*Corresponding Author's Email: miesa148@gmail.com
Proceedings of the International Conference on Research in Social Sciences and Humanities
Vol. 3, Issue. 1, 2026, pp. 1-15
DOI: https://doi.org/10.33422/icrsh.v3i1.1853
Copyright © 2026 Author(s)
ISSN: 3030-1211 online

Legal Psychological Assessment For The Divorce Process Sample Format

Jonida Mustafaraj

Faculty of Educational Sciences, Department of Psychology, University of Elbasan "Aleksander Xhuvani",Elbasan, Albania

Abstract

Divorce cases in Albania have increased in recent years and have become a serious problem, involving not only the separation of a couple but also the determination of child custody. The divorce process and the assessment for custody is one of the most difficult and complex processes in the field of clinical and legal psychology. The legal psychological assessment of the family is an aid to the Court in making a decision on the judicial process. In this paper, the aim is to convey professional knowledge and aspects of the assessment process in divorce cases by providing methods, types of psychological tests and an example of the format of the assessment report. Domestic and foreign literature has been reviewed and 223 legal psychological assessments for divorce processes with minor children in the Elbasan district have been examined.

Information is presented on the use of psychological tests in divorce evaluations and child custody determinations. According to the authors, review of psychological reports, it was concluded that, for a legal psychological evaluation to be complete, it should include specialized clinical procedures for observing the family system (Darlington, Lausanne Trilogue Play Clinic), DSM-V, instruments for validating evidence (CBCA, SVA), and psychological tests for personality assessment (MMPI-II, Eysenck) and projective tests (TAT, CAT, Graph Paper Tests, etc.) as well as the Rosenberg Self-Assessment Test, etc. Providing an example of writing a legal psychological evaluation format is a contribution to researchers, young professionals and students in the field.

Keywords: Assessment, clinical psychologist, divorce, legal psychologist

1. Introduction

The psychologist is always consulted in relation to minors, where the principle of listening, participation and taking into consideratio the child's point of view is at the core to arrive at the truth. The psychologist interprets the child's thoughts and translates them into adult language through the use of questions, games and stories. He also helps the child to express his point of view on the subject under consideration and provides the court with a fair

assessment of the child's point of view based on the child's age and level of understanding [(Center for Citizen Legal Initiatives (CLI) and Free Legal Service (TLAS), 2014)].

Custody assessment can be determined according to the following steps (Kraus LJ, Thomas CR, 2012, Chung DS, Moon DS, Lee MH, Kwack YS, 2020) 1) one or both parents have a mental disorder that affects their parenting skills; 2) the child has a mental disorder that needs to be considered; 3) domestic violence (including abuse by a parent, sibling, or the child) is present or documented; 4) concern about damage to the child's relationship with the non-custodial parent by the custodial parent's actions that are intended to alienate the non-custodial parent. Parents who are involved in the divorce process are able to express their thoughts, desires and perceptions with full awareness, while young children are often ignored. It is children who experience the most severe consequences during the divorce process and subsequently experience emotional and behavioral problems. It is important that in the custody evaluation, it is achieved that the parents overcome conflicts and build a healthy parent-parent and parent-child relationship. The process of psychological evaluation in divorce cases includes three general areas where the first is the interview with the parents and their psychological evaluation, the second is the interview and evaluation of the child, where in the case of young children the child's interactions with the parents are evaluated through observation and the third is the evaluation of the family as a whole.

The report should include answers to questions determined by the court regarding the best interests of the child and the ability of the parents to meet these interests.

Some of the key issues to measure parental compatibility and the best interests of the child in Albanian courts are as follows (Albanian Psychologist's Order): • What are each parent's abilities to parent effectively? • What parenting duties has each parent performed in the past? • What is each parent's relationship with the child? • How able are the parents to cooperate with each other? • Does either parent have physical or psychological problems that negatively impact parenting skills? • What is the child's coping skills and personality? • Are there any indications of domestic violence or child abuse? • What are the wishes of each parent and child regarding the dissolution of the marriage? (Albanian Psychologist's Order)

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Divorce

The most important and complex process in the field of legal psychology is the assessment and determination of custody in the divorce process (Bow JN, Quinnell FA,2002, Chung DS, Moon DS, Lee MH, Kwack YS, 2020). Eyo Ukpong (2018) has defined divorce as, "a legal dissolution of marriage; any formal separation of a husband and wife according to established custom; a complete separation of any kind". Divorce has several consequences that are general to divorcing parents in general, most of the consequences are variable, depending on various factors. The consequences of divorce include: The legal process and its consequences, financial consequences, psychological and emotional consequences, consequences for the parental relationship, consequences for the interparental relationship. Obvious factors by which the consequences vary are: (1) the parent with custody versus the one without custody of the child(ren); (2) the gender of the parent; i.e., mother versus father; or (3) the person who initiated the divorce versus the one who did not (and often did not want to), (Fine, Mark & Harvey, John. 2006).

