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PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD CHICANOS

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PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES
TOWARD CHICANOS

by

David Samuel Friedman

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ABSTRACT

There has been little empirical research into the nature of racial attitudes held toward Mexican-Americans. This study introduces an instrument, the Chicano Projective Prejudice Test (CPPT), which has been developed to measure the attitudes of preschool children toward that group. The test consists of 26 slides. In each slide an Anglo and Chicano child are ambiguously posed. Subjects must choose which child is responsible for either a positive or negative behavior. Subjects were 40 children ages 3 to 5. Fourteen were Chicano and twenty-six were Anglo. Twenty-two of the subjects were male. Adequate reliability for the instrument could not be demonstrated, a result due in part to the instability of attitudes among the age group tested. A significant correlation was found between the CPPT and the Chicano Ethnic Attitude Measure, a picture preference task, among the older subjects. Implications of these findings are discussed.

PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD CHICANOS

The acquisition of racial attitudes is a topic that has drawn much attention but about which there is little agreement. One component on which there is consensus, however, is the early age at which racial awareness is present. Goodman (1952) and Porter (1971), among others, found that differential responses to race were made by a sizable proportion of three-year-olds. What is surprising is not that three-year-olds are capable of discriminations between blacks and whites, but that such discriminations have already taken on an evaluative component. Although the notion of prejudice in children goes against our belief in the innocence of the young, children of three and four have been generally shown to exhibit strongly entrenched race-related values (see Goodman, 1952, for example), usually of a pro-white, anti-black nature.

The task most frequently employed to measure racial awareness and attitudes has been that of doll choices. This is a preference task, pioneered by Clark and Clark (1947), in which the child is asked to choose the nice doll, the stupid doll, etc. from pairs of Negro and Caucasian dolls. Although the task is seemingly simple, a number of method-

ological objections have been raised to choice instruments of this type. In most studies, dolls vary in hair and eye color as well as skin color cues; thus it is not clear which cues might be accounting for obtained preferences for white dolls. Kircher and Furby (1971), for example, found that hair type by itself was a significant factor in children's preferences. Moreover, a study by Katz and Zalk (1974) that held hair and eye color constant found no preference for a doll's skin color. Some additional problems concern the assumed behavioral concomitants of measured doll preferences, most studies taking for granted that a one-to-one correspondence exists between the index and other behaviors. Contrary to expectation, the few experiments that have compared task performance to behavior with other-race groups have not obtained positive results. Hraba and Grant (1970), for example, found no relation between doll task performance and stated friendship choices. Stevenson and Stevenson (1960) found that nursery school children they tested did not exhibit same-race play preferences.

Despite these problems and others, the doll choice technique continues to be used in numerous studies. The most interesting development of the past decade has been the accumulation of evidence that has contradicted the Clarks', and others', earlier findings that black children (as well as white) exhibit strong preferences for white dolls.

Datcher, Savage, and Checkosky (1973) and Fox and Jordan (1973) attribute pro-black, anti-white attitudes among black children in their studies to such factors as the pride developing at that time among black people and the more positive exposure given to black people in the media. However these more recent results are interpreted, studies replicating the earlier findings regarding white doll preferences among blacks also continue to be reported. This contradiction in direction of results may be due to a lack of reliability in the technique, geographic variations in attitudes, or failure to control for the race of the examiner.

Another important class of methods used in the assessment of children's racial attitudes is the picture preference task, best exemplified by the work of John Williams and his colleagues. Williams began his work in this area with the development of the Color Meaning Test (Williams and Roberson, 1967), which is based upon the rationale of the semantic differential indices. The test consists of pictures of two objects or animals, alike in all respects but color (black or white); a child is asked to select an evaluative adjective (e.g., nice, naughty, smart) to be applied to one of the animals or objects. Findings obtained with preschool Caucasian children in the South revealed that positive words clustered around white objects and animals, whereas negative words clustered around the

black ones (see, for example, Williams and Edwards, 1969). The more recent Preschool Racial Attitude Measure (Williams, 1971) is a picture preference task that is a more direct racial attitude scale. As in the Color Meaning Test, the child is asked to complete a story with an adjective to be applied, in this case, to either a black or white person. Studies using this latter instrument in a variety of locations (see, for example, Williams et al., 1975) revealed that most of the children tested, both black and white, associated positive adjectives with the white person and negative ones with the black.

