

# Personal Preferences of Filipino Students

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The present study is an attempt to point up personality differences between American and Filipino college students and to put them down in measurable, variable factors which most people feel are there but which they cannot put their fingers on. The area of personality differences is very broad and the approaches to the study of personality are numerous and varied. However, one such approach has recently become more popular, namely the attempt to describe personality by way of the subjective values it sets up for itself or by way of its interests or simply by way of its preferences. As a matter of fact, "values," "interests," and "preferences" may very likely have something in common and are probably different words meant to describe different aspects of one subjective phenomenon, a canalization of life energy along particular paths. In any case, the present study approaches personality explicitly from its "personality preferences."

Personal preferences arise from a multitude of determining factors. There may be genetic elements causing nervous or hormonal patterns which in turn may determine a person's tastes and his preferred lines of endeavor. They may come from early childhood training, the results of canalization or conditioning, a deep-seated form of learning. Again they may be "ego" factors arising later in life such conscious adjustments to a society's taboos and prohibitions. In any case, they indicate "slots" along which a personality can run, or open lines of development along which the personality is free to grow and develop. Preferences can be looked upon as potentialities for free action within a culture. They are not so much forms of behavior as trends of behavior. Thus, a person with high personal preference for "achievement" need not necessarily be a high achiever, but will find the road to achievement cleared of internal blocks. A person with high personal preference of "exhibitionism" feels free to take the center of the stage and to attract attention.

## *The Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS)*

The instrument chosen was the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule. This test provides measures of 15 personality variables. The names of the variables are as follows:

1. Achievement (ach)
2. Deference (def)
3. Order (ord)
4. Exhibitionism (exh)
5. Autonomy (aut)
6. Affiliation (aff)

7. Intraception (Int)
8. Succorance (suc)
9. Dominance (dom)
10. Abasement (aba)
11. Nurturance (nur)
12. Change (chg)
13. Endurance (end)
14. Heterosexuality (het)
15. Aggression (agg)

Each statement of these personality variables is paired twice with each of the other variables, making 225 paired statements in all. A sample-paired statement is as follows:

- A. I feel depressed when I fail at a task and planned before beginning it.
- B. I like to travel and to see the country.

The one taking the test is then asked, "Which of these two statements is more characteristic of what you like?"

While some of the pairs of statements have to do with likes, other pairs of statements have to do with how one feels. Thus, another sample-paired statement is as follows:

- A. I feel depressed when I fail at something.
- B. I feel nervous when giving a talk before a group.

The respondents are then asked, "Which of these two statements is more characteristic of how you feel?"

Scoring the Schedule consists in counting the number of choices favoring each of the 15 variables. The resulting table, in terms of percentiles, then gives description of the personality, the pattern of its likes and its feelings as grouped under the 15 headings to which Edwards gives the name "needs."

### *The subjects of the Experiment*

The EPPS was given to 100 college men studying in a middle-class men's school in the Manila area and to 130 college women in a middle-class women's school, likewise in the Manila area. Both were Catholic schools and all the subjects tested were Catholics. It was also given to 180 college girls and 180 college boys in a provincial town 300 kilometers north of Manila, all of who were likewise Catholics.

The control groups were the standardization American samples of 780 college men and 749 college women as described in the EPPS manual.

### RESULTS

The raw scores of the Manila men were compared with those of the Manila women. The results are seen in Table 1. The asterisks indicate two things: (1) which scores are higher, the men's or the women's, and (2) the level of significance at which they differ, one asterisk—.06, two—.01, three—.001.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of EPPS Variables of Manila College Men (N-100) and Manila College Women (N-130).

	Men		Significance of Difference Women		Critical Ratio	Men	Women
	M	SD	M	SD			
Ach	15.6	4.44	14.5	3.09	2.06	*	*
Def	12.0	3.86	15.2	3.83	6.30		***
Ord	12.2	4.81	15.5	3.72	5.69		***
Exh		12.5	3.60	10.6	4.24	3.68	**
Aut	12.4	4.13	10.3	3.98	3.94		**
Aff	12.2	4.24	14.5	3.89	4.25		***
Int	15.5	4.17	15.5	3.75	.06		
Suc	10.8	4.87	13.7	3.88	4.95		***
Dom		18.9	4.46	13.5	4.03	9.52	***
Aba	15.9	4.57	18.6	4.83	4.32		***
Nur	15.0	4.52	17.7	4.38	4.52		***
Chg	14.4	4.21	14.9	4.38	.79		
End		14.7	6.10	17.1	4.19	3.24	**
Het	12.6	6.23	4.9	3.93	10.83		***
Agg	15.3	4.18	13.5	4.18	3.05		**

