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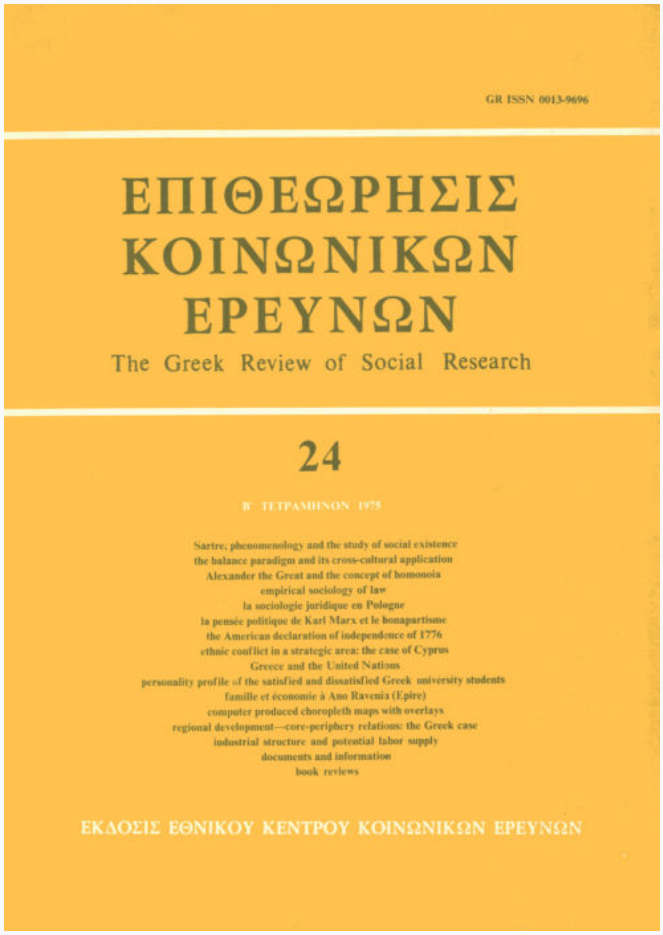

Personality profile of the satisfied and dissatisfied Greek university students

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personality profile of the satisfied and dissatisfied Greek university students*

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background of the research

As part of a larger research project dealing with attitudes of Greek university students, a Greek translation of the *Edwards Personal Preference Schedule* (EPPS) was standardized by the author (Anderson, 1974). The standardization provides norms for both male and female Greek university students based on a sample of 1200 students. Various attitude tests were also given to the standardization sample along with the EPPS. In this article, the attitude scores were used to select those students who were most satisfied with their university and those students who were most dissatisfied with their university. The EPPS profiles were then computed for each of these two groups to determine if, in fact, there are significant personality differences between satisfied and dissatisfied students.

methodology

The details of the testing procedure and the sample selection are given more completely by Anderson (1974). In summary, it should be explained that 1200 students (55% males, 45% females) were tested in the total sample. These students, primarily third and fourth year students, represent approximately a one-per-cent sample of all major Greek universities, schools, and academies which offer a university degree. The complete questionnaire, which included the semantic differential rating and the EPPS, was given during a two-hour testing session in an in-class administration.

The Greek translation of the EPPS included only six of the personality «needs» identified by Edwards. Those six variables are: achievement, order, autonomy affiliation, dominance, and change. A complete description of each of these needs can be found in Anderson (1974) or in Edwards (1954). The EPPS is designed in an ipsative, forced-choice format in which seven statements representing each need are paired against each other. A statement from each is paired against a statement from every other need and this process is repeated four times to give a total of 60 test items. The split-half reliability of the Greek translation is .71 which compares favorably with the .76 reliability reported by Edwards (1954) for the English version of the test. In addition, both the Greek and English versions of the EPPS were given to 86 bi-lingual subjects at Pierce College. A correlation of .78 was obtained between these two versions (Anderson, 1974). Hence, both the validity and the reliability of the Greek EPPS are sufficient to warrant further use among Greek students.

