDYING THE MOTIVATIONAL STRUCTURE OF CRIMINALS: IMPORTANCE FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

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**Abstract**

Currently, no unified array of globally applicable standards for forensic psychological tests exist, in particular aimed at evaluation of criminal motivations, which determines the necessity for harmonization. International and national-scale professional organizations are making evident efforts in this domain, but still major obstacles exist due to disparities in legal systems, cultural contexts, and evaluation techniques. The research examines international standards directing forensic psychological assessment to reveal criminals' motivation and investigates expert systems that are applied inside law enforcement organizations and court institutions.



Comparative method and integrative review were employed to understand how international approaches merge with nation-states' expert practices. The authors presented evidence on the detrimental effect of 'scattered' standards in forensic psychological assessment demonstrated that forensic psychological examination procedures which follow international standards produce more reliable evidence and contribute to the improvement of international legal system cooperation. Ultimately, it has been demonstrated that a balance between mental health knowledge and legal integrity is necessary for the successful application of psychological testing in international justice. This balance can only be reached by openness, moral consistency, and interdisciplinary collaboration, guaranteeing that mental health knowledge positively advances justice, accountability, and human dignity. The research results contribute to further development of international protocols for expert collaboration in forensic psychological assessment, as well as improving appropriate experts' professional training and establishing evidence-based standards for criminal justice functioning.

### Keywords

Psychological diagnosis; forensic psychological examination; motivation; psychology; international cooperation.

### Resumo

Atualmente, não existe um conjunto unificado de normas aplicáveis globalmente para testes psicológicos forenses, em particular destinados à avaliação das motivações criminais, o que determina a necessidade de harmonização. Organizações profissionais internacionais e nacionais estão a envidar esforços evidentes neste domínio, mas ainda existem grandes obstáculos devido às disparidades nos sistemas jurídicos, contextos culturais e técnicas de avaliação. A investigação examina as normas internacionais que orientam a avaliação psicológica forense para revelar a motivação dos criminosos e investiga os sistemas especializados que são aplicados dentro das organizações policiais e instituições judiciais. Foram utilizados métodos comparativos e revisões integrativas para compreender como as abordagens internacionais se fundem com as práticas especializadas dos Estados-nação. Os autores apresentaram evidências sobre o efeito prejudicial de padrões «dispersos» na avaliação psicológica forense, demonstrando que os procedimentos de exame psicológico forense que seguem padrões internacionais produzem evidências mais confiáveis e contribuem para a melhoria da cooperação do sistema jurídico internacional. Em última análise, ficou demonstrado que é necessário um equilíbrio entre o conhecimento sobre saúde mental e a integridade jurídica para a aplicação bem-sucedida de testes psicológicos na justiça internacional. Este equilíbrio só pode ser alcançado através da abertura, da consistência moral e da colaboração interdisciplinar, garantindo que o conhecimento sobre saúde mental promova positivamente a justiça, a responsabilização e a dignidade humana. Os resultados da investigação contribuem para o desenvolvimento de protocolos internacionais para a colaboração de especialistas na avaliação psicológica forense, bem como para a melhoria da formação profissional de especialistas adequados e para o estabelecimento de normas baseadas em evidências para o funcionamento da justiça criminal.

### Palavras-chave

Diagnóstico psicológico; exame psicológico forense; motivação; psicologia; cooperação internacional.



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### **Introduction**

Today, trends observed in criminal justice landscape show increasing interest in interdisciplinary research on criminal' personality traits through motivational factor analysis. The results from forensic psychological examination serve as vital evidence that enables experts to understand criminal psychological processes and evaluate offenders' mental states, emotional control, and social development. The absence of a logical and scientifically justified process might result in misconceptions, rights violations, or even unfair sentencing the need to address psychological assessment standards becomes even more evident. Meanwhile, the practice of using forensic psychological examinations faces challenges because different countries lack standardized methods and their procedures do not coordinate well, which hinders international law enforcement cooperation.

According to the widely adopted definition, "a psychological evaluation implies an assessment conducted by a qualified mental health professional to understand individual's mental health, cognitive function, and behavioral patterns, which can influence legal proceedings and sentencing outcomes" (Trenoweth & Moone, 2017).



These assessments have broad implications. They may influence choices about the appropriateness of rehabilitation programs, the severity of the sentence, or the necessity of specific interventions. For instance, a psychological assessment may identify underlying mental health conditions like anxiety, depression, or trauma that may have influenced the person's behavior. When crafting a sentence that not only punishes the offender but also aids in their rehabilitation, this information might be crucial. Moreover, in cases involving adolescents, the knowledge gathered from psychological assessments might assist in striking a balance between protection and punishment (Malvaso et al., 2024).

Organizations like the United Nations (UNODC), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the International Association of Forensic Psychology (IAFP) conceptually established some procedures for carrying out psychological testing during the criminal sentencing process on a global scale. These evaluations consistently stress how crucial it is to observe the values of justice and human rights. The application and function of forensic psychologists and psychiatrists vary, despite the underlying principles being similar, according to a comparative analysis of the legal systems of various nation-states. For instance, forensic psychologists in the U.S. evaluate criminal risk and culpability using standard tests like MMPI2, PCL-R, and HCR-20, whereas psychiatrists play a bigger role in France. This field is still in its early stages in Iran, calling for the creation of local psychometric tests, specialized training, and standards (Chaimowitz et al., 2025).

In the meantime, it has become evident in recent years that expert opinion can be prejudiced, as Rassin (2021) correctly points out, and it has been suggested that forensic psychologists might also be biased. In his research, the susceptibility of forensic psychological assessment of the suspect's mental state to the context effect – that is, the impact of unrelated material on expert opinion – was examined. Forensic psychology master's students were instructed to analyze a suspect's test results in a made-up double murder case. A version of the case with a neutral account of the murders was given to some attendees. A more explicit version was given to others. Participants in the latter condition appeared to be more concerned about the suspect's mental health than those in the former, even though the explicitness should not have had an impact on the forensic psychological examination. The author came to the conclusion that bias should be a focus of forensic psychological evaluation training programs. However, these studies also demonstrate the need for forensic psychological assessment frameworks to be unified, creating a canvas that would reduce the possibility of biases and enable accurate and efficient psychological testing as well as the assessment of criminals' motivations in international trials.

Fundamentally, the goal of forensic psychiatric evaluation is to offer impartial, scientifically sound information to support judicial decisions. Law enforcement officials and forensic psychologists are collaborating to use psychological science in criminal profiling. The goal of profiling is to determine the primary personality traits and behavioral traits of criminals based on their interactions during the crime. Based on analyzing trends and evidence, criminal profiling aims to develop broad profiles of



offenders, while forensic psychology, in turn, focuses its attention on diagnosing psychological problems, assessing risks, and determining competency through customized evaluations of individuals involved in judicial cases. Although forensic psychology and profiling have different goals and approaches, both are crucial for investigations and legal proceedings.

