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# Analysis of the Learners' Responses of the Adjusted Rorschach Comprehensive System: Critical Psychological Perspective

Mokgadi Moletsane-Kekae, Robert Kananga Mukuna

Abstract—The study focused on the analysis of the Adjusted Rorschach Comprehensive System's responses. The objective of this study is to analyse the participants' response rate of the Adjusted Rorschach Comprehensive System with regards to critical psychology approach. The use of critical psychology theory in this study was crucial because it responds to the current inadequate western theory or practice in the field of psychology. The study adopted a qualitative approach and a case study design. The study was grounded on interpretivist paradigm. The sample size comprised six learners (three boys and three girls, aged of 14 years) from historically disadvantaged school in the Western Cape, South Africa. The Adjusted Rorschach Comprehensive System (ARCS) administration procedure, biographical information, semi-structured interviews, and observation were used to collect data. Data was analysed using thematic framework. The study found out that, factors that increased the response rates during the administration of ARCS were, language, seating arrangement, drawing, viewing, and describing. The study recommended that, psychological test designers take into consideration the philosophy or worldviews of the local people for whom the test is designed to minimize low response

**Keywords**—Adjusted Rorschach comprehensive system, critical psychology, learners, responses.

# I. INTRODUCTION

THE major challenge faced by Psychologists and Mental Health professionals is to be able to apply skills that show their cultural competence when providing services to clients from different culture as theirs [1], [2]. Hall and Maramba [3] support the above statement by maintaining that psychology need to address issues of diversity if it is to be responsive to the needs of the population it serves. In a multi-cultural and multi-lingual society such as South Africa, one would expect that the mental health profession would reflect the demographic characteristics of the country. However, during apartheid years, psychologists and psychiatrists were mainly white and not familiar with indigenous Africans' culture. They were often far removed from the cultural milieu of their black patients and were unable to speak the language of the indigenous people in South Africa. The contribution of culture is now being recognised and integrated in all fields of psychology. Africans have their own believe system which is sometimes not understood by practitioners from different cultural groups. It is crucial to take into account that South

Kananga Robert Mukuna is with the University of the Western Cape, South Africa (e-mail: robert\_mukuna@yahoo.fr).

Africa is a multicultural country therefore mental health practitioners must not disregard the importance of cultural differences that exist [2].

The field of psychological testing is established in mainstream psychology, which has strong Euro-American origin and orientation [4]. Personality tests are designed to evaluate an individual's thoughts, emotions, attitudes and behavioral traits. Generally, there have been attempts to modify the Rorschach Inkblot test in the world. For example, [5] provided an overview of their development and attempted to modify the Comprehensive System as scientifically valid, clinical useful and reliable method of using the five primary systems of the Rorschach Inkblot Test in United Sates. Experts such as Bruno Klopfer, Beck, Marguerite Hertz, Zygmunt Piotrowski, Schaferand David Rapaport, created an influence on adaptations of Rorschach Inkblot Method. However, Rorschach Inkblot test is also used by many psychologists in South Africa, especially in the field of forensic and third party claims. Modifications have been made on the Rorschach test. Critical psychologists and researchers on indigenous psychology are concerned about its norms which are determined for Americans and Europeans and not Africans. Reporting on Rorschach test, South African Psychologists and researchers, [6] pointed out that he is concerned about the culture-fairness and bias, both regarding the normative data and the qualitative interpretation of the data. Clients are often rooted in strong traditional beliefs and values that need to be approached from an unbiased stance. Moletsane-Kekae [2] contends that in South Africa, the developer of psychological tests is faced with a problem of considerable complexity. Apart from the two former official languages, Afrikaans and English, the South African test developer has to cater for the principal different language groups namely; isZulu, isiXhosa, isiSwazi, Nothern seSotho, Southern seSotho, isiTsonga, isiVenda and Setswana [2]. To add to this complexity, each language group also tends to represent different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, which means that merely translating the same test content into various languages does not completely solve the problem of cultural fairness and accuracy.

Moletsane-Kekae [2] developed an adjusted procedure for the administration of the Rorschach to young South African learners. In the adjustment the researcher took into account the language and some social factors that may otherwise inhibit participants from giving sufficient responses. The findings indicated that the rate of responses of the participants,

increased when Adjusted Rorschach Comprehensive System was administered. In this study, the researchers also used the Adjusted Rorschach Comprehensive System, which takes into consideration the participants' cultural background. Critical psychology approach was grounded this study.

#### II. CRITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Critical psychology can be understood in multiple forms and multiple critical perspectives of psychology. It is a response to an inadequate theory or practice in the field of psychology [7]. Hook [8] notes that critical psychology starts from fundamental concerns with oppression, exploitation and human well-being, with perpetual injustice. It focuses on transformation of the discipline of psychology for promoting an understanding of the nature of human being and their mental life as active and societal [9]. Sloan's [10] conception of critical psychology provides a voice for those who were denied such voice which is an essential element in bringing about the societal transformations needed to achieve human betterment.

