

A COMPARISON OF CERTAIN RORSCHACH TRIANGLES BETWEEN
MARRIED AND DIVORCED COUPLES

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A COMPARISON OF CERTAIN RORSCHACH INDICES BETWEEN
MARRIED AND DIVORCED GROUPS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Research on the Rorschach Test reveals a great deal of literature purporting analysis of various personality factors. The amount of research indicates that this test is the most widely used of all projective techniques. In clinical psychiatry, ". . . it contributes to the understanding of personality patterns and to the evaluation of degrees of mental disorder" (15, p. v). The study of personality through the use of ambiguous stimuli was initiated by Leonardo da Vinci, "Leonardo used the blots not only to stimulate the creative imagination but also as a test of vocational selection. He had aspiring pupils, . . . compose paintings while they looked at ambiguous forms made by a sponge or found on the irregular surface of a wall" (15, p. 30). Although da Vinci understood several of the basic principles underlying perceptanalysis, he did not try to investigate or develop them systematically. The originator of the first systematic system of perceptanalysis was Rorschach, "His greatest achievement was to have discovered that the formal aspects of percepts correspond to distinct personality traits" (15, p. 34).

Today, there are a number of different scoring techniques influenced by Rorschach's original work. The most commonly used techniques are those of Beck (2) and Klopfer and Kelley (9).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the present study was to determine the relationship between a subject's perceptanalysis, as revealed by certain indices of the Rorschach and marital success or failure.

Definition of the Rorschach Terms

The Rorschach Test utilizes a number of abbreviations in its scoring procedure.

1. Color responses (FC, CF, and C). The color responses indicate the presence of color in the response and the relative amount that form (F) contributed to the response. A pure color response (C) indicates a percept formed primarily to the color of the ink blot, form not being a factor. This is an infantile response, based on emotionality and indicates inability to control impulses. The CF response indicates a response primarily dominated by color, but also influenced by form. A person making this type of response evidences control over his emotions, but it is poor. The FC response suggests a response basically dominated by form with some color consideration being given. Beck (2) outlines the way that differential scoring of the color responses may be obtained.

Collectively these responses have been referred to as "color nuances" (3) or affective balance (14).

2. Percentage of white space responses (s%). The s% is computed from adding up the total number of white space responses and then dividing that total by the total number of responses in the individual's record. An s response is recorded each time an individual perceives any white space on the card as having some meaning. The s% is usually interpreted as indicating a nucleus of contrariness and self-will which appears as will-power, resolution, obstinacy, or negativism depending upon other variables (3).

3. Experience Actual (EA). Beck's EA was derived by adding the two values which make up the Experience Balance (EB). The EB is the relation between the total number of movement (M) responses and the sum of the weighted C scores (2). An M response is scored when the percept includes a percept of activity related to human behavior. In weighting the C responses, a pure C was scored as 1.5, and CF as 1.0, and a FC response received a 0.5 rating. The EB is an index of inner potential. It is the balance of introversive against extravertive trends of fantasy and the lower the EA, the less emotion dictates behavioral patterns (3).

4. The human and animal responses and the human and animal detail responses (H+A:Hd+Ad). To compute this index, H and A responses were summed and the number of Hd and Ad responses were subtracted from this total. An H response

is scored when the individual associates with some human form or activity clearly related to humans. An A response is scored when the percept takes the form of an animal. The Hd response refers to any external part of a human. The Ad response refers to any external part of an animal. This index was computed because a preponderance of human and animal parts over whole percepts is interpreted by many as indicating constricting anxiety, frequently in interpersonal relations. This individual tends to be rather critical (9).

5. Vista responses (V, VF, FV). The vista response must make reference to distance, height, depth or reflection to be scorable as such. As was the case in scoring the different forms of color responses, the F associated with the V indicates the amount of influence form had in determining the percept. The pure V response is generally the least frequently observed. This is so indicative of feelings of inferiority and helplessness, and probable neurosis. The FV response is the most frequent, with the VF response falling in between the other two forms of V as per frequency. The FV response indicates feelings of inferiority, but they are controlled by the intellect. The VF response suggests that the intellect does not control the inferiority feelings, but does bring some pressure to bear. For purposes of this study, the number of each particular vista was summed to arrive at one figure for each subject.

