



110 Interrogative Suggestibility in Children: Italian Validation of GSS2 in the Forensic Field

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After attending this presentation, attendees will be able to understand the standardization and validation of the Gudjonsson Suggestibility Scale2 (GSS2) in an Italian research sample. GSS2 is widely used, particularly in preparation of court reports, to derive information on the memory, suggestibility, and confabulation of criminal suspects, victims, and witnesses. The Gudjonsson study was twofold: (1) to present a parallel form of the Gudjonsson Suggestibility Scale (GSS, Form 1); and, (2) to study the test-retest reliability of interrogative suggestibility.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by introducing a wide sample of subjects compared to the interrogative suggestibility and the study of the correlation among additional variables.

The hypothesis of this paper is that three variables (age, family condition, and type of attachment bond) have a significant association on the degree of suggestibility of children.

The subjects belong to three age groups: six, eight, and ten years of age. The dependent variables are: Immediate Recall; Delayed Recall; Yield 1; Yield 2; Change; and, Total Suggestibility.

Each subject submitted to two psychological tests, GSS2 with Italian translation and Separation Anxiety Test (SAT), to evaluate the way in which the child lives and the living situations (in terms of separation from their parents).

In this study, to investigate correlation measures for the corresponding variables in the two tests, about 100 children were individually examined using 30 variables for each group and all participants completed GSS2 and SAT. The investigation is ongoing. The hypotheses are:

Hypothesis 1 (Age): The higher the age, the higher the scores in Immediate and Delayed recall, and the lower the scores in Total Suggestibility, Yield 1, Yield 2, and Change.

Hypothesis 2 (Children With Divorced Parents): Children with divorced parents have higher scores in Total Suggestibility and Total Confabulation, and score equally in the Immediate and Delayed recall scores and single scores of the Immediate and Delayed recall.

Hypothesis 3 (Different Types of Attachment): Children with Attachment B have a lower Total Suggestibility score and lower total score of confabulation, the same score of Immediate and Delayed recall, which is a very high degree of association; Children with Attachment C have a higher score of confabulation, a higher Suggestibility score, and an equivalent score of Immediate and Delayed recall; Children with Attachment A have a lower score of Immediate and Delayed recall.

The presentation will focus on research related to suggestibility; in particular, time will be given to studies which show how much memory and leading questions may influence the testimony of minors. Finally, the presenters will report on studies which explore the relationship between specific variables and suggestibility interrogative degree and show how memory and testimony may be influenced by different sources of bias which need to be taken into consideration in the forensic field.

In this paper, it is believed that science is now sufficiently evolved so that such interviewing techniques can be applied to interviewing children in child custody evaluations or in cases of alleged sexual abuse.

Test Validation, Impact of Variables, Children Witness