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Rorschach Comprehensive System Data for a Sample of 42 Nonpatient Mexican American Children From the United States

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This study was inspired by a 1993 article by Frank whereby he asserted that Hispanic culture differs from mainstream American culture in ways that would be reflected on the Rorschach, therefore, requiring separate standardized norms. He acknowledged the dearth of research in this area and called upon researchers to collect empirical data that would guide clinicians using the Rorschach with Hispanic populations. Velásquez and Callahan (1992) reported that only nine studies (three clinical and six nonclinical) had been completed on the Rorschach with Hispanic samples, and personal communication with Velásquez indicated that there were only an additional three (R.J. Velásquez, personal communication, February 3, 1995). A major problem in studying the influence of Hispanic culture on personality lies in the definition of Hispanic itself. People who fall into this category share common traditions, values, history, ancestry, and language; however, numerous ethnic subgroups are encompassed under this broad heading, including people from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Costa Rica, and so on. Each of these subgroups enjoys some unique sociocultural practices, values, and linguistic variations. Differentiating the Hispanic population by country of origin reduces the problem of heterogeneity. The authors of this study chose to focus on Mexican Americans; however, the Mexican American population itself varies widely due to level of acculturation. It may be assumed that a highly acculturated Mexican American would not differ significantly from a European American; therefore, the inclusion criteria for this study included level of acculturation.

Of the 12 studies identified by Velásquez and Callahan, seven were not relevant to this study either because of the content for which the Rorschach was used (e.g., homosexuality, spiritual phenomenon) or due to the specific populations studied (e.g., Puerto Rican, Spanish). Of the remaining five, two are unpublished doctoral dissertations (Baca, 1993; Kranau, 1983) and three are journal-published research articles (Johnson & Sikes, 1965; Kaplan, 1955; Kaplan, Rickers-Ovsiankina, & Joseph, 1956) that are not relevant to this publication because they predate the Comprehensive System (CS). A literature review, performed in August 2005, did not reveal any newly published studies of relevance and revealed only one dissertation that used the Rorschach with Mexican American children, and it did not include the collection of nonpatient data.

Kranau (1983) studied the relationship between acculturation/biculturation and certain Rorschach variables of Hispanic Americans and Anglo Americans. Significant differences were found for only four variables: Anglo Americans gave significantly less animal movement (FM) responses; Anglo Americans gave significantly more pure form (F) responses; and Anglo-American responses had less conventional form (X+%) and less experience base (eb) than Hispanic Americans. Baca (1993) used the Rorschach to compare Northern New Mexico normals, Northern New Mexico pedophiles, Exner’s normative sample of nonpatient normals, and Exner’s normative sample of character disorders. He limited his study to only three variables and found significant differences for two of them. No differences were found for the Egocentricity Index. For both the D score and X+% the Hispanic groups differed from Exner’s samples in the direction of indicating a lack of stress tolerance, impaired capacity for control, and impaired reality testing.

The data for the current study were collected in 1998 by the first author. This study examined the responses of 42 nonpatient, low- to moderate-level acculturated Mexican American children between the ages of 8 and 10 years on the Rorschach. The purpose of this study was to add to the literature data that could be used to assess the need for separate standardized norms for Mexican Americans.

METHOD

Participants

Basic sample description. For this study, Rorschach protocols were collected from nonclinical, well-functioning Mexican American children. The children were recruited from local schools or were referred by participants and their families.

Number in the Final Sample: There were 50 children in the initial sample, ranging in age from 8 years to 12 years. To have a more developmentally meaningful sample, 8 children ages 11 and 12 were eliminated, leaving a final sample of 42.

Type of Sample: The sample is made up entirely of children.

This study was composed of 42 Mexican American children, ages 8 to 10 years, all from the United States. In addition to the children being administered the Rorschach, they also were administered the Children’s Hispanic Background Scale (CHBS) and the Children’s Personality Questionnaire (CPQ). The principal author was the sole examiner. Inclusion criteria are described. Interrater reliability statistics at the response level are presented along with scores for the Rorschach Comprehensive System (CS; Exner, 1995).

