

Application of Imagery Communication Psychotherapy in Projective Test

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Abstract: The Imagery Projective Test is an innovative psychological projective test from China, which introduces Imagery Communication Psychology into the projective test. Based on nearly 30 years of theoretical researches and clinical cases, the questionnaire was prepared by using the psychological symbolic meaning of the collective unconscious imagery of human beings, and imagery is defined as the imaginative figure which does not exist in reality. The images selected by subjects reflect their mental content and mental health status at different levels, but the test aims to present deeper mental content of the subjects instead of diagnosis. In order to explore the theoretical significance and practical value of Imagery Projective Test, this paper attempted to demonstrate an application of Imagery Communication Psychotherapy in projective test. By support of theoretical discussions and practical analyses, this research systematically explains the origin, development, principle, application, innovation, and research prospects of Imagery Projective Test. It is concluded that Imagery Projective Test could provide a new technical route to the development of projective test, which has academic prospect and deserves to be used in cross-cultural researches. The Imagery Projective Test is being tested for reliability and validity one by one, where the completed data shows that they have preferable reliability and validity.

Keywords: Imagery Communication Psychotherapy, Imagery Projective Test, Imagery, Symbolic Meaning

1. Introduction

Imagery Projective Test (IPT) is an innovative psychological projective test from China. It is a systematic psychological test, composed of multiple tests rather than a single one. In view of the representativeness of test stimulation, all kinds of images involved are based on the related theories of Psychological Dynamics, Imagery Communication Psychotherapy (ICP), symbolism and clinical practice data. In addition, after clever design and selection of experts in ICP, test questions and options are finally formed.

Imagery Projective Test can provide non-verbal tools for measuring the subliminal contents of subjects in a quite short period of time. Based on the subjects of projected images of subconscious mental activity, the imagery of symbolic significance, the correlation among the images, it reflects the status quo, health and deep reasons of their psychological development profoundly and faithfully.

This questionnaire, which uses color images as the main options, can arouse the interest of subjects, especially adults, greatly reducing the tension and fatigue of psychological tests. It is so simple and easy to operate that it does not require special tools, complicated instructions, or even a tester on the spot, and also not disturbed by external factors such as the language and behavior of the tester

The IPT was developed for three purposes.

1) To create a new psychological measuring tool with both value of academic innovation and social application.

Objective of academic innovation: to provide a new technical route and research results for the development of psychological projective test. The “stimulus” applied in IPT is a cultural symbol commonly used by the collective unconscious of human beings, imagery and its symbolic meaning, which is not directly analyzed, judged and transferred by human rational consciousness. Meanwhile, it can make up for the significant limitations of traditional projective tests (for example, they can only be applied

individually, but not collectively, and can't be analyzed by software).

Purpose of application innovation: to create a set of mental assessment tools that is not intended for diagnosis. IPT can not only be used for academic studies in teaching and research institutions, but also serve the society in a standardized and convenient way.

- 2) To further develop Imagery Communication Psychotherapy created by Chinese psychologist.

So far, more than 400 psychotherapies have been published all over the world. Only two were founded by Chinese psychologists. One was the Cognitive Insight Therapy founded by Zhong Youbin in the 1970s. Another was Imagery Communication Psychotherapy developed by Zhu Jianjun in the 1990s.

ICP was born in China, but it's worldwide. Thanks to Jungian psychology research of its establishment, by the classical psychoanalysis and humanistic psychology, etc. More is a blend of elements of Chinese traditional culture spirit. It takes imagery as the medium, through the communication mode of "subconscious to subconscious" by the psychotherapist and client, and uses the psychological symbolic meaning of the imagery and the original cognitive logic to carry out psychological intervention in the subconscious level of the client, in order to achieve the purpose of resolving negative emotion, eliminating complex, exploring self deeply and integrating personality, so as to promote self-growth and healthy development. ICP is very unique and has now become the most trained psychotherapy in China. By August 2017, more than 30 thousand people were registered. IPT is committed to tooling the representative psychological assessment method in ICP.

- 3) To develop a wider range of evaluating tools that can be amenable to be tested.

