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ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

Forensic Psychological Expert Research as a Tool for Establishing the Emotional States of Stress and Frustration of the Accused

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Abstract— The article highlights the importance of forensic psychological examination as a tool for identifying and assessing stress and frustration in defendants involved in criminal proceedings. The article emphasizes that forensic psychological examination is a professional study of mental processes and behavioral mechanisms of the individual, conducted by an expert to provide substantiated conclusions during the trial. Special attention is given to expert analysis in determining individuals' level of awareness of their own actions, ability to self-regulate, and depth of emotional experiences. The outlined indicators are important when determining moral damage and the degree of compliance. The methodological basis of the scientific research draws on cognitive-affective approaches, theoretical models of stress-frustration, and principles of legal psychology. The application of legal concepts provides a comprehensive analysis of psycho-emotional factors that influence the behavior of the defendant, including under conditions of psychological trauma. It has been established that timely and high-quality diagnostics of stress and frustration manifestations is important for the correct legal assessment of a person's actions, determining the amount of compensation for moral damage, and making a fair decision. The scientific value of the study lies in conceptualizing forensic psychological examination as a tool capable of objectively identifying the psycho-emotional factors in defendants. The proposed approaches will contribute to further standardization of expert procedures and to the integration of interdisciplinary methods, thereby enhancing the credibility and practical significance of forensic experts.

Index Terms— Forensic psychological examination, Emotional states, Psycho-emotional factors, Frustration, Expert procedures, Criminal proceedings

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Introduction

Modern criminal law science has increased the relevance of systematically and scientifically substantiated analysis of the psycho-emotional state of defendants. This is because the emotional factor is a key indicator of a person's behavioral reactions. It also affects the ability to be aware

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of one's own actions during the commission of a crime and to control their consequences (Bartol & Bartol, 2021; Melton et al., 2014). People who are stressed or angry at the time of committing a crime may act in ways that are illogical because their cognitive functions are impaired (Sapolsky, 2006). The research question formulated in this article is to determine the effectiveness of forensic psychological examination as a tool for identifying the accused's states of stress and frustration ed, as well as assessing their impact on behavior during the commission of a criminal offense. Despite the importance of forensic psychological examination, its implementation should be based on objective data, the professionalism of specialists, a clear definition of the defendant's psycho-emotional state, and several factors that need to be taken into account during its conduct (Gudjonsson, 2018). The effectiveness of an expert opinion depends on the expert's ability to identify psychological indicators from real data and to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between a person's emotional state and behavior.

It is important to note that modern criminal justice increasingly encounters cases where the emotional states of the accused become a determining factor in the correct qualification of their actions. The increase in the level of social tension, military events, economic crisis, and psychological trauma of the population leads to an increase in the frequency of crimes committed in a state of strong emotional excitement. In such conditions, traditional legal approaches to assessing guilt are insufficient without a deep psychological analysis (Heilbrun & King, 2026). Within this framework, the outlined problem becomes particularly relevant in cases where it is necessary to establish the boundary between sanity and limited sanity, determine the presence of affect or chronic stress, and find out whether a person could fully control their actions. In practice, there are cases when psychological factors are not taken into account. This creates a risk of judicial errors and affects the decision-making process (Melton et al., 2014).

Bartol and Bartol (2021), who study the role and place of a forensic expert rely on the provisions of general and legal psychology, the concept of emotional regulation of behavior, and criminal law approaches, on the basis of which guilt and sanity are determined. They also take into account the stress theories and the cognitive-evaluative theory of emotions (Lazarus, 1991; Selye, 1976). In addition, the developments in the field of forensic examination are of great importance, on the basis of which the principles of objectivity, scientific feasibility, and procedural admissibility of expert conclusions are determined (Heilbrun & King, 2026). The study of these theoretical provisions contributes to the formation of a comprehensive model of analysis of the psycho-emotional state of the accused, which takes into account both internal psychological mechanisms and external social factors.

An interdisciplinary approach is also important, combining methods of psychodiagnostics, clinical interview, observation, and analysis of information obtained from the materials of criminal proceedings. Such an approach contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the cause-and-effect relationships between a person's emotional state and their illegal behavior.

Modern scientific research lacks a number of aspects; in particular, there are no unified standardized methods for assessing stress and frustration within the criminal process (Heilbrun & King, 2026). This imbalance leads to discrepancies in forensic experts' conclusions. The influence of short-term, intense emotional states on a person's ability to understand the meaning of their actions at the time of committing a crime is also insufficiently researched. In addition, the mechanism of interaction between the expert and the court needs to be clarified, particularly regarding the presentation of the expert opinion and its legal weight. The lack of clear criteria for assessing the reliability of expert research results creates a risk of subjectivity and reduces trust in the institution of forensic psychological examination Melton et al., 2014. Eliminating these gaps and forming a systematic scientific approach to studying the psycho-emotional state of the accused determines the scientific novelty and practical significance of this work.