In a theoretical discussion of these findings, Williams argues that the acquisition of racial attitudes is based upon a gradual absorption of values from the Caucasian-dominated society. If this were true, older children should show evidence of stronger and more consistently biased attitudes; this, however, is not the case. An alternate explanation offered by Williams to account for his findings concerns the generalization of an earlier learned attitude toward light and darkness, i.e., fear of the dark. Williams suggests that darkness is intrinsically aversive to young humans, much as it is to other primates. This view implies that children younger than those ordinarily tested should display white preferences and that fear of the dark should

correlate with such preferences, but evidence in support of this is not available.

The most interesting recent work in the field of racial attitude assessment is that of Katz and Zalk (1976), who have designed the Katz-Zalk Projective Prejudice Test. The test consists of a set of slides which depicts black and white children interacting in a variety of school settings. These slides are presented to a child who must choose which of the two children, black or white, is responsible for a particular positive or negative act. The 1976 study showed white children responding in a pro-white, anti-black direction and black children answering in a pro-black, anti-white one.

The advantages of the Katz-Zalk test in the area of racial attitude assessment are many. The test was standardized on over 500 urban elementary school children ranging in age from six to eleven, about half of whom were black. In addition, 1800 suburban children from another state were tested and provided a necessary comparison sample to see if a contrasting location would yield a different distribution of scores; it did not. In all grades, the race of the examiner was varied so that half the children of any age were tested by a black examiner and half by a white one. Varying the race of the examiner in racial attitude assessment is particularly important, although this generally had not been

done in earlier research. The psychometric properties of the instrument are excellent: split-half reliability for both samples is in the 80's. All grades and both races have reliabilities in the 80's as well. Finally, the authors sought to establish firm predictive and construct validity for their instrument, a task rarely undertaken in the area. Intergroup behavior samples obtained from children in the standardization group, for example, revealed a high degree of consistency between scores on the Katz-Zalk and such measures as behavioral social distance. The Katz-Zalk was also found to be a good predictor of perceptual sensitivity to racial cues (Katz, Zalk, and Sohn, 1975). All in all, the Katz-Zalk Projective Prejudice Test is a psychometrically sound instrument, and one that avoids many of the pitfalls of other instruments in its field.

One notable feature about research on racial attitudes is that there have been few studies to date on attitudes held by and toward Chicanos (Americans of Mexican descent or birth). Although there are almost ten million Chicanos in the United States, making them the second largest minority population, research on this and other Spanish-speaking or Spanish-surnamed groups in this country has been quite sporadic. In an early study by Simmons (1961), adult Anglos expressed a variety of derogatory attitudes toward Chicanos, perceiving them as generally inferior to Anglos. Werner and

Evans (1968), working with children, found that four- and five-year-old Mexican-American children identified with and expressed favorable attitudes toward white dolls. Peterson and Ramirez (1971) reported that Chicano children rated themselves as dull, lazy, and stubborn. Similarly, Bernat (1977) discovered that a host of negative evaluative adjectives was associated with Mexican-American figures by Anglo and Chicano children alike. Paralleling recent trends in research conducted with blacks, however, Brand (1974) found a significant amount of own-group choices expressed by Chicanos in a picture preference task. These studies are representative of the literature, but it is evident from the paucity of research that further inquiry into the nature and direction of racial attitudes toward Chicanos is needed, especially in an area of the country in which Mexican-Americans form such an integral part of the community. This study therefore attempts to adapt the Katz-Zalk Projective Prejudice Test for use with Anglo and Chicano children between the ages of three and five in assessing racial attitudes toward Chicanos.

