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ADVANCING STANDARDS IN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT: RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN ALBANIA (ASPA-26)

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Faculty of Educational Sciences
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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Psychology and Social Work at the University of Shkodër “Luigj Gurakuqi”, in partnership with European University of Tirana and the Order of Psychologists in Albania, is honored to organize the International Scientific Conference “*Advancing Standards in Psychological Assessment: Research and Practice in Albania.*” The conference is organized within the framework of the National Research and Development Program (PKKZH), project “*Psychological Assessment Instruments in Albania: Challenges, Gaps, and Perspectives for Evidence-Based Practice,*” funded by the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (AKKSHI).

Psychological assessment and evidence-based interventions play a fundamental role in promoting mental health, well-being, social inclusion, and professional accountability. In this context, the use of reliable, valid, and culturally appropriate assessment instruments represents an essential component of high-quality psychological practice. However, important challenges remain regarding the standardization, validation, and ethical use of psychological tools, particularly in emerging professional contexts. This conference aims to provide a scientific and professional platform for critical reflection, interdisciplinary dialogue, and the dissemination of contemporary research findings related to psychological assessment and intervention practices. It brings together academics, researchers, practitioners, and students to exchange knowledge and experiences, while contributing to the strengthening of professional standards and the integration of research into practice.

The abstracts included in this volume reflect a wide range of topics related to psychology, mental health, education, psychotherapy, social well-being, and evidence-based practice. Through this publication, the conference seeks to encourage scientific collaboration, support innovation in professional practice, and contribute to the ongoing development of psychology and related disciplines in Albania and beyond.

The authors presented their research papers in six parallel sessions as below:

Session I: Artificial Intelligence and Digital Psychology
Session II: Psychological Assessment and Psychometrics
Session III: Clinical Psychology and Mental Health
Session IV: Education, Development, and Inclusion
Session V: Forensic, Social, and Contemporary Issues

**SESSION I: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND
DIGITAL PSYCHOLOGY**

Validation of the Ai Anxiety Scale: Psychometric Properties and Demographic Correlates Among Albanian University Students

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Artificial intelligence is becoming an increasingly important part of higher education and everyday life, prompting greater attention to how people emotionally respond to these emerging technologies. This study examined the psychometric properties of the AI Anxiety Scale (AIAS) among Albanian university students and explored whether demographic characteristics and AI information exposure were associated with anxiety levels. A sample of students enrolled in Albanian universities ($N = 280$) completed the 14-item AIAS. Psychometric analyses included reliability testing, exploratory factor analysis, group comparisons, and multiple regression. Results demonstrated excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .919$). Exploratory factor analysis supported a two-factor solution with strong sampling adequacy ($KMO = .907$), explaining 68.34% of total variance. The factor structure suggested two related dimensions: emotional-cognitive anxiety toward AI and perceived societal-functional threat. Participants reported moderate overall levels of AI anxiety. Female students reported significantly higher anxiety than male students, whereas no significant differences emerged across age groups or educational levels. Students with greater exposure to AI-related information reported higher anxiety compared with those reporting no information. In the regression model, demographic and informational variables predicted AI anxiety, but gender emerged as the only unique significant predictor. Findings support the AIAS as a reliable and structurally valid measure for assessing AI-related anxiety in higher education populations. The results further suggest that gender differences and informational exposure may play an important role in shaping emotional responses to AI. As universities increasingly integrate AI technologies into learning environments, understanding technology-related anxiety may be essential for promoting student adaptation, digital confidence, and psychological well-being.

Keywords: AI anxiety, psychometric validation, university students, psychological assessment, Albania.

eMental Health Literacy and Academic Performance: The Moderating Role of Digital Competencies in the Relationship Between Learned Helplessness and Student Outcomes

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In the context of increasing digitalization, eMental health literacy has emerged as a critical factor influencing students' psychological functioning and academic outcomes. This study examined the moderating role of eMental health literacy in the relationship between learned helplessness and academic performance among university students, contributing to the advancement of psychological assessment in digital contexts. A cross-sectional quantitative design was employed with a sample of 195 university students. Data were collected using the Learned Helplessness Questionnaire, the eHealth Literacy Scale (eHEALS), and self-reported academic performance (GPA). Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics and PROCESS Macro (Model 1) to test moderation effects. The results indicated that learned helplessness was significantly negatively associated with academic performance ($\beta = -.30$, $p < .001$), while eMental health literacy was positively associated with academic performance ($\beta = .28$, $p < .001$). Moderation analysis revealed a significant interaction effect between learned helplessness and eMental health literacy ($\beta = .15$, $p < .01$), indicating that the negative impact of learned helplessness on academic performance was weaker among students with higher levels of digital mental health literacy. These findings highlight the protective role of digital competencies in buffering psychological vulnerability and emphasize the importance of integrating digital mental health literacy into educational and assessment practices. The study contributes to contemporary discussions on digital mental health and cross-context psychological assessment.

Keywords: eMental health literacy, learned helplessness, academic performance, digital mental health.

Psychologists' Perceptions of Telepractice in Psychological Assessment: Ethical, Clinical, and Professional Challenges in Albania

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In recent years, telepractice has become a widely used approach in psychological assessment around the world, including in Albania. Although remote assessment has enhanced availability of psychological services and continuity, there are significant ethical, clinical, and methodological issues surrounding confidentiality, test security and standardization as well as the role of technology on professional competence. The present study explored psychologists' views about the ethical-professional issues of telepractice psychological assessment in Albania. This approach identifies several challenges that impact the perceived reliability and validity of remote psychological assessment in response to the following research questions:

(1) What challenges affect the perceived reliability and validity of remote psychological assessment and (2) What are psychologists' perceptions regarding the need for professional standards and training in telepractice? The research uses a mixed methods design as exploratory combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. An anonymous online questionnaire using quota sampling was conducted among licensed psychologists in Albania, with participants divided into subgroups (strata). The questionnaire consisted of Likert-scale items exploring telepractice related perceptions around reliability, confidentiality, environment control, professional competence and training needs in addition to optional qualitative responses capturing views on experience working in remote assessment settings. Descriptive statistical procedures and thematic qualitative analysis were used to analyze the data. The results suggest positive perceptions towards telepractice in terms of its accessibility and continuity but raise concerns about confidentiality, standardization, physical technological limitations, and maintaining the validity of

assessments in remote contexts. Qualitatively the reflections highlighted uncertainty about ethical and professionalism limits, about whether they had received enough training for the role and whether there are clear institutional guidelines in place. Participants who had previous experience of telepractice or training, indicated higher levels of confidence in carrying out remote assessment protocols. The results highlight the need for clearer professional guidance, specialist training and improved systems of quality assurance to support the delivery of valid and ethical telepractice assessment in psychology within Albania.

Keywords: telepractice/ telepsychology, psychological assessment, ethics, professional standards.

Artificial Intelligence as an Assessment Tool in Psychology: A Systematic Review of the Academic Literature (2022–2026)

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly assuming a pivotal role in transforming the field of psychology, offering advanced tools for analysis, diagnosis, and intervention. It contributes to enhancing the efficiency and accuracy of psychological practice by complementing traditional methodologies with innovative technological approaches. Grounded in these developments, the present study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the most recent advancements that AI is introducing into psychology, systematically documenting concrete empirical changes. Following the PRISMA methodological protocol, the analysis incorporated 33 peer-reviewed articles identified across the Springer Nature, APA PsycNet, and Google Scholar databases, using the search terms "AI in psychology" and "AI as assessment tool in psychology". The study is guided by two primary objectives: (1) to identify the empirically verified contributions of AI within the psychological domain, and (2) to determine which subfields of psychology are most profoundly affected by recent technological advancements. Findings indicate that AI's contribution is transformative in nature, particularly through the establishment of technological ecosystems serving preventive, diagnostic, and monitoring functions. Advanced algorithms and therapeutic chatbots have substantially enhanced clinical efficiency and access to specialized services, offering a therapeutic alliance functionally comparable to human interaction. The most significantly impacted subfields include Clinical Psychology, where AI augments diagnostic accuracy and personalized interventions; Psychometrics, through the automated generation of assessment instruments with high validity; and Academic Psychology, where models such as ChatGPT are challenging traditional academic integrity

frameworks. Despite these considerable innovations, the study underscores critical structural risks, including algorithmic bias and the potential erosion of human empathy within therapeutic contexts. It is concluded that AI should be conceptualized as a complementary instrument that empowers human practice, operating under rigorous ethical oversight and professional governance.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, psychology, innovation.

Digital Exposure and Psychological Well-Being: The Role of Self-Concept Clarity in Identity Stability Among Young Adults in the Digital Age

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This study examined the relationship between digital exposure, self-concept clarity, and psychological well-being among young adults in the context of increasing digitalization. In contemporary societies, digital environments are no longer only spaces for communication but also central contexts for identity construction, comparison, and self-evaluation. The study addressed the following research question: To what extent is digital engagement associated with self-concept clarity and psychological well-being among young adults? A cross-sectional quantitative design was employed with a sample of university students and young adults aged 18–40. Data were collected using the Self-Concept Clarity Scale (SCCS) and standardized self-report measures assessing psychological well-being and emotional distress. Digital exposure was operationalized through indicators of daily smartphone use, time spent on social media, and general online engagement patterns. Data were analyzed using SPSS through correlation and regression analyses. The results indicated that higher levels of digital exposure were significantly associated with lower self-concept clarity ($\beta = -.26, p < .01$). Lower self-concept clarity was in turn associated with higher levels of psychological distress and reduced emotional stability. These findings suggest that continuous digital engagement may contribute to identity diffusion and reduced psychological coherence in young adults. The study highlights the importance of self-concept clarity as a psychological mechanism linking digital environments and mental well-being, contributing to understanding psychological adaptation and resilience in digitally mediated societies.

Keywords: digital exposure, self-concept clarity, psychological well-being, identity coherence, digital behavior.