The attitude instrument which was used to select satisfied and dissatisfied students was a semantic

differential rating of the concept «your university or the institution of higher education which you are attending» (Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum, 1957). This concept was written at the top of one page of the questionnaire and was followed by eight seven-step scales in the form:

Good /____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ Bad

The student is instructed to place a checkmark near the adjective which best describes his or her feelings about «the university.» The other adjective pairs used in the rating were: Intellectually Stimulating—Not Intellectually Stimulating, Friendly—Unfriendly, Helpful—Not Helpful, Prestigious—Not Prestigious, Worthwhile—Useless, Satisfying—Not Satisfying, Well-Organized—Poorly Organized. These adjective pairs were selected from the factor analyses of the semantic differential provided by Osgood, et al. (1957). The adjectives are all highly loaded on the factor identified as «evaluation» and are, according to Osgood, et al. (1957), excellent measures of «attitude.»

Each of the eight scales was scored in an identical manner. The space nearest the positively-evaluative adjective was assigned the number «7» with the remaining spaces numbered in descending order until the final space (nearest the unfavorable adjective) was given the number «1.» In the Greek sample the average intercorrelation of these eight scales was .73. With this high intercorrelation established, the right semantic differential scales can safely be assumed to form a unidimensional, evaluative (attitude) scale. Hence, the scores on the eight scales were summed to give a total score which ranged from 56 to 7.

The «satisfied» group was formed by selecting students whose total semantic differential score was 48 or higher (average scale score of 6 or higher). This procedure produced a total of 191 students which is approximately 15 per-cent of the total sample. The satisfied group includes 99 males and 92 females. The «dissatisfied» group was formed by selecting students whose total semantic differential score was 16 or lower (average scale score of 2 or less). There were 56 students or approximately 5 per-cent of the total sample who fell into this category. Of these students, 36 were males and 20 were females.

The mean total semantic differential score of the satisfied group was 51.17 (standard deviation = 2.48). Hence, the average scale score for this group would be 6.40 on the seven-step scale. The mean total score for the dissatisfied group was 12.70 (standard deviation = 2.59) with the average score per scale being 1.59.

results

The mean EPPS scores for males and females can be found on Tables 1 and 2. The differences between satisfied and dissatisfied students were tested for significance with the usual t-test for uncorrelated means.

TABLE 1. *Mean EPPS Scores for Satisfied and Dissatisfied Males*

EPPS Variable	Satisfied Males (N=99)	Dissatisfied Males (N=36)
Achievement	11.46	11.17
	(3.29)	(3.51)
Order	11.45	8.47*
	(3.32)	(4.03)
Autonomy	9.50	13.22*
	(3.16)	(3.50)
Affiliation	10.23	8.75
	(3.44)	(4.16)
Dominance	7.67	8.19
	(3.80)	(3.87)
Change	9.65	10.11
	(3.04)	(3.66)

* Indicates that the difference between satisfied males and dissatisfied males is significant at the .05 level or less. Standard deviations are given in parentheses.

TABLE 2. *Mean EPPS Scores for Satisfied and Dissatisfied Females*

EPPS Variable	Satisfied Females (N=92)	Dissatisfied Females (N=20)
Achievement	10.91	11.17
	(2.91)	(3.51)
Order	11.04	8.47*
	(3.44)	(4.03)
Autonomy	9.35	13.22*
	(2.95)	(3.50)
Affiliation	12.25	8.75*
	(3.31)	(4.11)
Dominance	5.46	8.19*
	(2.96)	(3.87)
Change	10.94	10.11
	(3.24)	(3.66)

* Indicates that the difference between satisfied females and dissatisfied females is significant at the .05 level or less. Standard deviations are given in parentheses.

Table 1 indicates that satisfied males were significantly different from the dissatisfied males on the EPPS variables of need for order and need for autonomy. The difference on the affiliation variable was significant only at the .10 level. These scores show that satisfied males had higher needs for order and

lower needs for autonomy than the dissatisfied males. The profile suggests that the satisfied males tend to be more conforming, less independent and, to a slight degree, more interpersonally oriented (affiliation) than the dissatisfied males. Because of their high needs for order and low needs for autonomy the satisfied males probably accept and enjoy the rules, assignments and regimentation of a university setting. The dissatisfied males, on the other hand, would be disturbed by rigid, formal rules and regulations because of their high needs for autonomy. Hence, they would find less enjoyment in the formalized organizational structure of a university.

