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## A study on indecisiveness as a proposed criterion for measuring adjustment in children

Charles George Lenderman  
*University of the Pacific*

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A STUDY ON INDECISIVENESS AS A PROPOSED CRITERION <sup>2</sup>  
FOR MEASURING ADJUSTMENT IN CHILDREN

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Department of Psychology  
College of the Pacific

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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by  
Charles George Lenderman  
June 1955

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. THE NEED FOR THIS INVESTIGATION

It has long been recognized in both the fields of psychology and education that a tool is needed by which maladjustment in children may be quickly and easily discovered. In school, for example, frequently it is only after a period of time that the pattern of behavior on the part of a child may be diagnosed as abnormal. Particular types of incidences occur which, when they occur frequently, reflect a need that is not being fulfilled. Ordinarily, this observational diagnosis or assessment is incidental. That is, the maladjustment becomes recognized only because it intrudes into the everyday routine and becomes disruptive. The teacher's recognition of the problem, then, is a function of how often and to what degree the school situation is affected by it. If this recognition could be expedited, the weeks or months gained would provide additional time for adjustive measures to become effective.

#### II. THE PROBLEM

It was the purpose of this study to test a possible method of assessing adjustment that could be used quickly

and easily by teachers. The tool, to be effective, would

- (1) have to be administerable to groups of children;
- (2) have clear and concise directions understandable to children in lower grades; (3) be easily scorable; and
- (4) have a definitive scale of scoring.

### III. THE HYPOTHESIS AND RATIONALE

To accomplish the above objectives, the results of a test given to some children to measure indecisiveness were correlated with scores given them by their teachers on a behavior rating scale.

The hypothesis was that there is, in children, an inverse ratio between indecision and adjustment. That is, those children who are inclined to be indecisive in their approach to their physical and psychological environment are those whose personal adjustment to that environment is characteristically poor.

In order to obtain a measure of indecision, a third category of response to the pictures of The Mitchell-Brantly Choice of Pictures Personality Inventory (COPPI) was added. The COPPI is a series of 124 pictures in which various parent-child, child-child, and child-environment interactions are depicted. The subject is asked to separate these pictures according to whether he "likes them" or "does not like them." The emotional content of a majority of the

pictures in the inventory, however, suggests that some difficulty might be encountered in the subject's ability to separate categorically the pictures liked and disliked. If there were a third category of response--an "undecided" or an "I don't know" category--perhaps the subject would use it to protect himself when he felt threatened by the substance of the pictures.

A similar device is used in the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) with regard to the Question (?) score. Manuel N. Brown, in an article about the "Cannot Say" items of the MMPI, stated that "Patients unable at times to be decisive in clear-cut issues are likely to fill up the (?) category with their pathological irresoluteness."<sup>1</sup>

On the basis of Brown's evaluation and other references to indecision in the literature, it was felt that perhaps a measure of adjustment might be deduced from the number of times a subject was unable to make a clear choice between like or dislike in regard to the COPPI pictures.

This study attempted to validate this hypothesis by correlating the number of these indecisions on the part of

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<sup>1</sup>Manuel N. Brown, "Evaluating and Scoring the Minnesota Multiphasic 'Cannot Say' Items," Journal of Clinical Psychology, 6:182, April, 1950.

a sample of school children with the corresponding adjustment ratings given them by their teachers.

#### IV. THE PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES USED

The pictures of the COPPI were presented by the investigator to the pupils of five elementary school classes in Manteca, California. Three third-grade classes and two fourth-grade classes were used, since the pictures of the COPPI contain figures with which children of these age groups could identify more readily. No attempt was made to particularize the sample with regard to age (except as mentioned above), intelligence, race, or school achievement. Although the community in which this study was made may be classified as rural, the nature of the hypothesis and the methodology of validation would seem to be unaffected by this factor.

The total number of children tested was 153, the sample being made up of seventy-nine boys and seventy-four girls. All of the testing was done over a two-week period in April of 1953. Although several of the children had not enrolled with their class at the beginning of the school year, they had been in their classes long enough so that their teachers felt capable of rating them on a scale of adjustment.

The COPPI was administered as a group test in a classroom situation. While each class took the test, the teacher was asked to leave the room. It was felt that this procedure might eliminate the possibility of a child censoring his responses in the presence of his teacher. Distractions and extraneous stimuli were kept at a minimum while the test was being presented. In addition to the two categories of response (like and dislike) possible in the COPPI, the third category (undecided) was presented as part of the test.

