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**Investigating the Impact of Cultural Context on Forensic
Evaluations: Implications for Criminal Practice and Policy**

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Abstract

This research examined the influence of cultural context on forensic evaluations using the HCR-20 scales. The purpose was to investigate how cultural factors influence the interpretation and application of these assessments in diverse populations. Selected scale assisted in collecting relevant data, with forensic evaluators highlighting varying degrees of accuracy in assessments that consider cultural context compared to those that do not. Findings underscored the necessity of integrating cultural competency into forensic practice to enhance assessment validity and fairness. Practical and policy implications emphasize the importance of culturally sensitive training for evaluators and the development of guidelines for culturally appropriate forensic assessments.

Keywords: Forensic psychology, cultural context, HCR-20, forensic evaluations, cultural competency



التحقق من تأثير السياق الثقافي على التقييمات الجنائية: الآثار المترتبة على الممارسات والسياسات الجنائية

المخلص

بحثت هذه الدراسة في تأثير السياق الثقافي على التقييمات الجنائية باستخدام مقياس إدارة المخاطر التاريخية والسريرية- ٢٠

وكان الغرض من ذلك هو التحقق من كيفية تأثير العوامل الثقافية على تفسير وتطبيق هذه التقييمات في مجموعات سكانية متنوعة. وقد ساعد المقياس الذي تم اختياره في جمع البيانات ذات الصلة، حيث سلت المقيمون الجنائيون الضوء على درجات متفاوتة من الدقة في التقييمات التي تأخذ في الاعتبار السياق الثقافي مقارنة بتلك التي لا تأخذ في الاعتبار السياق الثقافي. وأكدت النتائج العملية والسياسية على أهمية التدريب على مراعاة الحساسية الثقافية للمقيمين وتطوير المبادئ التوجيهية للتقييمات الجنائية المناسبة ثقافياً.



Introduction

Background

Forensic evaluations are critical to the functioning of a criminal justice system and working in parallel with the police force, prosecutors, as well as courts, throughout their investigation and decision-making procedures (Bakhtiar, 2023). Forensic science as a discipline aims to assist in the attainment of justice using scientific techniques on tangible items. Nevertheless, the assessment is a vital component of the criminal justice system that depends on forensic services to solve the high demand overloading the existing service providers (Bakhtiar, 2023). Forensic services, when used purposely, help enhance the flow of criminal investigations, improve specific crime surveillance, and overall decrease the rate of crimes.

Forensic psychology is a part of psychology that deals with legal systems, focusing on the analysis of people's behaviour in connection with criminal cases and trials (Jamal et al., 2022). This field is very demanding, especially when responding to cases of gender-based violence, among other vices, involving mentally unstable patients (Jamal et al., 2022). According to Jamal et al. (2022), a fundamental component of forensic psychology is assessment, particularly the cultural sensitivity of assessments, the defendant's culture and background, or cultural factors they may have experienced in their lifetime. The Washington State Supreme Court in *State v. Sisouanh*, 174 Wash. 2d 292, 291 P. 3d 296 (2012) pointed out the missed emphasis on the cultural relevance given to the opinions of psychologists in matters of the law (Radosteva, 2018). Therefore, forensic psychologists need to follow federal-state laws and regulations; ethical principles of psychologists and the code of conduct American Psychological Association (APA) 2002 guidelines for assessment of and working with ethnic and linguistic minority populations (Radosteva, 2018). Among these guidelines, cultural



formulation models described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Illnesses (DSM)-IV and DSM-5 are widely recognized to make forensic evaluation culturally relevant.

Hence, forensic psychology cuts across the various aspects of managing crime and criminals, such as studying offenders, perceptions from the victims, the public, and the impact on the police force (Jamal et al., 2022). It is also in these ways that the worth of forensic science can be seen not only in the detection of suspects and production of evidence but also in making evaluations sensitive to cultural differences and similarities. It is noteworthy that although in the expanding field of forensic evaluations, cultural context is asserted to play a key role in terms of contributing to culturally relevant practices and understanding of cultural competency, its incorporation into forensic evaluations has not been fully explored. The general lack of representation entails that the cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity of the people in legal processes comprising translators is still limited. Thus, despite agreeing that cultural competency should form part of forensic mental health training and practice, there is very little information on how to put the principles into practice. This lack of knowledge is an excellent opportunity for additional research because increasing cultural sensitivity may improve the efficacy of forensic assessments.

Research Problem

Cultural influences, in general, play a significant role in forensic assessments; however, they still do not attract the necessary research interest. In the current juncture, which favours accuracy and refinement over genuine culture and the clinician-patient rapport, facets like language, biological growth, cultures, traditions, rituals, and stories leave a significant impact on an individual's actions and social realities (Radosteva, 2018). Criminal defendants across cultural, language, and socio-economic diversity are usually encountered in this practice, so



cultural sensitivity is vital in forensic assessments (Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018). It must be noted that although culturally diverse competence has been determined to be essential in clinical contexts, its use in Forensic Mental Health Assessment (FMHA) is not clearly well defined.