This work has been widely used in many fields. Such as related academic research in colleges and universities; Employee Assistance Program projects of enterprises; Employee Assistance Program projects in primary and secondary schools; psychological physical examination of enterprises and institutions; psychological training in enterprises and institutions; psychological counseling and psychotherapy (including individual cases and group psychotherapy); and so on.

This paper introduces IPT from the following aspects: the questions, the origin and development, the principle and application, innovation, conclusion, and future prospects.

2. Questions Raised

2.1. The Value of Projective Test in Psychometrics and Practical Application

Psychological test embodies the applicational value of psychology and is widely used in psychological assessment, screening, diagnosis and other aspects. Psychological test can be divided into three types according its test form: questionnaire test, projective test, and situational test [1].

Situational judgement test is used to evaluate individual's judgement about workplace situations [2]. It presents typical work situations and possible behavioral responses to the individual, and requires the individual to follow the instructions to select or evaluate them [3]. The test is also called low analog simulation because it simulates work situations [4]. People are more familiar with questionnaire test, which usually consists of self-description items like "I often lose my temper", and people need to rate the accuracy of the description by answering "yes" or "no", or selecting a score in the Likert scale. The questionnaire test is more structural, by which the self-perception, mental state and life experience of the subjects are examined very directly. The test results can be quantified by calculating the test scores.

Due to the advantages of such as high standardization, ease of scoring and interpretation, questionnaire test currently is dominating among psychological tests. In fact, under the profound influence of psychoanalysis, projective test has also been widely used in western countries. It is a major type of personality test based on Psychodynamic Theory. Its basic assumption is: without explicit contextual clues or the influence from others' view, one's responses to ambiguous, unstructured stimuli will reflect his/her own unique personality characteristics [5]. Well-known as The Rorschach Test and Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) are both projective tests. In addition to the clinical diagnostic role as neuropathic, projective tests are used in military [6], educational [7, 8] and personnel selection as well [9].

2.2. Limitations of Traditional Projective Test

In the 1950s, the Rorschach Inkblot Test had suffered a lot of criticism due to lack of standardized scoring procedures, norm data and high consistency of raters [10]. Although Exner subsequently developed a comprehensive system (CS) to score the test [11], there were still many controversies regarding the psychometric characteristics of the Rorschach Inkblot Test comprehensive system [12]. For example, the consistency of CS scorers varies tremendously [13]. In addition, the cost of the Rorschach Inkblot Test is too high for users; it can only be performed one-to-one between the tester and the subject, but not collectively; besides it takes excessively long time. The test results can only be interpreted by specifically trained and well-experienced experts.

However, the cultural applicability of the projective test may be an impediment to its development and dissemination in China compared to the psychometric limitations mentioned above. Nath, Lee, Belcher-Timme & Chau [14] compared the results of projective tests between Asian and American subjects. The most convincing example is the comparison between the test results of American cultural and Korean cultural subjects by Moon & Cundick (1983). The study included four types of subjects: Korean-speaking only subjects; English-speaking only subjects; Korean-language bilinguals who immigrated to the United States for more than five years; and bilingual American-language subjects with missionary tasks in Korea for many years. In this way, the researchers can not only compare the differences between the

test results of different subjects from the two cultural backgrounds, but also the results of the tests between only one language subjects and bilingual subjects. The test selected 16 variables from the Rorschach Inkblot Test Comprehensive System and found that the U.S.-Korean monolingual subjects had significant differences among the 6 variables, while the 5 of the bilingual subjects had significant differences.

Although there are few cross-cultural comparative studies on projective tests, which are limited by practical factors, there are controversies about the selection and number of subjects. That leads to an unclear conclusion about this cross-cultural difference in projective tests. But on the other hand, the appearance of projective test itself is contingent. It has developed in clinical practice, and the scoring methods and the norms have been obtained on the foundation of western subjects which has been studied continuously by scholars. What to emphasize is that almost all projective tests were developed in the framework of identifying the neuropathic. Even if there are projective tests that are not intended for this purpose, their development is still based on clinically abnormal standards. This indeed limits the use of projective test in other fields.

