

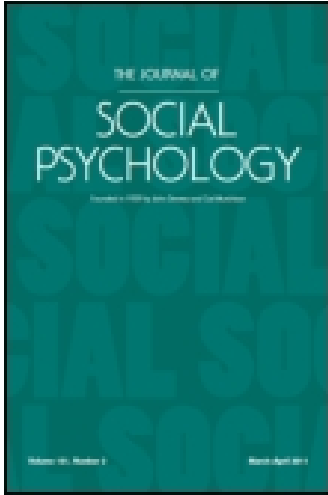
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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PERSONALITY IN NIGERIAN AND ENGLISH SUBJECTS*¹

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SUMMARY

A Nigerian sample of 329 men and 101 women was administered the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire under selection conditions; so was another sample of 246 Nigerian males under conditions of anonymity. All Ss in these groups were members of the armed forces. British groups of civilians and soldiers ($N = 404$ men and 544 women) were also administered the same questionnaire, with both samples being matched for age, and the results for the two national groups were compared. Factor analyses of the intercorrelations of the questions in the E.P.Q. showed factor comparison indices sufficiently high to indicate that the questionnaire measured much the same traits in the two populations. Reliabilities were somewhat lower among the Nigerians, and there were certain differences in the intercorrelations between the scales. Nigerians had much higher Lie scores, and in addition the evidence suggested that they had higher Psychoticism scores (i.e., were more tough minded) and had lower Neuroticism scores. The possibility was raised of their having higher Extraversion scores, but the evidence is somewhat contradictory. A discussion is given of certain cultural differences which may account for some of the observed differences.

A. INTRODUCTION

It is widely believed that different nations are characterized by different personality traits, and the stereotyped views of the extraverted Italian and the introverted Swede may or may not be more than unsubstantiated beliefs. Empirical work in this field has suffered from a disregard for

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certain very necessary precautions before considering differences in mean scores achieved by different nationals as proof of differences in personality between their respective nations. Traits, to make comparison meaningful, must be defined in both groups to be compared by means of identical (or very similar) matrices of covariances; i.e., the matrices of intercorrelations between elements (questions in the case of a questionnaire) must give rise to very similar factor patterns. If this precaution is not met, no meaning can be attributed to the observed mean scores, as the factors in question are derived only from one of the national groups in question and may not apply to the other. Even when such relatively similar cultures as the American and the German were compared in this manner, it proved impossible to reproduce the factors on the Cattell 16 PF inventory, originally derived in the U.S.A., in Germany (4, 6), and the same difficulty was found in England (2). In the present study we compare the scores of English and Nigerian Ss on the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire [E.P.Q. (3)], an inventory which purports to give a measure of P (psychoticism),² E (extraversion), N (neuroticism), and L (lie or dissimulation scale). This latter scale has been found also to be a measure of orthodoxy or conformity (3). We also report factor analyses of correlations between the questions contained in the inventory for both the groups which are being compared, in order to demonstrate the essential identity of factors extracted.

B. METHOD

The English sample contained 404 men and 544 women; while not exactly a random sample of the population, these groups approximated such a sample fairly closely. They were taken from a larger number of Ss (3) who made up the standardization sample for the E.P.Q., the selection being made so as to equate the age of the samples with the age of the Nigerian group (age has been found by us to produce shifts in scores for all the scales). In addition, another comparison group of 81 male British soldiers was used, in order to rule out the possible influence of occupation, all the Nigerians tested being members of the armed forces.

The Nigerian sample consisted of 329 men and 101 women, aged around 30. All the Ss had a basic minimum qualification of West African School Certificate, with at least a pass in English. All were tested in connection

² The P scale measures a personality trait which, in spite of the name given to it, is nonpathological; it is closely linked with tough-mindedness (1). In the same way, N is nonpathological, and is often referred to as "emotionality." It is only at the extremes that pathological variants are found; i.e., psychotics have high P scores, neurotics high N scores.

with examinations or interviews for selection into the Armed Forces Short Services. They were told explicitly that the questionnaire was unconnected with their selection or their medical fitness (some of the *Ss* were officer cadet pilots waiting for their medical). In spite of these assurances, it cannot be said with any confidence that these *Ss* were not motivated to dissimulate, and consequently another sample of 246 male soldiers were administered the questionnaire on a random basis, under conditions of complete anonymity, at the end of a general sociocultural questionnaire; these soldiers were not concerned with any selection procedure.

