

STUDIES ON A PHILIPPINE CHILDREN'S APPERCEPTION TEST: (PCAT)* PART I. CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

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Introduction:

Because of various questions bearing on the validity of the Murray set for other cultures, the necessity for an alternative set of projective test cards had been raised. This is not the place to review the literature on this problem; but in 1965, the author published the *Philippine Thematic Apperception Test (PTAT)*, an experimental edition of which has had some limited circulation among social science researchers, clinical workers, and instructors on projective techniques. The PTAT set was intended for adults and young adults, ages 12 and up, so that it was only logical to

develop another set for children, namely, for ages below 12 years. The *Philippine Children's Apperception Test (PCAT)*, the subject matter of this study, is this set.

The need for a standard set of cards in thematic apperception testing which is suited to Philippine culture has been long felt among researchers, notably in sociology, anthropology, psychology, and education. This need is over and above the traditional requirements of the clinicians, for the personality assessment of their clients since scientific investigations dealing with personality in all the above areas of work have been severely handicapped by

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the absence of common point of reference in terms of a standard projective instrument. Thus, psychologists or anthropologists have been improvising with rough sketches or drawings of situations for projective testing without careful attention to the technical considerations involved in those drawings.

Construction Requirements:

One problem in the construction of the Philippine Children's Apperception Test was whether or not to use the psychodynamic themes which were assumed in Bellak's Children's Apperception Test, (1952, 1954) which were clearly psychoanalytically oriented. One example in the original Bellak set would be Card No. 10, the toilet-spanking scene. Another would be the primal scene picture, Card No. 5. After some very careful assessment of the entire Bellak set, it was decided that many of them represented basic human situations even for the Philippine setting. There is some uncertainty, however, with respect to the primal scene picture (Card No. 5), so that this was eliminated in the Philippine set of cards. It did not imply, however, that the organization or even the characters of the Bellak pictures was going to be adopted. In fact, the author concluded that there were other ways of regarding the matter of basic human situations.

It was thought that the following would constitute the fundamental human situations around which conflicts or sources of gratification may be projected into by children:

1. Being alone, daylight
2. Being with a peer or a sibling, of the same sex or of different sex
3. Being with peers, more than two
4. With parents, under gratification conditions
5. With parent(s), under aversive or conflict conditions
6. Being ill
7. Social situation with adults, other than parents
8. Pregnancy of mother in relation to child (possible sibling rivalry expectations)
9. Early discipline in relation to excretory functions
10. Being alone, in the dark

Every one of the above themes or situations were incorporated in the PCAT. They are relatively independent of any school learnings, particularly the Freudian variety, on which the Bellak series depends quite markedly.

Compare furthermore some general rules laid out by Henry (1956), which the author found quite useful:

"1. The picture must have a *potent latent stimulus* meaning,

"2. A number of pictures should depict *basic interpersonal relations*, such as various family dyads like mother-child, father-child, sibling; also hereosexual scenes, a person alone, two persons of the same age and sex, persons in varying social roles,

3. The pictures should describe different aspects of reality (some pictures depict clear-cut reality, some

illogical reality arrangement, and others bizarre/unreal, or ambiguous reality,

4. The pictures selected and the situation portrayed should be appropriate to the culture of the group being studied. The pictures should be so drawn or selected as to employ persons, dress, objects, and background that are not thought inappropriate by the persons being studied."

Sherwood is cited by Murstein (1963) as requiring that the "images of which each picture is composed must be defined neither with sharpness sufficient to simulate reality nor with a vagueness sufficient to render the identification of the content uncertain," which is the requirement of sufficient ambiguity that would enable the subject to "fill in" the picture contents from his own personal resources.

This was the most difficult part of the construction effort. The author had to work with an artist who had to work in accordance with most of the above specifications and it took some training and several corrective re-drawings before the final version emerged.

Meeting once or twice a week, it took approximately six months to work out the seventeen picture cards of the PCAT with the exceptionally fine painter and illustrator Mr. Daniel Dizon, then of the School of Fine Arts of the University of the Philippines.

Animals vs. Human Characters

In the early 1960's there were a number of investigators in the Philippines who were working on children's projective pictures in connection with their research work; one in education and another in anthropology. Casual conversation with them on the animal character in the pictures which they used revealed that their subjects appeared to be constricted in their responses or otherwise unproductive in their output. They said that perhaps the assumption that animal characters are conducive to fantasy production might be true only in countries where cartoons, zoos, fairy tales, advertising, toys involving animals are part of the lighter side of their culture, but not necessarily, not even for the most part, in the Philippines. Animals could be seen by Filipinos quite often as biting, aggressive, dangerous, dirty, etc. and therefore would elicit undesirable negative reactions that lead to constriction. This is of course a matter for systematic inquiry which, for us, had remained mainly at the hypothetical level. This assumption and the work of others were sufficient basis for the author to construct the PCAT using human forms.