The EPPS scores for satisfied and dissatisfied females (Table 2) show more significant differences than was found for the males although the general pattern of scores is approximately the same. Satisfied females are significantly higher than dissatisfied females on order and affiliation while dissatisfied females are higher on autonomy and dominance. Thus the satisfied females appear to be conforming, interpersonally oriented and passive. The profile is much like the profile of the satisfied male and again indicates a type of personality which would passively conform to and enjoy the rules and regulations of a highly structured organizational environment such as that found at a university setting. The significant difference on the affiliation variable would also suggest that the satisfied females probably find considerable satisfaction from friendship associations and from interpersonal relationships with other students at the university. The overall pattern of the satisfied female is much like the pattern that would describe the traditional female role in most Western societies, i.e., passive, conforming, and interpersonally oriented.

The profile of the dissatisfied female indicates that these women are low in needs for order and affiliation and high in needs for autonomy and dominance. Hence, the rules and regimentation of the university would be unsatisfactory since such regulations would operate against the needs these women have for independence and self-determination. The pattern of scores for these women does not fit the traditional sex role stereotype since there are relatively low needs for affiliation, low conformity needs and high needs for independence and dominance. The pattern is, in fact, quite similar to the pattern usually associated with the stereotyped dominant, non-conforming male sex role.

It is also interesting to note that all of the students (both satisfied and dissatisfied, both males and females) are approximately equal in their needs for achievement. This finding is important since it indicates that both the satisfied and the dissatisfied students are, in fact, similarly oriented toward their education and career training. Hence, the significant differences in patterns between the satisfied and dissatisfied students are not due to differences in interest or concern with education and achievement. Since all of the students in these two samples have similar needs for achievement, the extreme differences in satisfaction scores must be accounted for by differences in other personality needs that are or are not being fulfilled at the various universities.

In conjunction with this point, however, it should be noted (see Table 3) that the mean percentile scores for all four groups of students are approximately at the median percentile (50th percentile) on the achievement variable. Although there were no significant differences between the satisfied students and the dissatisfied students in needs for achievement, both groups have only «average» needs for achievement. Table 3 suggests, therefore, that students with high needs for achievement fall into a middle or moderate range of satisfaction.

TABLE 3. *Percentile Scores on the EPPS for Satisfied and Dissatisfied Males and Females*

EPPS Variable	Males Satisfied (N=99)	Males Dissatisfied (N=36)	Females Satisfied (N=92)	Females Dissatisfied (N=20)
Achievement	55	51	47	52
Order	75	43*	70	43*
Autonomy	35	77*	27	71*
Affiliation	60	45	66	29*
Dominance	56	64	36	70*
Change	47	56	50	43

* Indicates that the difference between satisfied and dissatisfied groups is significant at the .05 level or less. Significance was computed from mean data reported on Tables 1 and 2.

conclusions and summary

From a large sample of Greek university students (N = 1200) those students who were highly satisfied and those students who were highly dissatisfied with their educational program were selected by means of a semantic differential x attitude test. The satisfied group consisted of 99 males and 92 females while the dissatisfied group consisted of 36 males and 20 females. Mean scores on a Greek translation of the *Edwards Personal Preference Schedule* were computed for these four groups of students. The results indicate that satisfied males are significantly higher than dissatisfied males on need for order and significantly lower than dissatisfied males on need for autonomy. Satisfied females are signifi-

cantly higher than dissatisfied females on needs for order and affiliation and significantly lower than dissatisfied females on needs for dominance and autonomy. The variable of need for achievement did not differ between satisfied and dissatisfied groups for either sex.

The results suggest that satisfied students, regardless of sex, tend to be conforming, passive and (for females) interpersonally oriented. Dissatisfied students tend to be independent, non-conforming, and (for females) dominating. The two groups (satisfied vs. dissatisfied) do not, however, differ in their needs for achievement and success. Both groups have «average» scores on this achievement variable—a fact which suggests that high achievement students are only moderately satisfied with their educational program.

The research also presents further evidence for the validity and utility of the new Greek translation of the EPPS. Although this study is extracted from the same data that were used for the standardization of the Greek EPPS, the data do support an intuitively sensible interpretation of the personalities of satisfied and dissatisfied university students. Further research using the Greek EPPS should be able to demonstrate the utility of the test as both a counseling and research instrument.

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