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SURVEY OF HUMAN ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS IN THE NORTHERN LATITUDES

STUDY OF ADJUSTIVE, NON-ADJUSTIVE BEHAVIOR AS
REFLECTED BY VARIATIONS OF SHIFTS IN DISPCITION
BY INFANTRYMEN ASSIGNED TO ALASKA

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INTRODUCTION

1. It is believed that shifts in disposition studied over a period of time can be used to understand the adjustment of troops to Alaska. Disposition changes of a group of Infantrymen assigned to Alaska have been studied to determine the influence of these changes on adjustive behavior. Infantrymen were used because, as a group, they were available for testing since their arrival in Alaska on 9 June 1949.

PURPOSE

2. This study is directed towards establishing the shifts in certain dispositions for a group of ground force personnel of differing background since their arrival in Alaska and prior to the winter of 1949-1950.

PROCEDURE

3. Administration

a. The Opinion Poll, Pre-Winter, abbreviated OPPW-1, is an experimental opinion survey questionnaire. It was administered to two hundred and thirty (230) Infantrymen stationed at Ladd Air Force Base on the 8th of September 1949. This day was characteristic of mild autumn weather.

4. Form of the Questionnaire

a. Section I: This section contains twenty-one (21) items concerning certain dispositions, such as, ambition, moodiness, anxiety, etc. (See Appendix A) The respondent replies to these items in terms of whether he has experienced more, less or no change in disposition since his arrival in Alaska.

b. Section II: This section questions the individual's anticipation for the coming winter. It is an open-end question aimed at soliciting the reasons for anticipation.

c. Section III: This section questions the individual's motivation to endure the coming winter.

d. Section IV: This section determines the extent of the subject's acquaintance with Alaska. Further, it questions the confidence of the individual in his ability to meet the situation as presented by the coming winter season.

e. Section V: This section questions the subject's opinion of the severity of the coming winter against any former outlook that he might have had concerning the winter prior to his arrival in Alaska.

5. Handling the Results

a. Out of the 230 questionnaires which were received from the administration of the OPPW-1, 156 were selected for particular study and further testing. These 156 Infantrymen consist of those who were randomly selected from the 230 in regards to their reply to Item 21, Section I, OPPW-1: "Do you feel more able or less able to get through with your Alaskan tour?" They contain 49 men who make up the group who answered "more," to the question; 56 who answered "less"; and 51 who answered "no change." In order that our results could have maximum significance, when possible the results from the entire sample of 230 were used. As such, this entire group is referred to as the "Aggregate Group." The fact that the number of subjects vary for this group is due to the fact that in many instances questionnaires were returned incomplete. In order that clarity be given to this division of the sample, the following outline will serve to summarize these pertinent groupings:

- (1) *The Aggregate Group:* Number of Total Subjects, 230; originally tested on the 8th of September, 1949.
- (2) *The More Able Group:* Number of Total Subjects, 49; randomly selected from the Aggregate Group.
- (3) *The Less Able Group:* Number of Subjects, 56; randomly selected from the

Aggregate Group.

- (4) *The No Change Group*: Number of Subjects, 51: randomly selected from the Aggregate Group.

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

6. Age

a. The mean age for the Aggregate Group is 20.13. The Less Able Group is slightly older than the Aggregate Group and the other sub-groups. The mean age for the Less Able Group is 20.29.

7. Marital Status

a. The predominant majority of the entire group are unmarried.

8. Education

a. The mean educational level for the entire group is 9.67 years; standard deviation 1.92. The No Change Group has the highest level of education of 10.17 mean years with a standard deviation of 1.97. The lowest level of education reported is the 5th grade level with four of our subjects within this category. The highest level, on the other hand, is 14 years with four of our subjects falling in this category.

9. Military Occupational Specialties

a. The men possess Military Occupational Specialties typical of an Infantry battalion.

10. Army General Classification Score

a. The average AGCT for the Aggregate Group is 94.05 with a standard deviation of 18.10. Those less able to endure the Alaskan tour have a mean or average AGCT of 89.50, and standard deviation of 17.90, which is slightly lower than for the Aggregate AGCT. The No Change Group, however, has an AGCT of 99.5, which is slightly higher than the Aggregate and the other sub-groups.