Three primary methods of reasoning are used for developing profiles: induction, abduction, and deduction. Rather than thinking of these as distinct forms of logic, it is preferable to think of them as distinct places along the logical continuum. To arrive at the best explanation (abduction) or only one that is based on universal laws or principles and cannot be refuted (deduction), we begin with various hypotheses about what might have happened or that might be true (induction) and use the scientific method to falsify each conclusion. Abduction is sometimes the best explanation for the evidence seen due to human behavior, evidential dynamics, or deliberate attempts to obstruct the investigation (known as staging, among other things). An inductive argument determines whether the conclusion is likely or an issue of probability by using supporting premises, such as empirical data or research. Although a strong inductive argument offers strong evidence for the conclusion, it is not perfect. In their study on behavioral consistency, Bateman and Salfati (2007) discovered that burying the body occurred 67.8% of the time, while transferring the body after the homicide occurred 61.1% of the time. While listed as high-frequency behaviors, these findings indicate that each will only be encountered about two-thirds of the time. As a result, investigators utilizing a profile that reports such statistical judgments may mistake probability for certainty. These tendencies do, however, occur in certain situations but not in others, which raises questions about the usefulness of this data as well as where criminal activity is consistent and inconsistent with studies. This might be particularly true when the degree of certainty is expressed ambiguously or generically, such as "the body will be hidden most of the time" (Petherick & Brooks, 2020). Although this argument is actually correct technically, it does not convey the precise degree of assurance. Thus, analyzing the motivations of criminals is of crucial nature for profiling process, and standardizing the framework and procedures for the examination represents the first step towards optimization of profiling accuracy. Expert evaluation of offender motivations enables successful identification of crime pattern and provides a foundation for developing prevention strategy in the field of violent and organized criminal offenses.

With this in mind, the research relevance grounds on the need to align domestic expert methods, applied in nation-states' practice, with international standards in the field. The scientific problem stems from the fact that there is no established system connecting forensic psychological examination theory with international criminal procedure standards, which impedes enhancing law enforcement capabilities and prevents strengthening international criminal justice partnerships.



## Literature Review

Jadidi (2025) correctly points out that criminal justice in the contemporary societies is not merely dependent on crime and punishment, but the type and severity of punishment are also significantly influenced by the defendant’s psychological, social, and personality traits. The court, police, attorneys, and other organizations focused on justice have direct contact with forensic psychology. To better understand the accused’s mental condition and impose a more equitable punishment, the forensic psychologist provides the judge with specialized assessments.

At the same time, a range of scholars point out the phenomena of cognitive biases in forensic psychological assessment. According to Buongiorno et al. (2025), cognitive biases are a result of forensic psychiatry’s intrinsic limitations. In particular, psychiatric evaluations, including forensic assessments, are particularly vulnerable to cognitive biases since they primarily rely on patients’ subjective interpretations of their symptoms and self-reports. Additionally, a “cascade” effect that gradually modifies the judgment process can be produced by cognitive biases at many levels (Scarpazza & Ghidini, 2023).

A thorough evaluation of the literature on forensic mental health expert (FMHE) testimony and court decision-making was carried out by van Es et al. (2020). This review contains a total of 27 studies. Most of the research was done on fictitious jurors in the United States. The majority of research concentrated on sentencing guidelines or criminal liability. Research on criminal responsibility consistently revealed that psychotic defendants of violent, major crimes were more frequently found not guilty by reason of insanity than defendants with psychopathic disorders. The length and kind of punishments had less consistent results, and they were frequently influenced by perceived behavioral control, recidivism risk, and treatability. There are hardly any studies on the potential negative consequences of FMHE.

The opinions of mental health professionals can have a significant impact on legal processes. In the meantime, Grossi and Green (2017) stress that because legal criteria, operationalization, and classification of mental illness vary throughout countries, it is challenging to compare the usage and impact of forensic mental health expert testimony on judicial decisions across jurisdictions. Regarding these distinctions, it seemed feasible to identify the components that are pertinent in the majority of legal systems and, where needed, to explain key distinctions. Table 1 shows this structure.

**Table 1.** Effects of forensic mental health expertise on judicial decisions

A court ruling	Forensic mental health expertise		
	+	0	-
1. Guilt			
a. <i>Mens rea</i>	x	√	√
b. <i>Actus reus</i>	x	√	x
2. Sentencing	√	√	√

Source: van Es et al. (2020)



Neal et al. (2019) presented the findings of a two-part study on psychological assessments performed by psychologists in legal circumstances. The first section included a thorough examination of the 364 psychological assessment tools that psychologists reported using in court cases in 22 surveys of experienced forensic mental health practitioners, with an emphasis on legal norms as well as scientific and psychometric theories. The second section included a legal analysis of admissibility issues in psychological assessments. The first part's findings show that, consistent with their roots in psychology science, almost all of the evaluation methods employed by psychologists and given as expert testimony in legal situations have been empirically tested (90%). However, the authors were able to clearly identify approximately 67% as generally acknowledged in the field, with only around 40% receiving generally positive appraisals of their psychometric and technical qualities from authorities such as the Mental Measurements Yearbook. Furthermore, there is little correlation between widespread acceptance and the favorability of tools' psychometric qualities. The second section's findings demonstrate the rarity of legal challenges to this evidence's admission: Just 5.1% of the sample's instances contained legal objections to the evaluation evidence for any reason; slightly more than half of these featured validity concerns. Only roughly one-third of the time did they succeed when challenges were posed. There are hardly any challenges to the most dubious scientific instruments. Psychological expert evaluation testimony is rarely contested by attorneys, and when it is, judges frequently neglect to apply the legal scrutiny.

According to de Roo et al. (2022), behavioral science and forensics are frequently viewed as distinct fields. The need for more integration between the two fields is becoming increasingly apparent, though. Forensic science may be able to solve investigation issues, particularly at the crime scene, by using psychological theories about human behavior. The authors of the study investigate the following: (1) investigative psychologists are better at identifying deviant behavioral cues than forensic examiners when examining a crime scene; (2) forensic examiners can identify pertinent traces that may be linked to this behavior; and (3) the availability of a psychological report that highlights these behavioral cues aids forensic examiners in identifying more pertinent traces. In order to do this, a virtual 3D fake crime scene was examined by 40 forensic examiners and 14 investigative psychologists. The study's findings demonstrate that forensic examiners who receive a psychological report on these cues identify and gather significantly more traces that can be connected to deviant behavior and have a high evidential value than examiners who do not receive this information, and that investigative psychologists observe significantly more deviant behavioral cues than forensic examiners. But the study also shows that when behavioral information challenges preexisting views, it is likely to be disregarded.

Criminals' motivation, on the other hand, plays a critical part in forensic investigations by offering context for a crime, supporting suspect profiling, and connecting instances through behavioral patterns. Although motive is not a legal prerequisite for conviction, knowing it aids in case linking, helps investigators formulate hypotheses, and helps them grasp purpose, particularly in recurrent crimes. Armeanu (2018) highlights the



importance of motivation in forensic analysis from a variety of perspectives. Table 2 provides summary of these insights.

