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ABSTRACT

The present study, part of a larger investigation, attempted to examine the separate and joint effects of succession and effectiveness on administrative processes in laboratory-created 3-level formal organizations. Specifically, the investigation concerned itself with the impact of these two elements on communication relationships between managers and subordinates. The investigators sought to assess the degree that these variables influenced the manner in and the extent to which information and affect was transmitted between executives and lower-level subordinates as well as among subordinates. Each organization consisted of seven coordinated positions -- a manager, two assistant managers, and four workers -- and was designed to resemble an actual business firm. Organizational effectiveness was manipulated by predetermining the number and type of errors produced by the workers, who were confederates. Findings indicate that change in organizational effectiveness is both a major factor effecting the type and direction of communication flow between managers and subordinates and an important variable mediating the influence of leadership change on the type and direction of communication. The findings generally confirm the strategic importance of treating effectiveness and managerial variables in a processual, interdependent fashion. (Author/JH)

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EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES OF THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
AND SUCCESSION ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

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EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES OF THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
AND SUCCESSION ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

A considerable research literature has documented the existence of significant relationships between organizational effectiveness and managerial behavior, between succession and managerial behavior, and between effectiveness and succession.

For example, Lowin and Craig (1968) have shown that worker performance, as a measure of organizational effectiveness, affects managers' closeness of supervision, initiating structure, and his consideration of subordinates. Carey's (1967) critique of the Hawthorne studies also proposes to show the importance of effectiveness as a determinant of supervisory style.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the effects of succession on the administrative process in a wide variety of contexts, such as business firms (Gouldner, 1954 and Guest, 1962), prisons (McCleery, 1957 and Grusky, 1959), and even sports organizations (Grusky, 1964).

The close relationship between effectiveness and succession has been shown both in field studies (Carlson, 1962 and Grusky, 1963) and in a laboratory environment (Hamblin, 1958).

The present study, part of a larger investigation, was designed to examine the separate and the joint effects of succession and effectiveness on administrative processes in laboratory-created three-level formal organizations. Specifically, we were concerned with the impact of these two elements on communication relationships that take place between managers and subordinates. We sought to assess as precisely as we could how these key organizational variables influenced the manner in which and the extent to

which information and affect are transmitted between executives and lower-level subordinates, and among subordinates themselves.

METHOD

A detailed description of the program of experiments of which the present study is part is presented elsewhere (Grusky & Churchill, 1970). The basic method consisted of setting up in the laboratory two simulated three-level business organizations having identical formal structures (Divisions I and II). Each formal organization consisted of seven coordinated positions, a manager, two assistant managers, and four workers. The organizations were designed to resemble actual business firms. For example, there was an official organizational goal, a hierarchy of authority, task specialization, a reward system, and differential communication control. Rank in the formal structure was tied to type of work, authority, expertise, access to information, freedom of communication, salary (Ss were paid according to position held and the unit's actual output), and various status symbols such as size of desk and type of sign on desk signifying title. The organization was designed to produce technical manuals. The workers (ostensibly) assembled the manuals, the assistant managers checked their output, and the managers were responsible for the administration of the total unit. Each organization's effectiveness was manipulated by predetermining the number and type of errors produced by the workers, who were confederates. Only the assistant managers and managers were naive Ss. The tasks of the assistant managers involved analysis of the workers' output. They transmitted written and oral reports to the manager. Specifically, their job was to assess the output to see if it conformed to specifications concerning neatness of assembly, stapling location, page sequence, and the like. The manager held ultimate administrative responsibility for the organization.

He directly, in face-to-face fashion, supervised the assistant managers and indirectly, through written orders, supervised the workers. He held authority to reorganize the production process by changing the workers' jobs, and could sanction his subordinates by withholding rest periods and by applying other pressures.

The manager learned his job during his period in the first organization and was then transferred to the second as new manager of the organization. In this way, succession was manipulated. In the no-succession condition the manager simply remained on his job. The organizations were in operation for eight 6-min. periods called Preperiod 1, Periods 1, 2, 3, Preperiod 4, and Periods 4, 5, 6. The period-by-period effectiveness of the organization was manipulated by using confederates as workers. Hence, only the managers and their assistants were naive Ss.

