DEVELOPING AN INSTRUMENT FOR MEASURING THE ATTITUDES OF HISPANI--ETC(U)

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UNCLASSIFIED MC-1-3
An experimental instrument was developed to assess the attitudes of Hispanic sailors on active duty. The instrument was made up of projective pictures, semantic differential scales, open-ended sentences/questions, and items to assess English and Spanish ability, intention to reenlist, and so forth. The experimental instrument was administered individually to fourteen Hispanic sailors, seven Mexican-Americans and seven Puerto Ricans. Findings indicate that the instrument is capable of tapping subjective attitudes.
20. (Abstract, cont.)
toward Navy life, about fellow sailors (whites, Blacks, and Hispanics)
reenslistment, the family, etc. Suggestions for revising the instrument
for large scale administration to groups, and future research needs are
also given.
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Preface

This is the last report of three prepared under N00014-79C-0850.

Technical Report MC 1-1, prepared by Susan Turner, was an exhaustive review of the literature pertaining to Hispanics. The Turner Retention Attrition Model (TRAM) was developed to predict retention and attrition of Hispanics from the Navy.

Technical Report MC 1-2, prepared by Manuel Recio, was a pilot survey of Navy Recruiters in several Hispanic Communities, and an assessment of the recruiting process by Hispanic youth. Its major focus is the recruitment of Hispanic youth.

The focus of this report is on the development of an instrument to assess the attitudes of Hispanics currently on active duty in the Navy.
Developing an Instrument for Measuring the Attitudes of Hispanics in the Navy:
A Pilot Study
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Introduction

Hispanic representation in the Navy does not reflect the proportion of Hispanics in the total population. It is not known whether the underrepresentation is due to Navy recruiting procedures or whether there is something about Navy practices that discourages Hispanics from staying on once they have served one tour of duty. Too, little is known about Hispanics currently serving in the Navy, e.g., their attitudes toward the Navy, their shipmates, their officers, or their feelings about being away from their families, etc. This lack of basic information provided the basis of this study, i.e., to develop an instrument that could measure the attitudes of Hispanic sailors.

Nigel Lemon states in his book, *Attitudes and Their Measurement*, "Understanding the nature of attitudes aids in explaining and predicting conduct," (Lemon, 1973). In addition to aiding with the explanation and prediction of conduct of Hispanics in the Navy, the results of this pilot investigation could lend data which would either support or change many of the stereotypic beliefs that are held about Hispanics.

The development of the instrument for this study drew upon existing literature and discussions with Navy personnel, both Hispanic and non-Hispanic. The items in the instrument were intended to obtain information about the reactions of family and friends to the subject's joining the Navy, what the subject feels about his shipmates, officers, work, life at sea, etc. There were informational items about relative language proficiency in Spanish and English, and ethnic identity.
Related Literature

A review of the literature reveals that very little research has been conducted on Hispanics. (See Technical Report prepared by Susan Turner for an exhaustive review of the literature on Hispanics.) Much of the historical material about Hispanics was found in reports or books and articles which have dealt with Blacks in the Armed Forces. Although specific mention is not always made to Hispanics it seems reasonable to generalize the results to the case of Hispanics as well as other minorities as Herbert R. Northrop mentions in his study, *Minority Recruitment in the Navy and Marine Corps.* He states, "Although these apply only to Blacks, the situation for Spanish Surname Americans and American Indians is sufficiently similar to that of Blacks that we can generalize for these minorities from the Black experience." (Northrop, 1974, p.6) In his study Northrop takes note of the underrepresentation of Blacks serving in high technical positions and the overrepresentation in service and supply areas. This underrepresentation is also seen in the officer percentages in all branches.

In a study completed by Lawrence Johnson and Associates for the U.S. Army on the Spanish ethnic soldier, there was evidence of discrimination in housing, education and jobs. (Johnson, 1979) Both Northrop and Johnson report that many returning sailors and soldiers relate accounts of segregation and discrimination to members of their families and to their friends, thus presenting a rather negative attitude of the armed services (Northrop 1974, Johnson 1979).

In two studies undertaken for the NPRDC on selective retention by Landau, and Landau and Farkas, they conclude that more studies need to be undertaken that deal specifically with Hispanics. One specific conclusion states that most attrition, about 60%, is related to attitudinal or motivational problems (Landau and Farkas, 1978).
Research Questions

1. What are the "attitudes" of the family toward the son's enlisting in the Navy?

2. What are the "attitudes" of friends toward enlisting in the Navy?

3. What are the sailors' attitudes toward various aspects of Navy life, e.g., life at sea, job in the Navy, Navy officers, etc.?

