

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 298 590

CS 506 362

AUTHOR Aitken, Joan E.; Palmer, Rodger D.
 TITLE Selecting a Q Sample: A Study of Communication Types among Students, Faculty, and Administrators in Higher Education.
 PUB DATE 22 Oct 88
 NOTE 26p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Institute of the Study of Subjectivity: The International Q Conference (Columbia, MO, October 22, 1988).
 PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS College Students; Communication Research; Higher Education; Interpersonal Communication; Methods Research; Organizational Communication; *Q Methodology; *Research Methodology; *Statistical Analysis
 IDENTIFIERS *Q Analogies

ABSTRACT

A study explored issues regarding the selection of a Q sample in three studies using Stephenson's Q technique or Q methodology: a current study on initial interaction in interpersonal communication; a second study on the effects of alcohol use on interpersonal communication (these two studies are in progress and are the outgrowth and work of two classes in interpersonal communication); and a third study on a completed project about the nature of communication patterns in colleges and universities. By looking at a completed Q sort, some of the problems that arose in the sample can be examined. Several basic methodological decisions regarding the selection of a Q sample are considered: (1) how the statements for a Q concourse will be collected; (2) whether a pleasure-unpleasure (agree-disagree) balance to the sample will be imposed; (3) whether the statements evoke imagery and meaning; (4) whether a theoretical structure will be imposed; (5) how statements will be modified or rewritten; and (6) whether the Q sort will be tested and statements that provide little information will be omitted. Results support theories stating that communication channels in formal organization follow vertical and horizontal channels but do not indicate whether these channels of communication are a result of a mixture of types of communicators found in an organization or the communication style of an organization. (Two tables of data, 24 references, and four appendixes of statements are attached.) (RAE)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-KANSAS CITY

College of Arts & Sciences

Department of Communication Studies

5100 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, Missouri 64110 2499
Telephone (816) 276-1337

ED 298590

Selecting a Q Sample: A Study of Communication Types Among Students, Faculty, and Administrators in Higher Education

Joan E. Aitken
University of Missouri-Kansas City

Rodger D. Palmer
University of Missouri-Kansas City

A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Institute of the Study of Subjectivity: The International Q Conference, Columbia, Missouri, USA, October 22, 1988.

Joan E. Aitken is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Studies, University of Missouri-Kansas City. Rodger D. Palmer is a Senior Research Associate in the School of Pharmacy at the same institution.

Abstract. The purpose of this paper is to discuss issues regarding the selection of a Q sample in studies using Stephenson's Q technique or Q methodology. The authors use a study of the organizational communication in the college setting to provide one example of a completed study. Additional examples are provided through current studies of initial interpersonal communication and the effects of alcohol use on interpersonal communication. The paper provides a stimulus for discussing specific methodological issues in development of the Q concourse and selection of the Q sample.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Joan E. Aitken

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) "

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Selecting a Q Sample: A Study of Communication Types Among Students, Faculty, and Administrators in Higher Education

At last year's Q Conference, Rodger and I left full of new ideas regarding how we could better use Q technique and Q methodology in research and teaching. At that time we had a study of the organizational communication in the college setting in progress, which we have continued to reshape. Subsequently, I began using Q methodology as a teaching technique in an undergraduate course in communication. My original plan for this paper was to tell of the study and findings of the organizational communication study. But because the audience here is far more interested in the process of using Q methodology than the answers to specific research questions in our various fields of study, we decided to expand our paper to discuss a specific methodological concern.

In the various Q studies I have conducted, I find two stages to be the most difficult: first, the selection of the Q sample or statements to be used in the Q sort; and second, the final interpretation of the data. Because the quality of the entire study rests on the selection of the Q sample, that is the issue I wish to discuss today.

Last year after the meeting, I sent Len Barchak some Q sorts I had developed and asked him to react to them. His responses gave me insight regarding how to improve a Q sample. Thus, I hope that instead of me telling you about the way you should select a Q sample, we can share ideas as I talk about my studies.

Information from three studies are included in this paper. One current study is on initial interaction in interpersonal communication. The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of verbal, nonverbal, and contextual factors when people first meet. A preliminary Q sort was developed on the topic (see Appendix 1) and the final Q sort is now being developed. A partial concourse (Appendix 2) is included. In order to save space, the concourse was reduced to statements selected by various students as appropriate for the Q sort. The statements have not been reworded in any way, so they should provide a good basis for discussion. Another example examines the effects of alcohol use on interpersonal communication. These two studies are in progress and are the outgrowth and work of two classes in interpersonal communication. These studies are designed to investigate and teach students. The third study is a completed project about the nature of communication patterns in colleges and universities. By looking at a completed Q sort, you can consider some of the problems that arose in the sample.

