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**Ethical Challenges for Psychologists in Albanian Media: A
Qualitative Analysis.**

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the ethical challenges psychologists in Albania face when being part of media appearances, due to the impact mass media, such as television, the internet and social media, has on public perception. The field of psychology in Albania is very new, with the official “The Code of Ethics and Deontology of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania” only being published in 2017. Therefore, there is a lack of research in the field of ethics within the region. We use a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with psychologists in Albania and members of the Ethics Commission of Professional Disciplinary Judgment of the Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania to address the questions “What are the most common ethical challenges of psychologist in Albanian Media?” and “What are the reasons and factors that contribute to these ethical challenges?”. Maintaining confidentiality, staying within boundaries of competence, separating professional from personal opinion and issues arising from self-advertisement are the most common ethical challenges noted. The reasons range from the desire for fame and elevation of one’s status, psychology being a relatively young field in Albania, the adaptation of codes of ethics and conduct to the Albanian context to media pressure. As this is a qualitative study, we are hesitant to generalize these findings, however this is a starting point for further quantitative research on the previously neglected fields of media psychology and ethics in Albania, which can inform practical strategies to be implemented in the future to minimize the cases of ethical violations in media.

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Ethical Challenges for Psychologists in Albanian Media: A Qualitative Analysis.

Chapter I: Introduction

Ethics, as defined by the APA dictionary as “*the branch of philosophy that investigates both the content of moral judgments*” and “*the principles of morally right conduct accepted by a person or a group or considered appropriate to a specific field*” (American Psychological Association., 2018), in psychology is one of the first concepts one is met with the moment they start their path to becoming a psychologist. From school desk to practical application, it is inseparable from our profession. As such, there is great interest in researching the field of ethics as it relates to psychology.

In today’s day and age, mass media, as defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as “*forms of communication designed to reach many people: the newspapers, radio and television stations, websites, etc., through which information is communicated to the public*” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). has become part of our everyday life. It is with us when we watch television, when we scroll through our phones, every time we take information in.

The intersection between psychology and media has created a new field of media psychology, which requires its specific set of ethical considerations. While media psychology has been studied extensively in different countries, it is an untapped research topic in Albania. Not only is media psychology a novel topic in Albania, but so is any study pertaining to ethics as related specifically to psychology. This research gap proves a great opportunity in expanding the Albanian literature on ethics and media psychology and the interconnection between the two. As such, it was decided to explore this theme in this study.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and identify the common ethical challenges that come with psychologists' appearances in Albanian media and the reasons behind them. The aim is to create a theoretical basis for media psychology and ethics in the Albania psychological scene. This investigation will be done through analyzing information gathered from the members of the Ethics Board of The Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania as well as from the lived experiences of psychologists, as well as the Code of Ethics for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania's guidelines for media appearances.

The two research questions posed are:

Research question 1: What are the most common ethical challenges that psychologists face when appearing in Albanian media?

Research question 2: What are the reasons for these ethical challenges in media appearances?

Chapter 2 of this study includes a literature review which defines the core concepts of ethics in psychology and then narrows it into ethics in media psychology. It explores mass media and its influence in the culture and the field of psychology. It examines codes of ethics and conducts throughout the world, paying particular attention to the Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania and explores what it says about ethics in the media. The study then proceeds to outline the methodology used in Chapter 3, which is using semi-structured interviewing with a population of 20 participants who are active psychologists in Albania today. Thematic analysis was chosen as a qualitative method as it allows for an in-depth categorization and analysis of the data set. Results and thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews are presented in Chapter 4, with the dataset yielding five main themes separated into subthemes relating to confidentiality, competences, the roles of a psychologist in the media, culture and the

media influence itself. The study concludes with Chapter 5, which details the following: discussions, relating the data set to the existing previous literature and the codes of conduct; conclusions , which aim to give a succinct answer the two research questions and note the most common ethical challenges for psychologist in the Albanian media and the reasoning behind them; future considerations in the field of ethics and media psychology in Albania, including future research areas that can be explored.

Chapter II: Literature Review

2.1. Definitions

2.1.1. *Ethics and Professional Ethics*

Ethics has been a field of study of great interest to philosophers and other professionals alike for years, with each profession developing their own ethical guidelines. But what do we exactly mean when we talk about ethics? According to the American Psychological Association (referred from now on as APA) Dictionary, ethics is defined in two ways (American Psychological Association., 2018):

1. *the branch of philosophy that investigates both the content of moral judgments (i.e., what is right and what is wrong) and their nature (i.e., whether such judgments should be considered objective or subjective). The study of the first type of question is sometimes termed **normative ethics** and that of the second **metaethics**. Also called **moral philosophy**.*
2. *the principles of morally right conduct accepted by a person or a group or considered appropriate to a specific field. In psychological research, for example, proper ethics requires that participants be treated fairly and without harm and that investigators report results and findings honestly. —**ethical** adj.*

Codes of Ethics and Conduct are created based on the subset of ethics called Professional Ethics. Durkheim (1957) defined professional ethics as a set of rules that govern the activity of people in any given occupation, rules which are generated by dominant groups in the occupation, eventually turning into normative standards, accompanied by sanctions. Later on, Durkheim expanded on this definition by including also the motivational and ideal aspect of ethics, thus

making morality both obligatory conduct and a social ideal to which we are committed to (Hall, 2000).

The definition of professional ethics from APA Dictionary, “rules of acceptable conduct that members of a given profession are expected to follow” (APA, 2018) is in line with Durkheim’s original idea of professional ethics. Furthermore, according to Knapp, VandeCreek, & Fingerhut (2017), ethics can refer both to the professional’s voluntary efforts to reach moral and ethical ideals as well as to the legal and mandatory measures adopted by the profession. Professional ethics and ethical behavior are in this way intertwined.

2.1.2. What It Means to Be Ethical

In his book *Right and wrong: a brief guide to understanding ethics*, White (1998) defined ethics as an evaluation of human action. As such, behaviors are described as right or wrong according to certain social guidelines. However, describing an act as “ethical” requires a foundational understanding of what is good (Robertson & Walter, 2007). Several professional organizations have set on a journey of creating Ethic Codes, aspiring to establish the basis for ethical practices. But the ethical conflicts and dilemmas that can emerge in professional contexts, more often than not, are extremely complex, with no readily discernable right course of action. Personal biases, prejudices, rationalizations, overriding personal needs, and insufficient training and experience can all lead to biased conclusions, bad decisions and regrettable actions. As such, maintaining high ethical standards, being competent, acting virtuously, taking responsibility and constantly striving for the highest standards can embolden psychologists when faced with ethical dilemmas and uncertainties (Koocher, Keith-Spiegel, 1985).

Another important facet when assessing ethical conduct is competences, which are required of psychologists by their ethics code and are crucial to providing effective treatment and service to their clients. These ethics codes also require the psychologists to monitor their competences and their effects, as well as any apparent threat to them (Barnett & Corcoran, 2018). Competences have been defined as “a measurable pattern of knowledge, skill, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully” (Rodriguez et al, 2002, p. 310). These competences, often combinations of knowledge, skills and the ability to perform a given role, in practice often overlap, making acquiring them in a linear fashion a difficult task (Von Treuer & Reynolds, 2017).

Pope & Brown (1996, as cited in Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2016) noted two different types of competences that are required for high-quality professional practice: intellectual competence and emotional competence. Intellectual competence refers to both the acquisition of knowledge based on empirical research and sound clinical scholarship in practice, as well as the general ability to assess, conceptualize and create a treatment plan for a client. Intellectual competence refers also to the understanding of one’s own limitations, namely, that which one does not know. Emotional competence, on the other hand, refers to the ability of the psychologist to emotionally contain and tolerate the clinical material that may come up during their practice, as well as understanding and detecting personal biases that may affect their work. Part of emotional competence also includes the capacity the practitioner has of self-care in the context of the difficult work they may be conducting (Keith-Spiegel, 2014; Pope, Sonne & Greene, 2016; Welfel, 2006, as cited in Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2016)

Competences are also crucial when dealing with the various legal domains in which psychologist must operate, particularly in relation to ethics. The application of ethical competences allows for

the correct and coherent addressing of legal issues (Weissman & Debow, 2003). These ethical competences include the capability to identify ethical problems, knowledge about the ethical and moral aspects of care, reflection on one's own knowledge and actions, and the ability to make wise choices and carefully manage ethically challenging work situations. Furthermore, moral aspects of thinking and decision making can also be added onto the definition as practical applications of the knowledge of ethical codes and moral aspects of care (Andersson et al., 2022).

2.2. Code of Ethics for Psychologists

2.2.1. A Brief History

According to Fisher (2003), the purpose of codes of ethics is to establish the identity of the profession, to maintain the trust of the public in the credibility of the profession as well as to socialize members on expectations of the profession. Pettifor (2004) found that in the existing literature the purposes of codes of ethics can be condensed into two main points: promoting optimal behavior by providing principles that encourage reflection and decision making within a moral framework and regulating professional behavior through both monitoring and disciplinary action against those who violate the standards of conduct. According to Oakland et al. (2012), ethics codes serve four general purposes: educating members of the profession and the public on what behaviors consumers can expect from the profession; promoting public trust of members of a profession; embodying legislative, administrative and judicial policies; enabling professionals working in institutions that may not have ethics codes to advocate for high ethical standards.

The American Psychological Association (APA) formulated the first Code of Ethics for psychologists in 1953. This Code of Ethics was created after the work of a committee devoted to ethical concerns that had been formed in 1938, based on a previously organized committee in 1947 (Canter, Bennett, Jones, & Nagy, 1994). After this formulation the code of ethics of psychologists from APA, went through different iterations until it came to the most widely known Code of Ethics for psychologists, the one that is used today which was adopted in 2002 and last revised in 2017 (American Psychological Association, 2017).

Just like the APA code of ethics is used in the USA, each country has their own version of their code of ethics for psychologists though there may be overlapping content. Within Europe, while many countries have developed their own Ethical Codes, the basis for national codes has been adopted from the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations' (herein referred to as EPFA) European Meta-Code of Ethics. Thus, the standards applying to psychologists in Europe are directly correlated with EPFA's Meta – Code of Ethics as the basis for national psychologists' associations and – consequently – national codes, and thus for the standards applying to all psychologists in Europe (Lindsay, Koene, Ovreeide & Lang, 2008).

The Meta-Code of ethics is not an ethical code in itself, but rather, a format for the Code of Ethics of countries which are full members of EFPA. This Meta-Code is an 8-page document, accessible on EFPA's website. It consists of three main sections, a preamble or introduction, ethical principles of ethical codes of full members and content of ethical codes of full members. The first section explains what the Meta-Code is to be used for. The second section, that of ethical principles outlines four main ethical principles: respect for a person's dignity and rights, competence, responsibility and integrity. The last section details what should be the content of ethical codes for countries that are full members, such as terminology, professional relationships

and the interdependence of the four principles (European Federation of Psychologists' Associations, 2005)

2.2.3. The Code Of Ethics for Psychologists in Albania

The Order of Psychologists on the Republic of Albania (Urdhri i Psikologut në Republikën e Shqipërisë, herein referred to as Urdhri i Psikologut) is a relatively new organization, having been established in February 2017. Since its creation, there has been much work involved in establishing international connection, starting with becoming part of European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology (EAWOP) on the 1st of May, 2019 to becoming part of European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) on the 6th of July 2024 (Urdhri i Psikologut, n.d.).

Ever since its establishment, there have been efforts to unify and create a code of ethics that would be relevant to Albania. As such, The Code of Ethics and Deontology of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania was published in 2017, approved by the Decision No. 1, dated 30.06.2017 of the National Assembly of the Order of the Psychologist of the Republic of Albania (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017). This Code of Ethics is also published online in both Albanian and English, and it is fully accessible on the website of the Albanian Order of Psychologist. The Code of Ethics and Deontology of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania spans 28 pages, and it includes general principles, as well as 10 chapters that tackle resolving ethical issues, competences, human relations and issues that may arise in specific circumstances (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017).

The first part of The Code of Ethics and Deontology of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania describes five general principles. These principles are inspirational in nature, with the intent to

guide and inspire psychologists toward the very highest ethical ideals of the profession. They do not represent obligations as opposed to Ethical Standards and are not to be used as a basis for imposing sanctions. The content of the general principles falls in line with the Ethical Principles of EFPA's Meta-code of Ethics, which include respect for a person's rights and dignity, competence, responsibility and integrity. On the other hand, they also seem to be inspired by the four core principles of bioethics: respect for autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, and justice (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017; European Federation of Psychologists' Associations, 2005; Beauchamp & Childress, 2019).

The first is the principle of beneficence and non-maleficence, which states that “psychologists strive to protect the welfare and rights of those with whom they interact professionally and other involved persons, as well as the welfare of animals, subjects of research”. It also implores psychologists to resolve conflicts that arise due to the psychologists' obligation and concerns in a responsible manner, seeking to minimize or avoid harm. This principle works as a two-way street, as it recognizes the effect of a psychologist's own mental and physical health on the quality and level of care that they are able to offer, thus it also extends to the psychologist's own well-being (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017, p.7).

The second principle is that of Fidelity and Responsibility, which explains that psychologists develop relationships of trust with the people with whom they work, and that they are aware of their professional and scientific responsibilities in the community they work in, as well as in the broader society. It also highlights the psychologists' duty to respect the professional standards of conduct, to cooperate with other parties for the best interest of those they work with and to make evident any case in which the behavior of their colleagues is unethical (Urdhri i Psikologut, 2017).

The third principle is that of integrity, which claims that “psychologists aim to promote accuracy, honest and truthfulness in science, teaching, and the practice of psychology. In these activities, psychologist must not steal, cheat or engage in fraud, deception, or intentional misinterpretation of the facts.” This principle also predicts that there may be cases where a psychologist must use deception as part of the therapeutic techniques, though it does not go into detail. In these cases, it is important that the psychologist considers if it is ethically justifiable, if the technique works to minimize harm, all possible consequences as well as taking the responsibility to minimize harm for whatever conflict that may arise from its use. (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017, p.7).

The fourth principle is justice, which “gives right to all persons to benefit from the contributions of psychology and to equal quality in the processes, procedures and services being conducted by psychologists”. The psychologist must exercise reasonable judgment to make sure there are no unjust practices, which requires them to take into consideration their competences and their expertise, including their boundaries and limitations (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017, p.7).

The fifth and last principle is that of respect for people’s rights and dignity. This principle implores psychologists to respect the dignity and worth of all people, including their rights to confidentiality, decision making and privacy. This principle also touches upon psychologist awareness of the special measures necessary to protect the rights and welfare of communities or people who have vulnerabilities which impede their autonomous decision making. It also calls on psychologist’s awareness of cultural, individual and role differences, such as those based on gender, identity, race, age ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, socio-economic status, disability status. encouraging psychologists to take these factors into account when providing service to members of these groups. All this, while being aware and working

towards the elimination of personal biases and prejudice that may affect their practice (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017).

The second part of the The Code of Ethics and Deontology of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania includes 10 chapters, outlining correct conduct in the following areas: resolving ethical issues; competence; human relations; confidentiality and privacy; advertising and other public statements; record keeping and fees; education and training; research and publication; assessment; therapy (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017).

2.4. Psychology and Media

After having defined ethics and the code of ethics and conducts, it is necessary to define mass media and its influence, so that we can look into the interconnection between psychology and media, which is the main research purpose of the study.

2.4.1. Mass Media And Its Influence on Society

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines mass media as “forms of communication designed to reach many people: the newspapers, radio and television stations, websites, etc., through which information is communicated to the public” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Mass media has a widespread reach due to the media institutions structures, made to reach a large number of people, sharing the same message, in the same time interval. As such, it has the power to influence our worldview, knowledge and behaviors as individuals, as well as how we navigate in the world as social factors, more than traditional institutions of influence such as family or religious organizations (Viswanath, Ramanadhan, Kontos, 2007).

Earlier studies into mass media effects on society would view mass media as a separate institution, independent of other social institutions. Nowadays, the nature and impact of mass media in social life have become very difficult to separate from other aspects of it, and a more interconnected approach has been taken, as mass media can be seen as our most important social institution (Altheide, 2003).

Misinformation is one of the most well-studied fields within the mass media atmosphere. Southwell & Thorson (2015) noted three aspects of misinformation as a mass-media and mass communication problem: human brain biases towards acceptance and retention of misinformation rather than skepticism; regulatory structure in major democracies not focusing on prevention of misinformation but on the detection of it after the event has occurred; the economical burden of correcting misinformation on the wide-scale mass media reach.

An example of the power of mass media to influence is the study by Baumgartner & Morris (2006), which investigated how political humor in *The Daily Show* affected young Americans' views on the presidential candidates of the 2004 election, George W. Bush and John Kerry. The study found that not only did the participants who were exposed to jokes about both candidates rated them both more negatively, even when controlling for other variables, but that they also were more cynical towards both the electoral system and the news media. They also showed increased confidence in their ability to understand the intricacies of the political world. It concluded that *The Daily Show* was, in fact, having a detrimental effect in driving down support for political institutions.

Furthermore, a viewer's psychological needs also influence the way they interact with the media and how involved they are with the information they receive from different programs such as talk shows. Edgerly, Gotlieb & Vraga (2016) studied how viewers with a high need for cognition

and viewers with a high need for humor engaged with talk shows with a host promoting critical debate and a host promoting humorous commentary, respectively. This engagement included cognitive involvement as well as behavioral aspects. The results of the study supported the model brought forth which states that if the host style aligns with the viewers psychological needs, in this case a high need for cognition and a high need for humor, the viewers are more likely to perceive the information as more relevant and thus pay more attention to said information as well as engage further with the information both online and offline.

In today's world, the internet has become an intrinsic part of human society, with 5.56 billion people being online at the start of 2025, or 67.9% of the population (Kemp, 2025). Havic (2000) predicted that the internet would influence the television-based society immensely by changing the level of freedom individuals have in relation to information gathering and communication, which would in turn increase specialization, fragmentation, individualization and decentralization of social activity. This would put stress on existing social institutions and would create a society vastly different from the television-dominated one. Furthermore, he theorized that the usage of the internet would reduce the anonymity of people and their communication while increasing access to information and allowing every individual to do their own dissemination of the communications.

In reality, in 2025, 5.24 billion people use social media, or 63.9% of the world's population. The average time spent on social media is 2 hours and 21 minutes (Chaffey, 2025). While staying connected with friends and family is a major reason for the usage of social media, it is also used as a source of information. Younger people tend to be interested in being updated on "trending topics", whereas older people emphasize reading news stories (Kemp, 2025).

With the popularity of the Internet, nowadays there are countless avenues for the dissemination of information. The number of websites, blogs, articles that publish psychological information, especially related to physical and mental health and work performance seems to be limitless. In addition, there are major servers which promote articles from different sources as well as public appearances of psychology experts who are interviewed or asked to talk of specific topics on news channels, talk platforms such as TED Talks or podcasts, TV shows, documentaries and other forms of media, be those in text form, audio or video (Rich, Kumar & Farley, 2024).

2.4.2. Media Psychology: A Brief History

Media psychology in itself is a relatively new discipline, even though interest in media studies has been a popular topic for a long time now. As a field, it sits at the unique intersection between communications and media studies and psychology (Rich, Kumar & Farley, 2024).

Media psychology has gone through an evolution, with its predecessor being the early advice columns in American newspapers, that can be dated back to the times of Benjamin Franklin (Gudelunas, 2008). With these advice columns becoming visibly successful, self-help books were to follow. These two phenomena were probably some of the deciding factors in convincing electronic media outlets and major publishers of books and magazines that the public wanted to consume this type of information (Broder, 2024).

Following this phase, radio psychology started as early as the 1920s in America, where psychologists found their guest spots in radio shows to be an effective medium of communicating with the public and sharing information on their research and other psychology-oriented topics (Behrens, 2009). Radio psychology continued to be developed in the 20th century, with important figures such as Joyce Brothers in the 1950s and with call- in radio programs gaining popularity

in major markets in the 1970s. Albert Ellis in 1987 attributed a big part of the early popularity of his therapeutic approach Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy to his appearances as a semi-regular guest on the Today Show (Broder, 2024).

