
**A Comparison of Scores on the Rosenzweig
Picture-Frustration Study Between Selected
and Unselected School Populations**

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In 1930-32 while conducting a series of experiments designed as a program for studying repression, Rosenzweig found that despite certain systematically imposed conditions, individual differences in immediate

reaction to frustration or failure intruded. These (individual) variations in reaction appeared to correlate with subsequent predominance in recall of success or failure. To quote, "Briefly it seemed that individuals who at the time of experiencing the failure were inclined to blame the external world—a type of reaction later called extrapunitive—or to blame themselves—later called intropunitive—tended characteristically to recall their failure, in contradiction to the repression hypothesis; only those who tended to gloss over their failures as if inevitable and tried to rationalize them away at the time of their occurrence—a type of reaction called impunitive—recalled their successes better than their failures" (5, p. 486). From this finding an hypothesis was developed that specific types of inadequate or subjective reaction to frustration might be found to be correlated systematically with special mechanisms of defense—repression being only one. Somewhat later Freud reported a similar position as a result of clinical experience.

In 1939 the "Yale group," Dollard, Miller, Doob, *et al*, published the now famous work entitled *Frustration and Aggression* (3) in which they simplified the preceding notion by positing that frustration always leads to aggression and that aggression is object-directed or self-directed. This presentation brought the problem dramatically to the attention of psychologists and it was not long before sufficient evidence was garnered to throw doubt upon the simple formulation.

Confronted with such evidence the "Yale Group" revised their hypothesis so that aggression occupied only one of a number of positions in the hierarchy of instigations aroused by a specific frustrating situation (4). By this maneuver they expanded the reaction possibilities far beyond the alternatives offered by Rosenzweig, for not only was repression with a consequent rationalization possible, but regression, sublimation, autism, identification, as well.

Presented in this manner the hypothesis seemed acceptable to most psychologists. Consequently the research devoted to the amassing of "facts" to prove or disprove the theory were no longer undertaken. However, simple formulations die hard and while frustration and aggression studies as such no longer fill the current literature, we find with each season a revivification with a new catalogue of terms. Superficial examination will show that many of the present "popular approaches" in psychology have their basis in the frustration and aggression sequence. We find that the notion has so penetrated psychological thinking that it is frequently never made explicit, *e.g.* the characterology of the "California Group" (1).

It is our belief that it is simpler to expand and/or delimit the formulations to the field than to begin anew with the same old phenomena under a new name.

Returning to the original frustration-aggression hypothesis we find that:

"Not only low intelligence seems likely to increase the amount of frustration experienced by an individual, it would also be expected to diminish the effectiveness of the socializing forces in that it would imply a lowered capacity to appreciate the consequences of specific acts. . . . But since the normally intelligent man is instigated both by needs which are actually present and also, perhaps to an even greater extent, by anticipated wants, the person with blunted capacity for looking into the future is likely to have a relatively low level of aspiration and to find acceptable a life status which would be intolerable to a more intelligent person. The same limitation of intelligence which restricts an individual's learning and earning capacities may also make the ensuing low level of accomplishment far less frustrating than it would otherwise be." (3,p.116-117)

Thus we should expect those individuals of high intelligence to be more frustrated since their aspirations are higher and their needs are greater than those of average or low intelligence. Since their socialization is likely to be more complete we might expect the reaction to frustration to be more socialized, i.e., with higher intropunitive and/or impunitive scores than extrapunitive scores.

The present report is designed to investigate whether or not "high" intelligence is related to direction and type of frustration reaction.

SUBJECTS AND APPARATUS

One hundred one students ranging in age from 6 through 13 were selected from Oklahoma schools on the basis of their scores on the California Test of Mental Maturity. Only those individuals with scores of 135 and above were included.

The frustration instrument used was the Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Study (2, 6, 7, 8). This is a limited projective technique designed to assess reactions to stress situations. The form for children (4 through 13 years) consists of an eight-page booklet of 24 cartoon-like drawings, each depicting a situation likely to occur in any ordinary day. The stimulus material consists of crudely sketched figures containing both males and females, adults and children, whose facial expressions are deliberately omitted, with barely sufficient details on both figure and background to suggest the overall situation.

PROCEDURE

The subjects were presented the test booklets and the instructions on the cover page were read to them as follows:

"We are going to play a game. Here are some pictures of people doing and saying different things. Look at the pictures carefully one at a time. One person is always shown talking. Read what that person is saying. Write in the empty space what you think the boy or girl would answer. The answer you give should be the first thing you think of. Do not make jokes. Work as fast as you can."