Issues Regarding Sample (Q Sort Statement) Selection

There are several basic methodological decisions regarding the selection of the Q sample. We must answer several questions in our attempt to design an effective Q sort.

How will you collect statements for a Q concourse?

There are several possible ways to select statements for a concourse. In the past I have conducted in-depth interviews myself, trained students to conduct interviews and bring back statements, had students write essays on an issue from which statements were selected, and used focus groups to discuss a issue from which statements were selected.

In the initial interaction study example, the topic was selected for study by students in a class on interpersonal communication. Each student was to conduct an in-depth interview with a "significant other" and bring in approximately 25 statements from the interview. I have found that with some training, students can be quite effective in providing a concourse of statements.

Will you impose a pleasure-unpleasure (agree-disagree) balance to the sample?

I have heard discussions regarding whether statements in a Q sort should have an agree-disagree balance. Some researchers argue that such a balance is artificial and unnecessary. Some complain that statements with such a balance necessitate rewriting certain statements in the negative form, which may cause changed meanings or double negatives. I find that if there is not some basic balance, however, the respondents seem confused by the attempt to sort on an agree-disagree continuum. I should indicate, however, that I have always used a forced-choice continuum for my Q sorts. To test the possibility of an unbalanced Q sort, however, I decided to provide a Q sort on alcohol use without regard to statement balance. I used the statements in appendix 3, with modification only of sentence structure and gender concerns. There was no attempt to create an agree-disagree balance.

Do the statements evoke imagery and meaning?

After evaluating some of my Q statements last year, Barchak explained that people can be poetic if the proper probing is used. The premise of using actual wording of "the people out there" is that from their statements we can develop a concourse of what is said or thought about the particular subject.

In my first interpersonal communication class, the students conducted four Q studies during the semester. The quality and depth of statements improved dramatically over the semester. The best statements are ones that have meaning to everyone (not in the normative sense) because they should not mean the same thing to everyone, but the statements should evoke meaning in everyone. The best

statements seem to be ones that are interesting, thought-provoking, and image producing.

Will you impose a theoretical structure to the Q sample?

The decision regarding the theoretical structure of a Q sample is a difficult one for me. I admit that after listening to Dr. Stephenson's responses at last year's meeting, I felt confused regarding how to make this decision. I think that theoretical structure is one of the most significant contributions of Q Methodology because it allows us to test and reshape theory.

From the first initial interaction concourse, I selected statements for a Q sort (see appendix 1) based on a desire for variety. In the next semester, another class of students in interpersonal communication selected the same topic of study. Half the class conducted additional interviews on the topic. The class studied the lists of statements in small groups and individually. The students observed three recurring themes: nonverbal elements, verbal elements, and contextual elements. Students indicated statements they thought should be included in the Q sample from which I selected potential statements (see appendix 2).

The themes in the statements on the effect of alcohol use on communication were less obvious. Perhaps the problem here was the similarity of content and the fact that many statements failed to relate to the role of communication. Based on the student recommendations and relevance to the topic, I selected a sample (see appendix 3) which I modified slightly (grammar and gender corrections) and distributed to students as is. At this stage the question is: Is the lack of quantity in these statements a function of the interviewers or the topic?

In the completed study on the communication among faculty, students, and administrators, it seemed logical to select statements that related specifically to each of these groups and to a fourth segment of more generalized statements. In addition, we tried to structure the Q sorts to include statements about upward, downward, and horizontal communication. The group structure turned out to be a mistake, however, because the result was that many statements appeared less applicable to people of a particular group. We must then assume that our findings may be influenced by the wording of certain statements.

How will you modify or rewrite statements?

Often statements will have promise for the Q sort, but because of the particular wording, the language will cause certain people to agree or disagree on that basis. A relevant question: Should the language actually reflect biases so that gender, grammar, or other language elements influence responses or should the statements be "santitized" so that most respondents can relate to them? There could be

disadvantages in changing statements if the changes increased the similarity and size of the first factor.

I try to convert statements so they are gender neutral and refer to "I." I also usually rewrite statements to achieve a better agree-disagree balance, to correct major grammatical errors, gender specific language, and similar problems. The initial interaction statements (appendix 2) are in the form received from the students. They have not been modified so the reader can consider the influence of such potential problems.

Will you test the Q sort and omit statements that provide little information?

Certain statements will prove to be more effective than others in the Q sort. Just as I do not want statements that everyone will agree with, neither do I want ones that everyone will disagree with. For example, in a study of music videos I included a statement: "Some music videos make me want to kill soft, furr things." The statement had intrigued me and certainly indicated a powerful effect from music video viewing. In the administration of the Q sort, however, virtually everyone chose that statement as their most disagree statement, thus indicating the inclusion of the statement in the Q sort had little value.

