Probation Officers’ judgements: A study using Personal Construct Theory

Abstract:

Summary: Social workers and probation officers are frequently called upon to make judgements about the likelihood of re-offending. However, whilst the use of risk assessment instruments is now commonplace, the cognitive processes through which these judgements are made are rarely explicit.

Findings: This study used the repertory grid method to elicit the constructs in their judgements. The findings are discussed in relation to two theoretical frameworks for understanding decision making: heuristics and image theory.

Application: It is suggested that the design and implementation of assessment tools should be undertaken in the light of the relevant decision making frameworks.
Introduction

Criminal justice social work context

Probation officers and many other professionals make numerous risk decisions on a daily basis. The Council of Europe (2010) notes: "Probation work involves making judgements and taking decisions. While the actions of staff are circumscribed by law and by agency policy, staff shall be trained and encouraged to exercise their professional judgement to take valid decisions whilst recognising the need for accountability (p.6)."

In Northern Ireland, where this study took place, all probation officers are qualified social workers. Internationally this is the most common training for this type of work although, in England and Wales, a social work qualification is not required to work with offenders in the equivalent probation services. There is no Probation Service in Scotland but similar roles are carried out by "criminal justice social workers" with a professional social work qualification. To avoid repetition this article will refer to "probation officers" generally whilst recognising the need for accountability (p.6). Professional knowledge is increasingly organised into standardised systems. For example, it is generally recognised, in professional probation practice, that the level of risk needs to be identified before any subsequent decisions regarding intervention can be made. Andrews and Dowden (2006) talk about the "central eight" risk factors in relation to offending. They list these in order of predictive power: history of antisocial behaviour, antisocial personality pattern, antisocial associates, family and/or diversity is recognised. However, it should be noted that the central focus of this paper — understanding the cognitive processes in professional judgement — applies to social workers generally.
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Is there a place for professional judgment?

Then the earlier generations (Schwabke, 2007) and that third and fourth-generation tools have higher predictive validity (Andrews & Bonta, 1995; Andrews, Bonta & Wormith, 2006; Andrews & Dowden, 2006; and that third and fourth-generation tools have higher predictive validity research has indicated that structured risk assessment tools are more reliable than clinical risk assessment. However, risk assessment has developed from such research-based knowledge into a procedural tool that can be utilised in daily practice. The factors included in such a tool are those that have demonstrated an empirical link to the area being assessed and that can be utilised in daily practice. The factors included in such a tool are those that have demonstrated an empirical link to the area being assessed and that can be utilised in daily practice.
The assessment of risk is argued to be the single most important decision made by probation officers (Byrne, 2006) but Whitehead and Thompson (2004) propose that “risk assessments are only as accurate as the information fed into the instrument by the person who has interviewed the offender” (p.80). Byrne and Robinson (1990) indicated that differences in the assessment outcome can be assigned to the individual characteristics of the worker. But what are these ‘characteristics’ and how do they influence the professional judgement process? Keeler (2010), a service-user of probation, is highly critical of the risk assessment process saying that there has been a move away from genuine concerns regarding the causes of crime and the concept of rehabilitation towards actuarial classification and control. He argues that just as risk assessment tools dehumanise prisoners as units to be measured and managed, they also de-skill the probation officers who are “reduced from professional able to use judgement to mere box-ticking technicians” (p.306). Keeler (2010) would be supportive of Matravers and Hughes (2003) who state that risk assessments are “clouded with emotion and misinformation” (p.306). In summary, whilst standardized risk assessment tools have provided some measure of consistency (Hanson & Howard, 2010; Lancaster & Lumb, 2006;) there are concerns that the tools are too often used in a mechanistic fashion and are not utilizing their potential. This may be because of the lack of connection of the tool to the cognitive processes of those professional using it. Thus, it is extremely important to explore the decision-making processes of those professional using tools designed to rank risk but undertaken by staff completing risk assessment tools but it is this, which this study attempts to explore.
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Judging when different categorisations apply. They also make other judgements, utilising criteria and signs of which they may not be entirely aware. So, the process of professional decision-making is very complicated. In addition, it is exposed to public demand for accountability and the need to be entirely aware. So, the process of professional decision-making is very complicated. In addition, it is exposed to public demand for accountability and the need to be entirely aware.
Our behaviour becomes the experiment. We come to understand the world by creating a personally organised system of interpretation, or constructs, of experienced events. The system is 'personal' because we interpret our own experiences through our uniquely constructed construct structure. The meaning of an event, or the individual interpretation of the event, is based on its antecedents and the resulting consequences. We therefore look to all events to confirm or disconfirm our predictions. Kelly (1955), however, was careful to avoid conveying the idea that constructs were explicit 'cognitive' events with verbal labels. Constructs include attitudes, opinions, non-verbal information and similar. They are not limited to cognitive concepts and categories. Thus they can include beliefs and attitudes which we might consider create biases and assumptions in the way we view the world.

