

COUNTERCULTURAL AND OPPOSING VALUES AT A TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to replicate findings using demographically different populations, the author compared results of principal components analyses on a chart of 456 "fundamental world perspectives." In addition the Comrey Personality Scale and a "social concepts" questionnaire by Kerlinger were administered to the second group of subjects. Principal components analysis of the second group's data was performed yielding comparable results across the different samples.

INTRODUCTION

In a book on "futurology" Kahn and Bruce-Briggs (1972, p. 90) present a chart of "fundamental world perspectives," which was designed with the help of Anthony J. Wiener of the Hudson Institute staff. This chart contains 45 values arranged in five ordered groups (see Table 1). Kahn and Bruce-Briggs associate the values in the first two groups with the "counterculture" or "humanist left," while the third group of values is regarded as being held by persons in the "responsible center." According to these authors, during the 1960's the values of the humanist left spread widely among upper-class youth of the United States and the Northwest culture area. Baggaley (1973) used undergraduate students in education courses at an Ivy League university as subjects in doing a principal components analysis of the 45 values. The subjects responded in terms of an ideal human society on a Likert scale whose points were labelled "highly desirable, somewhat desirable, somewhat undesirable, and highly undesirable." Six components were rotated according to the normal varimax criterion. In order of percentage of covariance accounted for, they were described as: structured, traditional rationality; countercultural values; religiosity; responsible participation; aging; and altruistic self-sacrifice. Subjects at a two-year county college in New Jersey became available, and so the question became pertinent of whether these results could be replicated at a school drawing on a population that is demographically quite different from that used in the earlier study.

METHOD

There were 114 subjects, of whom 68% were female. As in the earlier study, the subjects were asked to indicate their age in class intervals of five years. An age of less than 20 years was indicated by 54% of the subjects.

The instructions included these statements:

"Suppose that you could design a human society that you would regard as most highly desirable. Which values would be most highly prized in your society? Below are listed 35 values. For each value encircle the letters that indicate how desirable the particular value would be in your society according to the indicated key."

Ten of the values included in the earlier study were omitted because they had not loaded appreciably on any of the six components. The remaining values were

listed in alphabetical order. The following scoring system was used: highly desirable — 5, somewhat desirable — 4, omitted — 3, somewhat undesirable — 2, highly undesirable — 1.

All but five of the subjects also filled out the Comrey Personality Scales and a social concepts (values) questionnaire by Kerlinger which is scored on conservatism and liberalism. Descriptive statistics were calculated for the 48 variables. Then a principal components analysis was performed.

RESULTS

Since the scoring system and the values included differed somewhat from those in the earlier study, exact comparisons cannot be made between the means. However, it was evident that, as in the earlier study, the values in Group II were more popular and the values in Group V were less popular than those in the other three groups (see the last column of Table 1). The value of Spearman's rho for the means of the 35 values included in both studies was .80, so evidently these two-year college students tend to rank the values in the same way as the Ivy League students.

A plot of the eigenvalues against their serial numbers showed an "elbow" in the curve after the fourth component and after the ninth component. Therefore, the electronic computer was programmed to print out two varimax-rotated solutions, one for four components and one for nine components. The first four components accounted for 34% of the total covariance, while the first nine components accounted for 54% of it.

The loadings for the four-component solution are shown in Table 1. The first rotated component, which accounts for 12.85% of the covariance, is featured by high loadings by Reverence, Righteousness, Salvation, Worship, Spirituality, Loyalty, Dignity, Submission, and Obedience. Also there are appreciable loadings by Comrey's variables, Social Conformity and Masculinity (negative), and Kerlinger's Conservatism. Of the values listed above, Reverence, Salvation, Worship, Spirituality, and Loyalty showed loadings exceeding .40 on the *third* component of the earlier study.

The second rotated component accounts for 7.13% of the covariance. It involves high loadings by Perception, Sensory Awareness, Flexibility, Joy and Love, Spontaneity, Perspective, Self-actualization, Creativity, and Ecstasy. Comrey's Social Conformity is negatively loaded, while Kerlinger's Liberalism is positively loaded. All of the values listed above loaded .30 or more on the *second* component of the earlier study, and same values, Perception and Sensory Awareness, showed the two highest loadings in the two studies.

The third rotated component, which accounts for 7.12% of the covariance, features high loadings by Planning, Organization, Order, Calculation, and Perspective. Comrey's Orderliness and Activity scales also load highly. Although Planning, Organization, Order, and Calculation showed loadings of at least .40 on the *first* component of the earlier study, it was broader in scope and was loaded highly also by Obedience, Comprehensiveness, Salvation, and Righteousness.

None of the 35 values loads as high as .30 on the fourth rotated component (6.62% of the covariance). Several of Comrey's scales show high loadings — Trust, Emotional Stability, Social Desirability Response Bias, Extraversion, and Empathy. Chronological Age loads .45 on this component.

