

Family Adjustment Influences in the Neuroticism Score

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In his first presentation of the Personality Schedule, Thurstone reported the isolation for special examination of the 19 questions on family relationships which appear in the schedule. He compared the responses to those questions by the fifty persons giving the highest neuroticism scores with the responses of the fifty persons giving the lowest neuroticism scores. With the exception of one question all of these showed a markedly greater frequency of significant answers in the group having high neuroticism scores.

Since that time I have developed a diagnostic scoring scheme for the personality schedule which makes it possible to score the schedule in three other ways than that proposed by Thurstone. These diagnostic scorings reveal general tendencies toward an abnormality of personality pattern, tendencies toward a psychotic type of personality pattern, and tendencies toward a definitely schizoid type of personality pattern. It seemed, therefore, wise, and possibly instructive, to isolate again the reactions to the nineteen questions concerning family relations. In doing so I sought to answer this question: Do persons who answer the family relations questions significantly manifest scores for abnormality, for psychotic trend, and for schizoid trend that are higher on the average than for those persons who do not manifest family troubles?

My procedure was to obtain the average score on each of the diagnostic patterns for all persons answering the first family relations question significantly and to place beside it the average score on each of the diagnostic patterns for those answering the question insignificantly. Then this same thing was done for each of the remaining questions on family relations. By this means I had before me a list of the means (arranged by questions) which could be treated as a distribution of scores for those answering the family-relations questions significantly and another list for those answering insignificantly. This I did, obtaining, of course, the mean and the sigma of the mean in order to obtain the significances of the differences. There may be some possibility of question concerning the propriety of this statistical procedure. Nevertheless, it does express simply and clearly what anyone who reads the columns of figures will perceive is definitely present in them.

All this was first done on a group of 100 unselected college students, mostly sophomores. The figures in Table I indicate the results:

TABLE I. ANSWERS OF 100 STUDENTS

	Significant Answers	Insignificant Answers	Critical Ratio
Abnormal Scoring.....	22.46	13.35	10.1
Psychotic Scoring.....	26.03	19.8	6.3
Schizoid Scoring.....	25.20	18.4	13.2

Obviously those students who admit family difficulties manifest much greater tendency toward abnormalities of personality pattern than do those who appear to lack the family relation troubles. But it should also be observed that no causal relation is demonstrated here. Perhaps the abnormality twist of the personality pattern is the product of family maladjustment, as so many studies of delinquency in recent years have indicated; but it is also possible that the family maladjustment is the product of a personality which does not adapt well to family life.

I also had at my disposal a large amount of data acquired from diagnosed pathological cases. I had, already tabulated, the individual responses to each of the questions by a group of 34 psychoneurotic cases, a group of 52 manic-depressive cases, and another group of 78 schizophrenic cases. So it seemed possibly instructive to treat the responses of these pathological cases in the same fashion as I have just described for the student group. The following tables are the consequence (Tables II-IV):

TABLE II. PSYCHONEUROTIC CASES

	Significant Answers	Insignificant Answers	Critical Ratio
Abnormal Scoring.....	23.32*	26.13*	2.3
Psychotic Scoring.....	14.03	14.67	0.85
Schizoid Scoring.....	18.95	18.23	0.83

TABLE III. MANIC-DEPRESSIVE CASES.

	Significant Answers	Insignificant Answers	Critical Ratio
Abnormal Scoring.....	34.62	28.15	3.87
Psychotic Scoring.....	36.87	29.57	5.93
Schizoid Scoring.....	26.47	18.79	5.53

*Note the lower average for the persons answering significantly.

One most unexpected result of this comparison appears in the table for the psychoneurotic cases. There it will be observed that the psychoneurotics admitting family troubles do not give significantly higher scores than those who do not. Apparently psychoneurotics may or may not have family troubles with little significance in these scores, or, they may be more astute in lying, or they may have more reason for lying, or what not. It is still more curious that on the abnormal scoring the psychoneurotics who reported family troubles actually gave a lower

TABLE IV. SCHIZOPHRENE CASES.

	Significant Answers	Insignificant Answers	Critical Ratio
Abnormal Scoring.....	38.72	28.30	6.35
Psychotic Scoring.....	41.07	32.13	5.66
Schizoid Scoring.....	43.12	34.29	9.01

average score than those who denied family troubles. And the difference is fairly significant (critical ratio of 2.3).

The tables for the manic-depressive cases and for the schizophrenes run about as one would expect. In both groups those answering the family-relations questions significantly give much higher scores on all forms of the diagnostic scoring device than do those who answer these questions indicating little or no trouble in their family relations. Apparently the psychotic cases having family-relations troubles are those with personality patterns distorted far more in the direction of psychosis and of schizophrenia. Again the question of cause and effect could be raised, but there is no use in raising it because I cannot answer it.

Thus it seems quite certain that the questions in the Thurstone personality schedule on family relations are very important. But there are only 19 of them—too few, probably, for a diagnostic scoring which would be reliable; and a reading of them reveals that many kinds of family trouble are not included. Therefore, the scoring of any person for the degree of his family adjustment or maladjustment at present in terms of these 19 questions is scarcely practicable, important as family relations appear to be in maladjustment distortions of personality. If a score for family adjustment could be obtained, the possibilities of usefulness quickly exhaust almost anyone's capacity to imagine. Probably such could be developed by much the same procedure as that originally used by Thurstone in the development of his personality schedule.