A researcher working within the Personal Construct theoretical framework is able to explore an individual's interpretation of a concept. In this study, the likelihood of reoffending, and subsequently achieve a greater understanding of the respondent's unique view of the world and the issue under investigation (Gilles & Mullineux, 2000). In order to apply the theory, Repertory Grid technique was employed.

The repertory grid is a structured interview procedure which allows the researcher to obtain a glimpse of the world through the 'goggles' of their subject's construct system (Winter, 1992). It formalises this 'glimpse' by applying mathematical values to the elements. These elements are determined first. These are examples from the chosen topic of exploration, in this instance, people who have been assessed by the probation officer in terms of their likelihood of reoffending. The elements can be people (i.e. the client, the probation officer, the interviewer), generalisations (e.g. 'good person', 'bad person'), or events (e.g. good day, bad day).

The grid is a way of representing the subject's system of interpretation, or constructs, of experienced events. The system is 'personal' because we interpret our own experiences through our uniquely constructed construct structure. The meaning of an event, or the individual interpretation of the event, is based on its antecedents and the resulting consequences. We therefore look to all events to confirm or disconfirm our predictions. Kelly (1955), however, was careful to avoid conveying the idea that constructs were explicit 'cognitive' events with verbal labels. Constructs include attitudes, opinions, non-verbal information and similar. They are not limited to cognitive concepts and categories. Thus they can include beliefs and attitudes which we might consider create biases and assumptions in the way we view the world.

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Clients/service users, situations or events and can be presented in written, verbal or pictorial form. In essence, these act as a frame of reference; comparisons between the different elements (in this case offenders) allow the constructs to be elicited to the probation officer. Thus, in practice the respondent (e.g. probation officer) will be asked to identify the elements (i.e. offenders) within the range of characteristics selected in one’s decision-making. This process is repeated until a sufficient number of constructs have been elicited. Hunt (1951) suggests that after 20 to 30 have been elicited it is unlikely that any new constructs will emerge. The constructs used to differentiate them are displayed as columns. The elements selected as elements. The elements are displayed as columns. The constructs used to differentiate them are displayed as rows to create a grid. A visual assessment of a grid may reveal interesting features such as

In this study, probation officers’ clients were selected as elements. The elements are displayed as columns. The constructs used to differentiate them are displayed as rows to create a grid. A visual assessment of a grid may reveal interesting features such as

on a 7-point scale defined by each bipolar construct.

A number of predefined roles will be used to facilitate this process. The respondent (probation officer) will then be presented with 3 scenarios or elements (i.e. offenders) within the range of characteristics selected in one’s decision-making. These act as a frame of reference; comparisons between the different elements (in this case offenders) allow the constructs to be elicited to the probation officer. Thus, in practice the respondent (e.g. probation officer) will be asked to identify the elements (i.e. offenders) within the range of characteristics selected in one’s decision-making. This process is repeated until a sufficient number of constructs have been elicited. Hunt (1951) suggests that after 20 to 30 have been elicited it is unlikely that any new constructs will emerge. The constructs used to differentiate them are displayed as columns. The elements selected as elements. The elements are displayed as columns. The constructs used to differentiate them are displayed as rows to create a grid. A visual assessment of a grid may reveal interesting features such as

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obvious similarities or differences between elements/people. These may exist at a high or low level of cognitive awareness for the respondent. This approach can reveal considerations affecting the respondent's decision-making, of which he or she was unaware. George Kelly described the grid as a method for going beyond words (1955, p.17) to obtain data that a simple 'question – answer' interview procedure would not elicit.

Method

Design

The repertory grid technique was utilised to elicit probation officers' personal constructs. The results were analysed, firstly, by exploring the individual data from each probation officer using cluster and principal components analysis and, secondly, through content analysis and an exploration of collective themes elicited from all participating probation officers.