Within the framework of the selected study, it is also necessary to take into account the impact of modern information technologies, media, and social networks on the psycho-emotional state of defendants, since the constant flow of information contributes to increased stress and frustration. Social isolation, societal pressure, and personal trauma of the accused require a comprehensive approach to assessing their own actions. In scientific practice, it is important to implement standardized methods that would not only determine the emotional state of the accused, but also assess its impact on behavior during the commission of a crime. A systematic analysis of these factors will increase the accuracy of the expert opinion and reduce the risk of subjective assessments. As a result, this will increase the level of justice and support the adoption of well-reasoned decisions . The role of a forensic psychologist is extremely important, as a person's fate often depends on the accuracy of their conclusions. Inaccuracy in research and improper qualification, biased actions in the profession of forensic examination can lead to irreparable consequences(Huss, 2025). They can distort the factual circumstances of the case, which in the future will lead to an erroneous legal decision Gudjonsson, 2018. The lawlessness that occurs during the forensic examination has negative consequences for the accused. Those sentenced to long or life imprisonment become hostages of unfair or unqualified forensic examination. Such cases are not isolated. They violate the rights of the individual, undermine the authority of justice, and reduce public confidence in the objectivity and impartiality of the judicial system.

Therefore, professional ethics, impartiality, and scientific validity of the conclusions of a forensic psychological expert are fundamental principles for ensuring justice in the criminal process. Taken together, the training of forensic psychologists, the development of uniform standards of expert activity, and the combination of psychological techniques with legal procedures have important scientific value that needs to be explored. In addition, the constant improvement of psychodiagnostic methods will contribute to a more accurate assessment of the mental state of the accused (Goldstein, 2007). The high qualification of experts will minimize the risk of erroneous conclusions while increasing the efficiency of criminal proceedings. Substantiation of scientific approaches will help form a unified practice of forensic psychological examination, providing conditions for the effective implementation of the necessary aspects, taking into account the individual characteristics of the accused.

In conclusion, it can be noted that modern research in the field of forensic psychological examination is highly relevant and makes an important contribution to the development of the theory and practice of this field. However, the issue of determining emotional states and frustration in defendants requires a more comprehensive approach. The topic is still insufficiently studied from the point of view of combining interdisciplinary analysis and the use of digital technologies to increase the objectivity of expert opinions. Therefore, there is a need for further research aimed at a deeper understanding of how psycho-emotional states affect the behavior of a person in the criminal process.

The purpose of this work was a comprehensive study of the psycho-emotional state of a person brought to criminal responsibility , as well as clarifying the importance of forensic psychology as an effective means of identifying states of stress and frustration. The study combined theoretical analysis of scientific sources with the study of regulatory legal acts that regulate the practice of criminal justice.

The work is based on an interdisciplinary approach that integrates psychological knowledge with the provisions of criminal law. Such synergy allows for a deeper analysis of the influence of the accused's emotional experiences on their behavior and actions under stress Bartol and Bartol, 2021. The use of an integrated approach contributes to increasing the validity of expert conclusions and ensures a more just approach to sentencing.

Within the framework of the conducted study, it is necessary to identify a number of research questions:

- How does the defendant's psycho-emotional state affect their capacity to understand and control their actions at the time of committing a criminal offense?
- Which methods of forensic psychological assessment allow for the most objective determination of stress and frustration levels?
- How do external social and psychological factors influence the behavioral responses of the accused during the commission of a crime?
- What innovative technologies and digital tools can be integrated into forensic psychological practice to enhance the objectivity of expert conclusions?

Literature Review

Several leading scholars have examined the issue in question. A significant role is attributed to the examination of forensic psychology, its characteristics, and purpose (Govorina et al., 2019); the forensic psychological examination of emotional states (Shutyak, 2023); and the specific features of applying forensic psychological expertise in criminal proceedings (Magdysyuk & Pavlova, 2018). At the same time, the researchers in their own studies have drawn attention to the relevance of researching stress and trauma in forensic psychiatry (Bourget, 2017) and the influence of external factors on the offender's personality. The emotional state of an individual (Havrylkevych & Firstova, 2023) and frustration as a problem of a person's mental state (Mul, 2019) have also been examined separately.

Currently, criminal science is faced with several key problems: the need to determine the psycho-emotional states of the accused and ensure the fairness of judicial decisions. A number of scientific studies do not fully define the concepts of ”stress”, ”affect”,and ”frustration”. A leading role in this is played by both psychological and social factors that influence the behavior of a person at the time of committing a crime (Avdeeva, 2021; Gradun, 2023; Guseva et al., 2021). Traditional methods of criminal legal assessment do not take into account spontaneous short-term emotional states of a person, creating the risk of erroneous qualification and improper judicial decisions. The literature review shows that scholars approach forensic psychological examination from different perspectives. For example, researcher Andreeva et al. (2021), together with Alenin and Voloshina (2025), emphasize the importance of integrating examination into the process of investigative actions. Areh (2020) warns that the assessment of mental states is often based on intuitive assumptions, rather than on scientifically grounded evidence. Bondarenko-Berehovych (2023) highlights the psychological aspects of the professional activities of experts, while Bourget (2017) and Buchkivska (2023) reveal the significance of stress and trauma for criminal legal analysis. At the same time, the studies of Havrylkevych and Firstova (2023), Gerasimchuk and Lysyanska (2025), and Mul (2019), Kruk and Grigus (2023) focus on the study of emotions and frustration, which allows for the formation of a scientifically sound model of the psycho-emotional state of the defendant. In addition, modern authors (O. Makarova, 2023; Shevchuk et al., 2024; Shutyak, 2023) point to the need for interdisciplinary methods and digital tools to increase the objectivity of expert opinions.