4. What is the self-assessed language proficiency of the Hispanic sailor in English and Spanish?

Subjects

Subjects were 14 Hispanic sailors--seven Mexican-Americans and seven Puerto Ricans--who were serving on active duty in the Norfolk, Va. area.

Methodology

For this pilot study a variety of measurement techniques were used in order to obtain subjective responses from the subjects. The instrument contained the following sections.

Section I: This section contained the personal data sheet in addition to questions concerning length of time in the Navy and amount of time spent at sea.

Section II: This section is a modified projective technique depicting scenes of a family and friends (See Appendix A for a copy of the pictures). Two other pictures dealt with a recreational scene and the other with a scene where the sailors were receiving some kind of instruction. The Ss were instructed to tell the researcher what each person was saying. Basically, this projective technique is an attempt to get into the mind of the individual by enticing him to interject what "someone else" would say. One thus taps the respondent's own
perceptions but without the feeling that his own personal beliefs are directly exposed. Obviously, the sailor will not be able to speak for a family member, a friend, or a fellow sailor. What he does is to formulate some answers he thinks they would give. By this technique we gain access to his perceptions, opinions and values without self-exposure.

Section III: This section contained open-ended responses to questions such as: "What are the five things you think of when the Navy is mentioned?"

Section IV: This section contained a semantic differential scale. Ss were asked to rate on a seven point scale their reaction to items such as Family/La familia, Reenlistment/La reinscripción, Your duties in the Navy/Su trabajo con la Marina, etc. Bi-polar adjectives such as good/bad, clean/dirty, relaxed-tense, etc., were used.

Results

The results will be presented following the section approach discussed above.

Section I.

Age: Mean age was 22.6. Thirteen of the sailors ranged between 19-24 with one sailor being 41.

Navy Service: The average length of service was 31.5 months. The forty-one year old sailor had served for twenty years. He had reenlisted five times.

Time at Sea: Average time spent at sea was 20.7 months.

Intention to Reenlist: 1 Yes 8 No 5 Dont' Know
Section II. The Projective Picture Technique.

Ss' responses to each picture were coded as Positive, Neutral, or Negative.

Picture 1. The Family.

Father: 12 Positives 2 Neutrals 0 Negatives
Mother: 5 Positives 4 Neutrals 4 Negatives 1 No Answer
Brother: 2 Positives 7 Neutrals 2 Negatives 3 No Answers
Sister: 6 Positives 5 Neutrals 2 Negatives 1 No Answer
Grand-Mother: 7 Positives 7 Neutrals

On balance, the family seems to be favorably inclined to the son's joining the Navy. The father is especially favorable and would appear to be an ally. The mother's responses seem to show some ambivalence with an even spread across the three response categories.

Picture 2. Friends.

This picture generated only three negative responses. All other responses were either positive or neutral. Again, there seems to be positive regard toward the Navy.

Picture 3. Recreation.

This picture generated a two to one favorable response. Positive responses included being pleased with Navy life, getting drunk, and watching or talking about girls. Negative comments were about dissatisfaction with work or people, unfair practices by officers (pulling rank, extra work detail) and questions about treatment from others.
Picture 4. Instructional Setting.

This picture yielded about an even split between positive and negative responses--35 positive, and 31 negative and 4 no responses. Positive responses included learning from the Navy, job training, and future for the sailor in the Navy. Negative responses included boredom, and an inability to understand the instructor, e.g., "Speak a little slower," "Too fast," and "What"?

Section III. Semantic Differential.

This section contained ten items to which the Ss were to respond on a seven point scale. Ten pairs of bi-polar adjectives were provided for each item, e.g., good-bad, relaxed-tense, happy-sad.

The Family.

This item yielded a majority of positive responses. However, the relaxed-tense pair showed there was moderate tension.

Travel in the Navy

This item was rated mainly neutral with some pairs being on the negative side. Most felt that travel is "cruel," $\bar{x} = 5.0$, but "good" $\bar{x} = 3.0$.

White Sailors

Generally, the Hispanics view white sailors as neutral to somewhat positive.

Black Sailors

Black sailors were seen more favorably than whites. They were braver, cleaner, more fair and beautiful.
Hispanic Sailors

Hispanic sailors see themselves very favorably, more favorably than whites or blacks. The mean score for most of the pairs fell between 2.4 and 3.2. On the "rich-poor" dimension they were equal to the whites and blacks, \( \bar{x} = 4.00 \) for all three groups.

War

War received the most negative responses of all ten items. Except for one adjective pair, (brave-cowardly) all pairs had a mean of 5.2 or higher.