Method

Subjects

The subjects were 40 preschool children, 22 males and 18 females, between the ages of 3 and 5. Fourteen of the subjects were Chicanos and twenty-six were Anglos. Chicano

children were defined as children of Mexican descent or birth, and were designated as such by their teachers. Anglo children were all others who were not black, Oriental, or American Indian. Subjects were recruited from six preschools serving ethnically and economically diverse areas of Tucson, Arizona. Subjects were tested by trained examiners, all of whom were female and Anglo, thereby holding examiner effects constant.

Instruments

Chicano Projective Prejudice Test (CPPT). This adaptation of the Katz-Zalk Projective Prejudice Test consists of 26 slides which depict pairs of same-sex preschool children, one Anglo and one Chicano, interacting in a variety of school, and other, settings. Pairs were matched for age and height, and were also matched for attractiveness and style of clothing insofar as possible. Half of the Anglo children who served as subjects for the slides has blonde hair and half were dark-haired. The Anglo and the Chicano child were posed as identically as possible within each slide, thus deliberately creating an ambiguous situation. As each slide was presented, the child taking the test was asked to complete a brief story by indicating which of the two children seen in the slide was responsible for a particular action. The slides depict both positive and negative behaviors: 15

contain positive items (e.g., "Which boy does everyone like?") and 11 contain negative items (e.g., "Which girl always lies?"). See Table 1 for a complete list of questions accompanying the slide presentation.

Chicano Ethnic Attitude Measure (CEAM). This instrument represents an adaptation of Williams' Preschool Racial Attitude Measure II, or PRAM II, by Bernat (1977). A series of 24 racial attitude pictures are used in this test, each picture showing drawings of one Anglo and one Chicano figure of the same sex. The figures depicted are of a variety of ages and are shown in a variety of positions. They are dressed identically and are alike in all respects except that the Chicano figure has black hair, a darkish skin, a slightly rounded face, and large eyes. The Anglo figures all have blonde hair and pinkish-tan skin.

A brief story accompanies each picture. Each story contains either a negative evaluative adjective (e.g., bad, dirty, mean) or a positive evaluative adjective (e.g., clean, good, kind). Subjects are asked to indicate to which of the two figures in the picture the story pertains.

Procedure

Parents of children were contacted through the preschools their children attend for permission to use their children as subjects in the study. Participation on the part

Table 1. Slide test questions.

-
1. One of these boys is always invited to all of the birthday parties because everyone likes him. Which boy does everyone like?
 2. These boys are playing a game. Who is the better player?
 3. One of these girls is going to get a prize for being the best ballplayer on the team. Which girl is going to get the prize?
 4. These two boys both want to be leader of their class. Which one is going to be picked for leader?
 5. These two girls are playing tic-tac-toe. Which girl will win the tic-tac-toe game?
 6. One of these boys threw a ball at the window and broke it. Who did it?
 7. All the girls always like to play with one of these girls because she's so nice. Which girl does everyone like to play with?
 8. These two girls both want the same part in a dance. Which one will get picked for the dance?
 9. One of these girls had a book and ripped it. Which girl ripped the book?
 10. These two girls are both fast runners. They are going to race one another. Which girl will win?
 11. One of these girls scribbled on the classroom wall. Who did it?

Table 1. -- Continued

-
-
12. Some boy is having a birthday party. He doesn't like one of these boys and is not going to ask him. Which one is not going to be asked to the birthday party?
 13. The teacher is asking both girls what happened in the lunch room. They are telling different stories. She knows which girl to believe because one of the girls always tells lies. Which girl tells lies?
 14. One of these boys is winning a prize for being the best ballplayer. Which one is winning the prize?
 15. These girls are waiting to be picked for a game. Nobody likes one of these girls and she'll be picked last. Which one will be picked last?
 16. These two boys are playing their guitars in the class show. Only one of them can win the show. Which one will win?
 17. One of these girls was picked by the class to visit the fire station. Which girl did the group pick to visit the fire station?
 18. One of these boys just broke the rules of a game everyone was playing. Which boy broke the rules?
 19. One of these boys has been bad. The teacher is saying that she is going to punish him if he doesn't change. Which boy has been bad?
 20. One of these girls threw the other girl's toys on the floor. Which one threw the toys down?
 21. Both these girls are going to try to answer the teacher's question. Which girl knows her numbers the best?

