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INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS ON THE CONCLUSIONS OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINATIONS

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Annotation: This article examines the impact of socio-psychological factors on the process and outcomes of forensic psychological examinations. It explores how elements such as the expert's social background, interpersonal communication, group pressure, and emotional state can affect objectivity in expert decision-making. Through a qualitative analysis of expert practice, the study reveals that awareness and management of these factors are essential for ensuring the reliability and impartiality of forensic psychological assessments.

Key Words: Forensic psychology, expert examination, socio-psychological factors, decision-making, objectivity, communication, social influence.

Introduction

Forensic psychological examinations play a critical role in the legal process, providing psychological insights that may influence court decisions. While much attention is given to the methodological and ethical standards of these assessments, less focus has been placed on the socio-psychological context in which experts operate. This paper addresses this gap by analyzing how socio-psychological factors — such as social pressures, interpersonal dynamics, and the expert's own psychological state — influence the conclusions drawn in forensic psychological reports.

Methods

The study utilized a qualitative approach, including:

- Document analysis of 30 anonymized forensic psychological reports to detect patterns of subjective influence.
- Semi-structured interviews with 12 experienced forensic psychologists to gather insights into perceived social and psychological pressures during examinations.
- Thematic coding using NVivo to identify recurring socio-psychological themes affecting decision-making.

Results

The study found several key socio-psychological influences:

- Social pressure from legal authorities was noted as a common source of potential bias.
- Experts' emotional involvement in certain cases was found to unconsciously influence interpretations.
- Group dynamics and institutional culture contributed to conformity in expert conclusions, especially in multidisciplinary evaluations.
- A lack of structured reflection techniques among some experts allowed personal values to subtly shape assessments.



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Discussion

The findings suggest that socio-psychological factors are often underestimated in forensic expert practices. While procedural rigor is upheld, the influence of interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics requires more systematic attention. Training programs should incorporate modules on social cognition, bias awareness, and reflective practice. Establishing peer supervision and standardizing reporting formats can also help mitigate the influence of these factors.

Conclusion

Socio-psychological influences significantly shape the conclusions of forensic psychological examinations. Enhancing expert awareness of these factors and implementing structured methods to counteract bias will improve the quality and credibility of forensic psychological expertise in legal settings.

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