One of the diagnostic tools used by psychological specialists is standardized testing, which is based on questionnaires and structured interviews. However, if an examinee is previously familiar with the methodology or undergoes repeated testing in longitudinal monitoring studies, there is a risk of response distortion or biased answers. In addition, the potential subjectivity inherent in psychological and psychiatric evaluations further complicates the interpretation and reliability of results.

In this context, objective instrumental diagnostic methods are gaining relevance. These include neuroimaging techniques, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging and radionuclide imaging (Linke et al., 2023; Nikolov et al., 2022; Scheinost et al., 2021), as well as the ongoing search for informative biological markers (Michopoulos et al., 2015). Physiological indicators, such as Galvanic Skin Response (GSR), Heart Rate Variability (HRV), and Facial Electromyography (EMG) are also increasingly explored (Dzedzickis et al., 2020; Onim et al., 2025).

At the same time, these approaches are highly resource-intensive and remain largely within the domain of experimental research rather than routine forensic practice.

In this study, we aim to identify several significant gaps, including:

- The lack of standardized methods for assessing stress and frustration within criminal proceedings.

- The insufficient consideration of intense emotional states of the accused and their impact on awareness and behavioral control.
- Limited integration of digital technologies and analytical platforms to enhance the objectivity of expert opinions.
- An underdeveloped interdisciplinary approach combining psychological, legal, and social perspectives.
- The absence of clear criteria for evaluating the reliability of assessment results increases the risk of subjectivity and potential judicial error.

At the same time, the study is grounded in several theoretically and empirically supported hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. Elevated levels of stress and frustration in defendants are associated with impaired awareness and reduced behavioral control at the time of committing a criminal offense (Khashev, 2021; Kondratiuk, 2023).

Hypothesis 2. The application of interdisciplinary approaches and digital tools reduces the risk of subjectivity in forensic psychological assessment (O. Makarova, 2023; UCEE, 2025).

Hypothesis 3. The systematic consideration of social and psychological factors in the comprehensive assessment of a defendant's psycho-emotional state enhances the accuracy and reliability of expert conclusions (Gryshchenko & Orlov, 2020; Vashchuk, 2017).

Methodology

The methodological basis of this study consists of a combination of theoretical, analytical, and interdisciplinary approaches. Theoretical analysis enables the systematization of modern approaches to assessing stress and frustration,determines key criteria for the professional activity of experts, and identifies problematic aspects of assessing the behavior of the accused.

The use of analytical and comparative legal methods provides an opportunity to critically reflect on existing scientific concepts, compare domestic and international experience in forensic psychological research, and identify areas for improving forensic expert opinion.

The interdisciplinary approach combines knowledge from psychology and the criminal process, allowing for a deeper study of the relationship between the emotional state of a person, cognitive processes, and behavioral manifestations of the accused. Within this framework, it is possible to assess the influence of psycho-emotional factors on decision-making, the motives behind actions, reactions to criminal situations, as well as to establish stressful and frustrating states in the accused.

The use of these methods ensured the scientific validity and reliability of the data obtained, helped identify patterns in the manifestation of the emotional states of the accused, and enabled the formulation of practical recommendations for increasing the validity, objectivity, and effectiveness of the activities of a forensic psychological expert in the process of drawing up expert opinions on assessing the psycho-emotional state of the accused.

The search for relevant scholarly literature was carried out using Google Scholar, PubMed, and Mendeley. The basic keywords included:forensic psychological,psycho-legal assessment, emotional states, stress, frustration, PTSD,traumatic stress,emotional instability, accused, and defendants

Ethical considerations

When conducting a forensic psychological assessment, strict adherence to ethical standards is essential (Boyko-Buzyl, 2021; Pavlović, 2021). This includes ensuring the confidentiality of data , securing the voluntary participation of the defendant, and avoiding any form of undue influence or pressure from the examiner. Expert conclusions must be presented impartially and with due regard for the rights of the individual undergoing evaluation. Particular attention should be paid to the psychological condition of the accused during the assessment to prevent re-traumatization. Adherence to these principles ensures not only scientific reliability but also the social and legal legitimacy of the expert's conclusions.

The relationship between human rights and general ethical principles and standards is articulated in the following widely cited documents:

- Specialty Forensic Guidelines for Psychologists (CEGF, 1991)
- Human Rights, Ethical Principles, and Standards in Forensic Psychology (Ward et al., 2009)
- APA's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2026)
- Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (CCEP, 2002)
- European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA, 2005).