Reenlistment

Except for one pair (brave-cowardly) the mean for all items indicated a tilt to the negative side.

Navy Life at Sea

This item was more negative than Reenlistment and almost as negative as War. Six of the ten pairs had a mean of 5 or higher and two had a mean of 4.9. The "brave-cowardly" pair had a mean of 3. The responses to this item show that the Hispanics simply did not like Navy life at sea. But yet they are willing to put up with it by being "brave".

Navy Officers

Navy officers are viewed mainly in the neutral area. Their most positive trait is "clean". On the "rich-poor" pair their mean is 3.0 vs. the 4.0 reported for white, Black and Hispanic sailors.
Duties in the Navy

By and large, this item received either neutral or slightly negative responses.

Section IV. This section contained open-ended responses, yes-no questions, and questions about the Ss' competence in Spanish and English.

The question "What does being in the Navy mean to you"? produced twenty-eight responses (two per subject). Nineteen were rated as positive six as negative, and three as neutral.

The question "Why did you join the Navy"? yielded twenty-seven responses. Eighteen were positive, nine were negative.

To the statement, "Please list the five things you think of when the Navy is mentioned," sixty-six percent of the responses were coded positively.

But when asked, "What does your family say about you being in the Navy"?, the responses showed fourteen positives, ten negatives and four neutrals.

If one thinks back to the semantic differential item "Family," where the bi-polar pair "relaxed-tense" showed some degree of tenseness, there seems to be some evidence that the Family is an issue for these sailors.

The question "Why do you think few Hispanics join the Navy"? produced a variety of responses. In descending order they are:

Hispanics don't like to leave the family (N=6);
There is prejudice in the Navy (N=4);
They're afraid to take a chance (N=4);
Just not interested (N=3);
Language problems (N=2);
Don't like ships or the sea (N=2).
Various other answers received just one response.

When asked if they would like it if their brother joined the navy, five said yes, eight said no.

Questions about language competence revealed this pattern for Spanish:

- Twelve understand and speak it well;
- Two understand but do not speak it well.
- Seven read it well;
- Four read a little;
- Three do not read it at all;
- Seven write it well;
- Four write it a little;
- Three do not write it at all.

English:

- Fourteen understand and speak it well;
- Thirteen read it well;
- One reads it a little;
- Thirteen write it well;
- One writes it a little.

By their own estimation, the Hispanic sailors speak and understand both languages well, but are stronger in English literacy skills.

Educational Background

All but three had finished high school before joining or obtained the GED while in the Navy. One had done some post high school work.
Intention to Reenlist

Only one sailor intends to reenlist. Eight do not plan to and five do not know.

When asked which branch of the Armed Forces they would join if they currently were not in the Navy, they answered:

- Army = 0
- Navy = 4
- Air Force = 5
- Marines = 1
- Coast Guard = 2

Two did not answer.

Discussion

The results of this pilot investigation seem to indicate that it is possible to obtain information using a variety of techniques about how Hispanics perceive the Navy.

In general, the projective type pictures revealed an overall positive image of the Navy, especially in the family and friends' situation. Except for the mother's responses, the family (especially the father), are positive to neutral toward the son's joining the Navy. The reaction of the mother may be typical of any mother, regardless of ethnic background.

The semantic differential scales generated a wide range of responses for all ten items. With such a small sample (N=14) one must be careful not to generalize beyond the group studied. It does seem obvious, however, that the items War, Reenlistment, and Navy Life at Sea are decidedly on the negative side. Results of these items could lead to further probing in a revised instrument.
The open-ended questions also received a wide range of responses that could lead to additional probing or to the development of a check-list for the sailors to mark.

Finally, the pilot use of this instrument revealed a need to alter certain items and to add others, especially to find out the subjects' expectations at time of enlistment and whether those expectations had been met.

Need for Future Research

The pilot study of this instrument has revealed the potential for expanding the research methodology using the results to revise, add and delete items. A larger sample of Hispanics could provide data on:

1. The father/mother dichotomy by sub-group, e.g., Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans. Information on this variable could be helpful to recruiters in Hispanic communities.

2. The positive image the Navy received from family and friends as perceived by the fourteen subjects.

3. The kinds of problems endemic to the Navy that keep Hispanics from reenlisting, e.g., the kind of Navy duties assigned to them, discrimination in punishment practices, life at sea, etc.

4. The validation of the semantic differential as a means of tapping, quickly, attitudes toward various aspects of Navy life.
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I want to join the Navy.

Quiero ingresar en la Marina.

La familia

The family
I want to join the Navy.

Quiero ingresar en la Marina.

La familia
The family
I joined the Navy.
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Recreation in the Navy
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