2.3. Significance of Imagery Projective Test in Research

In the past 20 years, the number of studies on projective test has been declining [14]. How to improve the difficulties that encountered in the application of projective tests is the major focus of this study. Perhaps the combination of the native Imagery Communication Psychology and projective test can help with finding a new direction.

Imagery Projective Test is as a projective test first, based on which it has its own innovation: the test makes sense of stimulus itself—the symbolic meaning—not directly analyzed, judged and transferred by human consciousness. That symbolic meaning can be used to visualize different levels of psychological content and mental health status of the subjects, without being perceived by the subjects.

Compared with the traditional projective test represented by the Rorschach Inkblot Test, Imagery Projective Test fits better for subjects under the Oriental culture. Most of the western projective tests derived from an individual inspiration of the founders or some contingencies in clinical practice. Imagery Projective Test was developed under the guidance of oriental Imagery Communication Psychology. Because of its complete theoretical system and scientific methodology, it can be developed extensively as the needs of academic research or clinical practice, which is a measurement tool for sustainable development.

3. The Origin and Development of Imagery Projection Test

3.1. The Origin of Imagery Projective Test

Imagery Projective Test is an innovative projective test developed under the guidance of Imagery Communication

Psychology which is the theoretical foundation and method basis of the former. The origin and application of Imagery Communication Psychology is mainly Imagery Communication Psychotherapy, which is a psychological counseling and treatment method established by Professor Zhu Jianjun, a Chinese psychologist in the 1990s [15]. It uses imagery as a medium and conducts deep communication with primitive logic methods, emphasizing the experience and the interaction. It is clinically conducted by two participants—counselor and client. When both sides are in the imagery communication state, the communication between the psychological counselor and the client takes place at the subconscious level. Even if they are not identified on the cognitive level of rationality, the subconscious minds of the clients are completely intelligible, and the improvement will happen. In other words, the psychological counselor uses the symbolic meaning of imagery to communicate with the clients at the subconscious level to achieve the purpose of resolving negative emotions, eliminating complex, exploring self, and integrating personality, and to promote the clients' self-growth and mental health development.

ICP is a new branch and development of psychoanalysis methods, but its origins are deeper and closer to Jungian psychology. One of the differences between Jungian psychology and psychoanalytic psychology is that the latter uses rational thinking to understand primitive logic, and the former uses primitive logic itself to understand primitive logic. ICP uses imagery as a medium and applies primitive logic to communicate in depth, which is quite similar to Jung's active imagination technique. In addition, ICP also incorporates with the spirit of Buddhism and Taoism, and some methods of J·E·Shore's imagery therapy. In clinical practice, ICP is often combined with cognitive and behavioral psychotherapy [16].

3.2. Development of Imagery Projective Test

Since 2007, Yuan Yuan, an expert in ICP, has collaborated with “Read Your Mind” psychological institution on various training, curriculum development, and social service related to ICP. With a great number of practical operations, a system of Imagery Projective Test was gradually developed. After five years of clinical practice, the results of research have rapidly developed and gradually matured.

In December 2012, “the Mental Health State Imagery Projective Test” was registered at Chinese Psychological Association. “Imagery Projective Test” was registered at Chinese Psychological Association and registered with the copyright office of the People's Republic of China in June 2018.

The existing imagery projective tests include the workplace authority relations imagery projective test, mental immunity mode imagery projective test, marriage relations imagery projective test, behavioral mode imagery projective test, parenting style imagery projective test and house imagery projective test.

Among them, house imagery projective test, workplace authority relations imagery projective test and marriage relations imagery projective test have been made software.

[17]. The specific work includes: revision and compilation of documents; program modeling, output mode and software programming platform selection; programming and debugging.

3.2.1. Workplace Authority Relations Imagery Projective Test

This test measures the characteristics and regularities of authoritative relationships in human relations through imagery projection. It consists of 4 multiple-choice questions. The options involve 14 animal images. The major applicable subject is the adult.