At the conclusion of the third period, each manager was taken to another room, tested, and interviewed. For Experiment I, the managers were brought together and told: "It is common practice in large business organizations to rotate managers so as to broaden their experience. Therefore, you will now be manager of Division ____ and you manager of Division ____." Each manager was then taken to his new unit and the reason stated above for the rotation was explained to the assistant managers. In Experiment II, after the interview, the manager was brought to the same unit as before.

All Ss were male volunteers, predominantly undergraduates from the College of Letters and Science, University of California, Los Angeles. There were a total of 117 naive Ss, 81 in the first experiment and 36 in the second. Thirty-nine formal organizations were established, 27 for the first and twelve for the second experiment. When recruited, Ss were

told only that they would be members of simulated business firms. All Ss were strangers to one another. Each experimental ~~session~~^session was concluded by discussing the general hypotheses of the research, answering the subjects' questions, and requesting that they maintain secrecy about the experiment.

Measures of Dependent Variables. Communication between members of formal organizations can vary both in directionality and content. Directionally, we distinguished between: downward communication in the hierarchy (from the manager to assistant manager), upward (from assistant manager to manager), and lateral (between assistant managers).

In terms of content, Bales' (1950) twelve category system of Interaction Process Analysis was modified by reducing it to four categories labeled by Bales "A" (Observation Categories 1, 2, 3) Expressive-Integrative, Social-Emotional Area, Positive Reactions; "B" (Categories 4, 5, 6), Instrumental-Adaptive, Task Area; Solutions (Categories 7, 8, 9), Instrumental-Adaptive, Task Area; Questions; and "D" (Categories 10, 11, 12), Expressive-Integrative, Social-Emotional Area, Negative Reactions.

Three indexes concerned with the quality of the acts exchanged were formulated, as follows: (1) Index of Social Support. This index was operationally defined as Bales' A Acts which included three types of reactions:

1. Shows solidarity, raises other's status, gives help, reward.
2. Shows tension release, jokes, laughs, shows satisfaction.
3. Agrees, shows passive acceptance, understands, concurs, complies.

(2) Index of Advice-Seeking. This index was based on Bales' C Acts which included these types of acts:

1. Asks for orientation, information, repetition, confirmation.

2. Asks for opinion, evaluation, analysis, expression of feeling.
3. Asks for suggestion, direction, possible ways of action.

(3) Index of Advice-Giving. This final measure was based on Bales' B Acts which also included three types of acts:

1. Gives suggestion, direction, implying autonomy for others.
2. Gives opinion, evaluation, analysis, expresses feeling, wish.
3. Gives orientation, information, repeats, clarifies, confirms.

A fourth index of hostility, D acts, was discarded because of the small number of coded acts and low reliability.

Interrater reliability was assessed at four separate sessions during the experimental runs. The reliability across all acts for the four tests was .98, .97, .97, and .98. However, when interrater reliability was determined separately for each category of act, A, B, C, and D, the averages across the four types of acts were reduced to: .83, .74, .73, and .77 for each test session. By far the lowest reliability was obtained for the D acts which included three types of behaviors: disagreement, including passive rejection; tension and withdrawal; and antagonism. Interrater reliability for D acts considered separately in the four test sessions averaged .504.

FINDINGS

The Effects of Organizational Effectiveness: From the First Phase to the Transition

The general pattern of behavior in the laboratory organizations had three distinct phases. In the first phase, periods 1, 2, and 3, the manager and assistants were under extreme time pressure and were therefore compelled to focus their attention entirely on work-related affairs. The second phase or transition period was spent under more relaxing conditions.

During this time the staff enjoyed a brief respite from their ordinary tasks. Those subjects under the no-succession condition differed from those under succession in that only the latter group were confronted with the intrusion of a new manager into the staff organization. Both conditions were exposed to either high or low organizational effectiveness. (For the sake of convenience, we excluded all organizations under the stable effectiveness manipulation from this analysis).

Hence, we had four types of organizations to compare: High effectiveness (Per. 1-3) - Succession; High Effectiveness (Per. 1-3) - No-Succession; Low Effectiveness (Per. 1-3) - Succession; and Low Effectiveness (Per. 1-3) - No Succession.