Anxiety in Adolescents and the Impacts of Technology and the Family Environment

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This study emerged from a need to better understand the emotional state of students, who increasingly display signs of anxiety and insecurity within school psycho-social service environments. The primary focus of the paper is the analysis of the connection between technology addiction and the experience of anxiety. Additionally, the study is enriched by analyzing the impact of parenting styles and the school environment. To provide a realistic overview, the study is based on a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design from two different realities in Shkodër, featuring a sample of 300 students: 150 students from the public high school “28 Nëntori” and 150 students from the private high school “Atë Pjetër Meshkalla”. The methodology includes standardized scales for anxiety assessment (GAD-7) and the instrument for assessing internet addiction (IAT Young 2016), approved by the psycho-social service guidelines of the Ministry of Education and Sports and ASCAP. The research questions focus on the correlation between technology addiction and the experience of anxiety, the consequences of procrastinating and overthinking in the academic process, as well as the influence of the parenting style process. The findings of the study aim to verify the link between technology and the increase in anxiety, as well as the impact of the family environment. In an interdisciplinary framework, the study also includes a legal perspective on students' information regarding their rights and confidentiality within the psycho-social service, as an essential element for guaranteeing security in seeking professional help.

Keywords: Anxiety, adolescence, technology addiction, parents, confidentiality.

Social Media, Ai and Self-Diagnosis: Albanian Young Adults' Pathways to Psychological Labels

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Background: Albanian young adults increasingly arrive to clinical services with self-diagnosed conditions such as anxiety, ADHD or personality disorders, often first encountered through TikTok, Instagram and other social media platforms. Short-video content and online influencers frequently normalize mental health labels, while AI-based chatbots and symptom-checkers offer apparently personalized explanations and advice. This combination may support early recognition of distress but can also generate confusion, over-identification with diagnoses and delays in seeking professional help. This study explores how Albanian young adults use social media and AI-mediated tools to self-diagnose psychological difficulties and how these practices shape their emotional reactions and decisions about help-seeking. We will conduct a qualitative interview study with approximately 12 to 18 young adults aged 18 to 30 who report having used social media content and AI tools to interpret or confirm mental health concerns. Semi-structured interviews will examine trajectories from first experiences of distress to exposure to TikTok or other platforms, the move from social media content to AI-based consultations, perceived accuracy or inaccuracy of the information obtained, and the influences of stigma, access barriers and cultural beliefs. Interviews will be audio recorded, transcribed and analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis. We expect to identify patterns in which social media functions as a gateway that fuels psychological self-diagnosis and directs young adults toward AI tools for further validation. Anticipated findings include both risks, such as mislabeling, heightened anxiety and delayed contact with professionals, and perceived benefits, such as validation and easier language for expressing distress. The study will provide practice-oriented insights for clinicians and educators and will contribute to discussions about ethical standards for the use of social media and AI in psychological assessment in Albania.

Keywords: social media, influence, AI, self-diagnosis, Albanian youth.

Digital Mental Health and Artificial Intelligence: Opportunities, Challenges, and Future Directions

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The rapid development of digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming the landscape of mental health care by expanding access, improving early detection, and enabling personalized interventions. Digital mental health solutions—including mobile applications, teletherapy platforms, wearable devices, and AI-driven chatbots—are increasingly being integrated into clinical and community settings to address the growing global burden of mental disorders. These tools offer scalable, cost-effective support, particularly for underserved populations who face barriers to traditional in-person services. Artificial intelligence plays a pivotal role in this transformation by enabling advanced data analysis, predictive modeling, and adaptive treatment recommendations. Machine learning algorithms can identify patterns in behavioral, linguistic, and physiological data to detect early signs of depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions. AI-based conversational agents and virtual assistants also provide real-time psychological support, psychoeducation, and symptom monitoring, enhancing continuity of care between clinical sessions. Despite these promising developments, the implementation of AI in mental health raises significant ethical, legal, and clinical concerns. Issues related to data privacy, algorithmic bias, transparency, and the reliability of automated decision-making must be carefully addressed to ensure safe and equitable use. Furthermore, the therapeutic alliance, cultural sensitivity, and the risk of over-reliance on technology remain critical considerations in the design and deployment of digital interventions. This paper explores current applications of AI in digital mental health, evaluates their effectiveness based on recent empirical research, and discusses the ethical and regulatory frameworks required to guide their responsible integration into mental health systems. By highlighting both the potential and limitations of these technologies, the study aims to contribute to the development of evidence-based, ethically sound, and patient-centered digital mental health solutions.

Keywords: digital mental health, artificial intelligence, machine learning, teletherapy, AI chatbots.

Who Really Decides? Ai, Human Judgment, and the Ethics of Performance Evaluation

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The increasing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into organizational performance evaluation is often presented as a pathway toward greater objectivity, consistency, and efficiency in decision-making. However, this shift raises critical ethical questions regarding the role of human judgment, the transparency of evaluation processes, and the distribution of responsibility in organizational contexts. This paper critically examines the assumption that AI enhances objectivity in performance evaluation by exploring how algorithmic systems may reproduce, obscure, or even amplify existing biases embedded in historical data and organizational practices. The central research question guiding this study is: To what extent does the use of AI in performance evaluation redefine, rather than eliminate, human bias and ethical responsibility? A secondary question addresses the implications of delegating evaluative decisions to algorithmic systems: Who ultimately holds accountability for decisions influenced or made by AI? Adopting a conceptual and analytical approach grounded in interdisciplinary literature on psychological assessment, organizational behavior, and AI ethics, the study develops a critical framework for understanding the interaction between human judgment and algorithmic decision-making. The analysis focuses on three core dimensions: perceived objectivity, accountability, and ethical risk in low-regulation environments. The findings suggest that AI does not eliminate subjectivity but transforms it into less visible and less contestable forms, thereby complicating ethical oversight. In contexts where institutional standards for psychological and organizational assessment remain underdeveloped, such as emerging economies, the integration of AI may intensify risks related to fairness, transparency, and professional accountability. The paper concludes by proposing the necessity of maintaining structured human oversight, redefining ethical guidelines for AI-assisted evaluation, and promoting context-sensitive standards that ensure responsible use of AI in performance management practices.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, performance evaluation, human judgment, ethics, algorithmic bias.

Misinterpretation of Psychological Symptoms on Young People Through Self-Diagnostication on Social Networks

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Social networks serve young people not only for interaction but also for searching about sensations, emotions and physical, cognitive and psychological symptoms. Teenagers and young people are finding it increasingly difficult to live without social media every day. Young people are looking for simple diagnostic tools and resources. For them, it is better to describe symptoms and avoid the real narrative, the story from real therapy with a psychologist. Young people prefer to avoid difficult emotions and find easy and temporary solutions. These solutions are wrong, quick. Individuals share their personal stories on social networks and seek attention. Appropriate and ethical use of social media can expand opportunities for social connections and increase self-esteem. Self-diagnosis on online platforms stems from the desire of individuals to have control over their emotions and mental health. Seeking online help helps young people who suffer from mental health stigma and prejudice. This paper examines the impact of social networks on young people and the misinterpretation of psychological symptoms through online self-diagnosis. The aim of this study is to determine psychological symptoms and the emotional impact, the consequences of emotional misinterpretation. The methodology used in this study follows a quantitative approach, administering questionnaires adapted from contemporary literature. The participants of this study will be students of the “Luigj Gurakuqi” University who will be able to access the questionnaire through digital communication networks. The results of this study can provide a basis for awareness policies and further scientific research to raise awareness of youth, adolescents and each person who self-diagnoses through social networks and artificial intelligence.

Keywords: psychological symptoms, self-diagnosis, social networks, artificial intelligence, social interaction.

Psychological Evaluation in Art Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

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This study examines the relationship between psychological evaluation and the semiotic structure of art, conceptualizing aesthetic experience as a process of symbolic interpretation and meaning construction. From a semiotic perspective, the artwork is understood as a system of signs that generates meaning through symbolic, visual, and cultural structures. In parallel, psychology explores the cognitive, emotional, and cultural mechanisms through which individuals perceive, interpret, and internalize these signs. The study draws upon Charles Sanders Peirce’s theory of signs and Carl Gustav Jung’s analytical psychology, particularly his conception of symbols and the collective unconscious, to investigate the interaction between artistic representation and psychological interpretation. It argues that artistic meaning is not fixed or inherent within the artwork itself, but emerges dynamically through the interaction between the semiotic organization of the work and the subjective psychological experience of the perceiver. The analysis highlights art as a symbolic communication system capable of activating emotional responses, cognitive associations, and interpretative processes that shape aesthetic experience. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the role of cultural and psychological factors in mediating the reception and interpretation of artistic symbols. In this context, aesthetic experience is conceptualized as an interactive dialogue between the symbolic structure of the artwork and the internal psychological world of the observer. By integrating perspectives from semiotics and psychology, the study contributes to an interdisciplinary framework for understanding aesthetic interpretation, symbolic communication, and the psychological dimensions of artistic experience.

Keywords: semiotics, psychological evaluation, aesthetic experience, symbolic interpretation, art perception.

Psychological Assessment of Technology Anxiety and Social Inequalities in Older Adults: Implications for Evidence-Based Practice in Urban Contexts

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Rapid digitalization and urbanization of modern cities have significant impacts on the psycho-emotional well-being of older adults. This study aims to assess how technology use and social inequalities affect anxiety and social isolation among older adults, and to provide recommendations for evidence-based psychological practice in urban contexts. Methods: A systematic review was conducted on 21 peer-reviewed articles published between 2020 and 2025. Studies included participants aged 60 and above living in urban areas. Data extraction focused on measures of technology anxiety, social inequalities, mental health outcomes, and interventions promoting well-being. Both quantitative and qualitative findings were synthesized to identify key trends and barriers. Results: Findings indicate that rapid urbanization contributes to social isolation, urban stress, and physical limitations among older adults. Digital technologies, including internet use and mental health applications, help reduce loneliness and anxiety, enhancing quality of life. However, barriers such as limited technological literacy, privacy concerns, and insufficient guidance hinder adoption. Community infrastructure, green spaces, and interpersonal interactions, including relationships with care staff in elderly residences, are critical for promoting mental health and social engagement. Conclusions and Implications: Integrating sustainable urban planning, accessible technology, and social support can significantly improve older adults' well-being. Recommendations include improving access to and training in digital tools, developing user-friendly applications, fostering social interaction, creating community green spaces, and implementing institutional policies that support mental health and quality of life. These findings have direct implications for evidence-based psychological assessment and intervention strategies in urban contexts.