Nsamenang [11] focused on critical psychology and the challenges pertaining to Eurocetrism psychology in Africa. In South African, critical psychology involves questions of the post-colonialism, feminism and gender studies, the psychological process, dynamics, capacities, and practices through which people may achieve emancipation, freedom, liberation, and space from particular power structures of oppression and exploitation [12], [13], [8]. Fox, Prillentsky, and Austin [14] describe critical psychology from different traditions that typically share several concerns about mainstream psychology which focuses on;

- the individual rather than the group and larger society;
- over-emphasises individualistic values, hinders the attainment of mutuality and community, and strengthens unjust institutions;
- its underlying assumptions and institutional allegiances disproportionately hurt members of powerless and marginalised groups by facilitating inequality and oppression, and unacceptable outcomes occur regardless of psychologists' individual or collective intentions to the contrary [14].

The ultimate goal of critical psychology is to inspire a revision and a formulation of broad based structures of reference that can permit and foster the development of paradigm, theories, and methods and so on. This was the case in this study where the authors took into considerations the participants' frame of reference when administering Rorschach test.

# A. Critical Psychology in South African Context

In South Africa, critical psychology is generally a part of a global agenda of resistance. Furthermore, Painter, Terre Blanche, and Henderson, [15] indicate that critical psychology provides useful examples of successes and failures, potentials and impotencies in attempting to articulate psychology with progressive and emancipatory political projects. Thus Painter, et al. [15, p. 216] describes and accuses critical psychology in

South Africa as being a product of and a sanction for an inequality reign of a political system. Critical psychology is aimed to challenge the dominant theories and perspectives in psychology, and it works towards redressing the injustices, misrepresentations and implicit ideological imbalances endemic to academic and professional practice. Numerous psychoanalysts, psycho-politics and psychosociologists and practitioners in psychology emerged through an institute in the academic knowledge of post-apartheid in South Africa. Western approaches to psychology are based on western philosophical and value systems and imposed on non-Western populations. Mkhize [16, p. 3] explains the differences between Western and African ideas of selfhood. He confronts the foundation of psychology including the concept of the self. He shows the notion that an individual is taken for granted as a starting point for most mainstream psychology is in fact a social construct, specific to recent western culture. He contrasts Western ideas of the independent self-contained individual with African notions of selfhood as existing in relation to others and the environment. Mkhize's [16, p. 4] analysis draws attention to an on-going theme in critical psychology namely the 'colonial nature of psychological knowledge'. Psychology, especially in its claim to an objective science, is a victim of a profound conceptual narcissism. While trivialising the knowledge developed in other cultures by dismissing them as primitive, unscientific or otherwise idiosyncratic, psychology has failed to reflect on its own limitations as a very specific cultural form, a product of western cosmology, philosophy, and historical ideas. As a result, it imposed itself unthinkingly on other cultures, often offering inappropriate ideas and method while simultaneously undermining the existing indigenous knowledge systems. Mkhize [16] shows how the overwhelmingly western bias of psychological training in South Africa leaves professionals illequipped to deal with local problems. He argues instead for an indigenisation of psychological knowledge, showing the importance of producing frameworks that are consistent with local experiences and worldviews, and that are applicable to local problems.

# B. Relevance of Critical Psychology Theory in the Field of Psychological Test

The rhetoric and debate on critical psychology discussed in this study is an important qualification of mainstream psychology. It is viewed as necessary in a societal context as a point of departure from depoliticizing, individualizing particularly in United States or Eurocentric form. Practitioners and theoreticians seeking to develop a critical psychology within an African context need to engage this material and local communities with a certain degree of curiosity and humility [17]. The western psychological test designers fail to recognise that society is heterogeneous and that people differ in terms of their social and cultural environments. Critical psychology is concerned with elimination of injustice and other forms of social divide that deny people equal participation in society. Critical psychology propagates social emancipation and criticises mainstream psychology for

ignoring the vulnerable society. Concerning psychological assessment, critical psychology upholds that psychological instruments should take into consideration the social milieu of the individuals for whom the test was designed, which is the case in this study. Besides adapting a given psychological assessment instrument to the worldview of the underprivileged to ensure equity, it is also important to ensure that the tests is relevant to the indigenous people - their language and knowledge systems. Critical psychology is guided by the principle of fairness - fairness in terms of the content of the tests, environment where the test is administered, and the method of administration. Researchers argue that when a test is accommodated to the social and cultural backgrounds of the respondents, they are likely to feel comfortable that when the test is foreign to them.

