The use of computers in factor analysis with an emphasis on theory is treated in detail. Particular emphasis is given to the number-of-factors question. [The Social Sciences Citation Index® (SSCI®) and the Science Citation Index® (SCI®) indicate that this paper has been cited in over 225 publications.]

An interesting sidelight: I dictated the words "primordial" and "cloacal." When typed, I had no idea what they meant. Upon consulting a dictionary, I found that I had used them correctly. Was this subconscious knowledge?

The above paper is a symposium talk, not a report of research. It is cited so much because it mentions, as nothing more than an aside, my rule for the number of factors in factor analysis. This rule is in extensive use in the scientific community.

In the late summer of 1959, Cletus J. Burke, distinguished professor of psychology at Indiana University, phoned me and asked that I prepare and read a paper at a symposium he was organizing for the fall meeting of the American Psychological Association at Cincinnati. My topic: computers in factor analysis. I accepted immediately, as I, a mere assistant professor of education at Illinois, was flattered to be approached by so eminent a scholar. This was not to be a research paper; my job was to pontificate wisely about my topic. In this role I was to be something of a Premature Elder Statesman.

But I did not prepare my talk immediately. At the time, I was working hard on an involved research paper for these Cincinnati meetings. Indeed, it was not until the Friday evening before the Monday morning I was to read the paper that I dictated it. My devoted secretary, Joyce Fasnacht, came into the office and typed my Golden Words on Saturday morning.


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