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A VALIDATION OF CERTAIN MEASURES OF PERSONALITY ADJUSTMENT AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL

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This report deals with some preliminary data on the validity of the Bell Adjustment Inventory, a questionnaire scale designed to locate personality maladjustments in high school and college students. Other similar measurements being studied are the Thurstone Personality Schedule and the Woodworth-House Mental Hygiene Inventory.

According to Dr. H. M. Bell, his questionnaire ". . . provides four separate measures of personal and social adjustment:

a. Home Adjustment. Individuals scoring high tend to be unsatisfactorily adjusted to their home surroundings. Low scores indicate satisfactory home adjustment.

b. Health Adjustment. High scores indicate unsatisfactory health adjustment; low scores, satisfactory adjustment.

c. Social Adjustment. Individuals scoring high tend to be submissive and retiring in their social contacts. Individuals with low scores are aggressive in social contacts.

d. Emotional Adjustment. Individuals with high scores tend to be unstable emotionally. Persons with low scores tend to be emotionally stable."

The four part scores may be added to yield a total score, which is said to give a picture of the individual's total personality adjustment.

The University of Iowa freshman class of 1934-35, which took the Bell Adjustment Inventory as part of the Qualifying Examinations, are the subjects of this experiment. From the total population of 949 College of Liberal Arts freshmen who completed the first year's work, nine samples were drawn.

These samples may be divided into three groups, each containing 100 men, 100 women, and 100 mixed sections, one consisting of those individuals receiving the highest total scores on the scale, one made up of those receiving the lowest total scores on the scale, and one composed of randomly selected sections.

The following measures were available for all the subjects:

(1) Total and part scores on the Bell Adjustment Inventory.

(2) Percentile ranks on the Iowa Qualifying Examination — a highly reliable and valid measure of aptitude for college work.

(3) First and second semester, and year grade point averages.

From the following tables, containing the coefficients of correlation between the various measures, certain conclusions present themselves:

Table I — Coefficients of Correlation Between First Year Grade Point Average and Predictive and Personality Measures.

Group	Composite Percentile	Total Score	Home	Health	Social	Emotional
I	.76	.00	−.28	.03	.25	−.20
II	.56	.14	.12	.04	−.09	.08
III	.69	.15	.03	−.02	.18	.02
IV	.59	.03	.16	.03	−.05	−.05
V	.74	.10	−.22	.06	.07	−.16
VI	.54	.02	.02	−.07	.05	−.02

I 100 mixed having lowest score.
II 100 mixed having highest score.
III 100 women having lowest score.
IV 100 women having highest score.
V 100 men having lowest score.
VI 100 men having highest score.

Table II — Coefficients of Correlation Between Composite Percentile and Total and Part Scores of the Bell Adjustment Inventory.

Group	Total Score	Home	Health	Social	Emotional
I	−.10	−.11	.05	.06	−.22
II	.01	.08	.05	−.16	.10
III	.04	.03	−.05	.13	−.09
IV	.01	.13	−.02	.01	−.12
V	−.08	−.09	.18	−.06	−.17
VI	−.06	.04	.03	−.34	−.01

I 100 mixed having lowest score.
II 100 mixed having highest score.
III 100 women having lowest score.
IV 100 women having highest score.
V 100 men having lowest score.
VI 100 men having highest score.

Table III — Part-Whole Correlation Coefficients for the Bell Adjustment Inventory.

Group	Home	Health	Social	Emotional
I	.30	.34	.37	.36
II	.23	.50	.23	.27
III	.22	.29	.48	.69
IV	.33	.56	.21	.39
V	.25	.42	.40	.44
VI	.27	.52	.45	.51
VII	.32	.49	.47	.73
VIII	.31	.37	.14	.60
IX	.43	.50	.36	.67

I 100 mixed having lowest score.
II 100 mixed having highest score.
III 100 women having lowest score.
IV 100 women having highest score.
V 100 men having lowest score.
VI 100 men having highest score.
VII 100 men randomly selected.
VIII 100 women randomly selected.
IX 100 mixed randomly selected.

Table IV — Interpart Correlation Coefficients for the Bell Adjustment Inventory.

Group	Home vs. Health	Home vs. Social	Home vs. Emotional	Health vs. Social	Health vs. Emotional	Social vs. Emotional
I	.04	−.29	.02	−.33	−.10	−.25
II	.16	−.45	−.28	−.30	−.06	−.15
III	−.09	−.31	.05	−.24	.08	.08
IV	.18	−.48	−.09	−.23	−.04	−.13
V	.10	−.38	.03	−.29	−.07	−.13
VI	.06	−.21	−.25	−.33	.05	.07
VII	.25	.02	.34	.23	.60	.58
VIII	.50	−.11	.40	−.06	.44	.42
IX	.68	.05	.47	.22	.60	.50

I 100 mixed having lowest score.
II 100 mixed having highest score.
III 100 women having lowest score.
IV 100 women having highest score.
V 100 men having lowest score.
VI 100 men having highest score.
VII 100 men randomly selected.
VIII 100 women randomly selected.
IX 100 mixed randomly selected.

1. In Table I it may be observed that there is a closer correspondence between predicted and actual achievement for the low score (presumably well-adjusted) students, than for the high score (presumably maladjusted) students. The obtained differences between these coefficients of correlation are statistically significant. They have further educational significance in that the efficiency of prediction for the well-adjusted group is 15% greater than that of the maladjusted group.

2. Tables I and II yield the fact that there is no significant statistical relationship between the various phases of personality adjustment or the total adjustment and aptitude for college work, or actual grade point achievement. This absence of relationship is consistent for all groups.

3. If it is to be assumed that it is possible to obtain a score indicative of the totality of personality adjustment, then the scale does not have high internal consistency. The part-whole correlations presented in Table III are, in general, too low to support the possibility of a global conception of the personality. This result achieves even greater significance from the fact that it is found for both well-adjusted and maladjusted groups. It can only mean that, in terms of the performance on this scale, personality adjustment is a pocketed affair, a conclusion which is not supported by other psychological and psychiatric evidence.

4. From the interpart correlations in Table IV it appears that social adjustment bears a negative relationship to home and health adjustment, but that in the other areas, the interrelationships are

low. This is true, however, only of the extreme groups. For the groups representing a random selection of the population these results are markedly different. Here the relationships shift significantly in a positive direction in every case. Such a difference in correlations between the low scoring groups and the random groups might be due to the considerable differences in variability in adjustment inventory scores between the two sets of samples; however there is little or no difference between the variabilities of the high score and random groups, and the differences in correlations still persist. The obvious suggestion, of course, is that the very low interpart correlations for the high scoring maladjusted groups are manifestations of the breaking up of personality which occurs in any serious maladjustment. However, by the same token, we should expect higher correlations to obtain for the low scoring well-adjusted groups than for any others. In the absence of such relationship it must be concluded that the test is seriously lacking in validity.

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