Murstein (1963), has summarized for the investigator the research work on this issue of animals versus human beings, which justifies our initial decision to use human characters. He says: "The experiments clearly stress the superiority of the TAT (human beings) to the CAT (animals) for the conditions described. The assumption that children who can tell stories will more readily identify with and project on to animal figures than to human ones

gained no support at all.* Murstein also makes the point that human figures employed in thematic apperception tests are superior for a broad-band instrument compared to Bellak's animal forms in the CAT.

The PCAT Pictures

As finally constituted and numbered, the PCAT experimental pictures are so follows:

For Boys

Card No.

- 1B Lone boy standing and looking towards the distance
- 2B Two boys, almost the same height, standing
- 3B Boy seated with playing children in distant background
- 4B Two boys, one taller than the other, standing

For Girls

- 1G Lone girl, seated
- 2G Two girls, almost the same size, standing
- 3G Girl seated, with playing children in the distant background
- 4G Two girls, one taller than the other, standing

For both Boys and Girls

- 5 Girl and boy standing
- 6 Dining table scene with parents and child
- 7 Child in bed with doctor standing beside and parents in the background

- 8 Sala scene, three adults and child
- 9 Child with mess on floor, mother standing, father seated in the background
- 10 Pregnant woman with child standing beside her
- 11 Child facing woman whose arm is akimbo
- 12 Child with adult male holding slipper (spanking scene)
- 13 Child in bed, in a dark room
- 14 Blank card

Pictures 1B to 4B for boys are the parallels of Cards 1G to 4G for girls; pictures 5 to 14 are for both boys and girls. So that there are exactly 14 cards that may be administered to the child.

It will be observed that the cards are arranged such that emotionally laden cards are placed towards the last parts of the series, namely, Card 9 (mess on the floor scene), Card 10 (pregnancy-sibling threat), Card 11 (mother child-"scolding" situation), Card 12 (father-child spanking scene), Card 13 (the dark room picture).

Lone child or peer picture are placed in the beginning for the reason that they are less conspicuously emotionally involved. The danger of constricting the productivity and content of the stories of the subject is avoided by putting the aversive pictures towards the end. In general, it was

*In 1965, Bellak evolved the CAT-H (Children's Apperception Test, Human Form) for clinical and research purposes. See Haworth (1966).

thought sound procedure to put the pictures that are more difficult to handle towards the end rather than in the beginning of the series.

Ambiguity vs. Structure

The Bellak Children's Apperception Test (CAT) was avowedly meant to elicit projective responses that are important areas of concern in psychodynamic/psychoanalytic interpretation of the child's functioning, e.g. on feeding or oral problems, sibling rivalry, attitudes towards parental figures, and specifically on the oedipal problem and the primal scene.

The question of validation of the CAT therefore involves some of the corresponding psychodynamic categories of psychoanalysis, because the pictures are purposely structured to make this possible. The work of Byrd and Vitherspoon (1954) attempts this kind of construct validation for the CAT and, in exactly the same way, so does the one of Ilan and Resurreccion (1971) for the PCAT. In other words, the more specific the structure of the pictures, the more feasible it is for the psychological categories to be validated (construct validity). On the other hand, the aim precisely of projective testing is to make the stimuli ambiguous or uncertain in its structure in order to enable the subject to "fill in," as it were, from his own private world the rest of the materials for analysis.

A rough comparison of the Bellak CAT series and PCAT will show that, in the PCAT, there are many more cards of an ambiguous character. The less structured or ambiguous the card, the more likely it is to be, as Murstein

(1963) terms it, a "broad-band" instrument, which is one that elicits a greater variety of themes:

Administration of the PCAT:

As with all tests, the validity problems that are posed by PCAT hinge to a much greater extent on the proper administration of the instrument than with non-projective instruments. Productivity may be affected by an approach that constrains the responding of the child; the manner may be abrupt, the tester may be threatening or evaluative, the context of the performance may be one of a "school examination" or a class recitation, and so on.

In order to throw some light on these problems and in order to obtain some leads on the proper method of administration of the PCAT to Filipino children, a sample of 40 elementary school children was chosen as a test group. This was an "experimental sample", in the broader sense of the term experimental: a range of several age groups, belonging to different socio-economic classes and the sexes, but there were no controls and the like. The purpose was to obtain some notions as to how to go about administering the PCAT and to indicate the main problems for future work.