Keywords: technology anxiety, older adults, social inequalities, urbanization, well-being.

Use of Digital Technology in Social Services

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Social services represent a fundamental pillar of welfare and social justice, providing services to marginalized individuals, groups and communities. As necessary mechanisms for the protection of these groups, they are currently facing a challenging transformation, that of adapting to digital developments and artificial intelligence. This paper, as a meta-analysis, is based on a systematic review and comparative analysis of empirical studies and international reports on the use of digital technology and artificial intelligence in social services. Scientific databases and institutional sources were used to select the literature, focusing on publications from recent years and in the European context, with particular emphasis on the Nordic countries. The inclusion criteria were: (i) studies that directly address the use of digital technology in social services or integrated healthcare; (ii) peer-reviewed publications or reports from recognized international organizations; (iii) studies presenting empirical data or analysis of concrete policies and practices; (iv) publications in English or in a language accessible for analysis. Exclusion criteria included: (i) studies outside the focus of social services; (ii) publications without empirical basis or without direct relevance to the topic; (iii) duplications or studies of low methodological quality. A critical assessment of the challenges related to digital skills, professional ethics and data security was also conducted, highlighting the need for sustainable development of capacities and regulatory frameworks. The results suggest that digital technologies have the potential to increase efficiency, reduce costs and improve user satisfaction, but require sustained investment in training, skills development and ethical frameworks (OECD (2019b). Digital Economy and Society Index Report 2019: Digital Public Services.)

Keywords: social services, digital transformation, digital well-being, technology, inclusion.

**SESSION II: PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
AND VALIDATION**

Beyond Categories: Applying the Hitop Framework to Psychological Assessment in Adolescents

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Psychological assessment of adolescents presents distinctive challenges that categorical diagnostic systems, such as the DSM-5, are ill-equipped to address. Adolescence is a nonlinear developmental phase characterized by rapid neurobiological change, identity formation, and heightened contextual sensitivity — conditions that render static, threshold-based diagnoses both unreliable and clinically limiting. High comorbidity rates, fluctuating symptom presentations, and the risk of premature labeling are pressing concerns in this population. The Hierarchical Taxonomy of Psychopathology (HiTOP) offers a theoretically grounded and empirically validated alternative that reconceptualizes psychopathology as a dimensional continuum rather than a set of discrete categorical entities. This paper presents a conceptual and applied analysis of HiTOP as a framework for psychological assessment in adolescents, drawing on integrative diagnostic practice and case-based illustration. The paper examines the structural limitations of categorical nosology in adolescent assessment, focusing on polythetic diagnostic criteria, high comorbidity rates, and the developmental instability of symptom profiles. It outlines the HiTOP model — including its hierarchical structure from the general psychopathology factor (p-factor) through spectra, subfactors, and maladaptive traits — arguing that this framework better captures the transdiagnostic nature of adolescent psychopathology. Specific attention is given to the p-factor as an indicator of overall vulnerability, and to instruments such as the PID-5 and MMPI-3 in mapping dimensional profiles. The paper further addresses the concept of the adolescent as a ‘problem ambassador’ — a systemic lens through which presenting symptoms are understood as adaptive responses to contextual imbalance rather than individual deficits. This perspective shifts the focus from disorder identification toward mapping dimensional profiles, strengths, and developmental trajectories. Practical implications for Albanian clinical practice are discussed, including the potential of HiTOP-aligned

instruments to support culturally sensitive, evidence-based assessment standards. The paper concludes with recommendations for integrating dimensional frameworks into training, practice, and tool development in emerging professional contexts.

Keywords: adolescent assessment, dimensional diagnostics, HiTOP, p-factor, psychological assessment standards.

Psychological Assessment Governance in Transitional Contexts: Challenges for Evidence Based Practice in Albania

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Psychological assessment remains a key component of the practice of psychologists who provide their expertise in clinical, school, organizational or legal settings. However, in countries in transition and usually with low resources, psychological assessment systems still remain unregulated and standardized to a very small extent. This study presents a narrative review that analyzes the systemic and professional challenges that affect the practice of psychological assessment in countries in transition such as Albania. This study emphasizes the challenges of limited regulatory data, insufficient psychometric training of professionals, the lack of national mechanisms for the accreditation of psychological instruments as well as concerns related to the ethics of using these assessment tools that have not been validated for the Albanian context. This article argues that in a context like Albania, the growing demand for psychological services has not yet been matched by equivalent development in governance, assessment and quality assurance structures. The article concludes by emphasizing the need for much stronger institutional mechanisms, professional training and evidence-based regulatory frameworks.

Keywords: psychological assessment, test governance, evidence based practice, psychometric infrastructure, Albania.

Beyond Translation: Cultural and Psychometric Challenges in Validating Psychological Instruments in the Albanian Context

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The increasing use of psychological instruments in Albanian-speaking contexts has exposed a critical gap in the availability of culturally and psychometrically validated measures. Existing practices often rely on direct translation or limited adaptation procedures, which, while methodologically convenient, may not sufficiently capture the cultural and conceptual nuances embedded in psychological constructs. This paper aims to critically examine the methodological, linguistic, and cultural challenges involved in the validation of psychological instruments in the Albanian context, drawing on practical experience from ongoing validation efforts focused on self-conscious emotions and related constructs. Adopting a reflective methodological approach, the paper integrates insights from multiple validation processes, including translation and back-translation, factor analytic techniques, and reliability assessments. Particular emphasis is placed on the difficulty of achieving conceptual equivalence for constructs such as shame, guilt, and empathy, which are deeply shaped by cultural norms, social expectations, and linguistic structures. The analysis suggests that current validation practices, while technically aligned with international standards, often remain insufficiently sensitive to cultural variability, thereby raising important questions about the cross-cultural validity of widely used measures. The paper argues for a more integrative validation framework that moves beyond procedural rigor to incorporate cultural and linguistic reflexivity. It concludes by highlighting the need for contextually grounded guidelines and collaborative efforts to advance the quality and relevance of psychological assessment in Albania.

Keywords: psychological instruments, validation, self-conscious emotions, Albanian cultural context.

Adaptation and Validation of the Interpersonal Jealousy Scale in Albania: Evidence from a Cross-Sectional Study

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This study aims to adapt and validate the Interpersonal Jealousy Scale within the Albanian cultural context, addressing the need for reliable and culturally sensitive measures of self-conscious emotions. Despite the relevance of jealousy in interpersonal and romantic relationships, its psychometric assessment remains underexplored in non-Western and collectivistic-oriented cultures, including Albania. The present research seeks to evaluate the factorial structure, reliability, and construct validity of the 18-item version of the IJS in an Albanian-speaking sample. Data were collected through an online survey administered primarily to adults aged 18–45, including students and professionals. The validation process involved translation and back-translation procedures, followed by exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses to assess the scale’s structural integrity. Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability indices. To establish convergent validity, the IJS was examined in relation to theoretically relevant constructs, including social comparison orientation (INCOM), self-esteem (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale), and attachment-related anxiety (SAAM subscale). Divergent validity was assessed through the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), capturing global cognitive evaluations of well-being expected to correlate negatively with jealousy. It is hypothesized that interpersonal jealousy will be positively associated with social comparison and attachment anxiety, and negatively associated with self-esteem and life satisfaction. By providing a psychometrically sound Albanian version of the IJS, this study contributes to the broader literature on self-conscious emotions and offers a valuable tool for future research and applied settings. Furthermore, it advances cross-cultural understanding of jealousy by situating it within the socio-emotional dynamics of Albanian society. This study is part of a wider project the researchers have undertaken regarding the adaptation and validation of self-conscious emotions in the Albanian context.

Keywords: self-conscious emotions, jealousy, IJS measure, Albanian culture, validation process.

Preliminary Psychometric Validation of a Multi-Dimensional Instrument Assessing Academic Motivation, Perceived Meritocracy, and Migration Intentions in an Albanian Context

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The development and validation of reliable and culturally appropriate psychological assessment instruments remain a critical priority in emerging professional contexts. In Albania, the limited availability of validated tools capable of capturing complex psychosocial constructs highlights the need for context-sensitive measurement approaches. This study aims to examine the preliminary psychometric properties of a newly developed multi-dimensional instrument assessing academic motivation, perceived meritocracy, perceived opportunities in Albania versus abroad, and migration intentions among university students. The study addresses three research questions: (1) Does the instrument demonstrate acceptable internal consistency across its subscales? (2) Does its factor structure reflect the proposed theoretical model? (3) To what extent does the instrument adequately capture both psychological and contextual determinants of student decision-making? A quantitative cross-sectional design was employed. Data were collected from undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University of Shkodra using a structured self-report questionnaire developed for this study. Internal consistency is evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha coefficients, while exploratory factor analysis is conducted to assess construct validity and examine the underlying factor structure. Preliminary findings are expected to indicate satisfactory levels of internal consistency and a theoretically coherent multi-factor structure. The study contributes to ongoing efforts to strengthen psychological assessment standards in Albania by addressing existing gaps in instrument development and validation. It is recommended that future research extend this validation across diverse populations and institutional contexts, supporting the advancement of standardized, culturally grounded, and evidence-based assessment practices.

Keywords: psychometrics, psychological assessment, academic motivation, meritocracy, migration intentions.