When the testing of the children was completed, each child was rated as to his adjustment on the Hagerty-Olson-Wickman Behavior Rating Scale by his teacher. Since this was done in late April and May, each teacher had between seven and eight months of interaction with most of her children upon which to base her evaluation of their adjustment. A total of nine children who were rated did not start the school year with their classes; but each of these had been in his present class at least four months.

Since both the test and the rating scale yielded numerical scores, the results were correlated by the product-moment method as described in Garrett's Statistics

in Psychology and Education.<sup>2</sup> Correlations were calculated at the class level in addition to the over-all correlation, so that the variations inherent in the use of rating scales (i.e., "halo" effects, personal judgments, etc.) might be evaluated as to their effect upon the total result. The probable error (PE) of each correlation was calculated.

The results of these computations are presented and discussed in a later chapter on the basis of a sample of ninety children, since two of the teachers whose classes were involved were unable to complete rating scales on their classes for personal reasons.

#### V. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

In this chapter an attempt was made to give an overview of the problem with which this thesis was concerned. Since the personal adjustment of children is such an important factor in their readiness to learn, the general approach of this paper to the problem of assessing adjustment was made in terms of the school situation.

The hypothesis upon which this thesis was based was that there is a measurable relationship between a child's:

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<sup>2</sup>Henry E. Garrett, Statistics in Psychology and Education (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1950), pp. 282-88.



adjustment and his ability to make decisions. The procedures used to investigate this hypothesis were outlined in this chapter. Amplification of the procedures used, detailed descriptions of the tests involved, and the outcome of the statistical evaluation of the results will be developed in later chapters.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Very little research and documentation have been attempted by psychologists concerning the subject of indecision. Most of the material to be presented in this chapter will be of a tangential nature, rather than dealing specifically with the problem defined in the hypothesis stated above. No clinical material relating to indecision has been analyzed, although Manuel N. Brown, in his evaluation of the "Cannot Say" items of the MMPI,<sup>1</sup> states that "in its own right the Question score is an indication of personality factors. . . ." It might be added here, also, in regard to the material available, that indecisiveness as a dimension of personality is noteworthy in its absence from Hans J. Eysenck's Dimensions of Personality.<sup>2</sup> At no point in this work is indecisiveness investigated as a possible correlate or syndrome of neuroticism.

That material which is available in the literature regarding indecisiveness is largely of a theoretical nature

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<sup>1</sup>Manuel N. Brown, "Evaluating and Scoring the Minnesota Multiphasic 'Cannot Say' Items," Journal of Clinical Psychology, 6:183, April, 1950.

<sup>2</sup>Hans J. Eysenck, Dimensions of Personality (London: Rouledge and Kegan Paul Limited, 1947).

based upon clinical observations. It will be presented here as partly supportive of the hypothesis of this thesis, and partly as taking exception to it.

Fenichel approaches the subject with the view that it is an inhibition of will. He states that:

Inhibitions in the sphere of will are operative within persons who avoid independent decisions of any kind. This disturbance may be part of an obsessive tendency to doubt everything . . . , or the disturbance may be due to a defect in the functions of the super-ego; the capacity of will is renounced and the making of decisions is left to others because of fear of aggression or of need for external approval. Various kinds of conflicts with objects may also find expression in a neurotic indecisiveness.<sup>3</sup>

Fenichel's observations are most pertinent with regard to situations and events which may have emotional significance for the person involved, however.

Horney<sup>4</sup> explains that making a decision involves a willingness to assume the responsibility for that decision. Further, that inherent in the act of deciding is the taking of the risk involved in being wrong, and a willingness to accept the consequences of a mistake of judgment. To Horney, this would imply an inner strength and

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<sup>3</sup>Otto Fenichel, The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1945), p. 182.

<sup>4</sup>Karen Horney, Our Inner Conflicts (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1945).

independence. The neurotic person, however, is driven by equally impelling forces in opposite directions; so that procrastination or leaving the decision to someone else become methods to avoid making the decision himself. The author sees this indecisiveness present in trifling matters as well as in those of emotional import. Another solution to the ambiguous situation, according to Horney, though, is that the person may assume an arbitrary and dogmatic rightness in his decisions which denies the ambiguity of the situation and holds the emotional involvement at a minimum.

