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INTERCORRELATIONS OF THE SCALE  
SCORES OF THE PERSONAL  
ORIENTATION INVENTORY

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B. STEVEN MELMAN

INTERCORRELATIONS OF THE SCALE SCORES OF THE  
PERSONAL ORIENTATION INVENTORY

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An Abstract  
Presented to  
the Graduate Council of  
Austin Peay State University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in Psychology

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by  
B. Steven Melman  
July, 1980

## ABSTRACT

The purposes of the present study were to determine the intercorrelations among the scales of the Personal Orientation Inventory for a sample of nursing students, and to compare the correlations with those reported in the POI Manual.

The intercorrelations among the Personal Orientation Inventory scale scores were determined for a sample of 89 first- and second-year nursing students at Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, Tennessee. The sample was comprised of 79 females and 10 males, ranging in age from 18 to 52, with a mean of 27. In addition to the intercorrelations of the POI scale scores, attempts were made to correlate age, sex, and year-in-program, but these three variables were found to be unrelated to the POI. The scale scores of the POI were highly significant and were generally greater than the correlations reported in the POI Manual and by other researchers.



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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by B. Steven Melman entitled "Intercorrelations of the Scale Scores of the Personal Orientation Inventory." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Psychology.

John L. Martin  
Major Professor

We have read this thesis and  
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Linda Rudolph  
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Portland E. Blair  
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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

At the present time, the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) (Shostrom, 1966) is the only known scale that was specifically designed to assess one's level of self-actualization. The POI was developed by Shostrom to measure values and behaviors that are considered important in distinguishing the self-actualizing person from others. Knapp (1976) describes the self-actualizing individual as one "who utilizes one's talents and capabilities more fully than the average person, lives in the present rather than the past or the future, functions relatively autonomously and tends to have a more benevolent outlook on life and on human nature" (p. 2).

The POI consists of two major scales and ten subscales. The two major scales are Time Competence (Tc) and Inner Direction (I). The ten subscales are Self Actualizing Value (SAV), Existentiality (Ex), Feeling Reactivity (Fr), Spontaneity (S), Self Regard (Sr), Self Acceptance (Sa), Nature of Man (Nc), Synergy (Sy), Acceptance of Aggression (A), and Capacity for Intimate Contact (C). Klavetter and Mogar (1967) reported test-retest coefficients which were based on a sample of 48 undergraduate college students. The POI was administered

twice to these students with an interval of one week between administrations. The Time Competence and Inner Directed scales resulted in reliability coefficients of .71 and .77, respectively. Coefficients for the ten subscales ranged from .52 to .82.

Ilardi and May (1968) conducted a longitudinal study in which the POI was administered to 64 first-year nursing students. Only 46 students completed the first year and were given the POI again. No significant differences were detected between the dropouts and the remaining students. All correlations for the remaining nursing students ranged from .32 to .74.

Shostrom and Knapp (1966) directed a concurrent validity experiment in which the POI was administered to two outpatient groups: a beginning therapy group and an advanced therapy group. It was discovered that the POI differentiated the two groups on all twelve scales at the .01 level. In a study directed by Fox, Knapp and Micheal (1968), the POI was administered to a group of 100 hospitalized psychiatric patients. When compared with a nominated self-actualized sample and a normal adult sample, it was found that all scales of the POI differentiated among the samples.

Damm (1972) investigated the scales employed by the POI and found that the raw scores of the Inner Directed Scale and the Time Competent Scale give an overall measure of the POI. It was also discovered that

results on the POI can be generalized beyond the high school population to certain college populations. Finally, the results of Damm's study showed that the inventory can be equally applied to both males and females.

There also have been studies that have investigated whether sex role stereotypes can be related to the results. Cristall and Dean (1976) conducted a study in which there were 32 males and 32 females who were given both the POI and the Bem Sex Role Inventory. The results supported the contention that the more self-actualized an individual is, the freer he/she is from sex role stereotypes.