**Table 2.** The role of motivation in forensic examination

<b>Role</b>	<b>Description</b>
Gives context and purpose	Determining the motivation behind a crime's commission provides vital background information that aids detectives in comprehending the perpetrator's objective. Motive, for example, is crucial when the offender disputes their involvement since it can be used in conjunction with other evidence to establish their guilt
Provides information for criminal profiling	Forensic psychologists employ motivation to develop profiles of criminals by evaluating their behavior, psychological traits, and reasons for committing crimes. This helps narrow the search for suspects and serves as a starting point for investigations
Helps with case linking	Forensic psychologists can connect crimes to the same criminal by evaluating behavioral patterns and motivations across several crimes, which is especially beneficial for serial offenders. This is predicated on the premise that offenders frequently repeat specific actions or patterns across offenses
Aids in the examination of crime scenes	Behavioral indicators at a crime scene, impacted by motive, might provide important information about the perpetrator's psychology and personality. Investigators can utilize this data to better understand how the crime was perpetrated
Guides investigative strategy	Understanding the motive influences the whole investigative strategy. For example, understanding the reason might help law enforcement focus on certain sorts of suspects or areas, such as geographic profiling, which combines location data with behavioral patterns to anticipate future crimes.
Supports courtroom presentations	Motive can play a significant role in a trial, even though it is not a requirement for conviction. Comprehending motive is essential for both making a strong case for the prosecution and disproving the defense's evidence
Enhances forensic work' quality	A more thorough and accurate image of the crime scene and the people involved can be obtained by combining behavioral data, including motive, with conventional forensic evidence. In order to enhance the initial response, some future perspectives propose that crime scene investigators themselves may receive training in assessing behavioral elements

Source: Armeanu (2018)

Baidya (2022) studies criminal reasons by looking at conventional theories of motivation. Using actual criminal cases from India, McClelland's needs, Murray's psychogenic requirements, Maslow's need hierarchy, Alderfer's ERG model, and Optimal Level Theory are all examined. These theories bridge the gap between motivational psychology and the forensic-criminal environment by incorporating ideas from Sutherland's postulates, Kohlberg's moral growth, and the Frustration-Aggression hypothesis. Lastly, the author



shows how the drive for non-criminal behavior and the motivation for unlawful activity have similar foundations.

In order to assess the significance of individual motives for juvenile and adult crimes, as well as across a variety of offending categories, Koegl and Farrington (2021) compiled a list of offender motivations for criminal offending. The applicability of each of the 17 reasons to official conviction records and other clinical-risk variables was evaluated by adult male convicts (N = 136). According to the findings, the majority of prisoners committed crimes in order to escape reality, feel pleasure, or pursue sensations. While non-sex offenders supported substance abuse, social influence, and utilitarian incentives, adult sex offenders cited sexual motives. The results are examined in relation to evidence-based correctional practice and research.

Reddy (2025) uses psychological theories and techniques to comprehend the complexities of criminal behavior by drawing on a wide range of instances from the US, UK, Belgium, Columbia, Germany, and India, such as financial deceit, maternal psychosis, and serial murder. These ideas cover everything from behavioral analysis and criminal profiling to the dynamics of influence and the psychology of dishonesty.

According to Combalbert et al. (2014), there has been an increasing worry about the quality of forensic mental health assessment in a number of nations on both sides of the Atlantic. However, legal systems are not necessarily comparable, and many parts of forensic assessment are unique to a particular nation. The authors examine forensic mental health evaluation in France and provide suggestions for raising standards. The study outlines the benefits and drawbacks of forensic psychological evaluation in France (i.e., the pre-trial investigative phase assigned to a judge, with mental health evaluation carried out by preselected professionals referred to as "experts" in French). According to the authors, a lack of agreement on a number of fundamental concepts, including mental health diagnosis or assessment techniques, unfavorable working conditions, a lack of specialized training, and a lack of familiarity with the Code of Ethics, appear to be the primary causes of the heterogeneity of expert practices in France. The quality and dependability of forensic mental health reports have come under increasing scrutiny from the public and the judiciary due to the alleged involvement of psychiatric and psychological reports in a number of high-profile mismanaged criminal cases (such as the Outreau trial in 2005). According to Combalbert et al. (2014), there has been an increasing worry about the quality of forensic mental health assessment in a number of nations on both sides of the Atlantic. However, legal systems are not necessarily comparable, and many parts of forensic assessment are unique to a particular nation. The authors examine forensic mental health evaluation in France and provide suggestions for raising standards. The study outlines the benefits and drawbacks of forensic psychological evaluation in France (i.e., the pre-trial investigative phase assigned to a judge, with mental health evaluation carried out by preselected professionals referred to as "experts" in French). According to the authors, a lack of agreement on several fundamental concepts, including mental health diagnosis or assessment techniques, unfavorable working conditions, a lack of specialized training, and a lack of familiarity



with the Code of Ethics, appears to be the primary cause of the heterogeneity of expert practices in France. The quality and dependability of forensic mental health reports have come under increasing scrutiny from the public and the judiciary due to the alleged involvement of psychiatric and psychological reports in several high-profile mismanaged criminal cases (such as the Outreau trial in 2005). According to Combalbert et al. (2014), a psychological or psychiatric report that is mainly meant to inform the court on the personalities of accused criminals and victims should be written in a way that is understandable to both the prosecution and the defense. Technical terminology should be used sparingly. Additionally, experts should provide thorough answers to every query. Their findings should be supported by strong reasons, and they should be clear and succinct. Additionally, the authors emphasize the abundance of structured instruments for both actuarial evaluation (which yields the best rates of predictive validity) and clinical assessment of antisocial, violent, and sexual risk, as well as the practicality of taking their use into consideration.

Research by Neal et al. (2022) discusses the potential future of forensic psychology and gives a summary of its past. The authors claim that best practices of a psychological evaluation using the standards, principles, and respect of science to guide legal proceedings, should be followed. Accordingly, eight important factors are formulated: (i) assessment' foundational validity; (ii) assessment's validity as used; (iii) control and mitigation of bias; (iv) paying attention to quality control; (v) communicating data, findings, and opinions suitably; (vi) taking assumptions and limits into account in a clear manner; (vii) evaluating opposing viewpoints or arguments; and (viii) strict adhering to professional standards, codes of conduct, rules of evidence, and ethical duties.