This latter solution to the choice situation is presented also by Brown<sup>5</sup> and Rokeach<sup>6</sup> in their studies on the authoritarian personality. Although this material does not support the general hypothesis of this thesis, it is included here because it has a bearing on the subject. In describing the authoritarian personality, Brown<sup>7</sup> states that this type of person performs well until he is told he will be evaluated by his performance, at which time he

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<sup>5</sup>Roger W. Brown, "A Determinant of the Relationship Between Rigidity and Authoritarianism," The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 48:469-76, October, 1953.

<sup>6</sup>Milton Rokeach, "Narrow-Mindedness and Personality," Journal of Personality, 20:234-51, December, 1951.

<sup>7</sup>Brown, loc. cit.

compulsively clings to ready-made solutions that bring security. The compulsive character, then, would not tolerate a choice situation in the sense of admitting consciously that there were two equally acceptable possibilities. Frenkel-Brunswick describes this personality as showing

. . . emotionally dramatized responses . . . to perceptual and cognitive material, especially if it is vague or otherwise threatening. The choice is between total acceptance and total rejection; if the two co-exist, they do so in different layers of the personality.<sup>8</sup>

These studies on rigidity all seem to suggest an underlying ambivalence in the compulsive character-structure, but point out the lack of middle distance in the cognitive field which limits responses to rigid acceptance or rigid rejection.

Bergler, whose approach is psychoanalytically oriented, traces indecision back to unresolved infantile conflicts which result in indecisiveness as a neurotic defense mechanism.<sup>9</sup> The inability to decide, then, would be the outcome of unconscious desires and unconscious

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<sup>8</sup>Else Frenkel-Brunswick, "Personality Theory and Perception," Perception - An Approach to Personality, Edited by Robert Blake and Glenn V. Ramsey. (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1951), p. 395.

<sup>9</sup>Edmund Bergler, "Four Types of Neurotic Indecisiveness," Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 9:481-92, October, 1940.

punishments.

In a recent work by Eysenck,<sup>10</sup> he reports of an experiment conducted on male soldiers to test speed of decision. It consisted of placing two playing cards face down on a table and asking the subject to say which of the two will be higher. The time taken to make ten such decisions was correlated with the category in which the subject had been previously placed in regard to Normal, Anxiety States, Hysterics, and Psychopaths. The results were not significant. It might be added, however, that the mean scores for the maladjusted groups showed slightly less time involved in making decisions than for the normal group.

Although several different viewpoints seem to be represented in this chapter, it may be that there is no basic disagreement between them. Those authors above who support the concept of indecisiveness as a symptom of maladjustment see it in relation to the neurotic personality. Those who have theorized that an intolerance of ambiguity is symptomatic of poor adjustment describe it in terms of the compulsive, rigid personality. More definitive and precise research may reveal more fully the nature of indecision, and its relationship to the various types of maladjustment.

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<sup>10</sup>Hans J. Eysenck, The Scientific Study of Personality (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952), p. 134.

## CHAPTER III

### GATHERING THE DATA

#### I. TESTING PROCEDURES

This section of the thesis will describe the procedures with which the Mitchell-Brantly Choice of Pictures Personality Inventory (COPPI) was administered to the five classes comprising the sample. Since a third category of response was incorporated into the test, the presentation of the pictures was varied from that outlined in the materials of the COPPI.

After introducing the tester to the class, the teacher left the room. The administration of the test was then begun. The subsequent paragraphs describe the directions given to the children and the general procedures followed.

"How many of you like to look at pictures? That's fine. I think almost all of us enjoy pictures. I have brought with me some pictures which I am going to let you look at; but I want you to do something for me as you look at them. Your teacher has told me that her class can follow directions very well. Let's see how well you can do the things I will ask you to do.

"I am going to give each of you a box that has some

pictures in it. Now, I don't want you to open the box until I tell you to open it. I want to tell you something else before we look at the pictures."

Boxes were passed out. Three small blank pieces of paper were also passed out to each child, and those children who did not have pencils were supplied with them.

"Now I want you to take all of the pictures out of the box and put them in the middle of your desk in front of you. That's fine. Put the box at the top of your desk.

"You will get to look at these pictures in a few minutes; but first I want to talk to you.

"How many of you can tell your right hand from your left hand? Show me. Raise your right hand. That's good."

A few minutes of practice with raising right and left hands was done.

"Now, here's what I want you to do with the pictures. You are to look at each one of them and the ones you like I want you to put on the left side of your desk. (This was demonstrated as to side.) The pictures that you don't like I want you to put on the right side."

The words "right" and "left" were printed on the front chalk board in relation to the children's right and left. The directions as to the pictures were repeated.

"Now some of these pictures you may not be sure of about deciding whether you like them or not. If there



are some that you can't make up your mind about, then I want you to put them back in the box.

