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A Study of the Relationship between the Written Communication of Community College Deans and the Deans' Effectiveness Ratings

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Recommended Citation

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
THE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEANS
AND THE DEANS' EFFECTIVENESS RATINGS

by

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment
of the
Degree of Doctor of Education

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
December 1978

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this thesis required that I use several scales. To Harper & Row, Publishers, for their permission to use the two scales developed by Rudolf Flesch and published by them in The Art of Readable Writing, I am grateful. I also appreciate the permission to use Ohio State University's Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire, published by their Bureau of Business Research. Dr. Walker Gibson also gave me permission to use his "Style Machine," and I am especially pleased that I could do so. My own development of a scale for measuring grammatical usage and accuracy would not have been possible without the fast and efficient assistance of three of my colleagues at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, John Corbin, Bill Lay, and Joanne Wright. Dr. Marilyn J. Schlack also helped by providing me with updated figures on Michigan deans. I thank all of them for sharing their expertise with me.

Of course three other experts were invaluable to me. Dr. William P. Viall, who chaired my committee, and Drs. Charles T. Brown and James R. Sanders, who served on it, all provided patient, perceptive, needed advice. They have been the kind of committee everyone should have.

Although writing a thesis is in some ways a solitary work, it would not be worthwhile without the support of family and friends. I thank mine for tolerating me.

Maureen Phyllis Taylor

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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Description

Today's community college administrators, like their counter-
parts in business and industry, can no longer rely on daily, face-to-
face contacts with all members of their staffs. In a large and busy
organization a great deal of the communication between administration
and faculty must be written. Numerous memos keep faculty up-to-date
on policies, accomplishments, work deadlines, and procedures. These
messages--brief, handwritten notes, dittoed memos, or formal letters
(usually typed by the secretary, with or without changes)--represent
the dean who originated them. They reflect the dean's distinctive
style of communicating. These written communications are received
by faculty members as a "behavior" of the dean comparable to behavior
in faculty meetings or at social gatherings. From the totality of
these behaviors faculty glean their impressions of the dean as an
effective or ineffective administrator.

Probably most college teachers have had an experience similar
to that of poet John Ciardi (1968), who is also a college professor.

> Some years ago I received a reasonably standard nasty
> letter from a dean. "You will explain at once," it
> began. And it then went on to say that "to not keep
> adequate records is a grave matter."
>   I sent a letter back with a note saying its tone
> was unacceptable, that his request for information
> would have to be rewritten in a form acceptable to

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the consensus of a full faculty meeting, and that while he
was rewriting, I should prefer that he not split infin-
itives. (p. 187)

The administrator who is a skilled writer can criticize faculty
members without making them angry, but the less-skilled communicator
can irritate even while intending to compliment. The variable of
written communication can affect faculty perceptions of administration.
Does this mean that the dean who is a good memo writer is looked on
favorably by community college faculty? Is the dean who writes ungram-
matical memos that show little concern for the reader judged by the
faculty to be less effective?

In spite of the lip service paid in almost all large organiza-
tions to the importance of internal communications, they have not
been studied in depth. Very little is known about the possible link
between the quality of this internal communication and the employees'
perceptions of the communicator.

This study was designed to determine whether certain character-
istics of community college deans' written communication with their
faculties have high correlations with high effectiveness ratings given
them by their faculty members. It was also designed to investigate
the correlation between certain related characteristics--academic
training (degrees earned), teaching experience (subject matter and
length of time), number of publications--of the deans and these effec-
tiveness ratings.

Research Objectives

A study of the possible connection between effective administration and written communication could be approached in myriad ways. For this investigation there were six objectives. The rationale for selecting these objectives is found in the "Conceptual Framework" section and in Chapter Two.

1. To measure and describe certain characteristics of the written communication of community college deans.

2. To measure and describe certain related personal characteristics of community college deans.

3. To measure and describe faculty perceptions of the administrative effectiveness of these same deans.

4. To determine the correlations between the measurements of the written communication and the measurements of the perceived effectiveness of the deans studied.

5. To determine the correlations between the measurements of the personal characteristics and the measurements of the perceived effectiveness of the deans studied.

6. To develop an explanation of the findings in light of previous research and theory.

The fourth and fifth of these objectives, stated as more specific hypotheses, can be found at the end of Chapter Two. Chapter Three describes the design of the study. Measurements, descriptions, and statistical results for all objectives are included in Chapter Four. Objectives for further study are contained in Chapter Five.

Conceptual Framework

Because this study deals with perceived effectiveness, rather than
financial success, measurable output, or some other tangible result
of effective administration, it is related to the complex process of
interpersonal perception. Faculty member X, evaluating Administrator
Y, describes his perception of Y, and this perception is necessarily
different in subtle ways from the perception Faculty member Z describes
when she evaluates Y. Even when Administrator Y attempts to interact
with and communicate to both faculty in the same way, X and Z will
have different responses to him. From the infinite number of details
which might be observed about Y, each individual will select those
which are important to him or her to emphasize and store in memory.
Each uses his own screen to filter out less meaningful details. Even
while X and Z are engaged in creating their own sets of beliefs about
Y, they continue to communicate with him. This process of communica-
tion is influenced by their perceptions, but it also influences these
perceptions, all at the same time (Taylor, Rosegrant, Meyer, & Samples,
1977).

Two of Hoban's principles (1973) are particularly applicable:

Message content lies in inferences, and . . . these
inferences concern relationships involved in any in-
formational exchange transaction. In effect, then, the
content of communication is controlled by the receiver
as well as by the source, perhaps even more so. (p. 13)

To a greater extent than generally realized or acknowl-
edged, communication transactions occur in small incre-
ments, cumulatively, implicitly, and at the heart of

what Jackson calls "the hidden curriculum." (pp. 13-14)

Deans are especially vital in this communication process, as they should be "key communications centers" (Richman & Farmer, 1974, p. 246). The relationship of a dean and a faculty member can be visualized as a dynamic, cumulative cycle. Figure 1 (p. 6) illustrates the interrelationship of communication and perception in this process. As the figure shows, written communication is only one of the many inputs that go to make up the total perception of the administrator. All of the variables need to be studied, and much research could be done on the amount of influence each has on the total perception. Of course, differences in the sensitivities of the individuals—both faculty member and administrator—would probably keep any two situations from being identical. Some faculty would be more influenced by communications _about_ the administrator than by communications _from_ him, some would rely almost wholly on nonverbal communication, and others would maintain an even balance. Although all aspects of this communication cycle would merit analysis, this study was designed to investigate only the shaded part of the diagram: written communication from the administrator to the faculty member and the faculty member's responding perception of the administrator.

<div align="center">Definitions</div>

In this study several terms need defining, including these:

community college: a public institution providing the first two
years of post-secondary education and granting
associate degrees. (In Michigan, where this
study took place, some are still designated

Figure I

Administrator-Faculty Communication Cycle

ADMINISTRATOR Y

Perceptions
of Faculty
Member X

Y's Screen

COMMUNICATION Written Oral Nonverbal

COMMUNICATION Written Oral Nonverbal

Communication
about Administrator
Y

Communication
about Faculty Member X

X's Screen

FACULTY MEMBER X
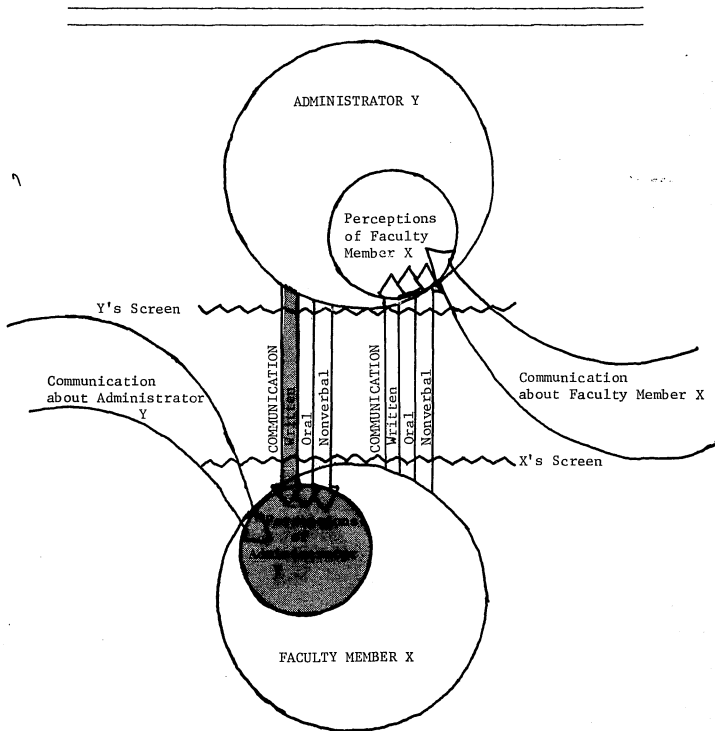
as "junior," and one such--Grand Rapids Junior College--was included in this sample.)

dean: an administrator in a position above department chairperson and below college president. (Since some colleges use other titles than "dean," the Education Directory put out by the National Center for Education Statistics was used to determine which administrators served as deans in the eight community colleges used in the sample. Included were administrators defined as "Chief Academic Officer," 02 in the Education Directory; "Chief Business Officer," 03; "Chief Development Officer," 04; "Chief Librarian," 05; "Chief Student Life Officer," 08; and "Dean or Director" of various instructional programs, 11 to 38.)

Hardest to define were the characteristics of written communication. An attempt to be quantifiable helped to remove some of the subjectivity from terms such as these:

readability: the ease with which written communication can be read, as measured by a scale developed in 1948 by Rudolf Flesch.

human interest: the amount of personal appeal in written communication, as measured by a scale developed in 1948 by Rudolf Flesch.

tone: elements of written communication that reflect the writer's attitude toward the reader and the subject. (One of the few quantitative scales for measuring the typical "voice" of a prose passage is Walker Gibson's 1966 "Style Machine." It identifies three styles: tough, sweet, and stuffy. Since stuffiness is defined as "the 'inflated' language of officialese, the speaker . . . being filled with gas, or hot air" [p. 91], it is the most apropos to any discussion of organizational communication.)

"Effectiveness" can also be an elusive term as it is applied to an administrator or other leader. Fortunately, much research has already been done on exactly what behaviors are perceived as indicators

of effective leadership.

> effectiveness: the achievement of goals generally seen as
>   desirable by the group.

One of the most useful research projects began at Ohio State University in 1945. The Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) resulted from this research in 1957, and over the last 20 years it has been tested and validated through use in many scientific studies. It was used in this study to rate the deans according to their perceived effectiveness. The most effective deans were those scoring high on both factors identified by the questionnaire: Initiating Structure and Consideration. Behavior that establishes "well-defined patterns of organization, channels of communication, and ways of getting the job done" (Halpin, 1957, p. 1) was considered in the Initiating Structure rating. The Consideration score was based on behavior that indicates "friendship, mutual trust, respect, and warmth in relationship between the leader and members of the group" (p. 1).

<div align="center">Significance of the Study</div>

Although there have been many studies of effective leadership in administrative positions, few of them have investigated the correlation between leadership and communication skills, and none has dealt with specific writing behaviors. Studying writing samples has both an advantage and a disadvantage. Writing samples are easier to collect than are spoken samples of communication, and they are less artificial than tape-recorded dialogues. Still, since few administrators type their own messages, a critic could argue that such a study really

evaluates the effectiveness of the deans' secretaries. There are two responses to this objection. First, the dean who is really concerned about communication will be sure to hire a competent secretary. Second, the study is not concerned with what a dean _could_ do or what a dean _knows_. It is concerned with what the faculty sees of his/her communication behavior—either before or after the secretary has tampered with it—for what the faculty sees becomes the basis for many conclusions about the dean's leadership techniques.

The importance of being a good communicator has been recognized by graduate programs that train would-be deans. The future dean is advised to "have good communication with the faculty," but such advice is too vague to be helpful. A study which reveals the relationship between specific characteristics of administrative communications and the subordinates' perceptions of the administrator-writer should be valuable in administrative training programs.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Literature on the Dean as Communicator

How important is written communication in accomplishing the daily tasks of the dean? How does this communication influence faculty when they evaluate the dean? Very little research exists to relate the topics of communication and evaluation, but each topic has its own body of literature.

The dean should be effective as a communicator both in speech and in writing. Recent commentators on the deanship have paid much lip service to this principle in spite of an almost total lack of research to support it. Some appear to accept the idea as a "given" needing little explanation. One such is ten Hoor (1968), whose discussion of personnel problems in academic administration at the college level included only a brief mention: "Regular communication is obviously necessary to the maintenance of good relations between the dean and members of the faculty" (p. 164).

Although communication was not specifically mentioned in the study, its importance was evidenced in the influential research done by Gould (1968). Surveying 166 deans at institutions of varying sizes, he asked them to rank their duties according to the amounts of time and skill each task demanded. "Faculty relations and morale" headed the list with a combined rating of 102, nearly twice that of the nearest

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competitor--Recruitment of faculty (surely a task which would be weighted more lightly in 1978). Most of the weighting for morale came from the skill required by the task, and certainly a large part of that skill depends upon the ability to communicate.

At about the same time as Gould's research Joughin (1968) wrote of three special qualities needed by deans: integrity, leadership, and "mastery of the English language" (p. 143). His negative estimate of skills existing at that time can be seen from these comments:

> I am not of course attacking individuals; more exactly, I am attacking nearly everybody. For a good many years it has been my privilege and business to converse and to exchange letters with government officials, lawyers, and faculty members and administrators in colleges and universities. I can only report to you that many of these persons, all of whom carry heavy responsibility, appear to be partly paralyzed or to give evidence of pathological deterioration in their communicative centers. Perhaps it is the world we live in-- a world of grunts, mumbles and harsh loudspeakers deficient in harmonic overtones. Few today practice the old art of fine words, beautifully arranged and winningly uttered. This is all very sad, and I for one would be tremendously grateful to a dean who set a high standard for his college. (pp. 143-144)

Communication was given short shrift when Salmen wrote <u>Duties of Administrators in Higher Education</u> (1961). A nine-page chapter entitled "Deans" made no mention of writing skills or the ability to communicate as job requirements. This was in spite of the fact that he called deans

> the most important group of administrators in the whole of American higher education for they . . . translate the aspirations of teachers into an organized program which will fall within the necessities of the budget. (p. 63)

However, in his comments on administrators in general Salmen did acknowledge the importance of their writing ability:

Whether through schooling or through experience no one should
be trusted to interpret or coordinate who does not understand
a balance sheet and operating statement, know something of
physics and chemistry, read a blueprint, make a budget, write
a clear-cut paragraph, have some feeling for art and literature
and appreciate a humorous situation. (p. 23)

Writing in Liberal Education in 1974 McGammon also emphasized

the importance of communication in general.