Participants

Repertory grids were completed with 15 probation officers in Northern Ireland. They ranged in age from 32 to 56 years (mean 43.5). There were male and 12 female, broadly representative of the gender balance within the organisation. Length of service ranged from eight months to 29 years (mean 14 years) and professionally qualified from three to 26 years (mean 14). Participants' current roles included both generic and specialist. No significant differences, between respondents, were identified as related to current employment roles. All regularly assessed how likely it would be for a specific individual to re-offend.
The probation officers were asked to consider the following nine roles, drawn from the actuarial risk assessment instrument they currently used, and identify a recent client in relation to each:

1. Someone you assessed but did not regard as a "recidivist";
2. Someone you assessed as low risk (<15);
3. Someone you assessed as medium risk (16-29);
4. Someone you assessed as high risk (30-44);
5. Someone you assessed as very high risk (45+);
6. Someone you found particularly difficult to assess on the scale;
7. Someone whose final summary score surprised you;
8. Someone whose final summary score presented you with a 'dilemma';
9. Someone who has not engaged in offending behaviour.

Each probation officer was then presented randomly with three of the names they had identified in the list above (triplets) and asked to identify a similarity and difference between them. The process was repeated until all the variations were exhausted or respondents were unable to distinguish further. For most, between 10 and 14 constructs were elicited.

Participants then considered each individual/element in relation to the bipolar constructs identified in the list above (triplets) and asked to identify a similarity and difference between them. Specialised computer software is available for repetitive grid studies; RepGrid IV software was used for the analysis in this study.

Procedure
Results

This results section includes: (i) one individual grid to illustrate the method including identifying constructs and themes, cluster analysis and principal components analysis; and (ii) group analysis across respondents. Both analytical and experiential factors are identified throughout the findings.

Individual Analysis: Probation Officer One

Probation officer One (RepGrid01) was employed in a generic fieldwork team. The completed grid (RepGrid01) for this probation officer, with the person identified for each element title as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Identified a particular client (using a pseudonym) against each element title as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
3. Old, and middle/upper class, 90% similarity.

2. Very successful and aware of Christian values, 85% similarity.

1. Unassuming and gentle character, 83% similarity.

These are the distinct construct clusters illustrated by the dendrogram branches on the right hand side of Figure 2. There are five distinct construct clusters illustrated by the dendrogram branches on the right hand side of Figure 2:

1. 'Unassuming' and 'gentle character' 83% similarity.
2. 'Very successful' and 'aware of Christian values' 86% similarity.
3. 'Old' and 'middle/upper class' 90% similarity.
4. 'Employee' and 'successful', 'able to keep it together', 'predictable' and 'unsuitable' are the clusters such as 'voluble', 'able to keep it together', 'predictable' and 'unsuitable'. These highlight the importance of relationships and commitment. Another cluster includes constructs such as 'hardworker', 'reliability/sustainability', 'family man/woman', These highlight the importance of kindness. Another cluster includes constructs such as 'home-maker', 'positiveardworker', 'reliability/sustainability', 'family man/woman', These highlight the importance of kindness. Another cluster includes constructs such as 'home-maker', 'positive

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4. The majority of the remaining constructs similarity 93%.

5. ‘Employment’ sits outside the other clusters similarity 78-80%.

This information highlights consistency and similarity in thinking and perception. For example, the probation officer is saying that where there are “previous convictions” the person is also “unpredictable” (% similarity 93). Where there is “addiction” they are also “unable to keep it together” and “unstable” (% similarity 93).

The principal components analysis shows the percentage of variance accounted for by each principal component. The higher the percentage accounted for a principal component, the more tightly organized and unidimensional the individual’s construing is considered to be. An example of this can be seen in RepGrid/01 (Figure 3) where 76.2% of the variance in the grid can be accounted for by the first principal component. Ten percent is accounted for by the second component. The constructs “previous convictions”, “incapable of maintaining a relationship”, “societal dropouts/unable to hold it together” and “unpredictable” lie closest to the horizontal first component line. The angle between the construct lines reflects the extent to which the judgments of elements on those constructs “unassuming” lies closest to the vertical second component line. The angle to hold it together” and “unpredictable” is closest to the horizontal first component line. The constructs that are almost parallel indicate that these constructs are highly correlated for this probation officer.

The principal components analysis is illustrated in Figure 3.
The first component relates primarily to previous convictions and employment, the second to personality characteristics. The first relates to the literature on criminogenic factors linked to offending behaviour, the second to more affective issues.

For RepGrid/01 the individuals assessed as being of 'high' (Patricia) and 'very high' (Paul) likelihood of re-offending are located around the first component. The grid also illustrates where each individual is located in relation to each of the constructs. Individuals who were not regarded as recidivists, or were assessed as having a low likelihood of re-offending, were clustered around the positive side of the first component being described as "consistent", "employed", "having no addiction" and being "able to sustain relationships".