In the initial interaction Q sort (see appendix 1), certain statements added little to the study while other appeared significant. The most significant statements will be combined in a revised Q sort with statements from the second class of students (appendix 2).

Communication Channels of Students, Faculty, and Administrators in Institutions of Higher Learning

A completed Q sort of the communication channels in institutions of higher learning is also included. Although additional data have been collected, preliminary results are included here. A discussion of that study follows.

Comparisons--and contrasts--between business organizations and institutions of higher education are often made. One area of difference between business and college organizational communication is the types and functions of groups in colleges. These groups--which also indicate role functions--may prohibit the application of a typical hierarchical organization. Certainly in a business, a major function of the individual's communication is his or her position in the organization. Does the same hold true in setting of institutions of higher education? One might expect the nature of communication to be influenced by the institution, the individual, the individual's role (student, staff, faculty, or administrator), or the individual's gender. The purpose of this study was to examine types of communicators in settings of higher education, and to suggest whether those types are most likely accounted for by individual differences, roles, or gender.

Background

Communication in organizations such as colleges and universities occurs in both the formal and informal structures found in these institutions. According to communication theorists, communication can follow vertical (upward and downward) and horizontal (peer to peer) channels in both the formal and informal structures (Goldhaber, 1986; Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974a; Massie, 1960).

The formal structure includes the legitimate communication (usually written) between and within offices, departments, (horizontal channels) and from level-to-level (vertical channels). These formal structures have certain chains of command to follow. For example, not everyone can (or should) pick up a telephone and call another person to discuss a problem, especially if that person is on a higher level. Thus, those unaware of the channels of communication in formal structures can find themselves in trouble if the chain of command is not followed (Taylor, Rosegrant, Meyer, & Samples, 1986).

Downward communication is communication passed from a higher level to a lower level in an organization or from individuals in superior roles or positions to those in subordinate roles or lower positions, such as professor to student or administrator to faculty. In some organizations there is so much downward communication that the system becomes overloaded causing a break down in effective communication. However, an "underload" of communication causes people on lower levels of an organization to feel uninformed, (Goldhaber, 1986) therefore the optimum level of communication is sometimes difficult to establish.

McCallistar (1983) stated that "management style and communication are inextricably linked" (p. 68) thus by insuring that downward communication is brief and accurate (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974a) an administrator can promote a feeling of trust and leadership in an institution.

Upward communication--that communication flowing from subordinates to superiors--is usually used to ask questions, make suggestions, or respond to downward communication (Goldhaber, 1986). Upward communication would appear to be as important as the downward flow, but in many organizations insufficient and overly restricted upward communication occurs. Planty and Machauer (1952) felt that communication should be a two-way street. In their study of the Johnson and Johnson Company, Planty and Machauer found that although most executives want upward communication, if they do not specifically request input from subordinates there is little upward flow. Reed (1962) found in another study that upward communication is filtered (a subordinate tells the superior only what the subordinate thinks the superior wants to hear, if subordinates do not trust superiors or if the subordinate has a high desire for upward movement in the organization.

Horizontal communication--communication between people on the same hierarchical level--occurs most frequently in lower levels in an organization (Simpson, 1959). This channel of communication is used to make low-level decisions, usually effecting only one department, without consulting an executive. Massie (1960) called this type of communication "automatic horizontal communication". In a study of communication between teachers and parents, Barron and Colvin (1984) saw this two-way communication as horizontal communication that solves problems without unnecessarily involving administrators. In many instances confusion is eliminated when such intradepartmental decisions are made. Albaum (1964) found this to be true. That study found that information that moved in upward channels and then back down channels was often distorted when the information reached the intended recipient.

The informal communication structure (usually verbal) is perceived as peer to peer communication (horizontal) and in many organizations called the "grapevine". Although the majority of informal communication is horizontal, Goldhaber (1986) found that "grapevine" communication can follow vertical channels as well. Sutton & Porter (1968) reported in their study of grapevine communication in large companies that only 25-33% of the employees passed grapevine information on to other employees. Although a small portion of employees participate in grapevine communication, Goldhaber found that the "grapevine" method of distributing information is used in many organizations when formal channels prove inappropriate. This informal channel of communication has been found to be fast and accurate but can encounter problems if the messages received are considered to be untrue or are from an unknown source (Walton, 1959; Sutton & Porter, 1968; Williams & Wiatrek, 1986).