The test was administered individually to the 6-7 year olds and in small groups (ranging in number from 5 to 9) for the age group 8 through 13.

TREATMENT OF THE DATA

The booklets were scored in accordance with the scoring system established by Rosenzweig (8, pp. 150-171). Scores were obtained for the direction of aggression as well as type of reaction. Means and standard deviations were computed also. These were then compared with the norms previously reported by Rosenzweig for normal children (8, p. 173). The *t* test for significant difference was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

t-ratios between E,I,M,O-D,B-D,N-P and GCR of the Experimental and Rosenzweig groups show no significant difference at any age level. We must conclude therefore that intelligence, in contradiction to the postulation of the Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis, is not a factor in the "direction of frustration" as measured by the Rosenzweig P-F Study.

Analyses of the tables indicate complete agreement with the Rosenzweig norms. Comparison between age groups shows that when the results for "direction" and "types of reaction" are considered as a whole they reveal that as the child increases with age extrapunitive gives way ¹⁰

TABLE I
Means and Standard Deviations of Scoring Categories for the Various Age Levels

AGE LEVELS	E		I		M		O-D		E-D		N-P		GCR	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
6-7	a. 53.4	20.2	20.9	7.4	25.6	14.0	15.6	7.3	56.7	8.9	27.3	9.5	51.4	3.6
Na=19	b. 52.5	15.4	22.9	7.0	24.6	11.4	17.5	7.0	59.6	12.3	22.9	11.3	60.0	9.9
Nb=23														
8-9	a. 48.0	15.8	23.9	6.3	30.8	12.4	16.4	7.0	54.5	10.2	27.3	10.2	54.7	9.0
Na=37	b. 47.9	12.0	22.3	7.2	29.2	9.3	16.5	5.3	57.2	11.1	26.3	9.3	64.2	10.1
Nb=58														
10-11	a. 44.5	6.0	24.7	7.4	30.6	13.6	12.9	2.0	50.7	3.0	34.4	8.9	58.5	9.3
Na=34	b. 43.7	13.7	25.6	10.5	29.0	9.6	15.1	6.1	57.1	8.5	27.7	9.3	65.4	9.7
Nb=62														
12-13	a. 44.6	19.2	25.4	8.5	30.0	11.9	14.4	9.3	53.2	10.3	32.4	9.8	57.7	7.9
Na=11	b. 46.0	15.6	25.6	9.7	28.5	11.0	16.3	6.5	56.4	10.6	27.2	10.2	62.1	10.6
Nb=77														

a=Experimental Data
b=Rosenzweig Data

TABLE II
t Ratios

AGE LEVELS	E	I	M	O-D	E-D	N-P	GCR	d/f
6-7	.035	.197	.055	.187	.190	.298	.816	40
8-9	.005	.148	.070	.011	.178	.072	.480	93
10-11	.053	.070	.024	.342	.710	.536	.514	94
12-13	.298	.015	.092	.167	.216	.367	.332	86

intropunitiveness and impunitiveness. While there was no increase in the trend, as we might expect from our hypothesis, we did find a definite shift with age which is constant for all three categories. Though the amount of decrease varied from one level to the next, the trend is maintained uninterruptedly and hence may be interpreted as significant in general. Ordinarily this gradual shift might be accredited to socialization, *i.e.*, the incorporation of socially sanctioned patterns of reaction to frustration or mechanisms for handling threat. However, if such were the case intelligence should play a primary role, reducing the age level at which a shift occurred.

We recognize that generalizations and speculations based on a limited study, as the present, is fraught with danger but it also seems necessary that one should strive to relate the findings of the investigation to a larger area of personality dynamics. In view of this we suggest that what was capable of evoking a strong frustration reaction at the age of 6 loses its efficacy or strength for individuals 13 years of age.

The shift in ego organization determines what shall be perceived as a threat to the organism and the strength of the threat is a part of the perception. The shift in reaction as related to age appears, then, not as a shift in the mechanism for handling threat but as a shift in what will be perceived as frustrating. If such is the case extreme frustration in every case would evoke an extrapunitive response, while a mild frustrating situation might call forth intropunitive or impunitive responses. If such were the case all three modes of reaction would be part of the individual's repertoire. This problem is at present being investigated by the authors.

SUMMARY

The hypothesis to be tested was that the level of intelligence was a factor in the mode of reaction to frustration. 101 students, age 6-13, were given the Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Study. *t* tests between the six factors and composite scores for the four age levels were made between the experimental group and Rosenzweig's norms. No significant differences were found. It was pointed out that mode of reaction may be a function of intensity of frustration instead of a characteristic defense mechanism incorporated by the individual from the social situation.

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