THE EFFICACY OF THE RORSCHACH AMONG BLACK LEARNERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

MOKGADI KEKAE MOLETSANE

2004
THE EFFICACY OF THE RORSCHACH AMONG BLACK LEARNERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

MOKGADI KEKAE MOLETSANE

Presented in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR
(EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY)

in the

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

of the

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

SUPERVISOR:
PROFESSOR DR. I ELOFF

PRETORIA
2004
THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO

my daughters Masechaba Refilwe and Leseho Manoko, and my husband, Motseokae Peter
to whom it must serve as a source of inspiration. They gave me strength, love and support during my study
MOKGADI KEKAE MOLETSANE
STUDENT NUMBER: 9183906

I, MOKGADI KEKAE MOLETSANE (Student number 9183906) declare that

“The efficacy of the Rorschach among black learners in South Africa”

Is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature: ....................................

Date: .................................
I would like to extend a sincere word of gratitude and appreciation to the following people who contributed towards the completion of my study:

- My promoter Prof Irma Eloff for professional support and advise. Her professional and unfaltering assistance has been of great value to me. She has also made this study an enriching experience.

- Gratitude is owed to Professor Jonathan Jansen for language editing, encouraging and motivating words when I needed to hear them the most. Professor Jansen surely displayed and exposed his hidden talents of editing as well as that of motivational speaking. He has been a great source of inspiration to me.

- Mrs Adrie Van Dyk for technical and overall outline arrangement of my thesis. Adrie was patient and always available when I needed her assistance.

- Ms Clarisse Venter for assisting me with library information whenever I needed it.

- Parents and staff members of schools who allowed me to interview their children or learners. My interaction with those learners has been a fulfilling experience and I enjoyed every minute I spent with them.

- My husband, Motseokae Peter, for understanding and loving support as well as my two lovely daughters, Masechaba Refilwe and Leseho Manoko for their patience and understanding when I spent long hours away from home working on my thesis, their eagerness to know what my thesis was all about and their loving support and their way of cheering me up when I was exhausted and down. They were always there when I needed them the most.

---oOo---
THE EFFICACY OF THE RORSCHACH AMONG BLACK LEARNERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

In this study the original Rorschach test was administered to ten black South African adolescents, all fourteen years of age. Originally, the Rorschach’s test norms have been determined for an American sample. Using a qualitative research design in this study, the standard Rorschach test was administered in two phases, namely the pre-test and the post-test. Ten case studies were used as a format for research. During the pre-test the standard RCS procedures were strictly adhered to. The participants were never exposed to psychological tests before and reacted differently when presented with the Rorschach Inkblot cards for the first time. For instance, some of them were uncertain, nervous and reacted with shock. According to Exner & Weiner (1995:33) when less than 14 answers are given in response to the Rorschach test, the results cannot be interpreted. The participants were therefore required to give 14 or more answers. During the pre-test phase five out of 10 gave 14 and more responses whereas five gave less than 14 responses. The total responses of the 10 participants were 127 with an average of 12,7.

The factors that inhibited the participants from giving 14 or more responses were identified and analysed. Adjusted or modified RCS procedures were then designed with the explicit aim of accommodating the participants’ culture, beliefs and background. The participants were re-tested with the adjusted RCS (ARCS) during the post-test phase. In this phase, eight participants gave 14 or more responses and only two participants gave less than 14 responses. The number of responses increased when the ARCS was administered. The total responses of the 10 participants were 161 with an average of 16,1. The results indicate an increase of 34 responses with an average increase of 3,4 responses for each participant.
The research findings indicate that the ARCS was a more appropriate and effective administering test procedure when testing black South African adolescents as compared to the standard RCS. It is recommended that when administering the Rorschach Comprehensive System among non-western participants, that the factors that could prevent them from giving sufficient responses should be identified and analysed in order to modify the test procedures. The examiners could in this way minimise biases when administering psychological tests.

KEYWORDS

Cross-cultural psychology
Culture
Disadvantaged
Ethnicity
Multi-lingualism
Psychological tests
Psychological test administration
Rorschach Inkblot method
Rorschach Comprehensive System
Standardised test
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCING THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 WHAT MOTIVATED ME TO CHOOSE THIS STUDY? 3
1.1.2 SOUTH AFRICA’S HISTORICAL BACKGROUND 4
1.1.3 BACKGROUND OF THE BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ADOLESCENTS 5
   1.1.3.1 Home environment as an informal learning environment 6
   1.1.3.2 South African historically black schools as formal learning environment 6
   1.1.3.3 Socio-economic factors and family circumstances 8
1.1.4 HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS IN SOUTH AFRICA 10
1.1.5 CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA 11
   1.1.5.1 Reverence and respect for ancestors 12
   1.1.5.2 Sorcery 12
   1.1.5.3 Sickness due to natural causes 12
1.1.6 CURRENT PSYCHOLOGICAL TRENDS IN SOUTH AFRICA 15
1.1.7 THE VALUE OF THE RORSCHACH TEST WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT 16