Regardless of the growing popularity of media psychology, APA and many psychologists did not fully agree with it at the start, going so far as to include questions about how giving advice over the airways constitutes unethical behavior in their licensing exam in 1979. APA's rationale for this was that psychological advice can only be ethically given under the proper professional context (Shapiro, 2011).

In the next years, many advances were made in the field of media psychology, particularly regarding the ethical and professional standards of service. In *Media Psychologists: Boon or Bane* (Bouhoutsos, 1981, as cited in Broder, 2024) it was argued that unlike other unequivocally unethical behaviors which usually include deception or cover up, what is done on air is in real time out there for everyone to see and hear, which makes it fully transparent and consensual. In addition, up until now, listeners and callers have expressed their appreciation for the messages given through media psychology: that their feelings and actions are normal, that they are not alone and others deal with the same problems and that there is help and hope for the future (Kuriansky & Pluhar, 2009).

As a result, The Association for Media Psychology was established in the 80s. Along with the establishment of this organization came the development of The Guidelines for Media Health Professionals, which address issues in all forms of media, guidance for appearances as guest experts in one's area of expertise, how to protect the public and other concerns that APA had in regards to media Psychology (Broder, 1985, 2024). Nowadays, certain guidelines about psychologists who appear in media are also included in the APA Code of Ethics, such as the

avoidance of false and deceptive statements, proper care in presenting one's own qualifications, and basing their information on the existing literature (APA, 2017, Art. 5.01, 5.04).

2.4.3. Ethical Behavior at the Intersection of Psychology and Media

Technological advancement and novelty come with the added notion that societies need to learn to navigate new ethical and social challenges that result from such innovation (Rich, Kumar & Farley, 2024). Shapiro (2024) reports several types of ethical violations that might result when psychologists are involved in media work.

To start, he notes that psychologists must take great precautions so that the material that they are referencing in their media appearances is presented in a general way and not a clinical manner. This means that they must make certain that what they say in the media, while adhering to the knowledge and expertise of the psychologist, is not perceived as psychotherapy by the viewer. As such, a critical point when appearing in media is clarifying one's own roles and expectations with reporters, in order to ensure the information that gets to the viewers about said roles is correct and in line with ethical behaviors detailed in the country's ethical code (Shapiro, 2024; McGarrah, Alvord, Martin & Haldeman, 2009). Psychologists can use media platforms to share information regarding mental health, specifically for psychoeducation, by making evidence-based research freely accessible using their training and expertise. This can serve as a steppingstone towards receiving mental health support and going to therapy, but it is important to make the distinction that the information shared is not therapy in itself as that veers into clinical information and practice (White & Hanley, 2025). The Albanian Code of Ethics (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017 , art. 5.04) and The APA Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association, 2017, art.5.04) further push this notion, by claiming that the psychologist must make

sure when appearing in the media that they do not indicate the establishment of a professional relationship with the public. Furthermore European Federation of Psychologists' Associations' Guidelines for Psychologists who Contribute to the Media note that true assessment of a person's psychological condition requires a proper investigation and tests, that can only be conducted with the person's consent, and thus psychologists should refrain from doing these assessments in the media (European Federation of Psychologists' Associations - Board of Ethics, 2011, art 2.2).

In addition, certain behaviors in clinical relationships that are prohibited by ethics codes, laws, and licensing boards are not common knowledge to the public. As such they might be uninformed on the severity of such behavior, for example, sexual misconduct and financial exploitation. The clinical relationship is not only a legally binding one, but one that requires informed consent, where the client is made aware of the nature of the process, their rights, fees and payments, before they can make a voluntary choice to involve themselves in one. Boundary crossing and the formation of dual relationships, which have been ethical concerns of therapists for decades now, are other reasons why establishing the correct expectations with the public is important in the field of media psychology (Shapiro 2024; Afolabi, 2015). To explain further, dual, overlapping or multiple role relationships happen when in addition to the client-therapist relationship, other types of relationships are established between the therapist and the client, which can happen concurrently or consecutively with the therapy relationship. "Some examples of multiple relationships include (a) functioning in another professional role with a client, for example, when a supervisor is also the therapist of the supervisee, (b) maintaining a personal relationship or close friendship with a client, or (c) going into business with a former client." (Schank et al, 2003). An important aspects of the client-therapist relationships are boundaries, which in overlapping relationships can be crossed or violated. Boundary crossing occurs when changes

are made to the role of the therapist that could benefit the client, whereas boundary violation is the opposite, where the changes made to the role of the therapist actively harm the client (Gutheil & Gabbard, 1993).

Another issue brought up is that of the involvement of information from current or former clients in the media-based context. This raises ethical issues even in cases where the client gives their full informed consent to be interviewed in the media. Confidentiality stands at the basis of the relationship between the psychologist and the client. It is generally understood that in order to be effective in helping the client, the psychologist must ensure that the information transmitted during a session will remain private and the identity of the client will be protected. The issue of confidentiality is not only salient in media appearances, but also in the usage of social media. Personal information has become more accessible than ever and as such, psychologists must take precautions both if they share their experience in social media and in intentionally searching out information about their clients, which may constitute in a breach of privacy if not done by previously informing the client and on the basis of the search being beneficial to the clinical interventions, taking great care to only extrapolate the necessary information from these client experiences (Shapiro, 2024; Kaslow, Patterson, & Gottlieb, 2011; American Psychological Association, 2017; European Federation of Psychologists' Associations, 2011, art.2.4.). When the necessity arises to provide cases both in traditional media and social media, with the purpose of educating the general public, there are several steps that can be taken to ensure confidentiality is protected. Honda (2019), a prominent personality in the online psychology sphere, details these steps in his white paper, widely available to the public. He details that providing a fictional composite case of several individuals, speaking in general terms so that the individual is not identifiable and asking for written permission while keeping in mind the power dynamics

between therapist and client are all good strategies used in both traditional settings and the current media landscape to protect the client's right to privacy.

Another ethical challenge arises when psychologists in media are asked to create a psychological profile of individuals, especially those who have committed criminal offenses. Criminal profiling refers to an investigative tool that aims to identify the behavioral and personality traits of offenders from their interactions in the crime. It is often used in tandem with police investigation, with its own distinct approaches to logical reasoning and gathering information (Petherick & Brooks, 2020). While profiling has been studied in forensic psychology, it refers to groups of people rather than an individual person. Such requests may strain ethical boundaries, which suggest that the best practice for psychologists is to not diagnose or reach conclusions without personal examinations. As such, an important distinction is to be made when commenting on these cases in the media, that the person in the news has not been evaluated by the psychologists, and thus all the information provided by them is talked about in generalities (Shapiro, 2024; McGarrah et al., 2009).

As previously mentioned, competence is an important part of ethical behavior (Weissman & Debow, 2003). Part of competence is also knowing your own knowledge limits (American Psychological Association, 2017, Art. 2.01; European Federation of Psychologists' Associations. 2005, art. 2.2). Psychologists may be asked by the media institution to comment on matters outside of their area of expertise. As such, agreeing to take on these cases and appearing in media to talk about the topic would be an ethical violation, as it falls into conflict with the codes of conduct, which often include clauses on competence. Furthermore, there is also another ethical violation closely related to working outside of the limits of one's knowledge and that is misinterpretation of credentials. It may happen that a psychologist is untruthful in the way they

word and present their credentials, something that again is in direct violation of conduct codes (Shapiro, 2024; American Psychological Association, 2017, art. 5.04; Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017, art. 5.04). Misrepresentation of one's own credentials and information can also reflect negatively on the profession, something that psychologists must keep in mind as it is their duty to not bring the profession into disrepute (European Federation of Psychologists' Associations, 2005, art.3.3.1).

Another case that proves tricky and can lead to ethical violations is that which is described in standard 2.04 of the APA ethics code; this standard states that a psychologist work should be always based on scientific and professional knowledge of the discipline (American Psychologist Association, 2017; European Federation of Psychologists' Associations, 2005, art.3.4.2). Within the field of media psychology, it may happen that a psychologist describes their own work and theories as scientific and professional, without providing adequate proof of the research to back up said statement.

2.4.4. EPFA Meta-Ethics and APA Code of Ethics on Media

Both EPFA and APA have certain guidelines suggest to psychologists when they appear in media. APA (2017) Code of Ethics and Conduct includes a full chapter relating to advertising and other public statements, as well as different standards throughout the Code of Ethics which inform ethical behavior that can be applied to media appearances. On the other hand, EPFA's Board of Ethics (2011) has compiled guidelines for psychologists who contribute to the media, based on the first iteration of the Meta-code of Ethics approved in 2005. These guidelines frame psychologists' contribution to the media as a responsibility to contribute to the general welfare of the public by sharing their knowledge and expertise and using media as a wide-reaching tool to disseminate this information. These guidelines serve to assist member Associations to develop

national guidelines to both support the psychologists that appear in media to act ethically but also to protect the rights of all people involved in said presentations.

APA Code of Ethics, chapter 5, presents guidelines relating to Advertising and Other Public Statements. Guideline 5.01., named “Avoidance of False and Deceptive Statements”, clearly defines what a public statements is, and that includes “paid or unpaid advertising, product endorsements, grant applications, licensing applications, other credentialing applications, brochures, printed matter, directory listings, personal resumes or curricula vitae, or comments for use in media such as print or electronic transmission, statements in legal proceedings, lectures and public oral presentations, and published materials”. This guideline clearly warns psychologist against making knowingly false, deceptive, or fraudulent statements concerning not only the definition above but also their level of training and expertise, their service and the titles they hold (APA, 2017), which is in line with principle B and C of the APA (2017) Code of Ethics, that of fidelity and responsibility and of integrity. These two principles work together to ensure that psychologists uphold standards of conduct, take responsibility for their statements and do not willingly offer misinformation and that the psychologist “be aware that he/she is also representing a community of psychologists.”

The guidelines of EPFA’s Board of Ethics (2011, art.2.6.) expand on this point, by reminding psychologists that they must also be aware that they are not only representing themselves, but also the profession and a community of psychologists at large. As such, with the multitude of models and practices contained within the field of psychology, the psychologist should be respectful of this difference and abstain from statements that may negatively impact the work of their colleagues. Valid critique, however, based on evidence, can help strengthen the profession. Furthermore, psychologists should be aware of the negative effects of self-promotion, and they

should aim to present any information on self-promotion following the principles of honesty and integrity, while paying close attention to any possible negative effects that may occur due to said self-promotion

Another standard within the 5th Chapter of APA's Code of Ethics, directly relates to media presentations, and that is standard 5.04. This standard outlines the basis for the advice or comments that psychologists can provide in media. These statements should be based on the psychologist's professional knowledge, training or experience as well as being supported by existing psychological literature and practice, they should align with the Ethics Code, and they should not indicate the establishment of a professional relationship with the recipient. It is also suggested to look back at standard 2.04, Bases for Scientific and Professional Judgements, which states that "Psychologists' work is based upon established scientific and professional knowledge of the discipline" (APA, 2017). Psychologists should also be careful to stay within their range and level of competence. Being involved in the media may bring with it the unexpected effects of becoming a recurring guest in one or more different programs, discussing a variety of vastly different topics. In these cases, psychologists should take care to stay within their field of competence and expertise and know their own limitations and skills (EFPA's Board of Ethics, 2011) .

Confidentiality, though not directly referenced in the sections of the Code of Ethics and Conduct relating to media appearances, continues to be one of the fundamental values and the basis of ethical conduct in the work of psychologists. Section 4.01, Maintaining Confidentiality, states that "psychologists have a primary obligation to take reasonable precaution to protect confidential information obtained through or stored in any medium, recognizing that the extent and limits of confidentiality may be regulated by law or established by institutional rules or

professional or scientific relationship” (APA, 2017). Therefore, psychologists must be very careful not to bring into the public domain any personal data about people with whom they have had a professional relationship or are in an ongoing one. Even in cases where the client may consent or even themselves request to have said information brought to the media, the psychologist should refrain as it goes against the fundamental core value of confidentiality. Conflicts of interest may also arise if psychologists take on different roles such as both that of providing a service to an individual or group of clients as well as that of publishing information based on these cases. Furthermore, psychologists should also keep in mind that there might be unforeseen effects on third parties such as relatives and other acquaintances of the client, and they should aim to avoid any negative effects that fall on these third parties and their relationships (EPFA’s Board of Ethics, 2011)

EPFA’s Board of Ethics (2011) also outlines several basic elements of media guidelines in regard to the public. First, respect must be shown to all people involved. Respect for People’s Right and Integrity is the so-called principle E in APA (2017) Code of Ethics, making it one of the key parts of the profession of psychologist. More caution should be taken when appearing in media, due to it being a wide-reaching medium, with many more people hearing and seeing what psychologists say. As such, psychologists should be careful not to show any disrespect, regardless of intentionality, or any negative referrals to individuals or organizations without the necessary evidence. Due to the unique medium, public statements exist within the local context and the risk of identifying third parties is heightened, prompting psychologists to take extra steps to avoid such statements. Furthermore, psychologists should aim to empower their audience by sharing knowledge and insights that may be relevant to the lives of their audience by using language that

the majority of people can understand and that does not allow space for misunderstanding (EPFA's Board of Ethics, 2010).

In addition, psychologists should avoid giving professional opinions about any person in public. A proper assessment of an individual's psychological condition includes observation, interviews as well as using tools such as tests. It also requires the individual's informed consent, or in special circumstances, it may be required by legal regulations. Therefore, the information provided in the media is not sufficient to provide a proper examination of an individual's condition and in the rare cases where it might be, the psychologist lacks the informed consent given by said individual and should therefore refrain from such statements. Exclusions can be made in the cases of deceased persons or historical figures, but caution should be taken not to harm the interest of others (EPFA's Board of Ethics, 2010).

APA (2021) released "Guidelines for the optimal use of social media in professional psychology". These guidelines instruct professionals on the importance and relevance of social media, ethical and professional issues and education, training and professional development issues. The ethical considerations in this document pertain to: the public nature of social media and how to navigate privacy and confidentiality, both that of the psychologist and of their clients; the implications and risks of using social media and online searches to obtain information on the clients; the need to avoid contact with current or former clients as it may lead way to a blurring of the boundaries of the professional relationship; the benefits of establishing a policy of participation of social media and thoroughly informing the client of said policy in the informed consent process; the usage of social media in research; accurate and truthful statements on social media about their ow practice, colleagues, the profession of psychology and other topics, while paying close attention to the empirical bases, research support and limitation of evidence for any

statements made. This document aims to help psychologists navigate the ever-changing field of social media, while ensuring that their behavior aligns with ethical standards of the profession.

2.4.5. The Albanian Code of Ethics in Regard to Media

The Code of Ethics and Deontology of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania (Appendix C) does tackle psychologist behavior in relation to media usage and appearances. Of particular interest is chapter 5, “Advertising and Other Public Statements”. This chapter includes 6 paragraphs relating to the ethical conduct of psychologists in Albania when faced with self-advertising or public appearances in different types of Media. It details what a psychologist is or is not allowed to do when advertising, such as making sure that there are no false and deceptive statements, how to confront states made by others, how to describe workshops and educational programs, and how to handle testimonials and personal requests (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017). The Code of Ethics and Deontology of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania seems to be influenced both by EPFA’s guidelines, seeing as Urdhri i Psikologut is a member association, as well as the APA’s Code of Ethics and Conduct in the way it is structured.

There is one paragraph that details ethical behavior in media presentations, paragraph 5.04, Media Presentations, which states that:

“When psychologists provide public advice or comment via print, Internet, or other electronic transmission, they take precautions to ensure that their statements:

(1) are based on their professional knowledge, training, or experience in accord with appropriate psychological practice and literature;

(2) are in accordance with this Code of Ethics; and

(3) do not indicate the establishment of a professional relationship with the public, to whom it is addressed.” (Urdhri I Psikologut,2017, p.16)

Another noteworthy paragraph, considering that media presentations involve two parties, the media (the organization) and the psychologist, would be in Chapter 1, “Resolving Ethical Issues”, paragraph 1.03, “Conflicts between ethics and organizational demands”, which states that:

“If the demands of an organization, or a private or public agency, in which psychologists are affiliated or for whom they are working are in conflict with this Code of Ethics, psychologists shall clarify the nature of the conflict, make known their commitment to the Code of Ethics, and take reasonable steps to resolve the conflict consistent with the General Principles and Ethical Standards of the Code of Ethics. Under no circumstances may this standard be used to justify or defend the violation of human rights” (Udhri i Psikologut, 2017, p.8).

Chapter 9 called “Assessment” gives guidelines of what the appropriate way to assess and individual is. Of particular importance and relevance to the media is section b, standard 9.01, which states:

“b) Except the described cases in Standard 9.01c, psychologists provide opinions of the psychological characteristics of individuals, only after they have conducted an appropriate examination that is adequate to support their statements or conclusions. When, despite reasonable efforts, such an examination is not possible, psychologists document the efforts they made and the result of those efforts, clarify the probable impact of this limitation on the reliability and validity of their opinions, and

appropriately limit the extent of their conclusions or recommendations. (See also Standards 2.01, Boundaries of competence, and 9.06, Interpreting assessment results.)” (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017, p.23)

It is also generally understood that the five principles detailed in the first part of the Code of Ethics for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania, those of beneficence and non maleficence, Fidelity and Responsibility, Integrity, Justice, and Respect for people’s rights and dignity are to be upheld throughout the media appearance as they form the basis of all the ethical standards that the Code of Ethics contains (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017).

Furthermore, confidentiality has been one of the most challenging aspects of media appearances according to literature (Shapiro, 2024; McGarrah et al., 2009), therefore it is important to bring into attention the standards that instruct psychologists on this subject. Standard 4.02, “Maintaining Confidentiality” states:

“Psychologists have a primary obligation and take reasonable precautions to protect confidential information obtained through various manners, recognizing that the limits of confidentiality may be regulated by law or established by institutional rules or professional or scientific relationship.” (Urdhri i Psikologut, 2017, p.14).

This standard can reasonably be applied in psychologists’ appearances in media when faced with the requests to provide case studies, as to not risk breaking confidentiality.

Another standard that directly correlates to sharing cases in the media is Standard 4.07 “Use of confidential information for didactic or other purposes” , which states that

“Psychologists do not disclose in their publications, lectures, or other public media, confidential or personally identifiable information concerning their clients/patients,

students, participants in research, clients of the organizations, or other recipients of their services that they obtained during the course of their work, unless:

- (1) they do not identify the person or the organization,
- (2) the person or organization has given their consent in writing, or
- (3) there is a legal authorization to do that.” (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017, p.15)

Under chapter 2, standard 2.04 “Bases for scientific and professional judgments” states:

“Psychologists' work is based upon scientific and professional knowledge of the discipline of psychology. (See also Standards 2.01e, Boundaries of competence, and 10.01b, Informed consent to therapy.)” (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017, p.10)

Though not directly related to the media, this standard is particularly necessary as it allows psychologists to know where to base their opinion when taking part in media life

All three organizations, APA, EFPA and The Order of Psychologists in Albania hinge on similar values and standards when instructing psychologists' appearances in media. Confidentiality, while maybe not directly addressed in the standards related to the media, is understood to be one of the pillars of ethical behaviors in the field of psychology and thus it can be reasonably extrapolated that it must be maintained throughout any media appearances. They also note the importances of the boundaries of competence, where psychologists should step back if necessary. They also mention the necessary requirements to assess an individual, which while not directly correlated with the media, can appear as an ethical challenge. All three organizations also note

the importance of upholding integrity, responsibility and fidelity when psychologists are faced with the media (APA, 2017; EPFA, 2011; Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017).

2.3.6. Cases Brought Forth the Ethical Committee in Albania

In order to report cases of violation of ethical standards in psychology in Albania, one must submit a formal complaint to the Ethical Committee of Professional Disciplinary Judgment (Komisioni Etik I Gjykimit Disiplinor Profesional) of the Order of Psychologist in the Republic of Albania (Urdhri i Psikologut).