The academic administrator must exercise leadership, assure
ready communication and uphold vital traditions if the insti-
tution is to survive and to accomplish its function in society.
(p. 281)
     It is in the nature of a college that the scope of commun-
ication should be inclusive rather than exclusive. Experience
has shown that it is better for a dean to tell his faculty and
staff more rather than less than they need to know. Excepting
individual salaries, there are few items of fact that need to
be kept confidential. (p. 282)

Such comments were not to be ignored. When the federal government

got into the act of training educational administrators under Title

III, an emphasis on communication was evident--at least in titles

such as Educational Management: An Inservice Manual for Educational

Administrators. Part IV--Communication and Leadership (Directing

Function). Unfortunately this 68-page manual written in 1974 is

almost entirely limited to spoken communication in committees or

other group situations. Only one page applies to other communication:

Communication in an organization is the transfer of information
from one person to another in such a way that the message is
understood by the receiver. The purpose of communication in
an organization is to effect change, to influence the actions of
organizational members in a positive way. The substance of
communication is information, information that can be utilized
in the making of decisions affecting the operation of an
organization. Because information is so crucial to effective
decision making, educational managers must create and maintain
a communication system that will ensure the timely transfer
of information from (1) the organization's external environment
to the members of the organization and (2) one member of the

> organization to other members of the organization. Koontz and
> O'Donnell identify some of the most common barriers to commun-
> ication: Badly expressed messages; faulty translations; loss
> by transmission and poor retention; inattention; unclarified
> assumptions; insufficient adjustment periods; distrust of the
> communicator; premature evaluation; fear; failure to communicate
> at all. (p. 43)

Education's recent emphasis on competencies and performance cri-

teria has also brought communication to the fore. In listing three

basic competencies for administrators in higher education Saville (1976)

linked together "Decision Making and Communications" as Competency

II. He stressed that

> open dissemination of information greatly affects relationships
> with the faculty. However, indiscriminate distribution can lead
> to misunderstanding and ill-will. Communication is more than
> verbal. It involves the transmission of beliefs, ideals, per-
> sonal traits, even emotions and any abortion of these values
> add [sic.] to the complexity of the leadership process. (p. 19)

Carey, studying the backgrounds of deans in North Central-accred-

ited colleges in 1975, also mentioned communication skill as a necessary

competency. "Although the new dean needs experience, he also needs

the ability and patience to communicate effectively with faculty

members, other administrators and with the community" (p. 93), he

said. His research instrument was not designed to reflect written

communication, however. Deans were asked about the amounts of time

they spent on various tasks--meeting with the faculty, meeting with

legislators, meeting with students, for instance. The amount of time

spent in writing to any of these groups was not mentioned.

In another 1975 study Borchgrevink surveyed public colleges in 13

states on the importance of various performance criteria in the formal

evaluation of the dean. She included several criteria related to

communications, and these were mentioned in the summary of her findings:

> Managerial criteria dealing with decision-making, task-performance, problem-solving, and planning received relatively high ratings of importance as well as did human-relations criteria dealing with interpersonal relations, communication skills, and humanistic qualities. (abstract)

Although these last commentaries reflect the jargon of the sixties and seventies, the need for the dean to be an effective communicator did not suddenly appear in the last decade. One of the earliest studies of the two-year college dean outlined multiple tasks requiring communication skills. Carpenter and Johnson, writing in 1942 of research conducted in 1940, described the jobs of "deans" in 422 junior colleges. (Interestingly, they had title problems, too. Although "dean" was used in 71% of the institutions, they discovered a total of 154 different titles for the job!) This was their composite job description:

> Usually he is expected to teach at least one class and some-times several. He is expected to attend at least one professional meeting annually. In addition, a majority of the colleges expect the performance of at least 93 specific duties. Of this number 55 are in relation to the students, 31 in relation to the teaching staff, one in relation to the public, one in relation to school authorities, and five in relation to school publicity. (p. 20)

In any study dealing with writing the conclusion of the Carpenter and Johnson article is noteworthy. Although its style could be called Florid Patriotism, it does comment effectively on the difficult job of the dean-communicator during World War II:

> War emphasizes the responsibility of the administrative officer usually called the dean. To him is delegated the grave responsibility of keeping the machinery of the college rolling in good order and contributing to the total defense of America. Since Pearl Harbor, he has been kept informed

of the deliberations and decisions of the Committee on Military
Affairs, the Commission on Colleges and Civilian Defense, the
Selective Service System, the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps
and other national groups, by the able Executive Secretary of
the American Association of Junior Colleges. Loyally and unself-
ishly the dean has cooperated with these groups in the war effort.
Loyally and unselfishly he has also continued to perform the
unspectacular routine duties which are essential to effective
operation. (p. 21)

General Literature on Communication Skills

Development of the study of communications

Many of the earliest scholars to take an interest in communications
within organizations were connected with business or industry. Henry
Fayol in 1916 and Mary Parker Follett in 1925 are usually considered
the pioneers (Pietri, 1974). Chester Barnard became famous in 1938
for his dictum that "the first executive function is to develop and
maintain a system of communication" (Pietri, 1974, p. 5). During the
twenties and thirties the Dale Carnegie courses fostered an interest
in interpersonal communication, and the Hawthorne studies at Western
Electric in Chicago brought attention to industrial communication.

By the 1940's interest in communication was burgeoning. Two-way
communication between employers and employees was stressed first by
Heron and then by Pigors. Also during this decade Carl Rogers was
developing his non-directive listening technique, semanticists
Hayakawa, Korzybski, and Lee were first publishing, and both Flesch
and Gunning were beginning to study readability (Hay, 1974).

This developing interest in communications which began about the
time of World War II has not slowed in our time. In 1970 the Center

for Communications Research of the University of Texas at Austin
published a bibliography on communication theory that ran to 405
entries. Although it covered the years from 1946 to 1969, 44% of the
items were published in the last four of these years. (Porterfield,
1974).

Porterfield summarized the "communication explosion" from the
mid-sixties to the present with this comment:

> The past decade has witnessed a veritable explosion of interest
> in communication. Seldom if ever has any phenomenon so quickly
> captured the imagination and enthusiasm of so many scholars
> from so many diverse fields. The literature today, expanding
> both in scope and sophistication, reflects the contributions
> of many disciplines--psychology, sociology, anthropology, linguist-
> ics, social psychology, communication theory, neurophysiology,
> information technology, military information systems, and even
> the newly emerging field of psycholinguistics. (1974, p. 18)

Communication in business and industry

Of the scholars mentioned by Porterfield not one was predominantly
interested in educational communication. However, his analysis was
written for the Journal of Business Communication, a quarterly whose
creation in the mid-sixties revealed another discipline greatly inter-
ested in organizational communication. Over the last two decades
much of the writing on this subject has come from professors in
business colleges or from business executives themselves.

Like many of the commentators on the job of the dean these busi-
ness writers tend to be prescriptive and experience-based rather than
research-based. Unlike commentators on the dean they give written
communication at least equal time with oral communication.

Ewing (1974) summarizes well writing's importance to the organization:

> An organization depends on its internal communications in much the same way the human body depends on its nervous system--for its ability to "think," react, change, plan, operate, and grow. It depends on its external communications to sell itself to those who might use it, to protect its position from rival or hostile groups, and in other ways to make its way in the world so that payrolls can be met, bills paid, campaigns won, and similar functions performed. (p. 4)

The last part of that comment seems particularly apropos of higher education today, as enrollments dwindle and institutions fight the battle of inflation.

For the individual too writing is important, and Ewing also stresses this effectively:

> How does the quality of a business or professional person's writing affect his or her career prospects? For one thing . . . most managers judge their assistants, subordinates, and consultants at least partly on the basis of their reports, letters and memoranda. . . . Perhaps, as Marshall McLuhan has said, the medium is the message in the field of mass communications; but in organizational life, often the message is the man or woman. It is his or her surrogate, taking the place of personal contacts which are impractical because there is too much to do and too far to go. (pp. 4-5)

Uris (1975) states this same idea more bluntly: "Nobody goes far in the business world today unless he can express himself intelligently on paper" (p. 3).

Both writers have quite a bit to say about the style of writing as an indicator of personality. Uris quotes an unnamed executive as saying, "If you want to know the kind of manager a man is, go through the file of memos he's written" (p. 9). Ewing discusses the tone "heard" by the reader of a letter or memo and compares it to tone in conversa-.

tion. "From that tone he detects your attitude just as surely as he would if you were talking" (p. 217). He outlines six steps to creating an effective tone:

1. Determine the desired relationship. . . .
2. Appraise the reader and situation. . . .
3. Choose words that will be "heard" in the intended way. . . .
4. Express ideas that convey the intended relationship. . . .
5. [Determine] how much detail is appropriate. . . .
6. Don't underestimate appearances. (pp. 220-249)

The importance of appearances receives even more attention in Ewing's 32-page chapter on "Correctness." His justification for devoting so much space to mechanics is well-stated.

Incorrectness suggests to some readers that you do not think highly enough of them to bother with a careful statement of your thoughts. . . . Technical errors are distracting; every time a reader notices them, his attention to your thought is inter- rupted--like a telephone call in the middle of an oral presen- tation. Moreover, in numerous cases . . . grammatical miscues reduce clarity. (p. 331)

Parr (1976), another businessman-author, is also concerned with the bad impressions created by the style of much business writing. He specifically recommends applying some readability formula to business letters and memos. His own formula, a variation of the FOG count, he calls PEARL (Parr Easy Appraisal of Readability Level). Parr's love for acronyms gives a gimmicky flavor to many of his prescriptions. For instance, he states that many of the problems of business communications could be solved if all executives would become SPEED MASONs. The letters stand for Soul, Planning and preparation, Emotional stability, Evaluation, Direction, Motivation, Acceptability, Simplicity, Organization, and Novelty--the ten aspects of any writing that should be considered by the writer. (p. 17)

Parr's "Soul" category covers the stylistic reflection of personality, and he gives particular attention to some of the negative traits that writing can unintentionally reveal.

> The letters we write can give a false picture of us. They
> can make us appear selfish instead of generous, pompous rather
> than personable, flippant when we mean to be friendly. For the
> recipients, the picture our letters paint is our personality,
> for better or worse. With care we can make our letters reveal
> the more attractive rather than the worse side of our nature.
> (p. 18)

Although most of these experts on business communications base their recommendations on personal experience, usually in industry, much of their advice seems pertinent to educational settings as well. Certainly Parr's comments on motivation are appropriate:

> If you would stimulate anyone to action, look to your language.
> If it is dull and stodgy, devoid of action and, in most cases,
> long and drawn out, you will have trouble motivating even your
> best friend. (p. 26)

Communication in educational settings

When _Educational Communication in a Revolutionary Age_ was published in 1973, Hoban, one of its contributors, drew attention to a gap in educational studies.

> Despite the fact that a major activity in schooling is commun-
> ication, educators in general have shown little interest in
> serious study of the communication process. Recently, there has
> been some study of classroom communication on the verbal level,
> and some attention has been given to the role of technology in
> education, but little attention has been given to the systematic
> study of communication in education. (pp. 11-12)

Unfortunately, the book itself did little to remedy this lack. Written communications within educational institutions were hardly even mentioned in any of its articles.

As Hoban pointed out, most studies up until that time had dealt with verbal communication. Also, most had been surveys, as they still tend to be. Very few studies use actual samples of communication. A typical example is Rowe's research done in 1966. To describe communication practices and teachers' preferences in secondary schools Rowe surveyed 120 teachers in 15 Illinois schools. Four teachers at each school were chosen by their principals from the group of "high communicators" and four were chosen from "low communicators." (This selection by the principals could tend to bias the results.) Each teacher filled out the Communication Conditions Questionnaire, developed at Ohio State, the Teacher Behavior Questionnaire, from the University of Chicago, and the researcher's Communications Inventory. In addition 52 of the teachers were interviewed. Rowe's results showed that the institutions studied tended to have one-way, formal communications with insufficient provisions for feedback. Teachers wished their principals would communicate more about instruction and less about student activities.

Some of these findings were partially substantiated by Youngblood (1969). Constructing a questionnaire to determine the importance of information which administrators usually communicate to teachers, Youngblood tabulated responses from 69 administrators and 567 teachers. He concluded that teachers and administrators differed significantly on the importance of items communicated but agreed on channels that should be used. In fact on the issue of channels there was more disagreement within each group than there was between the two groups.

Youngblood recommended that "teacher training institutions . . . place more emphases upon developing the communicative skills--reading, writing, speaking, listening--in teachers and administrators in the undergraduate and graduate educational development programs" (abstract).

A few surveys of educational communication have been conducted at the college level. In 1968, Schwartz approached the subject from the point of view of a social psychologist. He developed "a unique conceptual and methodological framework" called "communimetrics" (ii). This process was used to investigate the functional communication channels existing among the faculty and professional staff of a college within a large university. It involved questionnaires given to 142 members of the staff; the responses were sociometric reports of each person's communication contacts. From these Schwartz determined two extremes--liaison persons and isolates--and a third group, non-liaison persons. He contrasted a control group of 17 randomly-selected non-liaisons with the 17 liaisons (defined as having "interlinking communication contacts with two or more sociometrically-defined clique groups in the organization"). His conclusion was that liaisons have a larger number, more "structurally diverse and more important contacts in the organization" (abstract). (This seems to be a prime example of circular reasoning, as the 17 liaisons were selected in the first place because they fit a definition which was similar to this conclusion.) His hypotheses about differences in the three groups were not supported by the research.

Case (1969) also conducted a study of communications patterns at

the college level. His research in the College of Physical Education
at the University of Illinois was clearer and less jargon-bound than
that of Schwartz. He distributed questionnaires to 205 personnel and
received returns from 204! In addition to contrasting the informal
structure revealed by these questionnaires with the formal structure
of the college, he investigated the importance of several factors in
determining the "key communicators": age, sex, academic rank, years
of employment at the University, nationality, occupational specialty,
departmental affiliation, and proximity. Sex, departmental affiliation,
and office location turned out to be the most significant factors in
determining informal communication channels. All but nine of the 34
vital roles in the formal structure of the college were filled by
"key communicators" (having at least eight reciprocal contacts) in
the informal structure.

Three other studies made interesting contributions to our know-
ledge of educational communications, but since they also commented on
administrative effectiveness, they will be dealt with in a later
section of this chapter, after the next section.

