

Influence of familiarity on the MITI assessment

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INTRODUCTION

The main critique for qualitative methods or methods where human raters are the ‘rulers’ is that they lack objectivity. The Motivational Interviewing Treatment Integrity Code (MITI) and its last version (Moyers, Martin, Manuel, Miller, & Ernst, 2010) is a widely used tool to assess MI competence (Brueck, et al 2009; Forsberg, et al, 2008; Moyers, et al, 2003). All previous studies in the field, including the adaptations to other languages, have shown that the MITI is reliable as an assessment tool of MI skills – the most problematic is to cover complex reflections and some globals like empathy.

The outcome here may depend on how well the coder decisions originate from the manual. Raters may drift from the manual and their previous experiences may also affect decision-making. In coaching situations some coders have voiced their opinion based on experience that it is different to code somebody’s interview for the first time compared to coding after some coaching lessons.

Consequently we designed a pilot-study to measure a rater’s bias (the influence of familiarity) towards the MITI assessment. We assumed that the codes from the trainers familiar to the practitioners will be different from those who don’t know them. Moreover, we speculate that the scores on global ratings will be notably higher for the trainers coding the interviews of the people they know.

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Täiendatud üldskaalad: Motiveeriva intervjuueerimise hindamissüsteem 3.1.1

*Revised Global Scales
Motivational Interviewing Treatment Integrity 3.1.1
(MITI 3.1.1)*

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Fig 1. A front page of Estonian version of MITI manual

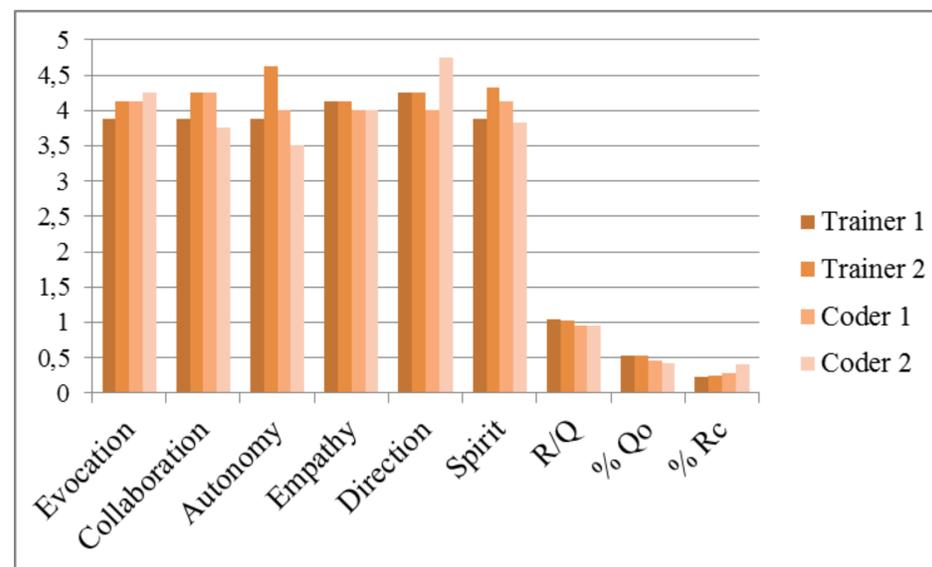


Fig 2. Global and Behavioural Counts trainers vs coders; R - reflections, Q - questions; Rc - complex R; Qo - open Q.

CONCLUSION

In spite of coders-trainers’ and coders’ different levels of familiarity with the interviewers and their different backgrounds (the experience level in MI), their opinions were highly similar in most cases and their assessment of the interviews followed the guidelines of the manual.

METHOD

The interviews were coded using the Estonian version of the MITI 3.1.1 manual which was translated into Estonian by the end of the year 2011 (Fig 1.). The translation procedure included also back-translation and corrections under the guidance of Denise Ernst. Estonian coders were trained in March 2011 by Ray Gingerich during a three- day code and coach workshop followed by 10 two-hour practical meetings. Our sample is a group of 8 MI trainees who attended to a two-day advanced MI training and taped their interview after that. The coders were divided into two groups: two coders were the trainers (coder-trainers) of the same group who were familiar to the trainees and their counselling style, and two of them were not familiar to the trainees. The trainers were also active practitioners, whereas the coders were less experienced.

The research has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Tartu.

RESULTS

As shown in Fig 2., the evaluations of trainers and coders are quite similar. Looking at the behavioural counts comparing trainers vs coders on the average level, we could see the tendencies for trainers to code more Qo ($t=4.17$; $p=.004$) and for coders more Rc ($t=-2.82$; $p=.02$). Overall, all the opinions (coders and trainers) were highly and significantly correlated in R/Q and % Qo (r btw 0.81-0.95; $p>.01$) but not in % Rc.

Also we didn’t find any support to our idea that trainers (the persons familiar to the interviewers) would assess their trainees higher on global ratings. As our study had several limitations (only 8 interviews) and the scales included less information, it may be useful to re-test this hypothesis in future with more interviews and with the trainers blind to the hypothesis of the study.