

begins by the leader's asking, "How did things go with your new procedure last week?" Excuses for failing to function are not accepted. Parents who provide such an excuse are asked if they believe the plan is appropriate or if they want to change it. This second meeting is spent in clarifying procedures and, if time permits, in considering new problems.

PREPARING COUNSELORS TO LEAD "C" GROUPS

The parent "C" group process is taught to counselors after they have developed group process and communication competencies. The consulting module acquaints the student with a theory of human behavior and then provides a series of parent group demonstrations. Students learn the specific skills of: (a) systematically exploring specific parent-child interactions; (b) utilizing the therapeutic forces of the group to promote the development of members; (c) understanding the meaning of behavior; (d) clarifying, confronting, and obtaining commitments from parents; and (e) encouraging parents to become aware of their strengths and to utilize the strengths of their children. Students are

expected to successfully lead parent "C" group sessions during the course.

Experience indicates that graduates of programs offering such training are successfully leading "C" groups and, furthermore, are broadening the base of support for their programs.

The parent "C" group provides a unique opportunity for the counselor to work in a preventive or developmental sense and affect a significant but often overlooked client: the parent. Through this procedure counselors are able to help more students as well as parents of the students. In this age of accountability, this process helps make counseling more visible, accessible, and relevant. ■

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Counseling with the SVIB: The "Ideal Self"

BENJAMIN BEIT-HALLAHMI

This innovation in the use of the Strong Vocational Interest Blank (SVIB) grew out of the needs of vocational counseling in a university counseling center. A common problem in vocational counseling with university students is the tendency of clients to become totally test

oriented or score oriented. With such clients the exploration of issues beyond the reporting and interpreting of SVIB scores proves to be difficult or unsuccessful. The method reported here—a second administration of the SVIB under ideal-self instructions—was designed as a way of leading into self-exploration and going beyond purely vocational concerns. Having two sets of scores and comparing them was seen as a means of clarifying basic trends and looking at the issues of identity formation, parental influences, and sex roles.

The approach is wholly clinical, dealing with the significance of differences

between self and ideal-self profiles and the importance of ideal-self scores in the context of individual counseling. To the best of my knowledge, there exists in the literature no previous account of using ideal-self scores in individual cases with any instrument. A considerable amount of literature does exist dealing with self/ideal-self differences (sometimes described as "discrepancy" or "congruence"), but it concentrates mostly on the research and the theoretical aspects of either the self-concept or the various instruments used (Butler & Haigh 1954; Schuldt & Truax 1968).

Ideal-self instructions have not been used before with the SVIB, and some may view it as a most unlikely instrument for the purpose of measuring self/ideal-self differences. The SVIB handbook (Campbell 1971) would give us only minimal encouragement for using the test under different response sets. Presenting an actual case of repeating the test under a different set, Campbell (p. 301) states that "contrary to most people's intuition about their test behavior, there is considerable consistency even under different strategies." An obvious form of a different "strategy" is faking. The research on faking the SVIB, as summarized by Campbell in the handbook, shows clearly that different sets of instructions do have an effect on SVIB scores. Individuals instructed to fake do change their scores by from 10 to 20 standard score points.

THE TECHNIQUE

The method of obtaining the first set of scores (self) is the standard procedure of administering the SVIB in vocational counseling. After receiving an explanation of the test's purpose and meaning, the client takes the SVIB under the standard instructions. At this stage the client has no knowledge of any special procedure. After the test is scored the results are interpreted and discussed, usually

together with additional information and other test data. At this point, when the client is interested in further exploration, the idea of a repeated administration is introduced. This is not a standard procedure, and it is used only in a minority of cases. The instructions for the ideal-self administration are given orally by the counselor, as follows:

"I would like you to take the Vocational Interest Blank again. This time you are going to respond to the items not the way you are but the way you would like to be; use this image of yourself as the guideline. Every person has an ideal image of the way he or she would want to be; just assume that the things that are now preventing you from being your ideal self do not exist, and respond to every item accordingly."

