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Validation of Eisegesis Concepts in Assessment Reports Using the 16 PF: A Training Method with Examples

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VALIDATION OF EISEGESIS CONCEPTS IN ASSESSMENT REPORTS USING THE 16 PF: A TRAINING METHOD WITH EXAMPLES

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Summary: A training method for psychological report writing uses reliably abstracted concepts from reports prepared by students and experts for the same data sets. Consensual and unique concepts are compared for student and expert reports and evaluated by assesses. Unique concepts are further subdivided into skill (assessee accepted) and eisegesis (assessee rejected). Karson 16 PF Reports from assessors were similarly broken down into consensual and unique concepts. Comparisons were made between 16 PF and Rorschach eisegesis that suggest student personality effects upon reports. A procedure for providing feedback to students is presented.

Projective techniques continue to be widely used, but consumers indicate that assessment reports are deficient in communication style and content (Dana, 1980). It is tempting to relate some of this dissatisfaction to an absence of consensual training procedures that may have contributed to reports varying in quality, accuracy, adequacy of data usage, style, etc. We no longer have the luxury of demanding several semesters of Rorschach training since there are now competing instruments and assessment modalities. In addition, while 47% of clinical programs still offer one course in projective personality assessment, 46% of program directors predicted that such assessment would decrease in academia (Piotrowski & Keller, 1982). It makes sense to be articulate about our training procedures in order to be cost-effective with available teaching time.

One approach to the process of learning to use the Rorschach in personality assessment is by evaluation of the concepts contained in reports of student assessors. The concepts contained in assessment reports have not been examined systematically, although early studies used concepts to describe the utility of reports (Davenport, 1952; Grayson & Tolman, 1951; Hartlage, Freeman, Horine & Walton, 1968; Hertz & Rubenstein, 1939) and to describe student eisegesis, or personalized assessor-derived concepts (Dana, 1966).

This paper presents some conclusions from research on a training method for development of skill in report writing and outlines a training method that uses the 16 PF to help student assessors identify personalized concepts. Adequacy of data usage and contributions of clinical skill and eisegesis are considered within a framework that contains assessor and assessee as integral
parts of a shared and mutual information exchange. The general method makes use of student assessment reports. Several students prepare independent reports based on the same protocol data. One or more experienced assessors also prepare reports on this data. Concepts are reliably abstracted from all reports and similar concepts are reliably clustered. Comparisons of concepts are made across student reports and between student and criterion reports using the same data. Concepts can be identified that occur several times (consensual) or occur only once (unique) either in one set of protocol data or across data sets. Assessee reactions to concepts in agree-disagree format provide information concerning acceptability of concepts. When the entire process is repeated several times using different data, the unique concepts for each student assessor can be examined for occurrence across reports.

Acceptance or rejection of these unique concepts by assesses provides one basis for distinguishing between skill (accepted unique concepts) and eisegesis (rejected unique concepts). Eisegesis can then be shared with the student assessors as another source of feedback. This method has been used for 13 years to facilitate the process of learning to write reports (Dana, 1982), to distinguish among different classes of concepts (Dana & Fouke, 1979), and to examine the range of content appearing in reports (Dana, Bonge, & Stauffacher, 1981; Cameron, 1982). In addition, concepts have been developed directly from assessment data and used to examine the validity of child Rorschach (Dana & Back, 1983), and sentence completion interpretations (Turnbow & Dana, 1981).

Some Research Conclusions

This method has been applied in two studies each involving three different Rorschach protocols with eight and twelve student assessors (Dana & Willcockson, 1980; Willcockson, Dana & Rau, 1981). These studies indicate highly reliable abstraction (r = .95 to .99) and clustering (r = .84 to .99) of concepts. The figures for concepts indicate agreement only since the concepts abstracted by the more experienced judge and subsequently reacted to by assesses were used as criterion. The abstraction of concepts from reports is a clerical process while clustering involves judgment. The figures for clustering are minimal estimates of agreement since each misplaced concept resulted in two clustering errors.

Conclusions from these studies are:

1. Students tend to generate more concepts with practice and feedback and these concepts progress from Barnum statements to more detailed and personality-specific statements.

2. Student agree to greater extent on consensual concepts with their peers and with consensual concepts contained over time and with practice.
3. Unique concepts do not change in frequency over time as a result of practice and feedback as do consensual concepts.

4. Criterion, or expert assessors, generate consistent numbers of concepts across reports.

5. Reports that are done later in the semester have more consensual student concepts accepted by assesses while there are no differences over time in the high rate of acceptability for consensual concepts contained in reports of expert assessors.