These documents and their respective provisions vary in their level of detail and do not always allow for a clear interpretation. Moreover, for example, the EFPA Meta-Code of Ethics is not a set of rules for individual professionals, but rather a framework on which national associations are based. There is considerable variability in the scope of application of the various codes (Shapiro, 2016).

It should also be noted that the development of scientifically based forensic medical research tools, particularly in psychology and psychiatry, can also lead to abuses, such as the torture of detainees at Guantanamo (Shapiro, 2016).

In scientific publications (Goldenson et al., 2022; Shapiro, 2016), several ethical issues are also highlighted:

- The concept of multiple relationships is explored in detail, particularly regarding whether a therapist can serve as an expert or only as a fact witness (role conflict, two or more roles for one specialist).

- Informed consent is addressed differently across various codes and guidelines. Some provide very detailed instructions, while others remain quite general. This variation also raises concerns about examinees who refuse to participate in assessments.
- Differences exist in approaches to ensuring confidentiality and privilege. Questions arise regarding whether a specialist may express any opinion about an individual who refuses to be examined.

Thus, modern science calls for an integrated approach that combines psychological, social, and legal perspectives within the framework of forensic psychological assessment. Identifying and addressing existing gaps, alongside the implementation of digital technologies, the enhancement of expert qualifications, and adherence to ethical standards, forms the foundation for a fairer and more robust criminal justice system.

It is important to develop standardized methods for assessing stress, affect, and frustration that can be applied at various stages of criminal proceedings. The use of digital platforms and analytical tools can substantially enhance the objectivity and accuracy of expert assessments. An interdisciplinary approach, integrating psychological, social, and legal perspectives, contributes to a deeper understanding of the defendant's behavior. Enhancing the qualifications of experts and implementing modern research methods can help reduce the risk of judicial errors. It is also essential to consider the individual characteristics of each defendant's psycho-emotional state, allowing for more personalized conclusions. Research in this area should address ethical considerations and aim to prevent additional traumatization of those undergoing assessment. A comprehensive approach, combined with the adoption of innovative technologies, will support the development of a fairer and scientifically grounded criminal justice system.

Results and Discussion

By its very nature, the purpose of the study is to scientifically substantiate and develop approaches to the use of forensic psychological expert research as a tool for establishing the emotional states of stress and frustration of the accused. This involves identifying psychological mechanisms that influence the behavior of a person in criminal proceedings, determining criteria for assessing the psycho-emotional state, and formulating recommendations to increase the objectivity and reliability of expert conclusions. Forensic psychiatric examination is closely connected with the development of forensic psychiatry. At present, its theoretical aspects remain relevant, as they relate to legislative innovations and the resolution of theoretical issues regarding the definition of the object and both general and specific subjects of research for forensic psychologists or psychiatrists, their specialized knowledge, and the limits of their competence. This type of examination is characterized by the search for approaches to establishing and legally regulating optimal organizational and legal forms of interaction between experts and law enforcement bodies, as well as between forensic psychologists and forensic psychiatrists (O. P. Makarova, 2023).

The profession of a forensic psychological expert requires the specialist to possess a complex set of professional knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as well-developed, professionally significant personal qualities. The psychological factors that shape such traits in law enforcement officers have been studied by many scholars (Bondarenko-Berehovych, 2023).

A psychological analysis of professional activity is of great importance, as it enables the consideration of psychological factors that influence the quality of decision-making, stress management, communication efficiency, and the motivation of expert service employees (Pavlović, 2021).

Forensic psychological examination is conducted to clarify circumstances that are important in criminal proceedings, in particular when establishing the causes of death, the severity of bodily injuries, or doubts about the sanity of the suspect (Govorina et al., 2019).

Its object is a person with a certain procedural status - a defendant, victim, witness, or defendant. The main stages of the examination include:

- A preliminary psychological examination to clarify the tasks;
- A diagnostic interview (biographical interview);
- A series of tests to identify individual psychological traits; Analysis of the results and formulation of the conclusion (Psychological examination).

Before starting the study, the expert familiarizes themselves with the case materials, assessing the behavior and mental state of the suspect (Yevsiukov, 2025). Forensic psychologists study the causes of illegal behavior as a conscious, volitional act formed by internal and external factors, including through the use of a polygraph (Derevyagin et al., 2022; Kamal et al., 2023; Patel, 2025).

During a psychological examination, the key task is to form a psychophysiological profile of a person, considering the influence of life circumstances before, during, and after the crime. Such a profile allows for comprehensive research on the defendant's behavior, and the development of information support contributes to increasing the accuracy and efficiency of the examination (Vashchuk, 2017). In most countries, criminal liability arises only when a person is aware of the significance of their actions and can control them. Therefore, when sentencing, it is important to consider states such as physiological affect or strong emotional arousal, which are similar psycho-emotional phenomena (I. M. Savka, 2010).