Ukrainian scientist Martynenko (2024) focus her research attention on creating uniform protocols for professional forensic psychology work in the Ukrainian setting. In order to establish standardized procedures, improve forensic psychological outcomes, and expedite international cooperation, the study looks into finding the ways how international standards might be applied in Ukrainian practice. The author highlights that the universality of international standards, that is, their ability to be applied in any forensic institution, independent of the nation, departmental affiliation, or organizational structure is what makes them valuable in the field of forensic examination. The article's conclusion states that in order to support adherence to the principles of interdependence, consistency, and continuity in standardization, national standards in the field of forensic examination should take into consideration the provisions of the ISO/TC 272 standards. The author claims that, for enhancing the quality of forensic examination activities, cooperation between Ukrainian forensic institutions and international organizations on standardization issues should be developed and strengthened. This can be achieved by working together on ISO/TC 272 and by participating in the various communication formats provided by regional networks of operational forensic examination laboratories.

A group of Ukrainian scholars – Tkachenko et al. (2024) – made an effort to evaluate global experience in the area of expert assistance of justice and to examine strategies for incorporating contemporary international standards into domestic forensic expert



practice. It was highlighted that forensic expert activity in Ukraine is organized using a hybrid approach. Harmonization of forensic examinations, standardization of expert methodologies, certification of forensic facilities, and publishing of the register of forensic experts are some benefits of such an approach. The author emphasized the importance of integrating the Ukrainian system of expert support for justice into the worldwide framework, as well as the participation of Ukrainian forensic institutions in international organizations that bring together foreign experts. The author recommended establishing a single body, the National Service for the Provision of Forensic Expertise, which would be subordinated to Ukraine's Ministry of Justice.

Makarova (2024) underlined the importance of studying a personality's psychological features and their impact on forensic psychiatric examination strategies in order to improve examination quality. According to the author, recognizing these characteristics enables the expert to analyze the defendant's mental state in a more objective and reliable manner. Nestor et al. (2024) investigate ethical norms in Ukraine and English-speaking countries, demonstrating the importance of established guidelines that minimize expert prejudice and ensure public trust in their conclusions.

Nevertheless, at the international level, there are very few studies in the field of harmonization of international standards in forensic psychological expertise, in particular, in analyzing criminals' motivation. Many publications describe the theoretical concepts of motive and goal, but do not develop a unified methodology that would allow for a standardized assessment of the motivational structure of criminals in different countries. Practical research often focuses on general personality characteristics or psychopathology rather than on a detailed analysis of motivational processes (awareness, conflict of motives, role of context). This evidently necessitates further research in this field, implying departure from vague conceptualization and moving towards design of practical solutions.

## Methods

The research was carried out within a qualitative paradigm, with the use of an integrative review methodology. Preliminary search for sources to be included in the sample was carried out within the scientometric libraries databases ScienceDirect, ResearchGate, Wiley, MDPI, PubMed, as well as through direct search on the Google platform. The inquiry for search included two domains: 1) international standards of forensic psychological assessment"; and 2) criminals' motivation evaluation. Only peer-reviewed or monographic English-language publications were considered. Screening was based on the topic and abstract. This preliminary search allowed identifying 97 sources. Among them, 30 publications appeared not openly available in full text. In the next stage of research, the found publications were evaluated based on their methodology and findings, which enabled deeper analysis of their scope and, thus, relevance for current research. This procedure allowed selecting 41 entries for inclusion in the sample for integrative review.



## Results and Discussion

Typically, the validity, dependability, and consistency of the fundamental scientific techniques for examining tangible evidence, such as DNA, fingerprints, and digital evidence, are the main goals of harmonization initiatives within forensic science. General standards are created and promoted by organizations like the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and ASTM International (e.g., ISO/IEC 17025 for testing and calibration laboratories, and the ISO 21043 series for forensic sciences). By reducing the influence of cognitive and motivational biases in examiners' decisions, these guidelines seek to enhance the quality of data collection, analysis, and reporting. Meanwhile, within the domain of psychological forensic examination, harmonization process is much more 'modest'. At the same time, to speed up the efforts in this field, there is the need of uniting expertise of psychology, social psychology, forensic science, and ethics.

It should be noted that understanding the basic ideas of psychology is crucial to comprehending the nature of criminal behavior and the influence of mental state on it. According to Bartol and Bartol (2016), the most significant of these theories are:

- 1 According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory, criminal behavior is picked up by watching and copying others, particularly strong role models like family members or peer groups. This viewpoint emphasizes the importance of both positive and negative reinforcement, the social context, and the incapacity to understand the detrimental effects of conduct.
2. Hirschi's Social Control Theory: This theory highlights how social connections with family, school, the law, and society can help to prevent deviation. Crimes are more likely to be committed by those individuals who were actually cut off from these connections. Mental illnesses potentially can erode social bonds and serve as a criminal activity' catalyst.
3. Psychodynamic theory (Freud and his followers): The theory implies that unresolved childhood concerns (traumas) and a weak Superego may represent the cause of criminal behavior. Within this approach, psychological evaluation examines personality structure of individual, his/her unresolved complexes, and unconscious motivations.
4. According to Eysenck's trait theory, criminal behavior is strongly associated with traits such as neuroticism, severe extraversion, and psychopathy. Individuals with high impulsivity, low empathy, and antisocial characteristics are more likely to violate the law.

Motivation is a key component of the criminal psychology analysis system because it helps researchers comprehend how criminal intentions develop, how criminals make decisions, and what motivates their criminal behavior. In-depth research on criminal behavior helps scientists create evidence-based theories about criminal offenders, which improves crime prevention, tailored punishment, and rehabilitation initiatives. Studying criminal motivating patterns is crucial in the contemporary globalized legal context because correct forensic psychology evaluations for international criminal justice rely on appropriate interpretation.



In recent decades, an important point of cooperation in international criminal justice was set in the phenomenon of profiling.

Criminal profiling, according to European police forces, was an effort to create a description of the offender based on the findings of an examination of the crime scene data and traits associated with the offender's past (Eze et al., 2025). The UK's Association of Chief Police Officers Behavioral Science Investigative Support Subcommittee later approved and endorsed this description. Criminal profiling was viewed by the definition as a preferred approach to crime solving rather than a specific technique, and it was generally unable to identify the actual criminals. In actuality, it can only imply some of the personality traits and demographics that a criminal would probably have. Because a criminal profile is simply one method of detecting real criminals, it was improper for the police to totally exclude anyone who did not match the aforementioned traits.

In his book, Kocsis (2006) defined criminal profiling as the practice of examining and interpreting the behavior or activity that was obviously evident in a crime. The traits that the offender most likely had were predicted by this research. In contrast to psychological profiling, criminal profiling did not involve the examination of new patients. Instead, it involved analyzing the crime to understand key behaviors at the time of the crime so that the investigator could create an image of the perpetrator (Kocsis, 2006).

Compared to the earlier definitions, this one appeared to be more expansive and general. When creating a criminal profile, Kocsis (2006) considered every facet of criminality. This meant that his definition was more flexible in terms of the strategies and techniques that profilers may employ throughout investigations in order to accomplish the primary objective of creating a criminal profile of the offender in question.