The approach of this study was to use Q methodology to determine what feelings students, staff, faculty, and administrators have toward the channels of communication at their institution of higher learning. The purpose of the study was to determine the perceptions each group has of the upward and downward flow of communication (vertical channels) and communication between peers (horizontal channels). The research questions used to guide the study included:

1. Does each group (students, staff, faculty, and, administrators) perceive their communication channels as being the same or different?
2. Are the perception of communication channels different or the same according to gender?
3. Are communication channels perceived differently at different schools?
4. Does the research--in this case using Q methodology--support the existing theories about the

three channels (upward, downward, and horizontal) of communication within an organization?

Method

The use of Q method appears better suited than other measurements of organizational communication, such as the Audit Survey Questionnaire (CAS), the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ), or the Organizational Communication Questionnaire (OCQ) because of its ability to test theory and potential for restructuring information about individual perceptions (Greenbaum, 1986; Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974b; Stephen, 1985). According to Stephenson (1980):

Q sorts are operations of "focalizing attention" under given conditions of instruction, in which measurement is for a person's feeling and belief with self-reference....The individual, in Q sorting, may of course use judgment, reason, and comprehension, all of which we call conscious. But the underpinning is "affectability," and quantification is with respect to feeling, belief, and self reference. The outcome for any individual is operant factor structure, subject to various laws..., a structure that is indicative of objective properties of communicability of which the person is quite unaware. (p. 884)

Recent applications in communication and education (Cragan and Shields, 1981; Barchak, 1984; Stephen, 1985; Barbato, 1986; Murray, 1986, Nitcavic & Aitken, 1986) have indicated an acceptance of Q methodology in the communication and education disciplines. Also, "Q-methodology provides a means for analyzing the phenomenological world of the individual (or of small numbers of individuals) without sacrificing the power of statistical analysis" (Stephen, 1985, p. 193). For these reasons, Q methodology provided a unique method for discovering the feelings that individuals have toward the communication channels found in these institutions of higher learning.

In this study, 23 students in an undergraduate communication class wrote essays about the feeling they had about the channels of communication found in their university. From these essays, 39 statements were selected to provide the Q sample (see appendixes 4). A small Q sort was used to increase the chances of having busy faculty and administrators complete them. Of the 90 Q sorts distributed, 46 Q sorts were returned completed (23 were completed by students, six by staff, seven by faculty, and ten by administrators).

The 46 returned Q sorts were analyzed by using the Quanal statistical program (Van Tubergen, 1959). Six types (factors) were extracted. Two of the types were closely

correlated to others and were not considered in evaluating results. Only four people loaded on these two types.

Results

The following factor descriptions outline the characteristic of the four main types of communicators found in this study of communication channels in institutions of higher education:

Type 1. The Looking Upward Type

This person is self-confident, feels influential, takes control of situations, is not intimidated by superiors and can communicate upward and horizontally but not downward. Loadings included: 18 students, 2 staff, 0 faculty, and 1 administrator.

Type 2. The Outgoing Type

This person is also self-confident and in control. The person feels that his or her opinions count. This person can communicate in all directions: upward, downward, and horizontally. Loadings included: 0 students, 1 staff, 3 faculty, and 1 administrator.

Type 3. The Overloaded Type

This person feels overworked because of excessive paper flow, does not feel in control, feels that the University doesn't care about his or her ideas or opinions. This person has little communication competence because he or she does not communicate upward or downward, and communicates very little horizontally. The horizontal communication is primarily with people he or she feels have the same view of the University. Loadings included: 4 students, 1 staff, 4 faculty, and 1 administrator.

Type 4. The Fantasy Type

This type feels that the University is working well, that his or her opinions count, that everyone understands University policy, and there is good communication in all directions (downward, upward, and horizontal communication). Because it is unlikely that the communication in any organization is this effective, we have called it "the fantasy type." The only problem this person perceives is that faculty don't communicate with administrators well. Loadings included: 1 student, 1 staff, 0 faculty, and 4 administrators.

The results of the study answered the four initial question as follows:

1. Does each group perceive their communication channels as being the same or different? By using a Chi-square to test differences between groups it was found

that there was a significant difference between students, faculty, and administrators (see table 1).

2. Are the perceptions of communication channels different or the same according to gender? By using Chi-square for independence to test for differences, it appears there is no difference accounted for by gender (see table 2).

3. Are communication channels perceptions different according to institution? By using a Chi-square for independence there appears to be a significant difference between institutions (see table 3). A larger sample, however, would clarify this difference.

4. Does the research--in this case using Q methodology--support the existing theories about the three channels of communication within an organization? Yes, the theory of directional communication in organizations (upward, downward, and horizontal communication) was supported. However, apparently not all organizational members use all directions as demonstrated by type one lacking downward communication and in type three lacking upward and downward communication.