Such reasons help explain why many clinicians agree that a first-hand understanding of an evaluatee's cultural background can go very far in boosting the reliability of evaluations (Rioja and Rosenfeld, 2018). Ethnographic interviews and socio-cultural formulation (EMI-SF) still remain rather obscure in the published literature regarding how one can obtain expansive cultural information and contemplate the optimal degree of cultural knowledge required for performing forensic assessment interviews (FAIs) (Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018). Thus, the research problem is in the limited focus on studying the way culture affects forensic examinations, as culture plays a crucial role in people's behaviours and interactions, and there are no specific guidelines for using cultural sensitivity in forensic mental health assessments.

Research Questions

This research paper aims to investigate the influence of cultural context on forensic evaluations, identify essential cultural factors, assess current practices in incorporating cultural competency, and explore ways to improve guidelines and training for forensic mental health professionals. Therefore, the following two questions act as a guide to keep the study glued to the main objective.

1. How does cultural context influence the outcomes and accuracy of forensic evaluations?
2. What strategies can enhance the integration of cultural competency into forensic mental health assessments, and what are the implications for criminal practice and policy?

Hypotheses to test corresponding to the two research questions are:



1. Null Hypothesis (H1₀): There is no significant difference in cultural context influence and accuracy of forensic evaluations.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1₁): Forensic evaluations that consider cultural context demonstrate significantly different accuracy compared to evaluations that do not consider cultural context.

2. Null Hypothesis (H2₀): Strategies integrating cultural competency into forensic assessments do not significantly improve procedural fairness, client rapport, or assessment effectiveness.

Alternative Hypothesis (H2₁): Strategies integrating cultural competency into forensic assessments improve procedural fairness, client rapport, and assessment effectiveness.

Significance of the Study

The importance of this research can be encapsulated in the assertion that it targets the real world and shows how cultural context gives rise to vast differences in forensic assessments while the endeavour to refine assessment processes in criminal justice systems ignores it. The cultural components like language, practices, and aspirants' stories contribute a lot to moulding the behaviours and interactions, which are the significant factors best understood to make right and fair judgments (Radosteva, 2018). Defendants in criminal cases come from different cultural backgrounds, and forensic mental health (FMH) physicians often encounter them in their work, which suggests a need to improve assessment practices that regard cultural sensitivity (Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018). Though cultural competence awareness in clinical practice is on the rise, cultural accommodation in forensic assessments is still rather rudimentary, with inadequate instructions regarding the acquisition of a broad variety of cultural information and interviews (Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018). This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the effects of cultural factors on the evaluation results and



advocating for a plan to implement culturally sensitive procedures in forensic assessment, which should, in turn, increase the fairness of the judicial process and boost criminal practice and policies.

Terminology

Theoretical Definitions

Forensic psychology can be described as an area of practice based on the sum where justice is sought simultaneously with knowledge of the cause of the crime in terms of human behaviour (Jamal et al., 2022). It deals with the solving of crimes through understanding criminal laws along the jurisdiction laws.

Forensic evidence is presented and analysed proofs in the courtrooms with probabilistic of the highest effectiveness at the contemporary stage (Bakhtiar, 2023). This term reflects on two slightly different but closely related processes.

Intersectionality, a term first used by scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, describes how race, class, gender, and other attributes interact with one another (O'Reilly, 2020). They help to search out how these various identities interact with one another to produce the special experiences that emerge when mentally analysing persons in terms of membership of these identity categories at the similar time that it is impossible to grasp this experience by reductionist analysis of every category individually (O'Reilly, 2020).

Cultural competency is a principle that can never be overemphasized when it comes to a social worker's engagement with clients, following the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics (Attipoe, 2024). When organizations lack cultural competence, they fail to deliver appropriate and effective services to clients, thereby violating ethical standards and undermining social work practice.



Operational Definitions

Three potential definitions or variables pertaining to the present research are based on the HCR-20.

Risk Assessment: Risk assessment defined as a systematic process that is used to estimate an individual's propensity for violence or their capability to either harm or endanger oneself, others, or the community. The HCR-20 assisted in identifying and measuring some of these facets, which include historical information (for instance, previous violence and the offender's criminal history), clinical features, and management factors (Silva, 2020).