The test is based on the symbolical meaning of animal images and the inner feelings of the subjects. Due to that animal imagery often symbolizes personality characteristics through behavioral patterns, so it can be used to project authoritative relationships in behavioral patterns.

3.2.2. Psychological Immunity Mode Imagery Projective Test

This test measures the characteristics and regularities of psychological immune patterns through imagery projection. It consists of 8 multiple-choice questions. The options involve 9 kinds of house images and 13 weapon images. The major applicable subject is the adult.

The test is based on the symbolic meaning of the weapon imagery and the inner feelings, needs, and defense status of the subjects. Among them, the weapon imagery symbolizes anger, attack or hostility and can be used to measure the state of mental defense and its pattern of psychological immunity [18].

3.2.3. Marriage Relations Imagery Projective Test

This test measures the concept of marriage and marriage behavior patterns through imagery projection. The options involve 10 kinds of flower images and 9 kinds of insect images. The major applicable subject is the adult.

The theoretical basis of the test is a classic theory in ICP termed as flowers and insects. Flower images and insect images respectively symbolize psychological characteristics of the female and those of male. The relationship between flower and insect images symbolizes the gender relationship. Therefore, utilizing these two images can measure the psychological characteristics, gender relationship status and gender relations behavioral patterns with gender traits.

3.2.4. Behavior Pattern Imagery Projective Test

This test measures the characteristics and laws of behavior patterns through imagery projection. It consists of 9 multiple-choice questions. The options involve 40 animal images. The major applicable subject is the adult.

The test is based on the symbolic meaning of animal imagery and the inner feelings of the subjects and the application situation. Among them, animal images often symbolize personality characteristics through behavior patterns [19]. Therefore, behavior patterns can be measured in imagery projective way.

3.2.5. Parenting Style Imagery Projective Test

This test measures the characteristics and continuing effects of parenting styles through imagery projection. The major applicable subject is the adult.

The test includes of the imagery projective test and structural test. It consists of three parts: the first part is an imagery projective test, the second part describes the state of the relationship between the core family members, and the third part measures the resource genetics in the way of parenting that aimed to guide positive resources.

3.2.6. House Imagery Projective Test

The house imagery is the most commonly used initial image in ICP. The house symbolizes one's personality and emotional tone. This test measures the personality and mental health of the subjects.

The test consists of 30 questions, which options include 20 house images and 25 other images. It is mainly applicable to subjects over 16 years old.

3.3. Reliability and Validity of Imagery Projective Test

With the House Imagery Projective Test and Psychological Immune Model Imagery Projective Test for example.

3.3.1. House Imagery Projective Test

To explore its internal structure, the principal component analysis method was used to analyze the exploratory factors of 16 projects to make the maximum orthogonal rotation. There were 117 subjects with an average age of 19.27 years ($SD = 1.16$). The results of the KMO and Bartlett spherical tests showed that the data could be factored ($KMO = 0.78$, $\chi^2 = 473.861$, $df = 66$, $p < 0.001$). The interpretation rate is 67.05%. The factors are related to each other: 0.235~0.368; related to the total score: 0.863, 0.619, 0.607, 0.619; internal consistency of the entry: 0.789; consistency between factors: 0.588.

The overall internal consistency coefficient of the scale is $Cronbach's \alpha = 0.73$, and the internal consistency coefficients of the items included in each factor are 0.76, 0.67, 0.66, 0.48, and 0.51. The test data of 171 subjects at intervals of one month showed that test-retest reliability was 0.67 ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, House Imagery Projection Test has good internal consistency and stability over time.

The validity criterion is: Emotional Style Scale, Coping Style Scale, Perfectionism Scale, Sensitivity Scale, Negative Emotion Scale, 238 people were tested. The relationship between the total score of the House Imagery Projective Test and the criterion is preferable. For example, association with emotional expression: $r = 0.171$ ($p = 0.015$); association with rationality: $r = 0.132$ ($p = 0.054$); association with rejection sensitivity: $r = -0.150$ ($p = 0.037$); association with negative emotion: $r = -0.213$ ($p = 0.002$).