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT 17

1.2.1 INTRODUCTION 17
1.2.2 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS 19

1.3 THE PURPOSE OF RESEARCH 21

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN 21

1.4.1 EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH DESIGN 23
   1.4.1.1 Pre-test phase 23
   1.4.1.2 Adjustment of RCS phases 24
   1.4.1.3 Post-test phase 26
   1.4.1.4 Principles of research design 27
# 1.5 Soundness (Validity) of Qualitative Research

1.5.1 Credibility

1.5.2 Transferability

1.5.3 Dependability

1.5.4 Confirmability

# 1.6 Limitations of the Study

# 1.7 Definition of Concepts

1.7.1 Psychological Tests

1.7.2 Psychological Tests Administration

1.7.3 Standardisation of Psychological Tests

1.7.4 Rorschach Inkblot Method (RIM)

1.7.5 Rorschach Comprehensive System (RCS)

1.7.6 Cultural Responsiveness

# 1.8 Organisation of the Thesis

---oOo---
# CHAPTER 2
THE RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

## 2.2 BACKGROUND

## 2.3 THE RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM (RCS)

### 2.3.1 INTRODUCTION

### 2.3.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM

### 2.3.3 CURRENT STATUS OF THE RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM

## 2.4 RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM ADMINISTERING PROCEDURES

### 2.4.1 INTRODUCTION

### 2.4.2 THE PHASES OF ADMINISTERING RCS

- **2.4.2.1** Introduction of the test and seating
- **2.4.2.2** Instructions
- **2.4.2.3** The response (Association) phase
- **2.4.2.4** Problem of brief protocol
- **2.4.2.5** Problem of lengthy records
- **2.4.2.6** Recording the responses
- **2.4.2.7** Inquiry phase

## 2.5 RCS ADMINISTERING PROCEDURES AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK ADOLESCENT

### 2.5.1 PREPARATION AND INTRODUCTION

### 2.5.2 CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

### 2.5.3 LANGUAGE

## 2.6 RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION

## 2.7 CONCLUSION
## CHAPTER 3

**TOWARDS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CROSS CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY AND THE RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td><strong>CULTURE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES</strong></td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1</td>
<td>Cultural and cross-cultural psychological theories</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2</td>
<td>Cultural psychology</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3</td>
<td>Cultural issues and the RCS</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.4</td>
<td>The Rorschach and culture-fair procedures</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td><strong>RCS AND NORMATIVE DATA</strong></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1</td>
<td>Information processing</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2</td>
<td>Cognitive mediation</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3</td>
<td>Affects</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.4</td>
<td>Interpersonal perception</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td><strong>THE RESEARCH AND LANGUAGE USAGE</strong></td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1</td>
<td>Multi-lingualism in South Africa</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2</td>
<td>The African perception of English as a language</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td><strong>CULTURE AND WORLD VIEWS</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td><strong>AFRICENTRIC PERSPECTIVE, PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND PRACTICE</strong></td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td><strong>THE RCS AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLIENTS</strong></td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.1</td>
<td>The conceptual level</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.2</td>
<td>The behavioural level</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.3</td>
<td>The cultural level</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.8 CHALLENGES OF CROSS CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY ASSESSMENT

3.8.1 EXAMINER’S VARIABLES

3.8.1.1 Warm versus cold interpersonal relationship, or a rigid and aloof versus a natural manner

3.8.1.2 Examiner’s own expectations

3.8.2 SUBJECT VARIABLES

3.8.2.1 Language limitation

3.8.2.2 Cultural differences

3.8.2.3 Motivational differences

3.8.2.4 Perceptions of normality

3.8.2.5 Interpersonal interaction and expectations

3.8.3 PROCEDURAL VARIABLES

3.8.3.1 Task appropriateness

3.8.3.2 Form appropriateness

3.8.3.3 Psychological equivalence

3.9 CONCLUSION
## CHAPTER 4
THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM: THE PRE-TEST PHASE

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

### 4.2 RESEARCH PROGRAM AND DESIGN

#### 4.2.1 INTRODUCTION

#### 4.2.2 EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

- **4.2.2.1 Paradigm**
- **4.2.2.2 Researcher as an instrument**
- **4.2.2.3 Natural setting**
- **4.2.2.4 Case studies as research format**

#### 4.2.3 DATA COLLECTION

- **4.2.3.1 Setting and sampling**
- **4.2.3.2 Literature**
- **4.2.3.3 Interviews**
- **4.2.3.4 Observation**
- **4.2.3.5 Field notes**
- **4.2.3.6 Administration of the RCS: Pre-test and Post-test**

#### 4.2.4 DATA ANALYSIS

#### 4.2.5 FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.3 LANGUAGE USAGE AND INVENTED LANGUAGE (IL)

### 4.4 PRE-TEST PHASE

#### 4.4.1 PRE-TEST ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURE

#### 4.4.2 INTRODUCTION OF THE TEST

#### 4.4.3 THE TEST INSTRUCTIONS

#### 4.4.4 THE RESPONSE OR ASSOCIATION PHASE

#### 4.4.5 THE INQUIRY PHASE

### 4.5 PARTICIPANTS' BACKGROUND AND PRE-TEST OUTCOMES

### 4.6 EXPLANATION OF THE PRE-TEST PHASE

### 4.7 CONCLUSION
CHAPTER 5
THE RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM PRE-TEST PHASE: RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.2 PRE-TEST PHASE: RESULTS

