

WES PENNER,
*Counseling Psychologist,
 Edmonton School District, and*
 CHARLES B. TRUAX,
University of Calgary.

THE HIPPIE LOVE AND HUMANITARIAN IDEOLOGY: GIVING OR NEEDING?

ABSTRACT: The central question researched was whether transients — hippies — communicate in a way that is negative and harmful, or whether, consistent with their rhetoric, they project warmth, love, and understanding in their interpersonal relationships. Also, whether compared with trained counselors and teachers, hippies and transients would exhibit, to a person with personal problems, less, as much, or more of the classic "helping" dimensions of genuineness, non-possessive warmth, and accurate empathy.

Findings suggest that the more the "helper" approximates the transient hippie reality (as measured by the Omnibus Personality Inventory), the lower his actual communicated levels of the "helping" dimensions.

INTRODUCTION

In today's fast changing world we as a people are experiencing alienation, loneliness, future shock, and anonymity. Still, because we are humans we seem to want, if not need, satisfying relationships with other humans in order to affirm our own existence. The youth culture today, and particularly the subculture of "hippies" are, like their older counterparts, searching for the meaning of their existence and, as part of this, seeking fulfilling or satisfying human relationships (Penner, 1971a). They are the "love generation" (so say the media). Almost no one is against having such facilitative and meaningful human relationships — but have "hippies" somehow learned to be more able to create such human qualities as understanding and warmth for others and authenticity of self. Or does their rhetoric signify instead a continuing need and search? A great deal has been learned about how to measure and even how to give authentic or genuine warmth and understanding in human relationships. Yet not very much of the knowledge has been shared with the public. There remains the possibility that the "love generation," and "hippies" in particular, have, in rejecting some of our non-human values, developed life styles that more completely affirm themselves by satisfying and helpful relations with other human beings. If so, then the public has much to learn from them.

The term "hippie" is still used by some social scientists, the mass media, and the public to describe a segment of the world's youth who distinguish themselves from their peers by a combination of their unique external appearance (i.e., long hair, beads, faded or discolored

jeans, etc.) and their unorthodox behaviors. The question of whether the unique external appearance and behaviors always accompany a so-called "hippie" personality or vice versa remains tautological. The question of whether the external trappings cause the "hippie" personality or whether the "hippie" personality causes the individual to present himself uniquely is equally tautological. An abundance of research, however, indicates that behaviors manifesting extreme forms of activism or passivism characterize those who have the "hippie" image.

Non-conformist youth of sub-cultures, often described as hippies, do differ in life style as well as dress style and appearance from the "straight" larger culture. There are also those who look like hippies but are really not non-conformist, but instead are conformists and perhaps should be called "straight-hippies." A number of studies have been completed that are able to identify the hippie or non-conformist person in terms of personality characteristics measured on the Omnibus Personality Inventory (Wittaker & Watts (1967) at Berkeley and Penner (Penner & Zingle, in press) in Canada in particular). Since this can roughly be determined, a number of important questions can be answered about the non-conformist youth sub-culture.

One of the characteristics that the non-conformist youth sub-culture claims as its own is the ability to communicate warmth or love and to understand other human beings in an authentic and genuine relationship. In general, these abilities of interpersonal skills have been self attributed and attributed by others to the hippie generation.

We know from dozens of relatively solid research studies that these kinds of human relationship skills, accurate empathy, non-possessive warmth, and genuineness, facilitate others in positive changes in a wide variety of settings. Much of the research is reviewed by Truax and Carkhuff (1967) and Truax and Mitchell (1971).

Literature on the attitudes, ideals and behaviors of "non-conformists," "fringe" or "hippie-type" individuals, is replete with research as well as speculation supporting hypotheses that are totally negative and hypotheses that are totally positive.

There are those who claim that many "hippies" are almost dead socially, and so require massive emotions such as sexual acts, acts of violence, nudity, and every conceivable Dionysian thrill. They are described as being exploitive and manipulative. A few psychiatrically oriented researchers attribute to the "hippies" the label of schizophrenia. Hippiedom, it has been said, has become a magnet for severely emotionally disturbed people. Charles Manson, the Rasputin-like leader of a band of "hippies," allegedly responsible for the killing of Sharon Tate, is perhaps the best example of one who fits the negative description.

More positive interpretations of hippie behavior and appearance hold that "hippies" understand with profound significance the teaching of Eastern religious leaders, witches, and other mystics who provide them with alternative ways of making sense of what they perceive as a dismal, futile, and threatening world. Yoga and psychic experience provide them with means by which important insights into life can be

gained. The importance of feeling "at one" with oneself and with the whole universe is just one insight which hippies have gained through their association with mystics and mystic literature (Penner, 1972).