#### III. GOAL OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to analyse the response rate on the Adjusted Rorschach Comprehensive System by isiXhosa learners with regards to critical psychology approach.

#### IV. METHOD

The study adopted a qualitative research approach, which is a systematic, subjective approach, employed to illustrate lived experiences and accord them explanation [18].

#### A. Paradigm

This study is located within the interpretivist paradigm. Niewenhuis [19] describes that interpretivist paradigm provides narrative descriptions, basically, interpretivist paradigm focuses on understanding people's subjective experiences [20], and the realities are not objectively determined but they are constructed socially [19]-[21]. Integrating interpretivist paradigm in this study means that people's subjective experiences is crucial and that meaning is socially constructed. In this study, the participants bring their prior knowledge, values, and experiences into the social settings.

# B. Research Design

The study employed multiple cases study design. It was important to understand social phenomena, because the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events [22]. According to [23] case study design focuses on context and lived experience of participants. It includes the search for patterns, ideas, propositions, or assumption rather than confirming assumptions [24]. This study employed both descriptive strategy and exploratory strategies.

# C. Participants and Setting

The study setting was one selected previously disadv antaged school in Western Cape, South Africa. The population of the study comprised learners in previously disadvantaged school. Six learners (3 boys and 3 girls) were purposively and conveniently selected to participate in the study. All the participants were 14 years of age and spoke isiXhosa as home

Language. They had never been exposed to psychological tests. The participants in this study were selected only those fulfilled the predetermined criterion of selection.

#### V. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The study used Rorschach Inkblot, adjusted Rorschach Comprehensive System administration procedure, biographical form, semi-structured interviews, observation, and field notes to collect data from participants.

#### A. Rorschach Inkblot Test

Rorschach Inkblots, developed by Rorschach [25], consists of ten cards, usually numbered in Roman figures I (One) to X (Ten). Each card is unique in terms of content and the responses that it evokes. The ARCS procedure for administering the Inkblot which was adapted from [2] was also used.

#### B. Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data because the administration of the ARCS required the participants to express their views verbally. Interviews are considered to be purposeful conversation between the evaluator and respondents that has a structure and a purpose determined by one party [26]. Forrester [27] contends that some qualitative researchers describe qualitative interviews as one of the most common and powerful ways understanding our fellow human beings.

### C. Observation

Observable phenomena or individual's behaviour in a natural setting [28] was noted. For this study, observation augmented interview. Observation is used to collects data on actual and first-hand experience of the participant and to see things that participants themselves are not aware of, or that they are unwilling to discuss [29]. The observation is also used to record the participants' behaviours, such the hesitation, uncertainty, fear, smiling, silence, and refusal as they occurred.

## VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data was analyzed using the thematic framework. Braun and Clarke [30] define thematic analysis as a technique of identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes within data. Thematic analysis is beneficial in qualitative research because it helps the researcher to search for patterns (themes) and make connection to perspectives emerging from the data. The framework involves four distinct steps, which are knowing/focusing the data, data coding, identifying themes, subthemes and connections, and analysis. After, data analysis, the data was interpreted. Miller and Brewer [31] define data interpretation as a process by which meaning is attached to data. Paton [32] argues that interpretation relates to the attachment of significance to the analysis.

# VII. RESULT

The following were the findings of the study:

A. Adjusted Rorschach Comprehensive System's Rate Responses

During the ARCS administration procedure, five participants out of six gave a satisfactory number of responses, which is fourteen or more. That means the majority of the participants gave more than 14 responses.

From the most to the least, participant's response rate is suggested as follows:

TABLE I IUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AND RESPONSE

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AND RESPONSES		
Participants		Number of Responses
1		39
2		36
3		35
4		31
5		20
6		9
Total	6	170

The total number of ARCS responses of six participants are 170 and the average number is 17.0.

Weiner [33] indicates that a valid record comprises of 14 responses which meets the minimum criterion for sufficient length to yield a generally reliable Rorschach protocol. According to [34] if the participant gives less than fourteen responses (R<14), the records are probably invalid and cannot be interpreted. In addition, the records with fewer than 14 responses are usually too limited to provide reliable information so as to support valid interpretations [33]. Exner [5] emphasizes that records containing less responses are probably not valid and reveals several reasons that can be the cause of brief records; such as the participants who have recently experienced significant neurological impairment often find the task difficult and frequently try to avoid becoming overly involved.

#### B. Factors that Can Lead to High Rate of Response

This study provides the evidence that suggests the factors that increase the response rate during the administration of ARCS can be attributed to the flexibility of the test which include the adjustment of the testing procedure, which are language, seating arrangement, and others strategies that encourages the participants to respond.

