

THE WILL-TEMPERAMENT OF INDIANS¹

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In these modern days the term racial temperament has a very well established usage. We seem to see in the Chinaman one sort of temperament, in the Negro another and in the Indian another to say nothing of Italian temperament and Irish nature. It would be hard to shake the faith of latterday members of society in civilization away from such a belief. Somehow we have come to think just in this way and we have not asked ourselves the question if these temperaments are after all really racial, that is, native and not acquired. It is time that psychology were seeking to answer the question as to whether or not there are such things as racial temperaments.

Efforts have been made to study the temperament of the southern Negro scientifically (1), (2) and the device used for the purpose was either altogether or in part the Will-Temperament Test devised by Dr. Downey. The results of these studies, one by McFadden and Dashiell in North Carolina and the other by Sunne in New Orleans are indicative but not conclusive.

The writers recognize the inadequacy of all tests of personality used so far in making studies. This would include of course the group test devised by Dr. Downey which we are using to study Indian personality but we believe, with others, that it is the most promising attack of temperament yet made and that it bids fair to have a wide application as it is more and more perfected.

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PROBLEM

The problem here is:

1. To obtain, if possible, reliable measures of full-blood Indians for the various tests of the Group Will-Temperament Test.

TABLE 1

Scores Obtained in Group Will-Temperament Test by 101 Whites and 170 Full-Blood Indians

	TESTS													TOTAL SCORE
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L		
For white subjects														
Med	4 11	5 12	4 15	6 16	5 23	5 03	5 03	7 08	3 71	5 55	5 42	3 88	59 54	
Q	2 05	3 25	1 82	2 17	1 12	2 65	2 47	2 69	1 53	1 91	2 66	2 13	5 39	
SD														
Med	0 37	0 60	0 34	0 30	0 20	0 48	0 44	0 48	0 28	0 17	0 48	0 39	0 99	
For full-blood Indian subjects														
Med	2 83	3 08	4 59	3 19	5 31	2 98	3 44	6 10	6 85	5 90	1 95	9 68	55 86	
Q	1 20	3 59	1 33	1 47	1 53	2 34	2 97	2 76	3 01	2 59	0 95	0 88	2 25	
SD														
Med	0 17	0 51	0 19	0 20	0 22	0 33	0 40	0 39	0 43	0 37	0 12	0 12	0 31	
Over-laps*	22%	47%	56%	18%	58%	35%	46%	48%	72%	57%	16%	24%	34%	

* Per cent of full-blood Indians attaining and exceeding the median of the Whites

(A) Speed of Movement; (B) Freedom from Load; (C) Flexibility; (D) Speed of Decision; (E) Motor Impulsion; (F) Self-Confidence; (G) Non-Compliance, (H) Finality of Judgment, (I) Motor Inhibition, (J) Interest in Detail, (K) Coordination of Impulses, (L) Volitional Perseveration

2. To compare these with similar measures of white individuals so as to ascertain if the groups behave differently when so tested.

SUBJECTS

There were two groups of subjects. One was a group of 101 White students in a High School of the City Schools of Denver. All but 5 of these were from the eleventh and twelfth grades and all but 7 were from seventeen years and on in age. Of these 7, one was fifteen years and the others sixteen years old. The

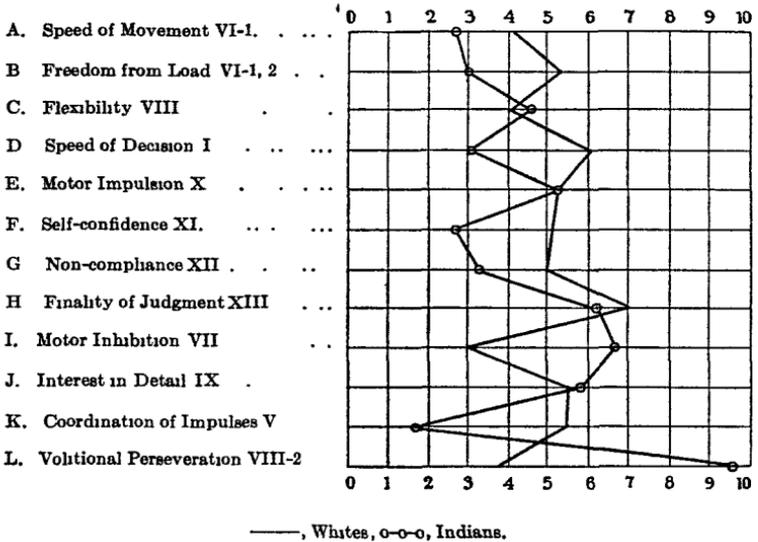


FIG. 1. SHOWING WHITE AND INDIAN GROUP PROFILES

sexes were about equally divided there being 49 girls and 52 boys. The Indian group was composed of 170 full-blood Indians from the United States Indian Schools at Santa Fe and Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Rapid City, South Dakota. There were 85 boys and 85 girls. About half of the group were full-bloods from sedentary tribes being nearly altogether Pueblo Indians; the other half were from different nomadic tribes, mostly Navajos, Apaches and Sioux.

