Rosenzweig picture frustration study

A projective test administered to assess personality characteristics, in which the subject is shown scenes depicting moderately frustrating situations and asked what the frustrated person depicted would probably do, or how the subject would react in such situations.

The Rosenzweig Picture Frustration test consists of 24 cartoon pictures, each portraying two persons in a frustrating situation. Each picture contains two “speech balloons,” a filled one for the “frustrator” or antagonist, and a blank one for the frustrated person, or protagonist. The subject is asked to fill in the blank balloon with his or her response to the situation, and the responses are scored in relation to a number of psychological defense mechanisms. For example, responses are scored as to whether, and to what degree, they indicate that the subject exhibits aggression toward the source of the frustration, assumes blame or guilt as the cause of the frustration, or justifies, minimizes, or denies the frustration. The score is based on a total of nine factors, derived from combinations of three types of aggression (obstacle-dominance, ego-defense, and need-persistence) and three directions of aggression (extragression, imaggression, and intragression). However, testers often analyze the subject’s responses more informally and intuitively.

Originally developed for adults by Saul Rosenzweig, the test is now available in versions for children and adolescents. The empirical validity of the Rosenzweig Picture Frustration Study and other projective techniques is disputed by some authorities.

Further Reading

Julian B. Rotter

1916-
American psychologist best known for his social learning theory of personality.

Julian B. Rotter was born in Brooklyn, New York. His parents were Jewish immigrants, and he was their third son. His father operated a profitable business until it ran into trouble during the Great Depression. The economic downturn greatly affected Rotter and his family, and made him realize how strongly people are affected by their environments. In high school, Rotter’s interest in psychology began when he read books by eminent psychotherapists Alfred Adler and Sigmund Freud. He attended Brooklyn College, where he received a bachelor of arts degree in chemistry in 1937. While in college he started going to seminars given by Adler as well as attending meetings of Adler’s Society of Individual Psychology.

After graduating, Rotter entered the State University of Iowa. He minored in speech pathology and studied with Wendell Johnson, a linguist whose work focused on meanings in language. Johnson’s ideas had a great influence on Rotter in terms of his coming to believe that language should be used very carefully in psychology in terms of how one defines terms and theoretical constructs. One of Rotter’s instructors in Iowa was Kurt Lewin, the Prussian-born psychologist known primarily for field theory. Rotter received his master of arts in psychology degree in 1938. Rotter then did a one-year internship in clinical psychology at Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts. At that time there were very few internships in clinical psychology available. He met his wife to be, Clara Barnes, at the hospital and they married in 1941. They would have two children.

In 1939, Rotter enrolled in Indiana University’s doctoral program in clinical psychology, one of the few schools offering such a program at that time. He received his doctorate in 1941. In doing a predoctoral internship before receiving his Ph.D. in clinical psychology, he was one of the first clinical psychologists to be trained in what is now the standard model. During World War II Rotter entered the United States Army and served as a personnel consultant in the armored force before becoming an aviation psychologist in the Air Force. In 1946 he joined the faculty of Ohio State University and served as director for its clinical psychology training program from 1951 to 1959, and in 1962 to 1963.

Rotter was very active in setting up standards for the training of clinical psychologists. In 1949, Rotter participated in what became known as the Boulder Conference where training requirements were developed for clinical psychologists at the doctoral level. He argued that psychologists should not be trained as psychiatrists (medical doctors who, after receiving their primary training in medicine, then focus on the psychological). Rotter felt clinical psychologists should be trained in academic departments of psychology as scientists and therapists (the scientist-practitioner model), being steeped in the study of general psychology throughout their training.

While at Ohio State, Rotter began work on his social learning theory of personality and in 1954, Social Learning and Clinical Psychology was published. In this book he laid out the basic tenets of his social learning theory, the main idea of which is that personality is real-
ly the interaction between a person and his or her environment. Personality does not reside within an individual independent of the environment he or she is in. By the same token, an individual's behaviors are not simple, reflexive responses to an objective environment. Rather, the environment an individual responds to or acts in is dependent on that particular individual's learning experiences and life history. What stimuli people respond to are shaped by their experiences. Two people might experience the same environment in very different ways. For example, Joe might respond to a visit to the doctor with apprehension because his last visit involved getting a painful shot, whereas Sam would not be apprehensive at all because his last visit was pleasant and did not involve any discomfort. To Rotter, personality is a relatively fixed group of dispositions to react to situations in a certain manner. He stressed that most learning takes place in social situations with other people. Rotter's personality theory was the first to comprehensively integrate cognition, in the form of expectancy, with learning and motivation, in the form of reinforcement.

In 1966, Rotter published a monograph entitled Generalized Expectancies for Interval Versus External Control of Reinforcement, where he explored people's expectancies as to whether they can influence the reinforcements they receive. At one extreme are people who believe that reinforcements are due to fate or luck. They would be said to have an external locus of control. At the other extreme are those who believe that reinforcements are a function of one's behavior. They have an internal locus of control. Rotter also created the Internal-External Locus of Control Scale to measure individual differences in this characteristic. The scale has been widely used, and research on I-E flourished in the 1970s. This dimension of internal versus external locus of control has come to be seen as a relatively stable dimension of personality.

Rotter has served as president of the divisions of Clinical Psychology and Social and Personality Psychology of the American Psychological Association. In 1963, Rotter left Ohio State to become director of the Clinical Psychology Training Program at the University of Connecticut. He retired in 1987 and is currently Professor Emeritus of Clinical Psychology. In 1989, Rotter received the American Psychological Association's Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award. His wife passed away in 1985.

Further Reading


Further Information
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Benjamin Rush
1746-1813
American physician, teacher, and statesman known as the "father of American psychiatry" for his work with the mentally ill.

Benjamin Rush was born near Philadelphia. He attended the College of New Jersey (the future Princeton University), intending to enter the ministry. Finally deciding in favor of medicine, Rush began his medical studies in Philadelphia, serving a six-year apprenticeship to a local physician. He then enrolled in the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, where many American physicians received their training at the time. Rush earned his M.D. degree in 1768, having concentrated in the study of chemistry. Returning to America, he began his own private practice the following year, when he was also appointed to a teaching position at the College of Philadelphia, becoming the first professor of chemistry in North America and authoring the first chemistry text by an American (Syllabus of a Course of Lectures on Chemistry). Rush's medical practice grew rapidly. He was known in particular for his strong endorsement of the contemporary practice of treating fevers by bloodletting and purges, as a result of his conviction that fevers resulted from arterial tension which could only be relieved by bloodletting. In severe cases, he recommended that as much as four-fifths of the patient's blood be drained.

Rush played a prominent role in the American Revolution. In 1776, he served as a member of the Continental Congress, and was also a signer of the Declaration of Independence. He also served from 1776 to 1778 as Physician General of the Continental Army. Rush was an enthusiastic supporter of the U.S. Constitution and a member of the Pennsylvania Convention that ratified it.

In 1787, Rush took charge of the treatment of mental patients at the Pennsylvania Hospital, beginning the work that eventually earned him the title "father of American psychiatry." While his treatment methods—which includ-