

# INTELLIGENCE AND THE Social Status of Occupations

DEEG AND PATERSON [2] in 1946 duplicated Counts' 1925 study [1] of the ranking of selected representative occupations in order of social prestige. The purpose of the 1946 study was to determine if any substantial shift in rank order occurred during the intervening 21 years. The obtained rho coefficient of +0.97 showed the two rankings to be highly similar. Welch [6] in 1948 repeated the study a second time with a teacher's college student sample and found a rho coefficient of +0.98. Twenty-five occupations were used in the latter two studies, and were selected from 45 occupations used by Counts.

Deeg and Paterson concluded that "the multiplicity of social, economic, and psychological factors determining the relative prestige of occupations has continued to operate in a consistent manner" (p. 207). Although there were shifts in certain occupations (such as insurance agent which was raised three ranks), by and large the status rankings were quite stable as reflected by the large rho coefficients.

## Purpose

This paper is presented to suggest the importance of intelligence as one psychological factor governing prestige of occupations.

Occupations have been ranked by average intelligence test scores of persons in the various occupational groups. Stewart [5] and Harrell and Harrell [3] independently ranked civilian occupations by Army General Classification Test median and mean scores, respectively, obtained from records of World War II army white en-

listed personnel grouped by their civilian occupations.

By comparing occupations commonly ranked on intelligence and social prestige variables in various studies, it is possible to give an estimate of the magnitude of the correlation between intelligence of persons by occupations and prestige of these occupations. In the analysis reported here, intercorrelations were obtained between the Stewart, Harrell and Harrell, Deeg and Paterson, Welch, and the North-Hatt Scale data. The North-Hatt Scale of occupational prestige [4] was included to provide another estimate similar to the preceding prestige rankings.

## Intercorrelation Results

TABLE I presents the matrix of coefficients obtained from the rho analyses. It should be noticed that the size of the coefficients

TABLE I  
Interrho Coefficients of Social Prestige and Intelligence Test Average Scores of Occupations and N of Occupations ( ).

	Harrell and Stewart	Harrell and Counts	Deeg and Paterson	Welch	
	(64)				
Harrell and Harrell	0.98 (15)	(12)			
Counts	0.95 (16)	0.96 (12)	(25)		
Deeg and Paterson	0.91 (16)	0.96 (12)	0.97 (25)	(25)	
Welch	0.92 (27)	0.90 (21)	0.98 (20)	0.98 (20)	(20)
North- Hatt	0.92	0.89	0.99	0.98	0.98

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among the intelligence test rankings and the prestige rankings are not quite so large as those among the prestige rankings. Nevertheless, they are quite large in an absolute sense.

It should also be realized that there is a definite restriction in range in the Stewart and Harrell and Harrell data. Officer personnel were not included, and this group normally populates occupations having higher prestige rankings such as the professions. The effect of this restriction tended to eliminate for consideration several of the higher prestige-ranked occupations such as banker, missionary, college professor, school superintendent, and similar professional and quasi-professional occupations, and thus probably to reduce somewhat the size of the obtained coefficients.

### Discussion

The general question of the basis for assigning status to occupations would seem to depend largely upon the perceptual experiences of the judges. These experiences may be derived from personal acquaintance with a variety of occupations, family attitudes and beliefs, general information from the public news media, general social class opinions, and so on. Assuming such experiences provide the basis for making judgments of social status of occupations, it becomes even more interesting to observe the relatively high relationship with intelligence test results as represented by the AGCT data. It would appear that this one psychological factor cuts sharply across

these perceptual experiences and determines the judgments. Thus, when a subject is asked to rank occupations for social status, he probably focuses upon perceived intelligence requirements of the respective occupations, albeit perhaps somewhat unconsciously.

Consideration should be given to several other variables also implicitly related to social status, particularly economic, educational, and social factors. What is the correlation between judges' estimates of income of occupations and ranking in social status? What is the correlation between judges' estimates of amount of formal schooling required by occupations and ranking in social status? What is the correlation between judges' estimates of difficulty of achieving success in occupations and ranking in social status? What is the correlation between judges' estimates of amount of social utility of occupations and ranking in social status?

It would seem that answers to these and similar questions are required before we can have an adequate understanding of the over-all basis on which judgments are made of social status of occupations.

### Summary

Rankings of civilian occupations of Army enlisted personnel by average AGCT scores were correlated with rankings of social status of the same occupations. Rho coefficients were found to average about 0.92, almost as large in magnitude as the interrhos of the social status rankings. These results were interpreted as indicating that judges' perceptions of intelligence of personnel in occupational groups may be a dominant factor leading to judgments of social status of occupations. Several other variables possibly affecting social status judgments were suggested for future studies.

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**Intelligence may be a dominant factor governing prestige of occupations**

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## References

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## A CRUCIAL ISSUE IN EDUCATION

It has been estimated that each year 60,000 students of high level ability do not graduate from high school . . . counselors can do much to prevent this loss of talent and to aid the students in choosing careers to suit their aptitudes.

Counseling and guidance services become more and more important as our schools grow larger. The counselor can aid the teacher in adapting instruction to the needs of the individual and in identifying special aptitudes and interests. Because he has an opportunity to work closely with the individual student, he can often help him solve his personal problems and aid him in selecting courses and activities serving his needs and ambition. He knows both the student and the occupational needs of society. He also knows the importance of general education.

There has recently been an increase in the number of part-time and full-time counselors in schools, from approximately 12,000 to 19,000. The number in higher education has also increased. Forty-three states and territories now employ guidance supervisors. Closer study is also being made of the preparation of counselors. The cooperative approach in providing services is being emphasized in some places. In Long Beach, California, and New York City, for instance, school counselors give one-third of their time to teachers and administrators; one-third to elementary school pupils; and one-third to parents.

I believe that wise counselors working in close cooperation with teachers can do much, perhaps more than any other group, to prevent able students from dropping out of high school. Unfortunately the loss doesn't end with the 60,000 who drop out of high school. There is also a great loss of talent between high school and college.

. . . interest in college is closely related to the extent of high school guidance. (According to a recent study of the College Entrance Examination Board.) Two-thirds of the high ability boys who had discussed college at length with teachers and counselors intended to go to college, but only 21 per cent of those who had no such counseling intended to go. —HEROLD C. HUNT, in address at the 20th Educational Conference of the Educational Records Bureau and the American Council on Education, New York City, October 27, 1955.