Administration and scoring

The accepted technique of administration of the group test was followed as closely as possible although it is realized that the technique is very difficult of execution. There was much practice by the experimenters in administering the test before the tests were given from which the data in table 1 were obtained. In scoring the tests the writers had some valuable assistance from the author of the tests for which they make acknowledgment. Regardless of these safeguards it is felt that variations found in these results may be partly due to variations in technique and scoring.

HANDLING THE DATA

In table 1 will be found the Medians and Quartiles of the 101 White subjects and of the 170 full-blood Indian subjects for each of the separate test items and for the total score. There will be found also measures of overlapping of the Indian measures on the white medians. Figure 1 gives the group profiles of the two racial groups.

INTERPRETATION

In the first place it will be seen from examining the medians of both racial groups and the profiles that there are points of similarity as well as difference; this is true on a basis of mere medians. But it will be noted that in some of the tests in both racial groups there is high variability and that therefore such medians are somewhat unreliable. This is true in eight of the tests for the white group and six of the tests for the Indians.

If one takes into consideration the overlapping of the Indians on white medians it will be found that the racial differences indicated by the medians in tests for Speed of Movement, Speed of Decision, Motor Inhibition, Coordination of Impulses and Volitional Perseveration indicate real differences as found between the two racial groups.

The overlapping for total score also indicates a tendency toward a real difference in that respect. That is to say, the

test indicates that the Whites are somewhat more speedy than the full-blood Indians in so far as the test indicates what it claims to test. They are just the same in flexibility but much more inclined to make quick decision than are the Indians. In motor impulsion the two racial groups are just about the same but the Whites show a greater amount of self-confidence than do the Indians. In non-compliance the results for the two groups are not very conclusive though the Whites are slightly stronger than the Indians it would appear upon comparing mere medians. The same may be said of finality of judgment although there is more similarity in the two group measures and the results appear more trustworthy, i.e., both groups appear rather strong in this respect. In motor inhibition the Indians certainly have the better of the Whites though they are slightly more variable. In fact the test indicates that this is a rather strong trait in the Indian group and the weakest trait for the Whites. In interest in detail the racial groups are again rather similar though the Whites are less variable. There is a striking weakness in coördination of impulses in the Indians as here measured. In this respect the Whites are (according to the author of the tests) just about normal. The difference seems to be genuine as measured. On the other hand the Indians attain a very high score in volitional perseveration and the variability is excessive under the circumstances whereas the score of the Whites is much lower and their variability is high. If we may take the total score as indicating strength of personality the Whites would appear to have stronger personalities than the Indians.

COMPARISON WITH NEGROES

Unfortunately the tests given to these Indians were not the same as those given by the investigators mentioned above but we may make a rough comparison. MacFadden and Dashiell conclude that the Negroes tested by them were slower than their White group and in this respect the findings for the Indians are similar in that they are slower than the Whites. They also found the Negroes to be quicker in the matter of speed of de-

cision than the Whites and we find the Indians slower than Whites. These investigators found the Negroes more self-confident but we find the Indians less so than the Whites. The Negroes were stronger in motor impulsion than Whites but the Indians are here found to be similar as measured. The Indians and Negroes seem to be slightly similar in being weak in non-compliance as compared with Whites. The Negroes are weaker in motor inhibition than the White group with which they were compared but here the Indians excel the Whites. Both the Negroes and these Indians proved weaker in coördination of impulses than the white groups with which they were compared and in volitional perseveration the Indians excel Whites while the Negroes fall below them in this respect.

The last finding of excellence in volitional perservation is supported by a finding by Garth (4) in his study of White and Indian and Negro work curves where the Indians held out better in a continuous task in addition than either Whites or Negroes although the Indians were nomadic Indians. His findings for sedentary Indians showed them as not excelling in the work curve test (5).

SUMMARY

When Indians are tested with the Group Will-Temperament Test and the results are compared with results from testing Whites of similar age we find.

1. The comparison of the total score indicates that Whites possess stronger personalities than Indians as here measured.
2. While the measures of various traits in both racial groups show great variability those showing least variability are: For Indians, Speed of Movement, Flexibility, Speed of Decision, Motor Impulsion, Coordination of Impulses, and Volitional Perseveration; for Whites, Flexibility, Motor Impulsion, Motor Inhibition, and Interest in Detail.
3. The greatest differences between the two racial groups as indicated by measures of overlapping are to be found in Speed of Movement, Speed of Decision, Self-confidence, Coordination of Impulses, Volitional Perseveration and Motor Inhibition.

4. Interpreted the above means that the Whites are more speedy in the test than are the Indians, they are quicker in making decisions, they are rather more self-confident, they have less motor inhibition, better coordination of impulses and are poorer in volitional perseveration.

5. The greatest differences as found here between the races are in speed of movement, speed of decision, coordination of impulses and perseveration. In only the last of these does the Indian excel.

6. It is rather dangerous to venture any conclusion with reference to comparison of Negro and Indian Temperament but it would appear that Indians are less speedy in decision than are the Negroes and they appear to be more given to motor inhibition than the Negroes.

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