Clients assessed as having a high or very high likelihood of re-offending were quite strongly defined as being "unpredictable" with "previous convictions". The person assessed as low likelihood of re-offending (Dale Farm) was placed near the constructs "no previous convictions", "homemaker", "family man/settled" and "hard-worker". The person whose score presented a dilemma (Gary) was positioned beside the person who had not engaged in offending behaviour. The grid shows how the constructs collectively in order to identify natural categories of themes emerging. Where a construct was considered to be similar to another they were placed together in a category. Where a construct was considered to be different they were placed separately. Where a construct could not be placed in either category it was placed in a third category.

A content analysis (Jankowicz, 2004) was undertaken looking at the probation officers’ judgements. The agreed results identified five broad categories: from: "gentle character" and "Christian values"; "previous convictions"; "employed"; "having no addiction" and being "able to sustain relationships". The second component relates primarily to religious beliefs and values. The first component was more general and related to previous offending and current employment. The second component was more specific and related to current employment and religious beliefs.

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The data was then analysed using principal components analysis and a summary is illustrated in Table 2.

The largest group of constructs, with regard to frequency, comprised those to do with personal characteristics: age/maturity; motivation to change; mental health; impulsivity/risk-taking/reckless; social skills; intellectual ability; response to supervision; locus of control; personal traits/personality.

The second largest were to do with 'external factors': lifestyle; environmental factors; peer influence; relationships; support networks; childhood/parenting issues; past anger/resolved conflicts; paramilitary links; probation officer’s personal view/feeling.

The third group concerned 'crime orientated': offending history; type/nature of offending; offending specific issues.

The fourth group comprised constructs of 'substance misuse': drug; alcohol; addiction; sobriety; relapse.

The smallest group of constructs related to values: responsibility/attitude; victim awareness; morals/values (including faith); reputation.

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The smallest group of constructs related to values: responsibility/attitude; victim awareness; morals/values (including faith); reputation.
Table 2 illustrates the primary and secondary components from the analysis. The primary constructs were evaluated in that they offered an opinion about the offending behaviour. Some during the research provided a snapshot of probation officers’ construct systems. Some constructs were consistent with their own particular view of the world. The information gathered and other agencies, and so on, actively interpreting or constructing events and their behavior in ways where the world by continually testing and revising hypotheses about social work and the individuality of our clients (Taylor, 2006). The repertory grid technique explored the content and structure of the implicit theories used by the participating probation officers through which their process of assessment and professional judgment was viewed. Kelly (1963) proposed that individuals function as active scientists, striving to make sense of the world by continually testing and revising hypotheses about personal responsibility for their offending behavior. Their stability (primarily in terms of accommodation) and the presence of a number of personally characterized, such as, responsibility/responsibility/self-awareness (environmental): ability and insight; personality characteristics: family dysfunction: substance misuse. However, the significance of the key themes were: criminal history, ability, and insight. Table 2 identifies the primary and secondary components from the analysis. The primary factors, criminal history, type of offence; stability (environmental); ability and insight; personality characteristics: family dysfunction; substance misuse. However, the significance of the key themes were: criminal history, ability, and insight.
The suggestion that probation officers are not always evaluating using a professional assessment practice as this probation officer may be unaware of his/her association between these two factors which may, in turn, influence their assessment decisions. The key themes identified through the principal components analysis are listed below:

- Feel protective over them vs. They are able to get on with things.
- Do not know their father vs. know their father.
- Reputation of offending is deemed positive vs. struggle with their reputation.

