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THE COMPARISON AND CORRELATION OF CERTAIN ATTITUDES AND DECEPTIVE TENDENCIES

WAYNE LEFFLER

PROBLEM

Various studies made by Voelker and Howells have indicated specific tendencies to cheat in persons. Marston found that women were 14 times as honest and 9 times as truthful as men on the average. An unpublished study by Johns and Lauer, made of 94 delinquent boys, indicated a tendency to cheat in certain subject matter. The examinees tended to overstate their knowledge of music and parts of automobiles, but gave a more or less correct statement of knowledge concerning books of the Bible.

The present study is an attempt to secure data on comparison of tendency of students to cheat and to overstate their understanding of certain subject matter with three types of attitudes: superstition, law observance and tolerance in conventional directions.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

A total of 74 men and 66 women students were given a battery of three tests, as follows:

1. Form B of the Iowa State Multi-Attitude Scale of 100 items. This scale covers three attitudes designated as scores U, V, and W.
2. Motor Performance, a paper and pencil target test, purporting to be a test of skill but designed to indicate the tendency to improve performance by peeking and designated as T.
3. Mental Efficiency Information Test, a form of knowledge test, in 10 parts. Each part contained 25 items, 80 per cent of which were fictitious. The categories covered were as follows: books of fiction, movie stars, battles, musical compositions, notorious men, organizations, famous men, games, books of the Bible and mechanical parts of automobiles. This score is designated as P.

The student was instructed to check *only* the books he had read, movie stars he had seen or read about, battles he had read about, musical selections he had heard or knew, notorious men he had heard, seen in the movies, or read about, organizations of which he is a member, famous men he has heard about, games he has played, books of the Bible he knows of, and parts of an automobile which he could identify. Scores were obtained by adding all checks made on fictitious items.

In the Iowa State Multi-Attitude Scale, covering the attitudes toward common superstitions (U score), toward law observance (V score) and the attitude of tolerance in conventional directions (W score); the student was instructed to, "Mark in the compartment at left of each number your feeling or attitude toward each item, as follows:

4. Very agreeable or very pleasing.
3. Agreeable or pleasing.
2. Neutral, no particular feeling, indifferent.
1. Displeasing or disagreeable.
0. Most displeasing or very disagreeable.

Mark every word and get through as quickly as possible."

Before grading the tests this information was recorded and each individual was assigned a number and the names removed, so that some of the statistical work could be done by persons other than the author. Such action was necessary as many students refused to sign their names unless the writer would promise that no one else would see their individual score. They were asked to indicate their actual attitudes, in as much as it is a comparison of attitudes and no attention would be given to the specific attitudes of any individual, but of the group comparisons only.

The tests were given to the following groups: one fraternity of 43 men, one sorority of 28 women, 31 dormitory women, 11 men in group meetings, 20 men in class and at the Union, and 7 women in classes. These were representative groups on the campus and were selected entirely at random. After the tests were scored the reliabilities of the units were calculated by the method of odd vs. even items. Each part of the test was correlated with every other part, the records of men and women were kept separate for purposes of comparison.

RESULTS

After correcting the zero order coefficients by the Spearman-Brown formula the respective reliabilities ran as follows:

Table I—Reliabilities of Tests Used (Odd vs. Even Items)

	Men	Women	Average
U	.580	.873	.726
V	.707	.516	.661
W	.668	.496	.581
T	.856	.754	.805
P	.751	.271	.511

The significance of sex differences was tested and is shown in table II.

Table II — Sex Differences

	Men			Women			Differ- ence	Critical Ratio
	N	Mean	S. D.	N	Mean	S. D.		
*U	64	48.22	4.13	64	42.96	5.53	5.26	8.65
V	77	20.05	4.13	64	19.41	4.42	0.56	0.74
W	40	47.50	7.75	64	48.71	6.19	1.21	1.20
*T	64	37.34	15.87	64	46.47	9.37	9.13	9.53
P	40	7.95	7.40	49	6.56	6.55	1.39	1.41

* T and U are highly significant.

Next the variables were intercorrelated to ascertain the degree of overlapping. These results are discussed below.

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It will be noted that the reliabilities of these tests are all fairly satisfactory for group comparisons. Most of them are reasonably high for attitude scales with the exception of the P score, which is 0.511. The correlations between functions measured were mostly all too low to be significant, thus indicating specific reactions to the various tests. The one exception is the relation between the scores V and W, for both men and women, which gave a respectively high correlation toward deceptive tendencies and toward people. This suggests that inconsiderate people also maintain lax attitudes toward unethical practices. It was noted that the W score, of tolerance in conventional directions, is here used as meaning an attitude toward socially acceptable practices. There seems to be a slight tendency for those men who overstate (a high rating on P score) to take advantage in a skill test, but this is not true of the women. Also a slight tendency was noted for men who are not tolerant to overstate. Women who are less tolerant have a tendency to be more superstitious; those who are more law observant are less superstitious. Significant sex differences were noted on the W and T scores; indicating that women are somewhat more superstitious and also that they may tend to accept visual cues which would help them in making a better score on a skill test. Other differences were not significant. These conclusions seemed warranted in light of the results obtained with the limited population studied.

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