"Let's go over the directions once more now. What will you do with the pictures you like? (Response) That's right--on the left. And the ones you do not like? (Response) Good--on the right. How about if you aren't sure of whether you like a picture or not? (Response)

"You are all doing very well. Now you may look at the pictures. Take your time and be sure to remember which side to put them on. If you have any questions while you look at the pictures, raise your hand, and I will come to your desk. You may begin."

The length of time required to complete the test varied between twenty and thirty minutes. After the children had worked about ten minutes, they were reminded of the positions of left and right and what to do with pictures of which they were undecided.

If it happened that some of the children became concerned as to how their classmates were reacting to the pictures, the class as a whole was reminded that each of the sets was composed of the same pictures. This procedure was used to prevent the possibility that a child might minimize his own emotional involvement by sharing his reactions with others or by attacking the pictures with ridicule.

When all of the children in a class had completed the test, they were directed to place a piece of paper over the pictures in the box. Then they put the pictures they did not like back in the box and put in another sheet of paper. The pictures "liked" were put on top. Next they were told to write or print their names on the remaining sheet and put it in the box and replace the lid. The boxes were then collected.

After all of the boxes were collected, each class was complimented on its cooperation and ability to follow directions. The examiner then left the room and the teacher returned.

## II. THE RATING SCALE

After her class had completed the COPPI, each teacher was given the Hagerty-Olson-Wickman Behavior Rating Schedule (HOWBRS) with which to evaluate her pupils' adjustment.

Both schedules of the HOWBRS were used for the purposes of this thesis. Schedule A is a scale which consists of fifteen items that indicate undesirable behavior. It is used by recording on the scale the frequency with which these items have occurred during the teacher's experience with the child. A high score on Schedule A generally indicates the presence of behavior problems.

Schedule B is a scale with which the child's intellectual, physical, social, and emotional traits may be evaluated as compared with the typical behavior of a group of children. The scores from this scale are weighted so that the numerical total of these ratings may indicate problem tendencies.

A Manual of Directions was also given to each teacher to explain the use of the scales and methods of scoring. A period of three weeks was set as that in which the HOWBRS would be scored.

At the end of three weeks, the rating scales for three of the five classes included in the sample were completed and collected. The teachers of the other two classes found it impossible to complete the scales, so that the statistical analyses of the results which follow are based upon three classes, a total of ninety children, instead of the original sample of five classes.

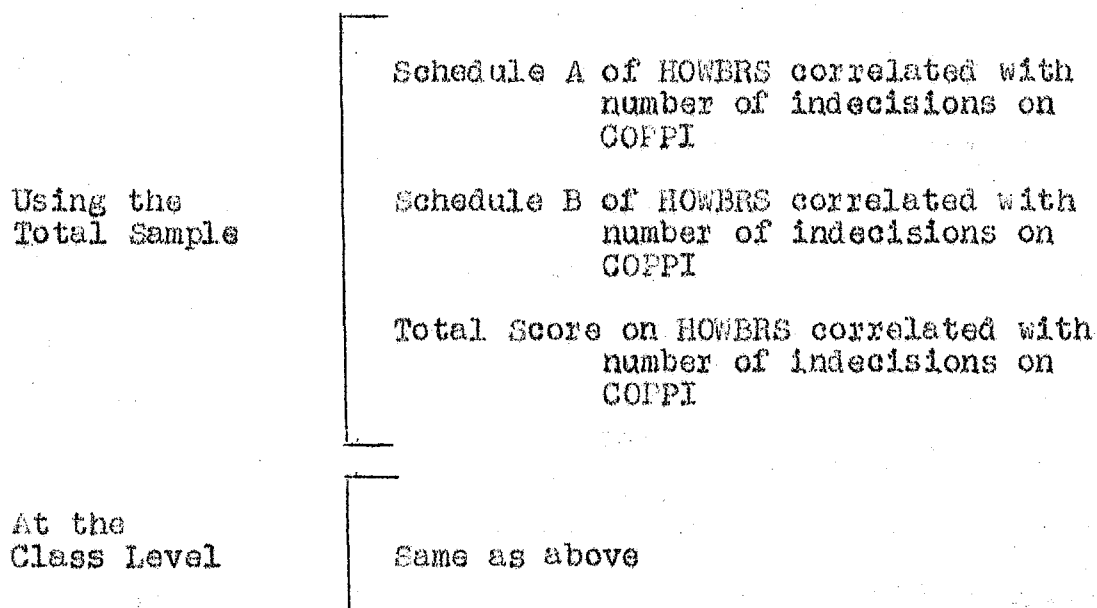
### III. STATISTICAL PROCEDURES

In correlating the scores from the COPPI and the HOWBRS, calculations were made at various levels. In addition to total correlations using the over-all HOWBRS scores and the number of indecisions recorded by the COPPI, correlation coefficients were also calculated using scores from Schedule A and Schedule B of the HOWBRS separately