The diverse nature of these constructs suggests that probation officers were also considering experiential factors not supported by robust empirical research. Constructs such as “Feel protective over them vs. They are able to get on with things,” “Do not know their father vs. know their father,” and “Reputation of offending is deemed positive vs. struggle with their reputation” illustrate the complexity of the assessment process. There is also potential for bias and stereotyping in supervision. This provides a comprehensive insight into the local processes within which these officers are operating. The existence of a relationship between the probation officer and the individual, whether on a personal level or in supervision, is strongly linked (90%). This suggests that when the probation officer evaluates the personal values of the client, the process helps to ease out issues by identifying high evaluation of the personal values. Finally, some aspects of the probation officers’ behavior in the context of supervision (will take advice, how they portray themselves) were also considered as potentially influential in individual outcomes.
Psychological characteristics, as well as experience, influence how we see and respond to conscious examination of the self in order to develop an awareness of how personal and professional knowledge is used in decision-making. Ruch (2002) identifies three types of knowledge that are utilised in decision-making processes. First is 'orthodox knowledge', the objective information provided by scientific empirical research. Second, there is 'tacit knowledge' which incorporates knowledge accrued over time but which may not be readily articulated. Third is 'practice wisdom' which is experiential knowledge that is acquired through professional practice. Social workers must utilise the knowledge, skills and values that they have gained throughout their education, training and experience in order to make decisions and take appropriate action. These decisions and actions may in turn have serious ramifications for service users. Houston (2015) emphasises the importance of reflective practice and the need for evidence base. Ruch (2002) describes this as a filter through which the practitioner sorts information and identifies patterns of meaning. The study results illustrate that probation officers are using both a strong empirical foundation and a professional tool-box which contains a bank of knowledge from cultural, practical and personal sources. Much (2002) suggests that a worker process or pattern of meaning when reflecting on decision-making processes that are used by social workers. This model is based on Ruch's (2002) model which identifies that a worker process is derived from integrating over time orthodox theoretical understanding with personal experience.
Reflection has often been cited as the key to developing both personal and professional effectiveness as it questions our thoughts and subsequent behaviours (Gardner, 2014; Hill, Knott & Scruggs, 2013). The use of repertory grids and the exploration of the constructs elicited illustrates how such ‘scrutiny’ can take place and how social workers can develop a greater awareness of themselves and avoid the creation of “oppressive structures” (Houston, 2015, p.8) in practice. The increasing demands for public accountability mean that greater attention needs to be given to understand how social workers make judgements about risk (Taylor & Campbell, 2011). This study adds to our knowledge of the mental constructs used by criminal justice social workers in making ‘threshold judgements’ in terms of ways they conceptualise the characteristics which distinguish one situation from another (Taylor & Killik, 2013).

The cluster analysis results provide an interesting insight into the thought processes of the probation officers with the possible impact on subsequent judgements becoming apparent. It is possible that, in the context of high caseloads and pressing deadlines, where such a strong association between constructs exists, mental associations or shortcuts will be taken (Taylor, 2016). The final assessment may therefore not be a true representation of the unique individual being assessed. Jones, Brown and Zamble (2010) suggest that, in complex cognitive tasks, such as risk assessment, as the amount of information increases personal judgement becomes impeded. The results of the repertory grid analysis demonstrate the extent and variety of the factors being considered by probation officers in the assessment task. An awareness of such complexity and the links and shortcuts in one’s thinking as a practitioner may be a first step in addressing and reducing potential bias.
mental shortcuts to decision making are widely recognised, and are usually considered to inform a decision. In a recidivism assessment context, this could be the assessor aligning themselves sympathetically with someone whom they perceive shares similar values to their own. Beach and Connolly (2005) suggest that these values may be sufficient to influence a decision – no moral message.

Beach and Connolly (2005) propose that an individual has a bank of knowledge that can be divided into three categories. The first is the ‘values image’ which embraces the individual’s values, and which may or may not be readily articulated. The constructs elicited through the repertory grid process can be seen, on occasion, to be directly linked to the individual’s personal values, for example, ‘lack of respect vs. respect for society’, ‘background of church attendance – moral message vs. no background of church, lack of respect vs. respect for society.’

The results may also be considered in the context of ‘image theory’. Beach and Connolly (2005) propose that an individual has a bank of knowledge that can be divided into three categories. The first is the ‘values image’ which embraces the individual’s values, and which may or may not be readily articulated. The constructs elicited through the repertory grid process can be seen, on occasion, to be directly linked to the individual’s personal values, for example, ‘lack of respect vs. respect for society’, ‘background of church attendance – moral message vs. no background of church, lack of respect vs. respect for society.’

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themselves. This process may not be conscious as many values and constructs develop in early childhood and may even exist with no verbal label attached. The assessor could be vulnerable to 'fundamental attribution error' (Ross, 1977) where the influence of the value similarity outweighs presenting situational factors. As one probation officer in the study stated:

"Values and experience contribute most strongly to professional judgment on a daily basis."
Probation officers' judgements are influenced by non-participating factors, the breadth and depth of these constructs, personal and professional, understanding how the breadth and depth of these constructs, personal and professional, understanding how the breadth and depth of these constructs, personal and professional.