Discussion

O'Bryan-Garland and Swinton (1982) feel that interaction skills are needed to have successful movement of ideas and information between students, professors, and administrators. The results of this study support O'Bryan-Garland and Swinton in that such skills were present in the types that showed good communication at all levels. Thus, the differences between factors and groups are worth noting:

1. Most students loaded on type 1 suggesting that these students find communicating with superiors and peers easy.
2. Faculty were split between types 2 and 3 which may suggest that while some faculty feel that there is good communication between all levels on campus while there is an equal number that feel just the opposite.
3. Staff did not load on any one type, perhaps because staff must deal with both superiors and subordinates, and therefore feel that their communication channels must change depending upon whom they are communicating with.
4. Administrators loaded highest on type four which may indicate that administrators feel that their institution is working fine. In actuality, the administrators may actually be out of touch with what is going on below them.

Gender apparently has little to do with the flow of communication. Statistical analysis of gender loading showed no difference based on gender. The results indicate

that difference in feelings toward communication is dependent upon the group association or hierarchical level of the individual rather than ones gender.

To answer the question of differences between institutions a more balanced group of subjects needs to be tested. Additional studies need to be done with a more balanced number of respondents.

This study supports theories stating that communication channels in formal organization follow vertical and horizontal channels but does not indicate whether these channels of communication are a result of a mixture of types of communicators found in an organization or the communication style of an organization.

Table 1

Differences Between Groups

OBSERVED FREQUENCIES:

Type	1	2	3	4
Student	18	0	4	1
Staff	2	1	1	1
Faculty	0	3	4	0
Administrator	1	1	1	4

EXPECTED FREQUENCIES:

11.50	2.74	5.48	3.29
2.50	0.60	1.19	0.71
3.50	0.83	1.67	1.00
3.50	0.83	1.67	1.00

NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS	42
CHI-SQUARE	33.4057
SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL	0.0001
CONTINGENCY COEF.	0.6656
CRAMER'S PHI SQUARE	0.5149

Differences According to Gender

OBSERVED FREQUENCIES:

Type	1	2	3	4
Male	10	3	4	1
Female	11	2	6	5

EXPECTED FREQUENCIES:

	9.00	2.14	4.29	2.57
	12.00	2.86	5.71	3.43

NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS	42
CHI-SQUARE	2.5083
SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL	0.4738
CONTINGENCY COEF.	0.2374
CRAMER'S PHI PRIME	0.2444

References

- Albaum G. (1964). Horizontal information flow: An exploratory study. Academy of Management Journal, 7, 21-23.
- Barbato, C. A. (1986). Uses of interpersonal communication. Paper presented at SCA in Chicago.
- Barchak, L. J. (1984, July). Discovering communication paradigms with Q methodology: Ferment or sour grapes? Operant Subjectivity, 7, 115-130.
- Barron, B. (.), & Colvin, J. M. (1984). Teachers talk to parents. Education, 105, 76-78.
- Cragan, J. F., & Shields, D. C. (Eds.) (1981). Applied communication research. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- Goldhaber, G. M. (1986). Organizational communication. (4th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Brown.
- Greenbaum, H. H. (1986). The measurement of organization wide communication: A comparison of three recognized instruments. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 271 796)
- Massie, J. L. (1960). Automatic horizontal communication in management. Academy of Management Journal, 3, 87-91.
- McCallistar, L. (1983). Predicted employee compliance to downward communication styles. Journal of Business Communication, 20, 67-79.
- Murray, E. (1986). Quantifying qualitative data: The Q-sort as an aid to interpretive rigor. Paper presented at SCA in Chicago.
- Nitcavic, R. G., & Aitken, J. E. (1986). The communication of inclusion: Communication needs of mainstreamed adolescents, paper presented at SCA in Chicago.
- O'Bryan-garland, S., & Swinton, M. (1982). Application of communication concepts: Effective interaction with students, teachers, parents, and administrators. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 266 507)
- Planty, E., & Machauer, W. (1952). Upward communication: A project in executive development. Personnel, 28, 304-318.
- Read, W. H. (1962). Upward communication in industrial hierarchies. Human Relations, 15, 3-15.
- Roberts, K. H., & O'Reilly, C. A., III. (1974a). Failures in upward communication in organizations: Three possible culprits. Academy of Management Journal, 17, 205-215.
- Roberts, K. H., & O'Reilly, C. A., III. (1974b). Measuring organizational communication. Journal of Applied Psychology, 59, 321-326.
- Simpson, R. L. (1959). Vertical and horizontal communication in formal organizations. Administrative Science Quarterly, 4, 183-196.
- Stephen, T. D. (1985). Q-Methodology in communication science: An introduction. Communication Quarterly, 33, 193-200.