The table shows the Manila men to have significantly higher scores than the Manila women in the variables of Achievement, Exhibitionism, Autonomy, Dominance, Heterosexuality, and Aggression. The Manila women are higher than the Manila men in Deference, Order, Affiliation, Succorance, Abasement, Nurturance and Endurance. In general, the test results showed the men to be more self-assertive and aggressive than the women. The woman appeared to be more group-centered, retiring, and patient than the men. That the women should be simultaneously high in both succorance and nurturance would indicate that these are not necessarily mutually exclusive but may indicate a need for close emotional ties.

In the same way, the scores of provincial men were compared with those of provincial women. The results are seen in Table 2.

The table shows that the directions of differences between provincial men and women are fairly similar to those between Manila men and women. However, the provincial men and women are more similar to each other than the Manila men and women. Especially noticeable is the disappearance in the provincial group of the large difference in Deference, Order, Affiliation, which were so prominent in the Manila sample. Apparently, the provincial men are very similar to the women in a trait which has to do with withdrawal and shyness as well as a need to follow well-ordered traditional lines of behavior.

The next two tables aim to compare the Manila students with the provincial students. Table 3 compares Manila men with provincial men; Table 4, Manila women with provincial women. The column in which the asterisks are printed indicate the group with the higher score.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of EPPS Variables of Provincial College Men (N-135) and Provincial College Women (N-180)

	Men		Significance of Difference Women Critical			Men	Women
	M	SD	M	SD	Ratio		
Ach	15.0	3.55	14.9	3.4	.25		
Def	15.8	3.22	15.3	3.3	1.25		
Ord	16.0	4.30	16.6	3.5	1.31		
Exh	12.5	3.45	9.5	3.2	8.15	***	
Aut	11.0	5.25	9.1	3.8	4.76	***	
Aff	14.2	4.00	15.0	3.5	1.83		
Int	15.0	3.08	14.9	3.4	.27		
Suc	12.3	3.80	13.8	4.0	3.30		***
Dom	15.0	3.91	13.8	3.7	2.75	**	
Aba	17.6	4.20	18.8	3.7	2.63		**
Nur	16.0	3.86	18.2	3.8	5.08		***
Chg	13.5	3.59	14.0	3.3	1.26		
End	17.0	4.95	18.4	3.6	2.75		**
Het	8.0	5.31	4.4	4.4	6.3	***	
Agg	13.2	4.68	12.7	4.0	.96		

Table 3. Significance and Directions of Differences between Manila College Men (N-135) and Provincial College Men (N-180)

	Critical Ratio	Significance of Difference	
		Manila	Province
Ach	11.1		
Def	7.95		***
Ord	6.22		***
Exh	.00		
Aut	2.79	**	
Aff	3.64		***
Int	1.01		
Suc	2.54		*
Dom	6.93	***	
Aba	2.90		**
Nur	1.77		
Chg	1.71		
End	3.07		**
Het	5.91	***	
Agg	3.58	***	

The preceding table shows the Manila men to be higher in Autonomy, Dominance, Heterosexuality, and Aggression. The Provincial men are higher in Deference, Order, Affiliation, Succorance, Abasement, and Endurance. The largest differences between the two groups lie in Deference and Dominance. Apparently, the provincial are more retiring,

more bound by tradition, more patient, while the Manila men tend more to express their individuality.

The women from Manila and the provinces show much fewer differences among themselves than did the men. Moreover, none of these differences reaches the .001 level of significance. The Manila women's group is slightly higher only in Exhibitionism, Autonomy, and Change. The provincial group is higher in Order.

In an attempt, now, to get at probable international differences, the Manila group was compared with the original American standardization group. There was no need to compare the provincial group with the American because every time there was a significant difference, the provincial group was farther away from the American than the Manila group. The only two exceptions were for the men in Affiliation and Aggression. In both of these the Provincial men stood between the American and Manila men.