When the ideal-self profile is ready, the two sets of scores are compared and interpreted. The emphasis is not on the discrepancy between self and ideal self but rather on additional information gained from the ideal-self set and the differences between the two sets. In examining and interpreting the ideal-self scores, one should note changes in all scales. In many cases non-occupational scales seem to be affected as much as occupational scales. The effect of a desirability factor in these changes is often clear: Academic Achievement (AACH) goes up, Occupational Level (OL) goes up, Diversity (DIV) goes up, and Occupational Introversion-Extroversion (OIE) goes down.

In clinical experience with self and ideal-self administrations of the SVIB to about 35 clients, the following patterns of comparison were found: (a) compen-

BENJAMIN BEIT-HALLAHMI is senior lecturer in the Department of Psychology, University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel. At the time he wrote this article he was a clinical psychologist in the Counseling Center and a research associate in the Department of Psychiatry, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. The author wishes to express his indebtedness to John W. Krienke, Edward S. Bordin, and William J. Sneck for their comments and suggestions on earlier versions of this article.

sation, where the gap between the self and the ideal self is expressed through the appearance of new and different score patterns; (b) accentuation, where the shape of the profiles is similar but the differences among scores are exaggerated in the ideal-self scores; (c) the rarely occurring pattern where there is little or no difference between self and ideal self. It is important to emphasize that in interpreting the two sets of scores only the first set is regarded as the valid one for the purpose of immediate guidance. The ideal-self set is used as a source of data for further exploration but not as an alternative to the "real" scores.

A CASE STUDY

The following case study is presented to illustrate the significance and some of the uses of additional information contained in the ideal-self SVIB profiles. This case may be classified as falling within the category of "compensation."

P, 21 years old, was a first-year law student who had been a social science major as an undergraduate. He had strong artistic interests, and he was a member in good standing of the campus counterculture contingent. His two profiles (Figures 1 and 2) present what can be seen as an internal struggle. The self profile is the "softer" one; it contains more indications of interest in people, need for intimacy, and curiosity about people. The ideal self, on the other hand, shows more interest in things, numbers, and money. The choice of law as a career was not without conflict for P, given his initial commitment to social science and the humanities. The self profile seems closer to P's ego-ideal. The ideal self seems to represent the more realistic, calculated, and ambitious choice of law as a vocation as well as a closer identification with his father, who is a research scientist (groups I and II). P himself indicated that he saw the ideal self as being closer to his parents' expectations for him.

We may notice considerable changes in the non-occupational scales, with Occupational Level showing the largest gain from self to ideal self, from 49 to 72. Still, P has not forsaken his countercultural humanism and has not taken the vows of the bourgeois rat race. For a while he toyed with the idea of joining a program that offered both a law degree and a PhD in social science as a way of resolving his conflict, but this did not materialize. Even while continuing in law school, P's eventual goal for himself is that of a lawyer who helps to change society. This can be seen as a successful integration of social and humanistic concerns (groups V and VI on the self profile) with the role of a lawyer.

The use of ideal-self scores in this case gave us a chance to look at the conflict within P and the effects of his identification with his father. It is clear that his solution so far is in the direction of establishing his own identity. Followed up two years later, P was about to graduate from law school and join a "social action" law firm. He was still actively pursuing his artistic interests as well.