Table 1

Component Loadings and Means for the Four-Component Solution

	Variable	Component				Mean
		1	2	3	4	
	Male Gender	-22	-16	-04	-04	----
	Chronological Age	-03	05	12	45	----
I	Spirituality	64	-07	-13	26	3.86
	Reverence	78	-05	-06	03	3.66
	Idealism	36	32	-14	29	3.95
	Altruism	-14	25	07	-11	3.98
	Perspective	-05	42	41	11	4.36
	Openness	-03	28	-07	-04	4.80
	Creativity	-06	38	-07	-06	4.88
	Perception	-04	61	14	07	4.55
	Spontaneity	25	47	-29	-02	4.00
	Self-actualization	-04	41	16	26	4.47
II	Sensory Awareness	-01	60	-04	-03	4.55
	Joy and Love	18	48	-17	19	4.84
	Ecstasy	25	37	-14	-25	3.84
	Rationality	-03	-00	18	06	4.04
	Synthesis	11	17	28	02	3.37
III	Calculation	-06	-08	48	03	3.49
	Planning	09	08	71	-12	4.36
	Prudence	31	13	18	22	2.93
	Comprehensiveness	12	33	23	-06	4.52
	Flexibility	-10	52	05	-08	4.63
	Dedication	19	05	28	15	4.56
	Loyalty	60	22	10	11	4.51

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Table 1 (cont.)

Component Loadings and Means for the Four-Component Solution

	Variable	Component				Mean
		1	2	3	4	
IV	Responsibility	29	05	29	-06	4.72
	Order	44	-03	50	-27	4.32
	Organization	32	-06	61	-14	4.46
	Tradition	43	-15	03	16	3.07
	Obedience	52	02	26	-05	3.90
	Self-sacrifice	15	00	31	26	3.28
	Revealed Truth	43	26	-11	-18	4.34
	Worship	66	-27	07	10	3.15
	Salvation	72	-04	01	08	3.31
V	Dignity	53	16	18	07	4.34
	Righteousness	75	-23	09	13	3.65
	Submission	52	-12	25	00	2.39
	Fatalism	08	-28	22	-15	2.02
	Social Desirability	23	-04	27	63	48.13
	Trust	02	-11	-22	74	87.44
	Orderliness	18	-17	58	15	87.51
	Social Conformity	54	-43	10	14	79.50
	Activity	-14	-22	54	28	90.98
	Emotional Stability	10	-18	04	66	93.08
	Extraversion	18	-06	-09	59	83.87
	Masculinity	-46	-07	02	19	70.65
	Empathy	04	13	10	50	102.63
	Conservatism	67	-26	36	10	94.81
Liberalism	-21	34	18	26	108.96	
	Percentage of covariance	12.85	7.13	7.12	6.62	

Note. All of the component loadings have been multiplied by 100.

In the nine-component solution, three of the four components described above remained essentially the same. However, Dignity and Loyalty split off from the religiosity component and joined with Idealism, Dedication, and Prudence to form a new component, which was third highest in amount of covariance accounted for among the nine rotated components. This component could be called "idealistic loyalty."

The zero-order correlations of Gender and Chronological Age with the 35 values were negligible; none attained an absolute value of .25.

DISCUSSION

The first three components in the present study of two-year college students match quite closely the first three components in the earlier study of Ivy League students. The main difference is that the "religiosity" component assumes a more prominent part in differentiating the two-year college students. It picked up Righteousness, Salvation, and Obedience, which had been highly loaded on the "rationality" component of the earlier study. Since Tradition shows a loading of .43 on religiosity in the present study, the other component could better be called simply "structured rationality." The high loading by the Comrey scale of Orderliness supports this interpretation. In the earlier study, Kaiser's (1962) method of scaling a simplex had been applied to 11 of the values loading highly on the religiosity and rationality components, producing an index of goodness of fit of .88. Thus it seems that in American society religiosity and rationality are associated in some complex fashion.

The "counterculture" component of the present study matches that of the previous study quite closely, and its highly loaded values are even more heavily concentrated in Kahn and Bruce-Briggs' Group II. The inclusion of the other variables helped to clarify the interpretation of the components. The more religious students are "conservative" and socially conforming, while the students attracted by the counterculture are "liberal" and "rebellious" (Comrey's term for the negative pole of his Social Conformity scale). However, inspection of the means in Table 1 shows that the counterculture values of Perception, Sensory Awareness, and Spontaneity seem to be quite popular with all of the students. The differentiation occurs mainly because most of the religious values are *unpopular* with the students attracted by the counterculture.

Kerlinger (1972), in a study of attitude "referents," found "child-centered curriculum," "children's needs," and "self-expression of children" to load on a first-order factor that, in turn, loaded on a second-order liberal factor. Students who value Perception, Sensory Awareness, and Spontaneity would probably favor such a child-centered education. Involved in Kerlinger's conservative second-order factor were "subject matter," "education as intellectual training," and "school discipline" (which seem congruent with a valuing of Order, Organization, and Planning), as well as religious referents, such as "faith in God" and "teaching of spiritual values." Thus the first and third components of the present study seem reminiscent of Kerlinger's conservative second-order factor.

The fourth component reflects the low but generally positive intercorrelations among the Comrey scales, which are similar to those reported in the manual for the test (Comrey, 1970). Because of the high loading by the response bias scale, the simplest interpretation of this component is probably "social

desirability in the American culture." The high loading by Chronological Age could mean that the younger students are less socialized into the general American culture. It would be interesting to retest these 20-year-olds on the Comrey ten years from now to see if they would then respond in the same way as the present 30-year-olds do now.

However, the low correlations of the *values* with age and gender suggests that neither a "generation gap" nor a "gender gap" exists among these two-year college students in values.

The results generally support the contention by Kahn and Bruce-Briggs that the responsible center and humanist left represent important opposing foci of world perspective in the early 1970's. They also attest to the continuing vitality of religious values among a rather large group of present-day college students.

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