Research on Administrative Effectiveness

"Successful leadership . . . rests on a latent congruence between
the psychic needs of the leader and the social needs of the followers,"
according to Rustow (1970, p. 23). This interdependence of leader and
follower also affects any attempts at rating the effectiveness of the
leader by the follower. In discussing rating scales Becker (1970)

emphasized this point:

> A rating is not purely a description of the individual or object being rated; it is rather a description of the individual or object _and_ the individual(s) doing the rating. Thus, it is like any other form of measurement. Measurement, by definition, yields a description of the relationship between the measuring instrument and the object measured; it does not yield some property intrinsic to the object alone. (p. 214)

One of the most thoroughly-researched instruments for measuring the effectiveness of administrators or other leaders is the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). Developed by staff members of the Personnel Research Board as part of the Ohio State Leadership Studies, the LBDQ was listed among the 50 most frequently cited measures in research studies conducted between 1954 and 1965 (Bonjean, Hill, & McLemore, 1967). The original form developed by Hemphill and Coons was shortened by Halpin and Winer and published in 1957. It contains 40 items, each a short sentence describing possible behavior of a leader. Examples are "He is friendly and approachable," and "He criticizes poor work." Respondents check their opinion of how each statement applies to the leader they are evaluating by choosing one of five adjectives: always, often, occasionally, seldom, or never. Ten of the items are not scored; they are retained in the questionnaire for purposes of standardization. The other 30 items are scored from 0 to 4, so that an administrator who _always_ was perceived as behaving in the most effective way would receive a score of 120.

When Halpin and Winer shortened the LBDQ they also broke leadership behavior down into two basic dimensions: Consideration and Initiating Structure. Half of the 30 scored items are associated with the first

dimension and half with the second. Thus, a dimension score can range from 0 to 60. "Effective leader behavior is associated with high performance on both dimensions" (Halpin, 1966, p. 98).

Hemphill applied the LBDQ in educational settings in more than one study. The first was a 1957 study to determine the relationship between the scores of department chairmen and the reputations of their departments. When he compared 22 departments within a liberal arts college, he found that those reputed to be administered the best were led by administrators with above average scores on both dimensions of leadership. (Halpin, 1966, pp. 97-99) He also used it as part of an extensive study (Hemphill, Griffiths, & Frederiksen, 1962) involving 232 elementary principals. Over 7,000 teachers were involved in rating these principals, and the results showed the following scores: Mean for Consideration, 45.6; Mean for Initiating Structure, 42.4. Scores on both dimensions were correlated with multiple factors, and two particularly interesting findings came to light. First, Consideration scores were slightly higher for less-experienced principals, while Initiating Structure scores were somewhat better for those with more experience. The researchers themselves appeared somewhat shaken by the second surprising finding:

> One of the sets of correlations . . . should give all professors of school administration cause for concern. It indicates that the correlation of years of preparation with superiors', teachers', and scorers' ratings is zero. . . . The finding of essentially no relationship between amount of academic preparation and performance on the various tasks in school administration that were investigated is consistent throughout. There is no evidence suggesting that the principal with a lengthier preparation does a more effective job of school administration, from any point of view from which one may examine the data. (pp. 340-341)

The LBDQ was specifically recommended as a means of faculty evaluation of deans in a 1973 Intellect article by Hoyle. Over the years many researchers have applied it to college administrators, usually with significant results. In 1962 Carson employed it for ratings of junior college deans by student leaders. Using the LBDQ for both expected and perceived behaviors of 20 deans he was able to show a role conflict created for the dean by the differences in the college president's expectations and the student leaders' expectations. On this basis he recommended that educators preparing to be administrators receive "specific training in the dynamics of leader behavior" (abstract). The deans involved in this study scored an average of 2 points below the means established in Hemphill's study of elementary principals on both dimensions. It would be impossible to say from these two studies whether the difference in educational setting (elementary versus college) or in raters (teachers versus student leaders) accounted for this difference in mean scores.

In 1969 Lindemuth used the LBDQ in conjunction with Pace and Stern's College and University Environmental Scales. In the six liberal arts colleges he studied, the deans' scores for Initiating Structure did not relate significantly to climate, but the correlation between the climate and their Consideration scores was significant.

The LBDQ was one of three questionnaires filled out by 10 college presidents and 227 other professionals in the 1971 study by Long. The other two were Rokeach's Dogmatism Scale and an Academic Experience Inventory. Long had hypothesized that academic preparation and previous experience would affect perceptions of leader behavior, but--as

Hemphill's study of elementary principals might have predicted—all results were negative! Preparation and experience made no difference on any of his hypotheses.

Two other researchers, Cox (1974) and Nicol (1975), used the LBDQ to have both superiors and subordinates evaluate the deans of instruction in two-year colleges. Both found significant differences between the views of presidents and the views of faculty members.

In spite of all this use in evaluating the effectiveness of college administrators the LBDQ does not appear to have been used in conjunction with a study of college deans' communication skills.

Research on the Relationship of Communication Skills And Effective Leadership

"Leadership-communication relationships in formal organizations are capable of objective measurement and ... such measures will open the way to a greater understanding of administrative communication." Although Benevento concluded this in 1956 (abstract), few scholars have taken up his challenge to investigate the relationship between leadership and communication skills in an educational setting.

Benevento's study, although ground-breaking, was again a survey. Instead of working with actual samples of communication he developed a "Staff Expectancies Questionnaire" which he administered to 48 principals and the 658 teachers on their staffs. Statements in the questionnaire covered three areas of school operations: organizational structure, relations with pupils, and a third area called "related obligations and personal relations." Principals and teachers marked

their opinions on each statement independently, and teachers also predicted their principal's opinions. Then Benevento measured the extent of agreement as an indication of "consonance" and the accuracy of prediction as an indication of communicative "reception."

Next Benevento used the <u>LBDQ</u> to measure the teachers' views of their principal's leadership and correlated these results with the consonance and reception scores. He came up with two pertinent findings:

> Initiating structure had little bearing on communication of institutional matters regarding "relations with pupils," but it was related to communication of matters of "organizational structure."
> Consideration tended to relate more highly to communication than did initiating structure. (abstract)

In 1969 the Department of Health, Education and Welfare sponsored a related study which at last examined some actual samples of communication, rather than depending entirely on responses to questionnaires. Lucietto wanted to test the relationship between a principal's language usage and his teachers' views of his administrative leadership. She found very little research since the Benevento study 13 years earlier:

> Even though the investigation of the language of administrators implies the possibility of direct insight into the administrator's behavior, rather than through the perceptions of his various reference groups, there has been little sensitivity shown to the importance of language in the interactions of administrators. Almost none of the standard texts on educational administration mentions the subject. One recently published text devotes only one page to the topic, and this within the specific context of "language and theory." (p. 4—Reference is to Getzels, Lipham, & Campbell, <u>Educational Administration As A Social Process</u>, 1968.)

Lucietto collected a verbal data bank—albeit artificial— of three tape-recorded dialogues, each with a different, randomly-selected teacher, for each of 20 male elementary principals serving schools in the Chicago suburbs. She also used the LBDQ to determine the principals' perceived effectiveness as leaders. Several of her hypotheses related to differences dependent upon the differing socioeconomic levels of the schools, but she also hypothesized that "differences in the subjects' scores on [the LBDQ] will be related to differences in their linguistic behavior" (p. 49). Her research tended to support this hypothesis, although her methods appear somewhat artificial. She allowed each principal to arrange his own taping system and to conduct the dialogues in a natural setting—as natural as talking into a microphone can be. Using the General Inquirer system (developed at M. I. T.) she made a computer-count of all the words in her samples, dividing them into different categories. A possible indication of the artificiality of the situation for the principals is that there was not one word of profanity or vulgarity in the 60 conversations.

The General Inquirer system used by Lucietto is quite complex, and it makes some of her analysis difficult to interpret in lay terminology. Still her results seem to support the study's basic theoretical viewpoint:

> There is a relationship between the language usage of school administrators and the intensity of certain variables observed in their nonverbal behavior. (p. 2)

This connection between language usage and other variables had also been observed in the Hemphill-Griffiths-Frederiksen study mentioned

earlier. Part of that study involved a factor analysis of a large number of rated skills and an analysis of their correlations with evaluations of each principal. Two of the rated skills were Written Communication and Understanding Written Communication. The researchers isolated a factor which they called "Judgment of General Professional Skill"; its highest loadings were on these two skills. This factor analysis led them to conclude that "the general evaluation of a principal by his superiors is particularly likely to reflect skills in reading and writing" (p. 233). They also noticed a relationship between sex and skill in Written Communication. On a 5-point scale the 137 men in their study averaged 3.47 as their rating for that skill, while the 95 women averaged 3.74. This difference was significant at the .01 level. (p. 392)

Because Hemphill and his fellow researchers were concerned with the possible criticism that too much of their study was based on paper-and-pencil in-basket tests, they made their views on the importance of writing ability very clear:

> The ability to accomplish large quantities of written work under stress of time pressures may be regarded as necessary for successful administration. Certainly, ability to write and to use language skills effectively can be defended as a reasonable requirement for those who provide educational leadership. (p. 268)

In spite of this acknowledged importance of writing for the educational leader those who study educators' communication skills almost always rely on questionnaires about existing practices or, at best, study samples of spoken language. Writing samples, as compared to conversational samples, are more concrete and easier to obtain without artificiality. Still, almost everyone thinks he can

talk, while many people--even educational leaders--will admit having difficulties expressing themselves in writing. Perhaps a study of conversational skills has been viewed as less threatening than a study of writing.

It is time for educational leaders to open up their files. They need to know how well they are writing, how this performance affects their readers, and what they can do to become more effective writers. Until more communication scholars have the opportunity to study administrators' writings, these questions will remain unanswered.

Resulting Hypotheses

This previous work suggests several hypotheses about the relationship between written communication and related characteristics of administrators and their perceived effectiveness. It appears that there is a correlation between certain characteristics of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' effectiveness as rated by their faculties. This relationship can be expressed in 12 research hypotheses:

H_1 There is a high correlation between Reading Ease scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Consideration scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>. (Based on Benevento, 1956; Borchgrevink, 1975; Parr, 1976.)

H_2 There is a high correlation between Reading Ease scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Initiating Structure scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>. (Based on Borchgrevink, 1975; Parr, 1976.)

H_3 There is a high correlation between Reading Ease scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty

and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>. (Based on Borchgrevink, 1975; Parr, 1976.)

H_4 There is a high correlation between Human Interest scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Consideration scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>. (Based on Ewing, 1974; Lucietto, 1969; Saville, 1976.)

H_5 There is a high correlation between Human Interest scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Initiating Structure scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>. (Based on Ewing, 1974; Lucietto, 1969; Saville, 1976.)

H_6 There is a high correlation between Human Interest scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>. (Based on Ewing, 1974; Lucietto, 1969; Saville, 1976.)

H_7 There is a high correlation between Stuffiness scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Consideration scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>. (Based on Ewing, 1974; Uris, 1975.)

H_8 There is a high correlation between Stuffiness scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Initiating Structure scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>. (Based on Ewing, 1974; Uris, 1975.)

H_9 There is a high correlation between Stuffiness scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>. (Based on Ewing, 1974; Uris, 1975.)

H_{10} There is a high correlation between Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Consideration scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>. (Based on Ewing, 1974; Hemphill, Griffiths, & Frederiksen, 1962; Lucietto, 1969.)

H_{11} There is a high correlation between Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Initiating Structure scores

as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Descrip-tion Questionnaire</u>. (Based on Ewing, 1974; Hemphill, Griffiths, & Frederiksen, 1962; Lucietto, 1969.)

H_{12} There is a high correlation between Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scores of community college deans' written communi-cation to faculty and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Question-naire</u>. (Based on Ewing, 1974; Hemphill, Griffiths, & Frederiksen, 1962; Lucietto, 1969.)

Studies of the correlation between certain personal characteris-tics of administrators and the administrators' effectiveness ratings have been inconclusive, but most have produced negative results. Three research hypotheses express this relationship:

H_{13} There is a low correlation between the academic training of community college deans and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Ques-tionnaire</u>. (Based on Hemphill, Griffiths, & Frederiksen, 1962; Long, 1971.)

H_{14} There is a low correlation between the teaching experience of community college deans and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>. (Based on Hemphill, Griffiths, & Frederiksen, 1962; Long, 1971.)

H_{15} There is a low correlation between the number of publications of community college deans and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>. (Based on Hemphill, Griffiths, & Frederiksen, 1962; Long, 1971.)

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The Sample

The target population for this study consisted of community college deans throughout Michigan. Since it was important to contact them both in writing and in person to obtain their cooperation, the accessible population narrowed down to nine community colleges in southern or western Michigan. Of these, eight participated and became the sample for this study. Southwestern Michigan College refused to participate. It could have made a particularly valuable contribution, for it had the largest number of deans--ten--and the next-to-the-smallest population-- 950 Full Time Equated students--of any community college in the area. However, the politics of the institution apparently necessitated its non-response.

Colleges which agreed to participate, in order of enrollment (FTE students, according to the 1974–75 Education Directory), were Lansing Community College (10,487), Grand Rapids Junior College (5,676), Kalamazoo Valley Community College (4,570), Muskegon Community College (3,879), Jackson Community College (3,609), Kellogg Community College (3,329), Lake Michigan College (3,082), and Glen Oaks Community College (648).

These eight institutions had a total of 56 positions in the "dean" category, but only 51 were filled at the time of the study. Of these,

33

53 % agreed to take part in the study. Several of the 24 who did not participate would have been ineligible for one of two reasons: insufficient time on the job (a tenure of less than six months would have made evaluation by faculty nearly meaningless), or a lack of subordinates to evaluate them. Deans with fewer than four people to evaluate them could not be used in the study.

The 29 community colleges in Michigan have, collectively, 192 deans. According to the Education Directory (updated by figures provided by Dr. Marilyn J. Schlack), 16% of these are women and 32% have earned doctorates. The 27 deans who agreed to participate in this study appear nearly typical in these respects, as 11% were women, and 33% had earned doctorates.

Instruments Used

The participants were asked to cooperate in the study in three ways: (1) completing a one-page "Administrators' Questionnaire" (Appendix A), (2) submitting one copy of everything they had written and sent to more than one member of the faculty for a two-month period in 1976, and (3) allowing randomly-selected members of their faculty to evaluate them on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

Ten items were randomly-selected for analysis from each dean's writing samples, after one-sentence memos had been eliminated. Deans with fewer than 10 items had all their writing analyzed. The analysis consisted of applying four scales: Rudolf Flesch's 1948 scales for Reading Ease and Human Interest, Walker Gibson's Style Machine (1966), and a Grammatical Usage and Accuracy Scale developed especially for this study.