with the corresponding COPPI scores. While it was felt that maladjustment would include not only problem behavior, but also the tendency to manifest traits significantly different from that of a normal group of children, the possibility that either of the two Schedules in the HOWBRS might produce more meaningful results was not overlooked.

A similar procedure as that above was carried out at the class level, so that an indication of possible variation in the teachers' rating methods might be observed.

A diagram will help to clarify the statistics involved. It is presented below.



The method used in finding the coefficients of correlation ( $r$ ) was the product-moment method described in

Garrett.<sup>1</sup> As part of the procedure, a probable error (PER) was calculated for each of the  $r$ 's. The significance of the obtained  $r$ 's will be evaluated below in terms of this calculated probable error.

To interpret the results of the correlations performed, the general classification described in Garrett was used.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Henry E. Garrett, Statistics in Psychology and Education (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1950), pp. 282-88.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 333-34.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

#### I. CORRELATIONS OF SCORES

Tables I through IV, pages 21 through 24, show the results of the statistical analyses which were carried out with the data gathered. Since correlation coefficients were computed at the class level as well as with the total sample four tables were needed to illustrate the results. For the sake of clarity, each class was given a number. This facilitated the verbal analyses of the correlations to be presented in the following section.

In explaining the column labelled "Significance of  $r$ " used in the tables, the determination of the significance of the  $r$ 's was based upon Garrett's use of the computed probable error. In general, Garrett states that it is customary to regard an  $r$  as worthy of confidence if it is at least four times its PE.<sup>1</sup> That is, an  $r$  which is four times its PE cannot be attributed solely to accidents of sampling. Using this criterion, it may be noted that only

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<sup>1</sup>Henry E. Garrett, Statistics in Psychology and Education (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1950), pp. 282-88.

TABLE I  
 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF SCORES  
 FROM CLASS #1 (N-31)

	r	PE <sub>r</sub>	Significance of r	Interpretation of r
Schedule A of HOWBRS with number of indecisions	-.21	.12	Not significant	Slight relationship
Schedule B of HOWBRS with number of indecisions	-.41	.10	Significant	Substantial relationship
Total score on HOWBRS with number of indecisions	-.34	.11	Not significant	Slight relationship

Key: N - Number of cases  
 r - Coefficient of correlation  
 PE<sub>r</sub> - Probable error of r

TABLE II  
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF SCORES  
FROM CLASS #2 (N-31)

	r	PE <sub>r</sub>	Significance of r	Interpretation of r
Schedule A of HOWBRS with number of indecisions	.11	.12	Not significant	Negligible relationship
Schedule B of HOWBRS with number of indecisions	.03	.12	Not significant	Negligible relationship
Total score on HOWBRS with number of indecisions	.00	.12	Not significant	Negligible relationship

Key:     N - Number of cases  
          r - Coefficient of correlation  
          PE<sub>r</sub> - Probable error of r



TABLE III  
 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF SCORES  
 FROM CLASS #3 (N-28)

	r	PE <sub>r</sub>	Significance of r	Interpretation of r
Schedule A of HOWBRS with number of indecisions	.11	.13	Not significant	Negligible relationship
Schedule B of HOWBRS with number of indecisions	.07	.13	Not significant	Negligible relationship
Total score on HOWBRS with number of indecisions	.07	.13	Not significant	Negligible relationship

Key: N - Number of cases  
 r - Coefficient of correlation  
 PE<sub>r</sub> - Probable error of r

TABLE IV  
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF SCORES  
FROM TOTAL SAMPLE (N-90)

	r	PE <sub>r</sub>	Significance of r	Interpretation of r
Schedule A of HOWBRS with number of indecisions	.00	.07	Not significant	Negligible relationship
Schedule B of HOWBRS with number of indecisions	-.03	.07	Not significant	Negligible relationship
Total score on HOWBRS with number of indecisions	-.12	.07	Not significant	Negligible relationship

Key: N - Number of cases  
r - Coefficient of correlation  
PE<sub>r</sub> - Probable error of r

the correlation using Schedule B of the HOWERS in Class #1 can be considered significant.

