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THE VALUES OF FEMALE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION MAJORS

INTRODUCTION

FEW years ago a vocabulary count of primary school children was being made in Puerto Rico. Everything the children said when asked to tell a story upon the presentation to them of a series of picture stimuli was taken down by specially trained recorders. The children's reactions to some of the pictures — one showing a policeman helping a lady and child to cross a street, a birthday party, children at play, etc., gave ground to believe that studying the attitudes and value-potentials of these children was a task worth undertaking.¹ It gave basis for an article entitled "The Use of Projection for the Study of the Puerto Rican Child - An Untrodden Path" published in English in the last issue of *Revista Pedagogía*.²

¹ Ismael Rodríguez Bou, "Lo que hablan los niños", *Revista Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico*, febrero, 1950.

² Ramón Ramírez López, "The Need of Projection for the Study of the Puerto Rican Child" - An Untrodden Path", *Revista Pedagogía* (1956), IV (1), 49-62.

Later on the need of studying the values of teachers and teachers-to-be came to the fore even though teachers are not directly responsible for the attitudes and values of the students.³ Soon the author found himself involved in the subject working on the study of the values of experienced school teachers, students of education, and other university students for a doctoral dissertation in the university of Texas.

This paper does not have much to do with said dissertation but it certainly provided practice and additional experience in the field. It aims to compare the values of female freshmen elementary education majors of the University of Texas and the University of Puerto Rico. Such an enterprise carried on with an extremely limited population as the case is here will not yield results to be relied upon too strongly. The study even if carried on under a well delineated experimental design and treated according to rigorous scientific procedures for its interpretation would have to be taken cautiously. One must agree with Fay L. Corey that⁴

“Anyone who attempts to determine the nature of the values held by others is confronted with the uniqueness of the individual human personality. Regardless of how careful such a study is undertaken, the attempt to present statistical information about people’s attitudes and values leaves much to be desired”.

The findings however, even though non-statistical in character may be of considerable worth.⁵

What are Values and Why do We study Them

Murray is of the opinion that a personality is largely rev-

³ H. Hartshorne, M. A. May, and F. K. Shuttleworth, *Studies in the Organization of Character*, N. Y., Mac Millan Company, 1930.

⁴ Fay L. Corey, *Values of Future Teachers, A Study of Attitudes Toward Contemporary Issues*, Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, N. Y., 1955, p. 1.

⁵ Bertha B. Friedman, *Foundations for the Measurement of Values (The Methodology of Localization and Quantification)*. Teachers College Contribution to Education, No. 94, p. 70.

ealed in the objects that it cathects, that is, what he values or rejects.⁶ Furthermore it is a unanimous opinion that what is chosen is valued more than what is rejected. People can be after various things—money, love, social position, career advancement, health—and these are their values.⁷

Value-study reveals the person's potential behavior. That is why anthropologists study values so insistently in various cultural media. Ralph Barton Rerry, the philosopher as well as Edward L. Thorndike, the psychologist, consider interest as the main fountain-spring of value. Corey refers to values as the integrated structure of beliefs, attitudes, and interests within a personality motivating behavior and enabling that personality to maintain balance between himself and the social world.⁸

Friedman mentions the reshift in emphasis of the objectives of schools, from intellectual training to character development, the trend back toward a dynamic rather than a mechanistic theory of behavior, the atomistic conception of the human being in psychology making possible assessing traits through adequate observation instruments, and the loss of faith in the efficacy of cramming knowledge into the heads of youth, for the renewed interest in the study of values and the increased momentum to the construction and use of character, attitude, and interest tests.⁹

Values are not studied to reveal the person's actual behavior, what he is doing in the moment, but what he is capable of doing. Friedman speaks of "what is characteristic of a person, his disposition to do so when conditions arise that make such behavior appropriate".¹⁰ When studying value one is aiming at the potential latent quality of persons of which John Dewey used to speak. Dewey considered this also as a characteristic of physical nature.¹¹

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

⁷ B. Berelson, "Content Analysis", in *Handbook of Social Psychology* (ed), Gardner Lindzey, Addison Wesley Publishing Co., 1954.

⁸ Fay L. Corey, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁹ Bertha B. Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹¹ John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, N. Y., Garden House, 1922, p. 41.

