

Evaluating the Diagnostic Potential of Projective Techniques in Personality Studies

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Abstract: This article explores the diagnostic possibilities presented by projective techniques in personality studies. It engages in an exploration of the particularities of employing projective techniques, the psychometric criteria governing these methods, the notion and essence of projection, and the current opportunities afforded by projective techniques in contemporary research. It also lays out the categorisation of projective techniques, as well as the current state of understanding of these techniques in international psychology. Additionally, the article elaborates on the concept of 'projection', while also providing detailed inspector remarks on the research outcomes.

1 INTRODUCTION

It's well known that the execution of empirical research demands considerable professional competence and expertise from every specialist psychologist. Furthermore, psychodiagnostics - a practical branch of psychology - necessitates the development of skills to disseminate and apply a suite of tests, techniques, personality examinations, aptitude tests, intelligence tests, and projective tests. Although a multitude of tests and personality surveys have been devised thus far, projective tests hold a particular significance. This is due to the limited availability of textbooks, monographs, and methodological guides on projective psychology and projective psychodiagnostics within local psychological research. However, what distinguishes projective techniques from others is their subtle approach to eliciting information from individuals. These methodologies are non-verbal and can encompass subjects' drawings, inkblots, and colour tests.

It's worth mentioning that the challenges of standardising projective methods - their non-verbal nature, the scarce application of these methods in research within our national Uzbek context, the

absence of clear research criteria, and the requirement of profound practical and theoretical knowledge for result analysis - contribute to the pressing issues surrounding psychometric aspects of projective methods usage, projective diagnosis and its characteristics, the adaptation of projective methods to the local environment, and the examination of practical applications of projective methods in individual studies.

Hitherto, a host of international researchers have contributed to the fields of projective psychology and projective methods, (Rohleder 2014, Mukhtasar 2021). These authors have primarily applied projective methods within a clinical environment and for distinguishing between normality and pathology. Therefore, the majority of research in this area is viewed through a medical lens. Similarly, in Russian psychology, comprehensive studies have been undertaken on projective methods, their psychodiagnostic nature, their specific usage, projective diagnosis, and personality capabilities, including work by scholars such as E. Sokolova, L. F. Burlachuk, I. Shlyapnikov, L. N. Sobchik, D.Ya. Raygorodskiy, K.M.Gurevich, E.M. Borisova, S.A.Pavlova, V.M.Bleyxer, S.A.Pavlova, V.I. Evdokimov, B. I. Hellinger, D.A. Leontev, and E.I.

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Kuzmina. Within the psychology of our country, specific investigations have been conducted on issues such as the application of projective methods in psychological practice, the use of projective methods in examining educational difficulties, and the benefits of projective diagnosis.

Local psychologists, including M.G.Davletshin, E.G.Gaziev, Z.T.Nishanova, G.K.Tulaganova, P.S. Ergashev, have paid particular attention to the issues of projective methods, focusing primarily on their methodological aspects and the study of adolescent students. Research has been conducted on subjects such as the potential for adapting pre-objective methodologies. Nevertheless, the diagnostic potential of projective methods in individual studies still requires more expansive research. This need in itself signifies the relevance of the topic of this scientific article.

Historically, the emergence of projective methods is linked with the introduction of the "projection" concept in psychology, which originates from the Latin term "projectio" meaning "to throw forward" or "cast". Initial methodological issues surrounding the methodology predominantly existed within the teachings of "psychoanalysis" and "holism". According to these theories, the use of methods can expose a person's attitudes towards objects, the surrounding reality, and their desires - including their needs and wishes - as well as uncover the conditions constituting their inner world.

The phrase "projective research" was initially utilised by L. Frank in 1939. A variety of research methodologies were already known during this period, including Jung's associative test, Rorschach's test, TAT, among others. Based on his research outcomes, the author categorises the following groups of projective methods [1,69-85]:

- Constitutional category methods: This category's methods are characterised by a situation in which the examinee is given a structure, shape, or an undefined configuration (gestalt), or an unstructured substance like clay, fingers, or paint to illustrate, such as a Rorschach card.

- Constructive category methods: These methods, similar to their constitutional equivalents, highlight differences between "dry" and "processed" materials. In the study, the participant behaves constructively, considering the materials provided for construction. The resulting construct reflects certain organisational concepts of their life at that moment, such as building something with blocks.

- Interpretive category methods: As inferred from the name, these techniques capture the participant's response throughout a narrative, in which a stimulus

situation is presented as an image, i.e., a specific response to the stimulus situation is registered. This category includes tests like the TAT and the verbal association test.

- Catarrh category methods: In these techniques, the participant expresses their emotions and feelings in response to the stimulus situation. These emotions are recorded in a relaxed state where the individual shows an affective reaction to life situations, which is then mirrored in their response to stimulus situations, observed during play with clay or toys.

- Refractive category methods: The term in this context was introduced by L. Frank during subsequent analysis. This phenomenon, as outlined by G.Allport, is seen "expressively" and highlights behavioural traits. If evaluated in the context of a projective method, the graphological method serves as a prime example.