11. Rural-Urban Factor

a. Most of the men come from a large city, the suburbs of a large city, or a small town, with very few from the rural or farming areas.

12. Geographical Background

a. Forty (40) percent of our Aggregate sample are from the North, forty (40) percent are from the South, and twenty (20) percent of the sample failed to indicate their home state.

13. Grades of the Sample

a. The bulk of the sample are Infantrymen in the grade of Private or Private First Class.

FINDINGS

14. Reliability and Constancy of Section I, OPPW-1

a. By using the split half method of computing reliability coefficients and then applying the Spearman Brown formula, Section I of the OPPW-1 yielded a coefficient of reliability of .89. This indicates that the items within this section are, as a whole, relatively free from item error, enabling safe interpretations concerning item response fluctuations as being due to other factors.

b. The number of individuals who failed to reply to the items may be considered another measure of the reliability. Item 14 contained the most blank responses with 4 percent of all replies to this question being left unanswered. The other items contained only 2 percent to 3 percent of blank responses.

c. One hundred and ninety-four (194) Infantrymen from Ft. Richardson, Anchorage, Alaska, were administered the OPPW-1 at approximately the same time as Infantrymen at Ladd Air Force Base were given the poll. The men from Ft. Richardson, however, were instructed to complete the questionnaire *without names*. This latter administration resulted in a coefficient of reliability of .94, which is slightly above the coefficient for the questionnaire administered *with names*. It is believed, however, that this difference of reliability for the items in Section I does not forbid the use of the questionnaire administered *with names*.

15. Section I

a. Figure 1 graphically summarizes the responses to Section I, OPPW-1, for the Aggregate Group and the sub-groups divided according to their response to Item 21. A shift in disposition is predominantly in the negative or unfavorable direction, with the greatest unfavorable shift occurring for those feeling less able to endure their Alaskan tour. The important trends are reduced cheerfulness, sleep, and patience, with increased disgust and depression. These shifts suggest symptoms of non-adjustive behavior. The variety of these symptoms for the group as a whole is typical of Neurasthenia.

b. The number of responses in the No Change category were summed for each paper. The mean was then computed for the whole group to determine the extent of the total change and its relation to the sub-groups. The Less Able Group had a mean of 3.00 responses expressing no change, the More Able Group, a mean of 7.13,

and the No Change Group a mean of 10.18, definitely indicating that the Less Able have changed the most in disposition.

c. The More Able are more motivated to tolerate the cold and are less depressed than those less able to endure their tour. This latter group overtly express this indication by a general feeling of dissatisfaction with life in Alaska. Those indicating no change in their ability to endure their tour in Alaska have not changed much in their ability to withstand the cold, and are as sociable as when they first arrived in Alaska.

16. Section II

a. This section deals with the Infantrymen's attitude toward the coming winter.

(1) The More Able Group feel quite lightly about the coming winter. Their responses suggest optimism and motivation.

<i>They Say:</i>	<i>Number Who Say:</i>
It's a new experience.....	13
Too cold.....	7
It's "okay".....	7
Looking forward to it.....	7
Can stand it.....	6
Don't mind it.....	6
Indifferent.....	3

Others

I have to take it like it make the best of it used to cold enjoy it lots of fun.

(2) The Less Able Group are opposed to their tour and seem quite intolerant.

<i>They Say:</i>	<i>Number Who Say:</i>
Don't like it.....	38
Don't know.. ..	8
Too cold.....	7
Dreading it.....	5
Can't stand it.....	3

Others

No reason for being here no women too rough had quarters.

(3) Those expressing No Change feel that the winter is going to be too cold. They dislike being in Alaska. Many are uncertain.

<i>They Say:</i>	<i>Number Who Say:</i>
Too cold.....	15
Dislike being in Alaska.....	12
It's a new experience.....	8
Don't know.....	6
Fearful.....	5
Don't mind it.....	6
No reply.....	10

Others

Can't do anything about it try to do my best like winter sports indifferent away from family.