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Type of Sample: The sample is made up entirely of children.
Basic demographic information.

Gender: There were 19 (45%) boys and 23 (55%) girls in the final sample.

Age: Ages ranged from 8 years to 10 years, with a mean of 9.12 (SD = 0.83) and frequencies as follows: 12 8-year-olds; 13 9-year-olds; and 17 10-year-olds.

Ethnicity: The participants were moderate-to-low acculturated Mexican American children as indicated by the Children’s Hispanic Background Scale (CHBS).

Primary Language: All of the children were bilingual (English/Spanish) speakers.

Education: Grade level ranged from third to fifth grade, with a mean of 3.98 (SD = .81) and frequencies as follows: 24 in the third grade, 16 in the fourth grade, and 2 in the fifth grade. The fathers’ level of education was as follows: 17 less than seventh grade; 6 less than tenth grade; 10 high school graduates or equivalent; 6 1 year of college; and 3 college graduates. The mothers’ level of education was as follows: 15 less than seventh grade; 2 less than tenth grade; 1 tenth or eleventh grade completed; 9 high school graduates or equivalent; 11 1 year of college; and 4 college graduates.

Marital Status: None of the children even had been married. Marital status of the parents was as follows: 4 never married; 35 married and living with spouse; 1 divorced or separated and receiving financial support; 1 divorced or separated and not receiving financial support; and 1 widowed.

Economic Status: Socioeconomic status (SES) was estimated using the Hollingshead four factor index of social status, from lower class to upper middle class as follows: 16 lower class; 5 lower middle class; 19 middle class; and 2 upper middle class.

Occupation: The parents’ occupation was not obtained.

Student Status: See education.

Psychiatric characteristics of the sample.

Lifetime History: See inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Current State: In addition to the Rorschach, the children were administered the Children’s Personality Questionnaire (CPQ) as a means to help describe the participants more fully. This questionnaire was chosen because it is a broad measure of emotional stability and self-concept and because the questionnaire has been used with Hispanic populations. Results from these data indicated that the sample as a whole is representative of children who have a notable absence of psychopathology, are reasonably well adjusted, and are apparently prosocial.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: Rorschach protocols were collected from nonclinical, well-functioning Mexican American children. Nonpatient was defined in this study as follows: (1) never treated or referred for treatment of a psychological nature; (2) never expelled nor suspended from school; (3) never arrested for a juvenile or criminal violation; (4) never treated for nor participated in the use of alcohol or illegal drugs; (5) current grade point average of at least 2.0; (6) neither parent ever had received inpatient psychological treatment nor had received outpatient psychological treatment more than once per week for longer than one continuous year; (7) neither parent ever had been incarcerated for a felony violation; and (8) neither parent ever had been treated for, nor participated in, abuse of alcohol or use of illegal drugs.

Participant Recruitment

Specific strategies to find and screen participants: Solicitation of participants began by making telephone contact with an official from the targeted school district. The district board member gave permission to contact individual school principals for permission to recruit participants at their schools. The individual principals were contacted by telephone. If a principal was amenable to the research project, a research proposal was submitted for his or her approval. Schools that agreed to solicitation were provided with two-sided (English and Spanish) flyers that briefly described the nature of the research, the target population requirements, the time requirements, the compensation offered, and how to respond if interested.1 Potential participants who responded to initial solicitation efforts were screened for eligibility over the telephone.

Compensation. Participants were paid $10 for participation in the study.

Feedback from the testing results. Participants did not receive any feedback from the testing results.

Other characteristics. None.

Examiners

Number of examiners and selection for the project. One examiner participated in the study, the principal author.

Training and level of experience With CS administration. The examiner was a doctoral candidate in the process of completing a doctoral degree in clinical psychology. She had completed coursework in basic and advanced assessment,

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1For additional information regarding the proposal for school solicitation and the subject recruitment flyer, please contact the principal author.