Review of Relevant Literature

In 1964 Krauser (10) published a preliminary study in which a married couple was tested by the Rorschach method in order to observe and make hypotheses about the couple's patterns of interaction. The modified method employed by Krauser was not of significance to this study, but the hypotheses generated were relevant. It was proposed that further research would bring to light certain differentiating factors which would separate married and divorced groups.

From Krauser's study and an earlier one by Pescor (13) it was hypothesized that married and divorced groups could be differentiated by certain Rorschach indices. In the study by Pescor, delinquents were grouped according to marital status and administered the Rorschach. Certain differences in their performance were found.

Certain subsignificant tendencies do exist such as the inclination for divorced, separated, and widowed individuals to have a faster reaction time, and a higher total of general motion, color, human anatomy, and abstract responses than either the single or married men (13, p. 6).

These studies contributed to the theoretical bases for assuming that the Rorschach could differentiate between married and divorced groups.

Selection of possible response measures that would adequately measure any differences was accomplished from a careful survey of the literature. Studies will be cited that tend to support the theoretical basis for the five proposed hypotheses.

Klopfer and Kelley consider FC to (CF+C) as a measure of outer control (9, p. 229). For them, the principle representative of such control is present in the FC+ response. The individual who gives predominantly FC+ color responses is more capable of feeling contact with his world. Therefore, where the person's record indicates FC CF+C, he tends to be more allocentric and able to postpone gratification than the person with CF+C FC, whose affect is considered more labile and is self-centered and unable to postpone gratification (3).

Levy and Kurz studied the impact of color on the Rorschach and stated:

. . . on the basis of the present findings it was hypothesized that the more anxious the subjects are, the more likely research will demonstrate that color plays an important role, while the less anxious the subjects are, the more likely that structure will be found to be predominate in accounting for Rorschach performance on chromatic cards (11, p. 625).

Thus, one would expect the emotionally secure person to give a greater number of FC color responses and also tend to function more successfully in his environment.

Sarason examined the function of color in the Rorschach and stated, ". . . individuals who, relative to their total number of responses, give markedly more FC than CF+C responses will be overtly less emotional than individuals in whom CF+C was greater than FC" (17, p. 148).

These studies are representative of those relevant to the hypotheses investigated in this study.

Beck stated that the s% is usually interpreted as being indicative of a nucleus of contrariness and self-will which appears as will-power, resolution, obstinacy or negativism, depending upon other variables. The interpretation of the s response is generally related to the experience type by many writers, although other investigators have found evidence to indicate that it might be successfully interpreted without such rationale (1).

Bandura conducted a study concerned with the white space response and its relation to "oppositional" behavior. Evidence was found to indicate that the experience type was not influential by the nature of the relationship between the s response and a person's behavioral ratings, ". . . Without reference to the experience type, the number of s responses showed a significantly positive relationship of moderate degree to the ratings of negativism" (1, p. 21). Bandura concluded that the experience type classification in the interpretation of the s response was of questionable usefulness and certainly not substantiated. Additionally, Bandura felt that Rorschach's theoretical position concerning the s response was supported:

The finding of a significant relationship between ratings of negativistic behavior and the s response represents a partial corroboration of the Rorschach hypothesis of the s response as reflecting an oppositional tendency (1, p. 21).

A study by Weltman and Wolfson investigated the nature of the s response and its relationship to oppositional tendencies.

Oppositional tendency was defined as, ". . . attitude of hostility which results in an attempt to assert oneself against an external demand or condition" (19, p. 821). The study was also concerned with determining if the space response was correlated with "mastery striving", which was defined as ". . . an act of seeking answers in an attempt to handle or resolve the external condition in an optimally openminded fashion" (19, p. 821). The results suggested that the s response, either as undifferentiated s, primary s, or secondary s, tended to be related to oppositional tendencies. The s response, in either of the three breakdowns investigated, was not related to any mastery tendency as it was defined.