Flesch's Reading Ease Scale

According to Klare (1963, p. 117), "The Flesch formulas have been involved in published comparative studies more than any others." Flesch's study of readability began at Columbia University at the Readability Laboratory of the American Association of Adult Education. In 1943 he developed a scientific formula to measure the difficulty of a sample of reading; this was explained in The Art of Plain Talk (1946). He changed the formula in 1948, correcting a computational error and simplifying the counting procedure (counting syllables instead of affixes). This new formula, popularized in The Art of Readable Writing (1949), produced a Reading Ease score ranging from 0 to 100 with these gradations: 0 to 30--Very Difficult, 30 to 50--Difficult, 50 to 60-- Fairly Difficult, 60 to 70--Standard (eighth or ninth grade reading level), 70 to 80--Fairly Easy, 80 to 90--Easy, and 90 to 100--Very Easy. Studies reported by Klare (pp. 109-113) showed test-retest reliability coefficients ranging from .95 to .99 and a validity coefficient of .70.

To apply the formula a researcher counts the words in the sample of writing, with contractions and hyphenated words counting as one word. When numbers or letters are separated by spaces, each number or letter counts. Then sentences are counted, and the number of words in the sample is divided by the number of sentences, giving an average sentence length. Independent clauses divided by colons or semicolons are counted as separate sentences. The average sentence length is multiplied by 1.015. The next step is to determine the average number of

syllables per 100 words. This is done by counting the number of syllables, dividing by the number of words, and multiplying by 100. This figure is multiplied by .846 and added to the sentence-length product. The resulting number is subtracted from 206.835 to obtain the "Reading Ease" score.

This process should sound less complicated if an example is given. The same memo will be used to illustrate the application of each of the four scales used in this study. This brief but fairly typical sample is copied exactly as submitted for this research.

> This memo is in response to your memo of June 1, 1976 requesting release of your summer contract due to graduate study requirements.
>
> After conversations with Mr. _____ and conversations that I understand you have had with him, the two of you have arrived at a compromise that you can meet the commitment of your summer contract providing that your class schedule can be revised to meet on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.
>
> Mr. _____ has informed me that this is possible and would not conflict with student schedules; therefore, the release from the contract is no longer necessary.

This memo contains 98 words and three sentences. However, the last sentence counts as two sentences because of the semicolon dividing the independent clauses. Therefore, the average sentence length is 25 words. The formula calls for multiplying this figure by 1.015; the result is 25.375.

Since the passage contains 157 syllables, the number of syllables per 100 words would be 160. When this figure is multiplied by .846, the result is 135.36. Add this to 25.375, and the result is 160.735. The final computation, subtracting this from 206.835, produces 46.1, which rounds to a score of 46. The memo is in the "Difficult" range.

Flesch's Human Interest Scale

When Flesch revised his readability formula in 1948 he also developed a formula to measure a passage's appeal to most readers. This "Human Interest" score is also expressed in numbers from 0 to 100 with these gradations: 0 to 10--Dull, 10 to 20--Mildly Interesting, 20 to 40--Interesting, 40 to 60--Very Interesting, 60 to 100--Dramatic. The numerical score is based on the number of "personal words" per 100 words and the number of "personal sentences" per 100 sentences. "Personal words" are first-, second-, and third-person pronouns that refer to people; names; words with "natural gender" (brother, actress, milkman); and the words _folks_ or _people_ (with plural verbs). "Personal sentences" are spoken sentences (with or without quotation marks); sentences addressed to the reader (usually questions or directions); exclamations; and fragments whose meaning depends on the context.

The score for a passage is found by multiplying the number of "personal words" per 100 words by 3.635, multiplying the number of "personal sentences" per 100 sentences by .314, and adding the two products. Although this scale's reported validity coefficient is also .70, it is less reliable than the Reading Ease scale. Still, studies of trained and untrained analysts produced scores differing no more than 5 points 75% of the time. (Klare, 1963, p. 108)

The 98-word memo in the previous illustration contains 12 personal words: your, your, Mr. _____, I, you, him, you, you, your, your, Mr. _____, me. Multiplying 12 by 3.635 gives 43.62. All of the sentences in the memo are declaratives. There are no imperatives, no

interrogatives, and no exclamatory sentences or fragments. Therefore, there are no "personal sentences," and there is no product to add to the 43.62. When this figure is rounded to the nearest whole number, the "Human Interest" score becomes 44, putting the memo in the Very Interesting category.

Gibson's "Style Machine"

The analysis of style on any basis other than subjective-intuitive has been a development of the last 15 years. Much of the recent research has involved complex studies assisted by computers (Crystal & Davy, 1969; Emmert & Brooks, 1970), but Gibson's pioneering effort in Tough, Sweet & Stuffy (1966) involves a fairly simple counting procedure that can be done by anyone with a working knowledge of English grammar.

Gibson's method for determining tone—called the Style Machine, but not a machine at all—uses the quantitative answers to 16 questions to categorize a passage as "tough," "sweet," or "stuffy." All of these are undesirable when they are extreme. Gibson provides the best descriptions of the individuals behind these three voices:

> (1) A hard fellow who has been around in a violent world and who pays us very little mind; (2) an affable fellow who is explicitly familiar with us and who knows just who we are; (3) a bloodless fellow who often speaks for an organization and not for himself, and who keeps his distance from us. (p. 115)

To obtain a score for any of these three voices Gibson answers 16 grammatical-rhetorical questions about samples of the writing. Twenty pages of Tough, Sweet & Stuffy give the details for applying the "Machine," but the questions can be summarized more briefly.

1. What is the percentage of monosyllables? (If 60% or less, the passage gets 1 point for Stuffiness.)

2. What is the percentage of words of more than 2 syllables? (For 20% or more, 1 point.)

3. How many first- or second-person pronouns are there? (If there are none, 1 point for Stuffiness.)

4. Are 2/3 or more of the noun subjects neuters rather than people? (If the answer is yes, 1 point for Stuffiness.)

5. Do finite verbs make up less than 10% of the passage? (If yes, 1 point for Stuffiness.)

6. How many of the finite verbs are forms of to be? (For 1 point for Stuffiness there should be fewer than 1 in 4 verbs.)

7. What proportion of verbs are passive? (If more than 1 in 5 verbs are passive, Stuffiness gets 1 point.)

8. What proportion of the total words are true adjectives? (If more than 8%, 1 point for Stuffiness.)

9. How many adjectives are modified by adverbs? (For 1 point for Stuffiness there should be fewer than 1 per hundred words.)

10. What is the percentage of noun adjuncts? (With 4% or more the passage gets 1 point for Stuffiness.)

11. What is the average length of dependent clauses? (To get 1 point for Stuffiness, the average should be more than 10.)

12. What percentage of the total passage is included in dependent clauses?   (If more than 40%, 1 point for Stuffiness.)

13. Does the number of words separating subjects from verbs equal at least twice the number of subject-verb combinations? (If yes, 1 point for Stuffiness.)

14. How often does the occur? (For 1 point for Stuffiness the frequency should be 6 to 7% of the time.)

15. Are there any fragments or contractions? (If there are none, 1 point for Stuffiness.)

16. Are there any italics, parentheses, dashes, question marks, or exclamation marks? (For 1 point for Stuffiness, a passage should have none of these.)

Gibson was an English professor at New York University when he developed the "Machine." He applied it initially to 3,000 words of prose, ranging from Saturday Review to a college catalog and from the Surgeon General's report on smoking to part of A Farewell to Arms. He rejected possible questions which did not appear to account for differences in readers' reactions to the passages. When the 16 questions were complete, he tested their face validity by applying them to a "Style Sampler" of 25 short passages from writers as diverse as Jack Kerouac and Abe Lincoln. Although excerpts from Tough, Sweet & Stuffy appear often in composition anthologies, there has been no further attempt to validate Gibson's work.

When this "machine" processes the sample memo (p. 36), the resulting Stuffiness score is 6 points, about average for deans' memos. (A totally stuffy score would be 16, but Gibson found only one such passage.) The points come from question 1 (58% are monosyllables), question 10 (6 noun adjuncts—summer, graduate study, summer, class, and student), question 11 (an average of 12.6), question 12 (44% of the words), question 15 and question 16.

Grammatical Usage and Accuracy Scale

There is no agreed-upon measurement for grammatical and typographical errors. When such errors are scored, the scale is more likely to be subjective than objective. A scale designed for an undergraduate writing course would hardly be appropriate for evaluating the writing of community college deans, as expectations differ for the

groups of writers. It was necessary to develop a scale for evaluating the mechanical errors occurring in many of the deans' memos. The researcher, with 14 years of experience as a college English teacher, kept two principles in mind while developing the scale: (1) Errors should be scored not on how heinous they appear to an English teacher but on how noticeable they would be to the average faculty member. (2) Any problems in style or readability that might be reflected in one of the other scales should be omitted so that the various scores reflect different, rather than overlapping, variables.

Ten randomly-selected memos were used to try out the scale on a pilot basis. Four college English teachers scored the memos, using the following scale:

> Five points are given for each occurrence of one of these errors--subject-verb agreement, non-rhetorical fragment, faulty pronoun case, omission of necessary words, run-on sentence, spelling error.

> Three points are given for each occurrence of one of these errors--comma splice, non-idiomatic preposition, confusion of adjective and adverb, dangling or misplaced modifier, faulty parallelism, apostrophe error, wrong verb form, misplaced semicolon.

> Two points are given for each occurrence of one of these errors--disagreement of pronoun and antecedent, incomplete comparison, obvious typographical error.

> One point is given for each occurrence of one of these errors-- omitted or misplaced comma, incorrect capitalization, faulty punctuation with quotation marks.

Scores given to the 10 memos in the pilot study were closely matched except for three samples. On the worst of these the scores ranged from 6 to 45. However, all large discrepancies were the result of differing interpretations of the term "non-rhetorical fragment."

One grader was giving 5 points to every fragment, even those considered acceptable by the other graders. To avoid this error in applying the scale, the researcher gave points for fragments only when they were pretty clearly intended as sentences but just did not make it; fragments that seemed to be intended--to create a breezy style, for example--were not scored as errors.

Application of this Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scale to the sample memo used to illustrate the other three scales produced a score of 9. Two 3-point errors occurred: a non-idiomatic preposition in the first sentence (release of your summer contract, instead of release from), and a dangling modifier at the beginning of the second sentence. The three 1-point errors were all omitted commas--one after 1976 and one after contract, both in the first sentence, and one before providing in the second sentence. The second sentence is really very hard to decipher, as it is unclear what conversations took place with whom. The additional comma would make it slightly more readable, but not much.

Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire

Ohio State's Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire was the only scale used to measure something other than writing performance in this study. It was chosen because it measures perceptions of behavior in a fairly simple way, it has been validated in numerous studies, and it has been correlated with communication behaviors before. The reliability coefficients for this scale are .93 for the

Consideration dimension and .86 for the Initiating Structure dimension. (Halpin, 1966)

Faculty responsible to each dean were asked to evaluate him/her, and the mean of their responses was used to determine the dean's LBDQ scores. Each dean had three mean scores, as the two dimensions were scored separately, and then these two scores were added together to achieve the total score. For each of the 40 behaviors listed on the form respondents choose an adjective to describe their perception of the frequency with which the leader indulges in that behavior. "Always" rates 4 points; "Often" rates 3; "Occasionally" rates 2; "Seldom" rates 1; and "Never" rates 0. However, on three items (marked with an asterisk when they are listed here) the scoring is reversed, as it is desirable that the dean never behave in these particular ways if he/she is to be an effective leader. The 10 "buffer" items are not scored.

The 15 items responsible for the Consideration score are as follows:

1. He does personal favors for group members.
2. He does little things to make it pleasant to be a member of the group.
3. He is easy to understand.
4. He finds time to listen to group members.
*5. He keeps to himself.
6. He looks out for the personal welfare of individual group members.
*7. He refuses to explain his actions.
*8. He acts without consulting the group.
9. He backs up the members in their actions.
10. He treats all group members as his equals.
11. He is willing to make changes.
12. He is friendly and approachable.
13. He makes group members feel at ease when talking with them.
14. He puts suggestions made by the group into operation.

15. He gets approval on important matters before going ahead.

The 15 items responsible for the Initiating Structure score are as follows:

1. He makes his attitudes clear to the group.
2. He tries out his new ideas with the group.
3. He rules with an iron hand.
4. He criticizes poor work.
5. He speaks in a manner not to be questioned.
6. He assigns group members to particular tasks.
7. He schedules the work to be done.
8. He maintains definite standards of performance.
9. He emphasizes the meeting of deadlines.
10. He encourages the use of uniform procedures.
11. He makes sure that his part in the organization is understood by all group members.
12. He asks that group members follow standard rules and regulations.
13. He lets group members know what is expected of them.
14. He sees to it that group members are working up to capacity.
15. He sees to it that the work of group members is coordinated.

At least four responses were needed to provide a dean with a valid LBDQ score, and earlier research established that more than 10 responses do not appreciably increase accuracy. (Halpin, 1957, p. 2) Therefore, if a dean had between four and 10 faculty reporting to him/her, all were asked to fill in the LBDQ. When a dean had a larger faculty, LBDQs were given to a random sample of 10.

Statistical Analyses

Each dean had seven scores--four writing scores and three LBDQ scores (Consideration, Initiating Structure, and the combined Total score)--which were used in testing the first 12 hypotheses. The bivariate distribution of each of the four writing scores with each of the three LBDQ scores was shown by the creation of 12 scatter diagrams. The Pearson product moment coefficient of correlation was

used to determine the strength of any relationship observed, and statistical significance--determined by the use of a Z test-- was set at .05. (This level of significance was selected because it seems less dangerous to assume that there is correlation between communication and effectiveness if none really exists than to assume the null hypothesis, that there is no correlation, when this is false.)

Several methods were used to test hypotheses 13 through 15. Academic training was measured in college degrees, ordinal data ranging from bachelor's degrees to doctorates. One way of solving the problem of correlating ordinal data and ratio data is to convert the ratio data to rankings and use the Spearman Rank-Correlation coefficient, a special case of the Pearson formula. However, the LBDQ data contained numerous tied ranks--a problem for the Spearman method. For this reason the Pearson product moment coefficient of correlation was used for these data also. It was also used to compare years of teaching experience with the LBDQ scores. Teaching experience also involved subjects taught, but the numbers teaching any one subject were too small for meaningful correlations. Therefore, scores were grouped according to subjects taught, and frequencies were reported.