6. Unique concepts in student reports are rejected very frequently while unique concepts in experts' reports are rarely rejected.

7. Unique concepts may be assessor-specific or assessee-specific and hence are less affected by training during one semester than consensual concepts.

8. Rorschach or test battery data appears to differ in difficulty as evidenced in several ways:
   (a) There is lowered reliability for abstraction and clustering for more difficult data sets.
   (b) There are fewer consensual concepts for more difficult data sets in both student and criterion reports.
   (c) There are a larger number of concepts that are rejected by assesseses from more difficult data sets, particularly unique concepts from all reports and consensual concepts from student reports.

9. This training method would be improved by the use of standard data sets that differ in difficulty of interpretation.

A Training Method with the 16 PF

A human science model for assessment provides a value system expressive of humanistic ideology, a shared assessment procedure, and as little transformation of data as possible (Dana, 1982). Figure 1 translates these general characteristics to the specifics of training, research, and practice. The major source of learning for student assessors is provided by feedback on the contents of their reports. Such feedback is best accomplished by use of multiple sources—peers, experts, and their own assesses—within a systematic framework for literal abstraction of their own report contents. This training method provides for identification of concepts that expose clinical skill as well as personalized concepts containing eisegesis. While it has long been known that eisegesis provides an unwanted contribution of
error (Macfarlane, 1942), general remedies of psychotherapy or psychoanalysis are unsatisfactory.

The Rorschach and the 16 PF are compatible instruments since both are designed for assessment of "normal" personality. The 16 PF is not threatening to student assessors since it was not constructed to measure psychopathology. The availability of a computer-scored version of the 16 PF (IPAT, 1983) provides concepts that parallel report concepts. While the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS) has been used as a criterion instrument for student assessor personality (Voigt, 1966), the EPP does not provide data on the full spectrum of personality and has not been available in a computer version.

Four sets of Rorschach protocols (data) were used by 12 student assessors to generate reports. All concepts were abstracted and clustered from each of the 12 reports for each data set by two advanced graduate student independently. Reliability for abstraction and clustering of concepts were within acceptable and previously reported ranges. The concepts from each of the 16 PF reports for the twelve assessors were abstracted and clustered following similar procedures. The concepts derived from the four sets of Rorschach reports were tabulated for frequencies. Consensus concepts were defined as those occurring in at least eight of the reports using one data set. Unique concepts were defined as occurring in only one of the 12 reports using one data set. All concepts derived from the Karson 16 PF Reports (KCR) were tabulated by frequency across the 12 assessors and unique concepts were listed for each assessor.

"Validation" herein pertains to the personal meaning of eisegesis concepts in terms of the 16 PF concepts for each assessor. The objective is to establish a connection between these two data sources. Each assessor becomes the link between data sources and this connection is made during a feedback interview that is designed to provide discussion focused on student eisegesis. The validation criterion is the acceptability and meaningfulness of these data to the student assessor.

The suitability of the KCR 16 PF computer scoring program for this purpose is evidenced by the nature of the concepts themselves. There were 46 unique concepts for the 12 assessors. Most of the 16 PF concepts occurred relatively infrequently, or less than four times. We conclude that the 16 PF computerized Karson report generates an individualized personality description. The computerized statements are generally positive and indicate that these student assessors are typically well-functioning. However, there are signs of personal distress and situational anxieties. In addition, these statements do accord with instructor impressions based on extensive experience with the student in a variety of settings.

There were 548 unique concepts in the four Rorschach reports from each of 12 student assessors with a range from 19 to 65 concepts across assessors.
The relative uniqueness of Rorschach concepts is indicated by low frequencies of most concepts across reports. For examples, there was only 32 concepts that occurred seven or more times while 133 concepts occurred twice and 76 concepts occurred three times. This provides a substantial basis for the identification of eisegesis concepts. A parallel is found in frequencies of consensual and unique concepts in Rorschach reports and 16 PF printouts.

Two assessor examples include the extremes of personality integration represented in this assessor group. For each assessor, a composite page indicates the KCR unique concepts, the clusters of unique Rorschach concepts, the number of these concepts accepted and rejected by assesses in feedback interviews, and a brief summary of the goodness-of-fit between the two data sources (Tables 1 and 2).

An additional component of the human science model applied to training is proposed (Figure 1, first column, bottom of page). A three-step feedback procedure to be used with the data provided by assessors x and y provides a vehicle for linkage between the KCR and eisegesis concepts from Rorschach reports. Table 3 outlines the steps in this formal feedback procedure that include resolution of the KCR, resolution of Rorschach eisegesis, and personal validation: Rorschach eisegesis in relation to 16 PF concepts.

