

Special Topics in Assessment

The Wartegg Drawing Completion Test and the Crisi Wartegg System:

A New Introduction to an Old Test

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Although one can find myriad tests, measures, questionnaires, and scales while thumbing through assessment catalogues, most assessment professionals have a small number that find a permanent home in their testing battery. Considering incorporating a new test presents many hurdles: vetting the new measure for reliability and validity support, achieving competency in administration, scoring and interpretation, as well as other issues such as cost and expediency. The first hurdle, however, is whether the test piques one's intellectual curiosity. The Wartegg Drawing Completion Test and the Crisi Wartegg System (CWS), a new approach to the test (Wartegg, 1939), cleared this hurdle with room to spare as it was discussed in a recent workshop by Alessandro Crisi and Jacob Palm at the Society for Personality Assessment 2016 Annual Convention in Chicago.

The Wartegg is a drawing completion test that was created by the psychologist Ehrig Wartegg in the 1930s at the University of Leipzig. The test was influenced by contemporary ideas in the traditions of Gestalt psychology and psychoanalysis, as well as by Wartegg's interest in the I Ching, the modern abstract art of Kandinsky and Klee, and his deep love of music (Roivainen, 2009). Wartegg's test stimuli consist of a box of two rows of 4×4 cm blocks separated by dark black borders. Each block contains one or more small, different, Gestalt-like figures such as a central dot, a horizontal arc of a circle and a series of lines suggesting a bar graph. The subject is instructed to use each block as a starting point to complete the drawing; there is no time limit.

Wartegg (1939) conceived of the test as a measure of personality, suggesting that different personality types (synthesizers, analytics, and a combined type) react to the geometric figures in particular ways and would subsequently process and produce drawings related to their style. For example, synthesizers would be more inclined to include all aspects of the stimuli and create complete, interrelated drawings while analytical types may be more concrete and detail oriented. Wartegg created four evaluative elements to assess important areas of psychological functioning, including

emotions, imagination, activity, and intelligence. It is speculated that Wartegg also considered psychoanalytic interpretive principles for his drawings, although it appears that he censored these ideas due to the fraught political climate in late 1930s Germany (Roivainen, 2009).

The history of the Wartegg has a varied and meandering path. While it has been virtually unknown in the United States until recently, it was widely used in the decades after World War II in Germany, Finland, Italy, and Brazil. In the latter two countries its use was in personnel selection; Crisi (2009) noted the Wartegg's role in screening for the Italian military. Despite its wide use, there have been notable questions raised regarding its empirical base. Crisi (1998) has noted concerns regarding the lack of support for the theoretical conception underlying the test and, from a practical standpoint, that Wartegg's approach to scoring and interpretation is difficult to implement. Research conducted with the Wartegg has been generated from various research and ideological traditions, often without knowledge or reference to the others, and serious questions regarding the test's theoretical basis and empirical support have been raised (Soilevuo Grønnerød & Grønnerød, 2012).

In 1998, Alessandro Crisi published the CWS, in an attempt to streamline and update the Wartegg through simplifying the administration instructions, introducing additional scoring categories, and focusing on the importance of sequence. A second edition was published in 2007. The CWS can be administered to subjects as young as 4.5 years, as well as in a group setting. The test requires approximately 10 min to administer, 15 min to score and, for an experienced user, about 30 min to interpret. For the administration, clients are asked to "Make a drawing in each box that means something, preferably the first thing that comes to mind, trying to avoid abstract drawings. You do not need to work in numerical order. Work at your own pace: there's no time limit" (Crisi, 1998). Once completed, the client is asked to describe in what order they completed the drawings and what was drawn in each box. This phase of the administration is similar to

the response phase of the Rorschach (1998) in that responses are recorded verbatim with as little interference by the examiner as possible. There are guidelines for querying in six specific instances; for example, if the drawing is unclear or abstract in some way ("Yes, but what exactly did you draw?"). The client is also asked which drawing was the most and least liked and what stimulus was the most and least liked (Crisi, 1998).

There are eight scoring categories in the CWS (Evocative Character, Affective Quality, Form Quality, Content, Frequency, Special Scores, Movement, and Impulse responses). Some of these scores are based on Bohm's (1958) Rorschach scoring system, while others represent Crisi's additions to Wartegg. Evocative Character (EC) reflects the idea that each drawing has a particular psychological or thematic pull similar to the Thematic Apperception Test (Murray, 1943) or Rorschach (1998) stimuli. The CWS provides guidelines for scoring (either 0, 0.5, or 1 point) the extent to which the drawing is consistent with the pull of the stimulus. As an example, the EC of the drawing in the first box is Centrality and Relevance. Drawings that are consistent with this theme, such as using the stimulus as the center of a drawing of a target, clock, or wheel, would receive one point for EC. Other evocative characters inherent in the boxes include vitality/movement, directionality/progression, stability/heaviness, overcoming an obstacle, synthesis/union, delicacy/softness, and rounding/closure. According to Crisi (2007), these themes each have implications for personality interpretation and clinical meaning. The sixth box (two unconnected lines at right angles) is thought to reflect synthesis and union, and its rendering has particular meaning for one's relation to reality testing. Affective Quality (AQ) scores are given to reflect the emotional tone of the completed drawings. Three scoring options are provided, and extensive guidelines are offered for clarification. Positive AQ (1 point) reflects pleasant and emotionally desirable content such as humans, animals, nature, and food. Neutral AQ (0.5 points) are contents that do not have a strong affective value or indicate ambivalence. Negative AQ (0 points) have unpleasant, dysphoric contents.

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Scores are transformed into indexes for interpretation in key areas of personality functioning. For example, based on the accuracy of the EC variable, EC+% provides a gauge of accurate perception while the AQ+% provides information regarding the client's access to their emotional life and the type of affect which they experience. An analysis of the client's drawing sequence also yields scores. The CWS also includes indexes of suicidal tendencies and psychopathology (Crisi 2007).

In terms of empirical support for the CWS, Crisi, Testa, Lops, Carleismo, and Maio (2011) report that the CWS has interrater reliability coefficients ranging from .68 to .98. Reliability for its key variables is reported as .65 for EC and .83 for AQ. For discriminant validity, using Cohen's *d* for comparing CWS indexes between normals and psychiatric groups, Crisi et al. (2011) report at least medium significance in 31 of 36 comparisons, as well as strong values for the index of suicidal tendencies. In 2012, Soilevuo Grønnerød and Grønnerød (2012) published a literature review and meta-analysis on the Wartegg Drawing Test in *Psychological Assessment*, which included 37 studies, 812 results with more than 7,500 subject in the samples. This sample included systems other than the CWS as well. The results of the meta-analysis showed a surprising effect size (.33) similar to other well-known tests such as the Rorschach and Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2. Soilevuo Grønnerød and Grønnerød (2012) conclude that the Wartegg has the basis for becoming a useful clinical tool. They suggest caution about its use for important decision making in professional practice and encourage the development of a solid empirical base to address the fractured and disparate nature of the Wartegg's history. To this end, another study on interrater reliability and criterion validity has recently been published (Crisi & Dentale, 2016).

While Crisi and Palm's (2016) recent workshop acknowledged some of the concerns with the Wartegg, their myriad clinical examples of the usefulness in understanding individual personality adds to the potential usefulness of this curious and interesting new (old) measure.

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