There have been three cases related to the media brought forth to this committee. Due to confidentiality the specifics of the cases are not accessible, however by request, we were able to obtain information regarding these cases (Zyra Juridike, Urdhri I Psikologut, 2026).

The three cases involved the field of school psychology and legal psychology. These cases dealt with violation of the following ethical standards:

- 5.01, Avoidance of false or deceptive statements
- 5.02 Statements by others
- 9.01 Bases for assessments

Disciplinary action was taken in accordance with the ethical violations and included:

- suspension from practicing the profession for a period of two years
- written notice
- in one of the cases, after further consideration, the complaint was denied as it was constituted that no ethical standards were broken.

Ethical codes of conducts around the world seem to share many similarities between each-other, Particularly APA's Code of Ethics and Conduct, EPFA's Meta-code of Ethics and The Code of Ethics and Deontology of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania. They rely on a robust body of evidence when denoting ethical behaviors. At the same time, nowadays mass media has infiltrated a lot of aspects of our lives, influencing and shaping our worldviews. It is no surprise that the field of Media Psychology emerged and continues to be developed. However, the field of media psychology brings forth ethical concerns such as the breach of confidentiality, overlapping roles, boundaries of competence and correct advertisement. This field has not been studied before in Albania, therefore it is important to research it in the Albanian population to see if we can apply the same concepts we do in foreign literature. As such the following chapter explains the methodology used to aim to understand ethics in media psychology in Albania better.

Chapter III : Methodology

3.1. Purpose of the Study, Research Questions and Hypothesis

The purpose of this study is to investigate and identify the common ethical challenges that come with psychologists' appearances in Albanian media and the reasons behind them. This field of research has so far been untapped in the Albanian academic scene, therefore the aim is to create a theoretical basis for media psychology and ethics in the Albania psychological scene. This investigation will be done through analyzing information gathered from the members of the Ethics Board of The Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania as well as from the lived experiences of psychologists, as well as the Code of Ethics for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania's guidelines for media appearances.

The two research questions posed are:

Research question 1: What are the most common ethical challenges that psychologists face when appearing in Albanian media?

Research question 2: What are the reasons for these ethical challenges in media appearances?

The hypotheses of this study are:

Hypothesis 1: The most common ethical challenges that psychologists face when appearing in Albanian media are protecting confidentiality, staying within their competences and providing information without involving their internal biases and beliefs.

Hypothesis 2: The main reasons for these ethical challenges in media appearances are the lack of clarity in the guidelines provided in the Code of Ethics for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania, the field of psychology in Albania being relatively new and thus still in development

and the pressure felt by the media outlets to provide sensational or expert information overlooking ethical standards.

3.2. Participants

Non-probability, purposive sampling techniques were used to recruit participants due to the study dealing with the particular field of professional ethics in psychology. As this field deals with sensitive information, as well as requiring expert opinion, it was thought appropriate to reach out to individuals who work in the field of psychology from different areas in order to get full data saturation and provide differing points of view. Two sampling techniques were used for different purposes.

Expert sampling was used to select participants from the Board of Ethics of The Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania, thought to be most suitable for this study due to the current lack of literature and information available in the field in Albania. This sample consisted of three participants, all female, as the Board of Ethics of the Order of Psychologist in the Republic of Albania is entirely made out of females. These participants provided insight and cases to aid in answering the questions this study poses. The inclusion criteria for this sample were:

- person needs to be a registered member of The Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania;
- person needs to be a member of the Commission of Ethics of The Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania;

The exclusion criteria for this sample was:

- person is not a registered member of The Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania or a member of the Commission of Ethics of The Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania.

The second sampling technique used was snowballing sampling to recruit psychologists who shared their lived experiences and opinions regarding ethical challenges in media appearances in Albania. This sampling method was chosen as it allows for a wider variety of professionals that would ordinarily be hard to access and contact, thus creating a more complete view of the current state of ethics and media psychology in Albania. This sample consisted of eighteen participants, sixteen females and two males. This reflects the reality of the psychology field in Albania, which is made up of a majority female population

The inclusion criteria for this sample were:

- Participant is registered in the Order Of The Psychologist Of The Republic Of Albania;
- Their status is a full member;

The exclusion criteria for this sample were:

- Participant is not registered in the Order Of Psychologist Of The Republic Of Albania;
- Their status is not a full member.

3.3. Instrument and procedure

A semi-structured interview was used for this study. The interview was originally written in Albanian and then translated into English (appendix A). The interview was modified into two

versions based on the participants selected. The version used for the expert sampling included questions that focused on the history of the Code of Ethics, ethical violations from psychologists in media that have been reported to the Board of Ethics and supporting guidelines for psychologists who deal with the media. The version used for the snowballing sampling included questions about the perceived ethical challenges when faced with the media, the lived experiences of psychologists who have appeared in media as well as what Albanian psychologists feel would support them when handling these ethical challenges.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face after contacting the participants through the official channels of the Order of Psychologist for the expert sampling and through the connections made through the snowballing sampling. Participants were given two documents outlining confidentiality prior to the interview (Appendix B). These documents were originally written out after applying to the Ethics Committee of Research of the University, translated into Albanian and then approved. These documents do not only outline the confidentiality clauses, but also the research purpose and the processing of the data, while informing the participants that they can withdraw from the study at anytime. After informed consent was obtained by signing both documents, the interview time was decided based on the availability and the schedules of the participants. The face-to-dace interviews were mostly done in person, with two exceptions due to the availability of the participants. The interviews lasted on average between twenty and forty minutes, depending on the participants familiarity with the field.

The interviews were conducted in Albanian, recorded and then transcribed into written format. After the transcription they were translated into English using the Google Translation software which can be obtained from official application stores. Afterwards, the interviews were checked

by hand for any inaccuracies, paying attention to the necessary adaptations that come with the nuance and tone of the different languages.

The need to check every translation arises due to specifics of the Albanian language. Two are the main differences. Albanian, unlike English, is a pronoun dropping language. This means that the verb itself is inflected in a way that shows who is performing an action, which means that oftentimes adding a pronoun in front of a verb becomes redundant. English on the other hand, requires pronouns to specify who is doing the action or who is the object. While the translation software can adjust for this change, it is not always accurate. Another prominent reason, which appears in all of the interviews is the nuance of gender. As a fully gendered language, Albanian does not allow for non-gendered generalizations. If the need to talk about “the psychologist” or “the individual” as a concept, due to the linguistic regularities, one would default to the masculine he. Therefore, when speaking about psychologists and individuals in general, the translation software would translate to “he”. Furthermore, when describing certain cases, this gendered language removes a level of anonymity, which is necessary when discussing public cases. As such, instances of “he” and to a lower degree “she” were changed into “they” after revision, since the English language allows for gender neutrality, unlike Albanian. An example would be an excerpt from an interview which in Albanian states “...nëse një person ka një problem identifikohet me një pyetësor që ka plotësuar ose me një reels që ka trajtuar një x psikolog dhe thotë unë tani jam një njeri që jam ndryshe, vetëstigmatizohet.”. The translation softer translates it as “If a person has a problem, he identifies with a questionnaire that he filled out, or with a reel that an x psychologist has posted and says, now I’m a person who is different, he self-stigmatizes.” The translation software added pronouns, but defaulted to the masculine he, while the participant was talking in general. As such the revised version was as follows “If a

person has a problem, they identify with a questionnaire that they filled out, or with a reels that an x psychologist has posted and they say, now I'm a person who is different, they self-stigmatize.”. The last minute but necessary adjustment was made to filler words used in Albanian. “Pjesa e...” which the software translates to “the part of” is in fact a filler word in Albanian and as such was often removed from the translation as while it is generally understood that it's just used to signify “ about that” in Albanian, in English it would make the sentence change meaning.

3.3. Analysis

Due to the novel nature of this research, it is difficult to obtain a big data set, therefore a qualitative type of analysis was used. In this case, we choose to use thematic analysis, analyzing the content of the semi-structured interviews in order to obtain broader themes Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns, which are categorized as themes within data. Other than just organizing and describing the data set in rich details, it also allows for further interpretation of the various aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was used for the purpose of this research due to its flexibility. “Thematic analysis can be an essentialist or realist method, which reports experiences, meanings and the reality of participants, or it can be a constructionist method, which examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society.” Report Braun & Clarke (2006, p.81). This flexibility in the approach one can take to thematic analysis allows for better understanding of the data, especially the constructionist method, when no previous framework is in place.

Guest et al. (2005) position that metathemes start to emerge around the sixth interview, with data saturation occurring as early as the twelfth interview, which provides a benchmark for the number of necessary interviews for a productive thematic analysis, which was previously missing in the literature. However this number was then further expanded upon by Hennik et al. (2016). They defined two different types of saturation, code saturation, which means where no new codes were emerging, and meaning saturation, which allows for a full understanding of complex issues. Code saturation can be reached as early as nine interviews, while meaning saturation where a richly textured understanding of issues happens, occurs around sixteen and twenty-four interview. As such, a data set of twenty interviews allows for both, code saturation to be reached, as well as meaning saturation where a full understanding of the issue of ethical challenges of psychologist in Albanian media can be reached.

Due to the lack of previous theoretical background in the specific population that was studied, an inductive approach was taken to the thematic analysis, where the themes emerged organically from the raw data set rather than following preexisting theoretical frameworks. The inductive approach is also called the “bottom up” approach, which means that the themes are strongly tied to the data themselves rather than previous theoretical frameworks. As such, the process of coding the data happens without trying to fit into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher’s analytic preconceptions. It is however important to note that it does have its limitations as we would be naïve to expect that the researchers can free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is remedied by following the six steps framework outlined below.

Due to the relatively small data set, the thematic analysis was done by hand following the 6 steps underlined in Norwell et al. (2017), based on the six stages of thematic analysis defined by Braun & Clarke (2006) These steps are:

1. Familiarizing yourself with the data by prolonged engagement with it
2. Generating initial codes and keeping an audit trail of code generation
3. Searching for themes by building diagrams and hierarchies of theme connections
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes which also includes peers debriefing
6. Producing the report

It is important to note that these phases are not linear. Instead, they are recursive and iterative, often requiring the researcher to move back and forth between them as the analysis progresses. It is important to understand this distinction as thematic analysis is a time-consuming process that evolves with each of the stages, requiring constant revision and backtracking on the ideas previously explored (Braun & Clarke, 2020).

3.4. Limitations and strengths of the approach

This study has several limitations. With only 20 interviews in total, data gathered from the study are not statistically generalizable. Nevertheless, the literature shows that this number of interviews is sufficient to yield reliable qualitative results, it is enough for both code saturation and meaning saturation and going above that number would risk yielding no new result. Furthermore, as the semi-structured interviews rely on self-reporting, participant biases may be present such as social desirability bias which would lead to a more favorable conclusion that

actuality. As no direct media content analysis was performed, other than the reported cases from the Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania, ethical violations described remain on a subjective level. In addition, there is a lack of geographical diversity as psychologists that were interviewed resided within the capital of Albania, which is also where the headquarters of The Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania is situated, thus it may skew the perception of ethics on a more favorable position.

On the other hand, this study also contains many strengths. To start, as there is no precedent for studying ethics in media psychology in Albania, the study is the first investigation into ethics of psychologist in media in the context of Albania. This allows for the creation of foundational, grounded knowledge where none previously existed. The in-depth nature of semi-structured interviewing is appropriate for a study that is seeking to start laying the groundwork for a field, rather than to arrive at a true and full theoretical framework that contextualizes ethical violations. Furthermore, the use of Nowell et al. (2017) method of thematic analysis allows for full immersion into the data and thematic context. The findings of this study may prove to be a strong help in developing future research, policy crafting and ethics training

Chapter IV: Results

After analyzing and coding the dataset from the 20 interviews conducted, five main themes emerged. These themes were then broken down into subthemes to allow for a better and more comprehensive analysis of the results due to the robust amount of data that comes from semi-structured interviews. Participants are referred to as P1-P14, with P1-3 being the members of the Ethical Committee. The diagram below is a visual representation of the themes, while the sub-paragraphs explain the themes in more detail and illustrate them with quotes from the dataset.

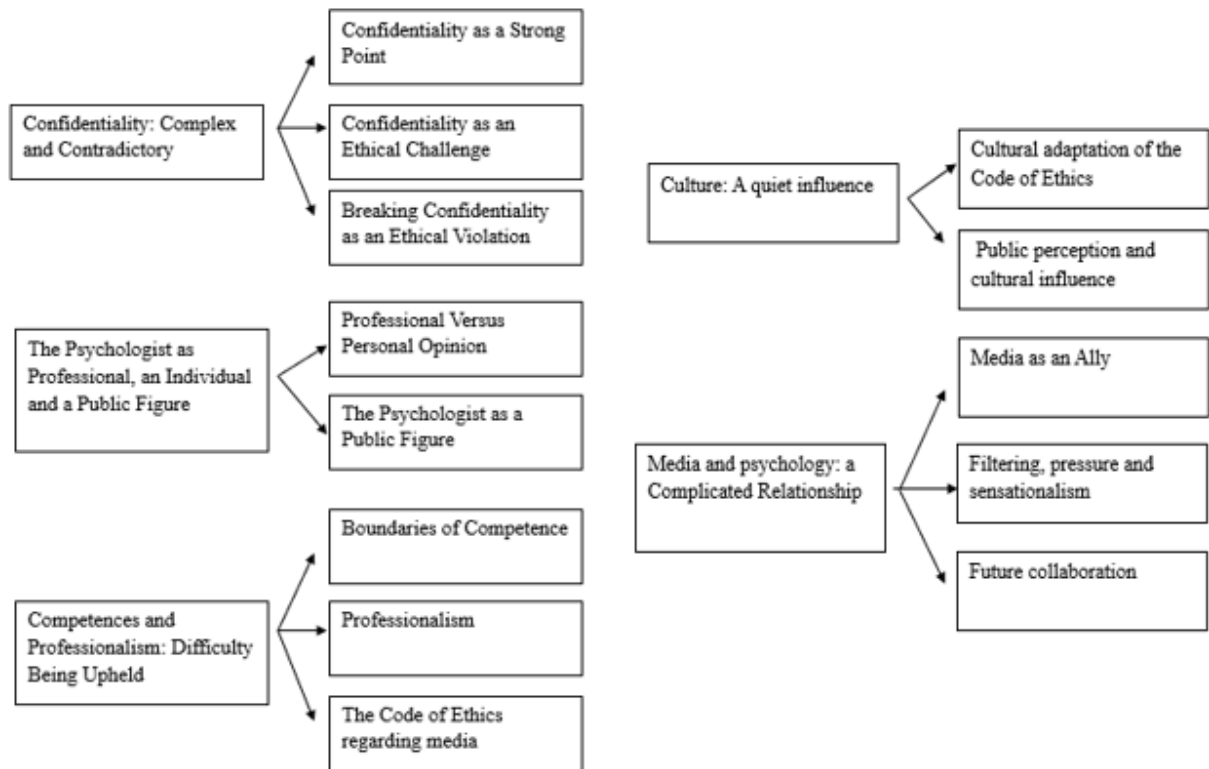


Figure 1: Diagram of themes and sub-themes

4.1. Confidentiality: Complex and Contradictory

Confidentiality is a crucial pillar of ethics in psychology, as it is contained in ethical codes all across the globe. It serves as a cornerstone of developing the relationship between the client and the psychologist, in establishing trust. The client trusts the psychologist not to break confidentiality, and in turn the psychologist vows to protect the private details of what was said in a session. While on paper confidentiality is a concept all psychologists must abide by, in real life it is a more complex process. Often it is debated what constitutes breaking confidentiality, and this question becomes even more salient when discussing media psychology.

4.1.1. Confidentiality as a Strong Point

Out of the twenty interviews, fifteen participants considered the way confidentiality is expressed and treated within the Code of Ethics and Deontology of Psychologist in the Republic of Albania as one of its strongest points. It seems that across the board, there is great appreciation of the development of a code of ethics that clearly outlines the correct way to handle patient data, as this was previously missing in the Albanian psychology scene. One of the participants (P13) reports the following:

“I think confidentiality is the most important point, because here in Albania, there have been problems with the lack of confidentiality of data, even I have used this [consent form] as an innovation in my daily work, because in the meetings I had with clients previously, the consent form or confidentiality was not taken into account”

Another participant emphasizes the way confidentiality is not only a fundamental principle of the work of a psychologist and something the code of ethics introduces within its first few pages,

but also one of the ways in which psychologists ensure that they provide the best care that they can for their client. Another participant (P2) says:

“Also, the code for me, has confidentiality as a strong point, it mentions it from the beginning and is well clarified along the part that mentions not harming the person you are treating”.

Other participants expressed that while the concept of confidentiality and the clauses that the psychologist should follow are a valuable aspect of the code of ethics in Albania, further work is needed in defining more instances in which confidentiality can be confused and sometimes necessary to break, other than when a danger to others or ones' self.. Nevertheless, they still had a positive attitude towards the improvement of this concept.

4.1.2. Confidentiality as an Ethical Challenge

While it is clear that confidentiality is a greatly appreciated part of the documentation available to assist Albanian psychologists in staying within ethical standards, and it one of the most developed aspects of the Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania, this does not stop Albanian psychologists from viewing maintaining confidentiality as an ethical challenge when faced with the media. Out of the twenty participants, nine of them mentioned that maintaining confidentiality can be an ethical challenge that a psychologist is faced with when deciding to be part of media life. Specific care is taken when asked to discuss cases in order to keep the privacy of the client, if pulling from a real case, which can only be done after obtaining client consent.

Several of the participants cited the media itself, as the reason why confidentiality becomes a challenge, claiming that when invited in shows, as a psychologist, you will be asked to provide case details and it falls onto you to abide to the ethical standards of the profession. One of the participants (P19) states:

“They (the psychologist) must be very careful not to mention cases (that they have worked with), they must be very careful that in the case they do mention it, permission has been received from the clients or patients, and in the way that they refer to a certain case history, a psychologist or psychotherapist must be very careful to maintain professional ethics and not violate confidentiality”.

Maintaining confidentiality, while well outlined within the documentation available to psychologists, seems to be one of the most challenging areas when it comes to ethical dilemmas that psychologists face in the media.

4.1.3. Breaking Confidentiality as an Ethical Violation

With how challenging maintaining confidentiality is perceived by psychologists when it comes to appearing in the media, it comes as a logical follow up that the most mentioned perceived ethical violation by psychologists when following the media is breaking confidentiality. Nine out of the twenty participants, when asked “what ethical violations do you think are more common by psychologist in Albanian media?” mentioned breaches of confidentiality as one of them.

When asked to provide any cases that came to mind when thinking of ethical violations in the media, five participants mentioned the same case of a confidentiality breach in a reality television show (Big Brother Vip Albania), where a psychologist had revealed that they had treated one of

the participants of this reality television show. While the breach of confidentiality had happened online, not directly on television it involved social media. The client had later come out to rectify the situation by claiming that they had given permission to the therapist to reveal said information, however the attitude the participants had towards this case was that even with permission, there should not have been a direct breach of confidentiality where personal information was shared.

One of the participants (P7) mentioned a topic involving a marginalized community, that of trans people part of the LGBTQIA+ community, where said individual's personal data was made public by the psychologist who had followed the case. This participant emphasized that in this case, the damage that can be imposed onto the individual due to the confidentiality breach can be great as it involves a member of a marginalized community.

Another participant (P6) mentioned a case where the breach of confidentiality happened due to the psychologist explaining a case of an abused child. While no names were given, there was enough information in the case for the child to be identifiable, and this caused the child further harm.

From what was reported by the participants of the study, there seems to be a disconnect when discussing the concept of maintain confidentiality. While on paper it is a well-developed ethical standard that all psychologists must follow, in reality it proves very challenging, especially when dealing with the media. Furthermore, in the perception of the participants, confidentiality breaches seem to be some of the more common ethical violations noticed when psychologists appear in the media. This makes confidentiality a complex and multifaceted concept of discussion in the field of ethics in media psychology.