The interpretation of the  $r$ 's was also based upon Garrett's classifications. He reports that:

. . . there is fairly good agreement among workers with psychological and educational tests that an  $r$  from .00 to  $\pm .20$  denotes indifferent or negligible relationship;  
 $r$  from  $\pm .20$  to  $\pm .40$  denotes low correlation; present but slight;  
 $r$  from  $\pm .40$  to  $\pm .70$  denotes substantial or marked relationship;  
 $r$  from  $\pm .70$  to  $\pm 1.00$  denotes high to very high relationship.<sup>2</sup>

## II. ANALYSIS OF CORRELATIONS

In view of the stated objectives of this thesis, the results achieved, as recorded in the Tables I through IV, pages 21 through 24, suggest that there is no demonstrable relationship between personal adjustment and the ability to make decisions when studied by the present methods. Using the scores obtained from the whole sample, the resultant correlation coefficients indicated only a negligible or indifferent relationship present. Moreover, the arithmetic proportion of the computed probable errors to the correlation coefficients demonstrated that they could

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 333-34.

not be considered as significant correlations.

In the analyses carried out at the class level, this same pattern of results may be observed in Table II, page 22, Class #2, and Table III, page 23, Class #3. The correlation coefficients showed indifferent or negligible relations between the scores, and the probable errors indicated a lack of significance in these coefficients.

The slightly higher figures achieved using scores from Class #1 could not be considered as favorable with regard to the general hypothesis, since these figures may have been the result of variance in the rating methods used by the teacher of that class. The higher relationship indicated by the coefficients from this class was not reflected in those figures obtained from Class #2 and Class #3, so that while these results were suggestive in terms of the objectives of this paper, they could not be interpreted as conclusive.

It may be noted, also, that the use of the HOWBRS as two separate rating devices did not result in more meaningful correlation coefficients. The partial correlations computed with Schedule A and Schedule B of the HOWBRS used separately followed the same general pattern as those correlations using the complete scale.

An analysis of the results of the statistical procedures, then, disclosed that the hypothesis which was

advanced in this thesis has not been substantiated. This inquiry does not disclose a definitive relationship between a child's adjustment and his willingness or ability to make decisions.

## CHAPTER V

### FINAL INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

#### I. EVALUATION OF THE THESIS

In evaluating this thesis as a research project, several aspects must be considered. The following paragraphs in this section, then, will have to do with presenting these evaluations from the investigator's point of view.

The problem itself seemed fairly well defined and justifiable for research. It had been the investigator's experience, quite apart from the sources mentioned in the Bibliography, to encounter in psychological and educational parlance a generalization connecting maladjustment and the inability to make decisions. This generalization, simply stated, was that one of the characteristics of children who are maladjusted is an inability to "make up their minds" about things. The purpose of this thesis was to attempt, using statistical methods, to help in establishing this generalization as a fact.

In retrospect, however, it became apparent to the investigator that the term "maladjustment" was too all-inclusive. What if indecisiveness were a correlate or syndrome of only a particular type of maladjustment?

What if "decisiveness" were a syndrome of another type of maladjustment? If this were true, the negligible relationship between adjustment and indecisiveness which the statistical procedures indicated might be, in reality, the result of a balance of factors. A more critical analysis of the bibliographical material might have suggested this before the research was carried out. The next section of the thesis will contain the investigator's recommendations concerning the refinement of the problem so that more definitive results might be observed.

There are also some considerations to be stated concerning the methodology adopted in this study. To begin with, the use of the COPPI as an index of indecision may have been based upon an assumption that is not necessarily valid, that is, that there would be a one-to-one ratio between the "amount" of indecision in a child, and the "amount" registered with the COPPI. It may be, though, that the academic overtones of a pictorial test administered in a school situation might minimize a child's emotional involvement as compared with a real-life situation involving people and objects. This general criticism is one that has meaning with regards to psychological and educational testing in general, however, so that this use of the COPPI may not have been unusual in that respect.

Except that the phraseology of the HOWERS seemed to be outdated at several points (i.e., in Schedule B, such adjectives as "hidebound," a "coquette," and a "buck" are sometimes used as descriptive of personality traits), the use of this scale in determining the children's adjustment seemed adequate. The school situation, is understandably only a part of the children's total environmental milieu, so that, in a sense, each child would have been rated on only a segment of his total possible reaction to his environment. But it seems realistic to suppose that a child will manifest his over-all personal adjustment in whatever setting he is observed. The child's teacher, in this instance, having "lived" with him for about eight months, could be expected to be capable of rating the child adequately.

