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## A Study in the Selection of Salespeople for Killians' Department Store, Cedar Rapid, Iowa

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A STUDY IN THE SELECTION OF SALESPEOPLE FOR  
KILLIANS' DEPARTMENT STORE, CEDAR  
RAPIDS, IOWA

GEORGE HORACE GALLUP

(*ABSTRACT*)

The need of a short-cut method in the prediction of ability in retail salesmanship in department stores has long been recognized. The scientific selection of sales-people is dependent entirely upon the finding of such a method. Enormous sums of money are lost each year by following the present plan of selecting applicants by chance and by "trying them out" on the job to ascertain their ability as salesmen.

In this research the purpose has been to describe in terms of measureable traits the successful salespeople of Killians' department store in Cedar Rapids, Iowa; and to find an objective test or a battery of objective tests which would differentiate the good from the poor salespeople.

Previous experimental work in the field of department store selling has proved that all of the commonly used "systems" of selection are invalid. Beginning with the character analysts who base their methods upon phrenology, and extending through the work of scientific investigators who have attempted an approach to reliable prediction of ability through intelligence tests, through psychoneurotic methods, through an analysis of special abilities, and through the determination of interests and preferences, little advance has been made toward a solution.

The present study has approached the problem of selection through an analysis of traits chiefly. Over eighty salespeople were examined with a battery of fifteen tests and rating scales. From these a test was sought which would reduce the error in the prediction of salesmanship ability and which might be used as a practical supplement to the regular interview.

Experimental findings in the study may be summarized as follows:

1. A graphic rating scale was devised which correlates .6989 with the criterion of success. This scale analyzes in terms

- of measureable traits the personalities of the successful salespeople at Killians'.
2. Three objective tests were found which differentiate to an small extent between the good and the poor sales-people.
  3. Previous experimental evidence with objective tests of ability and with interest-preference tests was corroborated in every case in which the present study touched upon previous work.
  4. A test to determine whether good salespeople are introverts or extroverts succeeded in the proportion of 80 to 36 in distinguishing between the good and poor salesmen.
  5. Training, experience, and education above a certain minimum were found to be of negligible importance. This is further evidence of the truth of the most important finding of the study, namely, that traits and not abilities or interests are the determining factor in department store selling.

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A PHENOMENON IN VISION SIMILAR TO REFRACTORY PHASE

ROLAND C. TRAVIS

(*ABSTRACT*)

It has been found that under conditions of dark adaptation, there exists a rather definite relationship between the three variables, the intensity of the stimulus, dark adaptation, and a visual phenomenon similar to refractory phase of spinal reflexes. Three experiments were made in ascertaining this relationship.

The results of the first experiment show that the more intense the stimulus when dark adaptation is relatively constant, the shorter the refractory period; and, vice versa, the less intense the stimulus the longer the refractory period. The one variable varies inversely as the other.

The results of the second experiment show that the longer the dark adaptation up to a certain point the more sensitive the eye becomes. Again the intensity threshold varies inversely as the amount of dark adaptation up to where the dark adaptation has reached its maximum. This fact has been brought out by previous investigators. Dark adaptation is carried on by the changes in at least three structures of the eye, pupil, fovea, and peripheral retina. Other neurological factors less under experimental con-