From the standpoint of criminology, criminal profiling identified the precise circumstances that could have led to a crime. It concentrated more on creating the chronology of the incident than on developing the character of the offender. In the meantime, criminal profiles were created by the psychiatric section in order to determine the perpetrator's demographics, mental health, and motivations for committing such acts. Instead of emphasizing how a crime was actually committed, it focused more on the background and history of the offender. From a forensics perspective, a criminal profile was constructed using the evidence found at a crime scene and focused more on the techniques and consequences of the crime.

In the end, criminal profiling was one of the techniques that law enforcement could employ to determine the predominant traits of an offender in a specific case by considering the traits, demographics, method of operation, and evidence in comparable cases that have been documented, looked into, or tried in court. Only prior case studies and scientific knowledge from fields like criminal psychology, forensics, geography, and statistics may be used to construct this strategy. These components were crucial in raising the accuracy percentage for any profiles that were generated. However, because the three branches of knowledge that served as the foundation for creating crime profiles did not have the same goals, it was still very difficult to implement an integrated definition of criminal profiling (Mustaffa et al., 2022).



In fact, just two studies have looked at adult prison samples' reasons for committing crimes thus far. In a sample of 196 male inmates, Gudjonsson et al. (2011) investigated the connection between four OMQ-derived motivations, Axis I and II illnesses, and childhood ADHD symptoms. Generally speaking, many connections were not significant when other personality characteristics were taken into account, even though different DSM illnesses had strong univariate links with each of the four motivation categories. The most compelling result was that drug dependence was closely linked to financial incentive. The second study (Ohlsson & Ireland, 2011) examined the connection between aggression and incentives in a sample of 206 adult male inmates in the United Kingdom. The OMQ, an aggression motivation questionnaire, and other tests were completed by study participants. Four primary motivations for aggressiveness were identified: enjoyment, social recognition, protection, and perceived benefits. The findings showed that the reasons behind hostility varied across violent and nonviolent criminals. Positive outcomes and pleasure-related motives were more frequently endorsed by those with a violent conviction, and both of these motives were strongly correlated with a standardized measure of rage (Ohlsson & Ireland, 2011).

Unquestionably, variations in the process employed to create a criminal profile may alter the profile's veracity and admissibility as the foundation for a suspect's arrest and conviction. Finding the ideal methods to do so was a challenging task. In addition to drawing on prior case studies and pertinent scientific knowledge, the community's demographics should also be considered. The majority of research on criminal profiling methodology was predicated on the demographic appropriateness of western civilization. Although international criminal tribunals deal with a variety of people, Western cultures are frequently the source of psychological tools and diagnostic frameworks. This raises moral questions regarding (Mihaela, 2025):

- Cultural misreading of symptoms or behaviors (e.g., culturally normal manifestations of grief or trauma misunderstood as psychopathology);
- Language obstacles, reliance on interpreters, and translation mistakes that distort meaning;
- Ethnocentrism in diagnosis can undermine local narratives or resilience methods.

According to Mustaffa et al. (2022), the absence of a defined framework for forensic psychiatric examination has a negative impact on the legal system and law enforcement. The author thought that one of the primary sources for creating a crime profile in Malaysia may be the customs and culture of a particular national or ethnic group. This was because the demographics and customs of the local community where the crime was perpetrated were intimately linked to the prominent traits of the offenders.

Numerous initiatives have already been put into place that could aid in the advancement of criminal profiling techniques in Malaysia. The creation of the Penang State Crime Mapping Application (Polgis-Pen) 2012 (Police Online Geographical Information System for Penang) was one of them. The app was created to track the locations and specifics of crimes for when a police complaint was filed, as well as to analyze crime and eSector data. Additionally, it made it easier to create Penang's crime statistics. The app alerted



users to two types of crimes: property crimes and violent crimes. The app's geographically based data has helped to facilitate and expedite the crime profiling process (Simposium Maklumat Geospasial Kebangsaan (NGIS) ke 5, 2012). In addition to nations like Sweden and Canada, Malaysia also employed criminal profiling as a crucial investigative technique, according to a 2008 Skeptic Magazine article titled "Criminal Profiling". The application of this method can be found in Part V, Chapter 13 of the Criminal Procedure Code, which covers information to the police and investigative authority from section 107 to section 120. Moreover, Part VIII, Chapter 33, Section 329 of the same Code, which addressed the police's obligation to investigate deaths, also included reference to criminal profiling.

The inquiry process outlined in Chapter 13 of the Code, meanwhile, has been an object of criticism for being overly broad and harsh. It also focuses more on physical evidence, even though psychological evidence must also be considered. The investigation analysis and evidence from the incident – whether from witnesses, the crime scene, or criminal remnants – were used in Malaysia's crime profiling process. However, the author also believed that the Code's rules regarding the authority and methods of inquiry failed to provide a clear and comprehensive explanation of the criminal profiling technique employed by local police officers. Mustafa et al. (2022) came to the conclusion that variations in backgrounds and methods employed by investigating officers during a criminal profile can lead to an incorrect crime profile, which could result in erroneous arrests.

Part IV, Chapter 13 and Part VIII, Chapter 33 of the Criminal Procedure Code in Malaysia both mention the use of criminal profiling; the latter relates to information provided to police and their investigative authority. Sections 109 and 329 were the precise provisions in question. Only police or officers in charge of stations with a level of Sergeant or higher were qualified to conduct an investigation for a significant case, according to Section 109. These officers were also prohibited from being questioned at any point during the process. In the meantime, Section 329 (1)(a) of the Criminal Procedure Code established a police officer's obligation to look into deaths caused by unknown causes. Section 329(2) made it clear that the criminal profiling method could be applied utilizing evidence from the crime scene and traces of the crime approach. In addition to conducting investigations based on the crime sites and issues pertaining to the death, District Police Officers and police officers ranking Sergeant and higher were required to submit an initial determination on the crime's method of operation. However, the "investigation" offered in this instance was overly broad and condensed, focusing more on physical evidence whereas psychological evidence should also be prioritized (Mustafa et al., 2022).

There was no minimal benchmark or yardstick to gauge their effectiveness because being a profiler did not require any particular training or accreditation. It was impossible to discipline or punish careless or inept profilers due to the lack of realistic criteria. Aggravating effects like unlawful detention and, worse, the possibility of misconceptions were exacerbated by the lack of a "peer-reviewed system" practice and uniformity over the necessary profile-making process and methodology.



Rather than being a “forensic examination” in the conventional sense of physical evidence analysis, the assessment of motivation is typically a component of a mental health evaluation or competency assessment. There is a lack of agreement on particular evaluation techniques and reporting across various contexts and judicial systems because these evaluations heavily rely on clinical data, mental history, interviews, and the defendant’s account of the accused offense. Although experts in these fields frequently offer their opinions to the court, there is a continuous discussion in the legal and scientific communities over the necessity of stricter, scientifically grounded standards to guarantee the validity and admissibility of such expert testimony. Current international standards emphasize tangible, empirical data. Due to inherent differences in legal frameworks and the subjective nature of psychological assessment, motivation assessment is still a difficult, qualitative area of forensic psychology that is not governed by a single, harmonized forensic standard.