In a large study involving deans with long publishing histories the data on publications could be considered interval. However, in this study the differences seemed to be between deans who had published and deans who had not. Therefore, the data were treated as nominal-dichotomous, and the point-biserial correlation coefficient was used.

Limitations of the Design

The design of this study has three major limitations: the rela-
tively small sample, the amount of time required for the process, and
the necessity of using two scales which have not had adequate valida-
tion by other researchers.

Only 21 deans were willing and eligible for this study. (Those
who had been on their jobs less than six months or who had fewer than
four subordinates were ineligible.) Obviously a sample of more deans,
providing more effectiveness ratings and more memos to analyze, could
give more conclusive results. Also a smaller correlation coefficient
would be adequate to achieve a significance level of .05 if the
number of subjects was increased. An ideal design might involve a
large enough sample that the deans could be grouped to keep a number
of variables the same, with the major difference being the writing
performance variable. Such a large sample is impractical for one study,
but perhaps somewhat the same effect could be achieved by later
duplications of the research.

Another drawback of this design might discourage anyone but the
most determined researcher from duplicating this research with another
sample. Applying the four scales to the writing samples is an
extremely time-consuming process. Even for fairly short memos the
amount of counting--words, sentences, syllables, personal words and
sentences, dependent clauses, passive verbs, adjectives, noun adjuncts,
and so on--is mind-boggling. About the best that can be hoped for is

to average 30 minutes per memo, and the process goes much slower at first. It would be easy for the researcher working alone to become discouraged, but the solution of training several researchers to apply the scales is not ideal, either. Possible differences in application would have to be carefully guarded against.

Perhaps the most serious limitation is the use of Gibson's Style Machine and the researcher's Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scale. Both lack the repeated validation of the Flesch scales and the LBDQ, which have been used in numerous research designs. As the science of stylistics develops further, scales which will measure the tone of business memos will probably be produced and validated, but Gibson's creation is the only yardstick for "Stuffiness" currently available. Many scoring devices exist for counting grammatical errors, but since all are to be applied to student-written samples, they seem inappropriate for writing done by professionals. The scale designed for this research was applied to 10 memos by four college English teachers, with quite consistent results. Application in other studies would help to determine its reliability.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Characteristics of the Sample

Although 27 deans agreed to participate in this study, the final
sample was narrowed to 21 after all data had been collected. Two
deans agreed to participate but did not submit any writing samples;
one submitted only two very brief memos inadequate for a valid deter-
mination of writing performance. Two wanted to participate but did
not have four faculty reporting to them, so the necessary Leader
Behavior Description Questionnaire scores could not be obtained. One
dean was hospitalized as the result of an accident and was unavailable
for an interview.

The 21 participating deans contributed a total of 180 letters or
memos they had written to their faculties, and they were evaluated by
147 faculty members. (Three incomplete evaluations were submitted
but not counted.) The collections of writing samples varied from 3 to
38 memos per dean, revealing at the outset that there existed a great
variety in amounts of written communication--or, perhaps, a variety in
filing systems, since deans were asked to supply copies of their
writing for the two months just before they were contacted about the
study. (The reason for this request was to avoid the Hawthorne effect
which might have meant greater attention to their written communication
if they had been asked for copies of what they wrote over the next two

48

months.) Some deans had difficulties supplying writing samples because they had new secretaries who were still not familiar with all the places the previous secretaries might have filed their communication.

The Administrators' Questionnaire (Appendix A) revealed several interesting facts about the deans in the sample. Their ages ranged from 30 to 65 with a Mean of 43.8 years (SD = 8.4). Although their positions had 14 different titles, their jobs fell into three categories: instructional deans (10--2 deans of instruction, 2 deans of arts and sciences, 4 vocational deans, and 2 business and technology deans), deans of student services (8-- 5 deans, 1 associate dean, 1 dean of admissions, and 1 dean of special programs), and other deans (3-- 1 in learning resources, 1 dean of program development, and 1 chief business officer).

Most deans were in their third year on the job, but the lengths of tenure ranged from 6 months to 9 years (M = 3.8 years, SD = 2.7). The most common stepping stone to the dean's job was a lower administrative position; 11 had followed that route, not including 3 who had been department chairpersons before becoming dean. Four had been instructors just before assuming the deanship, and 2 had been counselors. Only one had had a higher administrative post. Thirteen deans had been promoted from within the colleges, after working there an average of 7.3 years (SD = 5.1). All 8 of those not promoted from within had come from other educational institutions. Only 2 deans had backgrounds in something other than teaching--one in business and one in engineering--and both of them had taught at the college level

before becoming administrators.

All deans had taught at least a semester before joining the administration. One had taught for 36.5 years. The Mean of their teaching experience was 8.4 (SD = 7.9). Most--17 of the 21-- had begun their teaching careers on the secondary school level. Subjects taught were distributed as follows:

6 deans--Industrial Arts

4 deans--English

4 deans--Business

2 deans--Speech

2 deans--Unspecified subjects

1 dean--Science

1 dean--History

1 dean--Mathematics.

Eight of the deans had earned doctorates--4 PhDs and 4 EdDs. One had an Educational Specialist's degree, and all but 1 of the 12 others had master's degrees. (The one with only a bachelor's degree was Chief Business Officer.) Two of the 11 with master's degrees had earned two master's degrees. Only 4 of the total sample had gone outside Michigan for their highest degree.

Deans were asked to list their publications in two columns: those written before they became administrators, and those written after they became administrators. The results certainly did not support the theory that publishing is a stepping stone to an administrative position; only 6 had anything to report. Five of these had published before becoming dean and had not published since; 3 of these had written only 1 article,

while 1 had 2 articles to his credit and 1 had 3. The one dean who had published only after becoming dean had authored or co-authored 8 articles.

The final question asked of the deans was designed to determine their attitude toward written communication:

> In working with your staff, do you feel that written communication is (check one)
> ___Not very important?
> ___Important, but less so than face-to-face communication?
> ___Just as important as face-to-face communication?
> ___Even more important than face-to-face communication?

No one chose the first answer. The second choice was most popular, as 10 deans chose it. The third answer ("Just as important") was selected by 7 deans, and the remaining 4 chose "Even more important." If the answers were ranked from 1 to 4, the Mean answer would be 2.7 ($\underline{SD}$ = .78).

(For specific responses to the Administrators' Questionnaire see Appendix B.)

<center>Results of the Writing Analyses</center>

Flesch's Reading Ease Scale

Most of the memos and letters written by the deans in this study did not fare well when Flesch's Reading Ease Scale was applied to them. Scores on individual memos ranged from a high of 89 to a low of -17 (a 65-word memo with 122 syllables and really only one sentence!). In general, the scores did differentiate well between memos that were smooth and easy to read and those that were too complex and required re-reading in parts. For instance, the memo

that received the 89 (Easy reading, approximately sixth grade level) was this pleasant thank you note:

> Thank you for the fine pair of book ends. If you have a student who needs extra work or practice, I could use another pair or two. That's what happens when you give something to someone of Polish descent – they ask for more.
>   At least you know that they are appreciated!

Some of the lowest scores went to reports of meetings. Sentences tended to be long and dry. (Scores for Human Interest were also low on these.) Even though most samples were in the Difficult or Fairly Difficult range, they should have been comprehensible to their readers, for Flesch estimates that scores in the 30 to 50 range represent college-level reading. (1949, p. 149) Therefore, college faculty should have had little trouble understanding them. Still, this is no reason to make letters or memos particularly difficult to comprehend.

The Reading Ease scores for each dean were averaged to determine the dean's Mean score. This procedure was necessary for rankings and for correlations, but it was not always especially meaningful. Standard deviations were as large as 40.2, indicating that deans were not consistent in their writing. For some situations an individual dean would use short sentences and many monosyllables, producing a high score. At other times the same dean would write ponderous sentences and use many large words, resulting in a low score. For instance, the dean who wrote the thank you note just quoted had 10 memos analyzed. Their scores were 27, 28, 36, 40, 42, 47, 58, 58, 59, and 89. His Mean score was 48 (Difficult), and his standard deviation was 18.5. Mean scores ranged from 21 to 60, with a Mean of 45.5 ($\underline{SD}$ = 10.18).

Figure II

A Histogram of Deans' Mean Scores on the Flesch Reading Ease Scale

Frequency of scores

Levels of Reading Difficulty

Very Difficult   Difficult   Fairly Difficult   Standard
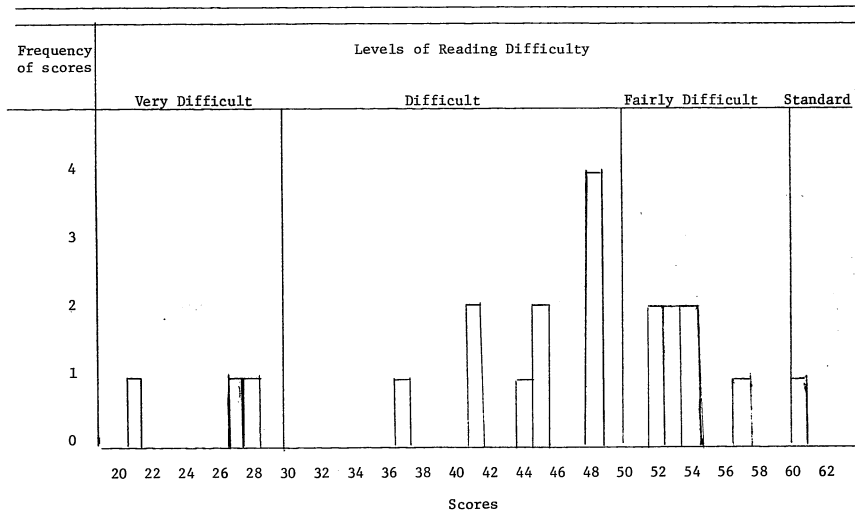
Scores

53

Figure II (p. 53) shows the distribution of the deans' Mean scores on the Flesch Reading Ease Scale. It reveals that a score of 48 was both the Median and the Mode. Individual Mean scores are listed in Table I (p. 55), which also lists individual Means on the other three writing scales. Deans in this table are listed from the smallest number of words analyzed to the largest number of words analyzed.

Flesch's Human Interest Scale

Although the Mean score for Human Interest--34.76--was lower than the Reading Ease Mean, the difference in interpretation makes this a "better" score. Scores from 20 to 40 are considered Interesting, and the Median (39) and Mode (28) as well as the Mean all fall in this category.

A high Human Interest score did not necessarily mean that a sample contained fascinating information. It merely meant that a large proportion of words were nouns or personal pronouns, and some sentences were conversational, addressed directly to the reader. Almost all memos contained at least some personal pronouns, and many gave instructions or asked questions, so the scores were not generally low. Still, they ranged on individual writing samples from 0 to 98! The 98 went to a very short memo--3 sentences, 1 of which was addressed directly to the reader-- with 5 personal words (24%):

> I have discussed this with Mr. _____. He approved an 8
> week replacement for Marti. Please coordinate this with
> Bob _____.

This is hardly Dramatic, as a score of 98 is supposed to indicate, but it is direct and personal.

Table I

Results of All Four Writing Analyses

(Means and Standard Deviations)

Dean	# of Samples	# of Words Analyzed	Reading Ease Score		Human Interest Score		Stuffiness Score		Grammatical Accuracy Score	
			M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1	4	241	48	9.7	24	19.0	7.0	2.5	0.5	1.0
2	3	267	28	40.2	39	14.5	8.0	2.0	2.0	3.4
3	6	283	54	20.7	47	26.2	6.0	1.7	2.0	2.4
4	5	311	48	19.8	44	10.7	5.0	1.2	6.0	7.4
5	7	330	45	14.8	46	10.4	8.0	1.7	3.0	4.8
6	4	617	52	14.0	28	17.5	7.0	1.7	0.5	1.0
7	4	630	21	10.9	11	6.1	9.0	1.9	2.0	2.4
8	11	745	45	13.4	42	20.6	7.0	2.1	7.0	4.9
9	7	784	54	10.5	52	21.5	6.0	1.3	4.0	4.5
10	7	788	41	7.5	23	14.2	8.0	2.2	1.0	2.0
11	7	793	57	9.3	40	21.4	5.0	2.1	5.0	4.4
12	9	794	48	20.1	40	26.9	7.5	1.8	4.0	4.4
13	9	877	53	15.7	55	16.6	6.0	1.5	5.0	4.3
14	7	948	53	10.3	42	16.3	6.0	1.0	11.0	5.8
15	12	979	60	18.8	28	11.7	4.0	1.5	3.0	3.2
16	3	1082	27	9.5	9	9.6	10.0	1.1	16.0	6.8
17	8	1437	44	20.5	41	21.5	6.0	3.2	7.0	3.2
18	8	1629	37	20.9	28	14.1	7.0	2.7	11.0	6.9
19	10	1821	52	14.9	35	10.7	6.0	1.9	8.0	8.0
20	11	2245	48	18.5	31	18.6	7.0	2.9	7.0	7.7
21	38	2253	41	11.4	25	15.9	8.0	1.6	6.0	4.8

Mean of all Means   45.52   34.76   6.83   5.29

SD of Means of Means

       10.18   12.27   1.41   3.92

Only two short memos had scores of 0 for Human Interest. Both are totally lacking in "personality."

> A meeting will be held next Friday, February 27, at 11:00 a.m. in the Board Room to discuss advisory committees. This meeting will be for Assistant Deans and Coordinators. A forthcoming memo on advisory committees will be discussed.

> The attached sheet gives the results of a MWF versus a T R study of schedules. The results shown here for the Mathematics, Science & Technologies Division do not support any wholesale change of M W F one-hour classes into T R one and one-half hour classes.

Like the first of these, many memos written by deans are announcing upcoming meetings. How can this be done in a more interesting way? After all, this memo does convey all the information needed, even if it does not make anyone eager to attend the meeting. A sample memo from another dean--whose Mean Human Interest score was just 31, only 6 points above that of the writer of the first memo-- received a score of 54 in announcing another meeting. It is quite a contrast:

> I keep making notes to myself to meet with the two instructors in your department who work with pharmacology and anatomy and physiology. Would you please mention my interest in talking with them about Respiratory Therapy and determine a time convenient for meeting as their schedules permit?
> Also, I am tentatively planning a formal advisory committee meeting on Wednesday, March 17 at 12:30 p.m. in room 206. I would like you to attend if possible. Soup and sandwiches will be served. Thanks.