In a further attempt to measure aggression from the s response on the Rorschach, Ingram studied groups of subjects separated into high and low s categories. It was hypothesized that

If s is an indicator of aggressive tendencies, individuals with an average or above average s score should respond to a situation which is frustrating to them with more aggressive behavior, quantitatively and qualitatively, than individuals who do not produce s (8, p. 23).

Based upon this hypothesis, it was found that the high s group was more aggressive in a frustrating interview situation than the low s group. In addition, the high s group was no more aggressive than the low s group in a nonfrustrating situation with minimal social interaction present. From these results it would seem that those individuals exhibiting s

responses tend to respond to frustrating situations with an aggressive or oppositional type behavior while those who do not show any s responses in their protocol generally lack, to any marked degree, this type of overt behavioral response.

Beck (2) obtained the EA indice through summing the two factors making up the EB. The EB is conceived of as being a balance of introversive against extratensive trends of fantasy. Therefore, the lower the EA, the less emotional the individual's behavioral responses tend to be.

Schachtel examined the color response and its relationship to the experience of affect, and stated that

As in considering color perception, the examination of the experience "affect" will become more transparent if one chooses a strong affect which, comparable to the pure C response, may blot out, for a short time, every other activity, and thought (18, p. 397).

The experiencing of color creates an emotional relation between the object and the subject. Therefore, the gap of detachment between the two is somehow bridged by the affective impact of the color. Schachtel elaborates further:

This quality of the subject-object relationship in the perception of color, together with the fact that color is a most vivid representative of the world outside, proves helpful in understanding Rorschach's finding that color responses, within the "experience type" of a person, represent this person's faculties of rapport and affective adaptation to others, to life, to the world around him, and that they are thus the representatives of the extratensive-extraversive tendencies within the personality (18, p. 408).

Presumably then, an individual's capacity for successful

adaptation toward others and the total environment is related to his EB and thus the modified EA measure.

Palmer investigated Rorschach's Experience Balance and stated, "Support is given here to the contention that the EB is a universal psychological function as distinct from a mere indicator of mental abnormality" (12, pp. 141-142). Palmer also hypothesized that this score was related to a broad general pattern of emotional perception and that when a predominance of M was present the individual's perception of the situation was based more on his own inner life than an emotionally related response based on the environment. Conversely, when C was predominant over M, the individual's response was expected to be one in which the perception was colored by an emotional interaction with the environment. If the two values were equal, then perceiving was a function of both. In the case where no score for either M or C was obtained, Palmer predicted that the individual either ignored the source of emotional stimuli, or was incapable of using either (12, p. 139).

In a study by Rosenthal, certain behavioral correlates with the Rorschach EB were investigated. It was hypothesized that

Human movement responses reflect a tendency to emphasize behaviorally mental activity whereas color responses reflect a tendency to emphasize behaviorally motor activity (16, p. 442).

To examine this contention, Rosenthal utilized an M group of subjects (M=3, C=0) and a C group (C 2, M=3 or less). They were grouped according to this criterion based on the group Rorschach. After this grouping had been done, both groups were given stick tasks (modified Katona Match Stick Test) and the Wonderlic Personnel Inventory, Form A. The findings reported were

The evidence indicates support for the hypothesis that subjects who respond to the Rorschach test with human movement percepts predominating over color percepts are more delayed in their behavior and are physically less active than color-predominant perceivers (16, p. 444).

Rosenthal also felt that his findings lent some confirming validity to some aspects of the Rorschach Eb.

In 1950, Whittenborn undertook a study of two important assumptions made by Rorschach. These were

1. That all of the responses falling in a given category are similar in some behavioral respect.
2. That the psychological significance of the responses falling in a given category is different in some respect from the responses placed in other categories (20, p. 1).

A total of 240 subjects were employed to test the hypotheses generated by these assumptions. A number of his findings and conclusions are relevant to this study. They are

1. Within the requirements of the stated hypotheses and the characteristics of the samples employed, assumptions 1. and 2. maybe accepted as true hypotheses.
2. Human movement responses comprise functionally similar behavioral elements and quantification of them is an appropriate procedure. The consistency among groups of human movement responses (as well as their relative independence from groups of color responses) may be taken as evidence that the total human movement

response score could bear a valid relationship to an important feature of the personality which could not be predicted from a knowledge of the individual's color responses.

