The Content Analysis of Rorschach in Attesting the Sex Offenders

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Abstract. The Rorschach test is one of the psychological tests widely used in various assessment settings, including in studies related to sexual offenses. However, such research is scarce, although the level of sexual violence in Indonesia increases yearly. Sexual violence is often associated with the sexual drives that humans have in themselves. In this case, Rorschach can provide an overview of the individual's drives, ideas, and social relationships. The current study aimed to find the personality profiles of sex offenders. Therefore, this study collected Rorschach data from 46 male sex offenders over 11 years in Depok City, Indonesia. Based on content analysis, this study found several prominent characteristics of sex offenders, such as exhibited difficulties in adaptation due to low intellectual capacity, poor emotional regulation, and empathy that other causes difficulty to build strong relationships with others. They also suppressed sexual urges, but they were more likely to express it impulsively with low intellectual capacity and emotional regulation. These various personality characteristics possessed by sex offenders will undoubtedly impact the intervention process they go through to gain insight from their experience. The results are expected to be an input for developing interventions for sex offenders not to repeat their actions in the future.

Keywords: content analysis; man; Rorschach; sex offender

The Rorschach test is a psychological test developed by Hermann Rorschach, consisting of 10 cards, each containing an ambiguous ink stimulus (John Exner, 2003; John Exner & Erdberg, 2005; Klopfer & Davidson, 1962). The test's primary assumption is that environmental stimuli are shaped by an individual's needs, motives, conflicts, and sequence of perceptions (Groth-Marnat, 2009). The need for the order will culminate, become extensive, and clear when an individual faces an ambiguous stimulus such as the inkblot. This condition demands an individual to develop imagery, ideas, and personal internal relations as a response to the inkblot. It makes the Rorschach functions as a test that elicits an individual's response when facing ambiguous situations (Groth-Marnat, 2009).

A response interpretation of the Rorschach test varies and is derived from prominent figures that have examined the interpretations (Groth-Marnat, 2009). These figures developed different scoring systems, making the response interpretations equally as various. In 1957, five Rorschach scoring, and interpretation systems were developed. The most popular scoring and interpretation method is Beck and Klopfer's system (Goldstein, 1938; Groth-Marnat, 2009). S.J. Beck as cited in (Groth-Marnat, 2009) suggested that individual responses to the Rorschach involve a cognitive-perception process whereby individuals shape and organize their perceptions into a meaningful response. This

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cognitive-perception process tends to describe a person's general response toward their world. For instance, a person who elaborates their perception toward the inkblot in a detailed manner tends to manifest similar behavior outside the examination room.

On the other hand, B. Klopfer as cited in (Groth-Marnat, 2009) interpreted Rorschach responses by inclining toward Freud and Jung's personality phenomenology and theories. It led to a strong emphasis on interpretation based on symbolization and the inherent quality of an individual's Rorschach content of responses. His opinion has reassured Klopfer that Rorschach responses are a product of fantasy as triggered by the inkblot stimulus itself. For example, a person whose response to an inkblot is by perceiving it as a threat may have similar perceptions toward their world. Other than this, the content may be the easiest response to score.

It is inarguable that Klopfer's system has several limitations. The system is considered unstandardized, causing interpretational differences between raters. It encouraged Exner in 1974 to develop a scoring system called the Comprehensive System (CS) that eases interpretational and analytical needs for Rorschach responses (Arnon et al., 2011; Evans, 2017; John Exner, 2003; John Exner & Erdberg, 2005; Schott, 2014). Despite its development, studies have shown that CS is still unable to facilitate research needs on specific topics. CS tends to reduce a large amount of information from responses given by participants, as the scoring system lacks a well-formulated content category (Gabriel & Opgenoorth, 2000; Peterson, 2010). Furthermore, this interpretation method also lacks a psychometric foundation, such as validity and reliability (Fontan et al., 2016). This further causes clients' response interpretations to lack depth, even though it is essential to understand the stimulus and interpret response contents from each card (Peterson, 2010). Therefore, understanding a subject's condition can be done in greater depth during research.