Thus the American boys are higher in Exhibitionism, Autonomy, Affiliation, Change, and Heterosexuality. The Manila boys are higher in Deference, Order, Dominance, and Abasement. The largest differences are in Heterosexuality, Abasement and Affiliation.

Table 4. Significance and Direction of Differences between Manila College Women (N-130) and Provincial College Women (N-180)

	Critical Ration	Significance of Difference	
		Manila	Province
Ach	1.09		
Def	.25		
Exh	2.49		**
Aut	2.77	*	
Aff	1.27	*	
Int	1.44		
Suc	23		
Dom	.69		
Aba	42		
Nur	1.02		
Chg	2.00	**	
End	.74		
Het	1.08		
Agg	1.54		

The differences between American and Manila women are more numerous and much larger than those between American and Manila men. The American women are higher than Manila women in Exhibitionism, Autonomy, Affiliation, Intraception, Change, and Heterosexuality. The Manila women are higher in Achievement, Deference, Order, Succorance, Abasement, Nurturance, Change, Endurance, and Aggression. The huge difference in Heterosexuality is shown by the critical ratio of 24.05 between the two scores.

A summary of the above results will be found in Figures 1 and 2. In these figures the American standardization group has been used as a baseline, its average score being used as the 50th percentile. The scores of the four Filipino groups are then plotted on the graph, using the American standards to represent percentiles. The Manila groups are in unbroken lines, the provincial groups in broken lines.

## DISCUSSION

Assuming the representativeness of the samples taken, it is possible to delineate a tentative sketch of the Filipino cultural character, mainly in contrast with the American one. It must be noted that one speaks here of "cultural character," i.e., one based in great part on what is allowed and prohibited by the culture. There are traits immediately underlying the social behavior of the Filipino, a summing up as it were of his preferred modes of action. What is the Filipino like?

Table 5. Significance and Direction of Differences between U.S. College Men (N-760) and Manila College Men

	Critical Ratio	Significance of Difference	
		U.S.	Manila
Ach	.20		
Def	1.97		*
Ord	3.88		***
Exh	5.00	***	
Aut	4.67	***	
Aff	6.24	***	
Int	1.31		
Suc	.10		
Dom	3.11		**
Aba	7.67		***
Nur	2.11		*
Chg	2.34	*	
End	3.17		**
Het	7.91	***	
Agg	5.56		***

1. One must first distinguish between the Manila and the provincial population. The Manila man is farther away from the Manila woman in personal attitudes and preferences than is the provincial man from the provincial woman. Apparently the women are much the same whether in the city or in the province. Manila seems to have had more of an effect upon the men, while the province tends to keep the men more homogeneous with women in psychological outlook.

Speculation may suggest that the traditional element in the women is so strong that it keeps them the same whether in the province or the city. On the other hand, the culture change of the city has had a great impact on the male character, forcing it to adapt in the direction required by the new industrial culture and thus enlarging the gap between the

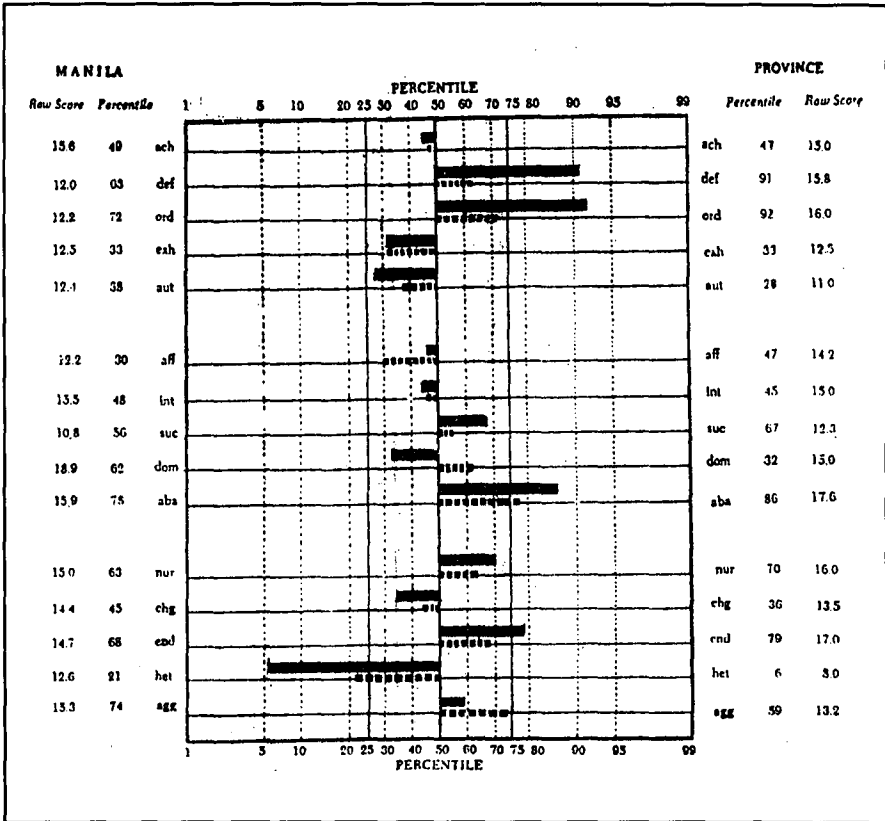
sexes. Thus the city men are very different from provincial men, while city women remain relatively similar to provincial women. In the same way, Manila men are closer to American men than Manila women are to American women. It is the Filipino woman who is "typically Filipino."