3. The practice of combining the number of color responses into a total score which is interpreted differently from the human movement total score appears to be justified. Moreover, since the color scores are related with each other, it is quite possible that the total color response scores could bear an important degree of relationship with some other response score, e.g. a measure of some practically important feature of personality (20, p. 18).

These findings would tend to add credibility to the establishment of a ratio such as the EB in an attempt to measure responses which related to different behavioral patterns and personality traits.

Klopfer and Kelley use a scoring ratio of $H+A:Hd+Ad$ as a measure of the degree to which the individual tends to be more critical. They state that if the number of Hd and Ad responses are greater than the number of whole H and A responses, then the person tends to be rather critical. The threshold for this is set at the point where the number of Hd and Ad responses exceeds one half of the number of H and A responses. This is not based on statistical findings, but seems to be rather an assumption that they are willing to make based on past experience and empirical observations (9, p. 217). The resulting behavioral patterns tend to lead to an experiencing of constricting anxiety, frequently in interpersonal relations.

Bohm lists six factors which are said to characterize

social contact: P and P $\frac{2}{3}$, FC, D, H and Hd, experience type, and the kind of M response (4, p. 177). Additionally, the H and Hd responses are useful to the degree that they tend to show the degree of relationship to the human factor of the surroundings. Bohm said, "If they are absent, human contact is either neurotically disturbed or it may even be an instance of narcissism" (4, p. 178).

Fisher studied the relationship of the H responses on the Rorschach to try and determine their significance to an individual's self reference.

The results support the view that the ability of an individual to project human percepts on the Rorschach blots is related to the adequacy of his role identity (5, p. 233).

Furthermore, Fisher continued:

Within the context of the present study one might say that high H goes along with a positive orientation toward self, a consistent perception of one's sex identity, and minimal feelings of vulnerability or fragility (5, p. 233).

For Fisher the number of H responses was significantly related to an individual's positive acceptance of himself as a person. The greater the frequency of these kind of responses, the more positively accepting the person tended to be.

Certain investigators, such as Hertzman and Pearce, feel that the human figure as a response on the Rorschach has personal meaning. Thus the belief that some content tends to express emotionally concepts not reproducible on the conscious level; this then resembles dream material, according

to the statements made by Hertzman and Pearce:

The extent to which some content emotionally expresses concepts that elude more rational and controlled description resembles the characteristics of dream material. The analysis of the images produced in the Rorschach can crystallize awareness in the same sense as does the analysis of dream images. Moreover, as in the case of dream material, new nuances of meaning, may be found upon reconsideration at different stages of therapy (7, p. 422).

Goldfarb investigated the animal symbol and stated that "There is direct similarity between the animal symbol and the human or emotional responses" (6, p. 12). Examples such as reference to an animal when verbally chastizing someone you feel has wronged you, were cited. Furthermore,

Apparently maturity involves a simultaneous process of conscious, purposive abstraction and a closer and more realistic awareness of human and material reality. Focusing on animal productions, the infantile adult will persist in a childlike preoccupation with animal activity rather than human activity (6, p. 12).

Therefore, a plethora of such responses would tend to indicate an immature and unrealistic person, according to Goldfarb.

Beck (2) delineated the criteria necessary to differentiate the three different forms of the vista response, citing examples of pure V, VF, and FV.

In another publication, Beck (3) discussed what the vista response purports to measure. Through research and experience, he concluded that this type of response indicates feelings of inadequacy and inferiority on the part of the person. The pure V response indicated the highest gradation of such feelings, whereas, the FV reflects the least intense

degree. The VF response indicates that the individual is losing his struggle against the feelings. For this particular study, no tabulated results were kept differentiating between the three types of responses. They were all considered as belonging to the same set and any one of them could have contributed to the total an individual received for that particular indice.

Hypotheses

It was hypothesized that there would be significant differences between the percepts of married and divorced groups on the following Rorschach indices:

1. The married group will make a significantly higher mean score on the FC minus (CF+C) index than will the divorced group.
2. The married group will make a significantly lower mean score on the s% than the divorced group.
3. The married group will make a significantly lower mean score on the EA than the divorced group.
4. The married group will make a significantly higher mean score on the H+A minus Hd and Ad indice than the divorced group.
5. The married group will make a significantly lower mean score on the number of V responses than will the divorced group.