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Mspss): Psychometric Properties of the Albanian Version

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Perceived social support is a very important factor that influences psychological well-being and coping with psychosocial distress in individuals, especially young people. The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) is a 12-item instrument designed to assess the perceived adequacy of social support from three sources: family, friends, and significant other, using a 5-point Likert scale. MSPSS is validated in different contexts, however a validated version in Albanian is currently missing. This survey study aims to examine the reliability and validity of the MSPSS in a sample of University of Shkoder students. The main research questions are: (1) Does the Albanian version of the MSPSS show significant internal consistency? (2) Does its factorial structure replicate the original three-dimensional model? A multi-stage cluster sampling approach will be employed, involving the random selection from six faculties in the first stage, followed by study programs and courses in the other stages. Selected participants will be asked to complete a self-administered questionnaire. MSPSS internal consistency will be examined using Cronbach’s alpha and the Split-Half method, and a confirmatory factor analysis will be conducted to assess the model fit of the three-factor structure of the scale. MSPSS is expected to demonstrate high reliability and validity, which will be consistent with the original version of the scale.

Keywords: perceived social support, MSPSS, psychometric properties, internal consistency, confirmatory factor analysis

Assessing the Internal Consistency and Construct Validity of Relationship Assessment Scale (Ras), Albanian Version

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Satisfaction in romantic relationships is a key component that influences individuals' psychological well-being. Due to this importance, it is necessary for standardized instruments that measure this construct to be adapted and validated across different cultural contexts. This study aims to evaluate the psychometric properties of the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) in the Albanian context. RAS comprises 7 items scored on a 5-point Likert scale to measure one single dimension: relationship satisfaction. Eligible participants include students from the University of Shkoder who have ever been involved in a romantic relationship. Participants are selected using a stratified random sampling method across four faculties of the University. Data are collected using an online questionnaire. The analysis of gathered data will focus on assessing the internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and half-split method. To verify the unidimensional structure of RAS, construct validity will be assessed via a confirmatory factor analysis. It is expected that the RAS will demonstrate good psychometric properties, including high internal consistency and strong construct validity, consistent with findings from other cultural contexts. Furthermore, the RAS is expected to be considered a valid instrument for measuring relationship satisfaction in the Albanian context.

Keywords: relationship satisfaction, RAS, internal consistency, construct validity, confirmatory factor analysis.

Psychometric Validation of the Meanings of Adolescent Masculinity Scale (Mams) in the Albanian Context

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The study aims to examine the psychometric properties of the Meanings of Adolescent Masculinity Scale (MAMS), originally developed by Oransky and Fisher (2009), following its cultural adaptation to the Albanian context. Masculinity norms during adolescence represent a critical domain for psychological assessment, particularly in socio-cultural contexts where gender expectations remain salient. The study seeks to evaluate the reliability and underlying factor structure of the adapted instrument. The original 27-item scale, comprising four dimensions (Constant Effort, Emotional Restriction, Heterosexism, and Social Teasing), was translated and culturally adapted, resulting in a 23-item version. A pilot study was conducted to assess linguistic clarity and cultural relevance, leading to minor modifications and item exclusion. The final version was administered to a sample of $N = 250$ adolescent boys. Participants were recruited using a convenience sampling method. Descriptive statistics were used to examine item distribution and variability. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha for the total scale and subscales. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using Principal Axis Factoring with Direct Oblimin rotation. Sampling adequacy was evaluated using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure and Bartlett’s test of sphericity. The results indicated satisfactory internal consistency for both the overall scale and its subscales. The exploratory factor analysis was broadly consistent with the four-factor structure reported in the original instrument. A small number of items demonstrated lower factor loadings or cross-loadings and were subsequently reviewed. The adapted version of the MAMS appears to be a reliable and structurally valid instrument for assessing masculinity norms among adolescent boys in the Albanian context. The findings support its use in future research and contribute to the development of culturally sensitive psychometric tools in Albania.

Keywords: adolescent boys, cultural adaptation, masculinity norms, psychometric validation

Assessing Psychological Distress and Social Media Use: Psychometric Evidence from the DASS-21 Among University Students

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The growing use of social media has raised important concerns regarding its potential impact on psychological well-being, particularly among university students. This study aimed to examine the relationship between daily social media use and psychological well-being among students enrolled in the Psychology and Social Work programs at the University “Luigj Gurakuqi.” A total of 186 students participated in the study. Demographic data were collected, including gender and age, together with information regarding the number of hours spent daily on social media. Psychological well-being was assessed using the DASS-21 scale (Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale). Exploratory factor analysis supported the construct validity of the instrument, revealing a stable five-factor structure that explained 59.63% of the total variance. Reliability analysis demonstrated excellent internal consistency for the total scale (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .89$), while the subscales showed acceptable to good reliability coefficients. Further analyses indicated statistically significant differences in psychological distress according to daily hours of use, $F(2,173) = 4.43$, $p = .013$. Students reporting 3-5 hours of daily use showed the highest distress scores. No statistically significant gender differences were found, and age was not significantly associated with psychological distress. These findings suggest that moderate to high levels of daily social media use may be associated with poorer psychological well-being among university students. The study contributes to the growing literature on digital behavior and mental health and highlights the importance of promoting balanced and healthy social media habits within university settings.

Keywords: social media, psychological well-being, university students,
DASS-21.

Validation of the Personality Instrument Big Five Inventory in the Albanian Context Using Principal Component Analysis

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Personality is a core construct in psychology and research on individual differences. The Big Five Inventory (BFI) is one of the most used instruments for measuring personality traits. It has been established as a standardized tool in the existing literature. However, there is currently no research validating this instrument for use in the Albanian context. This study aims to conduct a factor analysis with a sample of Albanian students using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to determine whether the BFI can be effectively utilized in Albania. This cross-sectional study involved 273 participants. PCA with Varimax rotation was employed for the factor analysis. PCA supported the original version of the instrument, although some items deviated from this structure in the Albanian context. These findings are significant as they provide evidence for the instrument's factor structure while also highlighting items that do not conform to this structure. The implications of this study are relevant to personality assessment in Albania, and further studies are recommended to employ more

Keywords: Big Five Inventory, personality, psychological assessment, principal component analysis, psychometrics.

Standardization and Cultural Adaptation of Psychological Assessment Tools in Albania

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Psychological assessment is a complex and multidimensional process that combines information from standardized tests, clinical interviews, and behavioral observations. By integrating these sources, clinicians gain a fuller understanding of an individual’s cognitive, emotional, and personality functioning. In Albania, many psychological tools are still translated rather than fully adapted, which can limit their validity. This review aims to explore how psychological assessment tools are standardized and culturally adapted in Albania, highlighting the importance of developing instruments that are both scientifically strong and culturally appropriate. The study used a qualitative descriptive design based on a systematic review of existing literature, including scientific articles, textbooks, and international guidelines from organizations such as the APA and ITC. The review included peer-reviewed studies and international literature on psychometrics, test adaptation, and measurement invariance. A thematic analysis was conducted, combining predefined categories such as standardization, reliability, validity, and cross-cultural equivalence with new themes that emerged from the Albanian literature, particularly gaps in practice. Relevant studies were identified through database searches, carefully screened, and then analyzed thematically. The findings were organized and synthesized according to established psychometric standards. Since this study is based on existing literature, no human participants were involved. The findings show that psychological tools in Albania are often translated rather than fully adapted to the local context. As a result, local

norms and validation studies are still limited, which affects how confidently results can be interpreted. While international standards are generally recognized, they are not always fully applied in practice. Overall, the situation reflects common challenges seen in other low-resource contexts and highlights the need for stronger standardization and more culturally sensitive psychometric development.

Keywords: psychological assessment, standardization, reliability, validity, cultural adaptation

Efficiency Without Compromise: A Structured 45-Minute Biopsychosocial Assessment Model in Clinical Practice-A Pilot Study in Disability Care Settings

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Time constraints in contemporary clinical psychology challenge practitioners to deliver comprehensive assessments without compromising depth or clinical accuracy. The biopsychosocial model provides a holistic framework for understanding mental health; however, its application within brief intake sessions remains limited in practice. This paper presents a pilot implementation of a 45-minute biopsychosocial assessment model designed to enhance efficiency while maintaining clinical rigor. The model was applied in two clinical cases within disability care settings, incorporating systematic data collection across biological, psychological, and social domains alongside real-time case formulation. Preliminary findings suggest that the model supported comprehensive data gathering within the allocated timeframe, enabled early identification of key clinical drivers (including relational and trauma-related factors), and informed targeted intervention planning. It also demonstrated feasibility across varying levels of clinical complexity, including dual diagnosis and trauma presentations. Although limited by a small sample size, these findings suggest that time-limited biopsychosocial assessment models may enhance clinical consistency, decision-making, and service accessibility in high-demand care settings. The proposed model contributes to advancing standards in psychological assessment by offering a practical, replicable, and person-centered framework for efficient clinical practice.

Keywords: biopsychosocial assessment, brief psychological assessment, clinical case formulation, disability care settings, time-limited clinical practice.

Psychological Assessment Practices of Students with Disabilities in Mainstream Education: The Role of Assessment Commissions and the Challenges of Standardization – Evidence from the Shkodër Region

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Psychological assessment constitutes a fundamental component in ensuring inclusive education and in determining appropriate support for students with disabilities (SD) in mainstream education. In this process, assessment commissions play a key role in identifying students' needs and guiding decision-making for educational and psychosocial interventions. However, in the Albanian context, significant challenges remain regarding the standardization of practices, the use of validated instruments, and the clarity of institutional procedures. This study aims to analyze current psychological assessment practices, with a particular focus on the functioning of assessment commissions, professional challenges, and the need for improvement in mainstream education in the Shkodër region. The study is based on a quantitative research approach, using a structured questionnaire developed on the basis of international literature on school psychology practices and adapted to the Albanian context. The study population includes school psychologists, support teachers, and school principals under the Local Education Office of Shkodër, where currently 33 psycho-social service staff, 130 support teachers, and 191 students with disabilities attending mainstream education are involved. The instrument used explores dimensions such as: assessment practices at school and commission levels, the use of standardized instruments, interprofessional collaboration, challenges in decision-making processes, and ethical aspects. The data will be analyzed through descriptive statistics, identifying patterns and differences across professional roles. Expected findings are anticipated to highlight variability in the functioning of assessment commissions, limited use of standardized instruments, and the need to strengthen institutional guidelines and professional training. The study aims to contribute to strengthening evidence-based practices and to provide concrete recommendations for improving the quality, standardization, and

functioning of psychological assessment processes within the framework of inclusive education in Albania.