Cultural Sensitivity in Forensic Evaluations: Cultural sensitivity in forensic assessments refers to how well evaluators acknowledge and incorporate the cultural values, beliefs, and norms of the person being evaluated (Ogunwale et al., 2021). Examining how cultural factors are addressed in the evaluation process alongside quantitative data from HCR-20 scores.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Cultural competence is critical when discerning endogenous and exogenous psychological symptoms and diagnosing cultural properties in the assessment (Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018). However, even nowadays, the integration of cultural competence into practice, let alone in forensic mental health, remains problematic. The evaluation made of these settings could be detrimental to the society and the individual concerned (Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018). Culture in this context refers to the framework that contains the norms, standards, ways of life, and religion or spirituality as determined by the American Psychological Association (2003). These guidelines also prompt psychologists to use a 'culture lens' to appreciate the part that culture plays in everyone's lifestyle. In addition, the American Psychological Association's (2013) guidelines demonstrate that it is crucial to take



into account the differences in language and culture that can influence the decision or decrease the reliability of the assessment. Cultural-related factors that may affect informed consent are the following: cross-cultural differences are sometimes seen in the assessment of witnesses and defendants, considerable rights are often at stake, and the techniques and approaches that the forensic professionals are using may not be known to the examinee.

According to O'Reilly (2020), intersectionality, a term conceptualized by Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, entails how systemic and historical aspects like race, class, and gender work together and respond concurrently in regard to politics, culture, society, and power, which means that people with multiple marginalisation's face systems and structures that are multifaceted and overall not just a sum of many individual oppressions. This idea holds much relevance in the context of the American military, where military personnel utilize a number of identity characteristics (O'Reilly, 2020). Self-reflection on the models of intersectionality facilitates the clinician's acknowledgment of each patient's history and the possible effects on patients who belong to minorities; the social categories, such as gender, race, and ethnicity, play essential roles in shaping the psychological state of the individual (O'Reilly, 2020). Two of the most prominent claims of intersectionality are micro aggressions, which are described as discreet and regular negative actions based on race and gender. These behaviours regarding gender, race, and sexual orientation convey a signal to minorities asserting that they are less valuable and, as such, should not speak out (O'Reilly, 2020). These are given as simple remarks at work or in social settings, which makes clinicians understand that the patients should be encouraged to talk about these experiences, and the clinician should recognize the psychological injuries that result from micro aggressions in cases where the patient's goals are affected (O'Reilly, 2020). To this end, it has been ascertained that micro aggressions occur frequently in



psychotherapy, so in assessing such patients, clinicians should not rely on assumptions and rather ask questions instead.

Review of Related Studies

The field of forensic psychology plays a crucial role in today's criminal justice system by bridging psychology and law to understand and address criminal behaviour (Jamal et al., 2022). This interdisciplinary approach not only helps diagnose psychological conditions within a legal context but also generates insights into human behaviour that are essential for effective crime prevention and law enforcement (Jamal et al., 2022). As crime rates persist and evolve, forensic psychology remains pivotal in providing scientific rigor to criminal investigations and legal proceedings, ensuring justice is served through a comprehensive understanding of psychological factors influencing both offenders and victims (Bakhtiar, 2023). However, the field also faces challenges in integrating cultural considerations adequately, which are crucial for ensuring fair and effective forensic evaluations (Radosteva, 2018). Cultural factors such as language, traditions, and societal norms profoundly influence behavioural assessments, highlighting the need for forensic practices to evolve in tandem with diverse cultural contexts to improve the reliability and relevance of psychological assessments in legal settings (Radosteva, 2018). Radosteva (2018) also stresses that in areas like forensic psychology, culture is not given sufficient importance it deserves, and parsimony and finesse of the approach overshadow the essence of cultural relevance to the patient-clinician relationship. Cultural factors affecting behaviour, such as language, biological factors, tradition, and stories, are presented as critical elements in the paper as part of the forensic evaluation.

Rioja and Rosenfeld (2018) identified the growing diversification of cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds of those implicated in courts; therefore, calling for the need to adopt culturally sensitive approaches when



conducting forensic mental health assessments. While there is a wealth of information about multicultural clinical assessments, there is a severe lack of help on how these principles are applicable when conducting forensic assessments. They have published an article addressing difficulties while interviewing multicultural populations and suggestions to counter them at various phases of a forensic interview (Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018). Attipoe (2024) reveals that culture occupies a central place in the development of the human being as well as in society. Cultural diversity is mandatory for any type of social work, as it is stated in the code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. Recognizing and appreciating cultures, icons, and beliefs are crucial in forming effective contact with clients and the delivery of relevant services to clients and social workers (Attipoe, 2024). Mental health assessment is an ever-evolving field. Thus, Neal et al. 2022, agree with this statement in their paper, where they explore the current development in forensic mental health with gratitude but with an emphasis on the quality concerns that are still present. The speakers talk about the development and perspective of forensic psychology, presenting tips on how to perform valid forensic psychological assessments. Such practices are; handling bias, quality, reporting, handling limitation, considering the opposite opinion, and regulation of ethics (Neal et al., 2022). King and Neal (2022) reiterate that forensic evolution is manifested in the growing application of the findings of psychological assessment in legal cases, which affect legal resolutions.