Subjects and Methodology

The subjects used in this study consisted of 100 individuals living in the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas area. There were no controls for ages, and the participants varied from the late teens to the middle sixties. The subjects were divided into two major groupings according to the criterion of either having been divorced or "happily" married. The term "happily" married was operationally defined as being a person who had been married, to the same spouse, with no previous divorce, for 25 years or longer. This group was composed of 50 individuals, of which 25 were males and 25 were females. Husbands and wives of the married group were not necessarily used, although this happened to be the case for some of them. The divorced group likewise consisted of 25 males and 25 females. The criterion for placement in this group consisted of the subjects having been divorced. Some of the group had remarried, but this did not exclude them from the study. Also, both partners might happen to be used for the divorced group, but this was not planned or considered in accumulating the data.

Since no population listings for such groupings were available, participants were secured in a number of ways. Some of the divorced group came from the Parents Without Partners Organization; some were acquaintances of the investigator. When an individual agreed to participate, he was tested and afterwards asked if he knew anyone meeting

the criteria for the study who might be interested in participating. These were contacted and those interested were administered the Rorschach. For purposes of statistical analysis this sampling selection was considered representative of the population from which it was drawn.

Rorschach Administration and Scoring Procedures

The Beck system (2) was used for the administration and scoring of the Rorschach protocols. The following instructions were given:

You will be given a series of ten cards, one by one. The cards have on them designs made up out of ink blots. Look at each card, and tell the examiner what you see on each card, or anything that might be represented there. Look at each card as long as you like; only be sure to tell the examiner everything that you see on the card as you look at it. When you have finished with a card, give it to the examiner as a sign that you are through with it (2, p. 2).

The Rorschach cards were given to the subject one at a time and the subjects' percepts were recorded verbatim. When the last response to card X was recorded, this ended the free association period.

The inquiry followed the free association period. In the inquiry the subject was asked to elaborate on any responses that were not clear to the examiner as to their location, determinants, or content. For the response to be scorable, the subject had to be able to locate the initial percept again during the inquiry.

Location responses were scored three ways: Whole (W),

large frequently seen details (D), and small infrequently seen details (Dd).

Determinant responses were scored as to the quality of the form percept, either F+ or F-. Other scored determinants were: Pure color (C), form dominating (FC), color dominating form (CF), human movement (M), white space response (s), pure distant perspective (V), form primary with distant perspective secondary (FV), and distant perspective primary with form secondary (VF). These were the determinants pertinent to the present study.

The content responses were scored: Humans (H), animals (A), human detail (Hd), and animal detail (Ad). While there is an almost limitless range of associational content categories (2, pp. 217-221), these were the only ones relevant to this study.

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CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Analytic Procedure

Beck's method (1) was used by the investigator in the administering and scoring of the Rorschach records to facilitate standardization of the protocols.

The procedure for the administration and scoring of the Rorschach was to administer the test to each subject and to score it by Beck's method. The Rorschach factors of the married and divorced groups, as stated in the hypotheses, were tested with a standard t test (2). Using a two-tailed distribution, the level of significance was obtained for each Rorschach factor.

Analysis of the Rorschach Scores

Five hypotheses were investigated in this study. In order to evaluate them, a t test was used to measure the significance of the difference between means of the married and divorced groups. Table I presents the results of this statistical treatment.

TABLE I

LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS
OF THE MARRIED AND DIVORCED GROUPS ON
THE RORSCHACH INDICES

Criterion	N	Married		Divorced		Mean Diff (M-D)	t Ratio
		M.	S.D.	M.	S.D.		
FC-CF-C	100	.680	1.602	.300	2.776	.380	.8386
s%	100	1.474	2.187	3.328	4.102	-1.854	2.820*
EA	100	2.000	1.761	2.801	2.503	-.801	1.842
H+A-Hd-Ad	100	13.020	4.562	9.560	7.492	3.460	2.780*
V+FV+VF	100	.620	.982	1.020	1.402	-.400	1.647

*p .01.