3.3.2. Psychological Immune Model Imagery Projective Test

Using psychometric paradigm, the reliability and validity of the Psychological Immune Model Psychological Projective test were initially explored through questionnaire survey. Since the weapon image can reflect the anger, aggression,

defense mechanism and coping style in the symbolic sense, to test the criterion-related validity of the test, the selected target scales were the defense style questionnaire, the simple coping style questionnaire and the Buss. -Perry attack questionnaire.

There were 300 subjects with an average age of 36.01 years ($SD = 10.03$). The results showed that the test has a preferable project discrimination, and the test-retest reliability at intervals of one month is 0.60. The correlation between the immature defense mechanism and the mature defense mechanism dimensions of the test and defense method questionnaires are 0.18 and -0.18 respectively. The correlation with the language attack, anger and hostility dimensions in the attack questionnaire is between 0.15 and 0.21, which is good criterion-related validity.

4. The Principle and Application of Imagery Projective Test

4.1. Principles of Imagery Projective Test

In Imagery Communication Psychology, the core central concept is imagery. "Imagery" derives from unconsciousness and refers to a certain mental image that is imaginary and does not really exist. The word "image" here refers to all internal psychological symbols that are similar to sensory perception. Imagery Communication Psychology believes that all psychological items can be expressed in imagery, because in conscious or subconscious activities, people often use imagery to symbolize and construct psychological reality. Specifically, when psychological experience is processed by information, it will be symbolized—psychological experience becomes symbol. Symbols are fixed. The symbolization process is to fix the flowing psychological experience with symbols, which is also the process of attributing new experiences to old ones. As a symbol, the most basic feature of imagery is symbolic [20]. Its symbolic meaning is often not the surface and direct meaning of the imagery, but it reflects the psychological activities hidden behind the imagery [18].

The process of symbolization has general laws, which is also the source of its symbolic meaning. The psychology scholars have explored this symbolic meaning, the most famous of which is Jung's archetype theory. Jung thinks that there is a deeper structure than what Freud called "unconsciousness", which is collective unconsciousness. In contrast, Freud's "unconsciousness" is only an individual unconsciousness. Collective unconsciousness is not individual, but universal. "The content and behavior patterns are generally the same in all places and all individuals." The main content of the individual unconsciousness is the complex, and the main content of the collective unconsciousness is the archetype. The archetype is a respond tendency to race inheritance [21]. Jung compares the fantasy of a neuropathic with the work of a Greek philosopher in his book "The Archetype and the Collective Unconsciousness" by identifying the same typical image and analyzing its meaning and explain the existence of the archetype to the world. Under the influence of Jung, his student Barbara Hanna further

explained the symbolic meaning of the imagery. In her book "Cats, Dogs, Horses", she conducted a detailed analysis of the images of the three animals [22]. Fromm systematically classifies the relationship between symbols and things represented by symbols, and classified them into habitual symbols, sporadic symbols, and universal symbols [23].

Symbolic symbols link and form structures. These structures are linked to each other to form a larger structure. Finally, a symbol system is formed. This is the entire cognitive structure of a person's values and language. In the clinical practice of ICP, it is precisely because of the temporality, variability, and arbitrariness of the links between symbols that are alternative, changing and transforming the psychological reality of clients and creating new ones, which are healthier, more effective mental reality, are achievable. By processing this, it makes psychotherapy possible.

It is noticed that, in this symbol system, not only the archetype derived from the collective unconsciousness but also the complex belonging to the individual unconsciousness content is included. The complex will bring together the similar psychological experiences as a snowball generally forms a big "knot". Complex is an important foundation for our personality structure, and each individual will have many complexes. There are positive and negative complexes. If a negative complex with a lot of psychological energy loads causes the individual's psychological disorder, then the complex and the mental content of will be reflected in the imagery. As a consequence, Imagery Projective Test developed on the basis of ICP can present the complex or trauma of the subject. For example, in the "Marriage Relations Imagery Projective Test", the insect images of "flies" and "longicorn" can reflect the sexual trauma of the subjects: it may be only sexual trauma, or it may be complex that based on sexual trauma.

