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COLLEGE STUDENT BEHAVIOR AS AN EVALUATION
OF THE IOWA HOME ADJUSTMENT
INVENTORY

(Test on Student Attitudes Toward Their Parents)

EARLE E. EMME AND IRVINE THOE

I. SIGNIFICANCE OF PARENTAL ADJUSTMENT

Psychoanalysts have made much of child-parent relationships as revealed by psycho-analytical methods. Symonds (7), however, in the *Psychology of Parent-Child Relationships* reports considerable research done on an objective experimental basis concerning the relationship of child and parent. Similar studies have also been made of the college student and his relationship to his parents and home. Emme (1) in an intensive two-year study of 73 college freshmen discovered the scope of the parental adjustment to be a total of 243 adjustment problems. They occurred in the following order of frequency: difficulty involving standards and viewpoints, 67; methods of contact with parents, 39; financial difficulties, 37; religion, 28; college procedures, 26; social and amusement relationships, 20; homesickness, 13; vocational difficulties, 13. Leta Hollingworth (6) discusses the scope of parental adjustment and something of the intensity of emotional feeling involved as youth seeks individual independence in their emancipation from parental dominance. Hale (3) found that students who had been home from college three times or more by November made poorer scores in personality for the year than those who had not visited their homes, but those who had no letters from home and those who did not write during this period were also in the less well-adjusted group. Writing letters three or more times a week had a positive relation to personality, but receiving letters as often as this bore no clear relation to personality. Much better adjustments were made by students whose religious views did not conflict with those of their parents. The difference in mean personality adjustment between these and the rest being 1.8 points on an 11 point scale.

II. EXPERIMENTAL PROGRESS

Emme (2) reported in 1937 at the Iowa Academy of Science the construction of the Home Adjustment Inventory of 47 state-

ments on the basis of the Thurstone attitude technique. Henry (4) one year later presented his validity study of this attitude scale and discovered that there was respectable validity between the Bell Adjustment Inventory and the Iowa Home Adjustment Inventory. Henry and Emme (5) at the Midwestern Psychological Association in 1939, reported findings secured from the use of their attitude scale: Students have more affection for their mother; women have more affection for their parents; and students who dislike parents are most frequently maladjusted.

III. PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study was conducted to evaluate the Iowa Home Adjustment Inventory by comparing student test scores with actual behavior in college.

IV. SITUATION AND CONDITIONS OF PRESENT STUDY.

One hundred forty freshman students, 56 women and 84 men, were given the Iowa Home Adjustment Inventory. Confidential information was then obtained on thirty out-of-town students. Raters reported on only those whose student behavior was specifically known to them. Ten freshman women live in the Women's Dormitory. There is no men's dormitory, and all the men live either at their own homes or in private homes. This made the desired information not as easily obtainable as on a campus where more students live in dormitories. Furthermore, the conduct of the student who is living at home does not so easily reveal confirmation or rejection or an intense affection score. Thus the results do not pile up in a quantitative way as they would in an effective dormitory system. But only the positive objective behavior data are here presented.

V. PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY

1. Administration of the test.

The entire group took the Iowa State Home Adjustment Inventory in September, 1939.

2. Rating of the Students.

The students were rated at the beginning of the second semester by advisors and senior student guides who were very familiar with them. The raters knew nothing of the test scores of the students. The raters were asked to report their personal observations of the student's parental attitude, dependence upon parents in making decisions and in carrying on financial and social obligations, and other possible data indicated on the check list. The

raters were instructed to report on *only* those students upon whom they had specific, objective evidence.

3. The raters.

The raters were Faculty Advisors of freshman students and senior Student Guides, the President of the Women's Self-governing Association, the President of the Women's Cooperative House, two fraternity men, and two senior psychology majors. These raters supplied the following confidential information on the out-of-town students whom they *knew*.

CHECK-LIST ON HOME RELATIONSHIP OF STUDENT

- Name_____ Residence_____ Parents Residence_____
- Commutes_____ Lives at home_____
1. Student goes home seldom_____, daily_____, or weekly_____.
 2. Student writes home seldom_____, daily_____, or weekly_____.
 3. Student telephones home seldom_____, daily_____, or weekly_____.
 4. Student was homesick___ when___ frequency_____and how long_____.
 5. Other evidence of dislike or affection of student.
(Asking parents to help student register, come and help select clothes, pay tuition bills, etc.)
 6. Effect of Home Adjustment on College Achievement. (Is the aid of the parent sought relative to college school work, and what is the effect?)