The Rorschach test has been used in various settings, such as clinical settings, research, and training. In clinical and training contexts, the test helps practitioners improve their understanding of clients, and design precise and appropriate interventions for the issues faced by their clients. Also, the test helps practitioners measure therapeutic development based on the ongoing intervention (de Almeida Beckmann & da Costa, 2019; Khalily, 2009). Research on sexual violence cases frequently focuses on the content a subject provides during the Rorschach administration, such as M. and H. (2000) research on Rorschach responses among female rape victims. These female rape victims presented more atypical response contents of threat, paranoia, birth, and rebirth. Cerney (1995) study on the healing process of sexual assault victims also attempted to understand the responses provided by subjects through Rorschach test administrations. This study also included observations of subjects while being tested during response interpretations. Meanwhile, other studies have focused on the response content among sex offenders. Some studies analyzed Rorschach test response contents of sex offenders and compared them with non-sexual violence offenders (Lagan, 2009; Newsome, 2011; Ryan et al., 2008).

Although the Rorschach test has been used numerous times in studies within the context of sexual assault, research data in Indonesia is still limited despite the considerably high number of sexual assault cases in Indonesia. Of 13,384 cases identified by the National Commission on Women (2018)

across various sexual assault case management institutions, there were 9,609 cases (71%) that occurred within personal relationships whereby offenders and victims are acquainted. Of these, as many as 31% are sexual violence cases. This number is still a rough estimate, considering how frequently case reports overlap. For instance, human trafficking reports are often reported separately from sexual assault, although in reality such cases often involve sexual assault.

The prevalence of sexual assault cases urges researchers to understand the personality profiles of sex offenders. Personality profiles will function as a considerable element for legal authorities in determining sanctions for offenders so that appropriate punitive actions can be carried out following their offenses. Other than this, the Rorschach test is also considered resilient toward 'faking good' responses (Dewangan & Roy, 2015; Grossman et al., 2002; Mihura et al., 2013). It may provide vital information for forensic cases. Personality profiles will also provide preliminary information for social workers that regularly handle sex offenders by working with them and helping them generate insight. Therefore, it is expected that they will show contrition upon their deviant behavior and refrain from repeating such conduct in the future.

Method

Dataset

The study used Rorschach test data from suspects of child or female sex offenders who are awaiting trial at Depok City Police Station. This is secondary data archived by the Department of Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia. The data was gathered by graduate students majoring in Adult Clinical Profession at the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia, from 2006 – 2017. All participant data were gathered under the supervision of a psychologist who is also a lecturer in the Adult Clinical Profession major at the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia. Data consisted of in-depth interviews on childhood experiences and case chronology, observation, case analysis, and psychological test interpretations. Graduate students usually collect various psychological tests as a tool to refine their understanding of their clients. Therefore, this research has permission to use the data from the Head of the Department of Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Psychology Universitas Indonesia, and all the cases' supervisors.

Of all available data, the study used data from 46 participants with an age range of 17 – 70 years. The participants all share similar demographic backgrounds, which are males, reside in the city of Depok, West Java, are from middle-to-low economies, and are high school graduates or under it. Selections were considered based on appropriate test administration, such as complete notations of responses, conducted inquiries, and testing-the-limit phases as needed. This selection is critical to validate the accuracy of content scores.

Data analysis

Out of all the Rorschach tests collected, the research team created a table for clients' responses to each card. The team categorized various contents based on Klopfer and Davidson (1962) content scoring

system. Due to the aim of this study, this scoring system can interpret the sex offenders' responses in more detail following the set of categorization on it. It helps to see the responses of sex offenders one by one and translate their symbolic meaning to be interpreted and concluded as their personality profile. The content groups are made for each inkblot, so that data on content distribution is obtained from each card. This distribution is useful in providing a detailed account of the variety of participants' response content. It will further help in analyses of the contents.

The content distribution is presented in Table 1. This study conducted content analyses from participants' responses with several considerations, such as the facility provided by each stimulus on each card, the number of responses participants provided for each card, the quality of responses based on form level rating (FLR), and participants' commentary on each stimulus or the response itself.

