

Beyond Validating the Szondi-test

Effect of drive classes on attraction evaluation

Császár A.¹, Galambos R.¹, Tóth R.¹, Káplár M.¹

¹ Institute of Psychology, University of Pécs, Hungary

The goal of the study

The statistical verification of projective personality tests - including the Szondi-test- is always a long and complex process, and several scientific studies even state that it is almost impossible. Projective personality tests are widely used in clinical practice; they provide reliable information about the unconscious aspects of the client and help to get a global picture about the personality. These tests usually have a high ecological validity, but their statistical validity is "questionable" at best. For this reason it is hardly possible to rely on the results of these tests in scientific research. The aim of our current study was to examine the statistically verify the results of the Szondi-test. And partially support its validity.

About the Szondi-test

The Szondi-Test is a projective, a verbal test well-known and widely used throughout Europe. The test was developed by Leopold Szondi, a Hungarian psychiatrist, who used the method to map the latent hereditary factors of his client's personality. Szondi based his method on his genotropic theory, which describes that the drives resulting from the latent genes will direct the choices of an individual in love, friendship, occupation, diseases and sometimes the form of death.

The test itself consists of 48 portraits of mentally ill individuals, representing the overload of the 8 drives (homosexual, sadist, epileptic, hysteric, catatonic, paranoid, depressed, maniac) determining the personality, described by Szondi. The 8 drives build four vectors each containing two of the drives: Sexual (h, s), Paroxysmal (e, hy), Ego (k, p) and Contact (d, m). The portraits are presented in groups of 8 in 6 series. The client has to select among the pictures, first the two most "liked" then the two most "disliked" finally from the remaining the two more "liked" ones. To be able to evaluate the test it has to be taken 2 or 10 times. Although the Szondi-test is clearly a projective method, the subjectivity of the examiner is limited as the evaluation is based on the client choices. The examiner does not have to evaluate and interpret the verbal answers of the subject. As there is no symbolic interpretation during the quantitative evaluation of the test results, the subjective view of the examiner has no effect on them. There were already multiple attempts on the verification of the test in the past, but neither of them was able to provide satisfying result. The main reason behind these failures is that the researchers have changed the evaluation of the test thus creating non-reliable results. However the problem of the test's validity is still important, as it is not only used in the clinical practice, but in vocational assessment, forensic psychology and in employee selection as well.

Hypothesis

Szondi described the system of drive classes of the test, which can be defined objectively during the evaluation, and can be computed from the picture choices of the test-taker. He states that it describes the character of the client's personality well. Our hypothesis was based on this statement and on his genotropic theory, which basically states that people prefer others with the same gene pool for friendship and love. We expected that the participants would find the members of their own drive class more attractive than the members of other drive classes.

Sample

48 (24 male, 24 female, mean age: 22,21, sd: 1,83) voluntary undergraduate students participated in the study. The sample group consisted of normal population, none having a clinical diagnosis. Our goal was to have a homogenous sample in age and socioeconomic class, to be able to exclude differences coming from the effect of external variables, which could distort our data.

	Age	SD
Male	22.71	0.43
Female	21.71	0.28

Method

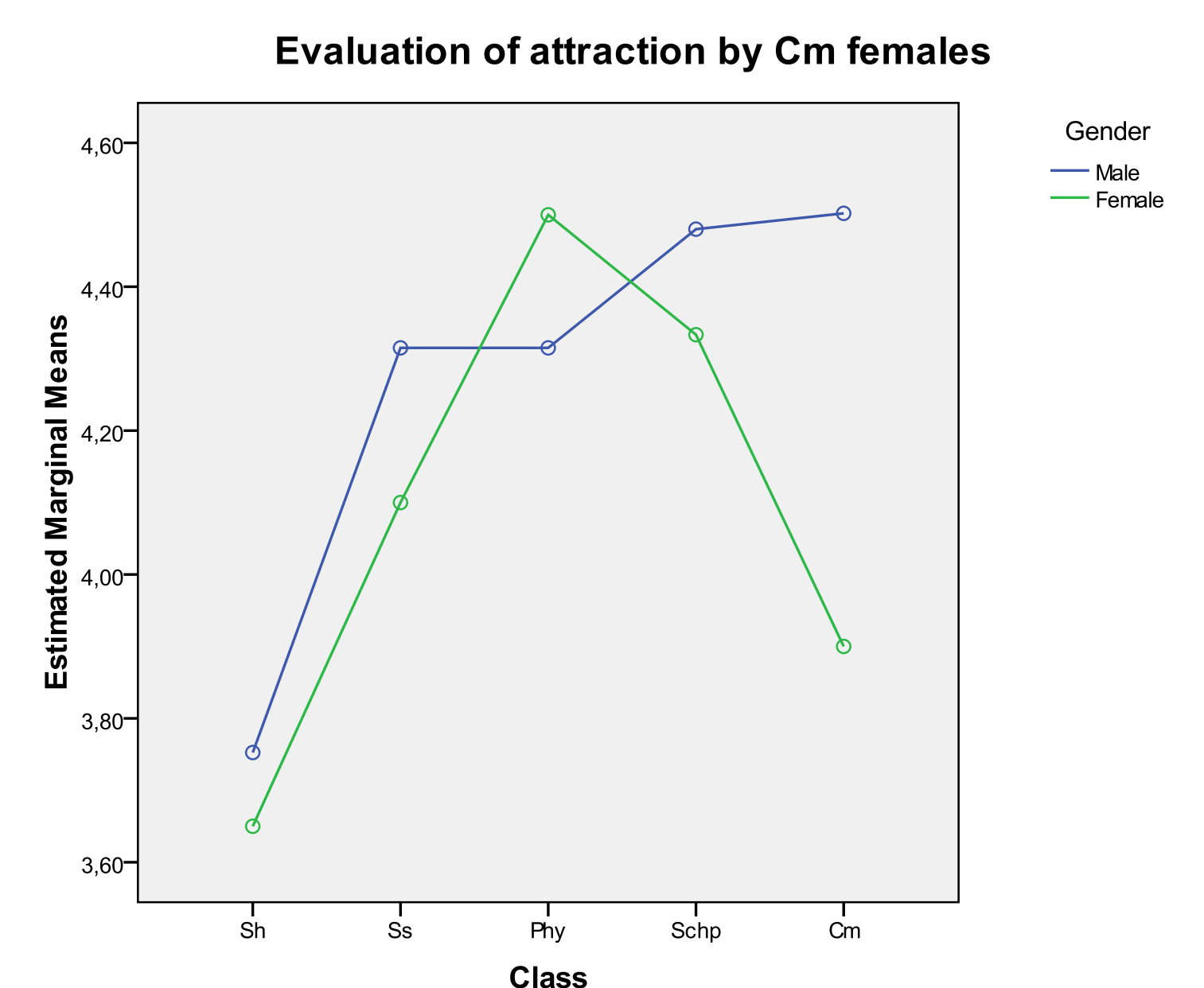
The experiment consisted of 3 steps:

- 10 profile Szondi-test were administered to all of the participants and the drive classes were determined, which later was used as a grouping variable,
- next pictures were taken of the participants among controlled circumstances,
- finally, participants were asked to rate all the taken pictures by attraction on a 7 grade Likert-scale.

Results:

We analyzed the results of the male and female participants separately because attraction choices vary between males and females. The sample was divided into 16 smaller groups; most of them were not eligible for further statistical analysis. Finally we used the photos of the Sh, Ss, Phy, Schp and Cm drive classes. Mixed Sample Analysis of Variances was conducted on the data of the Ss and Cm drive classes. The results show that:

- the photos of the female participants are significantly more attractive than the photos of male participants ($F(1,34)=35,557, p<0,01, (I-J)=0,351 p<0,01$)
- the Sh drive class was considered significantly less attractive by the whole sample ($F(4,1440)=18,168 p<0,01$)
- the male participants of the Ss and Cm drive classes evaluated the female participants of the Ss drive class significantly more attractive to the male participants of the Ss and Cm drive classes ($t(3)=-3,535 p<0,05$ and $t(6)=-3,655 p<0,05$)
- there was a tendency where the female members of the Cm drive class evaluated the male participants of their own class as more attractive, while under evaluated their own gender. ($t(4)=1,649 p<0,18$).



Discussion

Although based on our results the original hypothesis could not be verified, the data showed that our results correspond with Szondi's statements.

- According to Szondi, the Sh drive class is a temporary class which appears when a person is in adolescence or enters a new period of his life. Most of the participants were undergraduate university students in the age of post-adolescence. In this period of life people have to cope with the new situation of the responsibility expected by the university life, and several of them are still trying to found their identity. This uncertainty in the personality could be unconsciously recognized on the pictures, that could cause the lower evaluation of them.
- Szondi described the psychological changes as a revolving stage, where the different drive elements of the drive structure - depending on the actual life period and needs of the individual - can appear in the foreground of personality. He stated that the Ss and Cm classes usually alternate with each other. This can explain why the female participants of the Ss drive class are more attractive to the male participants of the Ss and Cm classes.
- In two drive classes (Ss, Cm) we found differences in the evaluation of the members of own class based on gender. The bases of over evaluating the opposite gender while under evaluate the same member shows the competition in mate choice in a specified group, supporting Szondi's genotropic choice theory:
- The Ss drive class is a class dominated by sexual energy. By nature men are more sensitive to sexual cues and in the members of this drive class the level of sexual energy is higher both in males and females. That's why the sexually more sensitive males over evaluated the attractiveness of the female participants in their own Ss class, while under evaluating their own gender.
- The members of the Cm drive class are relationship focused. Women by nature are more sensitive for this kind of cue than men. The statistical tendency in the evaluation differences implicated that the female participants over evaluated the male participants of their own class because of the unconscious recognition of the relationship orientation of them. At the same time they under evaluated their own gender.

Limitations and suggestions for further research

The sample consisted of small groups determined by the drive classes, that has limited the possible statistical analysis of the data. In later research bigger sample and better deviation of drive classes is needed.

Some of our participant knew each other personally, that had a great influence on their attraction evaluation. In further research the chosen participants have to be personally independent from each other.

Szondi states that drive classes have an effect on the choices of friends. In a further research it should be examined if an individual's friends are chosen from the individual's drive class, independently from mate choice.