Keywords: psychological assessment, inclusive education, students with disabilities, assessment commissions, school psychology

**SESSION 3 : CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY AND
WELL-BEING**

Randomized Controlled Study of a Self-Administered Self-Compassion Training Program and its Influence on Subjective Happiness

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We already know that self-compassion has a positive impact on psychological health and personal well-being. Various programs have been developed to increase individuals' initial level of self-compassion. However, most of these training programs are rarely compared to active control conditions, are lengthy, and are generally conducted through group meetings. The main objective of this article is to determine the feasibility and effects of a two-week online self-administered self-compassion training program by comparing it to a cognitive control training. The first hypothesis predicts an increase in self-compassion levels among participants who completed the self-compassion training. The second hypothesis predicts an effect of this training on subjective happiness. Volunteer participants were randomly assigned to one of the two training groups ($n = 39$). Levels of self-compassion and subjective happiness were measured before and after the training using self-report questionnaires (SCS-F and SHS-F). The results show, first, that only participants who completed the self-compassion training experienced a significant increase

in their level of self-compassion after the intervention, whereas this level remained stable among participants in the control group. Second, after controlling for participants' initial level of subjective happiness, we observed a positive influence of self-compassion training on post-training subjective happiness. In conclusion, this self-compassion program could become a new tool for practitioners and researchers wishing to increase self-compassion levels among French-speaking individuals through a self-administered training program that has demonstrated its effectiveness.

Keywords: self-compassion, training, online intervention, subjective happiness

Organizational Climate for Recovery: A Qualitative Foundation for Developing Recovery-Supportive Workplace Measures

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Recovery from work is increasingly relevant for employee well-being, yet research has mainly focused on individual recovery experiences, such as psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery, and control. Less attention has been paid to how organizational contexts can be assessed in terms of their capacity to support or hinder recovery processes. This individual-centered perspective risks overlooking both the organizational antecedents of recovery and the need for assessment tools capable of measuring recovery-supportive workplace conditions. Building on recovery from work research and organizational climate theory, this contribution introduces the construct of Organizational Climate for Recovery (OCR), defined as employees' shared perceptions of the extent to which recovery activities are expected, supported, and encouraged within the organization. The aim is to conceptualize OCR as a theoretically grounded construct and establish a preliminary basis for its future operationalization through assessment measures. The study is based on a conceptual analysis complemented by exploratory qualitative evidence from 22 semi-structured interviews with employees from different occupational sectors and national contexts. Interviews explored work routines, experiences of strain, internal and external recovery practices, and perceptions of organizational support for recovery. Data were analyzed through a bottom-up thematic approach inspired by Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Findings suggest that recovery is embedded in organizational norms, practices, and leadership behaviors. Five interrelated dimensions emerged as central to a recovery-supportive climate: workload management, social support, autonomy, availability of recovery resources, and leadership support. These dimensions provide a preliminary content domain for future scale development and validation. The contribution advances psychological assessment by extending evidence-based evaluation to organizational contexts and by outlining a framework for assessing recovery-supportive organizational climates.

Keywords: organizational climate for recovery; psychological assessment; recovery from work; scale development.

Sustainability and Identity in Changing Contexts: A Psychological Perspective on Ecological Awareness

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The ecological crisis, intertwined with contemporary geopolitical dynamics, is increasingly reshaping individual and collective identities within global tourism. Although sustainable tourism is steadily growing, significant psychological barriers still hinder the adoption of environmentally responsible behaviors. This study aims to explore how ecological awareness influences tourism-related decision-making and identity processes, focusing on environmental identity and psychological barriers to change. In particular, it addresses how psychological factors can support the transition toward more sustainable tourism practices. This study adopts a theoretical and integrative approach grounded in environmental psychology and social-cognitive frameworks. It draws on models of environmental identity and psychological barriers to pro-environmental behavior, such as perceived inefficacy and psychological distance. A narrative review of the literature was conducted to examine how these constructs apply to tourism contexts, with particular attention to decision-making processes and behavioral change. Findings suggest that ecological awareness can positively influence tourism choices by promoting more sustainable behaviors. However, this relationship is moderated by psychological barriers, including low perceived individual efficacy and the tendency to perceive climate change as distant and abstract. Moreover, tourism experiences can act as contexts for identity transformation, strengthening environmental identity and supporting long-term behavioral change. The study highlights the central role of psychological processes in shaping sustainable tourism practices. Enhancing ecological awareness and addressing psychological barriers may foster more responsible decision-making and identity-based transformations. These findings suggest the need for psychologically informed interventions in tourism policies and practices to promote sustainable behaviors in a rapidly changing global context.

Keywords: environmental identity, psychological assessment, decision-making, psychological barriers, sustainable behaviour.

Academic Anxiety and Emotion Regulation: Evidence from University Students

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Academic anxiety is a widely discussed issue in the contemporary psychological literature and is common among university students. Several factors contribute to academic anxiety, including academic and social pressures, as well as economic factors. On the other hand, effective emotion regulation helps students adapt more successfully; however, many students experience difficulties in regulating their emotions. These difficulties can negatively affect academic performance, mental health, and psychological well-being, ultimately reducing quality of life. This study aims to explore the relationship between academic anxiety and emotion regulation among students enrolled in bachelor’s and master’s programs in the Department of Psychology and Social Work, at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Shkoder “Luigj Gurakuqi”. Specifically, it investigates (a) levels of academic anxiety, (b) individual differences in emotion regulation strategies, and (c) the association between these constructs. A quantitative design was employed using standardized instruments translated into Albanian through a translation-back-translation procedure. Data were collected through stratified sampling to ensure representativeness of the target population. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence on the interplay between academic anxiety and emotion regulation, contributing to the existing literature in educational and clinical psychology. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of developing targeted interventions aimed at improving emotion regulation skills as a means of reducing academic anxiety and enhancing student well-being.

Keywords: academic anxiety, emotion regulation, student well-being.

Master's Students' Perceptions of Ethical and Professional Dilemmas in Family Therapy

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Ethical and professional dilemmas are an inherent part of psychological practice, particularly in the context of family therapy, where multiple clients, conflicting interests, and confidentiality challenges are present. Understanding how future professionals perceive and approach such dilemmas is essential for improving ethical education. This study aims to explore master's students' perceptions regarding ethical and professional dilemmas in their future role as family therapists. A qualitative research design was employed. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews administered online. The sample included 59 students from the Master of Science in Clinical Psychology and the Professional Master in Social Services programs at the University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key categories and themes related to the research questions. Findings indicate that students perceive ethical dilemmas primarily as conflicts between professional principles, particularly emphasizing issues of confidentiality and competing interests among family members. Participants demonstrated awareness of the complexity of family therapy due to the involvement of multiple clients. However, many reported limited confidence in their preparedness to manage such dilemmas in practice. Key factors influencing ethical decision-making included adherence to ethical codes, the role of supervision, personal values, emotional responses, and cultural context. The study highlights the need to strengthen practical ethical training in psychology and social work education, particularly in relation to family therapy. Enhancing supervision, integrating real-life case discussions, and addressing cultural considerations may improve students' readiness to manage ethical challenges in professional practice.

Keywords: ethical dilemmas, family therapy, master's students, ethical decision-making, perceptions.

Gratitude, Happiness, and Psychological Well-Being: A Structural and Multidimensional Examination of Their Interrelations

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This study examines the interrelations between gratitude, happiness, and psychological well-being through a multidimensional and structurally informed analytical framework. While each of these constructs has been extensively investigated within the field of positive psychology, their combined dynamics—particularly in relation to self-conscious emotional processes—remain insufficiently integrated within a single empirical model. Data were collected using validated self-report measures assessing dispositional gratitude, subjective happiness, and multiple dimensions of psychological well-being. The study employs a comprehensive analytical strategy, combining correlational analyses with structural modeling techniques to test both direct and indirect pathways among the variables. Building on existing theoretical and empirical literature, gratitude is expected to show robust positive associations with both happiness and psychological well-being. Furthermore, happiness is hypothesized to function as a potential mediator in the relationship between gratitude and well-being. To ensure analytical rigor, alternative structural configurations will also be tested, allowing for the evaluation of competing models and the identification of the most parsimonious and best-fitting representation of the data. By adopting a structurally oriented and integrative approach, this study aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between key constructs of positive and self-conscious emotional functioning. The findings are expected to have implications not only for theoretical refinement but also for the development of evidence-based interventions aimed at enhancing psychological well-being.

Keywords: gratitude, happiness, psychological well-being, SEM, multidimensional approach.

From Automatic to Neutral Responses: Bwrt as a Rapid Intervention for the Treatment of Aerophobia – A Case Study

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Aerophobia (fear of flying) is a situational specific phobia that can significantly impair personal and professional functioning, particularly in individuals who require frequent air travel. Although Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is considered the gold standard treatment, it often requires multiple sessions and direct exposure, which may limit its feasibility in time-sensitive contexts. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of BrainWorking Recursive Therapy (BWRT) as a rapid intervention for aerophobia. A single-case design was employed involving a 37 year old male presenting with intense anticipatory anxiety, catastrophic thinking, and persistent avoidance of air travel. Initial assessment was conducted using the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) and Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II), indicating moderate anxiety (BAI = 24) and mild depressive symptoms (BDI-II = 13). The intervention consisted of three BWRT sessions delivered over a three week period, targeting the modification of automatic fear responses. Following the intervention, the client successfully completed planned air travel without the presence of prior anxiety symptoms. At one-month follow-up, a complete reduction in symptoms was observed (BAI = 0; BDI-II = 0), accompanied by restoration of functional capacity and elimination of avoidance behaviors. These findings suggest that BWRT may represent a rapid and effective intervention for aerophobia, particularly in contexts requiring immediate functional improvement. However, due to the single-case design, further research is necessary to evaluate the generalizability and long-term stability of these outcomes.