The Standard Method and the PCAT:

The standard method of administering the CAT which Bellak (1954) follows from that of the Murray CAT "tell(s) the child that we (they) are going to engage in a game in which he has to tell a story about pictures; that he should *tell what is going on, what*

the animals are doing now. At suitable points, the child may be asked *what went on in the story before and what will happen later.*" (Underscoring supplied) There are many other points of detail that should be borne in mind by the trained administrator of the TAT or the CAT. In particular, prompting and encouragement are urged by Bellak, in deference perhaps to limitations imposed by capacities of the child in the earlier stages of development.

Initial procedures using this standard method, which were monitored through electrically-recordings of the testing situation, gave unsatisfactory results in that many of the subjects seemed to be confused by the instructions. It was found that by dividing the instruction into what is going on, what happened before, and what will happen later, some children tended to give descriptive responses. This was to be expected from the instruction because the question "What is going on?" is likely to create a *response set* for descriptive responding.

On the contrary, we found out early enough that one could create a good response set for story-telling by beginning with the instruction "Make a story about/from this picture" (*Gumawa ka ng kuwento tungkol sa larawan na ito*), which carries only one simple message about the whole task, and which does not require the added step of having to integrate the three components of (a) what is going on, (b) what happened before, and (c) what will happen afterwards in the standard procedure. By giving the simpler, shorter instruction to tell a story,

it was found that most children gave stories, needed less prompting or none at all in most cases, and above all removed the fundamental obstacle of a misleading response set which may be regarded as an invalidating procedure for the subject thus being examined.

The Problem of Comprehension of the Task:

Comprehension by the child of the task to tell a story seems to be the main problem in the administration of the PCAT. This was true at all age levels but was more serious as one went down the lower age groups. Kindergarten and first graders (ages from 5½ to 7) required much more attention on whether they actually understood the requirement to tell a story.

"Make a story from this picture" is simple enough to permit but few variations, but one may have nevertheless, with a slightly different wording, or by giving a model example.

Mention of *modelling* is quite absent from all that is written in the literature on how to handle this part of the examination, and we are glad to call attention to this method as one rapid way of communicating to the child what is required of him in the testing situation.

The author happened upon this method for the purposes of the PCAT quite accidentally while, one of the waiting subjects for the next session was watching from some hearing distance in the same room, an examination session which was proceeding quite well. The child that followed

did satisfactorily without too much of the usual preliminaries.

In fine, by varying the instruction a little, or by modelling, by few repetitions as reminder, one may hurdle the main problem of getting the examinee to do his task correctly and avoid the spurious uniformity and oftentimes ineffective, misleading features of the standard method which is usually found in actual practice among professional examiners using projective tests.

The Language of the Examination:

PCAT administration at lower age levels is filled with provoking challenges as to validity of test results as a function of the language used.

If the examiner should begin the examination in English and the language of the home of the testee is not that language, he may generate situation that makes the child produce materials which do not represent accurately his normal personality functioning. Whereas a deliberately probe into the usual, normal language used by the child could easily determine how the test is going to be conducted and in what language.

In our experience with the sample tested for this study, Filipino was the preferred language, with occasional English borrowings, although almost all of them were probably bilinguals in varying degrees of proficiency. Stories in English were not too many and in some of these cases a hint or probe in Filipino easily shifted the child to Filipino.

Sometimes, the child perceived the testing situation as an extension of

classroom activity and the response set was therefore for responding in English. Again, this was easily solved by probing for or modeling alternative ways of talking even before the first picture was presented.

Summary and Conclusions:

A *Philippine Children's Apperception Test (PCAT)*, consisting of 17 pictures and one blank card, 18 pictures in all, was developed for use by researchers and clinicians in the personality assessment or psychotherapy of their clients or subjects.

The PCAT is intended for use with age groups below 12 or thereabouts and is the complement to the *Philippine Thematic Apperception Test (PTAT)* which is intended for adults, ages 12 and above.

The PCAT was constructed in accordance with technical requirements ordinarily expected of projective pictures. Theoretically and on the basis of experimental evidence presented by other workers in the field, the PCAT should be a productive, broad-band instrument. It employs humans instead of animals for the characters in the pictures.

Also, there are more ambiguous pictures in the PCAT than in the CAT of Bellak which is structured towards the tapping of materials that are important from the psychoanalytic point of view. The presence of a greater number of ambiguous pictures in the PCAT is another factor that contributes to the broad-band nature of this instrument.

Some problems of administration of the PCAT, which have important bearings on the validity of the test, are explored. The standard method or instruction in the administration of the PCAT is discussed and suggestions are given on how to improve on this method through simplification and

rewording of the instructions and through modeling.

Finally, it was indicated that validity may be affected by inattention to the problem of language of the examination. For the sample of children studied, Filipino seems to be the contextual or expectation factors.

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