Probably most faculty would prefer to attend this meeting, even without the soup and sandwiches! The 10 personal words and 2 personal sentences may affect their reaction to reading the memo.

Figure III (p. 57) shows the distribution of the deans' Mean scores on the Flesch Human Interest Scale. Individual Mean scores and standard deviations are listed in Table I (p. 55).

Figure III

A Histogram of Deans' Mean Scores on the Flesch Human Interest Scale
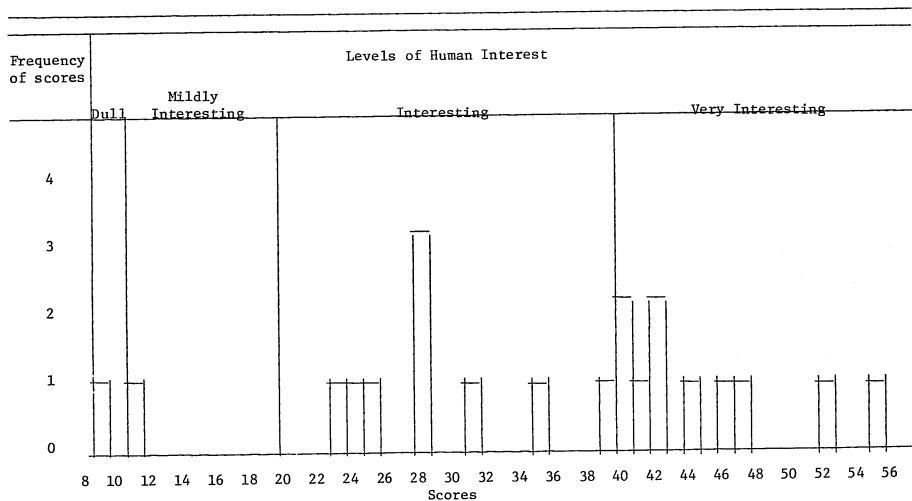
Gibson's "Style Machine"

When the deans' memos were put through the "Style Machine,"
scores ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 11. None approached the
"perfect" score awarded by Gibson to a ruling of the Internal Revenue
Service. (1966, p. 138) The Mean (6.83), Median (7), and Mode (6)
were all too low to classify the average dean as a "stuffy writer";
for this designation a score of at least 10 would have been necessary,
and only one dean received this as a Mean score. Interestingly,
standard deviations were much smaller for this scale than for any of
the others, as can be seen from Table I (p. 55).

A few of Gibson's 16 questions almost never resulted in points
for the memos. Very few memos were totally without personal pronouns,
so the third question seldom applied. Most had no shortage of verbs,
so question 5 resulted in few Stuffiness points. Very few had 8% or
more adjectives (question 8), and most did not have "the" appearing
as often as 6 to 7% of the time (question 14).

On the other hand almost every memo received a point for question
10, for noun adjuncts were abundant. This result could have been
predicted from Gibson's comment that "the educationist is character-
istically . . . generous with his noun adjuncts" (p. 172). Dependent
clauses averaging more than 10 words also caused many memos to earn
points for question 11, and a lack of contractions and fragments caused
most memos to earn points for question 15. Length was not a factor.
Even a short memo can have a high Stuffiness score, as this 73-word
memo with a score of 11 illustrates:

> Attached you will find two copies of the letter of administrative
> concurrence giving official recognition to the _____ Community
> College Emerging Women Club.
> It would be appreciated if you would pass on to Ms. _____
> and Ms. _____ the information that the college has given offi-
> cial recognition to the _____ Community College Emerging
> Women Club, and to Student Government such that official chartering
> may take place.
> Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

This sample consists of 57% monosyllables and 23% words of 3 or
more syllables, so it received points for the first two questions.
Questions 3 through 5 earned it no points, for it has personal pronouns,
people subjects, and sufficient verbs. However, only 1 of the 6
finite verbs is a form of "to be," so question 6 earned it a point.
It scored 5 points for questions 8 through 12, dealing with adjectives,
noun adjuncts, and dependent clauses. "The" appears 6.8% of the time,
earning a point for question 14. The lack of contractions, fragments
or exotic punctuation earned the last 2 points for a total of 11.

Earning only 1 point--for a shortage of "to be" forms (question
6)--is this contrasting memo:

> I am preparing my annual report and would like to include student
> programs/events you presented (I'll give you guys the credit!)
> Could you provide me with titles, dates, approximate attendance
> figures, and the number of students participating in the event?
> This information will be useful to me in presenting and
> defending the case for all student activities at _____,
> whether or not I am directly responsible for them. I am looking
> for ways we can nurture better "school spirit", participation,
> and attendance at all events. I see my role as one of support to
> your programs. I'd like input from you on ways I can help you
> next year.
> Can you respond with the information by June 11?
> Thanks.

Some of the elements that create a somewhat breezy style here are
reflected in the low Stuffiness score. The shortage of big words--less

than 13%--and the variety of punctuation show up in the scoring. Nothing in the "Style Machine" measures the emphatic first-person pronoun usage (10% of the total words) or the effect of "you guys."

Other characteristics of style that did not become evident when a sample was processed through the "Style Machine" were related to good manners. Memos with a cold, bossy tone often scored quite well, as evidenced by this 5-point example:

> Check the attached inventory sheet on the portion I have marked
> in red to see if you still have this equipment in your area.
> If you do have the equipment initial the item, if you don't
> have the equipment tell me where it's at or what happened to
> it. Return the marked copy of the inventory sheet to me
> by Friday morning, March 5th.

Only questions 6, 9, 10, 12, and 16 earned points for this one, although the tone is certainly impersonal. The Human Interest score is misleading on this one, too. Since all of the sentences are imperative, they all count as personal. This 100% plus the 7 personal words produces a Human Interest rating of 71, although the description "Dramatic" hardly seems to fit. Perhaps a scale for Interpersonal Relations needs to be developed in order to measure the effect that the lack of "please" and "thank you" creates in this example and others like it.

The distribution of the deans' Mean Stuffiness scores can be seen in Figure IV (p. 61). Table I (p. 55) lists the individual Mean scores and the standard deviations for each dean.

Grammatical Usage and Accuracy Scale

Although deans might be expected to write error-free letters--or to hire secretaries who could make them look as if they did--no one in

Figure IV

A Histogram of Deans' Mean "Stuffiness" Scores
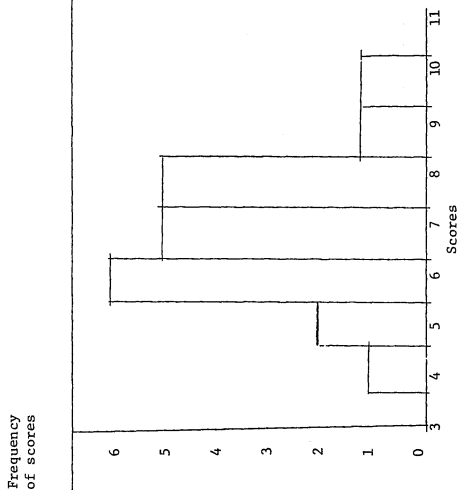
the sample for this study quite achieved perfection. The two deans who almost made it were among those who wrote the least and so had fewer opportunities to make mistakes. Each of these achieved a Mean of 0.5 by writing 3 error-free memos and one memo containing a 2-point error. The highest Mean score was 16. Table I (p. 55) lists individual Means and standard deviations on this scale. The distribution of Mean scores can be seen in Figure V (p. 63).

The Grammatical Usage and Accuracy Scale resulted in the only bimodal distribution; three deans had Mean Scores of 2 and three had Means of 7. The Median was 5, and the Mean was 5.29. Individual samples scored from 0 to 28. The 28-point writing sample had over 400 words, but others with multiple errors were shorter. Here is a 23-point example:

> SUBJ: Librarians Field Experience
> Dr. _____ _____, Associate Dean, Library Science School called Wednesday to inquire whether we engaged in Field Experience for students completing Library Science degree. I forgot to chat with you about this yesterday. _____ Library Science School, according to Dr. _____, has no set procedure for the Field Experience, except to require 240 hours (?) of work. A Mr. ____ _____ is finishing his masters degree and needs the experience. He could take the Field Experience in May and June, (_____ spring half semester) and would be available from May 3 on. I understand that he lives in the _____ area.
> _____, I know we've had this inquiry before from _____ Mich., and I believe we have had some students here. I expressed to Dr. _____ that the decision for Field Experience would rest with you and the librarians. I believe the students interests is in public service area, although (as I recall) Dr. _____ said he had not had reference yet. Perhaps the reference librarians would be interested in an assistant and in providing another training experience. Would you give consideration to the question and respond to me or directly to Dr. _____ at 313-7632286, _____ Library Science?

> Omitting all of the identifying names makes this a little difficult

Figure V

A Histogram of Deans' Mean Scores on the Grammatical Usage and Accuracy Scale

Frequency
of scores

Scores
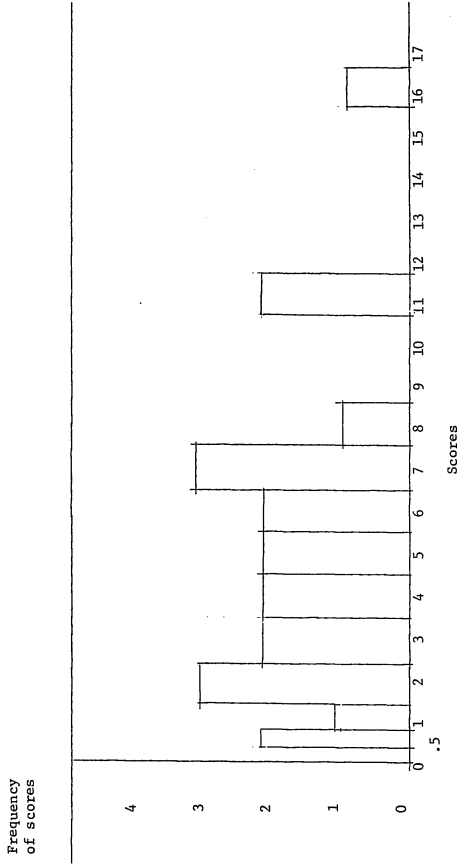
to read, but it does not obscure the errors. The sample contains two 5-point errors (omitted words at the end of the first sentence and a subject-verb agreement error--"interests is"-- in the second paragraph), three 3-point errors (an apostrophe missing from the subject of the memo, an apostrophe missing from "masters degree" in the fourth sentence, and an apostrophe missing from "students interests" in the third sentence of the second paragraph), one 2-point error (the omitted question mark at the end, probably typographical), and two 1-point errors (a comma omitted after "School" in the first line and a comma after "June," instead of after the parentheses in the fifth sentence). These eight errors account for the score of 23. The dean who wrote this memo had one sample that scored as low as 2, but his Mean score for this scale was 11. It is likely that several of his faculty members noticed two or three errors in almost every message they received from him.

Of course some faculty pay little attention to grammatical accuracy, and some of those who notice errors may assume they are the secretary's fault. Even if the secretary did make all of the mistakes and the dean is capable of correcting them, the appearance of the errors on writing samples shows that they were not corrected. Faculty perceptions of the dean's written communication can only come from what they see. When what they see is inaccurate or written carelessly, many of them will assume that the dean either does not know better or does not care enough to write the very best.

Results of the
Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire Evaluations

The Manual distributed by the Bureau of Business Research of

Ohio State University with the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire

does not provide norms for the scores. Instead, it gives statistics

on three samples: two groups of aircraft commanders and one of school

superintendents. These are supposed to provide a "rough guide for

interpreting LBDQ scores" (Halpin, 1957, p. 3).

It is interesting and a little surprising that the sample of 64

educational administrators had exactly the same Mean Consideration

score--44.7--and exactly the same standard deviation--6.0--as the

sample in this study had. Deans did a little better on Initiating

Structure than superintendents did, for the deans scored 39.57 to

the superintendents' 37.9. Standard deviations differed also:

3.55 for the deans, 4.4 for the superintendents.

The deans in this study received slightly lower scores than those

given deans by their department chairmen in Carson's 1962 research.

Carson's 20 junior college deans received 46.6 for Consideration and

40.85 for Initiating Structure from the chairmen. (Carson & Schultz,

p. 358) College presidents rated them even higher: 47.6 and 45.75,

respectively.

In this study deans were evaluated by from 4 to 11 subordinates,

with an average of 7 evaluators, "a good standard," according to

Halpin (1957, p. 2). Individual Mean scores and standard deviations

are shown in Table II (p. 66). Figures VI, VII, and VIII (pp. 67-69)

show the distributions for all three scores.