Keywords: aerophobia, BWRT, anxiety, rapid intervention, case study

Resilience and Social Support Among Older Adults

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This study aims to examine the relationship between resilience and social support among older adults. Resilience, defined as the capacity to adapt and cope with life challenges, and social support, understood as the perception of assistance and connectedness within social networks, represent two critical variables in understanding aging processes. The sample consisted of 350 individuals aged 65 and above, randomly selected from community settings. The collected data will be analyzed using correlational and regression techniques to determine the nature and strength of the association between these variables. The forthcoming analysis is expected to shed light on whether higher levels of social support are linked to greater resilience among older adults. By focusing on these two constructs, the study seeks to establish an empirical foundation for understanding how social factors may contribute to adaptive capacities in later life. Although results are not yet available, the study design emphasizes the importance of exploring resilience and social support as interconnected dimensions of aging. The anticipated findings will contribute to the academic literature by clarifying the role of social networks in fostering resilience, and they may inform future research directions and interventions aimed at strengthening adaptive resources in older populations.

Keywords: resilience, social support, older adults, community.

Personal Narratives as a Qualitative Tool for Assessing Emotional Experiences in Preadolescence: A Case Study

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Preadolescence constitutes a critical developmental stage marked by substantial emotional, cognitive, and relational transformations associated with identity formation and psychosocial adjustment. Within qualitative and psychosocial assessment frameworks, narrative materials can function as important interpretative resources for understanding how preadolescents perceive, organize, and communicate their internal emotional worlds. Despite growing scholarly interest in narrative approaches, limited research has examined the use of personal diary narratives as qualitative tools in the psychosocial assessment of preadolescents. The present study explores the potential of personal diary narratives as a qualitative instrument for assessing emotional experiences in preadolescence through a qualitative case study approach. The study is based on the narrative analysis of a personal diary written by a preadolescent girl over a two-week period, documenting spontaneous reflections on everyday emotional and social experiences. The analysis focuses on three central thematic dimensions: peer relationships, self-perception, and emotional regulation in everyday contexts. Using thematic narrative analysis, the diary entries were examined to identify recurring emotional patterns, forms of self-expression, and processes of subjective interpretation through which the participant constructs meaning around lived experiences. Rather than aiming for statistical generalization, the study seeks to provide an in-depth exploration of emotional experience through the detailed examination of a single case in preadolescence. Ethical principles of confidentiality, anonymity, and non-identifiability were carefully maintained throughout the research process. The findings suggest that the participant's narratives were characterized by emotional ambivalence, heightened sensitivity to peer validation, and recurrent reflective attempts to negotiate self-image and social belonging. The diary entries further revealed fluctuations between emotional vulnerability and emerging forms of self-awareness, illustrating the complexity of emotional regulation during preadolescence. These

findings indicate that personal diary narratives may serve as a valuable qualitative tool within psychological and psychosocial assessment practices involving preadolescents. The study contributes to the growing body of qualitative research emphasizing the value of narrative methods in psychosocial assessment and contemporary social work practice with children and adolescents.

Keywords: preadolescence, narrative analysis, diary narratives, emotional regulation, psychosocial assessment.

Who Carries the Emotional Burden? Gendered Experiences of Trauma and Burnout Among Journalists in Albania

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Occupational exposure to traumatic events is increasingly recognized as a significant factor affecting psychological wellbeing across several professions, including journalism. Journalists frequently report on crises, violence, and human suffering while operating under demanding professional conditions. Despite these challenges, the psychological consequences of journalistic work remain underexplored in smaller media systems such as those of the Western Balkans. This study investigates gendered experiences of trauma exposure, emotional strain, and burnout among journalists in Albania. The research draws on a survey conducted with 105 journalists working across Albanian media organizations. The questionnaire collected data on demographic characteristics, professional experience, exposure to traumatic reporting, emotional responses to work-related stress, coping strategies, and perceptions of institutional psychological support. The analysis is informed by the concept of “Emotional Labor” introduced by Arlie Russell Hochschild, which highlights how professionals regulate emotions as part of their occupational roles. The findings indicate a high prevalence of psychological strain within the profession. More than 90% of respondents report experiencing symptoms associated with burnout, while approximately 73% report having covered traumatic events during their professional activity. Although male journalists report slightly higher exposure to traumatic assignments, female journalists appear more likely to report frequent emotional exhaustion. At the institutional level, over 80% of respondents indicate that their newsrooms do not provide psychological or mental health support, forcing journalists to rely primarily on informal coping strategies. The study contributes to discussions on occupational mental health and emphasizes the need to integrate gender-sensitive psychological support mechanisms within media organizations in Albania.

Keywords: journalism; burnout; trauma exposure; emotional labour; gender; occupational mental health; Albania.

Public Stigma, Self-Stigmatization, and the Role of Social Workers in the Recovery of Individuals with Substance Addiction in Albania

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Stigmatization of individuals with substance addiction represents a complex social phenomenon that significantly affects access to services, treatment engagement, and social reintegration. This study examines the relationship between public stigma and self-stigma, focusing on how negative societal attitudes are internalized by individuals and how this process shapes their recovery trajectories. In addition, the research explores the role of social workers in addressing stigma within the Albanian context. The aim of this study is to analyze the forms, mechanisms, and consequences of stigmatization toward individuals with substance addiction, with particular emphasis on self-stigma as a key psychological and social barrier to rehabilitation and inclusion. Furthermore, it investigates the challenges encountered during reintegration processes and evaluates the strategies employed by social workers to reduce stigma through psycho-social support, advocacy, and community-based interventions. A qualitative research design was applied, based on an interpretative approach. Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with individuals who have a history of substance addiction and with professional social workers. Additionally, a focus group was conducted with stakeholders involved in social service provision. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure relevance to the research objectives. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns related to stigma experiences, internalization processes, and professional intervention practices. Findings indicate that public stigma remains deeply embedded in community attitudes and is often reinforced through institutional responses. Self-stigma emerged as a dominant mechanism, characterized by feelings of shame, diminished self-worth, and avoidance of help-seeking behaviors, thereby hindering recovery and long-term reintegration. The study concludes that self-stigma, shaped by persistent public stigma, constitutes a

central barrier to effective rehabilitation. Addressing this issue requires multi-level interventions, including awareness-raising, psycho-social support, and institutional strengthening. Social workers play a crucial role in disrupting the stigma cycle and promoting inclusive and supportive environments for individuals with substance addiction.

Keywords: substance addiction, public stigma, self-stigmatization, social work, social reintegration.

**SESSION IV: EDUCATION, DEVELOPMENT,
AND INCLUSION**

Creating New Minds: Enhancing of Educational Values in the Context of Rapid Digital Transformation

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This study addresses the transformation of educational values versus educational quality aspects in the context of rapid digital transformation, focusing on the Latvian education system. The research aims to identify gaps in current educational quality frameworks and explore how learners' and teachers' shifting psychology aspects and decision-making are influenced by sociotechnical factors which reshape educational values. The key research question is: How do social and technological factors influence modern learners' and teachers' psychology and decision-making to form future educational values? A mixed-method interdisciplinary approach was employed, including surveys and structured focus group sessions with education and social work professionals conducted during the winter "Seasonal School". The World Café methodology was used to analyze qualitative data. The study involved representatives from various educational and social institutions, with data analyzed through thematic and PESTLI frameworks. Findings reveal significant gaps in the current educational quality management model, particularly the lack of integration of social support institutions, parental involvement, and informal education providers, which causes a significant increase of mental and psychological problems for learners and teachers in schools. The educational value system is shifting from a classical social system to an integrated sociotechnical system, where digital technologies and social factors are inseparable. Challenges include insufficient teacher preparation for interdisciplinary demands and the unpredictable risks of generative artificial intelligence in pedagogy, which can hinder effective teaching and learning outcomes in this evolving educational landscape. The study highlights the necessity for holistic reforms in education policies, emphasizing interdisciplinary teacher training and broader inclusion of psychological, social and technological factors in educational value assessment. Policymakers should expand quality metrics beyond academic achievements to include mental stability,

sociocultural and sociotechnical competencies. Further research should explore adaptive educational models that integrate emerging technologies while supporting social inclusion, particularly focusing on how these models can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes in diverse educational settings.

Keywords: educational values, psychology, quality of education

Multidisciplinary Support and Teacher Preparedness in Inclusive Preschool Education: Evidence from Educators in Shkodra, Albania

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The successful inclusion of children with special needs in early childhood education depends not only on institutional policies but also on the preparedness of educators and the availability of multidisciplinary support services. Preschool teachers are increasingly expected to address diverse developmental and behavioral needs within inclusive classrooms; however, limited evidence exists regarding their perceived preparedness and access to specialized support in the Albanian context. This study aimed to explore educators' perceptions of professional preparedness, training participation, and multidisciplinary support while working with children with special needs in preschool settings in Shkodra, Albania. A quantitative cross-sectional design was employed using a structured questionnaire administered to 102 preschool educators. Analyses focused specifically on the subgroup of educators currently working with children with special needs ($n = 39$). The questionnaire examined educators' perceptions regarding access to specialist support, participation in professional training, opportunities for skill development, and self-perceived preparedness for inclusive educational practices. Descriptive statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS. The findings indicated that support from multidisciplinary professionals such as psychologists, speech therapists, and therapists remains inconsistent. More than half of the educators reported receiving specialist support either rarely or never during their work with children with special needs. At the same time, participation in training activities related to inclusive education was relatively frequent, with over half of respondents indicating that they participated in such training often or always. Educators also reported moderate opportunities for developing professional skills related to inclusive practices. Despite these experiences, perceptions of preparedness remained variable, suggesting that training participation alone may not be sufficient to ensure confidence and competence in inclusive classroom settings. The study highlights the

importance of strengthening multidisciplinary collaboration and improving ongoing professional support systems for preschool educators. The findings suggest a need for more structured and practice-oriented training models, as well as increased access to specialist consultation within preschool institutions in Albania.