The International Association of Forensic Psychology (IAFP), the American Psychological Association (APA), as well as United Nations documents, unanimously claim that psychological evaluation standards should have a number of key ideas in their foundation:

1. Professional competence of assessor. The forensic psychologist should possess expertise in forensic psychology, proficiency in application of psychometric instruments, adequate experience in judicial assessment, and be familiar with current legal frameworks.
2. Employing scientifically justified and standardized instruments: It is crucial to use assessments protocols with established validity and reliability, such as MMPI-2, PCL-R, and SCL-90-R. Any informal or local tools should be considered with caution and be assessed based on strong scientific argumentation.
3. Respecting the principles of independence and impartiality: During the evaluation process, an expert is obliged to express an opinion based solely on objective observations and scientific evidence, regardless of the demands of the parties involved or political and personal factors.
4. Respecting confidentiality and informed consent: The expert should be made aware of the evaluation’s goal, methodology, and implications. Personal information should not be shared unless there are specific circumstances, including a court order or a threat to other persons.
5. Transparent and intelligible reporting for the court: In order for the judge or jury to understand psychological reports, they must be given in straightforward, logical language that makes reference to the instruments employed and is devoid of technical or judgmental terminology.

Table 3 provides structure of international standards for psychological evaluation.



**Table 3.** International guidelines for forensic psychological assessment structure

<b>APA standards</b>	<b>IAFP guidelines</b>	<b>Recommendations of the United Nations and the Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)</b>
<p>The assessor should be completely knowledgeable of the legal conditions and the type of case</p> <p>Selecting scientifically valid psychometric instruments</p> <p>Conducting systematic and documented clinical interviews</p> <p>Preserving professional objectivity and independence</p> <p>Respecting confidentiality and clients' rights</p> <p>Reports for the court that are credentialed, accurate, and transparent</p> <p>Recognizing the assessment's limits and refraining from incorrectly extrapolating the findings</p>	<p>Necessity of specialized training for psychologists in the legal and ethical field</p> <p>Focus on multi-source evaluation (interview, psychometric testing, case review, witness accounts)</p> <p>Considering linguistic, social, and cultural factors when analyzing data</p> <p>The necessity of preserving independence from political or judicial pressure</p> <p>The necessity of constantly updating one's knowledge and abilities</p>	<p>Safeguarding the accused's rights during evaluations</p> <p>Preventing prejudice and discrimination based on race, sexual orientation, and culture</p> <p>Educating criminal justice staff on how to communicate with psychologists</p> <p>Stress the use of evaluation to lessen the negative effects of punishment</p>

Source: Liell et al. (2022)

Despite the importance of all these concepts, they do not offer a workable framework that can be modified for the global forensic environment. The discipline of forensic mental health evaluation is delicate, challenging, and have implicit dangers. It necessitates a deep understanding of symptomatology, substantial assessment experience, cautious interpretation, and rigorous observance of ethical code. Forensic work is complicated and can have major repercussions for both defendants and plaintiffs, thus ethics is a crucial component. Many nations, most notably the Netherlands (Duits et al., 2012), have demanded improvements in mental health forensic reports during the past 20 years and have offered models that incorporate structural changes. Certain European nations may not be able to use these models since judicial processes vary depending on whether their legal systems are founded on Roman law or Common law. At the international level, the 'disperse' in standards for forensic psychological assessment is still very significant, which impedes international criminal justice cooperation.



Psychologists may have to choose between their ethical duty to the person being evaluated and their duty to the court. The prosecution, defense, or judges frequently request psychiatric examinations under international criminal law; nonetheless, the person being assessed may not have given completely informed or willing consent, particularly in detention situations. Confidentiality violations, the possibility of coercion or lack of agency in participation, and the compromise of therapeutic neutrality due to the use of evaluations for legal rather than clinical goals are some of the issues that arise from this dual role.

There is no a global code of ethics created especially for psychologists working in international criminal courts. As a result:

- The expert's training and country of origin determine different ethical norms;
- Ethical wrongdoing is not well monitored or enforced;
- Fairness is undermined by cross-jurisdictional inconsistencies that result in unequal use of psychological expertise.

Let us remind that the study of motivation as a psychological phenomenon started during the early 20th century when scientists began to examine human behavior through systematic analysis. The initial understanding of behavior focused on biological and stimulus-based explanations but Heckhausen (1977) and other scientists later established motivation as a complex system which combines needs with goals and emotions and social factors. The criminal-psychological framework shows that criminal conduct emerges from a complete system of personal and environmental elements which affect how people make choices.

A person commits a crime through deliberate action which fulfills their needs by using dangerous social behaviors. The structure of criminal motivation contains three elements which include cognitive processes and emotional responses and volitional actions that function together based on personal mental state and life experiences and social surroundings (Ha et al., 2024). The forensic psychological examination requires complete understanding of this structure because it enables experts to determine the extent of criminal awareness and control and pathological motivation elements for creating expert opinions.

The distinction between internal and external motives receives special focus because it enables researchers to understand crime psychology better. People develop internal motivation through their personal needs to achieve self-affirmation and compensate for frustration but external motivation stems from social rewards and pressures and benefits (Franco & Svensgaard, 2011). The classification system serves an essential purpose for international expert work because multiple countries need experts to determine the extent of personal control over motives and their impact on decision-making processes.

The scientific validity, dependability, and quality control of test results and evidence handling are the main goals of harmonization efforts in forensic science (e.g., through the ISO 21043 series and ISO/IEC 17025 standards). In particular, for evidence that can be objectively verified, such as DNA or digital evidence, these criteria guarantee that



forensic procedures are scientifically sound and that the outcomes are dependable, reproducible, and globally acceptable.

However, behavioral analysis, psychological profiling, and investigative procedures – all of which are intrinsically more subjective and reliant on national legal frameworks, cultural contexts, and investigative traditions – are primarily responsible for the forensic investigation of a criminal's motivation.

Among the main obstacles to harmonizing forensic investigation of motivation are (Bouzin et al., 2023):

- Subjectivity: The interpretation and behavioral theories involved in motivation analysis are less subject to the empirical testing and validation criteria used for tangible evidence
- Legal Differences: The weight and admissibility of such evidence varied greatly amongst legal systems (e.g., common law vs. civil law states)
- Lack of Consensus: Harmonization of intricate, non-physical studies is challenging since there is still a lack of a wide, shared international understanding of the foundational ideas and boundaries of forensic science itself.

A number of professional associations, including the International Association for Correctional and Forensic Psychology (IACFP), the American Psychological Association, and the American Academy of Forensic Psychology (AAFP), create and disseminate their own best practices and specialist recommendations. By improving service quality and providing guidance for accreditation and certification procedures, these recommendations help members and associated areas achieve de facto harmonization. Global information exchange and the promotion of best practices are facilitated by organizations such as the International Association of Forensic Sciences (IAFS), which offer forums for international discussion and cooperation.