- Stephenson, W. (1980). Newton's fifth rule and Q-Methodology: Application to educational psychology. American Psychologist, 35(10), 882-889.
- Sutton, H., & Porter L. (1968). A study of the grapevine in a governmental organization. Personnel Psychology, 21, 223-230.
- Taylor, A., Rosegrant, T., Meyer, A., & Samples, B. T. (1986). Communicating (4th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Van Tubergen, N. (1975). QUANAL user's guide (Computer program manual). Lexington, KY: Dept. of Communication, University of Kentucky.
- Walton, E. (1959). Communicating down the line: How they really get the word. Personnel, 36(4), 78-82.
- Williams, M. L., & Wiatrek, D. (1986). An analysis of the communication systems of part and full-time instructors in community colleges. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 270 829)

Appendix 1: Statements Used in First Initial Interaction Q Sort

1. It is easier to meet people at parties or in groups.
2. It is easier to communicate with women.
3. If I'm meeting someone, I'll just know whether I like them or not. It just clicks.
4. When it's sunny it makes it easier for me to communicate.
5. It's easiest to trust someone in a blue room, because it reminds me of heaven.
6. I have a harder time talking to the opposite sex than my own.
7. It's harder for me to speak with someone wearing a five hundred dollar suit than one wearing a hundred and fifty dollar one.
8. I communicate better outdoors, because there is more to talk about.
9. It is a challenge to meet new people and remain composed.
10. First impressions are not important to me.
11. People who wear bright colors appear to be calm and sensitive.
12. When I first meet someone, I look for a smile and how willing they are to meet me.
13. I am observant of others and notice how they appear to be feeling--if they are sick, tired, happy, etc.
14. A friendly surrounding would have the curtains open, lots of light, plants, and bright colors.
15. People shouldn't be judged by the initial impressions they give.
16. I sometimes avoid eye contact when talking to someone I don't know very well.
17. I will talk to someone while standing in line at a football game.
18. Initial contact leaves a lasting impression on me.
19. People who put up obvious fake fronts during initial contact usually are the type of people who end up to be not worth knowing.
20. I do not like people who talk in my face and invade my space.
21. The first thing I look at when I meet someone--after overall appearance--is their face.
22. I am especially impressed when people remember my name a week or longer after having met me only once.
23. I feel most comfortable talking with someone in a familiar setting-- whether it's my house or a restaurant--where I feel like I have some control over the conversation and the setting, and I'm not "blocked in."

24. It's sad to admit, but I think looks are important because, often times, that's all you've got to go by when you meet someone.
25. Shoes can tell me a great deal about a person's character.
26. An individual who cannot look me directly in the eyes has a personality or emotional problem. I do not have time to waste on trying to take care of their problems and therefore I would not go out of my way to get better acquainted with them.
27. A relaxed body movement and a nice easy smile--not good or bad looks--make a person approachable.
28. I observe the type of clothes people wear to determine whether they perceive themselves to be in control.
29. A home that is messy points to an irresponsible person.
30. People who avoid a handshake are socially rude.
31. I don't like it if they first touch me--like on the arm--when we just meet.
32. I like it when they say my name, use it in conversation.
33. Eye contact, gestures, and stance are secondary things I notice.
34. People shouldn't be judged by the initial impression that they give.
35. I only notice the extremes of a person's appearance, such as bad odor or too much make-up.
36. My opinion of a person is low if they use profanity.
37. The first thing I notice about a man is they way he shakes hands.
38. I can usually decide whether I like a person in the first ten minutes.
39. I am quicker to judge men upon first impressions because I know them better and sense their feelings, motives, and intentions.
40. I feel that first impressions are lasting ones because you may never have a second chance.
41. A person's speech and grammar don't affect my first impression.
42. People who care about their appearance and taking care of themselves are more dependable than others.
43. When I first meet a person, if he or she lights up a cigarette, it causes me to dislike the person immediately.
44. I hate weak handshakes because they mean the person really doesn't want to meet you.
45. When I talk to someone, I do not like physical barriers between us--a desk, for example--it means you are intimidated or don't like each other.
46. Too many things on the wall are distracting to a conversation.

Selecting a Q Sample 18

47. A person who has a lot of hair on or around his or her face looks like they have something to hide or coverup.
48. If a person greets me initially with open arms, I feel very threatened.
49. A "friendly" room consists of a television, soft couch, fireplace, carpet, a lot of space, and a high ceiling.
50. I am in control of someone if he or she cannot keep eye contact with me.
51. People who use a lot of gestures in communication are more imaginative or creative.
52. Pleasant subtle odors (incense, food) promote a friendly atmosphere.
53. The lines in one's face are a good indication of character.