4.2. The Psychologist as Professional, an Individual and a Public Figure

When a psychologist becomes part of the media life, they take on several roles. Firstly they are professionals. When invited to appear on a television show or when posting on social media, they are operating under the guise of someone who has the correct education and certification to be called a psychologist, and that comes with the understanding that the information that they share is based on fact and evidence. Secondly, they are individuals. While being a psychologist is also a part of their identity, they also have their own opinions, beliefs and biases, which can make navigating the media space very tricky as one must be able to separate these personal subjective opinions from the evidence-based facts. Thirdly, when taking on media appearances, whether it be as part of a panel in a television show or having a public social media profile, a psychologist becomes identified as a public figure and accepts that navigating a wide audience has its own challenges. One must be careful to strike a balance between these three roles, as to avoid going outside of the boundaries of ethical behavior.

4.2.1. Professional Versus Personal Opinion

One of the most mentioned ethical challenges, which can then lead to an ethical violation when part of media life is the distinction between what constitutes a professional opinion from a personal one. Seven of the twenty participants mentioned this distinction, whether as a challenge psychologists face when they are part of the media life, or as an ethical violation they had observed in the media.

Professional opinion is based on years of experience as well as had evidence, namely research. It is what is expected of a psychologist that represents the profession when appearing publicly.

It is more akin to a fact. On the other hand, personal opinion represents the individual own views on a topic and can be influenced by personal bias. It is generally expected that when speaking under the guise of a certain profession, one is to refrain from mixing the two.

However, this boundary becomes unclear in Albanian media. Often a psychologist would present their own personal opinion as a psychological fact, without regard to how this information is perceived by the public. One participant (P4) states: “It (an ethical violation) can be forgetting the profession, starting to speak with great freedom simply as a person who is giving their own opinion”.

Another (P6) reports that “It’s like endless gossip that is more related to personal opinions than based on scientific facts or studies that have been done”

This can quickly veer into misinformation, as the public tends to believe the word of a person speaking as a professional, competently on a subject, without fact checking. One of the participants (P3) states:

“Often, opinions are presented in the media as facts and this is very harmful when speaking from a professional’s position, because personal opinion cannot be a scientific fact, unless it is supported by evidence. This is misinformation and I think it is damaging to the audience that will take it for granted and act based on what they judge to be a fact from a professional, not an opinion.”

4.2.2. The Psychologist as a Public Figure

When appearing in media of any type, the psychologist accepts that they are now considered a public figure and cannot hold the anonymity they once had within their working practice. “I

didn't want to be identified as a psychologist that comes out in the media" one of the participants states, understanding that a different set of responsibilities comes with this role.

However, becoming a public figure may be the goal of some psychologists. Seven out of twenty participants cited the need for fame, elevation of one's own figure and status, and advertisement for one's own business as a reason for breaking ethical standards when apart of the media. One of the participants (P4) reported:

"I think the desire for fame catches up to them. Television is a bit...it can confuse you. There are many lights, they make you beautiful, they make you up, and you forget that you are there for 20 minutes, an hour at most".

The Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania has strict guidelines on how a psychologist can market themselves in the media. However, these participants mentioned that a psychologist in the media may have an innate desire to advertise themselves and gain fame. When this desire goes beyond what is expected within the ethical guidelines, it can be the driving force of ethical violations.

It is clear that in the perception of the participants, balancing the roles of psychologist as a professional and as an individual becomes an arduous task, that when done incorrectly can lead to not only ethical violations but also "you become subjective, you become part of the herd effect" as one of the participants (P8) reports. Furthermore, adhering to the ethical standards described in the documentation about advertising seems to be bypassed in favor of gaining personal fame and notoriety.

4.3. Competences and Professionalism: Difficulty Being Upheld

Competences are some of the core aspects of a psychologist's work. Within Codes of Ethics all over the world, competences and their boundaries are mentioned and explained. Professionalism on the hand is a more "subjective" concept, as it is formed by years of experience and practice, and it entails following the code of ethics as well as making sure that the information shared is shared in a serious and scientific manner. It seems that when speaking about media psychology, both these concepts are difficult to uphold. Furthermore, when trying to find out why this might happen, it seems that there are mixed opinions on how the Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania handles media presentations.

4.3.1. Boundaries of Competence

One topic that continuously comes up in the data set is boundaries of competence. Nine of the participants mentioned going outside of the boundary of experience. Every psychologist has their own area of specialization and expertise. It seems that in Albanian media, a handful of psychologists are invited over and over again, with no regards of their area of expertise. As one of the participants (P1) reported:

“Not every psychologist who appears in the media can be an all-rounder and give opinions....they should limit themselves to their own field of competence. So, do not take on the task of giving professional opinions on issues that they do not practice in their work, that they have not studied and do not have the necessary training to give.”

Another (P5) states “All of us are experts in a certain field, we cannot be experts in all fields, regardless of the degree we receive.”

Furthermore, another way a psychologist can go outside of the boundary of competence is to try to give specific opinions about cases that they are invited to talk about. When handling a case that has become public, especially when handling sensitive topics, a psychologist should be careful not to give specific diagnosis regarding the people that they are discussing, as this falls outside of their level of competence as they have not established a trusting relationship and have not examined the person up close.

4.3.2. Professionalism

Professionalism was another topic that came up frequently throughout the interviews with the participants. It seems that a particular issue with professionalism is the way the psychologist who are part of media life choose to portray the information they give as well as their behavior on screen. “There are people on the media who had a fight” one of the participants (P18) exclaimed. “I think it’s a big challenge for the way you transmit the information you give”, another one (P15) explained.

Another participant (P12) recalled a case they had observed on television, stating

“a girl was crying in the media, showing part of her difficulty in life that she had gone through and the psychologist stood crossed-legged, arms folded and did nothing to offer her the support and assistance that this individual should really give to people who have an unstable psycho-emotional state at all times”.

It seems that for some of the participants, professionalism is directly tied to a lack of experience. As one of them (P7) stated: “Because of how professional you can be, because of experience. I think the more experience you have, I think that the person gains some virtues that can make

them more capable”, when asked about the reasons why psychologists may fail to reach ethical standards in the media.

4.3.3. The Code of Ethics regarding media

The Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania includes one chapter that describes the appropriate behavior when advertising and being part of media life. When asked, the participants had mixed reactions on whether or not this information was sufficient to ensure no ethical violations in the media. Four of the participants stated that this information was enough to guide psychologists when dealing with the media. To quote one participant (P7) :

“The description is general, which means that it foresees the fact that you are well informed, say confirmed information based on fact, maintain confidentiality and ask for permission before publishing any information ”.

Thirteen of the participants stated that more is needed, as this amount of information in fact does encompass all possible scenarios and ethical challenges. As stated by one of the participants (P3) : “I think that there should also be supplementation, not necessarily in the code per se, but in other well-regulated standards”. However, there were those who stated that they were not familiar enough with the Code of Ethics to answer the question, as they focused on the aspects relevant to their daily work.

Some of the participants agreed that in the future, it would be necessary for a revision of the Code of Ethics in regard to the media with the purpose of extending it.

In addition, while the code of ethics is a guided document, participants agreed that more is needed in order to prepare psychologists for the media, particularly trainings and specializations. “It may

not be written, because not everything can be written, but there needs to be training, or even a specialization, or something that orients psychologists towards the media” stated one of the participants (P16). Furthermore, these training courses need to be nationwide and accessible by all psychologists to ensure the reduction of ethical violations in the media.

4.4. Culture: A quiet influence

When talking about psychology, while the profession itself is universal, culture plays a big part in how it is perceived by the general public. A populations culture informs behaviors and attitudes, and it is especially salient when speaking about a country like Albania, where psychology is a relatively new field. As one of the participants (P1) claims

“In the beginning of the profession of psychologist in Albania about 20-25 years ago, there was no code. We have officially started operating with a code of ethics since 2017-2018 and until then we have not had a code of ethics. Most psychologists who worked and practiced their profession in Albania were oriented towards the implementation of ethics according to the APA, that is, according to the code of the American Psychological Association. And few have tried, let's say, individually to implement those principles, that is, maintaining confidentiality, not releasing personal data, providing services under confidential conditions or others. Things that have not always been applicable, have been more moral than obligations to be implemented, so in an attempt to create a good image of the professional, since it was a new profession for the country at that time, most have chosen to build the

image, let's say by implementing the rules of other countries until the moment came to have our order and code.”

For a long time, the burden of being ethical fell on the psychologist's own morality and foreign influence. As such, it is important to explore cultural adaptation and attitudes towards the role of psychologist.

4.4.1. Cultural adaptation of the Code of Ethics

When asked if in its current state the Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania is adapted and reflect the reality of the Albanian culture, it seemed that psychologists could not reach a consensus. Some of the participants claimed that it is adapted, “I think it is adapted, despite the fact that it is a bit taboo, that is, it is adapted but since people in Albania do not have the right information, they see it as a taboo to go and consult with a psychologist.” to quote one of them (P9). Others were of the thought that while it is adapted, it borrows from foreign literature and experience, which cannot always apply on a 1:1 ratio to Albania, so there is room for improvement. One of the participants (P16)

“Sometimes, we take foreign studies and say look, they have applied this thing, they have applied this point, why don't we apply it too? But no because things that work in one culture don't always work in another.”

A minority of the participants expressed that they felt as though the Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania was merely a translation of foreign codes and practices. To quote one of the participants (P4) “it was not adapted for Albania, and it seems to me like a work done by a student who had very good translation skills”.

4.4.2. Public perception and cultural influence

With psychology being relatively new in Albania, a unique set of challenges appears. One of the participants (P10) exclaims.

“I would say few people go to the psychologist because there is still prejudice that going to a psychologist is seen as going directly to the psychiatric hospital for medication and therapy”

. It seems that while great progress has been made in the last few decades when it comes to changing public perception of psychology and the psychologist, there is still much work to be done. There is still stigma surrounding asking for mental health support, there is still fear that if you were to see a psychologist regularly you would be labelled as “crazy”. As such it falls on psychologist themselves, including the Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania to help reshape public perception.

To add, being a collectivist culture, different from the typical western cultures, a unique problem arises when it comes to one of the most important ethical challenges and concepts, overlapping roles. In a culture where everyone is connected, even the most well-meaning psychologist, who has done everything right in following ethical standards, is met with difficult ethical challenges, especially when it comes to their roles. One of the participants (P6) stated:

“Our culture is different from other cultures, for example the interpersonal ties that we have are very strong, family ties, the communities are small, it works differently. Sometimes we have overlapping roles, so the role of the psychologist with the personal role, and you have a connection and an interplay that sometimes you can’t even separate”.

Culture plays a shaping role in all aspects of life, including psychology. While the ethical principles of psychology are universal, how they are applied vary from culture to culture. It is important that regulatory documents work on better adapting these ethical concepts to the Albanian culture. At the same time, being aware of one's own cultural biases and how it shapes one's own views is crucial in maintaining ethical positioning. Albanian culture has made good progress in accepting psychology and mental health struggles as a part of life, but there is still much more to be done

4.5. Media and psychology: a Complicated Relationship

As the core thesis of this study has to do with ethics of psychologists in the media several of the questions addressed and slowly a full picture of the perception of the participants of the media was formed. The relationship between psychology and the media is a complex and layered one. One of the participants (P19) described social media nowadays “just like a knife in the kitchen, you can't do anything without a knife, but you can also cut yourself”. This relationship informed not only the perception of the psychologists about the media, but also some of the reasoning behind ethical challenges in the media as well as future prospects in the betterment of the field.

4.5.1. Media as an Ally

Media, be it traditional or social has assisted psychologist in Albania in the last decade to legitimize a relatively new profession in the Albanian culture. By having psychologists appear in panels on television as experts on social issues or when a specific phenomenon happens, it

helps present psychology as a serious field of study. The participants (P20, P15) noted the positive involvement of psychologists in the media with quotes such as:

“I am very happy that psychologists are part of the television panels because I think that they manage to convey to some extent a kind of message that needs to get to the masses”

“I have seen that psychologists have been involved and have been asked for their opinion. I have seen this in media panels but also in online communications that they can, and do, ask for the opinion of a psychologist, an expert.”.

Furthermore, the internet and social media have helped bring the profession of psychologist closer to the general public. As almost everyone in today’s day and age has access to the internet, this allows for a wider dissemination of information by psychologists, being able to reach audiences that before would never have been able to. This allows for a public that previously had not been informed on psychology, mental health, and the role of the psychologist, to have this information at their fingertips.

4.5.2. Filtering, pressure and sensationalism

On the other hand, media can also have a negative impact on psychology. While it is true that there has been a positive involvement of psychologists in the media, this does not come without its issues. The participants noted a lack of filtering system, whether in traditional media or on the internet and social media. Participants noted that television hosts and producers don’t always do a thorough background check to ensure that the psychologist that is invited on a panel is a specialist in the field or the phenomenon being discussed. “I think that the lowest contingent emerges and absolutely not the most prepared psychologists speak out” One of the participants

states (P14). This ties to the previous theme of boundaries of competence, as it seems that going outside of these boundaries does not start with only the psychologists themselves but also the media.

Furthermore, in the pursuit of the next scoop, media hosts can pressure the psychologists by asking specific questions to steer the conversation in a direction that would benefit them. Media pressure was also noted as an ethical challenge and reason why psychologists might break ethical standards. This can often make psychologists feel like they need to follow a predetermined course of conversation and opinion, or like they need to share more than is ethical as supported by one of the participants (P6) “They ask the question ‘Tell us a specific case that you have worked with?’”.

To add, the media is sensational. It is always searching for the next big news, the next thing that will keep people watching and clicking. This sometimes leads media outlets to take psychologists’ words out of context. “They can ask questions that at the end of the day are clickbait” one of the participants (94) reports.

But it is not just media agents who sensationalized psychological concepts. The lack of filtering is also a problem on online spaces, where anyone can share any information. Often it may happen that someone is not a licensed psychologist and yet shares psychological advice. As the public may not be well informed on the specifics of the profession, they might believe what they see online, and this has started causing problems within the clinical system, as several of the participants mentioned an uptake in self-diagnosis cases. As one of them (P20) reports “For example, in therapy I often have people who are self-diagnosed from social networks. So, they hear some things that are very similar to their lives and they put a name to their situation and

they get fixated on the idea that this name represents them and they create a prejudice for themselves,”

4.5.3. Future collaboration

The relationship with the media can however be greatly beneficial to the world of psychology, but this requires further collaboration between the structures responsible for the media and psychology. In the past, attempts have been made to bridge the gap, by instructing traditional media to only invite psychologists with a valid license issued by the Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania. “I think we need a very good multidisciplinary team of psychologists” as stated by one of the participants, to assist in the betterment of the state of ethics in media psychology.

Evidently, the media can be a great asset to psychology in the development and betterment of the field, in making it more acceptable by the general public and in sharing information. However, it can also be a place of clickbait titles, sensationalizing and misinformation. It is up to psychologists and the media, including the governing structures for both these fields to collaborate for a better future for ethics in media psychology.

Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusions

5.1. Discussion

5.1.1. Research Question One

The first research question posed in this study is “What are the most common ethical challenges that psychologists face when appearing in Albanian media?”.

This question is very broad and it is understood that while data saturation did happen, we cannot encompass all ethical challenges that may present themselves in psychologists’ appearances in the media. Furthermore, defining ethical challenges in media proves a difficult task as it leaves rooms for interpretation. As stated in *Media Psychology: Boon or Bane* (Bouhoustos, 1981, as cited in Broder, 2024), while other unethical behaviors involve deception and or cover up, what is done on air and in real time is there for everyone to see. As everyone can see for themselves, rather than reading a report or a scientific study, personal bias may interfere with what is perceived as an ethical challenge or violation. However, several themes emerged that tie directly to this research question.

5.1.1.1. Confidentiality

The most prominent theme was that of “Confidentiality: Complex and Contradictory”.

Confidentiality is one of the bases of ethical codes of conducts of psychologists around the world. APA Code of Ethics (American Psychological Association, 2017,) includes “Section 4: Confidentiality and Privacy”, The Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017) includes “Chapter 4: Confidentiality and Privacy”, EPFA’s Meta-code of Ethics (EPFA, 2005) includes “Section 3.1.2: Privacy and

Confidentiality”. Furthermore, within the thematic analysis, a subtheme that was revealed was “Confidentiality as a Strong Point”, where fifteen of the twenty participants considered the way confidentiality is treated as one of the strongest points. The Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania has to offer to both professionals and individuals seeking care.

Although confidentiality seems to be a fully formed and well-crafted standard within the codes of conduct around the world and there is great appreciation of it in Albania, this did not stop the second and third subthemes from emerging, that of “Confidentiality as an Ethical Challenge” and “Breaking Confidentiality as an Ethical Violation”. The participants noted that in particular, the field of discussing previous cases when asked by the media is a tricky one that requires a lot of ethical consideration. This is in line with Standard 4.07 “Use of confidential information for didactic or other purposes” in The Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania, which states that no identifiable information must be included when sharing cases for publication, lectures or other public media, unless they do not identify the person or organization, written consent was given for the sharing of this information or the law requires a psychologist to do so. Furthermore, this ethical challenge is supported in the literature, which states that there are ethical concerns even when the client gives their informed consent for the sharing of the information. This happens due to confidentiality being the basis of the relationship between the psychologist and the client. It is generally understood that in order to be effective in helping the client, the psychologist must ensure that the information transmitted during a session will remain private and the identity of the client will be protected. With the rise of social media also, personal information has become more accessible than ever, psychologists must take precautions both if they share their experience in social media and in intentionally searching out

information about their clients, which may constitute in a breach of privacy if not done by previously informing the client and on the basis of the search being beneficial to the clinical interventions, taking great care to only extrapolate the necessary information from these client experiences (Shapiro, 2024; Kaslow, Patterson, & Gottlieb, 2011; American Psychological Association, 2017; European Federation of Psychologists' Associations, 2011, art.2.4.).

In these specific cases, Honda's (2019) guidelines for building a fictional composite case of several individuals and speaking in general terms, asking for written permission while also being involved with the inherent power dynamic of the client-therapist relationship can help in navigating this ethical challenge and making it easier on the psychologist.

However, even though the challenge of confidentiality in media has been greatly explored both by the literature and the codes of conduct around the world, and especially in Albania, breaking confidentiality as an ethical violation was reported by nine of the twenty participants. The examples provided, five of them explained a case in which a psychologist had leaked information about the treatment of a public figure, with the attitude that even with permission, there should not have been a direct breach of privacy. This is an interesting distinction, because standard 4.07 states that written permission allows for information to be shared, while the public attitude was that this information cannot be shared. While we do not have direct proof that the individual signed a contract to allow this, as they came out publicly to state that they were okay with it, it can be assumed that this consent was given.

Other two cases that were mentioned were that of identifiable information given for an abused child and for a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. What is interesting is that in the report taken from The Order of Psychologist in the Republic of Albania (Zyra Ligjore, 2026), none of

the 3 cases reported that related to the media included breaking standard 4.07, which lends to reason that the case examples provided by participants during interviewing were not reported.

5.1.1.2. Competences and Professionalism

Another theme that emerged from the interviews was “Competence and Professionalism: Difficulty being Upheld”

One of the subthemes is “Boundaries of Competence”. Competences are required of psychologists by their ethics code and are crucial to providing effective treatment and service to their clients (Barnett & Corcoran, 2018). These competences can be separated into three categories: intellectual competence, which include acquisition of knowledge based on empirical research, sound clinical scholarship in practice and understanding one’s own limitations; emotional competence, which include the ability of the psychologist to emotionally contain and tolerate the clinical material that may come up during their practice, understanding and detecting personal biases that may affect their work. and the capacity the practitioner has of self-care in the context of the difficult work they may be conducting; ethical competences which include the capability to identify ethical problems, knowledge about the ethical and moral aspects of care, reflection on one’s own knowledge and actions, the ability to make wise choices and carefully manage ethically challenging work situations and , moral aspects of thinking and decision making (Keith-Spiegel, 2014; Pope, Sonne & Greene, 2016; Welfel, 2006, as cited in in Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2016; Weissman & Debow, 2003; Andersson et al., 2022).