The first hypothesis was that the married group would have a significantly higher mean score on the FC-CF-C index than the divorced group.

The results show that this hypothesis was not supported by the findings, for the t score was not significant at the five per cent level, which was 1.98. Neither group made as many percepts involving color determined responses as had been expected.

The second hypothesis was that the married group would have a significantly lower mean score on the s% than the divorced group and this was accepted. As indicated in Table I, the s% was significant beyond the five per cent level of significance, indicating that this variable might be of value in predicting a marriage problem. The mean of the divorced group was significantly higher than that of the

married group, indicating that the presence of a large number of s responses is associated with traits possessed by the divorced group.

The third hypothesis was that the married group would have a significantly lower mean score on the EA than the divorced group. This hypothesis was not supported by the results of this study. The t score was not significant at the five per cent level. The mean number of EA responses for the married and divorced groups were quite similar. Both groups seemed to have equivalent levels of emotional responding to the stimuli. The results of this study would not recommend the use of the EA as an index capable of differentiating between married and divorced groups, but the direction of the difference would warrant its inclusion in further research.

The fourth hypothesis was that the married group would make a significantly higher mean score on the H+A-Hd-Ad index than the divorced group. The data in Table I indicates that the difference between the groups on the H+A-Hd-Ad factor was significant beyond the five per cent level, and the hypothesis was accepted. These findings would indicate that this index is capable of adequately differentiating between married and divorced groups, and that it is a strong indicator of existing differences between the groups investigated.

The fifth hypothesis was that the married group would make a significantly lower mean score on the number of V responses than the divorced group. There appeared to be no significant difference in the number of V responses, and the hypothesis was rejected, although the findings were in the direction hypothesized. The aggregate number of V responses for both of the groups did not reach the expected levels. Both mean values were below the norms established by Beck (1).

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CHAPTER III

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One hundred subjects, from the Dallas-Fort Worth area, were administered the Rorschach Test to examine the hypothesis that married and divorced groups can be adequately differentiated by certain Rorschach response indices. The sample was divided into a married group, consisting of 25 males and 25 females, who had been married for 25 years or more, and a divorced group, 25 males and 25 females who had been divorced.

A t test was used to determine group performance on each of five Rorschach indices, FC-CF-C, s%, EA, H+A-Hd-Ad, and V+FV+VF. The percepts of the two groups on the Rorschach indices follows:

1. The first hypothesis indicated that there would be a significantly higher mean score on the FC-CF-C nuance by the married group over the divorced group. This was rejected as being statistically insignificant.

2. The second hypothesis, that the married group would have a significantly lower mean score on the s% was accepted as being statistically significant.

3. The third hypothesis, indicating that there would be a significantly lower mean score on the EA by the married group over the divorced group, was statistically rejected.

4. The fourth hypothesis, that the married group would make a significantly higher mean score on the H+A-Hd-Ad index than the divorced group, was accepted as being statistically significant.

5. The fifth hypothesis, that the married group would make a significantly lower mean score on the number of V responses over the divorced group, was rejected.

The data obtained from this study appear to warrant the following conclusions:

The Rorschach Test appears to have value in differentiating between married and divorced groups in certain areas. Two of the hypotheses were supported at the one per cent level and two of them closely approached the five per cent level of significance. There appears to be significant emotional variability between the two groups, and the Rorschach Test was specifically designed to detect this type of variance (1).

Since neither of the hypotheses dealing with the color aspects of the Rorschach reached significance, future research might consider alternative approaches. Some sort of weighing concerning the FC-CF-C variable might produce significant results. The third hypothesis, which dealt with the EA, which incorporates M as well as weighted color responses,

was not supported and another method of treatment for this index might prove fruitful in future research.

Since there were two indices that successfully separated the married from the divorced group, other measures may be present which would also accomplish this task. It would be a step forward if some sort of compatibility index could be derived from the Rorschach technique. This study had demonstrated that there are Rorschach variables relevant to the compatibility of individuals, and since divorce results from many causes other than isolated personality traits, the results are particularly encouraging. Such an index would have the added advantage that the entire, laborious process of scoring the entire test is unnecessary. The variables required could be quickly abstracted from the response record.

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