How to Study Values

There are indeed many ways to study values. The indirect method using some kind of projective technique is becoming popular nowadays. The paper and pencil type of test—the questionnaire—is still the technique most widely employed. In fact, the Allport, Vernon, Lindzey—Study of Values is the instrument preferred by investigators and the one most frequently used today. This test as well as the Strong Vocational Interest Blank is based on the assumption that a person's verbal statements have some relationship to his behavior. Strong has presented evidence to show that persons with interest scores similar to scores of members of a specified occupational group are more likely to enter that occupation than any other, and that those who leave an occupation have lower scores for that occupation than those who continue in it.¹²

To localize as well as to quantify values, psychologists depend on the verbal responses of the subjects. Faris is of the opinion that "the residue of past experiences may show up in verbal attitudes long before it shows up in overt conduct".¹³

Paper and pencil tests are supposed to be helpful guides to personality measurement: James L. Mursel says:¹⁴

"Whatever their limitations they do in fact provide important information about the capabilities and prospects of human beings. Moreover they do so quickly. If it is possible to obtain in the space of anywhere between 30 and 180 minutes an estimate of a person or group of persons, which will at least correspond to reality, it is hard to deny that the devices for so doing have justified their existence".

Values and attitudes, though powerful, are intangible besides subtle and exceedingly difficult to lay bare for investigation.

¹² Edward K. Strong Jr., "Predictive Value of the Vocational Interest Test," *Journal of Educational Psychology* (1935), 26, 331-349.

¹³ Ellsworth Farris, "Attitudes and Behavior", *Journal of Sociology* (1928), 34, 271-281.

¹⁴ James L. Mursel, *Psychological Testing*, N. Y., Longmans Green Co., 1948.

The people holding them may be unable to verbalize them and may be unaware of their influences and forces.¹⁵ Instruments like the Allport, Vernon, Lindzey *Study of Values* and the Strong *Vocational Interest Blank* are used mainly with adult and college populations making verbalization easier.

It becomes imperative to know about the values of people in general. Knowing about the values of future teachers becomes even more important. Corey believes it is necessary to know about the values of future teachers if one is "to develop insight into what our present curriculum and total school experience are producing by way of value structure in the minds of students". Furthermore, she goes on to say, "it is important to find out what students are becoming rather than what they are accumulating".¹⁶

Some Studies About Values

A recent book by Fay L. Corey entitled *The Values of Future Teachers* is perhaps the best late contribution on the subject. Marion Garcia has come quite close to the subject by investigating the professional motivations of students in the Normal Course at the University of Puerto Rico.¹⁷

Arsenian employed the original Allport, Vernon test (1930 edition) to test 303 entering freshmen at Springfield College back in the year 1937.¹⁸ Stone used the Mooney Check List to discover the items that constituted the principal problems of students in a teachers college in the year 1941.¹⁹ Using the

¹⁵ *Public Education and the Future of Puerto Rico*, Institute of Field Studies, Curriculum Survey, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1950, p. 50.

¹⁶ Fay L. Corey, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

¹⁷ Marion Garcia, "The Guidance of the Normal School Student, A Type B Project." (Unpublished Ed. D. Thesis-Advanced School of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1953).

¹⁸ S. Arsenian, "The Relation of Evaluative Attitudes to Vocational Interest and Social Adjustment," *Journal of Social Psychology* (1943), 17, 17-20.

¹⁹ L. G. Stone, "Student Problems in a Teachers College," *Journal of Educational Psychology* (1948), 39, 404-406.

Personal Interview Form, Hunter and Morgan studied students' problems at Colorado Agricultural and Mechanical College in the year 1949.²⁰ More recently in 1955 Della Piana and Gage investigated the values of pupils as factors in teacher effectiveness.²¹

Many other studies on the values of college students could be mentioned, of art majors by Barrett;²² of drama school students by Golden;²³ of commercial students by Triplett;²⁴ of seminarians by Mc Curdy;²⁵ of ministers and laymen by Pugh;²⁶ of nurses by Woomer and Faust;²⁷ of education students in a graduate school;²⁸ of the psychological value system of psychologists by Robert L. Thorndike.²⁹

The present study comparing the values expressed by two groups of female freshmen education majors in the universities of Texas and Puerto Rico does not claim to have the scope or the importance of any of the above mentioned studies.

The Sample

A group of female freshmen elementary education majors, 40 in number, from the University of Texas was employed in this study. Also a group of forty girls from the University of

²⁰ Ruth M. Hunter and David H. Morgan, "Problems of College Students," *Journal of Educational Psychology* (1949), 40, 79-90.

²¹ G. M. Della Piana and N. L. Gage, "Pupils' Values and Effectiveness of Teachers Attitude Inventory," *Journal of Educational Psychology* (1955), 46, 167-178.

²² D. M. Barrett, "Aptitude and Interest Patterns of Art Majors in a Liberal Arts College," *Journal of Applied Psychology* (1945), 29, 483-492.

²³ A. L. Golden, "Personality Traits of Drama Students," *Quart. J. Speech* (1940), 26, 564-571.

²⁴ R. J. Triplett, "Interests of Commercial Students," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* (1935), 29, 409-414.