2.2. Clinical psychology

The American Psychological Association defines clinical psychology as "a clinical discipline that involves the provision of diagnostic, assessment, treatment planning,

treatment, prevention, and consultation services to emergency patients, inpatient wards, and hospital clinics."(Wahass S. H., 2005).

The profession of clinical psychology has grown to become increasingly complex and comprehensive. Clinical psychologists engage in activities ranging from basic and applied research to assessment and diagnosis, prevention and intervention, consultation, teaching, training and public policy development, in settings as diverse as universities and research institutions, medical settings, schools, businesses, courts and government. This profile addresses behavioral, emotional, intellectual disabilities, personality disorders and more broadly, medical issues and environmental stressors that affect individuals from infancy to adulthood. Based on the standards of the American Psychological Association (APA), (Wekerle, Christine & Wolfe, David, 2016).

2.3. Legal Psychology

Forensic psychology deals with a range of legal issues, but above all with the construction, interpretation and assessment of the psychological, social and cultural framework, a field in which the demands of justice are then configured. Forensic psychology is the professional practice of psychologists who provide professional psychological expertise to the judicial system. Such professional practice is generally within the fields of clinical psychology, counseling psychology, neuropsychology, school psychology, or other applied fields within psychology that involve the provision of human services by psychologists who have additional expertise in law and the application of applied psychology to legal proceedings (Weiner. I.B & Otto.R.K, 2013, Neal, Tess, 2018).

2.4. Ethical and Legal Framework

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, Article 155, provides for the summoning of a psychologist/social worker by the court to give his opinion regarding the manner of exercising parental responsibility, visitation rights or the guardianship of a child by a former spouse, whether temporarily or permanently; Article 267, last paragraph, provides for the court to obtain the opinion of a psychologist for the appointment of a guardian. This article also dictates the presence of the same psychologist throughout this trial. (United Nations Children`s Fund.UNICEF.2019)

According to the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC, 2006) standards for child custody evaluations are: Impartiality of the evaluator, Best interest of the child, professional qualification of the evaluator, use of multiple methods,verification of information received from the parties, interviewing children in the process, avoidance of conflict of interest and finally a clear structured evaluation report based on reliable data. The manner in which these standards are implemented and respected by the evaluator will be influenced by local law and court rules. (AFCC, 2006).

Standards and principles of psychological assessment according to United Nations Children`s Fund in Albania.(UNICEFF,2019):

1. To answer the referring questions directed by the court and to adhere to these questions throughout the assessment.

2. The referring questions directed by the court must be specific, psychological in nature, measurable and within the professional competence of the evaluating psychologist.

3. The report must summarize the assessment process in order to be transparent about what the court’s questions are, the procedure followed, what data was collected and how they

affect the conclusions reached by the assessor. The report must provide the judge with the necessary information he or she needs to make an informed decision.

4. Assessment methods include: individual interviews with adults and children, observations, testing, gathering information from documentation and third-party information sources, report writing and sharing information.

5. Despite efforts, such an examination is not practical and does not properly serve the judgment, the psychologist documents his efforts, the result of these efforts and makes clear the possible impact of the limitation that this incomplete information brings on the reliability and validity of his opinions.

6. Psychological assessment is a three-phase process: 1) Data collection; 2) Data interpretation; 3) Data use. An average psychological assessment report can be 10-25 pages.

7. The report should include: The relationship between the two parents, The parent/child relationship, Parenting skills of each parent, The psychological health of each member, Family dynamics.

8. The methods used in the assessment should be supported by studies and scientific research about their application in these types of assessments.

9. It is recommended to also write the relevant references. This allows legal experts, but also the parties, to see what sources and studies the evaluator relied on.