A factor analysis was carried out on the scores of the Nigerian men and women; the former are of course of much more interest, as the number of women was rather small. Principal components analysis was followed by Promax rotation to oblique simple structure; four factors were extracted and rotated. The results obtained from the Nigerian sample were compared with the results of a factor analysis originally carried out as part of the standardization of the E.P.Q. on 1796 men and 2565 women, constituting a reasonable approximation to a random English sample. Of major interest here are the results of the factor comparisons which were carried out by means of a method described in Eysenck and Eysenck (2). For the males, the indices of factor comparison were the following: $P = .98$, $E = .99$, $N = .99$, $L = .98$. For the women, they were the following: $P = .66$, $E = .91$, $N = .92$, $L = .93$. The indices for the men are clearly high enough to make it appear that for them the factors are virtually identical with those extracted from the British sample. For the women, the indices are satisfactory for all factors except for *P*. Here we must note that for two of the items in the *P* scale—viz., numbers 67 and 78—all Nigerian women answered in the same direction, so that these items had to be omitted in the analysis. Also, of course, women have much lower *P* scores in both samples (Nigerian and English) than men; this would reduce the chances of obtaining reasonable indices of factor comparison. We have already mentioned the fact that the women were represented in such small number that the results are suggestive at best as far as they are concerned. On the whole we conclude that the factors extracted from the male groups, and for the most part also from the female groups, are sufficiently like those extracted from English samples to make comparisons of scale scores meaningful.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 gives the alpha coefficient reliabilities of the various scales for the Nigerian and English groups. It will be seen that the English groups

TABLE 1
RELIABILITIES (ALPHA COEFFICIENTS) OF PSYCHOTICISM, EXTRAVERSION, NEUROTICISM,
AND LIE SCALES AND INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN SCALES
FOR NIGERIAN AND ENGLISH GROUPS

Scale	Males		Females		
	Nigerians (n = 329)	English (n = 500)	Nigerians (n = 101)	English (n = 500)	
		<i>Alpha coefficients</i>			
Psychoticism (P)	.64	.74	.40	.68	
Extraversion (E)	.60	.85	.68	.84	
Neuroticism (N)	.73	.84	.84	.85	
Lie (L)	.79	.81	.84	.79	
		<i>Intercorrelations</i>			
P vs. E	-.10	.06	.15	.07	
P vs. N	.40	.12	.40	.07	
P vs. L	-.37	-.23	-.38	-.19	
E vs. N	-.11	-.16	-.20	-.14	
E vs. L	-.00	-.10	-.07	-.09	
N vs. L	-.41	-.04	-.54	-.15	

tend to have higher reliabilities in all except one case, with P and E showing the greatest differences. This lower reliability of the Nigerian groups is not perhaps unexpected; the items were written for English conditions, and cannot be completely relevant to Nigerian conditions. We will later on comment on some individual items from this point of view.

Table 1 also shows the intercorrelations between the scales. It will be seen that Nigerians show much higher correlations between P and N (positive), between P and L (negative), and between N and L (negative) than do the English Ss. The correlations involving L are not difficult to explain if indeed the conditions of test administration were dissimulation motivating; Michaelis and Eysenck (5) have shown that the more motivating to dissimulation the conditions, the greater is the correlation between N and L. It seems likely that the same applies to the correlation between P and L. Given these associations, it would follow that P and N should also show a heightened degree of correlation.

Table 2 gives the means and standard deviations for the four scales, for the various groups tested. In view of the high L scores of the Nigerian group, a special group was constructed with the omission of all Ss with L scores greater than 12; this constitutes the Nigerian group of low L scorers. These very large L score differences are the most impressive evidence of national differences that spring to the eye, and it is clear that the conditions of testing are not likely to have been solely responsible for these differences; even group 4 (Nigerian males carrying out the test under conditions of anonymity) have scores which are almost as large as those of group 2.

TABLE 2
 SCORES OF ENGLISH AND NIGERIAN MALES AND FEMALES ON PSYCHOTICISM (P), EXTRAVERSION (E),
 NEUROTICISM (N), AND LIE (L) SCALES: MEANS AND SDs FOR COMPARABLE AGE GROUPS

	n	P		E		N		L		Age
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Males										
1. English ^a	404	3.27	2.75	12.85	4.73	9.33	5.18	7.53	4.51	30-39
2. Nigerians	329	2.99	2.47	14.92	2.59	6.03	3.22	14.95	3.77	31
3. Low L scorers	56	4.56	3.40	14.70	2.50	8.30	3.46	8.70	2.19	31
4. Anonymous Nigerians	246	6.81	3.38	11.24	3.43	6.97	4.14	14.04	3.93	—
5. English soldiers	81	3.60	3.11	16.04	4.38	8.86	5.41	—	—	—
Females										
1. English ^a	544	2.28	2.20	11.97	4.95	12.57	5.28	8.84	4.05	30-39
2. Nigerians	101	2.97	1.90	14.48	3.03	8.42	4.36	13.46	4.45	30
3. Low L scorers	34	3.53	2.28	14.81	3.20	11.37	4.61	8.32	2.65	28

^a The L scores in group 1 are based on 181 males and 285 females.