²⁵ J. T. Mc Curdy, "Personality Traits of Seminarians," *Stu. Psychol. Psychiat.*, Catholic University of America (1952), 5, No. 4.

²⁶ T. J. Pugh, "A Comparative Study of the Values of a Group of Ministers and Two Groups of Laymen," *Journal of Social Psychology* (1951), 33, 225-235.

²⁷ F. B. Woomer and E. J. Faust, "Interest Profiles of Student Nurses," *Nursing Research* (1955), 3, 125-126.

²⁸ J. C. Bledsoe, "A Comparative Study of the Values and Critical Thinking of a Group of Educational Workers," *Journal of Educational Psychology* (1955), 46, 408-417.

²⁹ R. L. Thorndike, "The Psychological Value System of Psychologists," *The American Psychologist* (1954), 9 (12), 149-154.

Puerto Rico, all beginning education students. The cooperation of Dr. James Greenleaf Umstadd was necessary to approach the University of Texas girls. Professor James of the School of Education of the University of Texas was kind enough to administer the test to a group of 43 students of the beginning course of education. Without their important assistance this study might not have been possible.

The Puerto Rican group was picked up according to a fixed order from among a larger group of 196 girls, one out of every six and seven more. These 196 girls had taken the test in Spanish for the larger study on values already mentioned.

The University of Texas group answered the questionnaire in its original form in English. Both groups showed to be eager to participate in the experiment even though no exact reference was made of the real purpose of the test. No one in either group seemed to have difficulty in understanding the written directions. The name was not to be signed so avoiding the possibility of the answers losing in spontaneity.

The University of Texas group took the test sometime during the latter part of December of 1956 while the University of Puerto Rico group had taken it during the month of January of 1955.

The Instrument

The instrument used in the study was the well known test called Study of Values by Gordon W. Allport, Phillip E. Vernon, and Gardner Lindzey (1951 ed.). "This test has been the most popular instrument employed in differential psychology for two decades now, only occasionally replaced by some other value test. It has received widespread, sometimes uncritical usage."³⁰

A translation of the test was made into Spanish to be employed in the study about Puerto Rican teachers upon permission granted by the editors Houghton Mifflin Company.

³⁰ William F. Dukes, "Psychological Studies of Values," *Psychological Bulletin* (1955), 52 (1), 24-50.

The test was standardized with 1816 college students, 851 men and 965 women. It intends to measure the relative value of six basic interests in the personality-theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political, and religious. This classification springs from Edward Spranger's *Types of Men*.³¹ Spranger's psychology is the ultimate source of much of the contemporary work on value, and is based on the idea that an individual's fundamental values and valuing are reflected in all his behavior.

The description of the six values is like this: the dominant interest of the theoretical man is the discovery of truth or getting knowledge; the economic man is characteristically interested in the practical or useful aspects of life; the aesthetic man sees his highest value in beauty-color, form, harmony; the highest value of the social man is the love for people; the political man is primarily interested in power; the religious man strives for what can be called unity. The religious man is mystical, and seeks to comprehend the cosmos as a whole, to relate himself to its embracing reality.³²

The test consists of 120 questions or situations 20 belonging to each value classification. Its administration requires not more than 20 to 30 minutes. The average correlation of the different parts of the scale is 0.70 and its repeated correlation is 0.89. An item analysis made with 780 subjects from both sexes in different colleges shows a positive correlation between each item and the total score for that value significant at the 1% level of confidence.

The Results

The tests were scored according to the manual of directions. An individual profile was drawn for each of the cases. After tabulating the scores it was necessary to find the mean and standard deviation for each of the six categories in both

³¹ Edward Spranger, *Types of Men*, Translated from 5th. German edition of *Lebensformen*, by Paul W. Pigors. Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag. American Agent: Stechert-Hafner, Inc., 31 East 10th St., New York 3.

³² Gordon W. Allport, P. E. Vernon, Gardner Lindzey, *Study of Values, Manual of Directions*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951.

groups: also the standard error of the difference between the means and the critical ratio between the means and the sigma of the difference for every category. The mean would give the characteristic or central score; the standard deviation, the average variability of the cases from the mean of the distribution; the standard error of the differences and the critical ratio would serve to establish the dependability of the measure obtained. It was necessary to determine if the difference between the means in the various categories are true differences or if they were due to errors of measurement of merely to chance.

To interpret the values expressed by these two groups of female elementary education majors from the University of Texas and the University of Puerto Rico it is important to consider the relation between the scores in the different values.