It is necessary to emphasize that the integration of psychological examination into the judicial process aims to provide a more comprehensive characterization of an individual's behavior and mental processes. For this purpose, in recent years, new methods and technologies on which it is based have continued to develop (Boyko-Buzyl, 2021). The use of a computer polygraph during forensic psychological examination has become a positive step towards the development and implementation of innovative technologies in the criminal law sphere (Areh, 2020). This technology enables the identification of significant psychophysiological reactions that determine a person's level of awareness, as well as research into

the nature and source of their knowledge, allowing for a more objective study of their psychological characteristics and potential involvement in events or facts. It thereby enhances the reliability and evidential value of the conclusions drawn from forensic psychological examinations (Guseva et al., 2021).

The object of forensic psychological examination clearly distinguishes it from forensic psychiatric examination. It studies the psyche of a person suffering from mental disorders. Before ordering a forensic psychological examination, it is necessary to make sure that the person under examination does not have mental illnesses (Alenin & Voloshina, 2025).

During the psychiatric examination of a suspect accused of murder, the specialist must clarify several circumstances, including: the presence of indications that may point to the person's mental illness; whether the individual's mental state allows investigative actions to be carried out involving them; and whether the suspect has a tendency toward alcoholism or drug addiction and requires treatment (Goncharenko & Gory, 2015).

Forensic medical examination is a procedural form of using special knowledge and scientific and technical achievements in the judicial process, aimed at establishing factual data important for the objective resolution of the case (Avdeeva, 2021). Its conduct is based on a court decision and involves the study of psychological aspects with the participation of qualified experts (Portnyi, 2020). The appointment of an examination is necessary when there are reasons to believe that certain circumstances could have affected a person's ability to be aware of their actions or control them (I. Savka, 2019). The reliability of the conclusion is determined by the accuracy of the methods, the effectiveness of technical means, and the correctness of their application (Gradun, 2023).

Modern forensic institutions should develop cooperation with international laboratories and expert centers to exchange experience and introduce innovations. Participation in networks such as the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes (ENFSI) contributes to the standardization of methods, improving the quality of examinations, and disseminating best practices (Govorina et al., 2019). Forensic psychological examination focuses on assessing the personalities of the defendant, victim, and witness, and its main task is to compile a psychological profile taking into account the emotional state and attitude of the person to the crime (Nauholnyk, 2015).

When formulating questions, the forensic expert identifies key aspects for the study of emotional states, in particular stress, frustration, and affect, analyzing the circumstances of the crime, the personality traits of the accused, and their behavior before, during, and after the event (Iram et al., 2024; Shutyak, 2023). Stress is accompanied by physiological and psycho-emotional changes aimed at adaptation, and its course depends on individual characteristics and social conditions (Lezhenina, 2012; Nauholnyk, 2015). Frustration arises from obstacles to achieving the goal and manifests as internal tension and emotional reactions. Affect and physiological affect are characterized by an acute emotional outburst; however, within the framework of physiological affect, the person retains the ability to be aware of their actions.

According to the scientist Karpyuk (2019), the term "frustration" refers to disappointment, failure, or an unsuccessful attempt. It concerns fundamental issues of the emotional-volitional sphere, as well as motivational, activity, and behavioral aspects. Kondratiuk (2023), notes that psychodiagnostic research should be carried out on the basis of relevant professional knowledge and methodological training of the specialist. In this case, it is important to use valid and reliable testing tools that allow not only to quantitatively measure the level of emotional state, but also to qualitatively analyze its features in the defendant (Table 1).

Table I
Scheme of the psychodiagnostic study of an individual's experience of stress

Indicators	Tools
Level of Stress	"Stress Level Assessment Test" (by V. Shcherbatykh, adapted by Kh. Kharko)
Identification of Coping Mechanisms and Ways of Overcoming Difficulties	Method "Coping Test" by R. Lazarus
Behavioural Strategies for Overcoming Stress	"Psychodiagnostics of Stress Adaptability" by I. Rozova

Aggression and frustration are interrelated psychological phenomena explained by different theoretical approaches. Among the main concepts of aggressive behavior, instinctive theories, frustration-aggression theory, social learning theories, and the cognitive approach are distinguished (Gerasimchuk & Lysyanska, 2025). Frustration is defined as a negative emotional state associated with an inability to realize intentions or plans (Gryshchenko & Orlov, 2020). People differ in their ability to tolerate frustration: those who are less patient are more likely to show aggression, especially in emotionally tense situations (Vovk, 2021). Aggression can also act as a form of psychological defense, which is especially characteristic of adolescents, in whom it manifests as a reaction to an insult or feelings of inferiority (Ichenko, 2020).

A forensic medical expert must have a thorough knowledge of the methodologies for studying emotional states, as the results of the examination may affect the classification of a crime and the mitigation of the defendant's liability (Jam et al., 2025; Magdysyuk & Pavlova, 2018). The term "state of severe emotional disorder" does not have a single definition in psychology, and therefore, it should be interpreted through an interdisciplinary approach, replacing it with concepts such as "intense emotional experience" or "strong emotional excitement" to harmonize legal and psychological interpretations (Syngaivska, 2021; Veresha, 2017).