2.5. Assessment Instruments

Specialized clinical procedures for observing the family system (Lausanne -Trilogue Play Clinic). Studimi i McHale, J.,et al, 2025, demonstrated that the Lausanne Trilogy Game can be used to identify strengths and challenges of coparenting and to enhance practitioners' adaptation to coparenting dynamics within their therapeutic contexts.

The MMPI-2 is commonly used in the psychological assessment of parents within child custody evaluations.The MMPI-2 has been shown to be one of the most effective psychological assessments of parents in the child custody process. (Medoff D.,1999). In the study of Roma, P., Marchetti, D., Mazza, Cet al., (2022), the use of the Minnesota Questionnaire showed that the personality profile of parents involved in parental alienation can provide important insight into custody cases.

Evidence Validation Instruments (CBCA, SVA). Criteria-Based Content Analysis (CBCA) dhe Statement Validity (SVA) is widely used in forensic practice as a tool for discriminating between adults' memories of self-experienced and fabricated events in various types of cases.

The study by Amado, B. G., et al, 2016, found that CBCA had distinct efficacy in studies presented on sexual and intimate partner violence offenses. SVA, a psychological technique that also assesses the credibility of evidence in legal cases, including witnesses, victims, or perpetrators. It primarily assesses the credibility of child testimony in cases of sexual assault. (Hongli, Z.,2024).

In a study about 1,500 married or divorced men and women were interviewed and administered the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire. Personality appears to be one of many factors involved in marital satisfaction and divorce (Eysenck, H. J. 1980).

The Thematic Perception Test (TAT) important for personality psychology, where it is required to tell an "imaginative" story based on some vague figures.(Langan-Fox.J.L, Grant.S,2006). And for children, the Children's Perception Test (CAT). Projective

instruments, which generally lack some psychometric properties, continue to be widely used despite the lack of empirical support. (Quinnell, F. A., & Bow, J. N. 2001)

The pencil-paper test is a projective house-tree-person test. This test is a design method for personality analysis, where they draw a house, tree and person on paper and project some psychological features, such as their personality. Angjelkoska.S,Stankovska.G, Dimitrovski.D (2015), in their study observed that there is a significant relationship between family conflict, parental divorce and children's self-concept.

DSM-5 is the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, a taxonomic and diagnostic instrument published by the American Psychiatric Association. (APA,2013) that helps measure mental health symptoms and determine a possible diagnosis.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, a widely used self-report for assessing individual self-esteem. (Rosenberg, M., 1965). Verrocchio MC, Marchetti D and Fulcheri M (2015), in their study identified alienating behaviors and parental bonds, of children who had divorced parents. It turns out that children exposed to dysfunctional parenting and low self-esteem are at risk for their long-term psychological functioning.

Purpose of the study

The goal is to submit professional knowledge and aspects of the evaluation process in cases of divorce and custody determination by providing methods, psychological tests and the format of the final report. As well as to emphasize the importance of the psychologist's clinical education so that the assistance to the family and the minor is completed in a quality report.

Objectives

The objectives of this paper are:

1-To present the method and process of legal psychological evaluation in cases of divorce and custody determination.

2-To present the importance of a detailed format of a legal psychological evaluation, based on the review of psychological reports developed by the Elbasan District Court.

3. Methodology

This paper is based on the assessment of the authors' experience in the field of psychology in general and psycho-legal for more than 14 years. 223 legal psychological assessments for divorce processes with minor children in the Elbasan District for the period 2016 - 2024 were taken into consideration. The method of analysis was the format of the evaluation report and the result at the end of the judicial process. The inclusion criteria in this paper are assessments of civil judicial divorce cases involving minors, and the assignment of guardianship.

The sample used in this study was taken from the archive of 223 cases evaluated by the professional of psychological assessment of civil cases handled in the Elbasan Judicial District Court. The way of coding the evaluations is based on measuring whether the evaluation reports are compatible with the court's requirements, whether the evaluation instruments are suitable to be used to show objective evidence for the psychological state of the parties for the judicial process. To measure how many reports have had a positive result in the court case.

The data was collected by examining the psycho-legal reports by analyzing the structure, the format used with the final format used suitable by the Code of Ethics and Deontology by

(The Order of the Albanian Psychologist,2017). *(see Table 1, UNICEF Assessment Standards, 2019)* and similar research study. Evaluation instruments based on the literature and the success of the court case, which is based on postponement/rejection/acceptance of the report by the court.