The scale is so constructed that the average for every person of group be the same (40 points). The order of the different values expressed by the two groups is the following:

University of Texas

1. Religious
2. Social
3. Aesthetic
4. Political
5. Economic
6. Theoretical

University of Puerto Rico

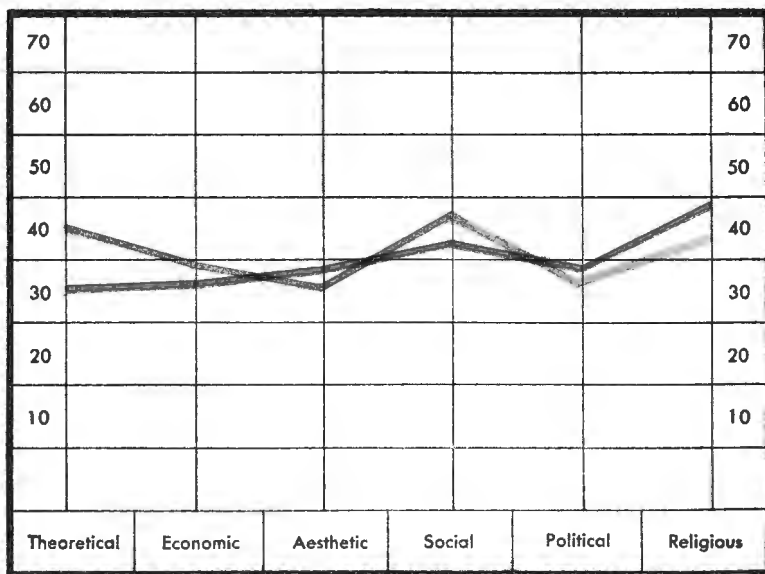
1. Social
2. Theoretical
3. Religious
4. Economic
5. Aesthetic
6. Political

The majority of the values expressed by both groups lie close to the average (40 points) yet in the University of Texas group religious and social values occupy the first place while the economic and theoretical occupy the last place. In the University of Puerto Rico group the social and theoretical values run first with almost identical score while the aesthetic and political values fall last in the order. As a group the University of Texas female future teachers seem to be moved more by the feeling of unity with the cosmos and service to others than by the practical aspects of life or the search for

truth; the University of Puerto Rico female future teachers, by the urge for getting knowledge and serving others and less by the love and appreciation of beauty and the need for power. Religious and social values head the hierarchy of values of the University of Texas girls. Social and theoretical values head the hierarchy of the University of Puerto Rico girls.

A glance at figure 1 may provide a clearer picture of the relation of the different values in the two groups studied and also the relation of each value in one group to the corresponding one in the other.

Fig. 1. Showing the characteristic profiles of University of Texas female freshmen elementary education majors and a corresponding group of female students from the University of Puerto Rico.



 University of Texas female elementary education majors
 University of Puerto Rico female elementary education majors

Table 1. Presenting mean, sigmas, mean differences, standard error of the difference, critical ratios, and level of confidence in six different value categories— theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political, and religious of University of Texas and University of Puerto Rico female elementary education majors. Data based on Allport, Vernon, Linzey — Study of Values (1951 edition).

	Theoretical	Economic	Aesthetic	Social	Political	Religious
U. of T. M	35.40	38.28	39.00	43.14	39.00	49.00
σ	6.02	5.06	7.00	6.34	5.80	8.50
U. of PR -M	43.10	39.24	36.60	44.48	36.60	42.36
σ	6.00	4.80	6.92	4.90	5.96	6.60
M ₁ — M ₂	7.70	0.96	2.40	1.34	2.40	6.64
σ D	3.40	3.13	3.72	3.44	3.42	3.90
CR	2.40	0.27	0.65	0.39	0.70	1.91
Level of confidence	1%	—	—	—	—	1%

The largest difference lies in the theoretical value where the Puerto Rican girls run highest and the religious which is the highest score for the University of Texas girls. The difference between the means in these two categories is significant to the 1% level of confidence. There are differences too in the economic, aesthetic, social and political values but these differences are not statistically significant falling beyond the 5% level of confidence. According to these data it may be said that there are differences between the University of Texas and the University of Puerto Rico female freshmen elementary education majors as to the theoretical and religious values.

Summary and Conclusions

Two groups of female elementary education majors from the University of Texas and the University of Puerto Rico have been studied with the purpose of finding out if there are differences in the value system of both groups. The Allport, Vernon, Lindzey — Study of Values (1951 edition) was the instrument employed in this study.

The results were submitted to the necessary statistical test following Garrett's method for computing mean, standard deviation, standard error of the difference, critical ratio, and for determining level of confidence.

The University of Texas girls show to be more religious, equally social, and less theoretical than the University of Puerto Rico girls; the University of Puerto Rico girls, more theoretical, equally social and less religious than the University of Texas girls.

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