Since every child could be expected to have both an adjustment rating and a corresponding "indecisiveness" score, there was no need for a sample to be chosen that would meet any particular categorical requirements.

To sum up, then, it is the investigator's point of view that the methodology and the statistical procedures used herein were in accordance with standard psychological and educational principles. It is felt that a reasonable doubt exists concerning the advisability of using the symptom of "indecisiveness" as a dimension in studying



maladjustment. In terms of the stated objectives of this thesis, however, it is felt that the use of a third category of response to the pictures of the COPPI to obtain a quick measure of adjustment has been explored adequately.

## II. FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED

In the course of investigating the hypothesis of this study, other promising areas of study seemed to suggest themselves as pertinent to the general problem of assessing adjustment. These will be set down here as recommendations in order that they might serve as guides to subsequent studies carried out in this general field.

To begin with, it seems apparent that the assessment of adjustment should be pursued by a test involving qualitative variables rather than by the use of a single variable such as indecisiveness. The many facets which maladjustment may reflect in behavior would seem to belie the idea that a single characteristic could connect them all. While a syndrome such as indecision might be typical of one pattern of maladjustment, it may be absent or in negligible quantity in another. Perhaps the use of a profile, in terms of the content of the pictures of the COPPI, might be rewarding in delineating problem areas in the children's personality.

It is further suggested here that indecisiveness be investigated as an indicator of particular types of maladjustment. As a means of carrying this out, it would be possible to use a third category of response in the COPPI in conjunction with another measure of adjustment which would generally classify the sample in terms of types of maladjustment. The literature in the Bibliography is certainly suggestive that definitive results could be expected from such a study.

It is hoped that the above recommendations and suggestions will be of value to others interested in this field of investigation, and that they will provide a measure of continuity to their studies in relation to this one.

### III. FINAL SUMMARY

To conclude this study, a summary will be presented that will recapitulate the main ideas and conclusions from the preceding pages. This summary follows.

Psychologists and educators have long felt a need for a method of assessing the adjustment of children that could be used quickly and easily. In school, for example, the knowledge that a child has exceptional emotional needs could expedite the teacher's determination of these needs. This would provide additional time for adjustive measures

to be effected.

It was the purpose of this thesis to test a possible method for recognizing maladjustment in children. A hypothesis was offered. In short, this hypothesis was that there is an inverse ratio between a child's adjustment and his ability to make a decision in choosing between two possible alternatives. While this had never been demonstrated statistically, literature based upon clinical observations was suggestive that it could be so.

In order to test this hypothesis, some indecision scores from a sample of school children were correlated with corresponding adjustment rating given them by their teachers. To obtain an indecision score, an "Undecided" category of response was added to the Mitchell-Brantly Choice of Pictures Personality Inventory. This altered form of the COPPI was administered to three third-grade classes and two fourth-grade classes from the Manteca Elementary Schools. The teachers of these classes were then given the Hagerty-Olson-Wickman Behavior Rating Schedules with which to rate their pupils' adjustment. Since two of the teachers were not able to complete the ratings of their pupils, the statistical analyses of the scores from these two tests were limited to a sample of ninety children.

The correlation coefficients to show the relationship of the scores from these two devices were calculated by the product-moment method described by Garrett.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the two separate schedules that make up the HOWBRS were each correlated with the indecision scores from the COPPI. These calculations were carried out at the class level as well as with the total sample, so that possible differences in the teachers' rating methods might be observed. The obtained correlation coefficients were evaluated as to significance by determining a probable error for each of them. The interpretation of the results of these statistical procedures followed the classifications suggested by Garrett.<sup>2</sup>

In general, the correlations indicated that only a negligible relationship existed between indecision and maladjustment. While this would serve to disprove the hypothesis offered here, it was proposed that further investigation of the syndrome of indecision might prove it to be more definitive in terms of particular types of maladjustment. A conclusion was suggested that the lack

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<sup>1</sup>Henry E. Garrett, Statistics in Psychology and Education (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1950), pp. 282-88.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 333-34.

of correlation that the statistical analyses revealed was due to a balance of factors. It might have been that the indecision on the part of those children with neurotic tendencies was offset by an intolerance of ambiguity that might be characteristic of those children inclined to be rigid and compulsive.