Table 6. Significance and Direction of Differences Between U.S. College Women (N-749) and Manila College Women (N-130)

	Critical Ration	Significance of Difference	
		U.S.	Manila
Ach	4.58		***
Def	8.12		***
Ord	4.69		***
Exh	9.36	***	
Aut	5.18	***	
Aff	7.82	***	
Int	4.89	***	
Suc	3.15		**
Dom	1.75		
Aba	7.64		***
Nur	2.92		**
Chg	5.85	***	
End	9.82		***
Het	24.05	***	
Agg	6.57		***

- When contrasted with the American, the Filipino is less autonomous, more dependent. He prefers a stable way of life where things are "structured" and do not demand a continual risk-taking. He will thus be more traditional, oriented to authoritarian ways of thinking rather than to innovation and entrepreneurship. He finds it easier to submit than to assert his own individuality. He likes to take care of others and be taken care of. In brief, he values *small-group belongingness*. The hold of his primary group on him is very strong. He is social-minded rather than individualistic, but his social-mindedness is limited to a small group. He says *kami* rather than *ako*, thus avoiding the charge of selfishness and *yabang* but nevertheless one might say that he is selfish to the extent that his personal *ako* is buried and tied up in the bigger self, his primary group, and it is the small group's good that he seeks.
- Almost in proportion to the intensity of his loyalty to the primary group is his distance of intimates. This trait is manifest in the continually low intensity of the need for Affiliation. Free emotional exchange is inhibited in the presence of strangers and instead, one makes use of distance-producing mechanisms whereby the other is treated deferentially and distantly while one gives the appearance of self-abasement. Perhaps it is this latter behavior which is seen by friendly foreigners as "smooth interpersonal relations" and by less friendly ones as "servility." From the sociocultural

Figures 1. Manila and Provincial Boys' Group plotted on American Boys' baseline (50th percentile).