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Table 1.—U.S. Mexican American child nonpatient sample response level interrater reliability statistics (n = 25).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>% Agreement</th>
<th>Iota (Kappa)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole Responses</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location &amp; Space (2 variables)</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DQ (+,o,u,v/+v)</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determinants (11 variables)</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FQ (None, +,o,a,–)</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pairs</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents (27 variables)</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z Score</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS Special Scores (14 variables)</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The cases were scored independently by two judges.
as well as practicum and internship assignments using the Rorschach CS.

**Number of protocols each examiner contributed.** The sole examiner gathered all 42 protocols.

**Analyses of examiner differences.** Not applicable, as there was only one examiner.

**Language(s) for test administration.** All protocols were administered in English.

**Other characteristics.** None.

**CS Administration and Scoring Procedures**

**Site of testing and warm-up procedures.** Most of the participants were tested in their homes, typically at the kitchen table and free from family distractions. Prior to completing the Rorschach, the participants were administered the CHBS in order to determine inclusion or exclusion in the study. Children who met inclusion criteria then were administered the Rorschach as indicated by Exner (1995). All of the children met the inclusion criteria as the principal author screened potential participants via the telephone before scheduling them for testing. Following administration of the Rorschach, the children were administered the CPQ.
Procedures when examiner and subject did not have the same primary language. Only children who were able to complete the testing in English were allowed to participate in the study.

Seating and procedures used to record responses. Testing was conducted side by side. The examiner recorded the participants’ responses by hand as the participant provided them. The responses also were audiotaped (with permission from the parents and the children) and later reviewed to ensure accuracy of the handwritten work.

Procedures to obtain \( R > 13 \) and/or to constrain high \( R \). The Rorschach was administered using standard procedures of the CS (Exner, 1995). All 42 protocols had a sufficient number of responses, so none of the protocols had to be discarded.

Other tests administered with the Rorschach. In addition to the Rorschach, participants were administered the CHBS and the CPQ.

### Monitoring of test administration quality

No administration issues arose that required consultation.

### CS scoring procedures

The CS scoring was completed by the principal author in accordance with the guidelines in (Exner 1995). Protocol selection and examiners for scoring reliability. Twenty of the original 50 protocols were chosen for the scoring reliability study using a table of random numbers from an introductory statistics textbook. A clinical psychologist with a doctoral degree completed the interrater agreement scoring. He was chosen because he and the examiner learned the Rorschach during the same time period and he subsequently was the teaching assistant for two semesters for an assessment course aimed at assessing children.

### Monitoring of test scoring quality

There were no ongoing efforts to monitor the quality of test scoring.

### RESULTS

Table 1 presents information on interrater reliability for selected Rorschach variables in two ways: percentage of agreement and iota (Janson & Olsson, 2004), a chance-corrected coefficient that is equivalent to the kappa coefficient. The percent of agreement findings range from a low of 70% to a high of 99%. The iota values range from a low of .56, which is in the moderate agreement range (e.g., Landis & Koch, 1977), to a high of .94, which is in the nearly perfect agreement range. The descriptive statistics for the CS variables are listed in Tables 2 and 3.

### DISCUSSION

Overall, the demographic data, CHBS, and CPQ lend support to the claim that the current sample is representative of normal Mexican American children. All testing was completed in English, thus holding language as a constant in an attempt to gather a stable population in which culture and not language differences were examined. Cuéllar (1998) warns that some data suggest language differences significantly can influence personality profiles obtained from expressive tests like the Rorschach; thus, future studies examining language differences are needed.

Future studies are greatly needed whereby examiners collect data representative of greater stratifications of developmental groups. Exner and Weiner (1995) warn against combining even adjacent ages, suggesting that this practice is “not well-grounded
in the realities of development” (p. 47). Although this study is limited by its subject pool, it represents the first sample of its kind, and it highlights the need for more inclusive, extensive research.

REFERENCES