Table 1. -- Continued

-
-
22. These two boys are looking at letters of the alphabet. One of these children knows more letters than anyone in his class. Which one?
23. The teacher left this money on her desk. One of these girls is thinking about taking the money and keeping it. Which girl will take the money?
24. One of these boys is very smart and gets all the answers right at school. Which boy?
25. One of these boys never does well in school. He gets all the answers wrong at school. Which one?
26. These girls are trying to take the same coat. It belongs to one of them. Which girl owns the coat?
-

of the children was also voluntary. In administering the tests, children were taken on an individual basis to a private room and conversed in an informal manner with the examiner for a few minutes before actually beginning. The examiner explained to the child that he or she was going to see some pictures and would be told a short story to go with each one. The child was asked to help the examiner by pointing to the person in each picture that the story was about.

Both racial attitude measures were administered within a 20- to 30-minute session by one of four trained examiners. Presentation of the two instruments was counter-balanced in order to control for order effects. Examiners were blind to the test results and, following a three-week period, a subsample of nine children was retested on the slide test alone.

A racial attitude score for the CEAM was determined by counting one point for the selection of the light-skinned figure in response to a positive adjective, and one point for the selection of a dark-skinned figure in response to a negative adjective. The racial attitude score for the CPPT was determined in a similar fashion; high test scores for all subjects are therefore indicative of pro-Anglo, anti-Chicano bias. The range of scores extends from 0 to 24 points on the CEAM, and from 0 to 26 points on the CPPT.

Results

Reliability

Because an attempt was being made to develop a new instrument, consistency of results was to first be established. Test-retest reliability using a Pearson product-moment correlation did not achieve significance, however. For a subsample of nine children, $r = -.19$, perhaps not a surprising result given the size of the subsample.

Internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's alpha (α) was .55 (see Table 2). Correlations between the 26 individual items and the total score ranged from $-.18$ to $+.48$, with most in the .20's and above. Attempts to modify the original 26-item scale in hopes of increasing the internal consistency of the measure were partially successful. One 19-item scale had a $\alpha = .61$, with many individual items bearing item-whole correlations of .30 and above. A 14-item scale that was derived had an $\alpha = .62$, with most item-whole correlations in the .30's, and none less than .13.

Descriptive Data

The mean racial attitude scores, standard deviations, and binomial test probabilities for the CEAM and the slide test are presented in Table 3. A prejudicial racial attitude score was obtained using the CEAM ($\bar{X} = 16.35$, $p = .058$). This pro-Anglo, anti-Chicano result matches the findings of

Table 2. Item-whole correlations for the CPPT.

| Question | Full Scale ($\alpha = .55$) | 19-item Scale ($\alpha = .61$) | 14-item Scale ($\alpha = .62$) |
|----------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | .11 | .09 | .15 |
| 2 | -.18 | -- | -- |
| 3 | .31 | .29 | .33 |
| 4 | -.11 | -- | -- |
| 5 | .26 | .28 | .35 |
| 6 | .20 | .18 | .15 |
| 7 | .09 | -- | -- |
| 8 | .35 | .32 | .31 |
| 9 | .21 | -- | -- |
| 10 | .48 | .55 | .49 |
| 11 | .34 | .33 | .26 |
| 12 | .23 | .28 | .24 |
| 13 | .05 | -- | -- |
| 14 | -.04 | -- | -- |
| 15 | .19 | .16 | .24 |
| 16 | .15 | .15 | .13 |
| 17 | .15 | .23 | -- |
| 18 | .20 | .27 | -- |
| 19 | .15 | .16 | .18 |
| 20 | .20 | .20 | .14 |
| 21 | .30 | .35 | .29 |
| 22 | .04 | -.03 | -- |
| 23 | .05 | .04 | -- |
| 24 | -.01 | -.01 | -- |
| 25 | .11 | -- | -- |
| 26 | .35 | .32 | .26 |