17. Section III

a. A review of Figure 2 indicates that the group was originally divided as to their desire to be stationed in Alaska. Many were uncertain and did not make any reply to the question. Those more able to endure their tour in Alaska either liked coming to Alaska, or if they disliked it, like it now. They feel that Alaska is different and gives them the opportunity to learn some things about the country. Those less able didn't like Alaska in the first place and don't like it now. They don't like the climate, they feel that there is nothing to do, and have a general dislike for the country. The No Change Group have changed least in disliking or liking Alaska. This group, as a whole, dislikes Alaska by reason of separation from home and lack of motivation towards their job.

18. Sections IV and V

a. Figure 3 graphically presents the findings for this section. Briefly:

(1) Most of the Infantrymen were not acquainted with the hardships of Alaskan winters, with the various sub-groups being equally unaware of these hardships.

(2) The More Able and those expressing no change as to their ability to endure their Alaskan tour feel predominantly that they can manage all right this coming winter. The Less Able are divided as to their ability to cope with the situation.

(3) The More Able believe that the Alaskan winters won't be so bad although formerly they thought they were bad. The Less Able did not know whether Alaskan winters are bad, although they believe that they will be so.

CONCLUSIONS

19. The OPPW-1 has been deemed statistically a reliable questionnaire for our purposes. It can be used with a degree of safety in our attempt to understand adjustment in Alaska.

20. The main finding is that the disposition of these men has predominantly changed. For most of the men, this change is in the negative or unfavorable direction, with those feeling less able to endure their Alaskan tour changing the most in this direction.

21. The major symptom obtained from the dispositional picture is one of increased depression.

with other manifestations of psychoneurosis for the group as a whole.

their attempt to adjust to Alaska, are doing so through the use of non-adjustive behavior.

22. These findings suggest that these men in

OPPW-1

APPENDIX A

OPINION POLL
(Pre-Winter)

DATE _____

NAME _____ ORGANIZATION _____

These are questions about how you have changed since you have been in Alaska. Check each one.

SECTION I

	MORE	LESS	NO CHANGE
1. Do you feel that you have become more ambitious or less ambitious?	_____	_____	_____
2. Are you inclined to be more moody, or less moody?	_____	_____	_____
3. Have you felt more held down than before, or less so?	_____	_____	_____
4. Since coming into Alaska, are you more cheerful or less cheerful?	_____	_____	_____
5. Do you feel more sorry about things that have happened to you, or do you feel less sorry?	_____	_____	_____
6. Do you get angry more easily than you did before, or less easily?	_____	_____	_____
7. Are you more disgusted with things in general, or less so?	_____	_____	_____
8. Do you feel that your life in Alaska has made you more satisfied or less satisfied?	_____	_____	_____
9. Are you more happy, or less happy?	_____	_____	_____
10. Have you become more sociable, or less sociable?	_____	_____	_____
11. Do you feel more independent or less independent?	_____	_____	_____
12. Do you feel "down and out" more often or less often?	_____	_____	_____
13. Do you worry more often or less often?	_____	_____	_____
14. Do you dislike being told what to do more than you did before, or do you dislike it less?	_____	_____	_____
15. Can you keep your mind on what you are doing more easily, or less easily?	_____	_____	_____
16. Do you have more patience or less patience?	_____	_____	_____
17. Do you feel more tense and keyed up more often than you used to or less?	_____	_____	_____

- | | MORE | LESS | NO CHANGE |
|--|-------|-------|-----------|
| 18. Do you like Alaska more or less than before? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 19. Do you sleep more or less than you did in the States? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 20. Do you feel that you can stand more cold or less cold than before? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 21. Do you feel more able to get through with your Alaskan tour, or less able? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

SECTION II

Tell us briefly how you feel about being in Alaska this coming winter.

SECTION III

Answer one (1) only:

I liked coming to Alaska but I hate it now because _____

I liked coming to Alaska and I like it more now because _____

I hated coming to Alaska but I like it now because _____

I hated coming to Alaska and I still hate it now because _____

SECTION IV

Answer the following "yes" or "no."

1. I'm acquainted with the hardships of Alaskan winters. YES NO

2. I think I'll manage alright this winter. _____ _____

SECTION V

CHECK ONE HERE

1. I thought Alaskan winters were bad, but now I believe they won't be so bad. _____

2. I thought Alaskan winters were fine, but now I believe they will be bad. _____