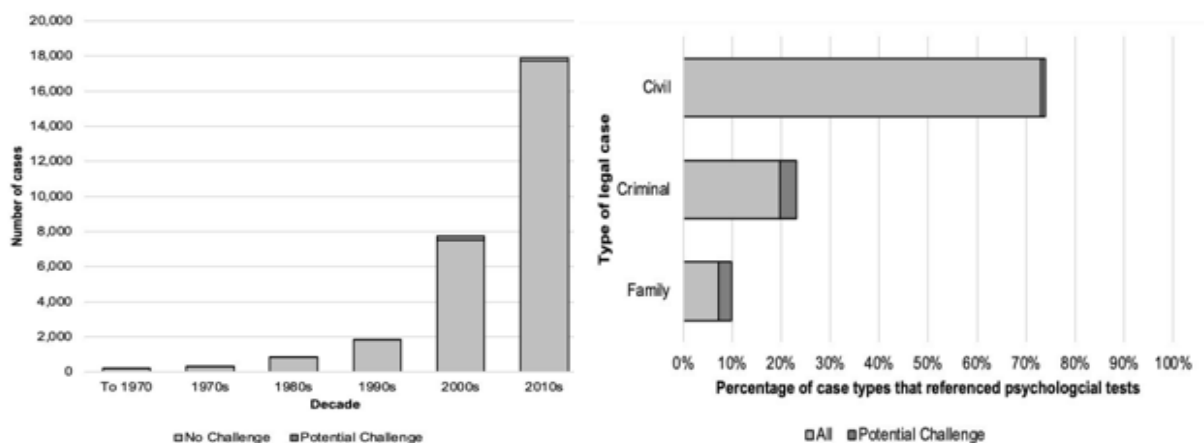
In the United States, by the end of the year 2017, 7% of licensed psychologists were practicing forensic psychology (Lin et al., 2017). For the last half-century, there has been a scholarly rise in the manner and frequency, where psychology evidence is admitted in court. The evidence-based psychometric science supports important legal determinations regarding the person's life, such as an individual's entitlement to disability benefits, a damages amount that reflects

psychological injury, child custody, and sentencing (King & Neal, 2022). As a result, it is possible to observe an increase in the utilization of psychological tests in the case of law seven hundred and ninety-nine thousand; seven hundred and eighty-four judicial opinions cited psychological tests.

The admissibility of these tests is a subject of very limited legal controversy, and the case law on it is rather weak, with such cases reported in only 1% of 66% of cases (479 out of 28,824) (King & Neal, 2022). The greatest proportion of references tends to occur in civil cases, while criminal and family matters closely represent the rest. Males report the most difficulties associated with the questions assessing sexual functioning and deviance, 90% of them, whereas 6.09% of individuals stated some concerns regarding the risk assessment tools (King & Neal, 2022). Figure 1 presents frequency count results regarding the U. S. federal, state, and territorial legal cases involving psychological tests. Descriptive statistics for the types of cases where psychological tests were mentioned, including a possible admissibility issue.

Figure 1

Frequency Count Results of the U. S. Federal, State, and Territorial Legal Cases and Challenges



Source: King and Neal (2022)



Specialists, including forensic psychologists, may have biases that affect their objectivity (Rassin, 2021). A study investigated this by having forensic psychology master's students assess a suspect's mental health in a mock double murder and arson case. Some students received graphic details of the murders, while others were told that murders had occurred. Those given the explicit version showed more concern about the suspect's mental state, despite this information being irrelevant to their assessment (Rassin, 2021). This should further inform the need to train workers so that they can be able to comprehend and deliver on the expectations of the customers follow-up interventions to handle possible discrimination in the forensic applications (Rassin, 2021). On the other hand, criminal procedures differ from one country to another, however; judges or jurors' role is to endeavor to establish suspect's guilt (Rassin, 2021). According to Earwaker et al. (2020), experts are paying more and more attention to cognitive methods in forensic science to satisfy the requirements of presenting clearer determinations of decision-making and individual characteristics contributing positively for forensic outcomes. In Earwaker et al.'s (2020) account, then, the structure has six components framework to enhance forensic reconstruction and legal activities: the Scholastics did not merely discuss choices in an orderly manner. The authors did systematic studies of varied decisions and scientific research that investigates decision-making procedures, as well as the communication of the results to relevant communities and for the growth of forensic science with emphasis on human factors and facilitating inclusiveness in research, practice, and training (Earwaker et al., 2020). This tremendous strategy aims at increasing the organizational capacity in forensic decisions to advance the justice system.