Tables 1, 2, and 3 present the findings separately for each of the three dimensional types of communication. These tables focus on changes in the percentage of each type of communication from Periods 1-3 to the transition period that transpired in each organization under the two conditions of succession and two of organizational effectiveness.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 about here

We found that effectiveness did not produce significant changes in the communication patterns of those organizations undergoing the succession manipulation, although it did affect those under No-Succession.

These findings provide support for the hypothesis that the change in the task routine that occurred during the transition period led to generally closer inter-level relationships and weaker intra-level relationships under High Effectiveness than under Low Effectiveness. Apparently High Effectiveness provided the manager with sufficient assurance of his competence and a generally favorable orientation toward him by the assistant managers. As

a result hierarchical barriers did not isolate the manager from the subordinate staff members and inter-level communications increased when permitted to do so by changes occurring in the transition period. Both upward and downward total interaction increased while total interaction of a lateral nature declined significantly. Moreover, while downward requests for advice and the giving of advice increased the same types of lateral communications declined. In addition, while support by the assistants for the manager increased, the proportion of support exchanged between assistants over this period went down.

On the other hand, under Low Effectiveness, the hierarchical barriers between the manager and his subordinates became more rigid and this in turn led to a situation of isolation for the executive. Inter-level communications decreased when the break in task routine took place. Both upward and downward total interaction decreased while total interaction of the lateral type increased. While downward requests for advice and giving of advice decreased, the same types of lateral communications increased. Moreover, while support for the manager by the assistant managers declined, the amount of support exchanged between the assistants over this period rose. Thus, under the stable leadership, or No-Succession condition, Low Effectiveness produced a situation for the manager of social distance from his subordinates while the situation of High Effectiveness led to closer ties with them.

The Effects of Succession: From the First Phase to the Transition

We turn now to an examination of the specific consequences of succession in this time period when organizational effectiveness was held constant. Returning to Tables 1, 2, and 3, we find that succession significantly affected organizational communication under Low Effectiveness but not under the High Effectiveness manipulation.

It was found that succession, in a situation of low organizational performance, led to a series of significant changes in the structure of communication in the organization during the transition period. On the whole, these changes involved a greater degree of communication between the manager and his assistants and a lesser degree of exchange between the assistants themselves. Succession, not surprisingly, resulted in the manager becoming a central focus of communication among the staff. No doubt this occurred because the new manager found it necessary to initiate new policies as well as learn about the past performance and policies of the organization. Hence, Succession led to an increase in total interaction both downward and upward in the structure. That the new executive did initiate new policies was shown by the increase in advice given to his subordinates. The increase in the manager's requests for advice revealed concern for the views of subordinates, especially those having to do with past organizational policies. All of the communication indexes pointed toward a decline in lateral communication following succession. The assistants not only exchanged less advice and requests for advice among themselves, but less support as well.

The question arises as to why the effects of succession described took place under Low but not High organizational effectiveness. We believe it was because of the differential effect of past organizational performance on expectations of changes in policy in the organization. If the organization had been highly effective in the recent past, a change of leadership would be looked upon by the subordinates as not necessarily meaning that numerous policy and procedural changes were to follow. On the other hand, when the organization's performance had been poor and an executive succession took place, the subordinates and the new executive

anticipated a series of profound policy changes. In some organizations the staff's perception of the effectiveness of the system may not be the same as that of senior executives or even of other organization officials. In the present situation there was found to be a high and significant position correlation between the objective measure of effectiveness and perceived effectiveness (Pearson $r = + .90$).

In the situation of low effectiveness, the staff anticipated that succession was merely a prelude to key changes in the operation of the organization. Thus inter-level communication increased sharply when the new man took over in anticipation of these changes. High effectiveness, on the other hand, since it did not lead to anticipation of policy changes, was less likely to produce pronounced changes in the communication structure. The staff simply did not expect radical change.

The Effects of a Change in Organizational Effectiveness: Communication Changes from the Transition Period to the Final Phase

We found that a change in organizational effectiveness from the first to the final phase produced a number of overall changes in the communication structure of the organization. These are shown in Tables 4, 5 and 6.