Table 3. Mean racial attitude scores, standard deviations, and binomial test probabilities for the Chicano Ethnic Attitude Measure (CEAM) and the Chicano Projective Prejudice Test (CPPT).

| Instrument | Mean/Total Possible | Standard Deviation | Binomial Test p |
|------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| CEAM | 16.35/24 | 4.24 | .058 |
| CPPT | 12.91/26 | 3.70 | .334 |
| Anglos | 12.08 | | |
| Chicanos | 13.29 | | |
| Males | 13.23 | | |
| Females | 11.61 | | |
| 3-years | 13.44 | | |
| 4-years | 12.33 | | |
| 5-years | 12.18 | | |

an earlier study which also employed this instrument (Bernat, 1977). The mean racial attitude score for the slide test, however, did not indicate the presence of prejudice.

Between Subject Comparisons

A three-way analysis of variance was performed to determine if the racial attitude score was affected by race, age, or sex of subject, or any of the interactions of main effects. While none of the three main effects or their interactions was significant, several did approach the .05 level (see Table 4). Race of Subject ($F = 2.63$, $p = .12$) and Sex of Subject ($F = 2.95$, $p = .10$) both approached statistical significance. Males scored almost two points higher on the test than did females (see Table 3). Interestingly, Chicano subjects scored about one point higher on the average than did Anglo subjects (see Table 3). An analysis of the Age of Subject x Sex of Subject interaction ($F = 2.28$, $p = .12$) revealed a pattern in which male subjects' scores decreased with age while females' scores rose. (For the age variable, subjects were divided into three levels: three, four, and five years of age.)

While Age of Subject was not a significant factor statistically, the decrease with age that was generally observed (see Table 3) does mirror the results obtained by Katz and Zalk in their standardization study (Katz and Zalk, 1976). In that study, children also show a steady decrease in racial attitude score with age, a phenomenon that Katz

Table 4. Analysis of variance for the CPPT.

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | Degrees of Freedom | Mean Square | F Ratio | Probability of F |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------|---------|------------------|
| Main Effects | | | | | |
| Age | 28.00 | 2 | 14.00 | 1.27 | .29 |
| Sex | 32.36 | 1 | 32.36 | 2.95 | .10 |
| Race | 28.87 | 1 | 28.87 | 2.63 | .12 |
| Two-Way Interactions | | | | | |
| Age X Sex | 50.01 | 2 | 25.01 | 2.28 | .12 |
| Age X Race | 5.14 | 2 | 2.57 | .25 | .79 |
| Sex X Race | .73 | 1 | .73 | .07 | .80 |
| Explained | 132.44 | 9 | 14.72 | | |
| Residual | 329.56 | 30 | 10.99 | | |
| Total | 462.00 | 39 | 11.85 | | |

and Zalk attribute to a growing awareness of the socially acceptable response.

Validity

Concurrent validity was assessed by comparing the CPPT to the Chicano Ethnic Attitude Measure (CEAM). The CEAM has a reported test-retest reliability of .63 (Paulsen and Balch, in preparation). In addition, the internal consistency of the CEAM, as determined by the present study, is about .75. The correlation between the CEAM and the slide test was not significant, with $r = .07$ ($N = 40$). However, when only five-year-old subjects were used in the analysis, results were markedly different. The Pearson product-moment correlation for this subsample was .37 ($N = 22$), a correlation significant beyond the .05 level. Other psychometric properties of the instrument remained stable when the subsample of five-year-olds was examined. (See Table 5.)

