

# **A Non Verbal Personality Test for Young Deaf Children**

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Most standard methods and techniques of objective psychological testing are verbal, which make them unusable with young deaf children (Graham and Kendall, 1960; Levine, 1960, pp. 225-226; Myklebust, 1954, p. 313; Myklebust, 1960; Myklebust, 1962; Zeckel, 1942; Zeckel, 1937). This investigation is an attempt to fill this gap in testing by providing some preliminary normative data on the Missouri Children's Picture Series Test (MCPS) with deaf children ages nine.

Vegely (1971) has already provided these norms for deaf children ages ten through 16 years old. Vegely's work compared the scores of deaf children to a standardized group of normal hearing children which included 100 boys and 100 girls at each age level from five to sixteen. Her results indicated no significant personality differences between her deaf sample and the hearing population.

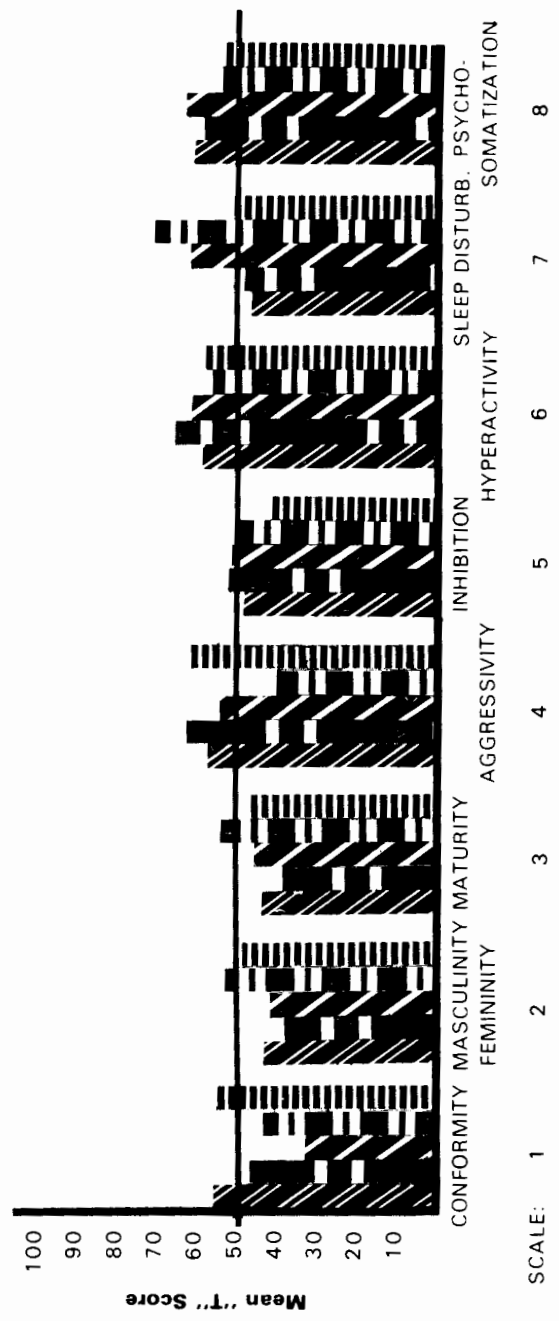
Vegely's results contradict the generally held assumption that deaf children are socially immature, emotionally underdeveloped and poorly adjusted (Vegely, 1971; Hess, 1969). These assumptions were often based on results involving the use of verbal tests. Such tests tend to measure the deaf child's language limitations rather than his actual personality characteristics (Levine, 1960; Vernon, 1970). Even on a non-verbal test such as the MCPS the communication factor may not be fully controlled for. Another variable to be considered in evaluating past work is experimenter bias. It may be present in a non-verbal test with deaf children if the examiner is not fluent in communicating with deaf youngsters. It is most important for the examiner to be fluent both in manual communication and psychological testing for this purpose (Vernon, 1970).

## **Procedure**

Forty-five deaf subjects were tested, five girls and five boys at each age level from five to nine, except for age 5 where there were no deaf girls available. Ss were tested on an individual basis with use of a sign language interpreter to explain instructions. Two 3" x 5" cards, one with a smiling face and the word "fun" on it, and the other with a frowning face and the words "not fun" on it, were placed on opposite sides of the table in front of the child. The instructions were: "Look at the picture. If it looks like something which is fun to do, then place the picture here (on the smiling face). If the picture does not look like fun, put it here (on the the other frowning card)." The child then separated the 238 cards into two piles of fun and not fun pictures. As the child responded, answers were recorded behind a screen to avoid distraction to the child. After each child was tested his cards were reordered consecutively to allow for easier recor-