The necessity of using culturally sensitive methods in forensic mental health evaluations to guarantee validity and reliability across a range of demographics is becoming more widely acknowledged and the subject of increased research. When used in different cultural contexts, assessment tools and techniques created in one may not have cross-cultural validity and reliability. As was already established, evaluators who are not familiar with local norms may misunderstand the impact of culture.

The use of classic psychological tests in various forensic contexts has been the subject of numerous survey studies, all of which have consistently shown that psychological tests are crucial to the majority of forensic assessments. However, its use has both benefits and drawbacks. When choosing, administering, and interpreting psychological tests for forensic evaluation, the forensic evaluator should consider a set of standards.

El-Shenawy (2017) correctly points out that there are differences between the standards employed in therapeutic and forensic assessment. While forensic assessment incorporates both clinical and legal standards, therapeutic assessment standards aid in diagnosis and treatment and serve organizing, condensing, and orienting purposes. For



instance, when the evaluator is expected to take into account the relationship between the underlying mental, emotional, and cognitive deficiencies and various legal difficulties, such as criminal responsibility, skills, or sentencing considerations.

The sources of information used in each of the two types of assessments differ significantly from one another. They both use behavioral assessment, psychological testing, and self-report measures to gather clinical and psychosocial data. These sources are insufficient for forensic evaluation, in contrast to therapeutic evaluation. To evaluate the accuracy and consistency of data obtained from self-reports, additional information is required through the use of collateral material (such as document examination and interviews). There are numerous reasons why someone undergoing forensic evaluation might provide false information. For instance, some persons may exaggerate mental health issues to avoid criminal culpability or to seek financial advantage in personal injury claims, while others may overestimate their parenting abilities to get custody of their children. The likelihood that the person being assessed will purposefully (by exaggerating or minimizing) falsify the nature of symptoms or experiences is typically low in the majority of therapeutic evaluation cases.

Additionally, in light of verbal communication regarding the evaluation outcomes, there is a significant difference between the two types of assessments. It is uncommon for the therapist evaluator to testify as an expert witness in court. The theory that provides the context and framework for the tests used in the evaluation must be clearly explained to the trier of fact (typically a jury, sometimes the judge), even though the forensic evaluator should always testify as an expert witness and that testimony would be connected to the assessment. In order to prevent the lawyer from proving that the expert is not an expert in this field and has misinterpreted, misused, or misstated the workings and results of the tests, it should be explained how the tests were developed, how they are used, how the results are interpreted, and how the test results at hand can be used validly and reliably.

Lees-Haley et al. (1996) carried out an early survey study to determine the prevalence of several psychological tests used in forensic assessments. Information gathered from reports of 100 neuropsychologists' assessments of adult personal injuries. The findings showed that between one and thirty-two tests were used in one hundred forensic neuropsychological assessments. The most popular scale was the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (WAIS-R), followed by the MMPI/MMPI-2 and the Wechsler Memory Scale (WMS)/Wechsler Memory Scale-Revised (WMS-R).

Quinnell and Bow surveyed 198 psychologists about the use of psychological tests in child custody assessments (Liell et al., 2022). According to the results, half of the participants said that IQ tests were used to assess custody of both adults and children. The Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory II or III (MCMI) was the second most popular objective test for adults, followed by the MMPI/MMPI-2. Other assessments, such as the California Personality Inventory and the 16-Personality Factors, were also utilized, but sparingly. The Millon Adolescent Clinical Inventory (MACI) and the Minnesota Multiphasic



Personality Inventory–Adolescent Version (MMPI-A) were frequently used for testing adolescents.

Another survey was carried out in Australia by Martin et al. (2001) to evaluate the usage of psychological tests and their application among 79 Australian psychologists employed in government agencies, private practices, or organizations that offer court evaluations. The MMPI and Wechsler Intelligence Scales are recognized as highly used tests, according to the results. The MCMI was placed third, while the PAI was the second most popular personality test.

Members of the American Psychology-Law Society Division of APA and American Board of Forensic Psychology evaluated the psychological tests used in forensic examinations (Archer et al., 2006). Participants were asked to describe how they used the exams in specific areas, such as ability to stand trial, custody evaluations, and sex offender risk assessments. Additionally, survey data was gathered for specific testing categories, such as cognitive/intellectual tests, neuropsychological tests, multiscale inventories, and single-scale evaluations. The results demonstrated that the most widely used clinical assessment instruments in forensic examinations were the MMPI-2 and the Wechsler IQ scores. The results also demonstrated the use of other assessment instruments in the field of minors evaluation, such as the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI) and parent self-report measures like the Parenting Stress Index (PSI), in addition to more well-known instruments like the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) and the Personality Inventory for Children (PIC).

McLaughlin and Kan (2014) provided an update on the usage of assessment tools by 102 forensic examiners to assess nonsexual violence risk, reaction style/malingering, competency to stand trial (CST), and mental state at the time of alleged offense (MSO). The findings demonstrated that the type of assessment tool and forensic mental health assessment had an impact on test usage. While multiscale inventory like MMPI-2, MMPI-2, MCMI, and PAI were more frequently used in MSO assessments, FAIs/FRIIs were most frequently utilized in evaluations of reaction style/malingering, CST, and risk for nonsexual violence. Evaluators used projective techniques the least across all four forensic concerns (such as the Thematic Apperception Test and the Rorschach inkblot Test).

The other key consideration for using psychological tests in forensic settings is how the test results are interpreted. In general, all psychological test findings should be interpreted in light of the standards group, which may limit their applicability in forensic evaluation. Groth-Marnat (2003) asserts that a well-designed test incorporates both fundamental standardized group norms and particular subgroup norms. A more appropriate and significant interpretation of scores is made possible by an understanding of each of these subgroup norms. Sadly, not all psychological tests are covered by this, especially those used in forensic assessments. The MMPI-2-RF is unusual since it is a thorough assessment of psychopathology with fundamental criteria for healthy people and a variety of comparison groups to support its application in populations of inmates, personal injury claims, and custody evaluation litigants.



Berger (2025) provides a well-structured and internationally agreed-upon framework, the importance of which extends beyond traditional quality management. The ISO 21043-4 Interpretation standard, guided by principles such as rationality, transparency, and relevance, includes standards and suggestions, as well as a common vocabulary and support for both evaluative and investigative interpretations. According to the author, the standard was developed with the goal of establishing uniformity and accountability while allowing for the necessary flexibility across varied areas of expertise. Above all, he believes that ISO 21043 represents a rare chance to integrate and enhance the discipline of forensic science, as well as to strengthen the reliability of expert judgments and faith in the justice system.

Indeed, ISO 21043-4 Interpretation focuses on the case's issues and possible solutions in the form of opinions. The standard recognizes that there are multiple ways to do something correctly and provides the flexibility to accommodate it. At the same time, this flexibility does not include doing things incorrectly in order to ensure the quality of the forensic process.