4.2. Application of Imagery Projective Test

House Imagery Projective Test is used as an example to illustrate the application of imagery projective test theory. The test examines the personality and mental health of the subjects. The image of "house" is chosen because in ICP, "house image" can present the overall state of personality and mental health of the subjects relatively independently. Each dimension of the topic itself is an image, symbolic and unknown.

The revised version of House Imagery Projective Test contains five dimensions. Let's take the texture of the house for example. The instruction of the test guides the subjects to imagine seeing a house and then examining the house in the next topic. The first examined is the material of the house, which symbolizes the basic qualities of personality. The cottage house in the options means that the subjects are simple, natural, and lacking security. In real life, they are afraid of interpersonal conflicts and the various negative emotions caused by them. They are accustomed to repression and tolerance. Metal house represents rationality, even if there are negative emotions or feelings, they are also good at rationalization and explanations with rational thinking; glass houses or crystal houses represent strong displays, and

subjects are good at expressing their own excellence, and fear that others will see what they think is not good enough. Different options represent different personality states and mental health states. Expert scoring methods are used to score the mental health status represented by these options according to the meaning behind these options. The more complete the personality status and the better the mental health status are, the higher the score is. Adding the scores of the subjects in different dimensions can yield a quantitative mental health score.

5. Innovation of Imagery Projective Test

First of all, as an innovative projective test, Imagery Projective Test inherits the advantages of projective test. It is a tool for measuring the deep structure or unconsciousness of personality, and it is an unstructured test for indirect measurement of personality. This makes it effective to avoid issues such as social approbation. Its interpretation of the results reflects the original integrity of the projective test, focusing on the overall assessment of personality rather than the measurement of a single trait [5].

In addition, Imagery Projective Test uses a lot of pictures to avoid the effect of textual narration on the measurement results. Moreover, compared with the traditional projective test represented by the Rorschach Inkblot Test, it is more suitable for subjects from the eastern cultural background. Most of the western projective tests derived from an individual inspiration of the founders or some contingency in clinical practice. Imagery Projective Test was developed under the guidance of the eastern Imagery Communication Psychology. Because of its complete theoretical system and scientific methodology, it can be developed as the needs of academic research or clinical practice, which is a measurement tool for sustainable development.

The last but not the least, the question quantity of Imagery Projective Test is insignificant, the application process consumes a short period, and can be collectively applied, which is more economical and practical than the previous projective tests.

6. Future Prospects of Imagery Projective Test

The introduction of Imagery Communication Psychology into the projective test can fix the existing limitations of the traditional projective test on the foundation of its original advantages. This makes the further development of both projective test and Imagery Communication Psychology possible. However, how to improve ICP guiding the projective test, it still needs to “wade across the stream by feeling the way” for more in-depth and extensive exploration.

In particular, in the clinical practice of ICP, not only can the counselor understand the psychological status of different levels through communication with the clients, but also obtain the information by observing the external performance of the

clients, including their wearing, expression, body language, and so on. Compared with that, the information collected by Imagery Projective Test is relatively limited and it is difficult to be quantified. In other words, although it is also guided by the ICP, the information obtained from Imagery Projective Test is greatly reduced compared with ICP. How to extract the most important and representative images in limited information, so as to quantify the psychological condition of the subjects more accurately, requires researchers to explore more in the future.

At the same time, in order to further verify the scientific and normative nature of Imagery Projective Test, cross-cultural research should be carried out. For example, samples will be taken in different countries and the data will be compared and analyzed. Continue to complete the reliability and validity testing of the Imagery Projective test, promoting the scientific and normative nature of each developed test.

7. Conclusion

As a non-verbal projective test, Imagery Projective Test provides a new technical route and research result for the development of projective test.

Imagery Projective Test realizes the unification of theoretical conception and clinical practice experience. Its compilation process and the testing process of its reliability and validity conforms to the requirements of psychometrics and is worthy of promotion and application.

The symbolic meaning of imagery comes from the collective subconscious of human beings. Imagery Projective Test based on this method has the characteristics of cultural equity and cultural independence and can be used in intercultural studies.

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