Tables 4, 5 and 6 about here

These findings support the general hypothesis that increased organizational effectiveness facilitated greater inter-level communication in the final phase while decreased organizational effectiveness led to an increase in intra-level communication. The Increased Effectiveness of the organization led to greater downward communication. It also led to more advice by the manager for his subordinates as well as more expressions of support for

them. The rise in effectiveness caused a rise in the manager's self-esteem which led him to feel he could express his opinions more freely (Grusky & Churchill, 1966). Moreover, it also encouraged him to express more positive feeling for his assistants. At the same time, increased effectiveness led to a decline in the rate of communication among assistant managers. They interacted less frequently with one another, and, specifically, exchanged less advice, sought each other's advice less often, and were less supportive of one another.

While increased organizational effectiveness caused the manager to become the communication focus of the organization, decreased effectiveness did precisely the opposite and furthered his isolation. Decreased effectiveness caused a decline in downward communication. The manager not only communicated less often with his subordinates, but he was prone to give them less advice and less support as well. At the same time, the total amount of lateral communication increased. The assistant managers not only gave each other more advice and solicited more advice from each other, but in addition, they exchanged more support. It may be that since decreased organizational effectiveness produced low self-esteem and lower evaluations of the manager by the subordinates the decline in inter-level communication reflected the concomitant loss of executive status. The response of the subordinates to the manager's decline was to turn to each other both for support and for consultation on task matters. Hence, there may be a snowball effect created by decreasing effectiveness. A loss of executive status leads to a decline in intra-level communication and makes it difficult for the manager to regain his former position of respect vis-a-vis his subordinates.

The Effects of Succession: Communication Changes from the Transition Period to the Final Phase

We found that succession had significant effects on changes in organizational communication from the transition period to the final phase under Increased Effectiveness but not under Decreased Effectiveness.

It should be noted that the organizations under Increased Effectiveness in the final phase were the ~~same as~~ those under Low Effectiveness in the first phase. We found that under Low Effectiveness succession caused an increase in inter-level communication in the transition period over that found in the first phase. The present findings revealed that under Increased Effectiveness succession also caused significant changes in organizational communication.

Under Increased Effectiveness succession produced an increase in supportive acts on the part of the manager. The new leader sought to obtain the approval of his new subordinates by transmitting positive communications to them. That these overtures were rebuffed was shown by the fact that subordinates decreased significantly their supportive acts directed toward the manager. They gave the new man significantly less support than that accorded his predecessor. One of the most striking effects of succession was its impact on communication between the two subordinates themselves. Succession caused a significant increase in intra-level communication of both the task and the affective types. Total interaction between subordinates increased as did the lateral exchange of social support. Moreover, both advice-seeking and advice-giving acts between the two assistant managers increased significantly. In sum, succession caused the subordinates to depend more heavily upon each other, and at the same time, led to the relative isolation of the executive.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Blau and Scott (1962) have described formal organizations as systems confronted with several crucial dilemmas. One such dilemma lies in the conflicting requirements of coordination and communication. In order to attain high levels of effectiveness, organizations must coordinate the various activities of their members. However, hierarchical differentiation is essential to accomplish this, and differentiation leads to the inhibition of communication flow. The limitation of communication, in turn, functions to decrease effectiveness. As Blau and Scott note: "This dilemma appears to be inherent in the conflicting requirements of coordination and problem-solving." (p. 244). Price (1968) also has observed the importance of communication to organizational effectiveness, proposing a positive relationship between the two variables. However, where he has treated effectiveness as a dependent variable, we have treated it as an independent one. In general, our research supports the findings of Rosen (1969), who has shown the strategic importance of treating effectiveness and managerial variables in a processual, interdependent fashion.

The laboratory organizations we established went through a series of stages and we have shown that the response of these systems to changes in effectiveness were related to a set of communication variables. Specifically, two findings stood out: (1.) organizational effectiveness affects both type and direction of communication flow, (2.) change in organizational effectiveness mediates the influence of succession on type and direction of communication flow.

