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ABSTRACT

In comparing the personality traits of disadvantaged youths to advantaged from an urban high school, as indicated on the IPAT Jr.-Sr. HSPQ, it was found that both groups of boys tended toward a pattern of group-dependency and restraint. They tended to be somewhat detached, less oriented to intellectual pursuits, showing a zest for action and expediency. In addition, the disadvantaged males indicated significantly greater emotional instability and lower ego strength. On the Minnesota Vocational Interest Inventory, the disadvantaged boys showed the strongest preference for health services and clean-hands type of activities; advantaged boys, office work and carpentry. (Author)

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A Comparative Study
of Personality and
Vocational Interests of
Disadvantaged and
Advantaged Youths

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Paper presented before the Annual Convention of the National Council on
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Abstract

A Comparative Study of
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of Disadvantaged and Advantaged Youths

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In comparing the personality traits of disadvantaged youths to advantaged from an urban high school, as indicated on the IPAT Jr.-Sr. HSPQ, it was found that both groups of boys tended toward a pattern of group-dependency and restraint. They tended to be somewhat detached, less oriented to intellectual pursuits, showing a zest for action and expediency. In addition, the disadvantaged males indicated significantly greater emotional instability and lower ego strength. On the Minnesota Vocational Interest Inventory, the disadvantaged boys showed the strongest preference for health services and clean-hands type of activities; advantaged boys, office work and carpentry.

Summary

A Comparative Study of Personality and Vocational Interests of Disadvantaged and Advantaged Youths

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Bridgeport, Connecticut

Objectives of the Inquiry

There is a continuing interest among psychologists in the relationship that apparently exists between the individual's choice of occupation and his personality profile (Osipow, 1968; Super, 1957). As Siegelman and Peck (1961) suggest, "the majority of individuals in a given vocation share a common personality need pattern that is different from personality need patterns characterizing individuals in other vocational groups." One representative study (Sternberg, 1955) indicated personality patterns in college majors. In another study of college students in teacher-training (Soares & Soares, 1966), differences among the majors — science, music, and physical education — further reinforced the relationship of personality characteristics and fields of interest.

In regard to the disadvantaged, little research evidence exists which serves to relate vocational interests with personality traits in this group. Baker and Wagner (1965) have found a higher prevalence of emotional dysfunction. Tannenbaum (1967) has pointed to the group's tendency toward anti-social behavior and prestige deprivation. There is additional evidence that the disadvantaged may have low resistance to the stresses of life, poor ego strength, and weak personality structure (Langner and Michael, 1963).

Therefore, it was deemed necessary to investigate the personality characteristics of disadvantaged youths, as well as their vocational interests, and to determine whether these traits and interests differentiated the disadvantaged from advantaged youths.

Methods and Data Sources

The subjects were 180 youths from an urban high school: 93 disadvantaged boys and 87 advantaged boys. They were administered the Jr.-Sr. HSPQ form of the IPAT and the Minnesota Vocational Interest Inventory (MVII). The relatively new MVII -- as developed to a great extent by Kenneth Clark -- was chosen because it seemed especially appropriate for the disadvantaged group of boys. The scores were submitted to a t-test analysis for the comparison of the two groups and to correlation for the comparison of the two tests.

Results

Figure 1 indicates how closely related the disadvantaged and advantaged boys were in their personality profiles. The only significant difference in the traits was on the C dimension with the disadvantaged males indicating a greater tendency in the direction of emotional instability and lower ego strength. Figure 2 indicates the highest standard scores on the vocational interests area scales of the MVII, with the highest indicators for the disadvantaged on areas 2 (health services) and 8 (clean-hand activities), and for the advantaged, areas 3 (office work) and 6 (carpentry).

Importance of the Study

Both disadvantaged and advantaged boys from an urban high school showed a low-scoring pattern of personality which can be described as group-dependent and restrained. They tend to be somewhat detached, less oriented to intellectual pursuits, submissive, yet relatively unfrustrated.

and self-assured. They go along readily with the group, showing a zest for action with others even though a bit serious and inactive by themselves. They tend toward expediency, feeling few obligations and following their own urges. The only significant difference indicated greater emotional instability for the disadvantaged boys.