While the hypothesis offered here has not been demonstrated to be valid, it is hoped that further investigations along the lines suggested in this study will prove more fruitful in terms of the purposes to which this paper has been dedicated. Certainly the problem of assessing adjustment in children is one which is of great concern to educators and clinicians alike. A method by which this could be accomplished quickly and easily would be of service to all of those people who work with children.

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## APPENDIX



A TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER OF  
TIMES EACH PICTURE OF THE COPPI  
WAS PLACED IN THE UNDECIDED CATEGORY

Pict.	No. of ?	Pict.	No. of ?	Pict.	No. of ?	Pict.	No. of ?
1	13	32	6	63	8	94	14
2	9	33	11	64	2	95	9
3	4	34	13	65	3	96	5
4	6	35	10	66	5	97	17
5	21	36	15	67	7	98	1
6	5	37	16	68	9	99	7
7	9	38	18	69	5	100	4
8	11	39	14	70	2	101	9
9	8	40	10	71	9	102	5
10	14	41	7	72	12	103	17
11	12	42	7	73	18	104	12
12	20	43	5	74	11	105	4
13	6	44	13	75	2	106	5
14	8	45	5	76	7	107	2
15	7	46	12	77	6	108	11
16	3	47	9	78	16	109	3
17	2	48	4	79	2	110	17
18	13	49	0	80	2	111	5
19	6	50	2	81	19	112	16
20	4	51	4	82	16	113	2
21	11	52	4	83	10	114	13
22	3	53	4	84	17	115	8
23	11	54	8	85	15	116	15
24	5	55	9	86	2	117	16
25	3	56	2	87	5	118	17
26	2	57	3	88	14	119	9
27	6	58	1	89	9	120	19
28	11	59	6	90	4	121	14
29	14	60	4	91	5	122	4
30	6	61	1	92	16	123	10
31	18	62	3	93	4	124	12

A TABLE SHOWING THE OBTAINED SCORES FROM THE  
CHOICE OF PICTURES PERSONALITY INVENTORY  
AND THE HAGERTY-OLSON-WICKMAN BEHAVIOR  
RATING SCALES

Class #1 (N-31)				Class #2 (N-31)			
	Sched.	Sched.	Total		Sched.	Sched.	Total
COPPI	A of	B of	Score	COPPI	A of	B of	Score
?	HOWERS	HOWERS	HOWERS	?	HOWERS	HOWERS	HOWERS
54	4	46	50	2	0	45	45
28	8	55	63	15	0	47	47
1	8	56	64	29	0	49	49
17	6	62	68	18	0	50	50
19	8	63	71	22	0	52	52
1	6	66	72	13	0	53	53
3	6	67	73	12	0	54	54
3	6	68	74	50	0	60	60
5	12	63	75	30	8	55	63
10	10	65	75	13	0	64	64
19	10	65	75	22	0	64	64
22	10	66	76	15	4	63	67
21	8	68	76	15	0	68	68
0	12	66	78	6	0	68	68
6	6	75	81	14	8	62	70
0	6	76	82	38	0	70	70
12	24	59	83	27	0	75	75
0	8	78	86	27	14	62	76
0	10	79	89	21	0	77	77
3	16	74	90	61	0	84	84
1	13	77	90	10	4	81	85
7	10	81	91	34	18	69	87
16	16	82	98	6	12	81	93
8	18	84	102	26	8	86	94
29	20	83	103	28	26	75	101
12	27	90	117	30	24	82	106
1	27	91	118	11	14	95	109
10	30	94	124	21	24	85	109
9	40	86	126	0	15	97	112
1	54	97	151	5	26	109	135
0	72	103	175	35	55	124	179

A TABLE SHOWING THE OBTAINED SCORES FROM THE  
CHOICE OF PICTURES PERSONALITY INVENTORY  
AND THE HAGERTY-OLSON-WICKMAN BEHAVIOR  
RATING SCALES (Continued)

Class #3 (N-28)			
COPPI ?	Schedule A of HOWERS	Schedule B of HOWERS	Total Score on HOWERS
12	0	49	49
3	0	49	49
6	0	51	51
0	0	51	51
0	0	52	52
5	0	53	53
27	0	53	53
0	0	53	53
9	4	51	55
39	0	56	56
12	0	57	57
22	0	57	57
0	0	58	58
0	4	55	59
7	0	62	62
1	6	57	63
28	0	64	64
0	0	65	65
0	7	60	67
0	0	70	70
6	4	69	73
15	6	69	75
0	28	54	82
0	6	85	91
7	6	86	92
6	6	87	93
5	29	77	106
31	37	79	116