Historical, Clinical, Risk Management-20 (HCR-20)

Researchers and clinicians can freely use, copy, distribute, and transmit the HCR-20 Rating Sheets can be freely under the following conditions (HCR-20, 2020). The first reason is attribution. User have to use the subsequent acknowledgment: © 2013 Mental Health, Law, and Policy Institute, Simon Fraser University, K. S. Douglas, S. D. Hart, and C. D. Webster & H. Belfrage (HCR-20, 2020). The material has to be formatted in a way that eliminates any indication of authors' endorsement. Another condition is noncommercial use. One must ensure the many meta tags of the work are not executable for commercial advantages (HCR-20, 2020). Thirdly, no derivative works. User should not extend, modify or develop from its present state (HCR-20, 2020). Certain conditions mentioned above can be revised with the use of permission from the copyright owner.

The HCR-20 currently exists as a well-known violence assessment instrument globally and is highly valued in the UK's forensic sector (Silva, 2020). Although it is a central component in the assessment of patient risks, but it does not absolve institutions from legal or public scrutiny regarding deficiencies in treatment or access to treatment (Silva, 2020). Even though HCR-20 and PCL-R are common, they are not 100% accurate in providing a violence prediction, even in the real world, this is because these tools rely on the narrative risk assertions, which are subjective (Silva, 2020). When it comes to forensic contexts and the assessment of norm violations such as rape and murder, it is herein expected that jurors and ultimately the decision-making processes be heavily prompted by heuristic-biases as contrasting to empirical data (Silva, 2020). Therefore, although the HCR-20 is still a useful instrument, the idealisation of its properties contributes to its potential overloading with expectations beyond its positivist data scope, threatening the instrument's goal of risk assessment (Silva, 2020). Sometimes, risk assessment gets elevated to the level where people have very high



expectations and start misusing the entire idea of risk assessment and start converting it into a moral idea rather than a mere empirical idea.

Comments on the Literature Review

Cultural competence coupled with the consideration of intersectionality highlighted as critical components in forensic mental health assessment this is because; both proper and fair assessment accorded equally to culturally diverse clients. APA guidelines issued in 2003 and 2013 as cited by Rioja and Rosenfeld (2018) point towards the aspects of cultural and linguistic respect. Nonetheless, there is a scarcity of literature regarding the direct implementation of multiculturalism principles in forensology cases (Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018). Fortunately, there is an acknowledgment that of the said tools, the HCR-20 for their cultural bias in both content and their misinterpretations by assessors (Blais & Ritchie, 2016; Silva, 2020). To this end, the current study seeks to rectify these problems through the integration of the cultural context into the forensic evaluations and examination of cultural factors that affect the understanding of psychopathy and violence risk assessments with an objective of lowering injustice in the criminal justice system.

Research Methodology

Methods

The researcher adopted a quantitative approach aiming to uncover the impact of forensic practice in as much as criminal practice and policy is concerned. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), quantitative research collect, measure, analyse, and interpret numbers and other numerical data in order to answer research questions. This method approach includes the use of survey and experimental methods of defining a sample, collecting data, analysing results, and organizing research reports. HCR-20 to properly evaluate and manage



participant responses (Thomas & Zubkov, 2023). Experimental design determine the effect a variable has on other variables by manipulating the former in the course of measurement. HCR-20 is among tools employed in this kind of research for the assessment of the respondents in the management.

Sampling

Subjects meant for inclusion in the study were chosen based on their multicultural nature to increase the generalizability of the study. Sampling is a vital component of any research and purposive sampling was chosen deliberately for its effectiveness on accurately capturing the study's target participants (Bhardwaj, 2019; Modi & Blumenthal, 2019). This method made it possible to enrol purposefully people from culturally diverse backgrounds, which is essential for investigating the cultural factors in forensic practices (Bhardwaj, 2019). Only the prisoners, who already had forensic assessments made, were included; attempts were made to include participants originating from different prisons. The study adopted the HCR-20 by a professional in forensic psychology. The assessment data will include the patient's age, gender, ethnicity, education, and occupational status, medical history, previous violence, and criminal history, as well as the HCR-20 risk management items. The study's sample comprised of 20 prisoners.

Measures/Instruments

HCR-20 items are based on culture dependence; the issue of cultural background and its effect on forensic reports, and in relation with the criminal law and police practice, and policy specifications (Myers et al., 2024). Appendix B also provides those components of the HCR-20 scale considered pertinent for this research.



Data Collection Procedures

Several procedures have to be followed when using the HCR-20, as they are sensitive in terms of ethical and cultural practices. As for the limitations of the pre-described tools, prior to their application, participants' consent is needed, participants' responses should be safeguarded, and the purpose and possible outcomes of the assessments should be described (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The patient should be reminded of his/her right to withdraw from the study at any given time without any consequences. The assessments that were applied in the study regarded the cultural background of the participants. This is in addition to the ability to pick raw feelings, nonverbal communication, and the role of the given set of signs and dangers (Ogunwale et al., 2021; Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018). The language of the questionnaires and other tested items should be comprehensible, and cultural differences should be checked, probably by translating and using the interpreter.