Table II

Results of <u>Leader Behavior</u> Description Questionnaire Evaluations

Dean	Number of evaluators	Total LBDQ score		Consideration score		Initiating Structure score	
		<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
1	10	95	12.4	51	6.0	44	7.3
2	6	93	7.9	49	4.9	44	3.3
3	8	91	16.6	50	9.8	41	7.5
4	7	91	5.1	49	3.7	42	4.4
5	7	90	9.6	40	8.0	50	3.4
6	4	90	6.7	50	5.1	40	3.7
7	9	90	9.5	50	3.8	40	6.5
8	6	89	10.8	51	4.2	38	8.0
9	9	88	8.6	47	4.8	41	4.6
10	6	86	10.1	49	4.2	37	6.4
11	9	86	6.7	49	4.6	37	5.8
12	6	86	13.7	46	8.8	40	5.2
13	6	86	16.8	46	10.6	40	7.6
14	9	84	13.0	45	5.3	39	9.0
15	6	79	14.4	43	7.3	36	7.5
16	7	79	15.7	40	9.0	39	7.7
17	11	78	12.7	43	8.1	35	7.9
18	6	78	14.7	38	6.3	40	9.5
19	7	77	15.4	42	8.4	35	7.5
20	4	72	4.5	34	2.5	38	4.5
21	4	63	22.8	28	17.6	35	6.8
Means	7	84.33		44.76		39.57	
<u>SD</u> of Means	1.95	7.80		6.09		3.55	

Figure VI
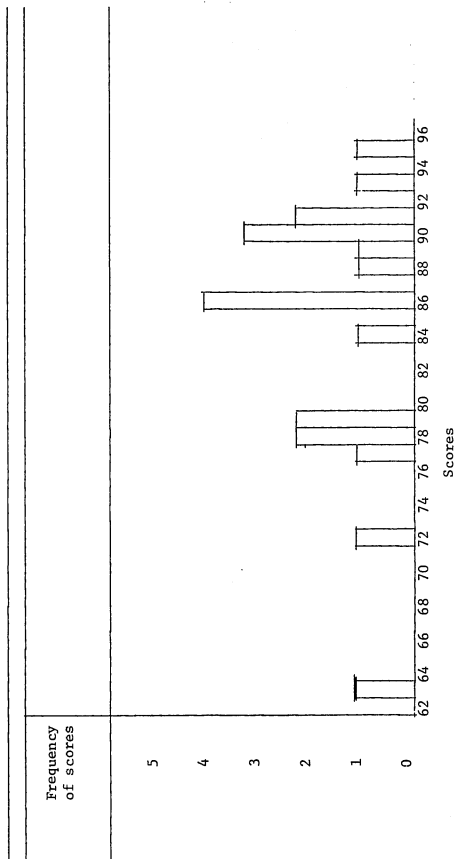
A Histogram of Deans' Mean Total Scores on the LBDQ

Figure VII

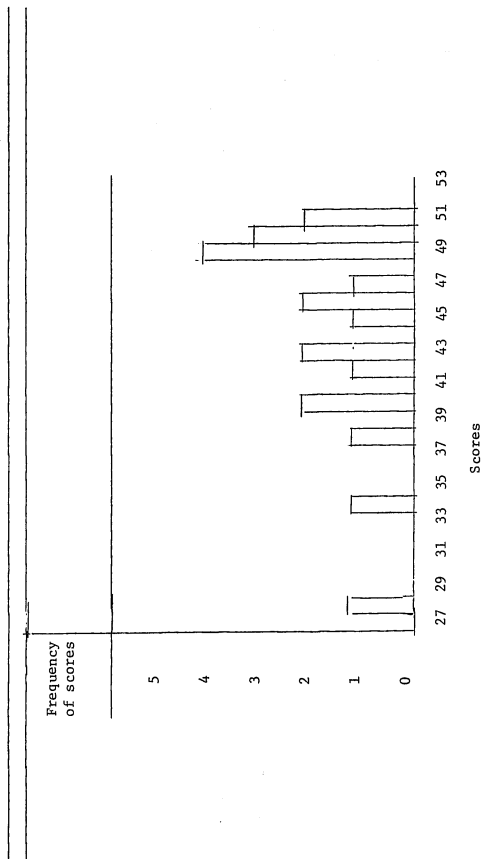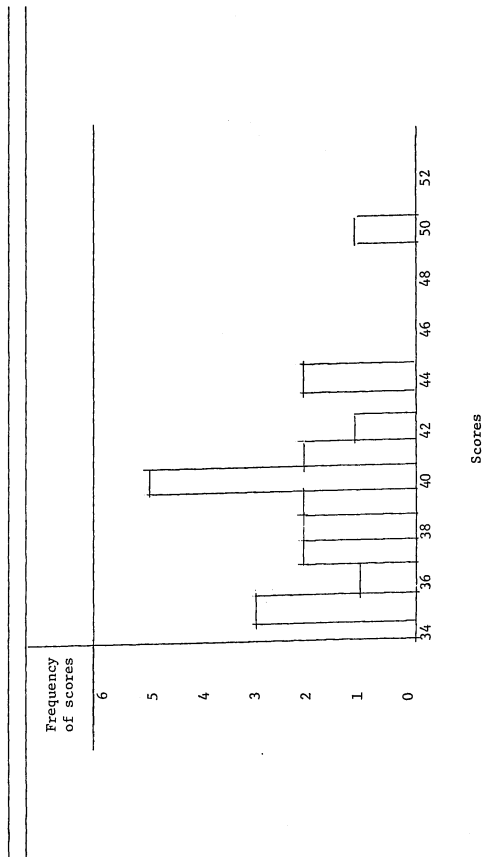A Histogram of Deans' Mean Consideration Scores on the LBDQ

Figure VIII

A Histogram of Deans' Mean Initiating Structure Scores on the LBDQ

A comparison of the Consideration and Initiating Structure scores in Table II (p. 66) shows that 17 of the 21 deans were rated higher for interpersonal relationships--the first score--than for organization and efficiency--the second score. The four deans who had better Initiating Structure scores than Consideration scores are an interesting group. None of the instructional deans is included in this category, and only one of the student services deans falls into it. All of the "other" deans--the chief business officer, the dean of program development, and the dean of learning resources--fit into this group.

As some of the high standard deviations indicate, the questionnaire may have revealed as much about the evaluator as about the dean being evaluated in some instances. Individual LBDQs had scores as high as 112 and as low as 42. (Not for the same dean! However, one did have Total scores ranging from 55 to 105.) Initiating Structure scores ran from 22 to 56. The range for Consideration was larger: 8 (yes, 8) to 59. Still Ohio State's research indicates that "followers tend to agree in describing the same leader, and the descriptions of different leaders differ significantly" (Halpin, 1957, p. 1).

Testing of the Hypotheses

This study set out to test the theory that there is a correlation between certain characteristics of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' effectiveness as rated by their faculties. Since "certain characteristics" and "effectiveness" are quite vague terms, 12 research hypotheses stated the idea more specifically. The first three of these dealt with the results on the Flesch Reading Ease scale:

H_1 There is a high correlation between Reading Ease scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Consideration scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader</u> <u>Behavior</u> <u>Description</u> <u>Questionnaire</u>.

H_2 There is a high correlation between Reading Ease scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Initiating Structure scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader</u> <u>Behavior</u> <u>Description</u> <u>Questionnaire</u>.

H_3 There is a high correlation between Reading Ease scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader</u> <u>Behavior</u> <u>Description</u> <u>Questionnaire</u>.

Three scatter diagrams illustrate the bivariate distributions of the Reading Ease scores with the three <u>LBDQ</u> scores. These are Figures IX (p. 72), X (p. 73), and XI (p. 74).

When the formula for the Pearson product moment coefficient of correlation was applied to these data, no relationship was found to be significant at the .05 level. Therefore, the first three hypotheses were rejected. Table III provides the specific figures.

Table III

Correlations of Reading Ease Scores With <u>LBDQ</u> Scores

When correlated with . . .	r_{xy}	Significant at .05 level?
Consideration scores	.250	no
Initiating Structure scores	−.184	no
Total scores	.112	no

Figure IX

The Bivariate Distribution of Reading Ease Scores
And Consideration Scores

Reading Ease Scores
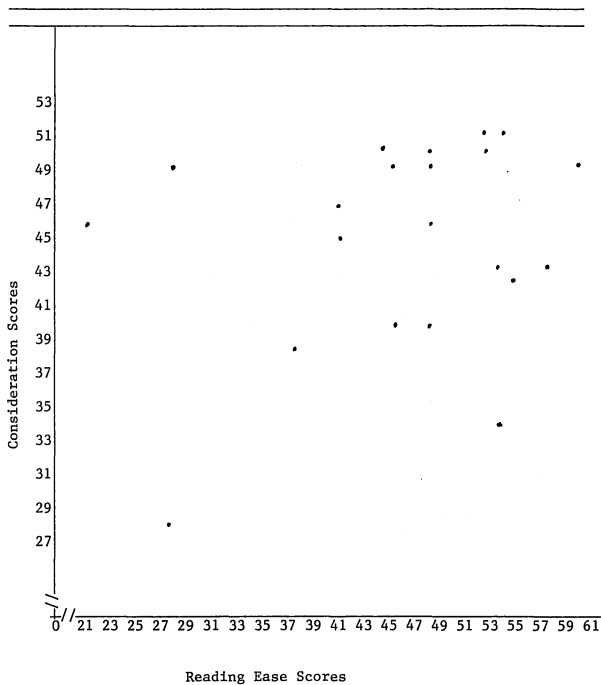
Figure X

The Bivariate Distribution of Reading Ease Scores
And Initiating Structure Scores

Reading Ease Scores
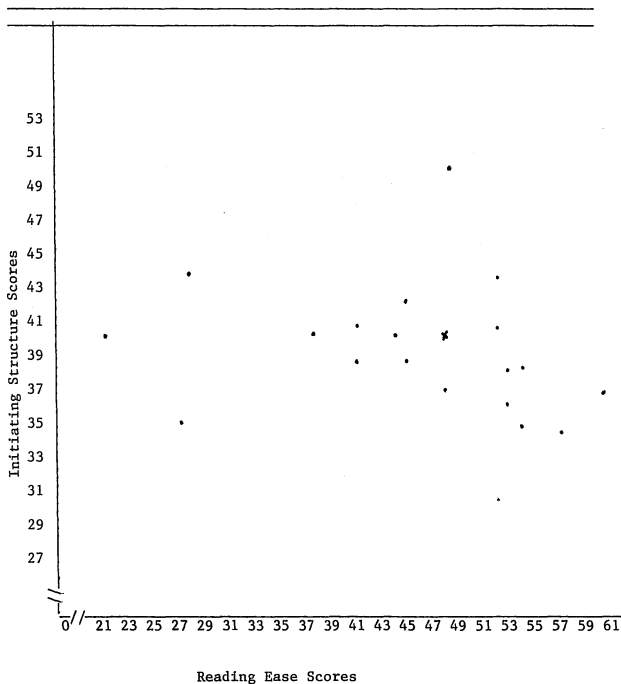
"x" indicates two deans
with identical scores

Figure XI

The Bivariate Distribution of Reading Ease Scores
And Total <u>LBDQ</u> Scores

Reading Ease Scores

"x" indicates two deans
with identical scores
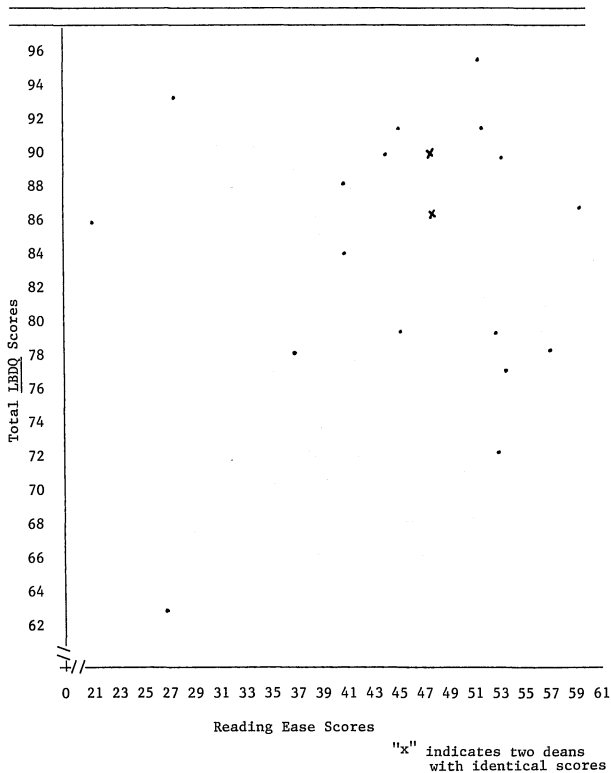
The relationship of Human Interest scores and effectiveness scores provided the bases for the nest three hypotheses:

H_4 There is a high correlation between Human Interest scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Consideration scores as rated by their faculties on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

H_5 There is a high correlation between Human Interest scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Initiating Structure scores as rated by their faculties on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

H_6 There is a high correlation between Human Interest scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

Scatter diagrams illustrating the bivariate distribution of scores on both instruments can be found on pages 76 through 78, Figures XII, XIII, and XIV.

Again applying the formula for the Pearson product moment coefficient of correlation to these data produced no coefficient that was significant at the .05 level. Table IV has the figures. On this basis, hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 were rejected.

Table IV

Correlations of Human Interest Scores With LBDQ Scores

When correlated with . . .	r_{xy}	Significant at .05 level?
Consideration scores	.148	no
Initiating Structure scores	.056	no
Total scores	.140	no

Figure XII

The Bivariate Distribution of Human Interest Scores
And Consideration Scores
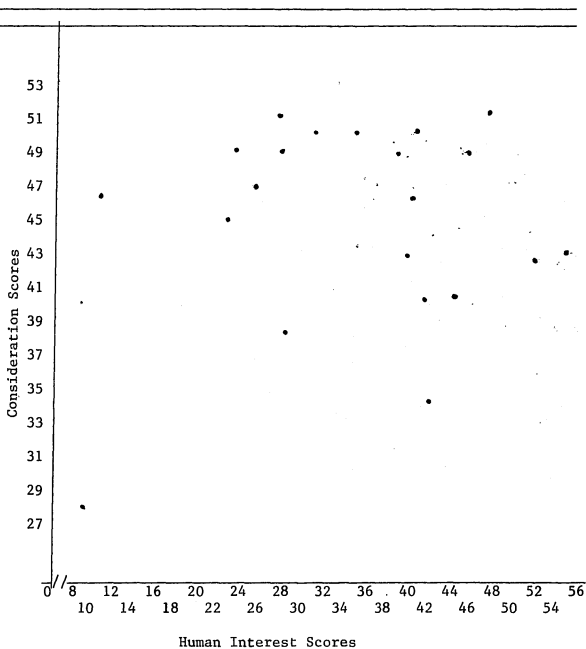

Human Interest Scores

Figure XIII

The Bivariate Distribution of Human Interest Scores
And Initiating Structure Scores
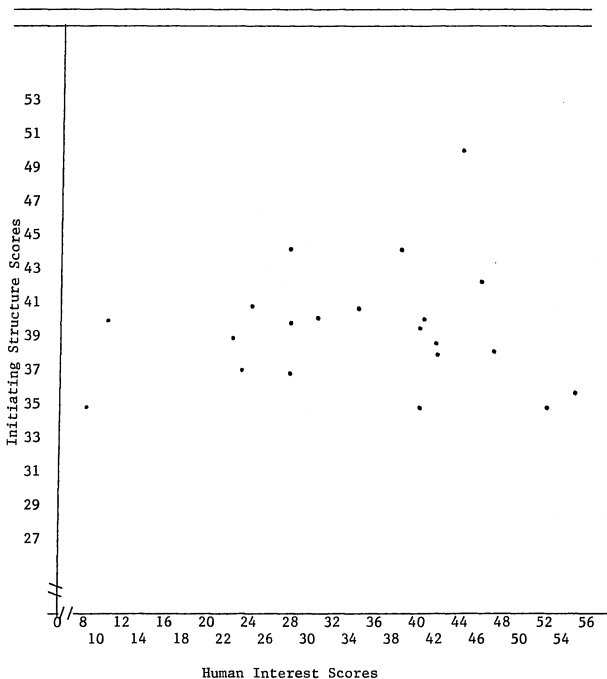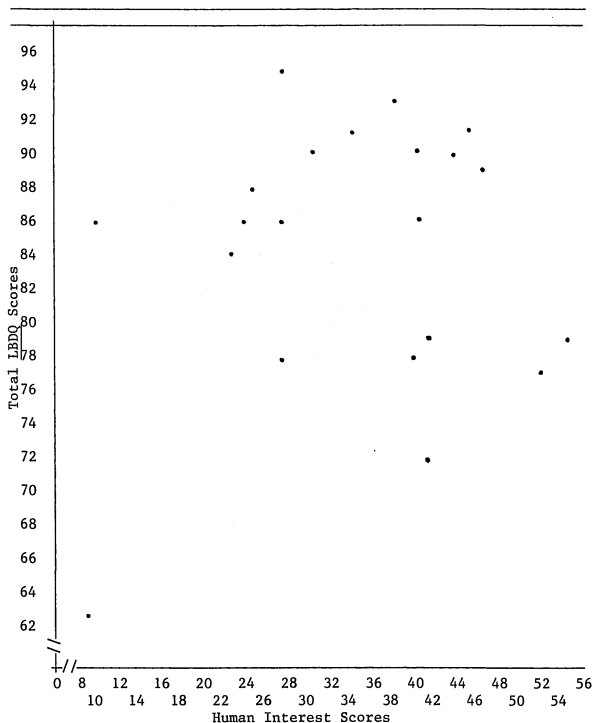

Human Interest Scores

Figure XIV

The Bivariate Distribution of Human Interest Scores
And Total <u>LBDQ</u> Scores

The next three hypotheses were concerned with the relationship between scores on the Stuffiness section of Gibson's "Style Machine" and effectiveness scores.