The large bulk of the literature on style of supervision has sought to relate this variable or set of variables causally to worker satisfaction and productivity (Katz and Kahn, 1952). Productivity as a measure of

organizational effectiveness was the main dependent variable and various components of supervisory style the independent ones. However, as Blau and Scott noted: "...this attitude of the supervisor might be a result of the group's low productivity as well as a determinant of it (1952, p. 50)." Likewise, Carey (1967) has suggested in his reinterpretation of the famed Hawthorne studies that the causal direction might be the reverse of that indicated by the investigators. As Lowin and Craig (1968) have recently shown experimentally, worker performance itself shapes closeness of supervision, initiating structure, and the superior's consideration for the subordinate. Organizations typically experience cycles of effectiveness and establish traditions which guide the expectations both of superiors and subordinates. Moreover, since they are hierarchical structures, the executive is treated as responsible for the organization's progress or lack of progress. The evaluation of the executive is closely tied to the system's overall effectiveness (Grusky, 1963; Gouldner, 1954; Gamson and Scotch, 1964; Grusky, 1964). Evaluations of effectiveness tend to be a relative matter, involving a contrast of the performance of the system under the present administrator with its performance at an earlier time. Therefore, change in effectiveness is a key variable. In addition, to revealing that effectiveness functioned to reduce hierarchicalization and thereby facilitated vertical communication, our study indicated that change in effectiveness had an influential effect on communication flow. When the new manager was successful compared to his predecessor, he transmitted significantly more support downward. He also transmitted significantly less advice. Increased effectiveness functioned to bolster the self-image of the manager and apparently enabled him to initiate a de-bureaucratizing process.

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Table 1. THE EFFECTS OF SUCCESSION AND EFFECTIVENESS ON CHANGES IN DOWNWARD COMMUNICATION (MANAGER TO ASSISTANT MANAGERS) FROM PERIODS 1-3 TO TRANSITION PERIOD.*

Direction of percentage change from periods 1-3 to transition period:**	High Effectiveness (N = 6) (N = 13)		Low Effectiveness (N = 6) (N = 14)	
	No Succession	Succession	No Succession	Succession
1. Total Interaction				
Increased	5	8	1	11
Decreased	1	5	5	3
	P = .07		P = .005	
2. A Acts (Support)				
Increased	5	9	5	6
Decreased	1	4	1	8
3. B Acts (Giving Advice)				
Increased	5	8	1	10
Decreased	1	5	5	4
	P = .07		P = .01	
4. C Acts (Seeking Advice)				
Increased	4	7	1	8
Decreased	2	6	5	6

*All p levels by Fisher's Exact Test, 2 tails, unless otherwise noted. Comparisons not noted were not significant, $p > .20$.

**N was number of organizations.

Table 2. THE EFFECTS OF SUCCESSION AND EFFECTIVENESS ON CHANGES IN UPWARD COMMUNICATION (ASSISTANT MANAGERS TO MANAGER) FROM PERIODS 1-3 TO TRANSITION PERIOD.*

<u>Direction of percentage change from periods 1-3 to transition period.**</u>	<u>High Effectiveness</u>		<u>Low Effectiveness</u>	
	<u>(N = 6)</u> <u>No Succession</u>	<u>(N = 13)</u> <u>Succession</u>	<u>(N = 6)</u> <u>No Succession</u>	<u>(N = 14)</u> <u>Succession</u>
<u>1. Total Interaction</u>				
Increased	6	10	5	10
Decreased	0	3	5	4
			P = .01	
	P = .01			
<u>2. A Acts (Support)</u>				
Increased	5	10	1	8
Decreased	1	3	5	5
			P = .18	
	P = .07			
<u>3. B Acts (Giving Advice)</u>				
Increased	3	9	2	9
Decreased	3	4	4	5
<u>4. C Acts (Seeking Advice)</u>				
Increased	5	7	4	10
Decreased	1	6	2	4

*All p levels by Fisher's Exact Test, 2 tails. Comparisons not noted were not significant, $p > .20$.