In vocational interests the disadvantaged males had highest scores on the health services and clean-hands activities, with special interest in the particular jobs of hospital attendant and truck driver. The advantaged youths had highest scores on the office work and carpentry area scales, with particular interest in the specific jobs of retail salesman, tabulating machine operator, and industrial education teacher -- thus setting their sights a little higher since they are more likely than the advantaged youths to perceive the possibility of obtaining the skills and training which such jobs command.

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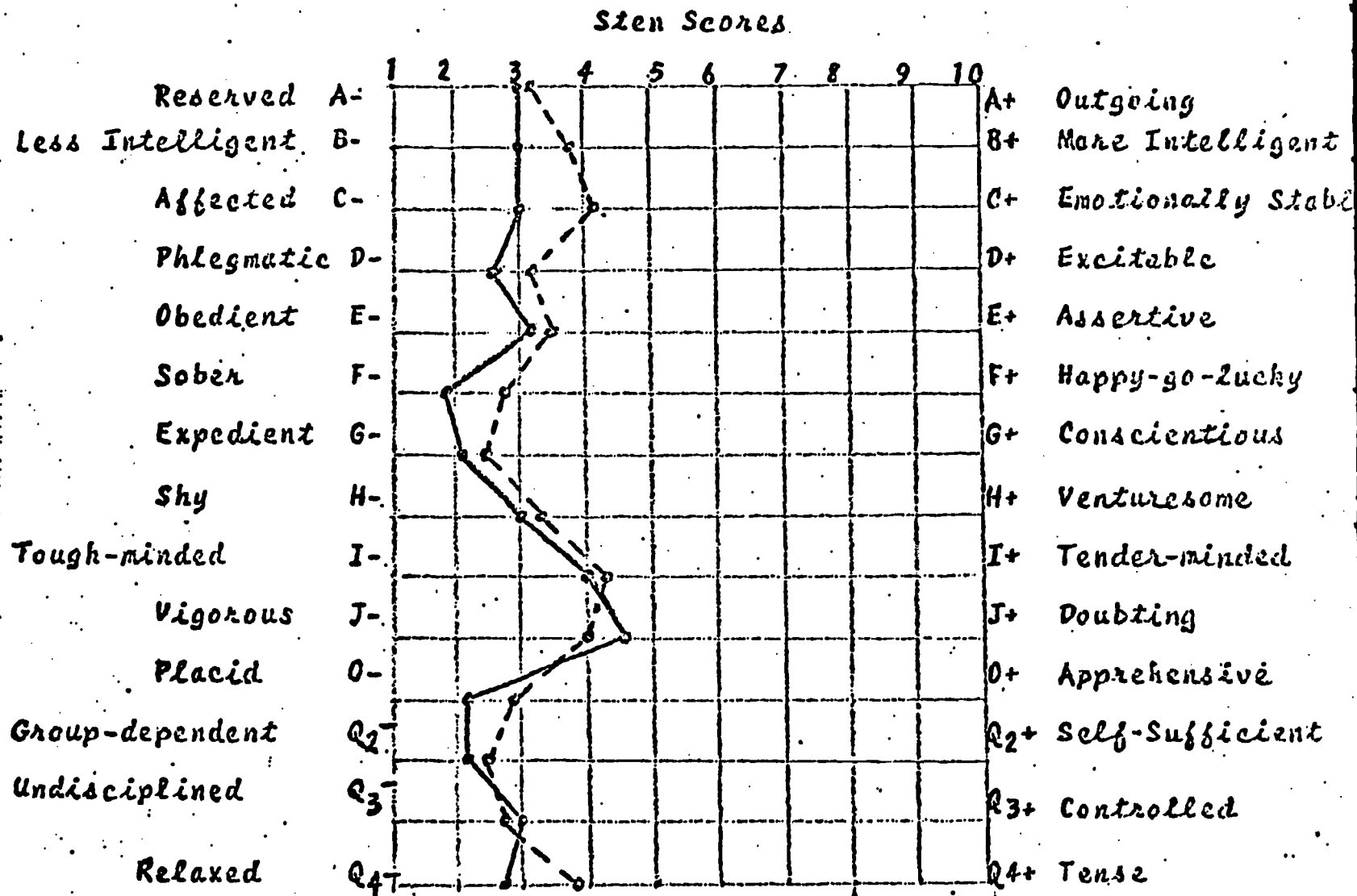
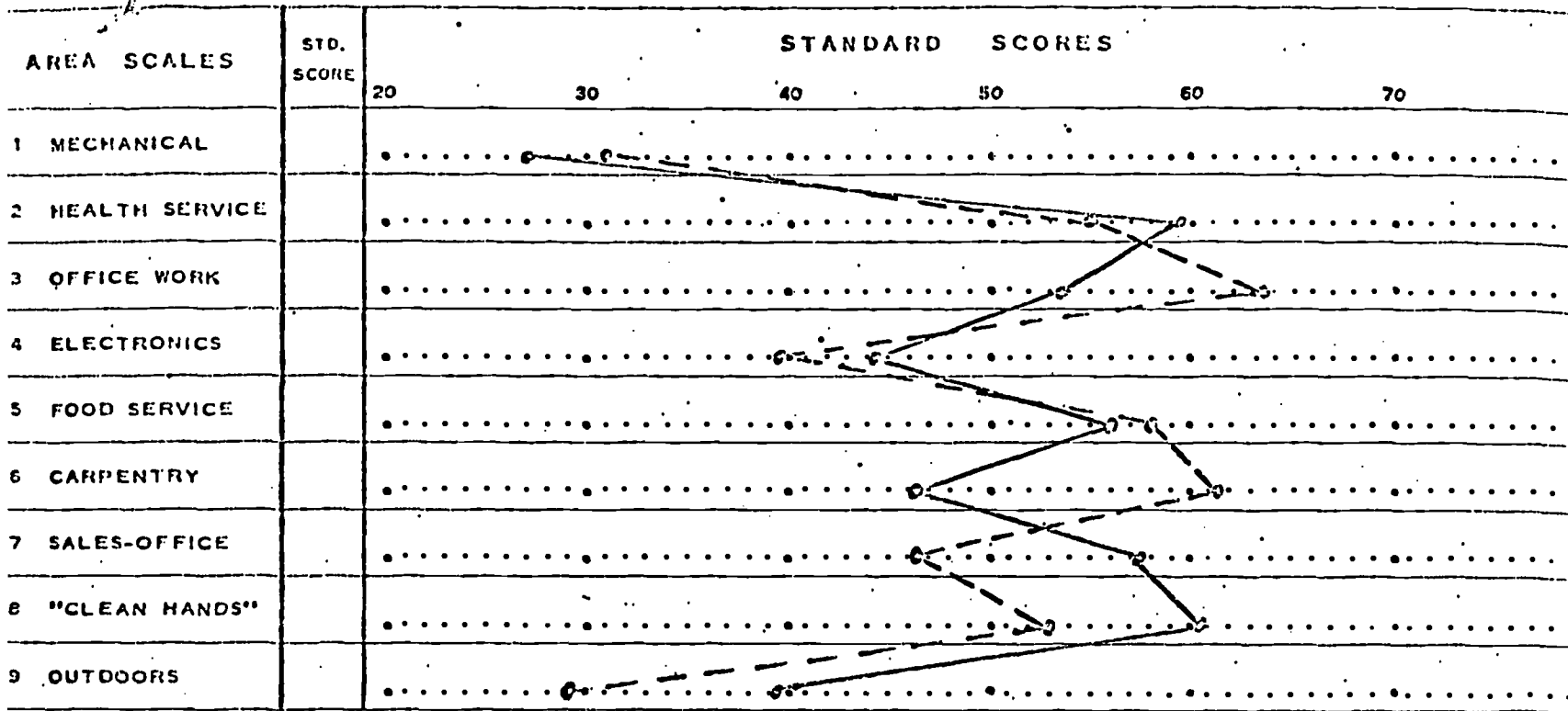


Figure 1

IPAT - HSPQ Personality Profiles of Disadvantaged and Advantaged Males

Code:

- Disadvantaged students ————•
- Adv. students - - - - -•



Code:

Disadvantaged Males
 Advantaged Males

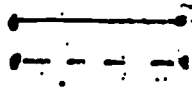


Figure 2
 Vocational Interests Profiles
 of Disadvantaged and
 Advantaged Youths