Age 9  Age 6   
 Age 8  Age 5   
 Age 7 

**MISSOURI CHILDREN'S PICTURE SERIES**  
 MEAN "T" SCORE  
 BOYS



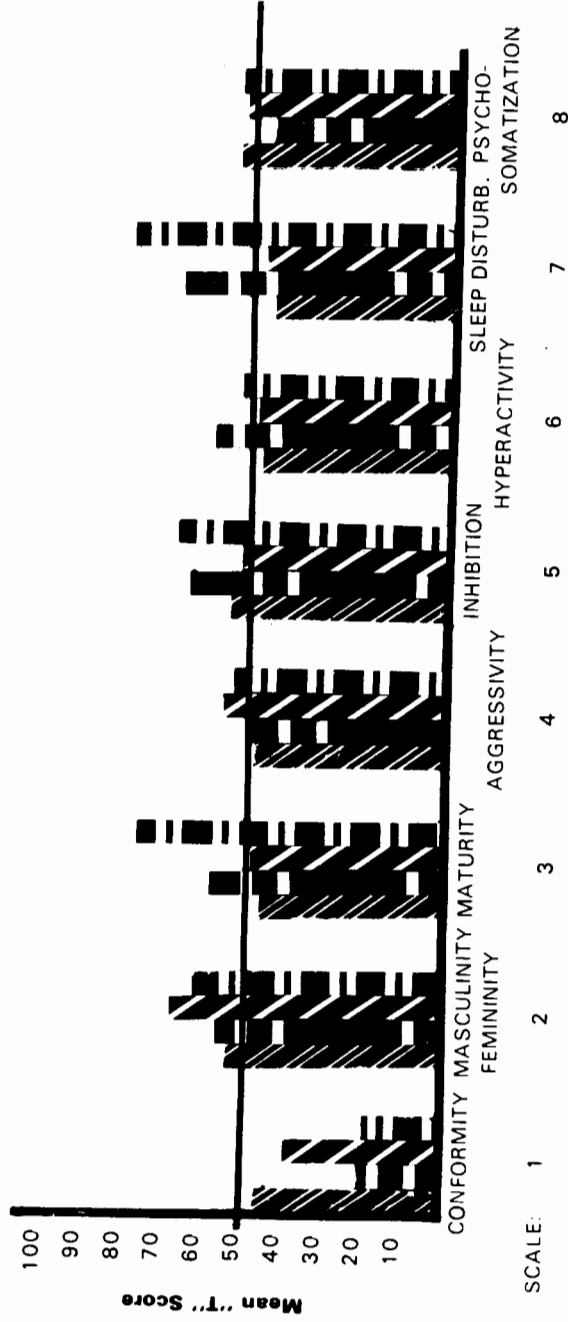
**FIGURE 1** Mean subtest "T" scores for each of the eight subtests of the MCPS for 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9-year old deaf boys. Normal performance is indicated by the line at "T" score of 50.

Age 9  Age 6   
 Age 8   
 Age 7 

**MISSOURI CHILDREN'S PICTURE SERIES**

MEAN "T" SCORE

GIRLS



**FIGURE: 2** Mean subtest "T" scores for each of the eight subtests of the MCPS for 6, 7, 8 and 9-year old deaf girls. Normal performance is indicated by the line at "T" score of 50.

ding. When used for the younger subjects, age five and six, the test was divided into two equal sections to avoid overtaxing the subject.

### Results

Performance of deaf children in each age group on each of the eight scales of the test is shown on Figs. 1 and 2 respectively. A T-score of 50 is the mean based on the standardization sample (Vegely, 1971). Ten points represents a standard deviation, i.e. a score of 60 would be one standard deviation above the mean.

Results are as follows: 1. Mean scores for girls on the subtests are more deviant from the norm than those for boys; but these scores are still within the normal range. 2. Deaf boys and girls are low on the conformity scale, the girls deviating more than the boys. Also, on Scale 7 (sleep disturbance) both boys and girls exceed the norm. Mean scores for girls are outside the normal range on Scale 2 (in the direction of masculinity), Scale 3 (in the direction of maturity), Scale 5 (in the direction of inhibition). 3. The deaf children, as a group, obtained scores associated with normal adjustment.

### Summary and Conclusions

The MCPS seems to be a reliable and useful test for deaf children. It is objective, uses a minimal amount of communication and explanation between the experimenter and subject, and is simple and fast enough to avoid overtaxing the subject. Modification in the application of the test for the five and six year-olds is recommended to use of half of the test at a time. Also, there is a possibility that many five-year-old deaf children do not understand the concept of the word "fun." To insure greater reliability, however, the use of the test should be expanded to a greater population of the young hearing-impaired children.

Based on this investigation and extrapolating from Vegely's more extensive study of older deaf children it is evident that the Missouri Children Picture Series (MSCPS) can be successfully administered to deaf children ages 5 to 9. With the youngest group (5 years old and perhaps older children with pronounced attention span problems) the testing session should be split into two periods.

The data reported here represent too small a sample to provide definitive norms. However, they do give substantial support to the fact that deaf children do not deviate significantly from hearing children on the MCPS. More importantly the data and the clinical experiences of administering the test indicate norms should be developed on deaf children ages 5 to 9. Such norms along with Vegely's for ages 10 to 16 would mean that at long last there would be available an objective non-verbal test of personality for deaf children:

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