Results

Based on content distribution data in Table 1, it is evident that participants were able to provide more than one response to a stimulus. On average, the participants provided one to three responses for each stimulus, although several participants provided more than three responses to the given stimulus. Cards I and X generated the most responses. Contrary to the stimulus in card X, responses generated from a card I had a relatively good FLR (FLR=1) and composed of responses with popular contents.

In general, most of the participants were able to provide proper responses to the stimuli presented on Rorschach cards. Despite this, participants also showed difficulty in providing adequate responses to complex stimuli, such as cards VIII, IX, and X. Rejection responses in the proper performance phase were found on card VI adding up to 5 times. Meanwhile, card VII received the second most rejection response, three times. Card VI is known as the 'sex' card and card VII as the 'mother' card (Klopfer & Davidson, 1962).

Subsequently, participants provided many responses with animal contents (A) across all card stimuli. On card III, the number of human (H) content responses was equal to animals (A). It is acceptable considering that H on card III is considered a popular (P) content. Content H is also the second most frequent content following A.

Table 1
Data Collection Results

CONTENT	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	Response Total
A	64	24	25	24	54	20	19	34	15	39	318
H	5	14	25	2	4	3	5	3	5	6	72
At	7	7	6	6	2	5	1	15	8	10	67
Obj	5	6	5	-	-	11	6	5	4	6	48
Plant	-	-	1	2	-	5	1	5	8	11	33
(H)	3	1	1	12	1	2	2	1	5	3	31

CONTENT	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	Response Total
N	-	2	3	-	-	3	4	6	10	3	31
Hd	1	2	4	2	2	1	5	2	-	5	24
Ad	2	6	3	1	-	1	4	-	1	1	19
Abs	2	2	2	-	-	1	2	2	1	1	13
Sex	-	4	-	-	-	3	-	2	-	1	10
Cloud	-	-	-	1	-	-	5	-	1	1	8
Arch	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	2	8
(A)	1	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	2	-	7
Emblem	-	1	2	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	6
Geo	1	1	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	5
Blood	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Skin	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	4
Mask	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4
Art	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	4
Food	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3
(Hd)	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
Color	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3
Fire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Rontgen	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
Smoke	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
Cloth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
AH	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
Letter	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Response Total	95	78	79	57	63	61	60	83	65	96	737

Discussions

Overall, the response contents most frequently provided by sex offenders who participated in this study are the animal (A) category, reaching up to 43.1 percent. This reflects participants' adjustment difficulties toward the environment (Klopfer & Davidson, 1962; Klopfer et al., 1954). Adjustment difficulties may be caused by a lack of creativity, therefore limiting their responses to content A on almost all cards. Several contents A responses provided by participants have a negative form level rating (FLR). This shows how the participants have inadequate intellectual capacity to solve the problems they encounter. The lack of intellectual capacity also affected the way participants deal with the demands of the outside world, causing them to perform actions that are less appropriate or even inappropriate with the norms of their surroundings. It is also supported by responses to card X that have low FLR and is pragmatic in quality. Previous research has shown similarity to this study's

finding, whereby sex offenders present lower intelligence (IQ) compared to non-sex offenders or other violence offenders (Cantor et al., 2005; Craig et al., 2012; Miyaguchi & Shirataki, 2014; Seto & Lalumière, 2010).

The second most frequent response is content H at 9.8 percent. The high numbers of H impressions indicate how offenders still have interest in developing relationships with others. The H content is frequently found in card III, in which the card does demand human content as a response to it. The quality of their responses is considered good (FLR=1) (Klopfer & Davidson, 1962), whereby their responses are following the stimulus presented in the card. In observation of the high number of responses presented from the card I, in general, all participants significantly struggled to be accepted by their new environment.

In line with this finding, prison studies have found that sex offenders present more H responses compared to non-sex offenders (Young et al., 2010). Other studies have shown how sexual homicide offenders exhibit interest in other people and the outside world compared to non-sexual offending psychopaths (Gacono et al., 2000; Gannon et al., 2011). Despite these findings, during inquiries in the following cards, statements of a sexual nature were present when participants elaborated on content H, such as buttocks, genitalia, breasts, and rape. This response appeared as many as 2.44 percent. It indicates how interpersonal relations may be oriented towards a basic physiological (physical) or sexual need.