Table 1. The psychological-legal assessment report contains the following components:

The psychological-legal assessment report:
1- Demographic data (including first name, last name, date of birth, identity card number, place of birth, place of residence.
2- Description of the court case.
3- The conflict between the parties and their current situation (a brief chronology of the history of the marriage, the reason they made this decision, the current status of custody of the children, the place of residence of both parties.
4- Solving tasks assigned by the Court (answering the court's questions formulated in a structured manner based on interviews with parents, interaction with children, interviews with children, observation, specific tests).
5- Summary and conclusions (Summary of the statements of both parties, such as the family dynamics; if there is any case of abuse, violence, mental disorder in the past/present; the personality traits of the parents that can affect the parenting skills with children. Description of the features, skills to be a good parent; description of the child's psychological state and how he is coping with this process. Description of the children's relationship with each of the parents, if there is a preference regarding custody; if the children are affected or /are alienated from any parent.
6- Recommendations (recommendations are given in determining custody of children, days, schedule of visits, if psychotherapeutic treatment is necessary for parents or children.
At the end of the evaluation report, they are sent to the court where the data for the whole family is examined. This report is one of the tools that the judge can attach to the final decision.

Study limitations

Generalizations cannot be made from the limited amount of data and sample collected in this study. It is a descriptive analysis coming from self-reports of a single expert and lack of in-depth comparative analysis. The assessment instruments that were used have discussions such as CBCA, SVA for application to child custody cases and lack of standardization for local culture.

4. Results and Discussions

The divorce process and determination of child custody is one of the most complex processes for all professionals involved in this decision-making. Mental health professionals who take action must be based on data and assessments in a professional and objective manner during the judicial process.

Evaluators use methods, techniques, psychological tests that must be carefully reviewed before being applied as assessments. In the Legal Framework in the Republic of Albania, the evaluating psychologist appointed by the court is a participant and interactive with parents who are on the verge of the divorce process and with children in cases where there is. By

analyzing the current situation well and reaching such a decision. By analyzing the thoughts, perspectives of each parent, in the relationship with partners but also in relation to the child.

Since each evaluating psychologist in court has a personal format in developing the evaluation methodology, this study is based only on reports personally evaluated as an evaluating psychologist, which is also a limitation of this paper, which is that we cannot generalize the results. This paper shows the method, methods, psychological tests used by the evaluating psychologist in cases of divorce and custody determination. Presentation of an example of writing a report by the author that she used in her work as an evaluating psychologist in the Elbasan District Court. The writing of the report is based on standards, professional ethics from the court, the Order of Albanian Psychologists.

From the review of 223 legal psychological assessments, evaluated in the period 2016-2024, in the Elbasan district. Where, N=10 reports used in 2016-2017 and N=213 reports 2018-2024, there are changes, details in the way of structure starting from the cover content, declaration of methodology, use of assessment instruments, adapted recommendations and number of pages (see annex for the final format). The use of psychological tests is considered valuable in obtaining information for the evaluation objectives. Based on some elements of the literature and studies (Chung DS, Moon DS, Lee MH, Kwack YS, 2020) have shown that the format, some of the tests used are included in the evaluation process.

Also, improvements were observed in the fulfillment of the questions determined by the court based on the objective psychological assessment, helping to reach an accurate conclusion. Of these 223 assessments, 10 of them were not formulated in the full format by not including information indicating the psychological state of the parents and in some cases also of the child. This is due to the non-use of the relevant instruments, resulting in the postponement of the second assessment session and unsuccessful reports. *(See Table 2)*. The detailed presentation of the content of the report also fulfills the first objective of this study.

Table 2: Comparison of evaluation reports in terms of format, tests used, and success of the report by the court.

No. of reports	**Format**	**Tests**	**Report success**
10	-Lack of presentation (presentation and content, how the methodology is based, recommendations, number of pages.	Lack of assessment instruments	Adjourned session
213	Full structure (see annex formation)	Addition of tests such as: Eysenck, CBCA, SVA, Rosenberg self-esteem scale, Paper-graphic tests	Successful

It should be noted that these N=10 reports belonged to the period 2016-2017, the beginning of the work as an evaluator and in Albania there was a lack of psychometric instruments. The use of projective tests was one of the tests that provided information about personality, personal and interpersonal relationships. By analyzing these tests, they provided a picture of the perceptions of spouses and children. The use of personality tests presented the

psychological state of individuals, where the lack of use prevented an objective assessment of the legal issue (see Table 3.)