# 1. Influence of Language

In this study, isiXhosa, which was the home language of participants, was used during interviews. The language played a significant impact on learner's ability to provide sufficiently responses to their full potential when exposed to ARCS procedure. All the six participants expressed clearly more concepts in their home language (IsiXhosa), because they were more comfortable when they provided ARCS responses during the Rorschach test. This study concludes that the majority (5 out of 6) of participants provided sufficient response during the ARCS in their home language.

# 2. Seating Arrangement

During the ARCS procedure, the participants have chosen the seat as follows: All six the participants chose the side-byside seating arrangement. According to the literature this kind of seating reduces the effect of inadvertent and unwanted signals. This arrangement allows the participants to be comfortable, without eye contact with the researcher. This helped them to feel free to respond to the ARCS procedure.

It was found that during the ARCS procedure, all the participants chose the side-by-side sitting arrangement. The findings also indicated that, none of the participants preferred the face-to-face and catty-corner. This suggests that the participants sat in middle between the translator and researcher, or at the right or left side of the researcher.

#### 3. Other Strategies (Drawing, Viewing, and Describing)

In this study, the researchers used different ways of responding such as drawing, viewing, and describing, as a strategy to motivate participants to give more response. This study employed the above-mentioned strategies to give the participants options for thinking about the responses. The researchers also asked Participant 6 (the participant who gave less than 14 responses) to describe concepts, to draw images, to view and see around her environment in order to provide more responses. Despite the use of these strategies, Participant 6 could not provide more answers.

# C. Factors that Lead to Low Rate of Responses When Administering ARCS

The possible factors that lead the participant to give low response rate during the test revolved around one of the participants' personal problems that she was confronted with during the research process. The study findings indicated that participant 6 gave fewer responses and rejected the cards VII and IX. The rejection of the Rorschach card could have been because something was troubling the participant and the source of trouble could have been in the characteristics of the blot or the impressions it has conveyed. Therefore, it could be concluded that, the participant who rejected the test had a depressive feeling. The participant reported that she was not feeling well as one person in her family had passed away during the research process.

# VIII. DISCUSSION

This study found out that most of the participants gave sufficient responses (R>14) when administered the ARCS procedure. Only one participant gave less than 14 responses due to the fact that she lost a family member during the time she participated in research. The participant indicated the symptoms of sadness and was unwilling to give responses. It is crucial to take into account that South Africa is a multicultural country therefore mental health practitioners must not disregard the importance of cultural differences that exist

Hall and Maramba [3] are of the opinion that psychology must address issues of diversity if it is to be responsive to the needs of the population it serves. According to Huysamen [35], the developers of psychological tests in South Africa are faced with a considerable complex challenge because some African tests are simply standardized adaptations of overseas

tests. Hall and Maramba [3] support the above statement by maintaining that psychology need to address issues of diversity if it is to be responsive to the needs of the population it serves. Cultural awareness and sensitivity are of paramount importance when providing psychological services. In a multicultural and multi-lingual society such as South Africa, one would expect that the mental health profession would reflect the demographic characteristics of the country. The researchers in this study took into consideration the participants' frame of reference when administering the Adjusted Rorschach administrative procedure.

It is important to guard against the potential misuse of psychological tests and to find ways to adapt and develop culturally appropriate measures in order to redress the situation. Indeed, there has been a growing concern over the failure of mental health professionals in general, and counseling and clinical psychologist in particular, to adequately meet the needs of a culturally diverse society [36], [2]. Critical psychology encourages different ways of looking at psychological methods and challenges the traditional Western and Eurocentric ways of approaching and relating to clients. Power dynamics, racial alienation and colonial domination are themes explored by critical psychologists. Mkhize [16] urges psychologists to integrate indigenous with Western world- views. He believes that through the principle of dialogism, whereby individuals are continually internalizing their lived experiences of their social, historical and cultural worlds into their self-perspective, many African people are able to shift between different worlds. The researchers in this study agree with [17], who suggested that practices and theoreticians who seek to develop a critical psychology within an African context need to engage the material and local communities with a certain degree of curiosity and humility.

Mukuna's [37] argued that critical psychology is a mirror because it can reflect the frame of reference of people in disadvantaged position. For Sloan [10], the essential component in bringing about the societal transformations needed to achieve human betterment is critical psychology. This provided a voice for those persons, and groups denied such voice. In South Africa perspective, critical psychology is relevant, because it is applied psychology that reveals the serious work of reconfiguring psychology as a socially relevant, progressive and even revolutionary practice along with new epistemological, theoretical and methodological lines [15].

# IX. CONCLUSION

Critical psychology needs to facilitate and encourage rival theories and forms of explanation which counter these ideological biases, and which do so in an on-going way. This was the case in this study where critical psychology was taken into consideration. In this study, critical psychology served as a reflection of psychological procedure that took into consideration indigenous people's cultural belief and their ways of living.

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