Wise and Davis (1975) also conducted an experiment exploring the possibility that sex differences may account for some of the variance on the POI. The results showed that women tended to score higher on the Inner Direction scale. Results also showed that the scores of the female subjects increased to a greater degree from the first administration of the POI to the second than the scores of the male subjects.

Investigators have designed studies to determine whether there is an inherent factor structure built into the POI or whether the factor structure is due to item overlap. Silverstein and Fisher (1968) sought to resolve this dilemma. In their experiment, it was discovered that Factor One dealt with affective or feeling phenomena in terms of self-actualization. Factor One was determined



by the following scales: Inner Directedness, Feeling Reactivity, Spontaneity, Acceptance of Aggression, and Capacity for Human Contact. The authors also found that Factor Two was determined by Self Actualizing Value, Nature of Man, and Synergy. The correlations were highly significant for the first two factors but not significant for the third factor. This led Silverstein and Fisher to conclude that there is indeed a factor structure in the POI, but they could not determine whether it was inherent or due to item overlap.

In a later study, Silverstein and Fisher (1972) corrected some errors reported in their first study and added more data to the information given in their previous study. It was found that the same scales that determined Factors One and Two in the first study also yielded the same results in the second study. In the second study, however, Factor Three was determined by Inner Direction and Self Acceptance; in the first study it was found not to be significant. They also discovered that Factor Three was loaded by Time Competence in the empirical data but not in the overlap data. This led the authors to conclude that item overlap could be responsible for Factors One and Two in the empirical data, but they could not resolve the issue as to whether item overlap itself was due to the inherent variables that the POI was designed to measure.

Several studies have been devoted to investigating the relationship between clergymen and the POI. Jansen,

Garvey, and Bonk (1972) tested this relationship using a sample of 93 clergymen entering clinical training between June 1967 and June 1972. The sample consisted of 68 per cent Roman Catholics and 32 per cent Protestants, with a mean age of 33 years. The clergymen in this study were compared with the normative group, and it was found that these clergymen scored significantly lower on the following scales of the POI: Self Actualizing Value (degree of adherence), Existentiality (flexibility in the application of values), and Acceptance of Aggression and Personal Feelings.

In another study by Jansen, Garvey, and Bonk (1973), the POI was administered to the same 93 clergymen. The correlations reported were significantly greater than those found in the POI Manual. The Self Regard scale correlated significantly with all other scales, while Synergy and Nature of Man yielded the lowest correlations with the other scales. The study suggested that clergymen entering clinical training score significantly higher on the POI than the college students reported in the POI Manual.

Graff and Ladd (1971) administered the POI and the Dimensions of Religious Commitment Inventory to 163 male students at Southern Illinois University. It was discovered that the subjects who were more self-accepting, more spontaneous, more accepting of their natural aggressiveness, and more inner-directed were found to be less religious than subjects of high religiosity.



The results found by Graff and Ladd were not uncommon. Knapp (1976) cited a study by Jansen and Garvey (n.d.) in which 80 clergymen who had completed their clinical program between June 1967 and December 1971 were given the POI. Seventy-nine per cent of the sample were Roman Catholic and 21 per cent were Protestant. These clergymen were also rated by their supervisors as being either high or low in clinical competencies. The results showed that clergymen rated high in clinical competency by their supervisors tended to be more rigid and dogmatic than the average adult. These same clergymen who were rated high in clinical competence were described as being more like those of self-actualized individuals. However, these high-rated clergymen tended to deny feelings of anger, hostility, aggression, and to be less comfortable with intimate personal relationships than the average adult.

There also have been articles devoted to investigations concerning nursing students and the POI. The professions of the clergyman and the nursing student are very much related. Since both professions constantly deal with people, the rewards offered from these occupations are often intrinsic. "A moment's consideration, however, will confirm that to serve others in a manner that is based on personal choice is a sign of inner directedness" (Knapp, 1976, p. 56). Hence, the POI should be able to measure this degree of self-actualizing.