Studies of "hippies" in attendance at rock festivals and in communes indicate a consistent desire among the youth for intimacy, a Utopian community in which "togetherness" is experienced (Zingle, Peel & Penner, 1971). Perhaps the most recent "happening" within the subculture is the Jesus freak movement. Many of the youth who are now known as Jesus freaks rejected their so-called North American Christian upbringing and opted for a more esoteric and unorthodox religion. Now they are returning to the way of life offered by their parents and grandparents except that they have an even more deeply Puritanical orientation. The overall desire for inter- and intra-personal harmony, for freedom from inner conflict, a high regard for love, true friendship, and a world at peace seems to exist whether the "hippie" defines himself as a witch or a Jesus freak.

METHOD

In 1971 and 1972 the writers addressed themselves to a unique study of a group of young people who for all intents and purposes represented the "hippie" subculture. The subjects studied were transient "hippie" youth. The appearance of their clothes was consistent with the descriptions given in studies of "hippies," and the behaviors exhibited were also consistent with research findings (Penner, 1971b).

The central question researched was whether transients — "hippies" — communicate in a way that is negative, harmful, exploitive, etc., or whether, consistent with their rhetoric, they project warmth, love, and understanding in their interpersonal relationships. Also, whether compared with trained counselors and teachers, hippies and transients would exhibit, to a person with a personal problem, less, as much, or more of the classic "helping" dimensions of genuineness, non-possessive warmth, and accurate empathy. Individuals who had obtained or were in the process of obtaining their Masters' degrees in counseling psychology, and all of whom had taken a counseling practicum, as well as several counselors with extensive experience were counselor Ss. Teachers were school teachers.

Since it was impossible to obtain a truly representative sample, the "snowball technique" was utilized in which some of the group members were initially asked to participate and they in turn referred others. The first attempt failed. It was hoped that appointments could be made with the transient or hippie subjects to meet with the researchers at a particular spot the following day. A brief explanation was given to them of how their abilities to extend help to persons experiencing personal problems would be compared with the same abilities of teachers and trained counselors. Out of the 23 transients or hippies who agreed to meet, only one held to her promise. The researchers had come face to face with the "here-and-now ethic." One could only speculate on where the remaining 22 transients were at the moment. Quickly, and admittedly with some fear, a second

attempt was made at selecting the sample. In approximately an hour and a half a sample of 16 subjects was gathered. Ten were male, six were female. Their ages ranged from 14 to 25 with a mean of 17. Also eight mature counselors were collected. A second study replicated the first, using 50 transients, or hippies, and 21 counselors and teachers.

In both studies the transients were transported to a university campus where tape recorders were set up to record 10-minute sessions for contact, with a counselee. Counselees were university students who presented problems they had recently experienced or were at the moment experiencing. The transients, teachers, and counselors were challenged to help the counselees deal with their problems.

By way of preparation for the sessions the counselees (the people to be helped) were all given the following information:

You will be interviewed by transients, teachers, or counselors.
Your role is simply to express to both the transients and to the counselors or teachers your real or assumed problem(s).
Both groups will be told that they are to try to help you with your problem(s).

The Omnibus Personality Inventory (OPI) was administered to the two groups, the transients and the trained teachers or counselors.

Since prior research by Whittaker and Watts (1967) and Penner and Zingle (in press) has shown that the OPI discriminates between hippies and straights, an attempt was made to have the Inventory discriminate even more finely. The OPI was given in Study I and in Study II to all helpers and then on the basis of their scores they were divided into: (1) transient hippies, (2) mixed transients, (3) straight transients, and (4) straight counselors or teachers. These four comparison groups could then be evaluated on their average levels of accurate empathy, non-possessive warmth, and genuineness communicated to university students presenting a personal problem.

Three 3-minute samples of tape recorded interaction between the four groups of "helpers" and the individual students with problems were then randomly assigned code numbers and rated on the accurate empathy, non-possessive warmth, and genuineness scales. The reliabilities or agreements among the raters separately rating the tape recorded excerpts on reliable and valid research scales ranged between .65 and .93.

FINDINGS

The combined results of the studies are presented in Table 1.

For accurate empathy, non-possessive warmth, and genuineness the groups are arranged so that reading the averages from left to right the groups move from hippie-hippies to straight counselors or teachers based on how hippie versus straight the "helpers" are in terms of the Omnibus Personality Inventory measures.

