

SPECIAL REVIEWS

Character and Intelligence. EDWARD WEBB. Brit. J. of Psychol., Mono. Suppl., 1915, I. (No. 3). Pp. 99.

This monograph presents one of the most elaborate attempts to quantify the exceedingly complex conative attributes of mentality by means of the best available statistical methods. Webb's main contribution is the statistical evidence for postulating a general conative factor, revealed by the method of correlation of correlations, which on the side of character, corresponds in its generality as a determinant of behavior, to the general intelligence factor, derived from mental tests by Hart and Spearman, Burt and others.

The subjects from whom Webb collected his data were two hundred students in a teachers' training school in London, and a group of 140 boys. Forty character traits of the training school students were assessed by a small group of prefects, the latter being officers elected by the student body and performing disciplinary and minor administrative duties. The character traits of the boys were assessed by two of the masters at each of the boys' schools. A series of mental tests were given to supply data for correlating intelligence attributes with character traits.

With the data so collected Webb tabulates with considerable completeness the correlations of every attribute with every other attribute, as well as the probable errors, and a reliability coefficient for each estimate.

Evidence for the existence of an intellectual factor as a psychological entity is derived from the mental test data by correlating the columns of correlations according to the method of Hart and Spearman. This enables the author to compute the saturation coefficients of the character traits with the calculated general intelligence factor "g." Among the interesting findings in this regard these may be cited as correlating highly with general intelligence: power of getting through mental work rapidly, general tendency to be cheerful, desire to excel at performances in which the person has his chief interest, belief in his own powers, intensity of influence on special intimates, degree of esthetic feeling, degree with which one works with distant objects in view. Among the traits correlating negatively with intelligence we find: tendency to quick oscillation

between cheerfulness and depression (as opposed to permanence of mood), degree of bodily activity in pursuit of pleasure, occasional liability to extreme depression. Among the traits which show practically zero correlation with general intelligence and which in consequence are to be considered as quite independent of intelligence are: tact in getting on with people, occasional liability to extreme anger, readiness to become angry, readiness to accept sentiment of associates, physique.

By applying the method of correlation of correlations to a selected list of character traits Webb finds substantial evidence for the existence of a general factor on the side of character. One might at first conclude that the common factor among character traits so revealed is caused by the general intellectual factor extending its influence into the conative attributes. In order to ascertain whether this is actually the case Webb computes the partial correlations between the character traits, eliminating the influence of the calculated intellectual factor. These partial correlations are again subjected to the procedure of Hart and Spearman with the result that the correlations, when corrected for attenuation, remain as before, hovering close to unity. Webb's conclusion is that a general factor on the side of character exists as a measurable psychological entity and that it is demonstrably distinct from the general intellectual factor.

The physiological nature of the second general factor, which Webb proposes to designate "w," is distinctly a speculative matter. The correlations can undoubtedly reveal the existence of a common causal factor for character traits, but the nature of this factor must be inferentially arrived at by the interpretation of the correlations. Webb defines his second common factor tentatively as "persistence of motive." This interpretation is read into the perseveration tendency of ideas of Müller and Pilzecker.

It would be inappropriate to criticize dogmatically the painstaking statistical procedure of Webb's work. However, the conclusion concerning the second conative common factor would be considerably more convincing if the author had retained throughout the course of his work the comprehensive list of traits with which he starts out. As it is, the long list of forty character traits assessed by the judges dwindles down to eight in the table from which the crucial evidence concerning the second common factor is derived.

The author does not give us a table of saturation coefficients for

the several character traits with reference to the new common conative factor. Such a table, when compared with the table of saturation coefficients for the same traits with reference to the intellectual common factor, would throw much light on the makeup of the traits, and would be serviceable for practical diagnostic purposes. If some character trait could be found which possesses a saturation coefficient with the conative general factor comparable with the high saturation coefficient of reasoning tests with the intellectual common factor, such information would throw light not only on the nature of a possible conative factor, but would be serviceable in defining the essence of character.

If the conative common factor should succeed in establishing itself as a psychological entity beside that of the intellectual common factor, then we would be forced to give up the unifocal interpretation of mentality in favor of a multi-focal interpretation. In case common factors should multiply with unexpected fecundity we would have a state of affairs demanding a non-focal interpretation of mentality in which case every list of related attributes would yield its own common factor. Again, if future developments should reveal the existence of a limited number of definable common factors, then we would virtually be returning to a modernized faculty psychology. Before the proposed conative general factor can be accepted it will be necessary to derive it from a more comprehensive set of character traits than the list of eight used by Webb for this purpose.

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Paradoxical Pain. R. M. HARBIN. Boston: Sherman, French, 1916. Pp. xxiv + 212.

Many books can be readily classified and summarized. This is not one of that kind. It deals with such diverse topics as digestion, parturition, fatigue, phagocytosis, intellectual effort, defeat, anxiety, pain in religion, altruism, warring for peace, temptation, remorse, death, divine discontent, immortality, and eighteen other topics within the confines of its 212 pages. Although by a surgeon it leaves the impression that it consists of notes for sermons, or that the deeply religious trend of the author has been the force compelling its publication.

The pain which is dealt with is both physical and mental, the latter not always being differentiated from the former. Pain is