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RELIANCE AMONG UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS

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RELIANCE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS¹

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It is popularly believed that adult males in our culture, through the factors of training and experience, tend to be more self-reliant, stable, self-confident and self-sufficient than adult females. Some evidence exists in support of such a belief (3). Much of this evidence is based upon inventory items scored for a trait that Bernreuter has called "self-sufficiency" (1). Data have also been presented which indicate that, although mean differences may not appear, some differences that are reliable might be evident when inventories are broken down by means of an item-analysis (2).

Some practical importance is attached to the problem. It has been suggested that the greater number of such sex-differences are due to the differential effect of dissimilarities in training. The existence and evaluation of such differences as well as a knowledge of the factors involved may have implications for the educator and the mental hygienist. In a broader sense, such knowledge is desirable in the general field of social psychology. Further evidence on the problem seems desirable. Such data are herein presented.

Stott (4) has presented an analysis of an inventory composed of items descriptive of the behavior of an individual that might be termed the possessor of a "high degree of self-reliance." By such a person, Stott means one that makes his own decisions, uses his own judgment, seldom asks for information or assistance, and has come to depend upon his own initiative in surmounting obstacles. Thirty descriptions of the behavior and feelings common to such an individual were formulated. These descriptions were then stated in both the positive and negative form. They were worded and designed for use with high school students. As such they composed an inventory of sixty items.

Stott's items were used in the present study. However, the wording was changed in several minor details since the writer desired to use them with students at the university level. Such rephrasings did not affect the essential nature of the descriptions concerned. The items seemed as applicable to the daily behavior of college students as to

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