The Interpretation ISO standard is based on the understanding that forensic science is about asking questions and using science to assist answer those questions. Interpretation explains what our observations signify in relation to the case's central question. As a result, some of the most important requirements are logical: what answers are possible, and what information is needed? The standard's fundamental structure is based on the different types of inquiries and replies or opinions. All essential task information must be considered, and all data, observations, and interpretation methods must be documented. Any known limits or potential sources of mistake in the analysis and interpretation processes must be documented and factored into the interpretation.

In our opinion, namely this ISO standard can become a foundation for approaching national standards for forensic psychological examination in studying the motivational structure of criminals, since it provides clear directions, necessary flexibility, and at the same time implies obligatory nature of potential limitations, which could eliminate, for example, cultural specifics to the maximum extent.

In recent years, several documents containing evaluative comments have been published. The European Network of Forensic Science Institutes (ENFSI) issued the "ENFSI Guideline for Evaluative Reporting in Forensic Science" in 2015. The Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) released "An introductory guide to evaluative reporting" in 2017. In 2021, the UK Forensic Science Regulator will publish "Development of evaluative opinions: codes of practice and conduct for forensic service providers".

While these documents were important to varied degrees, none of them met international standards or incorporated investigative opinion. The ISO 21043-4 Interpretation standard is a truly global standard that covers both evaluative and investigative questions and judgments. This is the initial two-way division in types of opinions: evaluative or inquisitive.



According to Mihaela (2025), the psychiatric evaluation of people charged with international crimes such as war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide has grown to be an important yet challenging part of international criminal justice. In procedures before international tribunals and courts, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) and ad hoc tribunals, this study investigates the function, extent, and constraints of psychological evaluations. Psychological evaluations are frequently used to ascertain the accused's mental competence, their eligibility for trial, or the existence of personality problems that would have affected their behavior. However, there are important ethical and legal issues when psychological competence is incorporated into international legal contexts. According to the author, obstacles include the potential of "pathologizing" political or ideological motives, cultural and linguistic biases, as well as the absence of standardized templates for assessment across different jurisdictions. Moreover, assessments by forensic expert can also affect punishment, criminal responsibility, or views of regret and rehabilitation, and this fact actually creates ethical dilemmas.

The above-mentioned ISO 21043-4 Interpretation can serve as a point of intersection of approaching nation-states' legal system peculiarities within forensic psychological expertise, eliminating the effect of biases, adjusting cultural concerns, providing broader perspective for criminals' motivation analysis, impact of political landscape, etc.

Moreover, there is an evident need for a multidisciplinary strategy, in order to close the gap between legal frameworks and psychological forensic science. It is needed to create integrated systems that guarantee the uniform application of forensic techniques and their conformity with legal requirements; policymakers, legal experts, and forensic scientists must collaborate. This endeavor necessitates investments in infrastructure, technology, and training in addition to the development of open procedures for gathering, analyzing, and presenting evidence. In order for the legal and forensic communities to comprehend one another and recognize the subtleties of each other's fields, appropriate education is essential. Collaborative research, interdisciplinary workshops, and cooperative training programs are examples of initiatives that could improve criminal justice systems' efficacy.

Integrated approach has numerous potential advantages. Justice systems can increase their accuracy, effectiveness, and trustworthiness by promoting a more harmonious interaction between forensic science and legal frameworks. A system that maintains both responsibility and fairness serves society as a whole, and both defendants and victims can have more faith in the impartiality of court decisions. Furthermore, integration fosters innovation since the cooperation of the legal and scientific sectors promotes the creation of innovative approaches and instruments for addressing complicated crimes.

A coordinated, context-sensitive, and rights-based strategy is necessary to develop interdisciplinary standards and ethical principles for psychological evaluations in international criminal justice. Such criteria must draw from law, psychology, human rights, ethics, and cross-cultural studies due to the complexity of international crimes and the variety of cultural, legal, and psychological concerns involved. The development



of strong, equitable, and human rights-compliant frameworks can be guided by the following essential components:

1. Creation of a multidisciplinary working group comprised of legal experts from international criminal law institutions (ICC, ICTY, and ICTR), cross-culturally competent clinical and forensic psychologists; human rights specialists; representatives of vulnerable groups and civil society; and experts in medical law and ethics. In addition to verifying compliance with international legal documents like the Rome Statute, the UN Principles of Medical Ethics, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this committee would be in charge of creating fundamental principles and harmonizing current national standards.
2. Defining minimum ethical and procedural requirements (neutrality and independence from political and prosecutorial influence; clear limitations of interpretation: psychological findings must not be pushed to serve punitive or ideological aims).
3. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for conducting interviews, gathering data, and writing reports; triangulation of data (clinical observation, collateral information, and self-report) to minimize bias and error; and the development of standardized methodologies and tools (culturally adapted instruments that are validated for use across diverse populations). Before being recognized as evidence, psychological instruments should, if feasible, go through peer review and international validation procedures.
4. Forensic experts training and accreditation.
5. Establishing procedures for oversight and review (an impartial review board ought to have the authority to keep an eye on the application of psychological evidence, particularly in international cases).

## Conclusion

International experience and evidence, revealed in the process of integrative review, demonstrates that integrating psychological knowledge into law enforcement activities significantly increases the effectiveness of investigations, contributes to the humanization of criminal proceedings and the development of preventive strategies; at the same time, the use of forensic psychological examinations in combination with criminalistic, medical, and sociological methods allows for a deeper understanding of the nature of criminal behavior, the formation of an objective picture of motives and the creation of conditions for crime prevention at the institutional level.

Meanwhile, large gaps still exist in this integration within the criminal justice system, despite the evident success in forensic psychology science evolution and the strong structures of legal frameworks. These deficiencies manifest themselves as institutional, procedural, instructional, and technical difficulties that compromise the effectiveness and equity of court decisions. In order to have a coherent system where forensic evidence and legal procedures coexist together and guarantee justice is done, it is imperative that these gaps be filled.



The study showed that although forensic psychological evaluations are crucial in international trials, their use is inherent with serious methodological issues that can compromise their validity, usefulness, and even applicability in court.

The absence of uniformity among international legal systems is a major challenge. Psychological evaluations are neither consistently carried out nor consistently interpreted because different courts may function under different procedural rules, definitions, and evidentiary standards. Efforts to guarantee consistency and comparability of assessments across instances and jurisdictions are complicated by this diversity.

Furthermore, psychological evaluations are extremely vulnerable to linguistic and cultural biases, which can substantially undermine their validity, particularly in such a complicated field as the motivations of criminals. Many evaluation instruments may not fairly represent psychological functioning in people from diverse cultural backgrounds since they were created and standardized in particular cultural contexts, frequently Western ones.

Designing culturally sensitive techniques, enhancing interdisciplinary communication between legal and mental health professionals, as well as establishing more precise standards for psychological evaluations in international justice contexts are necessary condition to address current problems.

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