Appendix 2: New Statements for Possible Use in Revised
Initial Interaction Q Sort

1. I am more interested in someone's speech patterns and their attitudes, not their looks.
2. The way a person dresses does not always reflect their personality.
3. Mannerisms are an important factor in gauging someone's personality.
4. Facial expressions reveal as much as words.
5. If someone is unpleasant to me when I first meet them, I find it hard to like them for awhile.
6. I think a person's personality depends on how they greet you. First impressions come from handshakes, whether it's firm or a wet dishrag, eye contact and whether or not the person is smiling.
7. Strong first impressions on parents are often made by how other parents treat or discipline their children. First impression can be made without even meeting the other parents.
8. Wearing work clothes instead of a dress suit makes a more favorable first impression on the working class person. If you are a salesperson they probably won't buy from you if you're dressed up. They feel you are acting superior to them.
9. You can tell by someone's outward appearance whether or not they can be trusted.
10. Physical disabilities can affect first impressions. If a person appears handicapped you are more likely to feel sympathy for them even before you actually meet them.
11. If a person will look you in the eye when talking to you I am more likely to have a favorable first impression of them. If they don't look at you, I feel that they' don't think you are important.
12. Women's first impressions have more of an impact than men's do.
13. On a first impression, I think people perceive me as arrogant.
14. If a person wears polyester this gives me a negative impression of them.
15. If a man has feminine characteristics, that gives me more of a negative impression than if a woman has masculine characteristics.
16. A lot of times first impressions are made on sight alone without any verbal interaction with the individual.
17. I tend to form better first impressions of people that are from the same class and age group as me.
18. I try to form a good first impression; I want people to like me.

19. I think women form stronger first impressions and tend to stick with them more than men.
20. I try to be middle of the line and appeal to everyone.
21. Looks have more importance on first impressions when meeting people of the opposite sex, rather than people of the same sex.
22. A person who is attractive but sloppily dressed makes a better first impression than an ugly person who is dressed nice.
23. An expressionless face has no bearing on a first impression.
24. If someone uses swear words it makes a bad first impression.
25. Guys with long hair make a bad first impression. Girls with greasy hair make a bad first impression.
26. First impressions are never forgotten.
27. Even though a person may give a good first impression I don't always like them.
28. First impressions are lasting ones.
29. People are often fake when they know they will be making their first impression on someone.
30. I am more critical of people of the same sex than those of opposite sex when I first meet them.
31. I try to avoid formulating first impressions.
32. On first impression we try to make people fit your personality, so we can become accepted.
33. On first encounter we do things because we want to be liked.
34. Favorite seeing is the church, since we are all more relax and in a more honest mood.
35. Always try to maintain secrets because not sure how person will perceive ones openness.
36. My criteria for judging first impressions has changed over the years.
37. I've only been wrong a few times with my first impression of a person.
38. By looking into someone's eyes, I can immediately tell a lot about that person when we first meet.
39. Usually I have to wait to examine their mannerisms and facial expressions before I can pass first judgment on a person.
40. I believe there's such a thing as "love at first sight."
41. It is usually hard for me to change my first impression of someone after I see different sides of them after being with them for a while.
42. I am usually more concerned about how they are perceiving me and take less time to read an accurate impression of them, when I am interacting with another initially.

43. I'm not sure I trust those who at first begin talking about themselves rather than leaving the door open to discussion.
44. I believe I'm in control of my nonverbal cues and can reveal the impression I want when first meeting someone.
45. I usually read a person totally from their nonverbal actions rather than our initial conversation.
46. I usually judge a person on their first sentence--hardly ever on an entire conversation when we first meet.

Appendix 3: Q Sort of the Effects of Alcohol Use on Interpersonal Communication

1. When people drink heavily, they become hostile and belligerent.
2. A person who has been drinking heavily becomes sadistic and antagonistic.
3. Children or spouses of people who drink heavily become very self-conscious.
4. Alcohol reduces inhibitions in communication.
5. Alcohol creates a false sense of courage.
6. Drinking alcohol causes a person to say things they don't mean.
7. Consumption of alcohol strains the relationship between a husband and a wife (boyfriend-girlfriend).
8. Heavy drinkers verbally abuse their family and loved ones.
9. When you meet a person who has been drinking, you are not meeting the real person.
10. I don't like to drink that much, but I feel like I stand out too much if there's not a glass in my hand.
11. When someone is drunk, I don't even try to talk to them.
12. I would go to a big party even though no alcohol would be served.
13. I become less self-conscious after drinking.
14. When I drink, I feel more open and comfortable talking to strangers.
15. Bars (parties) are good places to get rowdy, meet with friends, and blow off school.
16. Alcohol can help communication, but too much can be disastrous on communication.
17. In a restaurant, alcohol helps create a mood for serious conversation.
18. On first impression, if I have someone with alcohol breath, it turns me off so I'm not interested in pursuing the conversation.
19. It's not smart for teenagers and young adults to release all their inhibitions with alcohol.
20. My views on drinking have not changed over the past ten years.
21. I usually am not as nervous when I meet someone for the first time if I've had a drink.
22. I hate to meet people who are plastered.
23. Drinking affects my perception of people.
24. Some commercials and media make me feel like my life would be more glamorous if I drink.
25. My ideas about people seem distorted if I've had a lot to drink.
26. Drinking is bad for your image.
27. Drinking tends to lower one's inhibitions and reluctance.