DISCUSSION

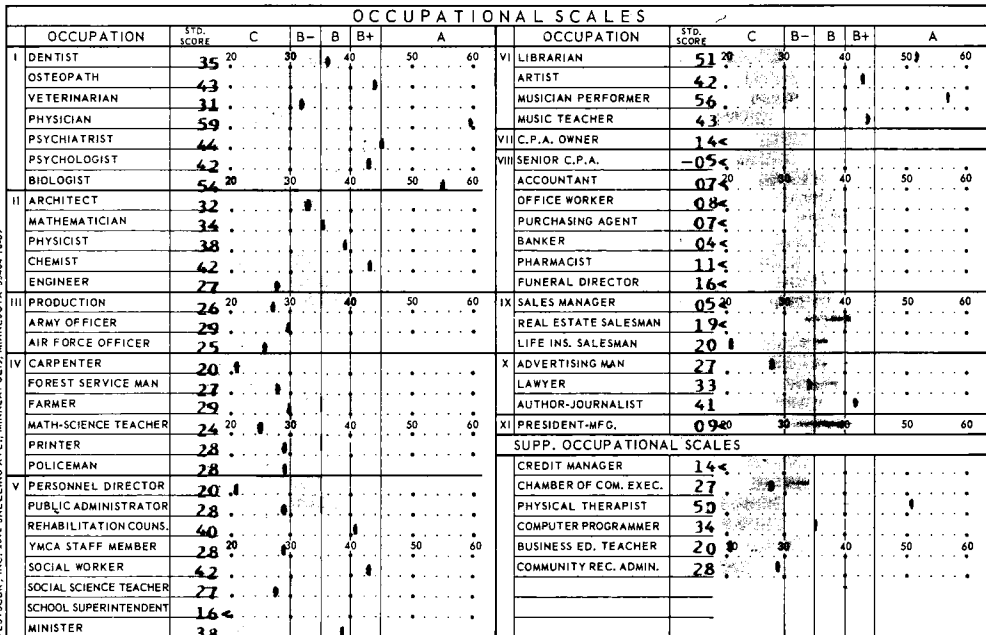
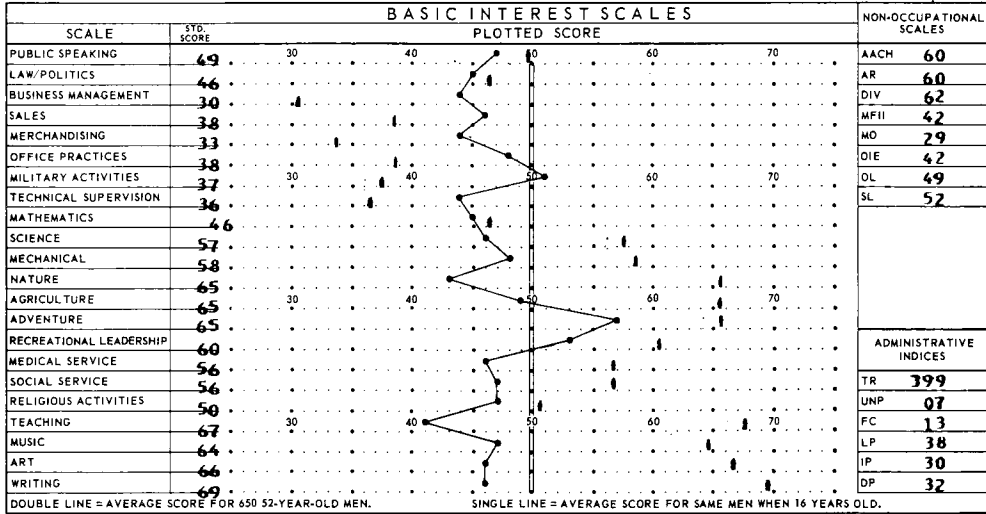
Discrepancy between self and ideal self has often been used as a way of operationalizing the concept of self-esteem. In other cases it has been used together with measures of adjustments or of psychopathology. The approach presented here is different, and the emphasis here is not on the "gap" but on the additional information gained from the ideal-self scores.

It is clear that in some cases we find real differences, which reflect conflicts in vocational choice and identity formation. The differences—and especially the new information—are then used as stimuli for the discussion of these conflicts.

(Continued on p. 261)