Response interpretations toward each Rorschach card stimulus must be connected to participants' knowledge and life background, and how they provide responses and treat Rorschach cards (Gandino, 2019; Klopfer & Davidson, 1962). Regarding previous studies among sex offenders, responses with sexual content are typically found (Breedy, 1995; Dewangan & Roy, 2015; Morgan & Viglione, 1992). However, responses with sexual content are usually found during performance proper. It may be due to the context of test-taking that is part of the police's criminal investigation sequence. This situation risks participants to be defensive and attempt to self-protect from anything with a sexual load. This argument is supported by the emergence of several contents under the nature category (N; 9.1%), anatomy (At; 4.2%), and art object (Art; 0.54%). Many of these contents indicate participants' defensive attitudes (Klopfer & Davidson, 1962). Previous studies suggest the possibility that when under pressure, participants who are sex offenders will demonstrate good responses and refrain from producing responses that do not conform to the norms of their surroundings (Benjestorf et al., 2013).

Besides, 56 percent of participants produced content H in their responses, while the remaining 46 percent did not produce H responses toward other stimuli. It shows how a majority of the participants may still have interests in keeping relations and can maintain relations with people around them (Klopfer et al., 1954; Wood et al., 2010). On the contrary, 46 percent of the individuals who did not produce content H in their responses indicate lower emphatic skills towards others (Klopfer et al., 1954). Low empathic skills may cause them to have difficulty in developing meaningful relations with others. Even if they do have relations, they will have difficulty maintaining them. The social relationships they have tend to be superficial and simplistic. Aside from this, failure to perceive human figures may indicate a lack of control and awareness toward personal feelings and urges (Klopfer et al.,

1954). It increases their likelihood to react toward environmental stimuli impulsively.

The anatomy (At) content is the next most frequently produced response, at 9.1 percent. This result corresponds to another study that found sex offenders to present more At responses compared to non-sex offenders (Hughes et al., 1992; Mihura et al., 2015; Wood et al., 2015). This study showed one participant whose responses were mostly content At across ten cards (60%). Hughes et al. (1992) also added how participants in the study who perceived At contents tend to commit sexual crimes. The high number of At responses also indicates the way participants show great attention towards the body (Klopfer et al., 1954).

Additionally, concerning human figures, human content in the form of mythological figures ((H)) was also found, such as ghosts and monsters. This content appeared up to 4.2 percent. This content indicates how participants try to identify a stimulus that is close to themselves (Klopfer & Davidson, 1962; Klopfer et al., 1954; Zeligman, 2020). By generating a mythological response, or imaginative human figures, participants convey the situations they encounter beyond their mental framework so that the situation may appear irrelevant to themselves (Klopfer et al., 1954). It indicates self-isolation from the environment in a certain way or seeking comfort in their imaginative world.

Meanwhile, facial responses were also found which function as part of the human figure (Hd). This response appeared up to 3.3 percent. Facial content responses may indicate a tendency for subjects to be preoccupied with the persona or external qualities (Klopfer & Davidson, 1962; Klopfer et al., 1954)). It causes them to focus on their external rather than internal qualities. They also attempt to use their personas in relation to others, causing a lack of self-presentation as their true selves. Therefore, these sex offenders tend to require an extended time to confide in others.

Furthermore, card VI also received the most rejection responses during performance proper. Card VI is the 'sex' card (Klopfer & Davidson, 1962); therefore, participants' responses indicate how they struggle in concealing their sexual urges. Regardless, of this, the emergence of sexual responses in other cards shows how sexual urges appear out of place. In the context of this research, sexual urges tend to manifest in the form of sexual violence.

Other than card VI, responses to card VII also require attention. Card VII is the next card receiving the most rejection responses during performance proper. The responses from card VII tend to have a low or negative FLR, such as the letter "U", clouds, etc. which indicates how participants are experiencing issues in viewing female figures. In this regard, there is a possibility that offenders tend to view female figures as sexual objects. The social-feminist theory explains how figures seen as weak are frequently considered potential sexual objects (Szymanski et al., 2011). It may be the reason why a vast majority of sexual violence victims are underage children as well as females.