References


Figure 1
Training, Research, and Practice Components of Human Science Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of concepts reliably</td>
<td>Abstraction of concepts</td>
<td>Discussion with asssesssee of assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abstracted from reports</td>
<td>from Rorschach and test battery reports</td>
<td>process; sharing of procedures and findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by student assessors</td>
<td>Use of concepts to describe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>based on independent use</td>
<td>student skill (consensus + unique + asssesssee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the same data set</td>
<td>accepted) and eisegesis (unique + asssesssee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rejected)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of concepts to describe</td>
<td>Administration and interpretation of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>changes (acquisition) of</td>
<td>assessment instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interpretive skill over</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>time and with practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of concepts to describe</td>
<td>Feedback of content in face-to-face process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>what personality characteristics are suggested</td>
<td>to assesssee and referral source person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>by particular assessment techniques and composite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>test battery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clustering of concepts by</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>clinical judges. Statistical treatment to</td>
<td>Preparation of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>determine reliability of clustering and</td>
<td>report for assesssee and referral source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>identity of clusters</td>
<td>based upon previous discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of derived clusters with</td>
<td>Alternatively the report may be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>subsequent concepts as framework for</td>
<td>presented as part of the face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>comparison of reports on different assesssees</td>
<td>process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potential applications:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barnum research; Lexicon of legitimate personality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>content domains for each</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assessment instrument</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparisons of concepts among students for consensus, uniqueness

Comparisons of student concepts with criterion report concepts

Feedback to asssesssee: asssesssee evaluation (acceptance/rejection of all concepts)

Feedback to students of asssesssee evaluations. Comparisons among consensual and unique, accepted and rejected concepts.

Preparation of composite report for asssesssee (with copies for students) based on all data. Evaluation of report by asssesssee and feedback of reaction to students.

Content analysis of unique concepts rejected by several asssesssees: separation of skill and eisegesis.

Use of 16 PF to provide asssessor personality data for juxtaposition with eisegesis concepts in feedback procedure.
Table 1

Assessor X: Composite of KCR Unique Concepts and Clustered Rorschach Unique Concepts, Including Assessee Reactions and Summary

**KCR Unique Concepts (N=4)**

- Good potential for handling emotional conflicts and interpersonal relations
- Requires much dependency gratification from people, particularly in his job;
- Major problem: strong feelings of assertiveness and need for control;
- Higher than average feelings of tension and frustration

**Rorschach Unique Concepts (N=47)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of items in Cluster</th>
<th>Cluster Label</th>
<th>Assessee Reject/Accept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Problems with strong need for affection/attention that includes minimal distancing from others</td>
<td>5/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Strong positive emotional tone</td>
<td>1/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Anxiety/tension</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Control problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>5/2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

16 PF suggests balance of good ego strength and good overall functioning with mild concerns re self-control and tension/frustration coupled with strong needs for dependency gratification. Rorschach eliesesis shows balance between strong positive emotional tone (12 concepts) and problems with meeting high needs for affection/attention (16 concepts). Anxiety/tension clearly present (7 concepts) as is a control problem (5 concepts). Note trend for more unique concepts to be accepted by assessees than rejected. This suggests that intensity of own problems does not usually distort perception of assessee.
Table 2

Assessor Y: Composite of KCR Unique Concepts and Clustered Rorschach Unique Concepts, Including Assessee Reactions and Summary

KCR Unique Concepts (N=6)

Withdrawal must be considered as is cautious, shy, and unwilling to take risks;

Too much of his potential wasted on impractical daydreams as he engages in fantasy activity rather than constructive use;

Below average egostrength in this person indicative of some emotional instability and unresolved neurotic conflicts with limited frustration tolerance and a below average capacity for handling emotional problems in a mature manner;

Free floating anxiety interfering with functioning efficiency;

Naive individual;

Too forthright and direct implying childishness

Rorschach Unique Concepts (N=36)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of items in Cluster</th>
<th>Cluster Label</th>
<th>Assessee Reject/Accept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Affectional needs unmet: resentment/struggle/conflict/denial</td>
<td>10/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>7/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Underlying anger and control attempts</td>
<td>3/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>2/4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

16 PF suggests difficulty in everyday functioning and extent of anxiety, fantasy, isolation, and inertia. Rorschach eisegesis suggests basis for these difficulties and some of the struggle, conflict, denial, and resentment expressed in attempting to be accepted/loved/have good relationships with others. Strong anxiety and submerged anger are unaccepted as evidenced by predominant rejection of these concepts by assesses. Assesseees are perceived as somewhat out-of-focus as a result of intensity of own problems.