**N was number of organizations. One case under Low Effectiveness, Succession, A Acts, was a tie and was omitted.

Table 4. THE EFFECTS OF SUCCESSION AND EFFECTIVENESS ON CHANGES IN DOWNWARD COMMUNICATION (MANAGER TO ASSISTANT MANAGERS) FROM THE TRANSITION PERIOD TO PERIOD 4-6.*

<u>Direction of percentage change from transition period to period 4-6**</u>	<u>Decreased Effectiveness***</u>		<u>Increased Effectiveness</u>	
	<u>(N = 6)</u> <u>No Succession</u>	<u>(N = 13)</u> <u>Succession</u>	<u>(N = 6)</u> <u>No Succession</u>	<u>(N = 14)</u> <u>Succession</u>
1. <u>Total Interaction</u>				
Increased	1	2	5	7
Decreased	5	11	1	7
<p>P = .07</p>				
Chi Square = 2.27, p < .20, df=1				
2. <u>A Acts (Support)</u>				
Increased	1	3	2	11
Decreased	5	10	4	3
<p>P = .14</p>				
P = .01				
3. <u>B Acts (Giving Advice)</u>				
Increased	1	3	6	6
Decreased	5	10	0	8
<p>P = .01</p>				
P = .046				
4. <u>C Acts (Seeking Advice)</u>				
Increased	3	4	3	5
Decreased	3	9	3	9

*All p levels by Fisher's Exact Test, 2 tails, unless otherwise noted. Comparisons not noted were not significant, p > .20.

**N was number of organizations.

***Chi Squares for Decreased vs. Increased Effectiveness combining Succession and No-Succession were 1) Total Interaction, 6.29, p < .02; 2) A Acts, 5.97, p < .02; 3) B Acts, 4.60, p < .05; 4) C Acts, not significant, p > .40.



Table 5. THE EFFECTS OF SUCCESSION AND EFFECTIVENESS ON CHANGES IN UPWARD COMMUNICATION (ASSISTANT MANAGERS TO MANAGER) FROM THE TRANSITION PERIOD TO PERIODS 4-6.*

Direction of percentage change from transition period to periods 4-6**	Decreased Effectiveness*** (N = 6) (N = 13)		Increased Effectiveness (N = 6) (N = 14)	
	No Succession	Succession	No Succession	Succession
1. Total Interaction				
Increased	1	3	5	4
Decreased	5	10	1	11
$\underbrace{\hspace{15em}}_{P = .07} \quad P = .005$				
2. A Acts (Support)				
Increased	3	8	5	3
Decreased	3	5	1	11
$\underbrace{\hspace{15em}}_{\text{Chi Square} = 3.08, P < .10} \quad P = .005$				
3. B Acts (Giving Advice)				
Increased	5	3	3	5
Decreased	1	10	3	9
4. C Acts (Seeking Advice)				
Increased	0	5	3	7
Decreased	6	8	3	7
$\underbrace{\hspace{15em}}_{P = .18}$				

*All p levels by Fisher's Exact Test, 2 tails, unless otherwise noted. Comparisons not noted were not significant, $p > .20$.

**N was number of organizations.

***Chi Squares for Decreased vs. Increased Effectiveness combining Succession and No Succession were not significant, $p > .20$.

Table 6. THE EFFECTS OF SUCCESSION AND EFFECTIVENESS ON CHANGES IN LATERAL COMMUNICATION (AMONG ASSISTANT MANAGERS) FROM THE TRANSITION PERIOD TO PERIODS 4-6.*

Direction of percentage change from transition period to periods 4-6**	Decreased Effectiveness*** (N = 6) (N = 13)		Increased Effectiveness (N = 6) (N = 14)	
	No Succession	Succession	No Succession	Succession
1. Total Interaction				
Increased	6	12	1	8
Decreased	0	1	5	6
2. A Acts (Support)				
Increased	5	9	1	5
Decreased	1	4	5	9
3. B Acts (Giving Advice)				
Increased	6	12	1	8
Decreased	0	1	5	5
4. C Acts (Seeking Advice)				
Increased	6	12	1	10
Decreased	0	1	5	4

*All p levels by Fisher's Exact Test, 2 tails, unless otherwise noted. Comparisons not noted were not significant, $p > .20$.

**N was number of organizations. One case, under Increased Effectiveness, Succession, B Acts, was a tie and was omitted.

***Chi Squares for Decreased vs. Increased Effectiveness combining Succession and No Succession were: 1) Total Interaction, 5.87, $p < .02$; 2) A Acts, 5.79, $p < .02$; 3) B Acts, 8.18, $p < .01$; 4) C Acts, 6.12, $p < .02$.