HCR-20 is given in a structured way by the examiner, in order to provide inter and intrascale consistency and validity. With regards to reliability, the assessors require proper training to make sure that the results portrayed and the interpretations given are consistent (Addiction research Center, 2024; Blais & Ritchie 2016). Participants' issues and questions must also be considered during the process. Quantitative data is in the form of numbers, which are collected from the participants' responses using structured questionnaires, while non-numerical data is collected through interview responses. The collected data is recorded and later stored with utmost care taken to ensure that participants' identification is not revealed. The data should only be released to the researchers and, where it is essential, other people in charge of the data analysis to meet any ethic requirements that may be deemed necessary.



Statistical Analysis and Results

Data Analysis Techniques

The descriptive data gathered annually through HCR-20 scales was statistically processed and analysed in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The purpose is to assess the effect of culture on the forensic ones and to analyse the various trends and correlations inside the collected materials. Enter the scores from the HCR-20 assessments into SPSS. Check for missing values, outliers, and any inconsistencies in the data. HCR-20 item is rated on a three-point scale (0 to 2), where 0 indicates the absence of a problem, 1 indicates a moderate problem, and 2 indicates a severe problem.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the HCR-20 scale results indicate mean scores and standard deviations of the selected variables. The table presents mean scores and standard deviations for various factors on the HCR-20 scale: Violence (M = 1.10, SD = .85), Personality Disorder (M = 1.50, SD = .51), Traumatic Experiences (M = 1.05, SD = .69), Violent Attitudes (M = 1.25, SD = .72), Treatment Response (H10) (M = 1.30, SD = .73), Violent Ideation (M = 1.30, SD = .80), Treatment Response (C5) (M = 1.40, SD = 0.68), Instability (M = 1.40, SD = .50), Professional Services (M = 1.20, SD = .77), Personal Support (M = 1.10, SD = .79), Stress or Coping (M = 1.15, SD = .88), Living Situation (M = 1.05, SD = .76), and Treatment Response (R4) (M = 1.15, SD = .75). These findings suggest moderate scores for personality disorder and treatment response, with more variability in responses for traumatic experiences, personal support, and living situation.



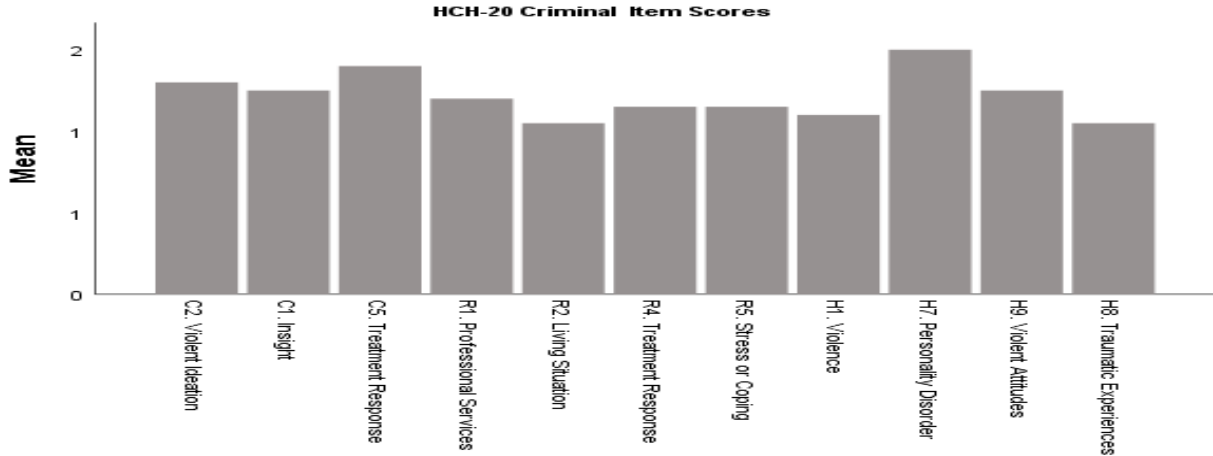
Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

HCR-20					
H1. Violence	20	0	2	1.10	.852
H7. Personality Disorder	20	1	2	1.50	.513
H8. Traumatic Experiences	20	0	2	1.05	.686
H9. Violent Attitudes	20	0	2	1.25	.716
H10. Treatment Response	20	0	2	1.30	.733
C2. Violent Ideation	20	0	2	1.30	.801
C5. Treatment Response	20	0	2	1.40	.681
C4. Instability	20	1	2	1.40	.503
R1. Professional Services	20	0	2	1.20	.768
R3. Personal Support	20	0	2	1.10	.788
R5. Stress or Coping	20	0	2	1.15	.875
R2. Living Situation	20	0	2	1.05	.759
R4. Treatment Response	20	0	2	1.15	.745