28. In most experiences with people who are drinking, I find that they tend to become more relaxed and interact with those around them more.
29. If one of my good friends drinks excessively and acts really stupid every once in a while, my opinion of hem doesn't change.
30. When I drink I tend to become an extrovert.
31. Guys drink socially because it's something that's been passed along time--a guy goes out to have a drink with the boys.
32. I feel that alcohol isn't such a great idea when conducting business negotiations--one should be level-headed when doing so.
33. I feel that the media has a major effect on people's drinking habits. I've seen people try to do some stupid things they've seen on t.v.
34. I used to cling to my drink at parties because I was insecure, but now I can drink or not drink at parties. I don't feel like it necessary.
35. It's hard to tell a person that they are too drunk to drive.
36. When at a bar, a drink is sometimes the only thing in common with other people.
37. My parents always drink when they go out.
38. People seem to find imaginary friends when drunk and talk to them.
39. Drinking is a communication medium.
40. When I drink I tend to be less tactful.
41. It is sometimes awkward to talk to someone who has had a few drinks when I am sober.
42. I sometimes wonder what it would be like to get drunk. I wonder how I would communicate in that situation.
43. Women are less affected by peer pressure (to drink).
44. It is okay to serve alcohol to minors who have graduated from high school but not to high schoolers because of their maturity.
45. I feel people have more respect for people who don't drink than for those who do drink.
46. How I perceive someone is changed by noticing the type of drink they are drinking.
47. Drinking helps relationships over troubled times.
48. I am more warm-hearted when drinking.
49. I am more likely to lie if I have been drinking.
50. People who do not drink at bars or parties are viewed as conservative and not as social.
51. At high school and college parties people who get drunk are better accepted than those who do not drink.
52. I become less attentive to others the more I drink.
53. Drinking becomes a contest with some people. "who can drink the most?"

Appendix 4: Statements Used in College Q Sort

1. I am a student.
2. I am a faculty member.
3. I am an administrator.
4. If there is a problem or question I can go directly to the source.
5. I feel my opinions are ignored.
6. I feel that my opinions count at this university.
7. If I wanted to, I would feel free to call the president of the university.
8. The Board of Curators/Trustees are in touch with what's going on here.
9. I find it difficult to communicate with administrators.
10. Students seldom talk much to other students on this campus.
11. There is little communication between administrators and other administrators.
12. University staff are an important part of campus policy-making.
13. The best source of information on this campus is other people like me.
14. If I don't know about a university policy or procedure I'd be lucky to find out.
15. The handbook is the best source of information about university policies.
16. Parents of students have easy access to administrators on this campus.
17. The best place to find information about degree requirements is from student advisors.
18. I can communicate comfortably with administrators at this school.
19. Students and faculty rarely communicate outside of class.
20. Administrators are in touch with what is happening in the classroom.
21. I find communicating with students to be difficult.
22. For the most part there is little communication on campus.
23. I feel that I can easily influence others on campus.
24. The bureaucracy at this school makes it difficult to communicate with superiors.
25. The best place to find information about class policy is from faculty.
26. I feel really isolated from sources of information and decision-making on this campus.
27. If I really want to find out what is happening, I talk to a secretary.
28. There seem to be a lot of cliques on this campus.
29. Most administrators on this campus have an open door policy and are easy to talk to.
30. There is good communication between all groups on campus.

31. I feel I am able to talk to superiors when ever I want to.
32. The best way to communicate with the school President or Chancellor is by writing a letter.
33. I find that most students fully understand university policy.
34. Everyone here is concerned about their own problems, they aren't interested in other areas of the university.
35. Students rarely have an opportunity to talk to administrator.
36. I perceive the communication between faculty and students as being distant.
37. I feel it is difficult for faculty to communicate with administrators.
38. The only people faculty talk to are other faculty.
39. The campus paper flow is overwhelming.