One of the earliest studies relating the POI to nursing student performance was conducted by Gunter (1969). The POI was administered to 109 sophomore nursing students who had completed at least the first year of college. The results showed these students had scored significantly higher on eight of the twelve scales of the POI than did freshmen college students reported in the POI Manual. The four scales on which these nursing students scored lower than the freshmen college students were: Self Actualizing Values, Self Regard, Time Competence and the Constrictive Nature of Man. These nursing students when compared to a self-actualized group scored significantly lower on all scales except Self Actualizing Values and Constrictive Nature of Man.

Rosendahl (1973) administered the POI to 31 sophomore nursing students. The purpose of Rosendahl's study was to investigate the relationship between the Inner Directedness and Time Competence scales and the degree of empathy, nonpossessive warmth and genuineness of self-actualization. Although Time Competence was not related significantly to the three variables, a moderate relationship was found between those three variables and the Inner Directed scale.

Mealey and Petersen (1974) administered the POI to 39 senior nursing students before and after their psychiatric nursing course. Results showed a significant improvement on the Inner Directed scale, and some

improvement on the Time Competence scale and the other ten subscales.

The purposes of the present project were to determine the intercorrelations among the POI scale scores for a sample of nursing students, and to compare the correlations with those reported in the POI Manual for samples of college students.

## Chapter II

### METHOD

#### The Sample

The sample used in the present study was 89 nursing students from Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, Tennessee. There were 53 first-year (50 females and 3 males) and 36 second-year nursing students (29 females and 7 males). The ages ranged from 18 to 41 for the women in the first-year program with a mean age of 25, and from 39 to 46 for the men in the first-year nursing class with a mean age of 41. The ages for the women in the second-year program ranged from 19 to 52 with a mean age of 28, and the ages for the men ranged from 19 to 45 with a mean age of 38. The mean age for both first- and second-year nursing students was 27.

#### Description of the Instrument

The Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) (Shostrom, 1974) is the only test specifically designed to assess one's level of self-actualization. The POI consists of 150 two-choice, comparative-value judgment items reflecting values and behavior that are believed to be important to self-actualization. Each item is composed of paired opposites in each scale but are not paired with those of other scales; each item is scored independently. Each

examinee is asked to choose the item which is most true of himself. The POI consists of two major scales (Time Competence and Inner Directed) and ten subscales (Self Actualizing Value; Feeling Reactivity; Existentiality; Spontaneity; Self Regard; Self Acceptance; Acceptance of Aggression; Nature of Man; Synergy; Capacity for Intimate Contact).

#### Administration and Scoring

The POI was administered to the first- and second-year nursing students by the present researcher between January and March of 1980. The POI was hand scored using templates and following the directions stated in the manual.



RESULTS

The Pearson product-moment correlational technique was employed to determine the coefficients. Intercorrelations were obtained for all of the scales and subscales on the POI. Additionally, age, sex, and year-in-program were correlated with all scales and subscales on the POI. Statistical analysis of the data revealed that age, sex, and year-in-program are unrelated to the POI scales and subscales. Table 1 shows the intercorrelations of the variables. The means and standard deviations are shown in Table 2.