Figure 2

HCR-20 Criminal Variable Visual display



Inferential Statistics

For HCR-20 analysis, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to investigate the impact of various predictors on violence scores, including Living Situation (R2), Personal Support (R3), Treatment Response (R4), Stress or Coping (R5), Traumatic Experiences (H8), Major Mental Disorder (H6), Instability (C4), and Symptoms of Major Mental Disorder (C3). Table 2 provides the overall regression model explained a substantial portion of the variance in violence scores, $F(8,6) = 2.648, p = .073$, but no statistical significance, indicating that the predictors collectively have no significant prediction of violence scores at significance level .05. Among the predictors, Stress or Coping (R5) was found to be a significant predictor of violence scores, $B = .757, SE=0.286, \beta = .778, t(6) = 2.648, p = .023$, suggesting that higher levels of stress or coping difficulties are significantly associated with higher violence scores. Other predictors, including Living Situation (R2), $B=0.306, SE=0.315, \beta=0.273, t(6)=0.971, p=.352$, and

Personal Support (R3), $B=0.137$, $SE=0.308$, $\beta=.127$, $t(6)=0.445$, $p=.665$, did not show significant effects on violence scores..

Table 2

Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β		
(Constant)	-2.204	1.478		-	.164
				1.491	
R2. Living Situation	.306	.315	.273	.971	.352
R3. Personal Support	.137	.308	.127	.445	.665
R4. Treatment Response	.627	.308	.548	2.036	.067
R5. Stress or Coping	.757	.286	.778	2.648	.023
H8. Traumatic Experiences	.430	.288	.346	1.490	.164
H6. Major Mental Disorder	.395	.363	.352	1.087	.300
C4. Instability	.055	.492	.032	.112	.913
C3. Symptoms of Major Mental Disorder	.116	.299	.105	.389	.705

a. Dependent Variable: H1. Violence

Reliability and Validity Analysis

The HCR-20 scale as measured in this context shows moderate internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha), indicating that the items less consistently measure a single underlying construct. The inter-item correlations

suggest complex relationships among the items, with varying degrees of association.

Table 3

Reliability Analysis

Reliability Statistics											
	Cronbach's Alpha		Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items								
	Alpha		Items								
HCR-20	.485		.522								10

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix										
	R2.	R4.	H8.	H4.	H5.	H9.	H10.	C1.	C5.	FV
R2.	1.000									
R4.	.172	1.000								
H8.	.096	-.221	1.000							
H4.	.179	.333	-.268	1.000						
H5.	.179	.226	.082	.024	1.000					
H9.	.073	.222	-.562	.168	-.056	1.000				
H10.	.066	-.280	-.345	.350	-.087	.050	1.000			
C1.	.190	.138	.450	.188	.314	-.374	-.394	1.000		
C5.	.265	.083	.518	.188	.071	.000	-.359	.605	1.000	
FV	.469	.187	.068	.267	.267	.036	.099	.202	.545	1.000

Hypothesis Result

The lack of statistical significance in the overall model $p=.073$, suggests that considering cultural context alone does not result in a significant difference in the accuracy of forensic evaluations, supporting the null hypothesis ($H1_0$). The average of the scores of the experts, which relate to the forensic evaluations, was insignificant, indicating that merely considering the cultural context does not



cause a variation in the precision of the evaluation in line with the null hypothesis (H_{10}). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the large Fishing Regressions of Stress or Coping (R5) have significant influences to the violence scores, which means that strategies which related to the stress and coping based on knowledge of cultural competency do play a crucial role in the forensic evaluation tools. This provides some evidence for the second part of the study's alternative hypothesis (H_{21}), that culture integration might make procedural fairness and client relations and assessment helpful more so by reducing stress-related versions of violence. Therefore, although the grand model was non-significant the Stress or Coping suggested the impact of cultural competency on the effectiveness of forensic evaluation.

Discussion

In light of the results of the study, as well as the analysis of the findings concerning the given hypotheses and the results of the literature review, the following conclusions. First, the focus was made on the analysis of the effect of cultural background on the outcome of HCR-20 scores. Therefore, the results partially supported the second hypothesis regarding the fact that CFAs are accurate mainly when compared to CAs that include culturally sensitive aspects (Neal et al., 2022; Radosteva, 2018). The present study thus points to the necessity of promoting cultural sensitivity as a part of assessment in forensic evaluations in order to increase the validity and fairness of criminal justice activity.

On the other hand, cultural factors remained critical for reviewing any assessment tool such as the HCR-20 (Attipoe, 2024; Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018). These factors influence the ways the traits involving psychopathy or risk stress the importance of cultural sensitivity in forensic assessment. The approaches to improving cultural competence in these assessments highlighted in the literature point to the significance of cultural factors for a forensic psychologist's work (Lin



et al., 2017; Rassin, 2021). In the current study of cultural bias in forensic assessment, therefore, the five Rs of the HCR-20 scale, namely, “Professional Services; Living Environments; Support People; Treatment; Stress/Coping” are evidently important in handling all forms of bias and improving the validity of the assessments.