Table 3. Period and instruments used and added for the evaluation of psychological reports

Period	**Instruments used**		**Period**	**Instruments added**	
2016-2017	Tests for parents	Tests for children	**2018-2024**	Tests for parents	Tests for children
	Family System Assessment, Darlington Measurement of mixed symptoms in adults – level 1; DSM-5 (DSM-5, 2013). MMPI-II TAT	Family System Assessment, Darlington CAT		Eysenck CBCA,SVA Rosenberg self-esteem scale	Paper-graphic tests: *The house-tree-man test*

As for personality assessment instruments, it provides information on ten personality scales, which has shown that the MMP-II was suitable for application to parents, similar to the study of (Medoff D.,1999, Bow JN, Quinnell FA, 2002), Roma, P., Marchetti, D., Mazza, Cet al., 2022).

In the Eysenck test, the assessment aid for the clinical interview, measuring some elements of the parents' personality, important not only for the divorce process but also in the child custody process (Eysenck, H. J. 1980).

The use of the DSM-5 test was an important test used internationally by clinical psychologists, necessary as an addition to the assessment in the judicial process to analyze whether there are significant levels of orientation for a possible diagnosis in the parents.

Lausanne -Trilogue Play, is a form of family psychological assessment that has provided analysis of the parent-child relationship as well as cooperation between parents. Important because we understood how parents communicate, cooperate with each other and how they respond to the emotional needs of children.

While the evidence assessment instruments were used, CBCA and SVA, to verify the reliability of the true and false statements of the parties. Although there is not enough data that shows the acceptability of these tests, in the context of juvenile custody, but in the analysis and assessment it has helped in the understanding of the statements. This may be both a limitation of the work and one of the recommendations for further research.

In projective tests, such as TAT and CAT, graphic tests (house, tree and person) helped in obtaining information to understand, each person's personality, unconscious needs and the way children perceived situations, people. Especially in cases of children who have difficulty expressing emotions, experienced traumas, in the form of imagined stories and drawings. Also supported in the study (Angjelkoska.S, Stankovska.G, Dimitrovski.D, 2015).

Rosenberg's self-esteem scale has been helpful in analyzing parents in court regarding their self-esteem. Studies have shown that Verrocchio MC, Marchetti D and Fulcheri M (2015) identified alienating behaviors and parental attachments in children whose parents were divorced. As a clinical psychologist, the assessment format described above, the use of

the instruments mentioned has helped in the objective and fair assessment of divorce cases and procedures with minors. Fulfilling both the second objective of the paper.

Table 4. Final -Clinical Psychological Tests for parents and children.

Clinical Psychological Tests for parents and children	
Tests for parents	Tests for children
Family System Assessment, Darlington Measurement of mixed symptoms in adults – level 1; DSM-5 (DSM-5, 2013). MMPI-II Eysenck CBCA,SVA TAT Rosenberg self-esteem scale	Family System Assessment, Darlington CAT, Paper-graphic tests: The house-tree-man test

5. Conclusions

Divorce is one of the most difficult processes that both parties and children can experience. The assessment for determining custody is one of the processes that must be careful in obtaining data obtained from interviews with each parent, with the children, the use of a series of psychometric instruments so that the assessment is objective, ethical, professional. From the review of 223 legal psychological assessments where 10 reports required review due to the lack of some instruments that prevented the objective assessment. In conclusion, the continuity of legal psychological reports have resulted effective in court hearings without opposition from the parties involved. As a result, the assessment is complete when clinical instruments such as family system observation (Darlington, Lausanne Trilogue play clinic) (McHale, J.,et al, 2025), DSM-V (APA,2013), evidence validation instruments (CBCA, SVA) (Amado, B. G., et al, 2016, Hongli, Z.,2024) and psychological tests for personality assessment (MMPI-II, Eysenck) ((Medoff D.,1999), and projective (TAT, CAT, Pencil-paper test, etc.) (Langa-Fox.L,J.,&Grant,S., 2006). as well as Rosenberg's self-description test are included (Rosenberg, M., 1965). Finally, showing that the review of 213 assessments was qualitative and the format was appropriate.