It is worth noting that emotional states, which are investigated within the framework of forensic medical and forensic psychological examination, can often be associated with traumatic events and the development of post-traumatic disorders. Therefore, the correct interpretation of intense emotional experiences should take into account not only legal criteria, but also clinical features of the mental state of the person. Understanding the nature of strong emotional excitement allows experts to objectively assess the behavior of the defendant at the time of the act and to determine the need for further psychological or psychiatric assistance. It is at the intersection of expert assessment and medical or rehabilitation approaches that a comprehensive strategy is formed, combining legal responsibility with the need to restore mental health.

Stress and trauma can cause dissociation, a protective mental state that separates a person from traumatic emotions, unlike frustration, which increases tension and may provoke aggression (Bourget, 2017).

Conducting a professional forensic psychiatric examination requires an individualized approach, taking into account personal characteristics, the emotional volitional sphere, and the intellectual potential of the individual. Improving the qualifications of experts and creating appropriate conditions for independent and impartial expert assessment are key factors in ensuring the principles of fair justice (Sivchuk, 2023).

A personalized approach to each case is also important because the personality traits, emotional-volitional sphere, and intellectual characteristics of people can differ significantly.

In addition, a fundamental condition for objectivity is to guarantee the independence of expert activity and the availability of appropriate institutional support. It is precisely such mechanisms that create the basis for the formation of unbiased and reliable conclusions, which, in turn, strengthen public trust in the results of forensic psychiatric research and in the justice system as a whole.

Improving the training of specialists, implementing interdisciplinary standards, and developing the ethical responsibility of experts should be considered strategic directions for the further development of forensic expertise.

Forensic psychological expertise has a pronounced cognitive nature, as it involves the use of special methods of cognition to establish objective truth (Dror, 2015). Psychological expertise is carried out in cases where there is a lack of knowledge or competence of decision-makers, and aims to assess circumstances important for judicial proceedings (Kostytskyi, 2015). It is a scientific activity that requires high qualifications, professional experience, a license, and developed intuition, as well as morality, empathy, and humanity of the expert.

Forensic psychologists help law enforcement agencies identify important facts using their expert knowledge and analytical skills, which increases the objectivity of investigations (Magdysyuk & Pavlova, 2018). The use of psychological knowledge in judicial proceedings is based on three criteria - legal, psychological, and moral, which ensure the legality, validity, and humanity of judicial decisions.

Negative emotional states fear, anger, aggression, frustration, stress, affect, jealousy can go beyond conscious control and cause conflicts, sometimes leading to serious crimes. According to of Ukraine (2012), a state of strong emotional arousal is recognized as a mitigating circumstance. In psychology, it corresponds to physiological affect and other similar states that have legal significance. Forensic psychological examinations are conducted to establish such emotional states in defendants, witnesses, or victims. Since emotions significantly affect a person's behavior, their study is of particular importance for legal psychology (Vlasenko et al., 2023).

Forensic psychological expert examination encompasses various domains of mental activity cognitive, emotional, physiological, behavioral, and motivational. Each of these domains has its own specific characteristics, which are identified through appropriate methods (Table 2).

Table II
Research on emotional states (stress/frustration)

Domain of Manifestation	Signs of Stress	Signs of Frustration	Methods of Detection
Cognitive	Reduced concentration; confused thinking;	Fixation on a single idea; narrowness of thinking;	Attention tests; speech analysis
Emotional	Anxiety; fear; panic	Aggression; irritability; despair	Observation; projective techniques;
Physiological	Tremor; tachycardia; sweating	Fatigue; psychosomatic complaints	Medical reports; questionnaires
Behavioural	Avoidance of contact; impulsive actions	Conflict-proneness; hostility; sharpness of reactions	Observation; situational analysis
Motivational	Decrease in productive activity	Loss of sense of purpose; demotivation	Interview; biographical method

Mostova (2019) defines frustration as accompanied by emotions of disappointment, anger, sadness, grief, and boredom, which can lead to destructive behavior, including apathy, aggression, regression, or chaotic actions. Emotions as a mental process are closely related to motives and instincts, reflecting the experiences necessary for human activity (Vlasenko, 2019). Any crime is a manifestation of individual behavior that is formed in interaction with the environment. The social environment is an important factor that can determine the choice of behavioral strategy, in particular, a person's ability to commit a crime.

Researchers argue that the likelihood of destructive forms of behavior emerging in an individual, as well as poor self-control under conditions of frustration, creates a risk of criminal conduct. Analyzing individual behavior under conditions of frustration, Kostytskyi (2015) identifies three possible patterns of manifestation:

- Reduction and loss of volitional control;
- Loss of meaningful connections in behavior;
- Simultaneous loss of the purposefulness of behavior and its meaningful connection with the motive of the situation.