Moreover, psychologist G.M.Proshansky developed a distinctive classification of projective methods based on three components: stimuli, responses, and aims. He delineated that stimuli in projective methods [2,99-105] can be:

- Verbal, visual, clear, or other conditional responses;
- Associative;
- Interpretive;
- Manipulative;
- Free choice and others.

The distinct feature of the above classification is that the final part of each category stems from the general sequence or is considered to possess a contrasting character to the other parts. In our view, the following characteristics are common to all types of projective methodologies:

1. The use of ambiguous, uncertain stimuli;
2. The lack of restrictions on answer selection;
3. The absence of "correct" or "incorrect" responses.

Psychologist A.Anastazi, discussing the diagnostic potential of projective methods, underscores that these methods are not purely psychometric tools but rather a series of works subject to qualitative analysis [3,245]. Hence, the diagnostic potential of projective methodologies is deemed reliable if interpreted using qualitatively descriptive methodologies rather than quantitatively processed ones [4,63]. In the following sections, we will attempt to provide brief information on the analysis of the obtained results and the assessment of the psychodiagnostic potential of projective methods.

2 METHODS

In our research, while applying the "House.Tree.Person" method, we factored in certain aspects of the local context. This is because, inherent to this method, when the primary stimuli are presented to the individual, they each implement the approach in their own unique manner. This projective method can be extensively utilised for gauging an individual's psychological traits, diagnosing their emotional realm, determining their attitudes, evaluating their defence mechanisms and the extent of their personal development, as well as assessing their interpersonal abilities and propensity for conflict. Additionally, the outcomes derived from this projective methodology can be uniquely analysed through the use of statistical methods.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Herein, we outline the aspects in which the methodology's application and its stimuli played a pivotal role, according to the nature of the subjects. Having studied the characteristics of this methodology, we concluded that the assessment of the subjects should incorporate the cyclic aspects of the psyche: the first being its relation to the future, the second to the present, and the third to the past. Instead of merely recording the stimuli present in the subjects' drawings, we devoted particular attention to calculating a quantitative measure of the results. This enabled us to utilise projective methodologies to characterise the temporal dimensions of an individual's mental universe. In our analysis of the obtained results, we deemed it necessary to consider the overall qualities and gender characteristics of the subjects (Table 1).

Table 1: Results of the method "House, tree, man" (N = 158).

| Stimuli | General (N= 158) | | | Boys (N= 80) | | | Girls (N= 78) | | |
|---------|------------------|------|--------|--------------|------|--------|---------------|------|--------|
| | Home | Tree | Person | Home | Tree | Person | Home | Tree | Person |
| Future | 65 | 79 | 61 | 36 | 43 | 33 | 29 | 36 | 28 |
| Present | 57 | 52 | 47 | 32 | 25 | 24 | 25 | 27 | 22 |
| Past | 36 | 27 | 50 | 12 | 13 | 22 | 24 | 14 | 28 |

Table 2: Correlation of results of the method "Home, Tree, Person" (N = 158).

| Stimuli | General | | | Boys | | | Girls | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|------|---------|---------|-------|---------|--------|
| | Home | Tree | Person | Home | Tree | Person | Home | Tree | Person |
| Home | 1 | 0,962** | 0,556* | 1 | 0,886** | 0,752** | 1 | 0,906** | 0,327 |
| Tree | | 1 | 0,761** | | 1 | 0,972** | | 1 | -0,104 |
| Man | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 |

*P<0,05; *P<0,01.

An examination of the results reveals that amongst both girls and boys, the dominant aspect in their recording of stimuli is their future mental state: overall - home (65), tree (79), person (61); present - home (57), tree (52), person (47); past - home (36); tree (27) and person (50) demonstrated this orientation. Furthermore, if we accept that mental states are linked to the three temporal periods of human psyche, the higher expression of past mental state in girls (28) suggests that they resort to a regressive defence mechanism during mental crisis situations. Displaying the results in a histogram also aids in delineating them more distinctly. In our research, we have also endeavoured to present an analytical example of the methodology, based on the overall sample of subjects and their specific instances. We will now examine some of these (Table 2).

What was somewhat surprising, for reasons yet unclear, was the lack of correlation between the girls' results: there was no observed relationship between

the representations of home and tree. This might indicate some difficulty they face in effectively regulating their emotional control. As a result, we also emphasised ranking the features of the "Home, Tree, Person" methodology that were accentuated by the subjects.

4 CONCLUSION

In essence, for stimuli pertaining to home, person, and tree, there may be a need to reassess the state of the materials in accordance with local conditions, introducing new examples if necessary. Broadly speaking, the "Home.Tree.Person." projective method is a potential tool for assessing both intentional behaviour and gender identity. It's vital, however, to consider the importance of professional skills and practical knowledge of the specialist in the

field of projective psychodiagnostics when conducting such research.

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