Sensitivity to cultural dimensions in Professional Services hence enhances awareness on how cultural factors that are present affect nurses and the behaviours being assessed in tools such as HCR-20 (Neal et al., 2022). The Living Situations supplement enables the evaluator to understand factors that surround the behaviours within the environment and thus have an accurate evaluation (Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018). Personal Support includes an assessment of cultural influence on clients’ mental health processes; evaluators are assisted in recognizing how family and community support influences states of mind (Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018). Considering the treatment responses across one’s different cultural groups is helpful in enhancing the understanding of the ways in which such approaches need to be modified and the likelihood of risk assessments being biased or inaccurate (Earwaker et al., 2020; Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018). Fourth and finally, studying stress or coping mechanisms under cultural influence avoids over or misinterpretation of certain behaviours, thus providing a better understanding of people’s reaction during forensic processes (Radosteva, 2018). These strategies can help forensic psychology progress toward the improvement of equal practice and cultural-bias-free assessments for the fair tests of legal cases.

Cultural diversity competency in forensic psychology should play an important role in improving various methods for evaluating people connected with legal proceedings and ensuring the efficacy of the results obtained. Thus, progress in cultural competence of forensic evaluators in the assessment does improve the test validity and significance of psychological tests, thus assist legal intercession



for justice in the multicultural society (King & Neal, 2022; Blais & Ritchie, 2016; Silva, 2020). Thus, these arguments call for the continuous cultural transformations of the forensic psychology towards culturally appropriate approach to work which will be of immense benefit concerning today's legal systems and cultural differences.

Implications

The trends for criminal practice and policy support the inclusion of cultural competence into forensic psychology education and practice to provide objective and fair assessment of culturally diverse persons (Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018). It can supplement administration of tests such as the HCR-20, which are affected by culture (Attipoe, 2024). It is vital for government officials to encourage policies that require cultural relevance in forensic evaluation, in an effort to decrease racism and increase the efficacy of an FSE legal investigation. These measures, in turn, can help enhance the equality of the criminal justice system and protect all the participants of legal proceedings.

Limitations

This research recognises factors that may pose a threat to the external validity and internal validity of the study. Still, it should be noted that even though the sample was purposively selected, it was not very large and included only professionals of particular fields, which could pose questions on generalizability of the results. Moreover, the use of qualitative data from interviews means that the study is prone to the effects of subjective variability of the perception of events by participants. Moreover, the current study only concentrated on assessing the HCR-20 scales, and no regard was taken to other assessment tools and cultural issues that could affect the forensic evaluations. Such factors beg the questions for future studies and potential focus on expanding the scopes of forensic psychological assessments.



Future Research

This study has several limitations and areas that future research should take into consideration to build upon the findings in this study. There is scope for further quantitative studies with bigger and more diverse samples to give finer details about the effects of cultural factors on judges' assessments in different environments and with different patients. In addition, qualitative research could assess the efficacy of cultural competency training in forensic psychology evaluation in a long-term basis. More research is advised on how other assessment tools apart from the HCR-20 include cultural factors in the assessment of psychopathy and risk assessment. Finally, it is suggested that qualitative studies must involve defendants, victims and practitioners to get their views about the influence of cultural backgrounds on forensic activities. Closing these gaps would improve cultural adaptiveness, propriety, and equity in forensic assessment paradigms that, in extension, would advance the criminal justice systems.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the training providers place emphasis on the relevant issues of cultural incorporation in forensic assessment and evaluation. Applying culturally suitable measures such as HCR-20 could improve the assessment precision and accuracy across different societies. There is a need to incorporate cultural competence standards in accreditation and licensing processes of forensic psychologists and legal personnel. The laws should require the use of appropriate assessment tools and instruments in forensic tests to achieve the best outcomes while eradicating prejudices. It is crucial to provide grants for promoting culture-appropriate approaches to forensic work because of the need to enhance the identification of best practices in this field and guarantee the unbiased administration of justice.



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Conclusion

The current cross-sectional study concerns how cultural context can act as a moderator of HCR-20 the forensic assessment, the latter showing numerous concomitant factors that may affect the scaled scores. Henceforward, it establishes the necessity of incorporating culture into forensic models to strengthen evaluation. Due to the aforementioned cultural correlations with risk management and psychopathy concepts, it is crucial to adapt the method for all cultural groups. Cultural competence focused on in the future endeavours of forensic psychology to enhance the assessments in the criminal justice system. The enhancement for forensic workers' education ongoing and the policies that specify that appropriate test instruments be to be utilized for culturally appropriate practice are suggested. Therefore, cultural diversity in forensic evaluations brings the chances for its fairness, or objective, irrespective of cultural differences, higher. Future studies should concentrate on ways and means of reducing bias and increasing culturally sensitive approaches in forensic work and studying the ways of dealing with diversity problems.



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