Reflections on the method and implications of the study

Probation officers are perhaps under more pressure than some other social workers to make recommendations that are 'certain' and that have credibility in court. Probation officers and social workers could fall into a 'need for certainty' (Gigerenzer, 2014) category particularly in the context of risk assessment. Whilst this study confirms the use of a number of actuarial-founded risk factors, it also highlights a number of other key categories particularly in the context of risk assessment. This study confirms the use of categories that are certain and that have credibility in court. Probation officers are particular to certain levels of understanding how the breadth and depth of these constructs, personal and professional.
Conclusion

The repertory grid is a promising method for illustrating the complexity of factors being considered by probation officers in their assessment of recidivism. The results indicate that a range of factors are considered, both criminogenic and non-criminogenic. The constructs presented highlight that some factors which are influential in decision-making practice do not always reflect the objective categories that are more amenable to being measured, and do not exactly correspond with how we are advised to measure these concepts. In light of this, assessment tools need to take into account, not only actuarial measures of risk factors, but also the ways in which the probation officer conceptualises the risks in everyday practice. The design of assessment tools needs to take into account the people making the judgements, not just the risk factors. The consideration of these frameworks, decision-making models assists in operationalising the concepts and helps our understanding of how a social worker moves from making a judgement to making a decision. The perspective of heuristics and biases is a useful framework connecting the findings of this study to the practice of decision making in social work.

Distinction is made between different theoretical frameworks, with the image theory, value dimension, and social work decision-making practice being used to connect the findings of this study.

The knowledge developed through this study, especially through the linkage to decision making models, will contribute to existing understanding, not only in a criminal justice context, but also in other areas of social work decision-making practice. It also explicitly illustrates the importance of maintaining and constantly developing practitioners who can apply the knowledge developed through this study, especially in the context of the field of social work, where practitioners are required to make complex decisions based on a wide range of factors.

The consideration of these frameworks and models helps us understand the decision-making process in social work, and assists in operationalising the concepts and helping our understanding of how a social worker moves from making a judgement to making a decision. The perspective of heuristics and biases is a useful framework connecting the findings of this study to the practice of decision making in social work.

The perspective of image theory, value dimension, and social work decision-making practice is also used to connect the findings of this study to the practice of decision making in social work.

The consideration of these frameworks and models helps us understand the decision-making process in social work, and assists in operationalising the concepts and helping our understanding of how a social worker moves from making a judgement to making a decision. The perspective of heuristics and biases is a useful framework connecting the findings of this study to the practice of decision making in social work.
reflection on 'thoughts, experiences and actions' to better meet the needs of service users and the communities within which they reside. Repertory grids create a lens in to the world of assessment by eliciting concepts, often less tangible, even non-verbal, that are

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank PBN1 for their support in this study. In particular, the

Funding

This study was completed as part of a doctoral study financially supported by the

Ethics

Their thoughts and feelings, their personal connections and their subsequent conclusions are then open to consideration and scrutiny. It provides workers the opportunity to see in print the communities within which they reside. Repertory grids create a lens in to the world of assessment by eliciting concepts, often less tangible, even non-verbal, that are

University of Ulster

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References


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Available from: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0264550510374644


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element title</th>
<th>Named element</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Someone who has not engaged in offending behaviour</td>
<td>Deirdre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone whose final summary score presented you with a dilemma</td>
<td>Dennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone whose final score surprised you</td>
<td>Shaun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone you found particularly difficult to assess on the scale</td>
<td>Paul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone you have assessed as very high (45+)</td>
<td>Patricia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone you have assessed as high (30-44)</td>
<td>William, Dale Farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone you have assessed as medium (16-29)</td>
<td>JLB, JLB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone you have assessed as low (&lt;15)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Probation Officer One - Element titles and identified service user
Figure 1. The repertory grid completed by probation officer - RepGr01
Figure 2 Cluster analysis: Probation Officer One (RepGrid/01)
Figure 3: Principal components analysis: Probation Officer One (PrinGrid01)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Principal Component 1</th>
<th>Principal Component 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability and stability</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuine and consistent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control and responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and depredation</td>
<td>76.2%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego-centric</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance misuse</td>
<td>83.5%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance misuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take responsibility for</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offence type (low risk vs. very high risk)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External locus of</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk-taking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Presentation</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of offence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous convictions</td>
<td>76.2%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of results from the principal components analysis.

Table 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3</th>
<th>Key themes identified placed against actuarially-based risk factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Substances misuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leisure and/or recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School and/or work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family and/or marital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Antisocial associates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Antisocial cognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Antisocial personality pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personality characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History of antisocial behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Criminal history/type of offence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study (2016) Andrews and Dowden (2006)