As mentioned, intellectual competences which include the knowledge of one’s own limits are particular salient when looking at the results of the thematic analysis, as nine of the twenty

participants mentioned going outside of the boundary of competence in one way or another. The specific cases which included going outside of the boundary were mainly related to psychologists taking on an “all knowing” role in the media, offering opinions and information on many different subjects, some of which they are not experts on.

This goes directly against one of the core principles mentioned in The Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania, that of integrity, which predicts that psychologist must always engage in the promotion of truthful, honest and accurate information in science, teaching and the practice of psychology. This is also supported by the principle of integrity in EPFA’s Meta-code of Ethics, which also states the same thing (Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017; EPFA’s Board of Ethics, 2005). Furthermore, all three documents taken into account when reviewing the literature for this study, The Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania, EPFA’s Meta-code of Ethics and APA’s Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (Urdhri i Psikologut, 2017; EPFA’s Board of Ethics, 2005; American Psychological Association, 2017,)), include direct standard and clauses that define the boundaries of competence, namely Standard 2.01, Section 2.2 and Standard 2.01, which all instruct psychologist to be aware of the limit of their own knowledge. Evidently, going outside of the boundary of competence is another ethical challenge that psychologist face in the Albania media.

To add, speaking on subjects that they are not proficient in was not the only ethical challenge related to competence that was brought up in the thematic analysis. Another important aspect was the handling of specific topics, mainly the case of “diagnosis at a distance”. Often psychologists are asked to give their opinions on specific cases that appear in the media, and when this opinion goes beyond general psychoeducation, it risks falling into another ethical violation. The way a

psychologist expresses their opinion in the media when relating to specific cases should be very careful, as one of the main ethical challenges is the risk of making the relationship they have with the public and the case being discussed unclear. A psychologist should always make sure not to establish a therapeutic relationship with the audience or the cases being discussed. One must clarify one's own roles and expectations with reported in order to make sure that the information that is passed onto viewers is in line with ethical behavior and the country's code of conduct, which is also in line with The Albanian Code of Ethics and The APA Code of Conduct (Shapiro, 2024; McGarrah, Alvord, Martin & Haldeman, 2009; White & Hanley, 2025; Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017, art. 5.04; American Psychological Association, 2017, art.5.04).

When discussing diagnosing at a distance, true assessment of a person's psychological condition requires proper investigation and tests, that can only be conducted with the person's consent, and thus psychologists should refrain from doing these assessments in the media. If asked to comment, they may speak in general lines, making the important distinction that an assessment can only be done when working with the individual directly and the psychologist is only speaking in generalities regarding the phenomena. As this process may strain ethical boundaries, it is generally recommended that the psychologist refrain from diagnosing or reaching conclusions. The Albanian Code of Ethics and The APA Code of Conduct also state that true assessment can only be done when contact has been established with the person, consent is received and tests and other assessment tools have been used (EPFA's Board of Ethics, 2011, art 2.2; Shapiro, 2024; McGarrah et al., 2009; Urdhri I Psikologut, 2017, art. 9.01; American Psychological Association, 2017, art.9.01). Interestingly, one of the cases reported by the Order of Psychologist in the Republic of Albania included the violation of standard 9.01 (Zyra Ligjore, 2026), which lends

some validity to the claims of the participants that going outside of the boundaries of competence is one of the ethical challenges psychologists face in the Albanian media.

“Professionalism” also emerged as a subtheme. Participants noted a difficulty in the way one is to convey information when part of media life, be it television or social media. They also stated that they had seen first-hand cases of unprofessional behavior by psychologists in the media, such as psychologists fighting with each other and psychologists not giving the necessary support and assistance to someone in distress. As professionalism is not a well-defined term within the codes of conduct throughout the world, many standards may fall within this category. Specifically, our definition of professionalism follows from Durkheim’s definition of professional ethics as a set of rules that govern the activity of people in any given occupation, rules which are generated by dominant groups in the occupation, eventually turning into normative standards, including the motivational and ideal aspect of ethics, thus making morality both obligatory conduct and a social ideal to which we are committed (Durkheim,1957; Hall, 2000), which aligns with the definition of professional ethics from APA Dictionary, “rules of acceptable conduct that members of a given profession are expected to follow” (APA, 2018). By these definitions of professional ethics, it stands to reason that professionalism encompasses abiding by the codes of conduct build on the foundation of professional ethics.

Particularly, we would like to underline the concepts of following ethical standards, including everything the codes of conduct encompass, paying particular attention to EPFA’S “Guidelines for psychologists who contribute to the media”. Among those guidelines, two important concepts are mentioned: “showing respect for all persons involved”, which urges psychologist to be careful not to show unintended disrespect to any person involved or to refer negatively to any individual or organization without sufficient evidence; and “be aware that he/ she is also

representing a community of psychologists” which means that the psychologist should be aware that they are not only representing themselves but also the profession itself and as such must abstain from statements that could discredit or hinder the presentation of the work of colleagues.

Evidently, when psychologists behave in unprofessional ways in the media and break these ethical standards, it does not only reflect badly on the psychologist themselves but also on the broader field of psychology.

5.1.1.3. The Psychologist in the Public Eye

The third theme that emerged was “The Psychologist as a Professional, an Individual, and a Public Figure”. This theme explored the distinction between different roles that a psychologist plays when taking part in media life. The mentioning of roles brings to mind the issue of overlapping roles in ethics, namely when the psychologist establishes other relationship with the client (Schank et al, 2003) as well as boundary crossing and boundary violation (Gutheil & Gabbard, 1993). Seeing that within ethical boundaries, a therapeutic relationship is not established with the audience, it is necessary to make the distinction that in this case we are not talking about overlapping roles in the traditional sense.

The first subtheme is “Professional versus Personal Opinion”, which came forth as the distinction between what constitutes a personal and a professional opinion was mentioned by seven of twenty participants as an ethical challenge or violation. When the boundary between these two becomes blurred, when a psychologist presents their own opinion as facts, they risk spreading misinformation. While this can certainly happen in individual therapy as well, it takes on another

scale when a psychologist becomes part of mass media and social networks , as mass media has a widespread reach due to the media institutions structures, made to reach a large number of people, sharing the same message, in the same time interval., which allows it to influence society's worldview, knowledge and behaviors as individuals, as well as how they navigate in the world as social factors (Viswanath, Ramanadhan, Kontos, 2007). Furthermore, 5.24 billion people or 63.9% of the population use social media nowadays (Chaffey, 2025), which means there is ample space for dissemination of information or misinformation. Misinformation is a well-known phenomena in the media world and it can be separated in three categories as a problem: human brain biases towards acceptance and retention of misinformation rather than skepticism; regulatory structure in major democracies not focusing on prevention of misinformation but on the detection of it after the event has occurred; the economic burden of correcting misinformation on the wide-scale mass media reach (Southwell & Thorson, 2015).

Sharing one's own personal opinion as a fact goes against codes of conduct for psychologists, as the documents taken into consideration when reviewing the literature for this study all have sections mentioning where professional opinion is based on. In the APA's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct and The Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania (Urdhri i Psikologut, 2017; American Psychological Association, 2017,) standard 2.04 " Bases for Scientific and Professional Judgements", in both codes, state that a psychologist's work is based upon established scientific and professional knowledge of the discipline. In addition principle B and C of the APA Code of Ethics, that of fidelity and responsibility and of integrity align with the third and fourth principle of The Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania, fidelity and responsibility and integrity. Both these principles work together to ensure that psychologists are aware of their

professional and scientific responsibilities in the community, as well as psychologists' aim to promote accuracy, honest and truthfulness in science, teaching and the practicing of psychology.

Furthermore, EPFA's Meta-code of Ethics (EPFA's Board of Ethics, 2005), in article 3.4.2. Honesty and Accuracy, which falls under the principle of integrity, states that psychologists must uphold "Accuracy in representing information, and responsibility to acknowledge and not to suppress alternative hypotheses, evidence or explanations." and "Recognition of the need for accuracy and the limitations of conclusions and opinions expressed in professional reports and statements". Evidently, when psychologists are presenting their opinion as fact, they are not only failing to meet ethical standards, but also failing to adhere to ethical principles, which have a guiding and inspirational purpose.

The psychologist as a public figure also includes the dimension of self-advertising and promotion. In In the APA's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct and The Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania (Urdhri i Psikologut, 2017; American Psychological Association, 2017,) standard 5.01 "Avoidance of False and Deceptive Statements" clearly outlines that psychologists must remain truthful when talking about their qualifications and the services they offer when part of the media. The guidelines of EPFA's Board of Ethics (2011, art.2.6.) expand on this point, stating that psychologists should be aware of the negative effects of self-promotion, and they should aim to present any information on self-promotion following the principles of honesty and integrity, while paying close attention to any possible negative effects that may occur due to said self-promotion. It is worth mentioning that while no participants cited direct ethical violations due to self-promotion, 5.01 was one of the ethical standards that were broken in the cases reported by The Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania (Zyra Ligjore, 2026).

From the thematic analysis as well as relating back to the literature review, it seems that the most prominent ethical challenges and violations from psychologists in the Albanian media are those of maintaining confidentiality, staying within boundaries of competence, separating professional from personal opinion and issues arising from self-advertisement.

5.1.2 Research Question Two

The second research question posed is “What are the reasons for these ethical challenges in media appearances?”

While it proves difficult to quantify the specific reasons every individual psychologist faces ethical challenges in the media or falls short of ethical standards, some broader themes did emerge through the thematic analysis of the data set that correlate directly with this research question.

5.1.2.1. The Desire for Fame

As mentioned in the previous section, the third theme that emerged was “The Psychologist as a Professional, an Individual, and a Public Figure”. This theme not only explored the different roles that a psychologist takes on when becoming part of media life, but also what those roles entail. In the second subtheme “The Psychologist as a Public Figure”, an interesting concept was brought forth. As a public figure, the desire for self-promotion is inevitable, but seven out of twenty participants specifically mentioned the desire for fame and elevation of one’s own figure and status as a reason why psychologists may fall short of ethical standards. Psychologists gaining notoriety through media has existed since the beginning stages of media psychology as a field, with advice columns and radio shows being the first starting points, which later evolved

into television shows and the rise of the social media (Gudelunas, 2008; Border, 2004). Alber Ellis himself attributed a big part of the popularity of his therapeutic approach to his appearances as a semi-regular guest on The Today Show (Broder, 2024).

On the other hand, EPFA's Board of Ethics (2011) frame psychologists' contribution to the media as a responsibility to contribute to the general welfare of the public by sharing their knowledge and expertise and using media as a wide-reaching tool to disseminate this information. In this moment, becoming part of the media life is no longer just a desire, but an ethical responsibility.

As discussed in the previous section, codes of conduct contain guidelines for self-advertising in an ethical way. However, in the perception of the participants of the study, it appears that the desire for notoriety overshadows the ethical obligations a psychologist has when appearing in the media and as such can lead to ethical challenges, or in more severe cases, ethical violations.

5.1.2.2. Cultural Adaptability

The fourth theme that emerged is "Culture: A Quiet Influence", with the subthemes "Cultural Adaptation of The Code of Ethics" and "Public Perception and Cultural Influence".

The profession of psychologists in Albania is relatively new, only becoming known in the early 2000s. The Order of Psychologist in the Republic of Albania is a young institution, having been established in 2017, less than a decade ago, which is also when The Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania was created (Urdhri i Psikologut, 2017). As evident by this study being the first of its kind in the field of ethics in Albania, there is also a lack of research database, which was taken into consideration when created this code. As one of the participants reported, before 2017, psychologists in Albania had to rely on foreign literature

such as that of APA's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct to ensure that they were following ethical standards.

However, this poses a unique challenge. The first iteration of the APA's Code of Ethics for psychologists was created in 1953, after the work of a committee devoted to ethical concerns that had been formed in 1938, based on a previously organized committee in 1947. After this formulation, it went through different iterations until the one we know today, which was adapted in 2002 and last revised in 2017 (Canter, Bennett, Jones, & Nagy, 1994; American Psychological Association, 2017). This means that the APA has had over half a century to work on perfecting its Code of Ethics, twice as long as "psychologist" has been a profession in Albania. Similarly, EPFA's Meta-code of Ethics was created in 2005 (EPFA's Board of Ethics, 2005). Adapting these well researched codes that were created for the context of open and developed western societies onto a society that until the early 90s had no contact with other countries has certainly proved to be difficult. This was reflected in the answers of the participants who could not seem to reach a consensus in whether or not The Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania is a document that is well adapted to the Albanian culture. Some thought that it was adapted, some thought that it was merely translated and a majority thought that while it is adapted it is in need of further improvement.

In examining the APA's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct and EPFA's Meta-code of Ethics (EPFA's Board of Ethics, 2005; American Psychological Association, 2017) and comparing them to The Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania (Urdhri i Psikologut, 2017), their influence was visible. The structure is almost identical to that of APA's code of ethics, while the principles included seemed to be inspired by EPFA's

Meta-code of Ethics. Participants in the study noted that foreign literature cannot be applied to the Albanian context in a 1:1 ratio due to the differences in cultural context.

Furthermore, the second subtheme that emerged “Public Perception and Cultural Influence”, had a lot of participants stating that in the Albanian culture, seeing mental health support is still seen as taboo, which, when considering that it has not yet been three decades since the establishment of the field, stands as a reason. The stigma surrounding it can often affect the psychologist’s own biases when presenting in the media.

One clear example of the cultural influence in applying ethical standards in Albania is the case of overlapping roles. As stated before overlapping roles in ethics happen when the psychologist establishes other relationship with the client (Schank et al, 2003) and boundary crossing when a boundary is broken in order to help the client, the opposite of boundary violation, when a boundary is broken and actively harms the client (Gutheil & Gabbard, 1993). It was reported by participants that Albanian culture, different from more western cultures, has a collectivist mindset, where communities are small and tight knit. As such, roles can often overlap, making it difficult even for the most well-meaning psychologists to separate them.

It is clear that The Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania being less than a decade old, the field of psychology in Albanian having been established around three decades ago and the cultural biases and influences, can be reasons for ethical challenges, though often not conscious.

5.1.2.3. The Role of Media.

The fifth theme that emerged was “Media and Psychology: A Complicated Relationship”. The subthemes categorized “Media as an Ally”, “Filtering Pressure and Sensationalism” and “Future Collaboration”.

As previously stated, mass media has an immense influence in the population’s worldview (Viswanath, Ramanadhan, Kontos, 2007). Psychology is still stigmatized in Albania, as discussed in the previous section. As such it is no surprise that the participants were happy that psychologists are being involved in media life. This means that with the widespread dissemination of information, the media can help change the public perception of psychology in Albania.

However, the media can also be a hindering factor in reaching ethical standards. Many participants cited media pressure as a reason why psychologists may fail to meet ethical standards. This happens because due to the saturation of the market when it comes to media, it stands to reason that different media outlets will be searching for the next scoop, the next big thing. This may force hosts to put pressure on the psychologist in order to get information that would be exclusive. Due to lack of experience and training, psychologists may accidentally break ethical standards when faced with the pressure by the media. this is supported by Koocher & Keith-Spiegel (1985), that cited personal biases, prejudices, rationalizations, overriding personal needs, and insufficient training and experience as reasons for bad decisions and regrettable ethical actions.

But a collaborative work between the media and the institutions in place, namely The Order of Psychologist in the Republic of Albania may help remedy this point and work towards a better ethical framework for psychologists in the future.

From the literature, thematic analysis and exploration of the documentation, it seems that the main reasons why psychologists may fail to meet ethical standards when collaborating with the media are the desire for fame and elevation of one's status, psychology being a relatively young field in Albania, the adaptation of codes of ethics and conduct to the Albanian context as well as media pressure.

5.1.3. Further Findings

There seems to be a disconnect between what is reported and what is perceived by the participants of the study. According to Legal Office of the Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania (Zyra Juridike, Urdhri I Psikologut, 2026), there have been three reported cases of ethical violations by psychologist in the media that were brought forth the Ethical Committee of the Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania. However, almost all participants of the study reported that they noted several ethical issues when following psychologists' statements in the media. The specific cases described as an answer to the interview question "Is there any case that comes to your mind when thinking about ethical violations of psychologists in media?" were already more than three.

The reason for this disconnect seems unclear as it can stem from varying factors, which all remain at the hypothetical stage. However, many participants lauded for more ethical training and an increased need for campaigns to raise awareness about ethical problems. This perceived lack of awareness may be the reason why fewer cases of ethical violations are reported to the ethical

committee than the number of cases of ethical violations that were perceived by the participants. In addition, many participants exclaimed that psychology is a relatively new field in Albania, and that of the Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania was only established in 2017, less than a decade ago, which is also when The Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania was standardized and published. Therefore, it stands to reason that due to the novelty of operationalization and standardization of the profession, more time is required for not only psychologists, but the general public to become aware of ethical issues, learn how to spot them and know when to report to the appropriate structures. Furthermore, increased awareness and education of the public on what behaviors consumers can expect from the profession and embodying legislative, administrative and judicial policies are two of the four purposes of ethics codes described by Oakland et al. (2012). As such, a higher visibility of the Code of Ethics and Deontology of Psychologist in the Republic of Albania may remedy this fact.

5.2. Conclusions

The two research questions posed in this study are:

Research question 1: What are the most common ethical challenges that psychologists face when appearing in Albanian media?

Research question 2: What are the reasons for these ethical challenges in media appearances?

The hypotheses of this study are:

Hypothesis 1: The most common ethical challenges that psychologists face when appearing in Albanian media are protecting confidentiality, staying within their competences and providing information without involving their internal biases and beliefs.

Hypothesis 2: The main reasons for these ethical challenges in media appearances are the lack of clarity in the guidelines provided in the Code of Ethics for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania, the field of psychology in Albania being relatively new and thus still in development and the pressure felt by the media outlets to provide sensational or expert information overlooking ethical standards.

After discussions, the connection between results and literature reviews it was found that the most prominent ethical challenges and violations from psychologists in the Albanian media are those of maintaining confidentiality, staying within boundaries of competence, separating professional from personal opinion and issues arising from self-advertisement, relating to the first research question, Relating to the second research question, the main reasons why psychologists may fail to meet ethical standards when collaborating with the media are the desire for fame and elevation of one's status, psychology being a relatively young field in Albania, the adaptation of codes of ethics and conduct to the Albanian context as well as media pressure.

This proved the two hypotheses presented in the methodology section correct.

5.3. Limitations, Strengths and Future ConsiderationsAs mentioned in the methodology section, this study has several limitations, mainly, due to the qualitative nature of the study, the findings are not statistically generalizable, though data saturation was reached. Furthermore, participants biases and the researcher's own biases may interfere with the findings. To add, there is a geographical limitation to the study as it was concentrated in the capital of Albania, Tirana.

However, the study has many strengths. It is the first of its kind in the field of ethics in media psychology in Albania, and as such it sets a precedent for future studies in this field. Starting

from the findings of this study, a theoretical framework of ethics in media psychology in Albania can begin to be built. These findings can be used in revising current ethical documentation in relation to media psychology.

It is recommended that due to the limitations of this study, future studies in the field of ethics in media psychology in Albania take on a quantitative quality, to reach empirical evidence of the findings of this study. Furthermore, the findings in the study can be used to draft documents that will allow for better cooperation between the media and psychologists to minimize cases of ethical challenges and violations by psychologists in the media. To add, these findings lay the groundwork for future theoretical frameworks that would also facilitate psychologists' appearance in the media. A revision of the Code of Ethics and Deontology for Psychologists in the Republic of Albania may be in order, specifically looking into cultural complexities, confidentiality and psychologists' appearance in the media. If not within the Code of Ethics, another alternative is drafting a document akin to EPFA's Guidelines for Psychologist Contributing to the Media for the Albanian context, to aid psychologist when being faced with the media.