FIGURE 1

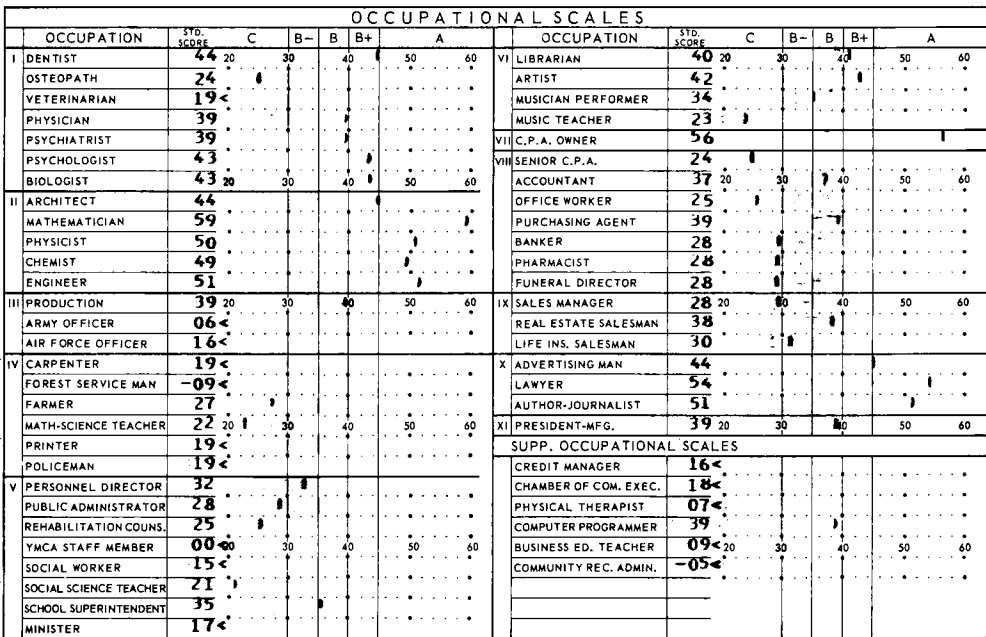
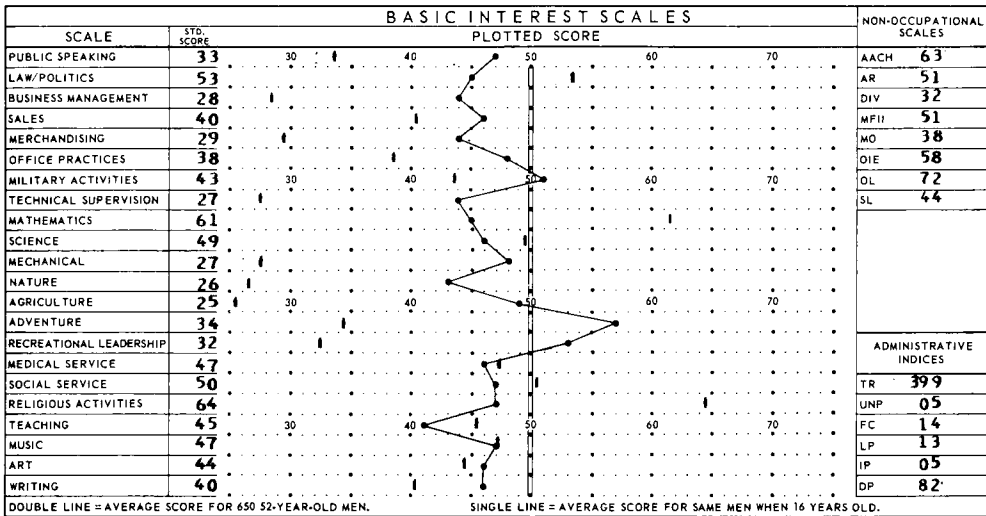
First SVIB Profile of P (Self)



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FIGURE 2

Second SVIB Profile of P (Ideal Self)



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(Continued from p. 258)

One indication for the ideal-self administration is the occurrence of a flat self profile without any clear interest patterns. In these cases it is hoped that the ideal-self profile will cause some pattern to surface. Using the concept of ideal self may be especially appropriate for clients who define their presenting problem as a gap between potential and performance. Issues of identity formation and completion are central in the college-age group, and this is one way of exploring them. At the same time, the concept of ideal self may be too difficult or threatening for some immature clients and cannot be used.

The use of ideal-self scores on the SVIB is not recommended for all clients. It should not be a part of routine vocational counseling, since in most cases the

information available is sufficient and the client may not be motivated toward exploration. However, in cases where vocational counseling has to go "deeper," and when clients are motivated toward exploration, using ideal-self scores should be extremely beneficial. ■

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