Discussion

The current study has produced quite mixed results. First, the researcher was not able to demonstrate the reliability of the slide test, although the small size of the retest subsample ($N = 9$) and the instability of attitudes among the age group tested may very well have been significant factors in accounting for the result. Efforts are currently under way to collect retest data from a different

Table 5. Some statistics from a subsample of five-year-old subjects on the CPPT.

| | Mean | N |
|---|-------|----|
| All Subjects | 12.18 | 22 |
| Anglos | 11.00 | 10 |
| Chicanos | 13.17 | 12 |
| Males | 12.18 | 11 |
| Females | 12.18 | 11 |
| Correlation with CEAM: $r = .37$, $p = .046$ ($N = 22$) | | |
| Cronbach's $\alpha = .54$ | | |
| ANOVA: No significant main effects or interactions | | |

and much larger sample however, and this should provide good additional information about the reliability of the instrument. Attempts to increase the internal consistency of the CPPT were, again, only marginally successful. None of the alternate scales significantly improved the correlation of the CPPT with the CEAM, as was hoped.

Findings concerning the presence of stereotypic pro-Anglo, anti-Chicano bias were also contradictory. While pro-Anglo, anti-Chicano results obtained using the CEAM matched those of an earlier study which also employed this instrument (Bernat, 1977), no prejudice was found among either race when the slide test was used. That no bias was found when the CPPT was used instead of the CEAM may be attributable to a number of factors: its unstable psychometric properties; the inapplicability of the instrument to the preschool population; the multi-dimensionality of prejudice as a construct; or the non-biased attitudes of a well-integrated Southwest community. One additional problem may center on the unsuitability of the format of the CPPT; that is, the use of photographs of live subjects. That preschool children responded as expected to the CEAM but not to the CPPT may be due to the fact that they characteristically acquire their information from pictures and drawings such as those used in the CEAM, rather than from photographs. The

use of slides as a psychometric medium may very well be inappropriate for the age group under study.

When the slide test is examined more closely, it does display characteristics that are comparable to those of other instruments in the field. As is true with the Katz-Zalk test, for example, racial attitude scores on the CPPT show a decrease with age. Bernat, employing the CEAM, found that males exhibited greater anti-Chicano bias than did females on a variety of measurements. This is also the case with the CPPT, on which males score almost two points higher than females (13.23 for males, 11.61 for females). Williams (1971), who worked with a very much larger sample, obtained significant results for this variable using the PRAM.

The most encouraging finding about the instrument appears when the data on validity are taken beyond the initial level of analysis. While the correlation between the CEAM and the CPPT is only .07 when all 40 subjects are considered, the use of only 5-year-old subjects causes the correlation between the tests to jump to the .37 level. The justification for using only 5-year-old subjects may be found in the work of Renninger and Williams (1966), who demonstrated that while only 19% of 3-year-olds and 50% of 4-year-olds could connect racial labels with appropriate figures when the labels were supplied by examiners, almost

80% of 5-year-old subjects could do so. Furthermore, twice as many 5-year-olds could independently apply a racial name to black figures as could 4-year-olds. When considered alongside other research in the area which points to the age of five as the time at which racial attitudes solidify (see, for example, Paulsen and Balch, in preparation), it may not be surprising to find consistency of results only among the 5-year-old subjects in the study. The tentative conclusion of the researcher is that, given a demonstration of adequate reliability at some future date, the slide test may prove to be of use with the early school-age, though not the preschool, population.

The present research has some limitations besides those of a more psychometric nature. Sample size, particularly for the subjects who were retested, is limited. There are questions about the extent to which these findings may be generalized to other locations, since results were derived from a Southwest community in which Chicanos play a visible and substantial role. The use of exclusively Anglo examiners also limits the generalizability of the research. Finally, informal reports from the examiners indicate that in the case of a few of the slides, subjects were not able to distinguish easily between the Anglo and the Chicano child, a problem not encountered when the stimuli are white and black.

Despite these limitations, the present study does address itself to the need for instruments for assessing racial attitudes in young children. In particular, the study provides data and materials in the little-researched area of attitudes toward Chicanos. Evidence suggests that this group will soon overtake Black Americans as the largest racial minority in the country; given this fact, it seems appropriate to discover more about our interrelationship than is currently known.

In summary, it is hoped that the CPPT will be used and refined by others so as to provide a truly sound instrument in the field of racial attitude assessment. Further examination of the components of racial attitudes and the factors which affect them is needed. The current study suggests, however, that if we wish to go about changing these attitudes, our efforts should be directed at those children under five years of age.

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