VI. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Statistical Results of the Study.

Table I presents the findings of students whose scores indicated intense affection.

Table I—Number of Students with Scores of Intense Affection

Sex	For Both Parents	For Father	For Mother
Male	7	1	10
Female	4	2	17
Total	11	3	27

Seven men and four women had test scores indicating intense affection for both parents.

One man and two women had test scores indicating intense affection for their father, and ten men and seventeen women had test scores indicating intense affection for their mother.

2. The Behavior of Students Whose Scores Indicated Intense Affection.

Thirty-nine students, 23 women and 18 men, who took the Iowa Home Adjustment Inventory revealed a tendency toward intense parental affection. According to the test, three of these students were supposed to have an intense affection for their father; 27 for their mother; and the remaining 11 for both parents.

This reveals the tendency on the part of many mothers to main-

tain too firm a domination over the affection of adolescent sons and daughters. This is one of the major causes of homesickness which so often confronts college and university personnel workers.

The following information was given by raters on some of these freshmen. Initials are superficially arranged to mislead any efforts toward identification.

- a. One girl, C. W., whose score of 28 showed an intense affection for both parents, went home every week-end. She was homesick a long time at the beginning of the year with recurring spells. She wrote home daily and telephoned home on the average once a week.
- b. Another girl, G. W., who had a score of 28 also went home every week-end. She is still not interested in college and participates in no college activities.
- c. Another girl, H. S., whose score of 26 showed intense affection for her mother, lived so far from home that she was unable to visit except during vacation. She was able to make a satisfactory college adjustment, however, because physical attractiveness gave her an exceptionally large number of college friends.
- d. A man, R. T., whose score of 25 showed considerable affection for his mother was very timid. He made poor grades and found few friends. Finally he dropped out of school giving financial difficulties as the reason.
- e. Another man, F. D., whose score of 25 showed considerable affection for both parents had his parents engage his room and pay his tuition; they even interviewed with the professors in his behalf. "The boy can't settle down," they reported. "And his grades are too poor to enable him to qualify for N. Y. A. work."
- f. A man, J. X. with a score of 28 showing intense affection for his mother has gone home at least every three weeks. Often his parents come down to visit him or to attend a basketball game. His parents pay his tuition and board and room.

Table II presents the findings with respect to students with scores of intense dislike.

Table II — Number of Students with Scores of Intense Dislike

Sex	For Both Parents	For Father	For Mother
Male	4	9	2
Female	0	6	1
Totals	4	15	3

Twenty-two students, 15 men and 7 women, showed a tendency toward parental dislike. Concerning these 22, raters indicated the following:

- a. One woman, M. H., with a score of 4 showing intense dislike for her mother dropped out of school against her parents wishes after they had quarreled over a boy friend.
- b. One man, F. A., with a score of 7 for his father dropped out of school early in the year.
- c. One man, D. S., with a score of 14 for both parents also dropped out of school.
- d. One man, G. L., with a score of 3 indicating intense dislike for his father was named by an advisor as having no apparent affection for his family, and as one who received no parental sympathy or understanding.
- e. J. L., a man with a score of 8 showing intense dislike for his father, was

- reported as never being homesick. He was too far from home to go home at any time. His parents occasionally sent him a few clothes.
- f. D. W. whose score of 12 indicated dislike for her father, was listless and passive in school. Her father dominated the home situation entirely.
 - g. A girl, F. C., with a score of 12 for her father was arbitrary and resentful. Had a cynical attitude and a cold, hard exterior appearance.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

1. The majority of students had scores placing them in the "some affection" and "considerable affection" categories, indicating that the majority of students are not listed in either intense dislike or intense affection, but are fairly well adjusted with relation to their parents. This is confirmed by the test scores, as well as the absence of report on those students by the counselor-raters.

2. There is agreement with the Henry and Emme study on the following three points:

- (1) Women have more affection for parents.
- (2) Students have more affection for their mother.
- (3) Students with intense dislike for their parents are apt to be maladjusted with regard to college life.

3. In addition, findings of this study showed that students with intense affection for their parents were also apt to be maladjusted with regard to college life.

4. There was no evidence that students with scores signifying other than intense parental affection exhibited strong affection.

5. There was no evidence that students with scores signifying intense parental affection exhibited other behavior.

6. Schools which have begun using the test have found its diagnostic value very useful, especially with regard to personnel work.

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