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Appendix A

Semi structured interview questions for members of the ethics committee:

- 1. Could you tell me a little bit about the The Code Of Ethics And Deontology Of Psychologists In The Republic Of Albania (there in referred to as The Code Of Ethics), for example how it came to be, the structure, ect?**
- 2. What do you think are its strong points?**
- 3. What about any areas that could be strengthened or modified, if there are any in your opinion?**
- 4. Do you think the code of ethics as it stands now reflects the reality of cultural specifics of Albanian culture? If yes/no, why do you think that is the case?**
- 5. How do you think is the scene of media psychology in Albania at the moment?**
- 6. What do you think has been the impact of the internet and social media on the field of psychology in Albania?**
- 7. What types of ethical cases related to the media have been brought to the ethics board?**
- 8. Would you be open to provide some cases of ethical complaints brought forth to the Board of Ethics that relate to how psychologist behave in media?**
- 9. How often does the ethical board receive complaints related to the media?**
- 10. According to your experience, what are the most common ethical violations that happen in these cases?**
- 11. Are there any specific parts or ethical standards in the code that you think could be confusing or subject to different interpretations by psychologists in the media?**

Is there a specific ethical standard that you think may cause confusion, which in turn gives way to these complaints?

12. What do you think about the current guidelines in the Code of Ethics instructing psychologists when faced with media appearances?

13. Are there any other official documents or guidelines available to Albanian psychologists that could help?

14. According to you, what are some of the reasons that these aforementioned ethical violations happen?

15. What do you think would be some good steps to minimize the occurrence of these cases?

Semi structured interview questions for psychologists:

- 1. How do you feel about The Code Of Ethics And Deontology Of Psychologists In The Republic Of Albania (there in referred to as The Code Of Ethics)?**
- 2. What do you think are its strong points?**
- 3. What do you think can be improved?**
- 4. Do you think the code of ethics as it stands now reflects the reality of cultural specifics of Albanian culture? If yes/no, why do you think that is the case?**
- 5. How do you think is the scene of media psychology in Albania at the moment?**
- 6. Have you ever been invited as a guest/ to do a media appearance? If yes, how did you feel in that moment?**
- 7. What do you think are some of the challenges psychologists face when being part of the media?**
- 8. Is there any case that comes to your mind when thinking about ethical violations of psychologists in media?**
- 9. What do you think would be the most common ways a psychologist can fail to meet ethical standards when appearing in media?**
- 10. Do you think the code of ethics, as it stands now, has enough information to clearly instruct psychologists when faced with media appearances?**
- 11. According to you, what are some of the reasons that that psychologist may fail to meet ethical standards when making public appearances?**
- 12. What do you think would be some good steps to improve these cases?**

Appendix B

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATION AND DATA PROCESSING

DESCRIPTION AND AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

Dear Participant

we hereby ask you to give your informed consent to participate in the research Ethical Challenges for Psychologists in Albanian Media: A Qualitative Analysis coordinated by dr. Federico Zilio.

Research Objective: The purpose of this research is to investigate and identify the common ethical challenges that come with psychologists' appearances in Albanian media through analyzing the information gathered from the members of the Commission of Ethics as well as psychologists' lived experiences and analyzing the Code of Ethics guidelines for media appearances.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The semi-structured interview technique was chosen as a flexible data collection tool that will allow the participants to share their experiences in detail while providing a specific question framework. This qualitative approach aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the ethical issues withing psychologists' appearances in media, The Albanian Code of Ethics and the reasonings behind it.

Example of questions:

1. Could you tell me a little bit about the Code of Ethics and Deontology of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania (there in referred to as The Code of Ethics), for example how it came to be, the structure, etc.?
2. What do you think are its strong points?
3. What do you think has been the impact of the internet and social media on the field of psychology in Albania?

LOCATION AND DURATION OF RESEARCH

No locations belonging to FISPPA, DPG, DPSS, SCUP structures will actually be used. The data collection will be conducted either through the Zoom platform, in person at the interviewees' workplaces, or a location mutually decided with the participants, depending on their preference and availability.

Duration: This interview is expected to last around one hour. You will be asked to answer some questions about The Code of Ethics and Deontology of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania, media psychology, ethical violations of psychologists in media, ethical challenges when faced with media appearances as psychologists, as well as provide fully anonymized cases if possible. These questions are mostly open ended and aim to create a clearer picture of the current state of ethics in relation to psychologists' appearances in media in Albania at the current time. This interview will be audio recorded, transcribed and translated while your personal data will be anonymized.

CONTACT DETAILS

- Responsible for research: Federico Zilio, RTT, affiliated at FISPPA Dept. Email federico.zilio@unipd.it
- Responsible for data collection: Lorela Dema, Master's student in Clinical, Social and Intercultural Psychology.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION AND DATA PROCESSING

I, the undersigned (SURNAME AND FIRST NAME) _____

freely agrees to participate in the study entitled *Ethical Challenges for Psychologists in Albanian Media: A Qualitative Analysis*.

I DECLARE

- i. That I am aware that he/she may withdraw from the study at any time, without explanation, without penalty and by obtaining non-use of the data.
- ii. That I am aware that the data will be collected confidentially (name/code) and that if he/she so wishes, he/she can obtain the return of the raw data.
- iii. That I am aware that if he/she so wishes, he/she can obtain the return of the raw data together with the relevant regulatory reference data. As this study is not for clinical purposes, I am aware that I will need to consult a specialist for any interpretation of the data.

- iv. That I consent to the sharing of data obtained as a result of my participation for scientific purposes only (scientific publications, communications at conferences, public sharing of anonymous data) after pseudonymisation procedure so that my identity cannot be traced in any way.

To consent to video and/or audio recording:

☐ *I consent*

☐ *I do not consent*

Signature

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I, the undersigned (SURNAME AND FIRST NAME) _____

having read the above information, expresses the consent to participate in the research titled Ethical Challenges for Psychologists in Albanian Media: A Qualitative Analysis (responsible: Dr. Federico Zilio).

Date _____

Readable

signature

INFORMATION ON THE PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

This information is provided pursuant to articles 13 and 14 of EU Regulation 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation, hereinafter EU Regulation), in relation to the personal data that the University of Padua (hereinafter University) processes in carrying out the activities envisaged by the research project Ethical Challenges for Psychologists in Albanian Media: A Qualitative Analysis. The processing of personal data complies with the principles of correctness, lawfulness, transparency and protection of the privacy and rights of the interested parties.

RESEARCH PROJECT: Ethical Challenges for Psychologists in Albanian Media: A Qualitative Analysis

DATA CONTROLLER: Università degli Studi di Padova - FISPPA

SCIENTIFIC RESPONSIBLE: Federico Zilio, FISPPA, email federico.zilio@unipd.it

PRIVACY INFORMATION: <http://ethos.psy.unipd.it/>, privacy@unipd.it

1. Sources and types of data
2. Purpose of data processing
3. Methods of data processing
4. Legal basis of the processing and nature of the provision
5. Subjects to whom the data is addressed
6. Data retention
7. Rights of the interested party
8. How to exercise your rights
9. Data Protection Officer
10. Any changes to the information

Sources and types of data

The personal data provided directly by the interested party are:

- a) Common data. Personal, identification and contact data (email, telephone contacts);
- b) Special categories of data. Data possibly provided relating to health, political beliefs, etc. [cf. art. 9 GDPR].

Purpose of data processing

The data are processed exclusively for the purposes related to the performance and dissemination of the institutional activities of the University. In particular, the data are processed for scientific research purposes within the project Ethical Challenges for Psychologists in Albanian Media: A Qualitative Analysis.. The specific objectives of the research project are: *The purpose of this research is to investigate and identify the common ethical challenges that come with psychologists' appearances in Albanian media through analyzing the information gathered from the members of the Commission of Ethics as well as psychologists' lived experiences and analyzing the Code of Ethics guidelines for media appearances..*

Personal data may also be stored and processed by the University for other scientific research purposes similar and attributable to the scientific-disciplinary sectors of the Psychology research area.

Modalità del trattamento dei dati

The semi-structured interview technique was chosen as a flexible data collection tool that will allow the participants to share their experiences in detail while providing a specific question framework. This qualitative approach aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the ethical issues withing psychologists' appearances in media, The Albanian Code of Ethics and the reasonings behind it.

Example of questions:

1. Could you tell me a little bit about the Code of Ethics and Deontology of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania (there in referred to as The Code of Ethics), for example how it came to be, the structure, etc.?
2. What do you think are its strong points?
3. What do you think has been the impact of the internet and social media on the field of psychology in Albania?

The data processing is carried out in such a way as to guarantee maximum security and confidentiality and may be implemented using manual, computerized and telematic tools suitable for storing, managing and transmitting them. The University does not use automated decision-making processes relating to the rights of the interested party based on personal data, including profiling, in compliance with the guarantees provided for by art. 22 of the EU Regulation.

The personal data collected are stored on institutional hard disks protected by password and accessible only with the prior authorization of the scientific manager and in compliance with the security and organizational measures established in the privacy policy of the reference institution , in order to guarantee:

- a) the anonymisation, pseudonymisation or encryption of personal data
- b) the continued confidentiality, integrity, availability and resilience of systems that process personal data;
- c) the ability to promptly restore the availability and access to personal data in the event of a physical or technical incident.

Legal basis of the processing and nature of the provision

The legal basis for the processing is the performance of tasks of public interest in research, teaching and so-called "third mission", institutionally entrusted to the University (art. 6, par. 1, lett. e, of the EU Regulation). If special personal data are processed (e.g. relating to health), the legal basis for the processing is the consent of the interested party. The provision of personal data is necessary to participate in research *Ethical Challenges for Psychologists in Albanian Media: A Qualitative Analysis*.

Subjects to whom the data is addressed

The data may be communicated, exclusively for the purposes indicated in point 2, to the University staff and to collaborators, including independent ones, who provide support activities for the implementation and management of the activities envisaged by the research project. The data collected will be used (disseminated or communicated) exclusively in an aggregate and anonymous manner, for the purposes of scientific publication. The recipients of the data are also any external subjects appointed as data controllers pursuant to art. 28 of EU Regulation 2016/679, including:

Name of the external body _____

- a) [any company owning an online platform that provides an automation service for email campaigns, web services, etc.].

The data collected are not normally transferred to countries outside the European Union. In any case, the University ensures compliance with the security regulations for the protection of the personal data of the interested parties.

Data retention

Personal data shall be stored in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes of the research referred to in point 2. Personal data may be stored for longer periods solely for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes, in accordance with Article 89, paragraph 1, GDPR and subject to the implementation of technical and organizational measures necessary to safeguard the rights and freedoms of the data subject.

Rights of the interested party

The interested party is granted the following rights:

- a) right to access, rectify or integrate your data (articles 15 and 16 of the EU Regulation);
- b) right to erasure (right to be forgotten), pursuant to art. 17 EU Regulation;
- c) right to limit the processing under the conditions set out in art. 18 of the EU Regulation;
- d) right to data portability, as regulated by art. 20 EU Regulation;
- e) right to object to processing at any time (art. 21 EU Regulation).

The interested party may lodge a complaint with the Guarantor for the protection of personal data.

The interested party may revoke at any time the consent to the processing of his/her personal data. In this case, no further personal data of the interested party will be collected, without prejudice to the use of data already collected and necessary to determine, without altering them, the results of the research and data that, originally or following processing, cannot be traced back to an identified or identifiable person.

How to exercise your rights

To exercise their rights, the interested party can write to the email address _____ (pec), possible project reference _____

Alternatively, the interested party may write to: University of Padua, via VIII Febbraio n. 2, Padua. The University normally responds within one month of the request. In the event of a particularly complex request, the University responds within and no later than three months of the request.

Data Protection Officer

The Data Protection Officer, appointed pursuant to art. 37 of the EU Regulation, can be contacted at the following email address: privacy@unipd.it.

Any changes to the information

Any changes and additions to this information will be published in the Privacy section of the website <http://ethos.psy.unipd.it/>. The University undertakes to communicate directly to the interested parties any changes in the purposes of the processing, the identity of the data controller and any other changes that may significantly affect the rights of the interested parties or their exercise.

CONSENT TO THE PROCESSING OF SPECIAL DATA

I, the undersigned, _____, born in _____ (____), on ____ / ____ / _____, residing in _____ (____), address: _____ n° _____ ZIP CODE _____,	
☐ I agree	☐ I do not agree
to the processing of my personal data within the research project Ethical Challenges for Psychologists in Albanian Media: A Qualitative Analysis as specified in the information published on the web page http://ethos.psy.unipd.it/ and received today, pursuant to art. 13 EU Regulation 2016/679	
Place and date, _____	signature _____

☐ I agree	☐ I do not agree
To audio/video recording	
Place and date, _____	signature _____

Appendix C



**THE CODE OF ETHICS AND
DEONTOLOGY OF PSYCHOLOGISTS IN
THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA**

MAY 2017

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INTRODUCTION AND APPLICABILITY

The Ethical Principles of Psychologists and the Code of Ethics and Deontology (hereinafter the Code of Ethics) of the Order of the Psychologist in the Republic of Albania) consists of an Introduction, a Preamble, five General Principles and specific Ethical Standards. The Introduction discusses the intent, organization, procedural considerations and the scope of application of the Code of Ethics and Deontology. The Preamble and General Principles aim to guide psychologists toward the highest ideals of psychology. Although the Preamble and General Principles are not enforceable rules, they should be considered by psychologists in order to guarantee an ethical course of action. The Ethical Standards stipulate proper rules of conduct for psychologists. Most of the Ethical Standards are broadly known, in order to apply to all the psychologists in varied roles while practicing their profession. The Ethical Standards are not exhaustive. The Code of Ethics applies to every aspect of psychologists' activities. Areas include, but are not limited to the clinical psychology, psychological counseling, and school psychology; research in psychology; teaching; supervision of trainees; public service; policy development; social intervention; development of assessment instruments; conducting psychological assessments; educational counseling; organizational consulting; legal activities; program design and evaluation, as well as administration. This Code of Ethics applies to these activities across a variety of contexts, such as in person, via mail, telephone, Internet, and other electronic transmissions. In order to carry out this Code of Ethics effectively, these activities shall be distinguished from the entirely private conduct of psychologists, which is not subject to the rules of this Code. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of an ethical standard is not in itself a justification for an unethical conduct.

The procedures for filing, investigating, and resolving complaints of unethical conduct are stipulated in the current Regulation of the Professional Disciplinary Adjudication. The Order of Psychologist (OP) may impose sanctions on its members for violations of the standards of the Code of Ethics, including termination of Membership, and it has the right to notify other bodies and individuals fits actions, if deemed necessary. Actions that violate the standards of the Code of Ethics and Deontology may also lead to the imposition of sanctions by bodies other than OP, including psychological associations, other professional groups, psychology boards or other state agencies and institutions. The Code of Ethics intends to provide standards of professional conduct of the psychologists that can be applied by other bodies that choose to adopt them. The Code of Ethics is not intended to be a basis of civil or criminal liability. If the Committee of Ethics and Disciplinary Adjudication states that a psychologist

has violated the standards of the Code of Ethics that does not determine whether the psychologist is legally liable in a court action.

The general terms used in some of the standards of this Code of Ethics (*e.g. reasonably, appropriate, potentially*) are intended to be used in cases when:

- (1) psychologists are allowed to make professional judgment,
- (2) it is needed to eliminate injustice or inequality that would occur if the above mentioned terms are not taken into consideration,
- (3) it is provided the applicability of the ethic standards in a variety of professional activities conducted by psychologists, or
- (4) it is guaranteed the protection of standards from a set of rigid rules that might be quickly outdated.

As used in this Code of Ethics, the term 'reasonable' means the general professional judgment of psychologists engaged in similar activities in similar circumstances, considering the knowledge the psychologist had or should have had at that time.

In the process of decision-making related with their professional behavior, psychologists must follow this Code of Ethics, in addition to applicable laws and other psychology regulations in force. In applying the Code of Ethics, psychologists must consider other materials and guidelines that have been adopted or approved to be applied by scientific and professional psychological organizations and the dictates of their own conscience, as well as they must consult with other experts within their respective field. If this Code of Ethics establishes a higher standard of conduct than is required by law, psychologists must meet the highest ethical standards. If the ethical responsibilities of the psychologists are not in accordance with law, regulations, or other governing legal authority, psychologists make known their commitment to this Code of Ethics and they take steps to resolve the conflict in a responsible manner, in agreement with basic principles of human rights.

Preamble

Psychologists are committed to enhance scientific and professional knowledge of behavior in understanding themselves and other persons, and to the use of such knowledge to improve the condition of individuals, organizations, and society. Psychologists respect and protect civil and human rights and the essential importance of freedom of inquiry and expression in research, teaching, and publication. This Code of Ethics provides a common set of principles and standards upon which psychologists build their professional and scientific work.

This Code of Ethics aims to provide the welfare and protection of the individuals and groups with whom psychologists work, and the education of members, students and the public, regarding ethical standards of the discipline of psychology.

The development of a dynamic set of ethical standards for the professional conduct of the psychologists requires a personal commitment and lifelong effort:

- to act ethically;
- to encourage ethical behavior by students, supervisors, employees, and colleagues;
- to find out other concerning ethical problems

General principles

This section consists of General Principles. General Principles, in contrast to Ethical Standards, have inspirational nature. Their intent is to guide and inspire psychologists toward the very highest ethical ideals of the profession. General Principles, as opposed to Ethical Standards, do not represent obligations and should not be used as a basis for imposing sanctions. Their use for either of these reasons distorts the meaning of General Principles.

Principle A: Beneficence and nonmaleficence

Psychologists try hard to assist their clients and make sure to do no harm. In their professional actions, psychologists strive to protect the welfare and rights of those with whom they interact professionally and other involved persons, as well as the welfare of animals, subjects of research. When conflicts occur due to psychologists' obligations or concerns, they attempt to resolve these conflicts in a responsible manner, by avoiding or minimizing harm. Because scientific and professional judgments and actions of the psychologists may affect the lives of others, they must be alert to and try to prevent personal, financial, social, organizational and political factors that might lead to misuse of their professional influence. Psychologists strive to be aware of the significance of their own physical and mental health on their ability to help those with whom they work.

Principle B: Fidelity and responsibility

Psychologists establish relationships of trust with those with whom they work. They are aware of their professional and scientific responsibilities, of the society and of the specific communities in which they work. Psychologists must respect the professional standards of conduct, clarify their professional roles and obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior, and seek to avoid conflicts of interest that could lead to unfair benefits or harm to the others. Psychologists must consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals and institutions in order to serve to the best interests of those with whom they work.

Psychologists should be attentive and to make evident any case in which the scientific and professional conduct of their colleagues is not ethical. Psychologists strive to contribute a part of their professional time for little or no compensation or personal advantage.

Principle C: Integrity

Psychologists aim to promote accuracy, honesty, and truthfulness in science, teaching, and the practice of psychology. In these activities, psychologists must not steal, cheat, or engage in fraud, deception, or intentional misrepresentation of the facts. Psychologists seek to keep their promises and to avoid irresponsible or unclear commitments.

In situations in which psychologists decide to use deception, they must consider:

- a) If it is ethically justifiable to maximize the results of the offered service and minimize harm,
- b) the possible consequences,
- c) taking responsibility to minimize any other harmful effects that may arise from the use of such techniques.

Principle D: Justice

This principle gives right to all persons to benefit from the contributions of psychology and to equal quality in the processes, procedures, and services being conducted by psychologists. Psychologists exercise reasonable judgment and take precautions to evade unjust practices. For this reason, they must take into consideration the boundaries of their competence and the limitations of their expertise.

Principle E: Respect for people's rights and dignity

Psychologists shall respect the dignity and worth of all people, and the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, and decision-making. Psychologists are aware that special measures may be necessary to protect the rights and welfare of persons or communities whose vulnerabilities damage autonomous decision-making. Psychologists are aware of and respect cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, language disability, and socio-economic status, and consider these factors when working with members of such groups. During their work, psychologists try to eliminate the effect of biases based on these factors, and, being aware of this, they do not participate in or disregard activities of others based upon such prejudices.