Keywords: inclusive education, preschool educators, multidisciplinary support, professional preparedness, special needs.

AI-Vet – Quality for All. High Quality and Socially Inclusive Vet in Albania

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The aim of the survey is to understand the modalities of qualification and career choices of pupils in lower secondary education and their parents. The purpose of this study is to explore among a representative number of parents and children in the last year of compulsory education on factors guiding their choices of career paths and VET profiles with special focus on the potential role of gender stereotypes in this process. Regarding the main purpose, the study collected some reliable and comprehensive information from students and their parents about their perceptions for career choices. These terms/notions, as the main variables of the study, will serve as a direct contribution for future recommendations to better know their paths of education. Based on a quantitative perspective we used two questionnaires to access the experiences and perceptions of students and parents regarding the near future. Also, the second objective is to explore if there are gender stereotypes in this process and after to develop recommendations for breaking the barriers hindering girls in acquiring further qualifications after compulsory education. Regarding the purpose of the study, we conducted 392 questionnaires with pupils and 274 with parents in different schools, rural or urban, different region in Albania. The questionnaires were designed regarding the purpose of the study and contained questions aimed at gathering as much data as possible. It was then reflected on a Google form adhering to all norms and rules of scientific research. In the first part of the questionnaire, all participants were introduced to the purpose of the study and their roles. The final version was culturally appropriate and understandable for them.

Keywords: Vocational education, career choices, schools

Parental Influence on Developing Resilience

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Resilience is commonly conceptualized as positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity, but it is not a fixed trait; it is a developmental process that emerges through transactions between children and their environments. Within this process, parents shape resilience through multiple pathways, including the quality of attachment relationships, everyday parenting practices (warmth, structure, monitoring), the emotional climate of the home, and the broader family system’s capacity to maintain functioning during stress. This article uses a theory-driven analytic approach to examine how major developmental and clinical theories explain parental influence on resilience, and it then evaluates empirical evidence from selected longitudinal and population-based studies that directly test family and parenting predictors of resilient outcomes. Across empirical designs and risk contexts, findings converge on two clinically relevant conclusions. First, supportive and emotionally responsive parent–child relationships are reliably associated with better functioning under adversity, including lower externalizing behavior and higher social competence. Second, parental influence is conditional rather than universal, its protective effects vary by the type and timing of adversity, co-occurring risks (e.g., neighborhood disadvantage), and the child’s individual characteristics.

Keywords: resilience, parenting, protective factors, family processes, child and adolescent development.

Early Detection and Support for Developmental Disabilities

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Early detection and support for developmental disabilities are widely recognized as essential for improving child outcomes, reducing family stress, and increasing access to timely intervention. This paper reviews the literature on developmental surveillance, developmental screening, early intervention, and family-centered support for children with developmental disabilities. The review finds broad agreement that early identification is most effective when developmental surveillance and standardized screening are used together, rather than as separate strategies. Evidence from high-income countries shows that screening tools can be feasible and acceptable in routine care, but their accuracy varies across contexts and there is limited evidence on follow-up after positive screening results. The literature also emphasizes that screening alone is insufficient unless it is linked to referral, evaluation, and support services. Family-centered and parent-implemented interventions emerge as especially important because they strengthen caregivers' capacity to support development in daily routines and natural environments. At the global level, major inequities remain: although developmental disabilities are highly prevalent worldwide, most evidence comes from high-income countries, with limited validated tools and fewer scalable intervention models in low- and middle-income settings. Overall, the literature suggests that effective systems must move beyond early detection alone and build integrated pathways that connect identification to meaningful, equitable, and sustained support for children and families.

Keywords: developmental disabilities, early detection, developmental screening, developmental surveillance, early intervention.

The Impact of Urban and Rural Background on the Experience and Performance of University Students

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This research paper aims to examine the impact that the background of urban and rural students has in their university performance. Due to the fact that students used to live in the rural area, they didn't have a chance to have many resource options in order to fully explore different subjects. There is lack of internet, lack of a school library, lack of financial support from the parents or from the municipality. It must be emphasized that the above-mentioned create difficulties in the rural students in comparison to the students who studied and lived in the urban areas. It aims to reveal the difficulties in the academic performance, in their social and lifestyle factors. It also attempts to reveal the challenges they have to go through in order to succeed in their university performance as well as their future perspectives consisting in their future jobs whether they would go back to rural areas or create a new lifestyle in the city. A questionnaire will be conducted for the purpose of highlighting the problems encountered by the students studying at the university starting from year 1 to year 5. The questionnaire is composed of 8 sections which consist in basic information, their educational background, access to resources, academic experience, their challenges and future perspectives. The expected results will test that urban students have greater access to educational resources and that rural students face more adaptation challenges in comparison to urban students. There is need to address the issue even further when considering that the urban students have had more access than rural students to different resources. Urban students have received financial support whereas rural students have not received any support. Taking into account that even families receive less income, it is important to provide more financial support to these students.

Keywords: urban, rural, education, access, resources.

The Impact of Social Comparison with Peers on the Self-Esteem of Students in Grades AMU

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This study aims to examine the relationship between social comparison with peers and self-esteem among students in grades AMU, with a focus on the psychological assessment of these constructs within the school context. During early adolescence, individuals are particularly sensitive to social comparison processes, which play a significant role in shaping self-perception and self-esteem. The study adopts a quantitative research design and is based on a structured self-report instrument using a 5-point Likert scale. The instrument is designed to measure two key constructs: social comparison (as the tendency to evaluate oneself in relation to peers) and self-esteem (as a global perception of personal value and individual abilities). The questionnaire was administered anonymously to students in grades AMU within a school setting. The collected data are analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlational analysis in order to identify the relationship between the study variables. Based on existing literature and Social Comparison Theory, a negative relationship is expected between the level of social comparison and self-esteem, where higher levels of social comparison are associated with lower levels of self-esteem. This study contributes to the field of psychological assessment in educational settings by providing empirical evidence on the influence of social processes on students' emotional development. The findings are expected to have practical implications for school psychologists and educators, particularly in designing interventions aimed at enhancing self-esteem and reducing the negative effects of social comparison in the school environment.

Keywords: social comparison, self-esteem, peers, early adolescence, psychological assessment.

Eating Behaviors in Children with Autism: A Comparative Analysis with the Typical Group

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Eating habits in childhood constitute a key component of physical and psychological development. Children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) often exhibit atypical patterns of eating behavior, which can negatively impact diet quality and overall well-being. The aim of this study is to compare eating behaviors between children with ASD and children with typical development, using a shortened-form questionnaire based on the existing scales of the standardized instrument Children’s Eating Behaviour Inventory (Archer, 1991). The study has a comparative (cross-sectional) design and includes two groups of participants: children diagnosed with ASD and children without developmental disorders. Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire completed by parents/caregivers, which assesses different dimensions of eating behavior, including food selectivity, food refusal, and difficulties during meals. Statistical analyses aim to identify differences between groups in these dimensions. The results are expected to show statistically significant differences, where children with ASD are predicted to exhibit higher levels of food selectivity and more problematic behaviors during feeding compared to their peers. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a better understanding of feeding challenges in children with ASD and to support the development of targeted interventions for improving feeding practices and quality of life.

Keywords: autism spectrum disorders, feeding behavior, food selectivity, CEBI, children.

Challenges Faced by Albanian Immigrant High School Students in the Pelham School District (New York)

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The Pelham School District has seen a steady rise in immigrant enrollment in recent years, with Albanian students now making up one of the largest newcomer groups across grade levels. Although many of these students arrive with strong family support and high hopes for their education, they often run into academic and sociocultural hurdles that shape how they experience school. Understanding these challenges in the specific context of Pelham is important for creating district-level supports that actually meet students' needs. This case study looks closely at the academic, social, and acculturation-related obstacles faced by Albanian immigrant students at Pelham Memorial High School. It examines how school structures, peer relationships, and family expectations come together to influence students' engagement, performance, and sense of belonging. The study draws on a qualitative design, using semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, and guidance counselors. Overall, the findings show that Albanian immigrant students in Pelham navigate a unique mix of linguistic, cultural, and social pressures that shape their high school experiences and long-term trajectories.

Keywords: Albanian immigrant students, Pelham School District, high school education, acculturation, expectations.

**Session V: FORENSIC, SOCIAL, AND
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES**

Assessment and Behavioural Change in Male Perpetrators: Evidence from Counselling Programmes in Albania

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Addressing gender-based violence requires not only protective measures for victims but also evidence-based interventions targeting perpetrators. This study examines behavioural change among male perpetrators participating in structured counselling programmes implemented by the Office for Boys and Men (ZDB) in Albania during the 2025 implementation period. A mixed-methods design was employed, integrating quantitative data derived from standardized assessment instruments with qualitative clinical observations from individual and group counselling sessions. The assessment tools (T1, T2, T3/T4) are standardized instruments developed within the framework of the Work with Perpetrators – European Network (WWP EN) and have been adapted and validated through a collaborative process involving European and Albanian experts, ensuring both methodological rigor and contextual relevance. The study sample consists of 66 male perpetrators referred through protection orders, municipal services, police, and self-referral pathways. Baseline data were collected through 53 T1 questionnaires administered to perpetrators, complemented by corresponding data from 53 partners or ex-partners, allowing for a multi-perspective assessment of violent behaviour and relational dynamics. Follow-up measurements include 37 T2 and 16 T3/T4 questionnaires, enabling longitudinal analysis of behavioural change. The findings indicate that approximately 75% of participants demonstrated measurable improvements in emotional regulation, empathy, and accountability. However, a dropout rate of approximately 25% was identified, particularly among court-mandated cases, suggesting persistent challenges related to engagement and intrinsic motivation. Despite positive trends, the study highlights structural limitations, including insufficient systematic follow-up with partners/ex-partners and gaps in inter-institutional coordination, which may constrain the sustainability of observed behavioural changes. The study contributes to the ongoing discourse on standardizing perpetrator assessment and intervention models in Albania. It underscores the importance of integrating validated

assessment frameworks with coordinated community response mechanisms to enhance intervention effectiveness and accountability. These findings position Albania as an emerging case of structured, evidence-informed perpetrator intervention within the Western Balkans context.

