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Educational and Psychological Measurement 1978; 38; 587

DOI: 10.1177/001316447803800249

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THE RELATIONSHIP OF SCORES ON ELIZUR'S HOSTILITY SYSTEM ON THE RORSCHACH TO THE ACTING-OUT SCORE ON THE HAND TEST

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The purpose of the present study was to determine the degree of relationship between Elizur's (1949) Hostility Scoring on the Rorschach to the Acting-Out Score on the Hand Test (Wagner, 1961).

The subjects were 29 volunteers with a mean age of 34 years from the general population. The Rorschach and the Hand Test were administered individually to each subject in a single sitting.

The Pearson product-moment correlation technique was used to compare the acting-out score with the hostility level. The correlational coefficients obtained in the study ranged from .40 to .64 and attained significance beyond the .01 level.

The results of the study indicate that there is a significantly positive relationship between the two measures of aggressiveness. The Hand Test might better be utilized in predicting the direction to the aggressiveness as it also takes into consideration the positive or socially acceptable feelings manifested by the subject.

As an area which has given rise to much research and debate, the relationship between the content of projective protocols and the overt behavior of the person tested is a question of major concern to the user of projective techniques. Piotrowski (1950) and Rosenzweig (1950), for example, indicated that it is possible to predict overt behavior from projective methods. Gluck (1955) has suggested that users of projective tests, both psychiatrists and psychologists alike, often make predictions and take action based on them.

In attempting to use the Rorschach as a measure of hostility, practitioners have emphasized content rather than other aspects of the response. Although the Elizur (1949) scoring system for hostility was not designed as a diagnostic indicator for aggressive acting out, the

hostility level (HL) on the Rorschach has generally been found to be related to overt acts of aggression. In a study by Gorlow, Zimet, and Fine (1952), the Rorschach records of 13 adolescent delinquents were compared with those of 13 non-delinquents matched on the basis of age, IQ, and socio-economic background. The delinquents were randomly selected from court files on the basis of the "antisocial" acts which they had committed. The results indicated that the delinquents in comparison with the non-delinquents obtained significantly higher HL scores. Wolf (1957) found that aggressive acting-out patients did receive significantly higher hostility scores on the Rorschach ($p < .005$) than did non-acting out patients as determined by both case history data and current progress notes.

It is doubtful that the Rorschach hostility score alone can be used successfully to predict how members of a heterogeneous group of subjects are going to behave in a rather typical life situation. An instrument is needed which can determine the extent to which, and the way in which, the individual expresses his impulses. As a result of continuing interest in the projection of aggression responses, Wagner (1961) devised the Hand Test (HT). In his search for a medium which would reflect some important action tendencies found in Rorschach *M* (human movement) responses, Wagner chose pictures of hands. Theoretically, it was assumed that "prototypical action tendencies" would be projected into hands, as the hand is considered important for interacting and relating to the external world. In addition to supplying kinesthetic feedback, the hands in coordination with the brain enable one to organize one's perceptions of reality (Wagner, 1962). The Hand Test is particularly likely to reflect action tendencies close to the motor system action tendencies that are readily activated and which are therefore likely to be apparent in overt behavior (Bricklin, Piotrowski and Wagner, 1962; Wagner, 1962).

The initial goal of the Hand Test (HT) was the prediction of overt aggressive behavior. The acting-out score (AOS) was not designed to predict specific motor acts, but rather a tendency to act out in any aggressive manner. The acting-out score is based on the principle that the probability of overt aggressive behavior increases as dominant and aggressive attitudes outweigh attitudes indicating social cooperation. Finding the arithmetic difference between the sum of points reflecting aggressive and domineering action tendencies and the sum of points indicative of cooperative or non-aggressive attitudes yields an acting-out score (Bricklin, Piotrowski, and Wagner, 1962).

Most of the studies with the HT have been devoted to validating the acting-out score. In one study Bricklin, Piotrowski, and Wagner (1962) compared 76 subjects representing acting-out cases on AOS

with 72 subjects representing nonacting-out persons. The chi square test yielded significant differences ($p < .001$). After matching a sample of 30 "assaultive" and 30 "non-assaultive" delinquents on sex, age, number of convictions, IQ, social class, and racial characteristics, Wagner (1964) examined their relative strengths on the AOS. Assaultive delinquents did have a significantly higher ($p < .001$) AOS score than did the non-assaultive group.

The HT has undoubtedly shown itself useful in assessing acting-out tendencies. A beginning has been made to demonstrate its predictive validity which would be requisite for establishing its clinical utility. The purpose of the present study was to determine the degree of relationship between the HL score based on Elizur's Hostility System of the Rorschach and the AOS on the Hand Test on a general heterogeneous population. A positive and significant correlation was hypothesized.

Method

The Sample

The sample used for the present study was taken from the population at large in Lombard and Addison, Illinois, and Indianapolis, Indiana. All participants volunteered to serve as subjects. The sample was composed of 29 subjects (14 males, 15 females). No criteria were set up for selection, with the exception of age of participants who were between 16 and 60 years, with the mean age being 34 years.

Scoring

The HL score was obtained for this study by assigning a weight of two to those responses scored *H* and one to the *h* score and by adding these two scores to provide a total score (Elizur, 1949). Using Goldfried's (1971) suggestion, a bonus weight of one was assigned to the hostile responses showing minus form level.

In considering the possible effect that the total number of responses (*R*) to the Rorschach has on the *HL* score, one observes that the research findings seem to conflict. There does seem, however, to be a relationship. Computing an *HL%* (i.e., HL/R) does not completely eliminate the effect of *R* but it does reduce it (Sanders and Cleveland, 1953). The acting-out score (AOS) was determined by using the scoring criteria set forth in the monograph, *The Hand Test*, by Bricklin, Piotrowski, and Wagner (1962). Additionally, an AGG-DIR (aggressive and directive responses on the HT) score was ascertained according to the procedure outlined in the above mentioned monograph.

The Pearson-product moment correlation technique was used to determine the degree of relationship between the AOS and HL%, AOS and HL score, and AGG-DIR and HL scores. The resulting coefficient were, respectively, .40, .54, and .64, all of which were statistically significant beyond the .01 level.

Discussion

As many of the previous studies employing Elizur's system used HL rather than HL%, a correlation was also found between HL scores and AOS. A correlation coefficient of .54 resulted. The data were included for purposes of comparison only.

A correlation coefficient of .64 was obtained between the AGG-DIR content score of the HT protocols and the HL score. The AAG and DIR tendencies are considered the undesirable, hostile indicators on the HT (Bricklin, Piotrowski, and Wagner, 1962). Direction is determined when the undesirable indicators are compared with the desirable or socially acceptable indicators. Elizur (1949) has stated that his scoring reveals hostility but does not predict direction. The higher coefficient between AGG-DIR and HL scores lends support to his original hypothesis.

A significant correlation between HL% scores and AOS indicates that the instruments appear to be measuring the same thing. It appears that the acting-out score gives direction to the hostility level as measured on the Rorschach.

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