The author emphasizes that the third type of behavioral disturbance has the most significant impact on an individual's psyche, particularly on their self-regulation and volitional expression (Furyanah & Sulastri, 2023; Kostytskyi, 2015). The external manifestation of the expert's inner conviction is reflected in their responses to the questions posed, which usually take the form of categorical judgments. If the expert lacks such inner conviction, it may be expressed as a conclusion about the possible existence of certain circumstances or facts. A possible conclusion is considered a variant of an expert hypothesis, the degree of its reliability or likelihood being determined through a comprehensive evaluation of all evidence by the investigator, prosecutor, investigating judge, or court (Kliuiev, 2023).

Researchers Gavrylkevych and Firsova emphasize that emotional states are closely related to human needs. They depend on the nature and intensity of a current need, as well as on the individual's perception of the possibility of satisfying it (Havrylkevych & Firstova, 2023).

Based on the analyzed data, it should be noted that stress and frustration represent key negative emotional states capable of significantly influencing human behavior. Their emergence is caused by psychogenic factors that disrupt normal mental functioning and reduce the level of self-control. Under stress, an individual may exhibit increased impulsivity, emotional instability, and diminished critical thinking. Frustration manifests through feelings of hopelessness and disappointment, leading to aggression or other destructive forms of behavior (Table 3).

Table III

Stress and frustration as objects of forensic psychological expert examination

Emotional State	Manifestations	Consequences for Behaviour	Significance for Forensic Examination
Stress	Anxiety, tension, irritability, sleep disturbances, difficulty concentrating.	Impulsive actions, reduced critical thinking, emotional breakdowns.	It is established whether stress could have reduced the individual's ability to adequately assess the situation and control their behaviour.
Frustration	Disappointment, anger, apathy, aggressive reactions, sense of hopelessness	Aggressive behaviour, deviant states, destructive actions, loss of purposefulness	It is examined whether frustration influenced the emergence of destructive behaviour and the possible commission of a crime.

Source: Systematized by the author

The court establishes whether a person was in a state of intense emotional agitation by evaluating the forensic psychological report alongside other evidence. It also determines if the victim's behavior was cruel or systematically humiliating toward the accused. Only then is the medical criterion considered, whether the offense was committed under intense emotional agitation (Buchkivska, 2023).

Mul (2019) defines frustration and aggression as two independent and distinct mental states, indicating that frustration manifests turbulently and affectively, influencing a person's relationships within a group. A single factor determines the primary characteristic of frustration: Dissatisfaction with something. The study of frustration should be carried out comprehensively, taking into account a range of aspects, their intensity, and semantic content.

A person's ability to control their actions depends on their emotional state, so when qualifying crimes, especially those committed in a state of strong emotional arousal, the court relies on the results of psychological and psychiatric examinations. Although the court usually identifies this state with physiological affect, other emotions can also influence behavior, anger, fear, stress, or frustration. Determining whether a person was aware of their actions is possible only with the help of forensic psychological examination (Khashev, 2021).

Defendants represent a special category, since their psycho-emotional state is shaped by both personal traits and the criminal procedural situation. Legal pressure and psychological stress during a trial require a comprehensive study of emotional states using both traditional and digital psycho-physiological tools. Determining the level of stress and frustration is important for assessing guilt and self-control.

When applying a European arrest warrant, the judicial authorities take into account the specific individual circumstances of the accused, in particular the severity of the sentence and the possibility of its review or amnesty. Such conditions can significantly affect the emotional state of the accused, causing stress and frustration during the long wait for the execution of the decision. That is why forensic psychological expert examination is an important tool that allows experts to establish the extent of these emotional experiences and take them into account in the decision-making process of the court (Shevchuk et al., 2024).

A person's ability to regulate their own behavior is largely determined by their psycho-emotional state. That is why, during the legal assessment of crimes, in particular those committed under conditions of intense emotional stress, the court takes into account the conclusions of psychological and psychiatric examinations. Despite the fact that in judicial practice such a state is often associated with physiological affect, behavioral reactions can also be influenced by other emotional factors - anger, fear, prolonged stress, or frustration. Determining whether a person was fully aware of the meaning of their actions and could control them is possible only by conducting a specialized forensic psychological study (Khashev, 2021).

Persons who are in the status of accused persons constitute a specific category, since their psycho-emotional state is determined both by individual characteristics and the influence of criminal proceedings. Procedural pressure and psychological stress during the consideration of the

case require a comprehensive analysis of emotional manifestations using both classical methods and modern digital psychophysiological tools. Assessment of the level of stress and frustration is essential for establishing the degree of guilt and the ability of a person to self-control.

Limiting the analysis exclusively to the physiological effect significantly narrows the boundaries of objective assessment. In contrast, combining traditional psychodiagnostic methods testing, clinical interview, observation with modern technological tools, such as biometric systems, sensor devices, and neuropsychological monitoring tools, can significantly increase the accuracy of expert conclusions. A comprehensive approach makes it possible to establish not only the very fact of the presence of a certain emotional state, but also to determine its real impact on the behavior of a person, distinguishing conscious, purposeful actions from actions caused by psychological disorganization.