Table 1

## The Intercorrelations of the Variables

	I	SAV	Ex	Fr	S	Sr	Sa	Nc	Sy	A	C	Age	Sex	Year-in-Program
Tc	.62†	.47†	.52†	.38†	.48†	.46†	.55†	.37†	.46†	.31*	.52†	.10	-.09	-.10
I		.64†	.76†	.73†	.69†	.66†	.75†	.44†	.46†	.68†	.79†	.06	-.03	.04
SAV			.39†	.35*	.52†	.67†	.28*	.49†	.68†	.48†	.45†	.08	-.12	.03
Ex				.55†	.47†	.36†	.62†	.17	.38†	.48†	.60†	-.03	.09	-.02
Fr					.55†	.38†	.54†	.06	.25*	.64†	.71†	.14	-.07	.02
S						.52†	.50†	.24*	.34*	.53†	.57†	.13	-.19	.02
Sr							.38†	.45†	.50†	.46†	.56†	.01	-.08	-.06
Sa								.21	.20	.49†	.62†	.01	.02	.04
Nc									.46†	.16	.18	.00	-.16	.04
Sy										.37†	.36†	.13	-.11	.01
A											.61†	.18	-.02	.08
C												.14	.00	.10
Age													-.43†	.10
Sex														-.21

\* significant at .05 level of significance

\* significant at .01 level of significance

† significant at .001 level of significance

Table 2

## THE MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF VARIABLES

Item	M	SD
1. Time Competence	15.94	3.057
2. Inner Directed	81.425	10.895
3. Self Actualizing Value	19.943	2.623
4. Existentiality	18.483	3.845
5. Feeling Reactivity	16.078	2.575
6. Spontaneity	11.764	2.481
7. Self Regard	11.977	2.808
8. Self Acceptance	14.280	3.582
9. Nature of Man	11.359	2.073
10. Synergy	6.707	1.308
11. Acceptance of Aggression	16.191	3.283
12. Capacity for Intimate Contact	17.528	3.388
13. Age	26.887	7.733
14. Sex	.887	.315
15. Year-in-Program	1.404	.490

DISCUSSION

The Time Competence and Inner Directed scales were found to be significantly related at the .001 level. The Time Competence scale proved to be significantly correlated at the .001 level with all subscales except one. The correlation between Time Competence and Acceptance of Aggression was significant at the .01 level. The POI subscales which failed to achieve significance were: Existentiality and Nature of Man, Feeling Reactivity and Nature of Man, Self Acceptance and Nature of Man, Self Acceptance and Synergy, Nature of Man and Acceptance of Aggression, and Nature of Man and Capacity for Intimate Contact.

Fifty-four of the 66 POI scales and subscales intercorrelations were found to be significant at the .001 level. Fifty-nine of the 66 intercorrelations were found to be of greater magnitudes than the correlations of college students reported by Knapp (1965). Thirty-seven of the 66 correlations from the present study were found to be greater than the correlations obtained in a sample of clergymen revealed by Jansen, Garvey and Bonk (1973). Forty-three of the 66 correlations were greater than the correlations derived in a sample of nursing students

reported by Klavetter and Mogar (1967). The correlation between age and sex was significant at the .001 level and reflects the number of older males in the sample. The means and standard deviations from the present study were found to be very similar to those reported by Ilardi and May (1968).

The present researcher had predicted that age, sex, and year-in-program would account for some of the variance on the scales and subscales of the POI. It was expected that the younger nursing students would have scored lower on the POI than their older predecessors. Conceivably, the older an individual is, the greater the degree of self-actualization he/she has attained as detected by the POI. There was, however, no significant difference between the older and younger nursing students, or between the first- and second-year students. There was also no significant difference between male and female nursing students on any of the POI scales and subscales, which was in keeping with the previous finding of Wise and Davis (1975). The lack of relationship between male and female nursing students could be attributed to the small number of males in the nursing program. Age, sex, and year-in-program should be examined more closely in future studies concerning the POI.



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## APPENDIX

## Appendix A

### DEFINITIONS OF ABBREVIATIONS FOR TABLE 1

Tc - Time Competence  
I - Inner Directed  
SAV - Self Actualizing Values  
Ex - Existentiality  
Fr - Feeling Reactivity  
S - Spontaneity  
Sr - Self Regard  
Sa - Self Acceptance  
Nc - Nature of Man  
Sy - Synergy  
A - Acceptance of Aggression  
C - Capacity for Intimate Contact