6. Recommendations

According to the standards of psychological assessment by the assessor, it is the use of assessment tests, but it would be appropriate to analyze, standardize, and list which tests would be decisive for the custody process.

Further research is needed to evaluate other specific instruments for custody assessment.

It is recommended that instruments such as the CBCA and SVA, and projective techniques be validated if they are appropriate for the local culture for use in custody assessment in the judicial process.

In the future, research should be conducted to evaluate the appropriate format of the final report. This study should be an example for young professionals working as clinical evaluators in divorce processes and custody evaluation.

This study can be supportive of other studies in the clinical and legal fields. Studies should be conducted including assessments by other professional evaluators.

Acknowledgment

This paper is not a product of a scientific project.

References

Amado, B. G., Arce, R., Fariña, F., & Vilariño, M. (2016). Criteria-Based Content Analysis (CBCA) reality criteria in adults: A meta-analytic review. International journal of clinical and health psychology : IJCHP, 16(2), 201–210. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijchp.2016.01.002

American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-V). American PsychiatricPub, 2013. https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596

Angjelkoska, Slagjana & Stankovska, Gordana & Dimitrovski, Dimitar. (2015). Self-image in children of divorced parents. International Journal of Cognitive Research in Science, Engineering and Education. 3. 59-64. DOI:10.23947/2334-8496-2015-3-2-59-64

Bow JN, Quinnell FA. (2002). „A critical review of child custody evaluation reports“ . *Fam Court Rev*;40:164–176. DOI:10.1111/j.174-1617.2002.tb00827.x

Drayton, Michael. (2009). The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2). Occupational medicine (Oxford, England). 59. 135-6. DOI:10.1093/occmed/kqn182

Eyo, Ubong. (2018). Divorce: Causes and Effects on Children. Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Studies. 6. DOI:10.24203/ajhss.v6i5.5315

Eysenck, H. J. (1980). Personality, Marital Satisfaction, and Divorce. *Psychological Reports*, *47*(3_suppl), 1235–1238. https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1980.47.3f.1235

Fine, Mark & Harvey, John. (2006). Handbook of divorce and relationship dissolution. Journal of Family Communication. 8.

Quinnell, F. A., & Bow, J. N. (2001). Psychological tests used in child custody evaluations. *Behavioral sciences & the law*, *19*(4), 491–501. https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.452

Gray-Little, B., Williams, V.S.L., & Hancock, T. D. (1997). An item response theory analysis of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 23, 443-451. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167297235001

Guidelines on hospital privileges for psychologists: credentialing and bylaws. Washington: APA; 1991. The American Psychological Association.

Harman, J. J., Kruk, E., & Hines, D. A. (2018). Parental alienating behaviors: An unacknowledged form of family violence. *Psychological bulletin*, *144*(12), 1275–1299. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000175

Hongli, Z. (2024). Statement Validity Assessment. In: Kan, Z. (eds) The ECPH Encyclopedia of Psychology. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-7874-4_97

Chung, D. S., Moon, D. S., Lee, M. H., & Kwack, Y. S. (2020). Custody Evaluation Process and Report Writing. Soa--ch'ongsonyon chongsin uihak = Journal of child & adolescent psychiatry, *31*(2), 58–65. https://doi.org/10.5765/jkacap.200006

Iudici A, Salvini A, Faccio E and Castelnuovo G (2015) The Clinical Assessment inthe Legal Field: An Empirical Study of Bias and Limitations in Forensic Expertise. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01831

Kato, Daiki & Suzuki, Mikie. (2016). Personality Traits and the Expression Area of Synthetic House-Tree-Person Drawings in Early Adolescent Japanese. Psychological Thought. 9. 67-74. https://doi.org/10.5964/psyct.v9i1.164

Kraus, L. J., Thomas, C. R., Bukstein, O. G., Walter, H. J., Benson, R. S., Chrisman, A., Farchione, T. R., Hamilton, J., Keable, H., Kinlan, J., Schoettle, U., Siegel, M., Stock, S., Ptakowski, K. K., & Medicus, J. (2011). Practice parameter for child and adolescent forensic evaluations. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, *50*(12), 1299–1312. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2011.09.020