These high L scores may signify dissimulation, or else they may indicate great conformity and orthodoxy of the Nigerian males and females; it would be difficult to decide between these two interpretations, and of course it is possible that both may be valid, and account for a portion of the total variance.

As far as P is concerned, the anonymous Ss have a much higher score than do the English controls (either civilian or soldier). The low L scorers also have quite elevated P scores, both for the men and the women. The main Nigerian sample has P scores not markedly different from the English sample, but the high L scores of the Nigerians, and the high correlation between P and L which they show, make it likely that dissimulation has lowered their P scores drastically. The figures suggest that Nigerians have higher P scores (i.e., are more tough minded) than English Ss when not dissimulating in order to obtain practical advantages in the course of their career.

Turning next to N, we find that here the evidence suggests rather the opposite conclusion. Nigerians, whether anonymous or not, have distinctly lower scores than the English civilians and soldiers, and this is also true of the low L scoring Nigerians. We may tentatively conclude that Nigerians on the whole have lower N scores than English Ss.

Nigerians at first sight seem to be more extraverted than the English; this certainly is the impression when we compare groups 1 and 2, for both men and women. It also applies to the low L scorers. The anonymous Nigerian group, however, has lower E scores than the English, and the English soldiers, who constitute the appropriate comparison group, have much the highest E scores. This is not unexpected; soldiers (particularly professional soldiers) tend to come into the high E low N quadrant. As all the Nigerian samples are military, comparisons with civilian English groups may easily give the wrong impression. As far as E is concerned, therefore, we find it difficult to come to any conclusion; it is possible that Nigerians are a little more extraverted than the English, but little confidence is felt that this conclusion would be upheld in subsequent work.

While the indices of factor comparison suggest that the items in the questionnaire give rise to similar patterns in Nigerian as in English Ss, there are certain cultural differences which may affect the interpretation of individual items. The following in particular may be suggested as giving rise to difficulties. In each case we have stated the question, with the scale involved in brackets.

- (a) *Are you a talkative person?* (E) Nigerians associate talkativeness

with gossiping and the telling of lies; their immediate reaction would be to say "No." In England there would not be such a negative association.

(b) *Would it upset you a lot to see a child or animal suffer?* (P) Nigerians are not animal lovers, as the English are reputed to be; they do not keep animals as pets, but regard them purely from a commercial point of view. Thus they would not associate animals and children, as is suggested by the question, which would create a conflict as most would say "Yes" to the first part and "No" to the second.

(c) *Do you enjoy hurting people you love?* (P) Most Nigerians would give "hurting" an interpretation suggesting physical injury; this is not the interpretation that would occur to most English readers.

(d) *Do you prefer reading to meeting people?* (E) Reading is not anything like as accepted as a pastime in Nigeria as in England, and is not considered as a proper alternative to social intercourse. This same point applies to another question, *Do you have many friends?* (E) It would also apply to the question *Do you usually take the initiative in making new friends?* (E). Of course, it is also possible to interpret these social customs as evidence that in fact Nigerians are more extraverted; it is difficult to be sure of the direction of the causal arrow.

(e) *Do you sometimes like teasing animals?* (P) As already pointed out, Nigerians look upon animals from a purely commercial point of view, and would therefore consider teasing an animal as childish.

(f) *Would you feel very sorry for an animal caught in a trap?* (P) Traps are used in Nigeria as part of farming, which is their predominant occupation; the item, therefore, refers not to a "sport" but to a means of earning a living.

There are many items in the Lie scale which for Nigerians have much stronger moral implications than they would for English Ss. It is considered morally wrong to steal, be greedy, not to keep promises, to blame others unnecessarily, to possess bad habits, to disobey parents or be cheeky to them, to cheat at games, or not to practice what one preaches; the gradations of mild transgressions are not so well understood, and this may lead to very high L scores. These points were raised by the Nigerian member of the investigating team, and they clearly suggest possible reasons for observed differences. They do not invalidate the scales for use in Nigeria, however, as is shown by the high factor comparison indices, and the high reliabilities for, for example, the L scale. They do suggest, however, that no certain conclusions can be drawn from our data, and that any conclusions should only be regarded as suggestive.

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