5.3 SYNOPSIS: PRE-TEST
5.3.1 PRE-TEST RATE OF RESPONSES
5.3.2 NO EYE CONTACT
5.3.3 UNCERTAINTY
5.3.4 LACK OF INTEREST AND HESITANT TO VERBAL EXPRESSION
5.3.5 REPETITION OF CONCEPTS
5.3.6 INABILITY TO REMEMBER THE INITIAL RESPONSES
5.3.7 SIDE-BY-SIDE SEATING
5.3.8 HOME LANGUAGE DEFICIENCY

5.4 CONCLUSION
CHAPTER 6
THE DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTERING OF ADJUSTED RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM PROCEDURES: THE POST-TEST PHASE

6.1 INTRODUCTION 158

6.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ADJUSTED RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM (RCS) ADMINISTERING PROCEDURES 159

6.2.1 INTRODUCTION 159

6.2.2 VARIABLES TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THE ADJUSTMENT OF RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM (RCS) 160

6.2.2.1 Participant variables 161
6.2.2.2 Researcher variables 163
6.2.2.3 Procedural variables 164

6.3 THE RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM AND ADJUSTED RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM ADMINISTERING PROCEDURES 166

6.3.1 INTRODUCTION 166

6.3.2 EXPLANATION OF ARCS 169

6.3.2.1 Presentation Phase (PP-phase) 169
6.3.2.2 Re-emphasising Phase (RE-phase) 169
6.3.2.3 Preliminary Response Phase (PR-phase) 170
6.3.2.4 Inquiry Phase (I-phase) 171
6.3.2.5 Re-inquiry Phase (RI-phase) 172

6.4 THE POST-TEST OUTCOMES 172

6.5 SUMMARY OF THE POST-TEST OUTCOMES 183

6.6 INTERPRETATION OF THE OUTCOMES 184

6.6.1 Post-test rate of responses 184
6.6.2 Seating arrangement 185
6.6.3 Re-inquiry Phase 186
6.6.4 Strategies to acquire concepts 186
6.6.5 Participants’ reactions 187
6.6.6 Language 188

6.7 CONCLUSION 188

---oOo---
CHAPTER 7
RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM

7.1 INTRODUCTION

7.2 FINDINGS OF THE RORSCHACH COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM AND ADJUSTED RCS ADMINISTERING PROCEDURES

7.3 INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

7.4 SYNOPSIS

7.5 SOUNDNESS OF THE STUDY
7.5.1 CREDIBILITY
7.5.2 TRANSFERABILITY
7.5.3 DEPENDABILITY
7.5.4 CONFIRMABILITY

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS
7.6.1 TRAINING
7.6.2 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
    7.6.2.1 Language
    7.6.2.2 Interpersonal relationship and cultural difference

7.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

7.8 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

7.9 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY
7.9.1 THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE
7.9.2 RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE
7.9.3 PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

7.10 CONCLUSION
LIST OF REFERENCE

ADDENDUMS

Addendum 1: Pre-test phase 220
Addendum 2: Post-test phase 241

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Interview document 264
Appendix 2: Tswana translation of abbreviations commonly used for recording RCS responses 265

---oOo---
## LIST OF FIGURES

| FIGURE 1.1: | Research design | 22 |
| FIGURE 3.1: | Eco-cultural framework | 70 |
| FIGURE 3.2: | Model of African personality | 88 |
| FIGURE 4.1: | Research design | 108 |
| FIGURE 4.2: | Participants' pre-test outcomes | 128 |
| FIGURE 6.2: | Participants' post-test outcomes | 172 |

## LIST OF GRAPHS

| GRAPH 5.1: | Pre-test rate of responses | 152 |
| GRAPH 6.1: | Post-test responses | 184 |
| GRAPH 6.2: | Seating preference: Post-test phase | 185 |
| GRAPH 7.1: | Pre- and Post-test rate of responses | 191 |

---oOo---
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 3.1:</td>
<td>Skills and knowledge of multicultural assessment</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 4.1:</td>
<td>Examples of Invented language used</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 6.1:</td>
<td>Summary of RCS and ARCS administering procedures</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 6.2:</td>
<td>Post-test rate of response</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 7.1:</td>
<td>Pre-test (RCS) and Post-test (ARCS) rate of responses</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 7.2:</td>
<td>Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test responses</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIST OF CHECKLISTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHECKLIST</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHECKLIST 5.1:</td>
<td>Pre-test checklist</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHECKLIST 6.1:</td>
<td>Post-test checklist</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFR</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARCS</td>
<td>Adjusted Rorschach Comprehensive System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>Invented Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>Northern Sotho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSW</td>
<td>Tswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCS</td>
<td>Rorschach Comprehensive System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RI</td>
<td>Re-Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIM</td>
<td>Rorschach Inkblot Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXAM./ E</td>
<td>Examiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zul</td>
<td>Zulu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---oooOooo---