Langan-Fox, J., & Grant, S. (2006). The Thematic Apperception Test: Toward a Standard Measure of the Big Three Motives. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *87*(3), 277–291. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa8703_09

McHale, J., Tissot, H., Mazzoni, S., Keren, M., Philipp, D. A., Darwiche, J., Hedenbro, M., Salman-Engin, S., Collins, R., Mensi, M., Coates, E., Corboz-Warnery, A., & Fivaz-Depeursinge, E. (2025). Evaluating early coparenting using the Lausanne Trilogue Play observational procedure: Guidance for infant-family practitioners from an International Coparenting Collaborative. *Couple & family psychology*, https://doi.org/10.1037/cfp0000274

McWilliams.N (2002), "Il caso clinico. Dal colloquio alla diagnosi", Raffaello Cortina Editore, ISBN: 9788870787399

Medoff D. (1999). MMPI-2 validity scales in child custody evaluations: clinical versus statistical significance. *Behavioral sciences & the law*, *17*(4), 409–411. https://doi.org/10.1002/(sici)1099-0798(199910/12)17:4<409::aid-bsl357>3.0.co;2-n

Neal, T. M. S. (2018). Forensic psychology and correctional psychology: Distinct but related subfields of psychological science and practice. *American Psychologist*, *73*(5), 651–662. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000227

Roma, P., Marchetti, D., Mazza, C. *et al.* (2022).„A Comparison of MMPI-2 Profiles Between Parental Alienation Cases and Custody Cases". *J Child Fam Stud* **31**, 1196–1206. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-021-02076-1

Rosenberg, M. (1965). Society and the adolescent self-image. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Santos-Morocho, JL., (2016). Psicología Clínica y de la Salud, Cuenca, Ecuador: EDUNICA. IBSN:978-9942972-99-6

Verrocchio, M. C., Marchetti, D., & Fulcheri, M. (2015). Perceived Parental Functioning, Self-Esteem, and Psychological Distress in Adults Whose Parents are Separated/Divorced. *Frontiers in psychology*, *6*, 1760. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01760

Wahass S. H. (2005). The role of psychologists in health care delivery. Journal of family & community medicine, 12(2), 63–70.

Weiner. I.B & Otto.R.K., (2013), "The Handbook of Forensic Psychology Fourth Edition". John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

Wekerle, Christine & Wolfe, David. (2016). Child maltreatment.. Encyclopedia of Mental Health. doi:10.1016/B978-0-12-397045-9.00232-9

Zaina.Z (2007), Case study as a research method, Jurnal Kemanusiaan bil.9.

(Online Sources style)

Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (2006) „Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluation“. Author.AFCC Publication Page: https://www.afccnet.org/Portals/0/Committees/ModelStdsChildCustodyEvalSept2006.pdf

Center for Citizen Legal Initiatives. Available: https://www.qag-al.org/

Family Code and Adoption Legislation of the Republic of Albania, (2014), Kodi-i-familjes-Ligj_9062_08.05.2003- 1.pdf (www.drejtesia.gov.al)

Free Legal Service (2014), Available:https://tlas.org.al/

Order of Albanian Psychologists (2017), "Code of Ethics and Deontology of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania",chrome extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.urdhriipsikologut.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Kodi-i-Eikes-dhe-Deontologjise-pas-ndryshimeve-2023-3.pdf

United Nations Children`s Fund. (2019). Pjesemarrja e psikologut ne procesin gjyqesor me te mitur: Fletepalosje per gjyqtaret e seksioneve familjare. UNICEF Albania. https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/1466/file/Flet%C3%ABpalosje%20p%C3%ABr%20gjyqtar%C3%ABt%20e%20SEKSIONEVE%20FAMILIARE.pdf

APENDIX

Forensic Psychological Assessment (A sample format)

(First page – example)

(Logo - example)

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Addressed to: Judicial District Court

_____

(date, month, year)

(name of psychologist)

license number: (of psychologist)

Phone number: _____

e-mail: _____

Address: (of psychologist's office)

(Sample format of a legal psychological evaluation):

I (name and surname of the psychologist), psychologist (specialization or field of competence), having been appointed by the Judicial District Court (city) in the capacity of expert Psychologist for the civil case with the subject: Marriage settlement, with litigants (names of the parties), in the session dated _____, draft this psychological report as follows:

REPORT CONTENT

1- Methodology used for the assessment

2- Description of the case

3- Conflict between the parties and their current situation

4- Resolution of the tasks assigned by the Court

5- Summary and conclusions

6- Recommendations

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the assessment: this assessment is carried out according to the court's decision to appoint a Psychologist expert, based on articles 6 and 155 of the Family Code, to conduct a psychological assessment of the case. The purpose of this assessment is to help understanding the relational dynamics and take appropriate measures in relation to the best interest of the minor.