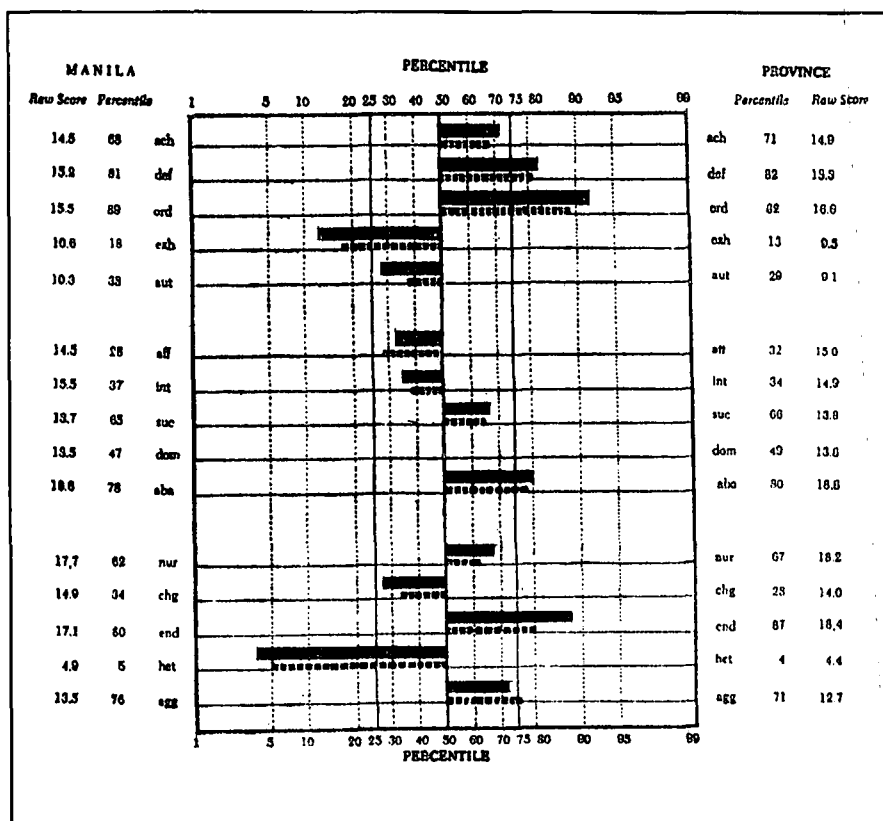
viewpoint, it is merely the high-abasement, high-deference, low-affiliation drive, which is the obverse of the intense belongingness to one's small group, and a need to *maintain distance from strangers*.

This lack of personal exchange between the individual and the stranger may explain how, in spite of Nurturance needs, one finds a callousness towards society in general, as reflected in a lack of courtesy in traffic or in leaving stalled cars in the middle of the road. It may explain the observation by visiting foreigners that the private homes of Filipinos are immaculately clean while the public toilets are foul. It may explain the lack of political interest in the good of the country as a whole, so long as the locality is cared for.

4. The Filipino girl, in particular, manifests the warmth of the domestic trait of Nurturance and Succurance, to love and to be loved. She also shows most intensely the obverse traits of low Exhibitionism, high Order, high Abasement, high Deference, high Endurance traits that enter into the concept of *hiya*, and of the



Figure 2. Manila and Provincial Girls' Group plotted on American Girls' Baseline (50th percentile).



*babaeng mahinbin* of song and story. And yet, in spite of all this warmth and retiringness, she also shows an Achievement drive and an Aggression which are more intense than those found in American girls. How does one understand such a paradox?

An interpretation of these data may be that the Filipina is precisely a combination of "achievement through gentleness," and that underneath the soft exterior lies a capacity for expressed anger as well as for action. Such an interpretation would match the well-known sagacity of women in business as well as their presence in the professions, particularly in the medical profession, where they can fulfill their Achievement as well as Nurturant needs.

- The male, too, exhibits Dominance and Aggression needs which are higher than those found in the American controls as well as Affiliation needs which are lower. They may explain in part the large proportion of crimes and violence (Manila has 11

times the murder rate of New York City). Since the culture does not allow frank, verbal expressions of Aggression, the drive finds vent in egosyntonic, hostile acts, rationalized as "*Nabiglaan, ako*," or "*Biglang nag-init ang ulo ko*," etc.

The Dominance trait manifests the Filipino trust in authority as the means for solving problems. The simultaneous presence of Dominance and Abasement in the Filipino male probably means one or both of two things:

1. Authority is an area of conflict. He wants simultaneously to submit and to dominate.
  2. Authority is highly valued. It is a "slot" along which life is to be run. One has to be controlled or in control in order to be happy. One submits to authority and in turn one takes up authority. Authority is important. It is politics. It is life.
6. Erotic-tinged expressions of affection (apart from intercourse itself) are far more severely interdicted by Philippine culture than by American culture. Both the male and the female sample show the effects of such inhibition, the female group showing a fantastically high critical ratio of difference of 24.05 from the American female group in Heterosexuality. It is to be noted that such difference must also be interpreted in the light of the items composing the Heterosexuality scale of the EPPS, which are mainly public romantic expressions of love. How can ordinary kissing be accepted by a Philippine culture where even holding hands is taboo?
  7. The above-mentioned traits also reflect a very positive sensitivity to people. One lives in a world of people to which one adjusts by deferring, by depending, by taking care. One is careful to be sensitive to others' needs, not always for purely altruistic reasons, but always from an awareness that the other is there. And where one cannot change things, there is always one virtue left—Endurance.

#### REFERENCES

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