As can be seen, the more the "helper" approximates the transient hippie reality, the lower his actual communicated levels of accurate empathic understanding, non-possessive warmth, and genuineness. Significance tests were made using the Alexander Trend Test and in

TABLE I

Combined Results: Hippies vs Mixed vs Straight Transients
vs Counselors or Teachers

	Transient Hippies		Mixed Transients		Straight Transients		Counselors or Teachers	
	Study I	Study II	Study I	Study II	Study I	Study II	Study I	Study II
Number of "Helpers"	10	22	3	12	3	16	8	21
Average Level of Accurate Empathy	(1.3	1.4)	(1.3	1.7)	(2.0	2.5)	(2.4	2.5)
Average Level of Non-Possessive Warmth	(2.1	2.1)	(2.1	2.2)	(2.6	2.4)	(2.9	3.1)
Average Level of Genuineness	(2.5	2.2)	(2.4	2.6)	(2.9	2.6)	(3.0	3.2)

all cases the more the helper was representative of the so-called "hippie" personality the more he was *significantly* ($p. < .01$) *less able to communicate these therapeutic or helping qualities* to people presenting personal problems.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus it would appear that even among transients the more one approximates a hippie personality the less one is able to *give* understanding, warmth, and genuineness to others. In all cases it should be noted that the straight teachers and counselors were significantly above the combined transient population on these facilitative or therapeutic dimensions.

The rhetoric of love, understanding, warmth, authenticity or genuineness in the hippie or non-conformist youth culture does not reflect their ability to give. Rather, it may very well reflect a need.

It is in this sense that they represent a "lost" people, valuing and searching for human affirmation of their existence, but unable to give or communicate the human qualities that are central to effective human relationships.

The numbers in Table 1 have limited meaning until one understands the measurement of understanding, warmth, and genuineness itself. The actual findings are perhaps more unhappy than the numbers. In terms of the measurements, the *average* hippie response to a university student (18- to 21-year-olds for the most part) can be put into words, as can that of the straights or straight counselor and teacher.

In accurate empathy, Stage 1 means "completely unaware of even the most conspicuous of the client's (person's) feelings." Stage 3 means "responds accurately to more exposed feelings... also displays

concern for deeper, more hidden feelings... though he/she does not understand their nature or sense their meaning..."

In non-possessive warmth (love), Stage 1 means "giving clear negative regard. There is explicit evidence of a negative feeling..." while Stage 3 means "...neither explicit nor implicit evidence of dislike or disinterest... is present but not warmth."

Finally genuineness, at Stages 1 and 2 shows defensiveness or phoniness, while at Stage 4, "there is neither implicit nor explicit evidence that... (he/she) is defensive or phoney."

In short, a bad rap session. The counselor and teacher averages are comparable to prior studies, but then... it is already known that the educational system is not the most loving, authentic, and understanding — what is now evident is that despite rhetoric, the hippie or non-conformist youth sub-culture is, if anything, less humanizing.

To end on a "good news"- "bad news" note: the non-conformists do not have the answer to humanizing society but ongoing research now shows that people (teachers and hippies are just people underneath their roles) can rapidly learn to communicate these human qualities of non-possessive warmth, accurate empathic understanding, and genuineness. It's really simple: listen to yourself and give yourself feedback to when you're high and low on these qualities.

RESUME: La principale question de cette étude était de savoir si les nomades et les hippies se comportent de façon négative et nuisible dans leurs relations interpersonnelles ou si au contraire, conformément à leurs prétentions oratoires, ils font preuve de compréhension et d'amour. De même, en les comparant avec des conseillers professionnels et avec des enseignants, on voulait savoir s'ils manifesteraient à un degré égal, moindre ou supérieur, ces qualités classiques de la relation d'aide, telles la sincérité, l'empathie et l'accueil chaleureux mais non possessif.

Les résultats suggèrent que plus "l'aidant" se rapproche de l'identité hippie (telle que mesurée par le Omnibus Personality Inventory), plus bas est son niveau réel d'aide.

REFERENCES

- Penner, W. Hippie life style: An extension of previous life styles. *Canadian Counsellor*, 1971, 5, 263-266. (a)
- Penner, W. Some comparisons of life style reflected in the dress and behavior of high school students. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1971. (b)
- Penner, W. Hippies' attraction to mysticism, *Adolescence*, 1972, 7, 199-210.
- Penner, W., & Zingle, H. Personality differences between high school "hippies" and high school "straights." *High School Journal*, 1973, in press.
- Truax, C. B., & Carkhuff, R. *Toward effective counseling and psychotherapy*. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1967.
- Truax, C. B., & Mitchell, K. Research on certain therapist interpersonal skills. In A. Bergen & S. Garfield (Eds.), *Handbook of psychotherapy*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1971.
- Whittaker, D., & Watts, W. A. Personality characteristics of a non-conformist youth subculture: A study of the Berkeley non-student. *Journal of Social Issues*, 1967, 25, (2), 65-69.
- Zingle, H., Peel, P., Jr., & Penner, W. The individual at the rock festival. Paper presented at the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association Convention, Toronto, 1971.