This assessment was carried out taking into account the following points of the Code of Ethics and Deontology in the Republic of Albania (May 2017):

1- General principles

2- Limits of competence

3- Maintaining confidentiality/recording

4- Assessment

The parties were informed in advance about how this assessment would be conducted and the methods that would be used. They were informed about the confidentiality and the main purpose of the assessment to answer questions set by the court and the parties. The instruments listed below were used to increase the validity and reliability of the psychological assessment and specifically its conclusions.

Methodology used:

The measuring elements of this assessment are scientifically based, which confirm its reliability and validity. It is part of the clinical psychologist's work to diagnose personality characteristics and assess individual characteristics, psychosocial resources, needs and expectations at different stages of development. The clinical psychologist can also select and use quantitative (inventories, tests) and qualitative (direct observation, clinical interviews, etc.) instruments.

Initially, the parties were contacted by phone and then schedules were set for when the interviews would be conducted.

All psychological assessments, including remote assessments, can only be performed by professionals registered with the Order of Psychologists of the Republic of Albania.

The following instruments were used, as appropriate:

1. Semi-structured interview

2. Clinical interview

3. Darlington Family System Assessment

4. Adult Interpersonal Symptom Scale – Level 1; DSM-5 (DSM-5, 2013).

5. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

6. Self-Description Instrument

7. Projective Tests

Place, time and method of interview:

The interviews were conducted at (address of the studio, psychologist's office) on _____. The interviews were conducted with:

(First name, last name of the plaintiff)

ID: ____

Place of birth: _____

Place of residence: _____

(First name, last name of the defendant)

ID: _____

Place of birth: _____

Place of residence: _____

Another general data collection model is given below:

Client Name\ID	
Age	
Marital Status, Children	
Place of work and position held	
Education	
Place of birth\residence, religious belief	

CASE DESCRIPTION

Plaintiff _____ has filed this case to dissolve the marriage. This is the desire of ____ parties.

CURRENT STATUS OF THE PARTIES AND CAUSES OF SEPARATION

Where they currently live

Who the child lives with.

Escalated conflicts

How both parties tell the story.

Solving the tasks assigned by the Court

(Below is a modality of questions that may be assigned by the Court)

1. Describe the material and moral situation of the parties, in order to see the best interest of the minor in perspective.

Mrs. _____

Mr. _____

2. Assess the development of the minor(s) and what his/her/their needs are in accordance with age.

(Here the model for assessing the minor according to the dimensions of Gulotta, 2000 can be used).

Physical aspects. Information about who takes care of him. Who washes him, who feeds him, who takes care of his daily problems.

Aspects related to the environment. Information related to the home. How safe and comfortable it is for his needs. This also includes interpersonal aspects, who are the relatives, friends, other figures.

Emotional and social aspects. Information about the child's relationship with the parent. Here it was assessed whether the relationship has mutual understanding, acceptance, trust, the parent's ability to put themselves in the child's place, to recognize and anticipate his expectations, to respond appropriately. It was assessed whether the parent is able to promote in the minor the ability to self-defense, the acquisition of values, rules and social norms. It was assessed whether the parents manage to promote autonomy and independence. And it was also assessed whether or not the parents have transferred their conflict to the child.

Intellectual aspects. Information on how much the parent stimulates the child intellectually.

3. Assess the parent-child relationship.

Relationship with mother

Relationship with father

4. Assess the conditions and psychosocial status of the parents, and determine with which parent the minor should live with. In the event that the minor can only live with one parent, with which parent the minor's best interest is served.

The minor's best interest in this case is served _____

5. Provide the manner of exercising parental responsibility.

For example: Meetings with the father ...

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking into consideration the interview, the psychological evaluation and the statements of the parties, *I assess that: It is in the best interest of the mental, emotional and behavioral development of the minor (s) _____ to be under the custody of ____.*

The assessment was prepared by:

(psychologist)

(Signature and stamp)