The results obtained show that assessing the level of stress and frustration contributes to a more accurate disclosure of the motives and intentions of the accused. This, in turn, is important for establishing the form of guilt - whether it is a matter of direct intent or actions committed within the framework of necessary defense. In addition, such data can serve as a basis for individualizing responsibility, in particular by applying mitigating circumstances or prescribing rehabilitation measures. The proposed concept involves the formation of a holistic digital-psychological model for assessing the behavior of the accused, which will provide a more scientifically sound and impartial approach to determining the measure of punishment. Within the framework of such a strategy, the mental state of a person is considered not as a secondary factor, but as one of the key elements in establishing his responsibility at the time of committing the offense.

Limitations of scientific research

Despite significant achievements in the field of forensic psychological examination, modern scientific research has several significant limitations that limit its practical and theoretical value. First, the lack of standardized methods for assessing psycho-emotional states, in particular stress, affect, and frustration, makes it difficult to compare the results of different studies and draw universal conclusions. Traditional approaches are often based on expert assessments and subjective observations, which increases the risk of errors and distortions. Second, most studies focus on the analysis of general behavioral trends, while short-term, intense emotional reactions remain insufficiently studied. This creates limitations in accurately determining the impact of psycho-emotional states on the awareness and control of the defendant's actions at the time of committing a crime. Third, the application of digital technologies, biometric methods, and analytical platforms in forensic psychological research is currently limited. The lack of broad integration of such tools reduces the objectivity and reliability of expert opinions, and also complicates the reproducibility of results. Fourth, interdisciplinary approaches that combine psychological, legal, and social aspects are still being developed in a fragmentary manner. This limits a comprehensive understanding of the psycho-emotional states of defendants and their impact on the criminal-legal assessment. Finally, limitations are associated with the ethical and legal aspects of conducting an examination. Ensuring voluntary participation, confidentiality of data, and minimizing the risk of additional traumatization of the defendant limits the choice of research methods and the number of available participants. Thus, the existing limitations create a need for further development of the methodological base, implementation of innovative technologies, and standardization of procedures for forensic psychological examination in order to increase the scientific reliability and practical value of research.

Future research perspectives

Further development of forensic psychological examination requires the systematic implementation of modern digital technologies and biometric methods for studying the psycho-emotional states of defendants. In particular, the use of sensory monitoring systems, neurocognitive programs, and facial expression recognition technologies and voice indicators is promising, which allows for objectively recording short-term affective reactions, stress levels, and frustration. The use of such tools creates opportunities to obtain quantitative data that ensures the scientific validity of the expert's conclusions and minimizes the subjective component of the assessment.

In addition, special attention should be paid to the development of interdisciplinary approaches that combine psychological, legal, sociological, and technological aspects of the analysis of the defendant's behavior. A comprehensive study of both personal characteristics and situational factors allows for an increase in the accuracy of assessing the defendant's ability to be aware of his actions and control his behavior at the time of committing a criminal offense.

An important prospect is the standardization of forensic psychological examination methods and their adaptation to national and international legal frameworks. This will contribute to the unification of procedures, increasing the comparative reliability of expert opinions and ensuring their legitimacy in the judicial process. In addition, the creation of centralized databases of psycho-emotional reactions integrated with digital analytics platforms opens up opportunities for the application of artificial intelligence and machine learning methods in criminal psychological analysis.

Further research may also focus on studying the relationship between the psycho-emotional state of the defendant and the decision-making process of judges, prosecutors, and other participants in criminal proceedings. Such an analysis will allow for a deeper understanding of how internal emotional reactions influence the assessment of the actions of the accused and the formation of well-founded judicial decisions.

In conclusion, the prospects for future research in this area lie in the formation of comprehensive, standardized, technologically supported methods of forensic psychological examination that guarantee a high level of objectivity, reliability, and fairness of judicial conclusions, as well as contribute to the further development of the scientific basis of criminal psychological practice.

Conclusion

The study revealed difficulties associated with the insufficient use of modern digital diagnostic technologies in forensic psychological practice, which limits the objectivity of assessing the emotional state of the accused. There is also a lack of interdisciplinary approaches that combine psychological, legal, and technological aspects. Further research should be directed towards the creation of standardized methods that integrate traditional psychological tools with digital technologies - biometric analysis, sensory monitoring, and neurocognitive programs. This will increase the reliability, scientific validity, and evidentiary value of expert opinions adapted to the legislation of different countries.

The results confirm that the identification of stressful and frustrating states is of key importance for the objective research on legal responsibility, taking into account both personal and situational factors of behavior. It is also important to take into account psycho-emotional states when determining the measure of punishment and compensation for moral damage. The scientific novelty of the study lies in the interpretation of forensic psychological examination as a tool for objectively recording emotional factors and a basis for standardizing expert procedures, which will increase confidence in conclusions and the fairness of court decisions.

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