Keywords: gender-based violence, perpetrators, psychological assessment, behavioural change, counselling programmes, ZDB.

Psychopathy as a Predictor of Recidivism: A Systematic Review

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This study presents a systematic review examining the relationship between psychopathy and recidivism within the field of forensic psychology. The aim was to synthesize the findings of empirical studies indexed in Scopus, PubMed, and Google Scholar. Following PRISMA guidelines (Moher et al., 2009), five empirical studies were included, with a total sample of approximately $N = 4,091$ individuals, primarily drawn from forensic populations. The findings were synthesized descriptively based on reported effect sizes across studies. Psychopathy was assessed mainly using the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) (Hare, 2003), while recidivism was operationalized as rearrest, reconviction, or re-incarceration in longitudinal designs. The included studies reported a moderate positive association between psychopathy and recidivism, with effect sizes ranging from $r = .21$ to $r = .33$, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of psychopathy are more likely to reoffend. The effect was stronger for violent recidivism and weaker for sexual recidivism. The findings suggest variability across studies in relation to sample characteristics and the measurement of recidivism. Overall, psychopathy emerges as a significant predictor of recidivism, with direct implications for risk assessment and decision-making within the criminal justice system.

Keywords: psychopathy, recidivism, PCL-R, systematic review, forensic psychology.

The Psychology of the Victim in Domestic Violence Offenses: The Importance of Psychological Assessment in Establishing Criminal Liability

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Domestic violence does not represent an isolated criminal incident, but often a prolonged relationship of control, fear, emotional, economic, and psychological dependency. In investigative and judicial practice, one of the most frequent challenges relates to the victim's behaviour after reporting the offense: withdrawal of statements, minimization of the violence, return to the perpetrator, lack of cooperation with prosecuting authorities, or changes in testimony during trial. When assessed in a purely formal manner, such behaviours may raise doubts about the victim's credibility. However, when analyzed through contemporary standards of psychological assessment, they are better understood as consequences of the cycle of abuse, trauma, repeated fear, and the dependency created within the abusive relationship. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 1 in 3 women worldwide (around 30%) have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence by a non-partner during their lifetime. In Albania, the National Survey on Violence Against Women and Girls indicated that 52.9% of women had experienced at least one form of violence during their lifetime, while 33.7% had experienced intimate partner violence in the 12 months preceding the survey. Data from INSTAT for 2024 show that 1456 women reported domestic violence, with the highest concentration in Tirana, Durrës, and Fier. This paper adopts a triangulated and interdisciplinary methodology, it combines: (a) doctrinal legal analysis of domestic and international standards; (b) qualitative case-based analysis of prosecutorial and judicial practice; and (c) integration of psychological assessment models, including trauma-informed approaches and the cycle of abuse. Statistical data are used analytically to support the need for standardized evaluation. The study argues that integrating psychological assessment into prosecutorial reasoning enhances evidentiary reliability, prevents misinterpretation of victim behaviour, and strengthens decision-making in domestic violence cases.

Keywords: domestic violence, psychological assessment, victim behavior, cycle of abuse.

The Role of Criminal Profiling in Investigating Albanian Organized Crime: Integrating Criminal Psychology into Investigative Practices

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Organized crime is one of the most sophisticated criminal phenomena, requiring advanced investigative methods to understand and combat its structures. Criminal profiling is an interdisciplinary tool that connects psychology with criminal investigation and offers an important perspective for analyzing the behavior and structures of criminal groups. This paper aims to examine the impact of criminal psychology on the investigation of Albanian organized crime, focusing on its use to unravel the hierarchy of criminal groups, relationships within groups, and the psychological control mechanisms that maintain these structures. Through a review of contemporary literature and domestic and international cases related to Albanian organized crime, this study shows that criminal profiling can help identify the organizers and internal mechanisms of criminal groups, providing a deeper understanding of their motivations and characteristics. This method can assist investigators in conducting investigations and in preventing procedural errors that can negatively affect the final results. In the Albanian context, where organized crime has a long history and has evolved into more sophisticated and transnational forms, the use of criminal psychology is indispensable to meet the challenges of modern investigations. The use of criminal profiling is a tool still in its early stages and requires training of investigators and prosecutors to better integrate this method into the Albanian investigative system. This paper also discusses the importance of strengthening cooperation between criminal psychologists, law enforcement agencies and justice institutions to increase the efficiency of investigations and reduce the impact of organized crime.

Keywords: organized crime, criminal psychology, criminal profiling, investigative strategy.

Use of Mmpi and Cpi Personality Inventories in Selecting Police Officers: A Perspective Review for Albania

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Psychological testing of police officer candidates represents a core area of police psychology. The primary purpose of psychological testing is to identify those applicants who demonstrate specific traits or attributes that are appropriate for the police officer profession. The study aims to provide insights from contemporary practices regarding the usefulness of personality tests in the recruitment of applicants for police officers and their future application in Albania. The study focuses on examining two personality tests: the Minnesota Multiphasic. The study was based on a systematic literature review using the ScienceDirect, PsycNet and Google Scholar databases from the period 2000 to 2024. The literature was filtered by identifying and analyzing key terms such as “MMPI and police officer” or “CPI and police officer”. Based on the studies used and international practices, the application of psychological tests during the recruitment phases of applicants for police officers provides qualitative information on mental health and job suitability for the police organization and academic and research units. The application of psychological tests in the selection of candidates for police officers provides significant data for police and academic structures about the psychological state and the prediction of work performance and professional integrity in the future. A significant part of the studies emphasizes that in addition to the use of psychological tests, it is useful to include additional data such as clinical interviews and information about education and demographic characteristics. Based on the studies used and international practices, the use of personality tests in the recruitment process would be positive for the police organization, the Security Academy, and research purposes.

Keywords: public safety officer, personality test, MMPI, CPI.

Mapping Cognitive–Emotional Responses to Multi-Sensory Stimulation in Electronic Dance Music Events

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This study examines how engagement in electronic dance music (EDM) environments relates to psychological experiences, focusing on emotional intensity, emotional release, self-reflection, psychological escape, and subjective well-being, and tests the mediating role of substance influence in the relationship between emotional intensity and emotional release. Using a quantitative cross-sectional design, data were collected from active participants in the Albanian EDM scene through purposive sampling via social networks and community outreach. A structured questionnaire incorporating standardized psychometric measures was administered, and data were analyzed using correlation and mediation analyses to test the proposed relationships. Results indicate that engagement in EDM environments is positively and significantly associated with all examined psychological outcomes, with frequency of attendance predicting higher levels of psychological escape and subjective well-being. Mediation analysis further reveals that substance influence partially mediates the relationship between emotional intensity and emotional release, while a significant direct effect persists in its absence. These findings suggest that EDM environments function as non-clinical contexts that facilitate emotional regulation and self-processing. The study contributes to psychological assessment by identifying measurable dimensions of emotional functioning in naturalistic settings and offers implications for intervention by informing experience-based approaches to affect regulation, while advancing understanding of well-being within contemporary cultural contexts.

Keywords: electronic dance music (EDM), emotional processing, psychological escape, substance use, well-being.

Tourist Consumer Behaviour Patterns in Albania: Information Sources, Trust and Booking Experiences

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Tourism is a global industry of major economic, political and sociocultural importance. However, unlike other industries, it is shaped by emotions, attitudes, and financial choices. Unlike traditional products or service purchases, tourism offers experiences, memories, and the opportunity to learn about new cultures, places, and histories. Understanding tourist behaviour is important for all industry stakeholders and is key to improving marketing, policies, and customer satisfaction. After a long pause during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism appears to have rebounded. This research specifically investigates how consumers in Albania are currently selecting their touristic experiences. The research poses questions such as: Where do consumers search for information before travelling? Which information sources do they trust most? Do they seek professional agencies' services for bookings, or do they organize everything themselves? The methodology of this research considers Albanian culture and socio-economic factors; the authors explore consumer travel behaviour through a quantitative survey of a large sample of men and women aged 18 to 66. The average age of the sample (N=100) is 38 years. Results of this research show that more than two-thirds of Albanian tourists primarily rely on personal recommendations and reviews from friends and family, and less on online information sources or social media recommendations. Trust in peer reviews outweighs that of official tourism websites. Whenever possible, more than 80% of the sample avoids agencies and makes all the bookings on their own. When making financial decisions, more than half say low-cost travel is not a priority. Understanding touristic behavioural patterns and preferences will help agents in this industry tailor services to attract more consumers while offering them a better experience and increase their satisfaction.

Keywords: tourism, travel, information sources, consumer experience, consumer behaviour.

Assessment of Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors Related to Stis Among Teenegers in High Schools of the Municipality of Lezhë

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This study aims to assess the level of knowledge, sources of information, and attitudes of students attending public and private high schools in the Municipality of Lezhë regarding reproductive health and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The study was conducted using a quantitative approach to ensure a structured and comprehensive analysis. The study sample consisted of 667 students aged 14–18 years old, selected through purposive non probability sampling, representing the teenagers age group a critical period for the formation of attitudes and behaviors related to sexual health. The primary data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire with closed ended questions, administered through the Google Forms platform. The findings indicate that schools and social media serve as the main sources of information on sexual and reproductive health, while the role of the family remains limited, primarily due to cultural taboos and a lack of open communication between parents and children. Students report having basic knowledge regarding condom use however, they demonstrate insufficient information about other contraceptive methods and about preventive services offered by primary health care centers. Sexual education in schools appears to focus mainly on biological aspects, with limited inclusion of psychological and social dimensions. The study recommends the development of local action plans by Primary Health Care services, incorporating comprehensive health education, active involvement of both families and schools, and strengthened interinstitutional collaboration to create safe and confidential environments for adolescents.

Keywords: STIs, contraception, reproductive health, promotion of healthy behaviors.

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