When examining many contents, A and H responses, participants understand the rules in developing social relations reasonably well. However, participants also demonstrate impulsivity as a response to uncontrollable urges (Klopfer & Davidson, 1962; Klopfer et al., 1954). The high number of unfitting sex responses suggests how these urges are applied in maladaptive behavior (Klopfer et al., 1954). In the context of this study, sexual urges are expressed through the sexual objectification of underage children and females. Lack of control is exacerbated by the inability to regulate emotions, as

seen through inattention toward colors in cards VIII, IX, and X. Emotions, in this case, are disregarded in social relations.

This barrier is supported by low intellectual capacity and ability to problem-solve, evident through low FLR in card X and responses that tend to be pragmatic towards it. Responses with anatomical and floral content also frequently appear. This suggests incapability in solving problems effectively (Klopfer et al., 1954). Responses to card X tend to have contents such as pincer animals, sharp objects, fireworks, and other symbols of aggression and conflict. It implies how the inability to solve problems elicits aggressive behavior in resolving such problems (Klopfer et al., 1954). Prior studies have also found responses with aggressive qualities, such as on card IX "*two people with guns, they both have long claws and are on both sides, appear to be fighting, shooting at each other*" and responses to the card I "*two men handling a woman roughly. They are holding the woman's hand as if they were hurting her and taking her someplace*" (Breedy, 1995).

Moreover, this study produced several findings that are in line with previous research on sex offenders, such as difficulty in modulating affect, inability to solve problems, propensity to behave aggressively under conflict, and hindrance in maintaining deeply emotional interpersonal relations (Breedy, 1995; Klopfer & Davidson, 1962; Klopfer et al., 1954; Morgan & Viglione, 1992). Notwithstanding these similar results, this study also found a distinction, particularly in reality testing. Belcher and Boston (1995) found that one of the main profiles of sex offenders is inadequate reality testing. However, this study shows how offenders have good reality testing. It also did not show low self-esteem and suspicion towards other people's perceptions, as suggested in Belcher and Boston (1995). Nonetheless, a tendency for self-isolation from the environment was also found in this study.

This study's limitations occurred during Rorschach data administration and collection that was, in the majority, conducted by female administrators. It may have created a barrier to disclose their responses fully. Also, this study only focused on content responses given by the participants. A comprehensive personality profile across these sex offenders would generate greater detail if determinant responses, location, and time of response were included in interpretation. Data collection was also limited to sex offenders in one city.

Conclusions

Based on content analyses of Rorschach cards, this study discovered several distinctive characteristics of sex offenders as participants. In general, these sex offenders demonstrated difficulty in adjustment. It may have several causes, such as low intellectual capacity and difficulty expressing suitable emotions. These offenders still show interest in having relations with other people. However, it is challenging to have meaningful relations. They also require a relatively long time to confide in others. One of the leading causes of this is those sex offenders are more likely to have difficulty empathizing and regulating emotions. This difficulty also affects their ability to control urges from within, such as sexual urges. Sexual urges are one of the greatest drives within a person, resulting in a tendency to be expressed impulsively.

Suggestion

Nevertheless, it is expected that the results will serve as preliminary data for further studies relating to personality profiles of sex offenders on a grander scale. Findings from this study may also function as a guiding point for court decision-making and advanced interventions in handling sex offenders in Indonesia. Lastly, this study also provides new evidence of validity on the use of Rorschach content scoring interpretation within clinical and forensic settings. Future studies may compare the clinical data obtained with personality tests, such as the MMPI and Personality Assessment Inventory, to ensure the validity and reliability of the Rorschach test.

Declarations

Author's Contribution

LH built the theoretical concept, managing and interpreting the data collection, and writing most part of the manuscript. AHM and BSHH interpreted the data collection. CAD wrote the sexual offender theory and its relationship with the Rorschach interpretation. EKP built the theoretical concept of this study.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this research.

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