Chapter 1. Resolving ethical issues

1.01 Misuse of psychologists' work

If psychologists learn of the misuse or misrepresentation of their work, they take reasonable steps to correct or minimize the misuse or misrepresentation.

1.02. Conflicts between ethics, law, regulations, or other governing legal authority

If the ethical responsibilities of the psychologists are not in accordance with law, regulations, or other governing legal authority, psychologists clarify the nature of the conflict, make known their commitment to the Code of Ethics, and take reasonable steps to resolve the conflict consistent with the General Principles and Ethical Standards of the Code of Ethics. Under no circumstances may this standard be used to justify or defend the violation of human rights.

1.03 Conflicts between ethics and organizational demands

If the demands of an organization, or a private or public agency, in which psychologists are affiliated or for whom they are working are in conflict with this Code of Ethics, psychologists shall clarify the nature of the conflict, make known their commitment to the Code of Ethics, and take reasonable steps to resolve the conflict consistent with the General Principles and Ethical Standards of the Code of Ethics. Under no circumstances may this standard be used to justify or defend the violation of human rights.

1.04. Informal resolution of ethical violations

When psychologists are aware that there may have been an ethical violation by another psychologist, they attempt to resolve the issue by bringing it to the attention of that individual, if an informal resolution appears appropriate and the intervention does not violate any confidentiality rights. *(See Standards 1.02, Conflicts between ethics, law, regulations, or other governing legal authority, and 1.03, Conflicts between ethics and organizational demands.)*

1.05 Reporting ethical violations

If an apparent ethical violation has significantly harmed or is likely to harm a person or an organization, or private or public agency, and is not appropriate for informal resolution (under Standard 1.04), then this violation must refer to the Committee of Ethics and Professional Disciplinary Adjudication. *(See also Standard 1.02, Conflicts between ethics, law, regulations, or other governing legal authority.)*

1.06 Cooperating with Ethics Committees

Psychologists are obliged to cooperate in investigations related with ethical violation issues, to examine and to draw results required by the OP. Failure to cooperate is in itself an ethics violation.

1.07 Improper complaints

Psychologists do not file or encourage the filing of ethical complaints which are considered completely unfair, or that are made with reckless consideration for or willful ignorance of facts that would disprove the allegation for violation.

1.08 Unfair discrimination against complainants and respondents

Psychologists do not deny employment, advancement, and admissions to academic or other programs to persons based solely on the fact of having made or being the subject of an ethics complaint. This does not exclude taking action based upon the outcome of such disciplinary proceedings or considering other appropriate information.

Chapter 2 Competence

2.01 Boundaries of competence

- a) Psychologists provide services, teach, and conduct research with populations and in areas only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, consultation, study, or professional experience. Psychologists shall not practice competence out of their field, which are related with other disciplines such as: sociology, social work, medical field etc.
- b) Psychologists practice their profession in suitable environments for practicing the profession. In addition to psychologists who practice the profession in organizations, public or private institutions, the psychologist must take appropriate measures to ensure that the place of work in which he practices his/her profession provides privacy, maintain confidentiality and comply with the type of service profile offered. Except in cases of emergency or unless it is in accordance with the purpose for which it is carried out, the psychologist does not exercise his activity in public places or somewhere different from the place where he officially exercises the activity.
- c) Where scientific or professional knowledge in the discipline of psychology establishes that an understanding of factors associated with age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socio-economic

status is essential for effective implementation of their services or research, psychologists have or obtain the training, experience, consultation, or supervision necessary to ensure the competence of their services, except cases provided in Standard 2.02.

d) Psychologists planning to provide services, teach, or conduct research involving populations, areas, techniques, or technologies new to them, undertake relevant education, training, supervision, experience, consultation, or other necessary study.

e) When psychologists are asked to provide services to individuals for whom appropriate mental health services are not available and for which psychologists have not obtained the required competence, in order to ensure that services are not negated, psychologists, with closely related prior training or experience may provide such services, but they shall make reasonable efforts to obtain the required competence through relevant research, training, consultation, or study.

f) When assuming legal role, psychologists shall be aware of or become reasonably familiar with the judicial or administrative rules governing their roles.

2.02 Providing services in emergency situations

In emergency situations, when psychologists may provide services to individuals, for whom other mental health services are not available, and for the cases in which the psychologists have not obtained the necessary training for such services. The services are discontinued as soon as the emergency has ended or appropriate services are available.

2.03 Maintaining competence

Psychologists undertake ongoing efforts to develop and maintain their competence.

2.4 Bases for scientific and professional judgments

Psychologists' work is based upon scientific and professional knowledge of the discipline of psychology. *(See also Standards 2.01e, Boundaries of competence, and 10.01b, Informed consent to therapy.)*

2.05 Delegation of work to other persons

Psychologists, who delegate work to employees, supervisees, or research or teaching assistants, or to other freelance professions such as interpreters, take reasonable steps to:

- (1) avoid delegating such work to persons who have a conflict of interest with the persons who receive the service, that would likely lead to misuse or loss of objectivity;
- (2) authorize only those responsibilities that such persons can be expected to perform

competently on the basis of their education, training, or experience, either independently or while being supervised;

(3) check that such persons perform these services competently. *(See also Standards 2.02, Providing services in emergency situations; 3.05, Multiple relationships; 4.01, Maintaining confidentiality; 9.01, Bases for assessments; 9.02, Use of assessments; 9.03, Informed consent in assessments; and 9.07, Assessment by unqualified persons.)*

2.06 Personal problems and conflicts

a) Psychologists shall avoid initiating a professional activity when they know or should know that there is a possibility likely substantial that their personal problems will prevent them from performing their activities in a competent manner.

b) When psychologists, while performing their professional duties, become aware of personal problems that may influence the duty performance adequately, they take appropriate measures, such as obtaining professional consultation or assistance, and determine whether they should limit, suspend, or terminate their professional duties. *(See also Standard 10.10, Terminating therapy.)*

Chapter 3: Human relations

3.01 Unfair discrimination

In their work-related activities, psychologists must not engage directly or indirectly in unfair discrimination based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic status, or any basis forbidden by law.

3.02 Sexual Harassment

Psychologists shall not engage in sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is sexual solicitation, physical harassment, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, that occurs during the psychologist's activities or roles as a psychologist, and that either:

(1) is unwelcome, is offensive, or creates a hostile workplace or educational environment, for which the psychologist is or should be aware;

(2) is sufficiently severe or intense to be abusive. Sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act or of multiple persistent acts carried out in different ways. *(See also Standard 1.08, Unfair discrimination against complainants and respondents.)*

3.03 Other harassment

Psychologists shall not engage in behavior that is harassing or humiliating to persons with whom they interact during their professional activities, based on factors such as age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socio-economic status of these persons.

3.04 Avoiding harm

- a) Psychologists shall take reasonable measures to avoid harming their clients/patients, students, supervisees, participants in research, organizational clients, and other persons with whom they work, and to minimize harm where it is unforeseeable and unavoidable.
- b) Psychologists shall avoid any act in any possible situation that may cause harm intentionally on a person, such as severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, or any act that may be defined as cruel, inhuman, violating or degrading behavior.

3.05 Multiple Relationships

- a) A relationship is considered a multiple relationship when a psychologist is in a professional role with a person and, at the same time, has another close relationship with the same person, is in a relationship with a person closely associated with or related to the person with whom the psychologist has the professional relationship, or in cases when this relationship is expected to enter into another relationship in the future.

A psychologist refrains from entering into a multiple relationship only in cases when the multiple relationship could reasonably harm the objectivity, the competence, or the

effectiveness of the psychologist in performing his or her functions as a psychologist, or otherwise risks misuse or harm to the other person.

Multiple relationships that do not cause harm, misuse or harmful consequences for the parties are not unethical.

- b) If a psychologist finds out that, due to unforeseen factors, a harmful multiple relationship has arisen, the psychologist takes reasonable steps to resolve it taking into consideration the best interests of the affected person and in maximal compliance with the Code of Ethics.
- c) When psychologists are required by law, institutional policy, or extraordinary circumstances to be involved in a multiple relationship, they are obliged to clarify their role to all the concerned parties, as well as the boundaries of the principle of confidentiality. (*See also Standards 3.04, Avoiding harm, and 3.07, Requests for services by third-party.*)

3.06 Conflict of interest

Psychologists refuse to take on a professional role when personal, scientific, professional, legal, financial, family, or other interests or relationships could influence their objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing their functions as psychologists.

3.07 Requests for services by third-party

When psychologists agree to provide services to a person or entity at the request of a third party, psychologists shall clarify, at the beginning of the service, the nature of the relationship with all individuals or organizations involved. This clarification includes the role of the psychologist (e.g., therapist, consultant, diagnostician, or expert witness), the identification of the client, the possible uses of the services provided or the information obtained, and the fact that there may be limits to confidentiality. *(See also Standards 3.05, Multiple relationships, and 4.02, Discussing the limits of confidentiality.)*

3.08 Exploitative relationships

Psychologists do not exploit persons over whom they have supervisory, evaluative or other authority such as clients/patients, students, supervisees, participants in research, and employees. *(See also Standards 3.05, Multiple relationships; 6.04, Fees and financial arrangements; 6.05, Barter with clients/patients; 7.07, Sexual relationships with students and supervisees; 10.05, Sexual intimacies with current therapy clients/patients; 10.06, Sexual intimacies with relatives or significant other persons of current therapy clients/patients; 10.07, Therapy with former sexual partners; and 10.08, Sexual intimacies with former therapy clients/patients.)*

3.09 Cooperation with other professionals

When it is recommended and professionally appropriate, psychologists cooperate with other professionals in order to serve their clients/patients effectively and appropriately. *(See also Standard 4.05, Disclosures of identifying information).*

3.10 Informed consent

a) When psychologists conduct research, assessment, therapy, counseling, or consulting services, they require to obtain the informed consent of the individual or individuals who

receive these services, except the cases, when conduct of such activities without consent is mandated bylaw, by by-laws or by the decision of the legal authorities provided in this Ethics Code. *(See also Standards 8.02, Informed consent to research; 9.03, Informed consent in assessments; and 10.01, Informed consent to Therapy.)*

- b) For persons who are legally incapable of giving informed consent, psychologists in any possible case consider a person's best interest, and, if possible, obtain appropriate permission from a legally authorized person. When consent by a legally authorized person is not permitted or required by law, psychologists take reasonable steps to protect the individual's rights and welfare.
- c) When psychological services are ordered by the court or otherwise mandated by other legally authorized authorities, psychologists inform the individual on the nature of the anticipated services on any limits of confidentiality, before proceeding.
- d) Psychologists document written or oral consent, or permission appropriately.

3.11 Psychological services provided to or through organizations

Psychologists who offer services to or through organizations provide information beforehand to clients and when appropriate to those who are directly affected by the services about:

- (1) the nature and objectives of the services,
- (2) the target recipients,
- (3) the individualization of the clients,
- (4) the relationship that the psychologist will have with each person and the organization,
- (5) the probable uses of the provided services and the obtained information,
- (6) who will have access to the information,
- (7) limits of confidentiality.

They should provide information about the results and conclusions of such services to appropriate persons as soon as possible.

If psychologists will be excluded by law or by organizational roles from providing such information to particular individuals or groups, they shall inform those individuals or groups at the beginning of the service.

3.12 Interruption of psychological services

Unless, otherwise, stipulated by law or by the contract signed with the person who receives the service, psychologists make reasonable efforts to minimize the consequences that may

arise from the interruption of the service. *(See also Standard 6.02c, Maintenance, dissemination, and disposal of confidential information of professional and scientific work.)*

Chapter 4. Privacy and confidentiality

4.01 Maintaining confidentiality

Psychologists have a primary obligation and take reasonable precautions to protect confidential information obtained through various manners, recognizing that the limits of confidentiality may be regulated by law or established by institutional rules or professional or scientific relationship. *(See also Standard 2.05, Delegation of work to others.)*

4.02 Notification of the limits of confidentiality

a) Psychologists notify the persons (including, to the extent possible, even the persons who are legally incapable of giving informed consent and their legal representatives) and organizations with whom they establish a scientific or professional relationship about:

(1) the relevant limits of confidentiality,

(2) the foreseen uses of the information gathered through their psychological activities.

b) Unless it is not possible or is harmful, the notification of confidentiality occurs at the beginning of the relationship and as soon as it is allowed by the circumstances.

c) Psychologists who offer services, products, or information via electronic transmission should inform the clients/the patients of the risks of privacy violation and the limits of confidentiality.

4.03 Recording

Before recording the voices or images of individuals to whom they provide services, psychologists obtain permission from all such persons or from their legal representatives. *(See also Standards 8.03, Informed consent for recording voices and images in research; 8.05, Providing research information after receiving informed consent; and 8.07, Deception in research.)*

4.04 Minimizing intrusions on privacy

Psychologists include in written and oral reports, only information which are crucial to the purpose of the report.

Psychologists use the confidential information obtained during their work only for appropriate scientific or professional purposes and only with the persons clearly concerned with such case.

8.06 Disclosures of identifying information

Psychologists may make known to the public confidential information with the appropriate consent of the institution, the individual client/patient, who receives the service, or another legally authorized person on behalf of the client/patient unless prohibited by law.

Psychologists make known confidential information without the consent of the individual only if it is required bylaw, or where permitted by law for a valid purpose such as to:

- (1) provide needed professional services;
- (2) obtain appropriate professional consultations;
- (3) protect the client/patient, psychologist, or others from harm; or
- (4) obtain payment for services from a client/patient, in cases when the disclosed information is limited to the minimum that is necessary to achieve the purpose. *(See also Standard 6.04e, Fees and financial arrangements.)*

4.06 Consultations

When consulting with their colleagues, psychologists do not disclose confidential information that reasonably could lead to the identification of a client/patient, participant in research, or other persons or organization with whom they have a confidential relationship, unless they have obtained the prior consent of the person or organization and when they disclose information only to the extent necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation. *(See also Standard 4.01, Maintaining confidentiality.)*

4.07 Use of confidential information for didactic or other purposes

Psychologists do not disclose in their publications, lectures, or other public media, confidential or personally identifiable information concerning their clients/patients, students, participants in research, clients of the organizations, or other recipients of their services that they obtained during the course of their work, unless:

- (1) they do not identify the person or the organization,
- (2) the person or organization has given their consent in writing, or
- (3) there is a legal authorization to do that.

Chapter 5. Advertising and other public statements

5.01 Avoidance of false or deceptive statements

- (a) Public statements include, but are not limited to, paid or unpaid advertising, product

support, grant applications, licensing applications, other qualification applications, brochures, printed materials, various listings, personal resumes, curriculum vitae, or comments for use in media such as: print or electronic transmission, statements in legal procedures, lectures and public oral presentations, as well as published materials. Psychologists do not deliberately make public statements that are false, deceptive, or misleading in relation with their research, practice, or other work activities or those of persons or organizations in which they are affiliated.

(b) Psychologists do not make false, deceptive, or misleading statements concerning:

- (1) their training, experience, or competence;
- (2) their academic degrees;
- (3) their credentials;
- (4) their institutional or association affiliations;
- (5) the services provided;
- (6) the scientific or clinical basis of their services or results or degree of success of their services;
- (7) their fees;
- (8) their publications or research findings.

(c) psychologists present their degrees as credentials for the services that they provide, only if these degrees:

- (1) are earned from a regionally accredited educational institution, or
- (2) are considered criteria for psychology licensure by the state in which they practice the profession.

5.02 Statements by others

(a) Psychologists, who engage others to make public statements that promote their professional practice, products, or activities, retain professional responsibility for such statements.

(b) Psychologists do not give rewards to employees of press, radio, television, or other communication media in return of presenting advertisements as news. (*See also Standard 1.01, Misuse of the work of the psychologist*).

(c) A paid advertisement relating to psychologists' activities must be clearly identified or perceived as such.

5.03 Descriptions of workshops and educational programs which do not grant degrees

Psychologists, responsible for the announcements, catalogs, brochures, or description of workshops, seminars, or other educational programs which do not grant degrees, shall ensure that they accurately describe the audience for which the program is intended, the educational objectives, the presenters, and the fees involved.

5.04 Media presentations

When psychologists provide public advice or comment via print, Internet, or other electronic transmission, they take precautions to ensure that their statements:

- (1) are based on their professional knowledge, training, or experience in accord with appropriate psychological practice and literature;
- (2) are in accordance with this Code of Ethics; and
- (3) do not indicate the establishment of a professional relationship with the public, to whom it is addressed. *(See also Standard 2.04, Bases for scientific and professional judgments.)*

5.05 Testimonials

Psychologists do not encourage or ask testimonials from clients/patients who are currently under therapy or other persons, who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to unjustifiable influence.

5.06 Personal Requests

Psychologists do not ask, directly or through agents, to work with potential clients/patients (or other persons, who because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to excessive pressure), only if these requests are submitted by these persons themselves.

This prohibition does not exclude:

- (1) cases in which this occurs to the best interest of a current client/patient under therapy,
- (2) interventions in disaster situations or interventions in community services.

Chapter 6. Record keeping and fees

6.01 Documentation of professional and scientific work, and maintenance of records

Psychologists shall administrate data relating to their professional and scientific work in order to:

- (1) facilitate provision of later services by them or by other professionals,
- (2) allow for reproduction of research design and analyses,
- (3) meet institutional requirements,
- (4) ensure accuracy of billing and payments, and
- (5) ensure compliance with the law.

(See also Standard 4.01, Maintaining confidentiality.)

6.02 Maintenance, dissemination, and disposal of confidential records of professional and scientific work

- (a) Psychologists provide confidentiality in creating, storing, accessing, transferring, and disposing of data under their control, whether these are written, automated, or saved in any other way. *(See also Standards 4.01, Maintaining confidentiality, and 6.01, Documentation of professional and scientific work and maintenance of records.)*
- (b) If confidential information related to the recipients of psychological services is registered into databases or systems of records available to persons whose access has not been consented to by the recipient of the service, psychologists use coding or other techniques to avoid the identification of the persons.
- (c) Psychologists take measures in advance to facilitate the appropriate transfer and to protect the confidentiality of records and data, in the event, that for any possible reason, the psychologists interrupt their professional service or practice. *(See also Standards 3.12, Interruption of psychological services, and 10.09, Interruption of therapy.)*

6.03 Omission to provide information due to non-payment

Psychologists may not refuse to hand documentation, which is under their control, that is requested and needed for an emergency treatment of a client/patient, solely because payment has not been received yet.

6.04 Fees and financial arrangements

- (a) In a professional or scientific relationship, as early as possible, psychologists and recipients of psychological services should reach an agreement specifying compensation and billing arrangements.
- (b) Fees of psychological service shall be in agreement with law, if the law stipulates the legal fees.
- (c) Psychologists shall not misrepresent their fees.
- (d) If law foresees limitations to services because of limitations in payment, this should be made known to the recipient of services as early as possible. *(See also Standards 10.09, Interruption of therapy, and 10.10, Terminating therapy.)*
- (e) If the recipient of services does not pay for the services, as agreed in advance, and if psychologists intend to use legal measures to collect the financial fees, psychologists should first inform the recipient of services that such measures will be taken, and provide to that person an opportunity to make prompt and immediate payment. *(See also Standards 4.05,*

Disclosures; 6.03, Omission to provide information due to non-payment; and 10.01, Informed consent to therapy.)

6.05 Barter with clients/patients

Barter is the acceptance of goods, products, or other nonmonetary remuneration from clients/patients in return for psychological services.

