

Review of PETER SAVILLE, *The British Standardisation of the 16 PF.*
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C. J. Adcock

The appearance of this British standardisation of the 16 PF is an event of some importance for New Zealand test users and immediately raises the question of whether it is more suitable to our own use than the U.S. norms. But before reviewing the evidence on this point some general remarks may be in order. The present reviewer has long held that there is far too great a tendency to seek local norms when the suitability of a test for local conditions has still to be established. The unsophisticated test user is inclined to imagine that the process of standardisation has some magical effect in making the test suit local conditions whereas in fact it merely helps to disguise any inadequacies.

Differences in score distribution as between one country and another may be the result of real sample differences with regard to the variables measured or may be a function of differences with regard to what is being measured by the test items. In the latter case differences which the test user may be inclined to interpret as reflecting differing basic personality patterns may really be due to the failure of some items to tap the factor which they are supposed to represent. Studies carried out by Adcock, Adcock and Walkey (1972), Howarth and Browne (1971) and Eysenck and Eysenck (1969) indicate that in New Zealand, Canada and England, respectively, the 16 PF items do not clearly define the factors which they are presumed to measure. Quite apart from any factorial evidence which might be queried on grounds of inadequate rotation the correlation pattern in the New Zealand samples indicated that an appreciable number of items were more related to other factors than to the ones they were expected to measure.

In the light of such evidence the provision of British norms may be regarded as a temporary expedient. What is needed is a thorough analysis of the data obtained to provide evidence for a more adequate British version of the test and it is understood that such a procedure is being followed. The outcome, based on such a representative sample should be a major contribution to our understanding of the most widely used personality test in the United Kingdom.

Insofar as a personality test really measures in other cultures the factors which it purports to measure, the establishment of national norms may be regarded as undesirable. It is likely that cultural influences will produce different mean scores from one country to another and the test results should indicate these, not mask them. Norms of a distribution-free type (Rasch, 1960) would therefore appear to be the

ultimate goal but in the meantime national sampling may play an important part by providing a suitable reference frame within the cultural milieu.

For us in New Zealand, this standardisation may be more appropriate for use than are the U.S. norms, but we cannot be sure of this without already having reliable norms of our own. Nothing so ambitious has been attempted here but there are data which are useful for comparison. Unfortunately the most comprehensive and general sample (high school seniors) was tested with the 1962/3 version of the test and could be expected to show poorer agreement with the British norms than would the revised version used in the English survey. Nevertheless only two scales produce a disagreement exceeding 0.5 SD (F and Q3 for males and F and Q1 for females). A similar comparison with the U.S. norms shows seven such differences for males (A, G, H, L, M, N, Q3) and four for females (F, O, L, Q1). As might be expected, the New Zealand agreement with Australian results (Chopra, 1967) is even better, there being no differences exceeding 0.5 SD for girls and only two for boys.

These comparisons suggest that the U.S. norms may be very misleading for New Zealand testees. This is confirmed by the only readily available results based on the 1967 (Form A) revision which Ngaire V. Adcock collected in 1969. The subjects were psychology students and doubtfully representative but it is worth noting that with this sample nine scales showed a difference from U.S. general norms exceeding 0.5 SD. Of these intelligence at +1.64 was only fourth in degree of discrepancy. It would appear, therefore, that N.Z. users of the test would be well advised to use British norms until more N.Z. data are available. A local standardisation should be postponed until validity has been better established. The pending British analysis may provide some leads in this respect.

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