Psychologists may barter only if:

- (1) it is not clinically contraindicated,
- (2) the arrangement is not of exploitative nature. *(See also Standards 3.05, Multiple relationships, and 6.04, Fees and financial arrangements.)*

6.06 Accuracy in reports to payers and financial sources

In their reports to payers of services or sources of research funding, psychologists try to ensure the accurate reporting of the nature of the service provided or research conducted, the fees, charges, or payments, and when it is applicable, the identity of the provider, the findings, and the diagnosis. *(See also Standards 4.01, Maintaining confidentiality; 4.04, Minimizing intrusions on privacy; and 4.05, Disclosures.)*

6.07 Referrals and fees

When psychologists pay, receive payment, or divide fees with another professional, in different conditions from that of an employer-employee relationship, the payment to each person is based on the kind of services provided (clinical, consultative, administrative, etc.) *(See also Standard 3.09, Cooperation with other professionals.)*

Chapter 7. Education and Training

7.01 Design of education and training programs

Psychologists, who are responsible for education and training programs, make sure that the programs are designed in such a manner that provide the appropriate knowledge and proper experiences, and to meet the requirements for licensure, certification, or other goals promoted

by the program. *(See also Standard 5.03, Descriptions of workshops and educational programs that do not grant degrees.)*

7.02 Descriptions of education and training programs

Psychologists, who are responsible for education and training programs, take reasonable measures to provide an accurate description of the program content (including participation in required course, counseling, psychotherapy, experiential groups, consulting projects, or community service, which are related with the program), training goals and objectives, scholarships and benefits, and requirements that must be met for satisfactory completion of the program. This information must be made available to all interested parties.

7.03 Accuracy in teaching

(a) Psychologists take reasonable measures to ensure that course designed syllabi are accurate regarding the subject matter, the assessment manner and the expectations of this educational program.

This standard does not exclude modification of the course content or requirements, when:

- it is considered pedagogically necessary,
- students are informed about these modifications,
- it enables them to fulfill course requirements.

(See also Standard 5.01, Avoidance of false or deceptive statements.)

(b) When engaged in teaching or training, psychologists present psychological information accurately. *(See also Standard 2.03, Maintaining competence.)*

7.04 Student disclosure of personal information

Psychologists do not require students to disclose personal information in course or activities related to the program they attend, either orally or written, regarding sexual history, history of abuse and neglect, psychological treatment, and relationships with parents, peers, and spouses, only in cases when:

- (1) the program or training objective has clearly identified this as an admissible requirement, or a program material,
- (2) the information is necessary to evaluate or provide assistance for students, whose personal problems could be judged to be preventing them from their performance,
- (3) in cases they pose threat to themselves or others.

7.05 Mandatory individual or group therapy

- (a) When individual or group therapy is a program requirement, the students are allowed to carry out this therapy with professionals who are not directly related with the program. *(See also Standard 7.02, Descriptions of education and training programs.)*
- (b) Faculty, which is or is likely to be responsible for assessing the academic performance of the students, does not provide that therapy itself. *(See also Standard 3.05, Multiple relationships.)*

7.06 Assessing student and supervisee performance

- (a) In academic and supervisory relationships, psychologists provide feedback to students and supervisees in a specific process. Information regarding the process is provided to the student since the beginning of the activity.
- (b) Psychologists evaluate students and supervisees on the basis of their actual performance in accordance with the stipulated program requirements.

7.07 Sexual relationships between students and supervisees

Psychologists do not engage in sexual relationships with students or supervisees who are in their department, agency, or training center or over whom psychologists have or are likely to have evaluative authority. *(See also Standard 3.05, Multiple relationships.)*

Chapter 8. Research and Publication

8.01 Institutional approval

When for a research it is required institutional approval, psychologists provide accurate information about their research proposals and obtain approval prior to conducting the research. They conduct the research in accordance with the approved research protocol.

8.02 Informed consent to research

- (a) When obtaining informed consent, as required in Standard 3.10, psychologists inform the participants about:
 - (1) the purpose of the research, its duration, and procedures;
 - (2) their right to participate and to withdraw from the research once participation in the study has begun;
 - (3) the foreseen consequences of withdrawing;
 - (4) reasonably foreseeable factors that may be expected to influence their willingness to participate such as: potential risks, discomfort, or negative effects;
 - (5) any probable research benefits;

- (6) limits of confidentiality;
- (7) motivation/rewards for participation;
- (8) persons to be contacted for questions regarding the research and the participants' rights in research. Psychologists provide opportunity for the participants to ask questions and receive answers.

(See also Standards 8.03, Informed consent for recording voices and images in research; 8.05, Dispensing with informed consent for research; and 8.07, Deception in research.)

(b) Psychologists, who conduct research involving the use of experimental treatments, clarify to participants at the beginning of the research:

- (1) the experimental nature of the treatment;
- (2) the services that will or will not be available to the control group;
- (3) the means through which will be made the treatment or the assignment to control groups;
- (4) available treatment alternatives, if an individual does not wish to participate in the research or wishes to withdraw, once the study has begun; and
- (5) compensation for monetary costs of participating, including if appropriate, reimbursement for the participants. *(See also Standard 8.02a, Informed consent to research.)*

8.03 Informed consent for recording voices and images in research

Psychologists obtain informed consent from research participants prior to recording their voices or images, except the cases when:

- (1) the research consists only of naturalistic observations in public places and it is not expected that the recording will be used in a manner that could cause personal identification of the person or harm to him/her,
- (2) the research format foresees the consent for the use of the recording during the collection of the information. *(See also Standard 8.07, Deception in research.)*

8.04 Clients/patients, students, and subordinates as participants in research

- (a) When psychologists conduct researches in which participate clients/patients, students, or subordinates, psychologists take measures to protect the potential participants from negative consequences in case of interrupting or withdrawing from participation.
- (b) When participation in research is a requirement of academic course or an opportunity for extra credit, the potential participants are given the choice of selecting equal alternative activities.

8.05 Providing information with informed consent for research

Psychologists may hand out information with informed consent only in cases when:

- (1) research is not supposed to create distress or harm and involves:
 - (a) the study of normal educational practices, curricula, or classroom management methods conducted in educational settings;
 - (b) only anonymous questionnaires, naturalistic observations, or archival research for which disclosure of responses would not place participants at risk of criminal or civil liability, or damage their financial state, their job or reputation, and when confidentiality is protected;
 - (c) the study of factors, which are related to job or organization effectiveness, conducted in organizational circumstances, in which the participants do not risk their employment and confidentiality is protected;
- (2) it is permitted by law or institutional regulations.

8.06 Offering inducements for participation in research

- (a) Psychologists make reasonable efforts to avoid offering excessive or inappropriate financial or other inducements for participation in research when such inducements are likely to force participation.
- (b) When offering professional services as an inducement for participation in research, psychologists should make clear the nature of the services, as well as the risks, obligations, and limitations. *(See also Standard 6.05, Barter with clients/patients.)*

8.07 Deception in research

- (a) Psychologists do not conduct a study in which is involved deception, unless they have determined that the use of such deceptive techniques is justified by significant scientific educational prospective of the study, as well as its applied value and that alternative procedures, which do not involve deception, are not possible to occur.
- (b) Psychologists do not deceive future participants in research, in cases when deception is expected to cause physical pain or other forms of severe emotional distress.
- (c) Psychologists explain to the participants, as soon as possible, any deceptive practice that is an integral part of the study and conduct of an experiment, if it is possible at the completion of their participation, but no later than the conclusion of the data collection, and allow the participants to withdraw their personal data. *(See also Standard 8.08, Informing.)*

8.08 Informing

- (a) Psychologists provide an opportunity for participants to obtain appropriate information concerning the nature, results, and conclusions of the research, and they take reasonable steps to correct any misconceptions that participants may have for which the psychologists are aware.
- (b) If scientific or humane values justify delaying or withholding this information,

psychologists take reasonable measures to reduce the risk of harm.

(c) When psychologists become aware that research procedures have harmed a participant, they take reasonable steps to minimize the harm.

8.09 Humane care and use of animals in research

(a) Psychologists acquire, care for and use the animals in compliance with current state laws and regulations, as well as with professional standards.

8.10 Reporting research results

(a) Psychologists do not fabricate data. (*See also Standard 5.01a, Avoidance of false or deceptive statements.*)

(b) If psychologists discover significant errors in their published data, they shall be responsible to correct such errors.

8.11 Plagiarism

Psychologists do not present data or sections of one's work or as their own, even if the other work or data source is cited occasionally.

8.12 Publication credit

(a) Psychologists take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work that they have performed or to which they have significantly contributed. (*See also Standard 8.12b, Publication credit.*)

(b) In a publication should be accurately reflected the scientific or professional contributions of all the involved individuals, regardless of their relative status. Possession of an institutional position, such as head of the department, does not justify authorship credit. Minor contributions to the research or to the written documents or publications are made known appropriately, for example in footnotes or in an introductory statement.

(c) A student is listed as principal author in an article written by multiple authors, in cases when this publication is considerably based on the student's doctoral dissertation or under exceptional circumstances. Publication credits are discussed with the students as early as possible and throughout the research and publication process according to the specific case.

(See also Standard 8.12b, Publication credit.)

8.13 Duplicate publication of data

Psychologists do not publish, as original data, data that have been previously published. This does not exclude republishing data, when they are accompanied by proper explained notes.

8.14 Sharing/ providing/ submitting research data for verification

(a) After research results are published, psychologists do not hide the data on which their conclusions are based from other competent professionals, in cases when it is required to verify the significant testimony through reanalysis, and, only in cases when such data is used only for this purpose, provided that the confidentiality of the participants is protected. Costs, related to the provision of such information, are charged to the persons who require it.

(b) Psychologists, who request data from other psychologists, in order to verify the significant claims through reanalysis, may use such data only for the declared purpose. Psychologists, who are being asked to provide such data, obtain written agreement in advance for all other uses of the data.

8.15 Reviewers

Psychologists, who review the material submitted for presentation, publication, grants, or research proposal review, respect the confidentiality and the authorship rights of the author.

Chapter 9. Assessment

9.01 Bases for assessments

(a) Psychologists base the opinions presented in their recommendations, reports, diagnostics or evaluative statements, including legal assessment, on information and techniques sufficient to verify their findings. *(See also Standard 2.04, Bases for scientific and professional judgments.)*

b) Except the described cases in Standard 9.01c, psychologists provide opinions of the psychological characteristics of individuals, only after they have conducted an appropriate examination that is adequate to support their statements or conclusions. When, despite reasonable efforts, such an examination is not possible, psychologists document the efforts they made and the result of those efforts, clarify the probable impact of this limitation on the reliability and validity of their opinions, and appropriately limit the extent of their conclusions

or recommendations. *(See also Standards 2.01, Boundaries of competence, and 9.06, Interpreting assessment results.)*

(c) When an individual examination is not reasonable or necessary and when psychologists base their assessment on the documentation or information obtained during supervision, psychologists should explain the sources of information on which they have based their conclusions and recommendations.

9.02. Use of assessments

(a) Psychologists administer, adapt, score, interpret, or use assessment techniques, interviews, tests, or instruments in a manner and for purposes that are based by the research or data, which suggest of the usefulness and proper application of the techniques.

(b) Psychologists use assessment instruments whose validity and reliability have been verified for use in specific population. When such validity or reliability has not been tested, psychologists describe the strengths and limitations of test results and interpretation.

(c) Psychologists adopt assessment methods with the language preference and competence of an individual, except the cases when the use of an alternative language is crucial to the assessment issues.

9.03 Obtaining informed consent in assessments

a) Psychologists obtain informed consent for assessments, evaluation means, or diagnostic services, as described in Standard 3.10, except when:

(1) Testing is mandated by law or governmental regulations;

(2) Informed consent is implied because testing is conducted as an educational, institutional, or organizational activity routine (e.g.: when participants voluntarily agree to assessment when they apply for a job);

(3) One purpose of the testing is to evaluate decision-making capacity.

Informed consent includes an explanation of the nature and purpose of the assessment, fees, involvement of third parties, and limitations of confidentiality and adequate opportunity for the client/patient to ask questions and receive answers.

b) Psychologists inform the persons whose capacity to give consent is questionable or other persons, whose testing is stipulated by law or governmental regulations regarding the nature and purpose of the proposed assessment services, using a language that is easily understandable to the person who is being assessed.

c) In cases when the services of an interpreter are required, the psychologists obtain informed

consent from the client/patient, and make sure to protect confidentiality and to include in their recommendations, reports, as well as presentations of diagnostics or evaluations even limitations that may arise from the interpretation of the obtained data. *(See also Standards 2.05, Delegation of work to others; 4.01, Maintaining confidentiality; 9.01, Bases for assessments; 9.06, Interpreting assessment results; and 9.07, Assessment by unqualified persons.)*

9.04 **Release of test data**

The term ‘test data’ refers to raw and scored responses of the client/patient to stimuli or test questions and psychologists' notes and recordings concerning the statements of client/patient behavior during an evaluation. The definition of test materials includes those parts of test materials that are related to client/patient responses. In accordance with the release of a client/patient, psychologists provide test data to the client/patient or other persons determined in the release.

(a) Psychologists may refuse to release test data with the purpose of protecting a client/patient or other persons from serious harm, misuse or misinterpretation of the data or the test. *(See also Standard 9.11, Maintaining test security.)*

(b) In the absence of a release of client/patient, psychologists provide test data only if it is required by a court order.

9.05 **Test construction**

Psychologists, who design tests and other assessment techniques, use appropriate psychometric procedures and current scientific or professional knowledge for test design, standardization, validation, reduction or elimination of bias, and give recommendations for use.

9.06 **Interpreting assessment results**

When interpreting assessment results, including automated interpretations, psychologists take into account the purpose of the assessment as well as the various factors of the test, abilities of taking a test, and other characteristics of the person being assessed, such as situational, personal, linguistic, and cultural differences, that might affect psychologists' judgments or may reduce the accuracy of their interpretations. They present any probable limitations of their interpretations. *(See also Standards 2.01b and c, Boundaries of competence, and 3.01, Unfair discrimination.)*

9.07 Assessment by unqualified persons

Psychologists do not promote the use of psychological assessment techniques by unqualified persons, except when such use is conducted for training purposes under appropriate supervision. *(See also Standard 2.05, Delegation of work to others.)*

9.08 Outdated tests and outdated test results

- (a) Psychologists do not base their assessment, intervention decisions or recommendations on data or test results that are outdated for the current purpose.
- (b) Psychologists do not base such decisions or recommendations on tests or measures that are outdated and not useful for the current purpose.

9.09 Test Scoring and interpretation

- (a) Psychologists, who offer assessment or scoring services to other professionals, describe accurately the purpose, norms, validity, reliability, and applications of the procedures and any special qualifications needed for their use.
- (b) Psychologists select scoring and interpretation services (including automated services) based on data that prove the validity of the program and procedures as well as other essential considerations. *(See also Standard 2.01b and c, Boundaries of competence.)*
- (c) Psychologists shall be responsible for the appropriate application, interpretation and use of assessment instruments, even in cases when they score and interpret such tests themselves, or when they use other automated services.

9.10 Explaining assessment results

Regardless of whether the scoring and interpretation are done by psychologists, by employees/assistants, by automated or other outside services, psychologists take reasonable steps to ensure that explanations of results are given to the individual or to the authorized representative, unless the nature of the relationship impedes their provision and this fact has been clearly explained to the person being assessed since the beginning of the process.

9.11 Maintaining test security

The term 'test materials' refers to manuals, instruments, protocols, and test questions and does not include *test data* as stipulated in Standard 9.04. Psychologists make reasonable efforts to

maintain the integrity and security of test materials and other assessment techniques consistent with law and contractual obligations, and in a manner that permits the appropriate application of this Code of Ethics.

Chapter 10. Therapy

10.01 Obtaining informed consent to therapy

(a) When obtaining informed consent to therapy, as defined in Standard 3.10, psychologists inform as soon as possible clients/patients in the therapeutic relationship about the nature and foreseen progress of the therapy, fees, involvement of third parties, and limits of confidentiality and provide sufficient opportunity for the client/patient to ask questions and receive answers. *(See also Standards 4.02, Discussing the limits of confidentiality, and 6.04, Fees and financial arrangements.)*

(b) When obtaining informed consent for treatment, whose procedures and techniques have not been determined yet, psychologists inform their clients/patients of the nature of the treatment conduct, the potential risks involved, alternative treatments that maybe available, and the voluntary nature of their participation. *(See also Standards 2.01e, Boundaries of competence, and 3.10, Informed consent.)*

(c) When the therapist is attending a treatment and the legal responsibility for the provided treatment relies on the supervisor, the client/patient, as part of the informed consent procedure, is informed that the therapist is in training and is under supervision, and is also given the name of the supervisor.

10.2 Therapy involving couples or families

(a) When psychologists agree to provide services to persons who have a certain relationship (such as spouses or parents and children), they take reasonable steps to clarify since in the beginning:

- (1) which of the individuals are clients/patients;
- (2) the relationship the psychologist will have with each person

This clarification includes the psychologist's role and the probable uses of the services provided or the information obtained. *(See also Standard 4.02, Discussing the limits of confidentiality.)*

(b) If it is found out that psychologists are required to perform roles which are considered potentially conflicting (such as family therapist and then witness for one party in divorce procedures), then psychologists take reasonable steps to clarify their roles and should withdraw from these roles in the most appropriate way. *(See also Standard 3.05c, Multiple relationships.)*

10.03 Group therapy

When psychologists provide services to several persons in a group, they describe since the beginning of the service, the roles and responsibilities of all parties and the limits of confidentiality.

10.04 Providing therapy to the persons who receive service by others

In cases when the psychologists have to decide whether to offer services to the persons who already receive mental health services by other professionals, they consider carefully the welfare issues of the potential client/patient. Psychologists discuss these issues with the client/patient or another legally authorized person, in order to minimize the risk of confusion and conflict, as well as they consult with the other service providers, when it is considered appropriate, and proceed carefully and sensitively with the therapeutic issues.

10.05 Sexual intimacies with current therapy clients/patients

Psychologists do not engage in sexual intimacies with current therapy clients/patients.

10.06 Sexual intimacies with relatives or other important persons of current therapy clients/patients

Psychologists do not engage in sexual intimacies with individuals who are close relatives, guardians, or other significant persons of current clients/patients. Psychologists do not terminate therapy aiming to avoid this standard.

10.07 Therapy with former sexual partners

Psychologists do not accept as therapy clients/patients persons with whom they have engaged in sexual intimacies.

10.08 Sexual intimacies with former therapy clients/patients

- (a) Psychologists do not engage in sexual intimacies with former clients/patients for at least two years after interruption or termination of therapy.
- (b) Psychologists do not engage in sexual intimacies with former clients/patients even after a two-year period except in the most unusual circumstances. Psychologists, who engage in such

activities two years after the interruption or termination of therapy, and meanwhile they had no sexual contact with the former client/patient, are obliged to clarify that there has been no exploitative relationship, considering all relevant factors, including:

- (1) the amount of time that has passed since the termination of the therapy;
- (2) the nature, duration, and intensity of the therapy;
- (3) the circumstances of therapy termination;
- (4) the personal history of the client/patient;
- (5) the current mental status of the client/patient;
- (6) the possibility of unfavorable impact on the client/patient;
- (7) the existence of any statements or actions made by the therapist during the course of therapy which may have suggested the possibility of a sexual or romantic relationship with the client/patient after the termination of the therapy.

10.09 Interruption of therapy

When being employed or starting contractual relationships, psychologists make reasonable efforts to provide the right and appropriate way of responsibility for the client/patient, in the event that the employment or contractual relationship terminates, by giving principal consideration to the welfare of the client/patient. *(See also Standard 3.12, Interruption of psychological services.)*

10.10 Termination of therapy

- (a) Psychologists terminate the therapy when it becomes obviously clear that the client/patient no longer needs the service, he/she is not likely to benefit from it, or he/she is being harmed by continued service.
- (b) Psychologists may terminate the therapy when they are threatened or endangered by the client/patient, or another person with whom the client/patient has a relationship.
- (c) Except the cases when it is prevented by the actions of clients/patients, or payers of third party, prior to the therapy termination, psychologists provide a summarizing counseling before termination and suggest him/her alternative service providers according to his/her specific needs.

Approved by the Decision No. 1, dated 30.06.2017 of the National Assembly of the Order of the Psychologist of the Republic of Albania.