H_7 There is a high correlation between Stuffiness scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Consideration scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>.

H_8 There is a high correlation between Stuffiness scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Initiating Structure scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>.

H_9 There is a high correlation between Stuffiness scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>.

Figures XV (p. 81), XVI (p. 82), and XVII (p. 83) represent scatter diagrams of these bivariate distributions. The statistical data are presented in Table V (p. 80).

Since the Stuffiness score goes from 0 (good) to 16 (bad), it would be expected that high effectiveness scores would correspond with low Stuffiness scores, producing a negative coefficient of correlation. This was the case in two of the three distributions—those for Consideration and Total scores—but coefficients were not large enough to be significant at the .05 level. Therefore, hypotheses 7, 8, and 9 were rejected.

Hypotheses 10, 11, and 12 were concerned with the relationship of scores on the Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scale to the effectiveness scores on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>. Again high scores indicated poor writing, so it would be expected

Table V

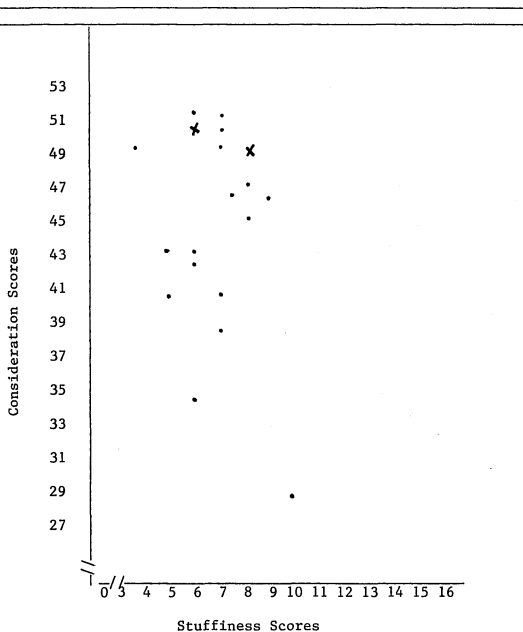Correlations of Stuffiness Scores With LBDQ Scores

When correlated with . . .	r_{xy}	Significant at .05 level?
Consideration scores	−.218	no
Initiating Structure scores	.005	no
Total scores	−.168	no

that any coefficient of correlation would be negative. The hypotheses were as follows:

H_{10} There is a high correlation between Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Consideration scores as rated by their faculties on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

H_{11} There is a high correlation between Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Initiating Structure scores as rated by their faculties on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

H_{12} There is a high correlation between Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

Statistical data (Table VI, p. 84) support hypotheses 10 and 12, so only 11 had to be rejected. Coefficients for the relationships with Consideration scores and Total scores were both large enough to be significant at the .01 level. (Scatter diagrams for these hypotheses can be found in Figures XVIII, XIX, and XX, pages 85-87.)

Figure XV

The Bivariate Distribution of Stuffiness Scores
And Consideration Scores

Stuffiness Scores

"x" indicates two deans
with identical scores

Figure XVI

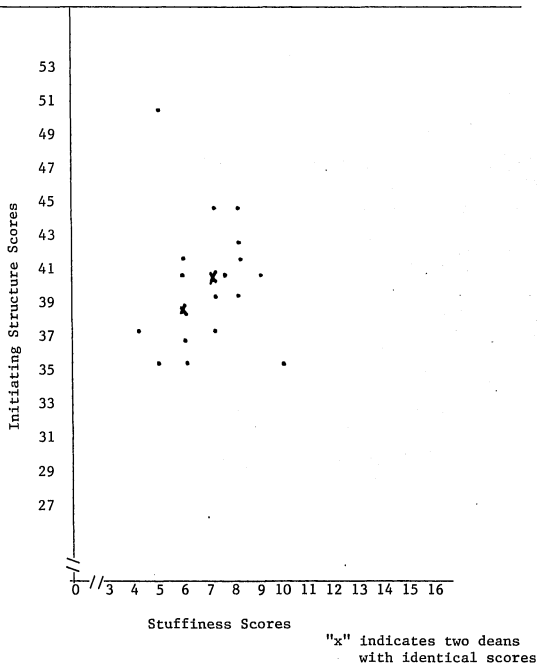The Bivariate Distribution of Stuffiness Scores
And Initiating Structure Scores

Stuffiness Scores

"x" indicates two deans
with identical scores

Figure XVII

The Bivariate Distribution of Stuffiness Scores
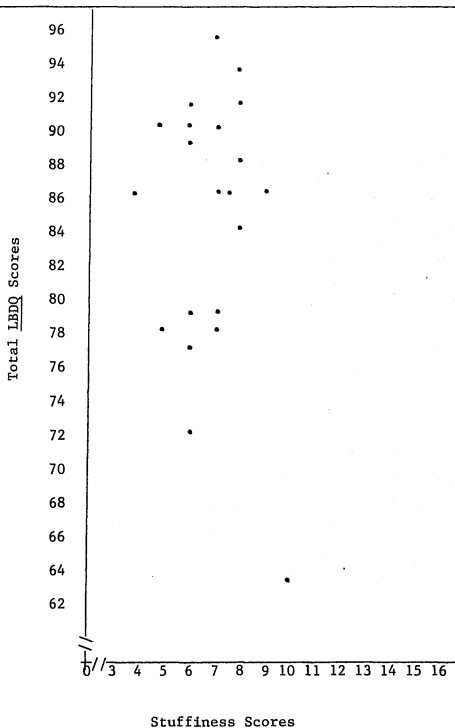And Total LBDQ Scores

Stuffiness Scores

Table VI

Correlations of Grammatical Usage and Accuracy Scores
With LBDQ Scores

When correlated with . . .	r_{xy}	Significant at .05 level?
Consideration scores	−.761	yes
Initiating Structure scores	−.186	no
Total scores	−.678	yes

The last three hypotheses were related to the deans' personal characteristics and their predicted low correlation with effectiveness ratings. These were:

H_{13} There is a low correlation between the academic training of community college deans and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

H_{14} There is a low correlation between the teaching experience of community college deans and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

H_{15} There is a low correlation between the number of publications of community college deans and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

For the first of these "academic training" had to be translated into degrees earned. There were five categories: (1) bachelor's degree--1 dean, (2) master's degree--11 deans, (3) EdSp--1 dean, (4) EdD--4 deans, and (5) PhD--4 deans. The Spearman Rank-Correlation coefficient did not seem adequate to test this hypothesis,

Figure XVIII

The Bivariate Distribution of Grammatical Usage
And Accuracy Scores and Consideration Scores

Grammatical Usage
And Accuracy Scores

"x" indicates two deans
with identical scores
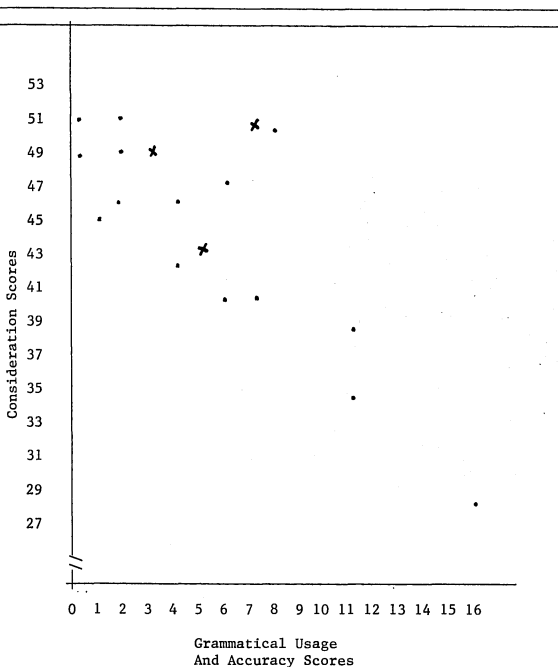
Figure XIX

The Bivariate Distribution of Grammatical Usage
And Accuracy Scores and Initiating Structure Scores

Grammatical Usage
And Accuracy Scores

"x" indicates two deans
with identical scores
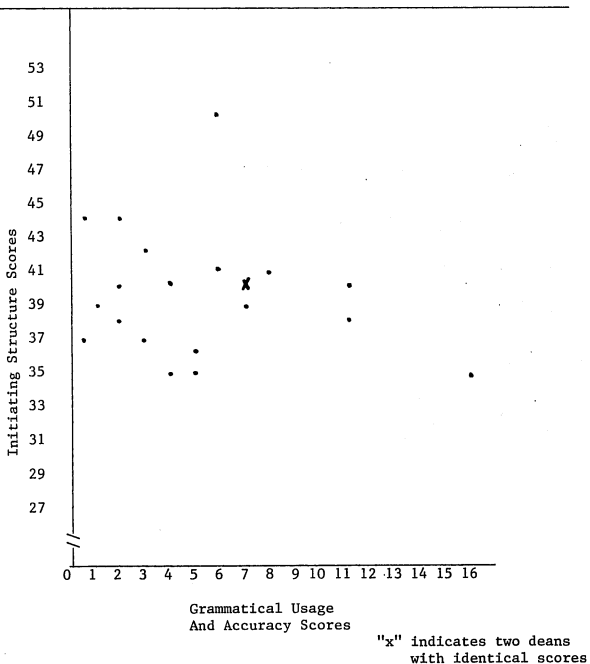
Figure XX

The Bivariate Distribution of Grammatical Usage
And Accuracy Scores and Total $\underline{LBDQ}$ Scores

Grammatical Usage
And Accuracy Scores

"x" indicates two deans
with identical scores
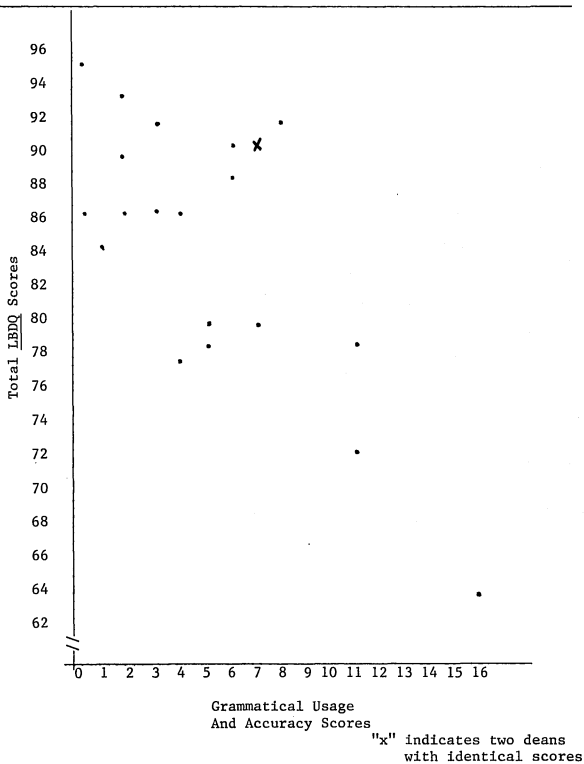
because there were so many tied ranks in the LBDQ data. Applying the formula for Pearson r to the data produced a coefficient of −.057, too small to be significant at the .05 level. Therefore, hypothesis 13 was retained.

It was interesting that the correlation was negative, possibly supporting the findings of the Hemphill-Griffiths-Frederiksen study (1962) that more academic preparation did not increase administrative effectiveness.

Hypothesis 14 was also retained when the formula for Pearson r was applied to the data on years of teaching experience and Total LBDQ scores. The resulting coefficient of .032 was too small to be significant at the .05 level, so the data supported the expected low correlation.

"Teaching experience" also referred to subjects taught as well as to years of experience. The distribution of Total LBDQ scores by the subjects the deans had taught is shown in Table VII (p. 89). It can be seen that for all subjects taught by more than one dean the Means are very close to the sample Mean of 84.3. These data also support the expectation that kind of teaching experience did not have a high correlation with effectiveness ratings.

Because 15 of the deans had not published anything and only one had written more than three articles, the number of publications was not really satisfactory for testing hypothesis 15. If any difference in effectiveness scores were linked to publishing history, the difference probably related to whether the dean had published,

Table VII

Distribution of Total LBDQ Scores by Subjects Taught

Subject	# of Deans	Total LBDQ Scores	Mean	SD
Indus. Arts	6	95, 86, 86, 84, 79, 79	84.8	5.9
English	4	93, 88, 78, 77	84.0	7.8
Business	4	91, 90, 89, 63	83.3	13.5
Speech	2	90, 78	84.0	8.5
Unspecified	2	91, 86	88.5	3.6
Science	1	90		
Math	1	72		
History	1	86		

not to how much he/she had published. Considering the data as
nominal-dichotomous (0 = no publication, 1 = some publication) meant
that the point-biserial correlation coefficient could be used. Apply-
ing this formula resulted in a coefficient of .387. This figure was
high enough for a significance level of .10, but not high enough for
a level of .05, so the low correlation meant that this hypothesis
could also be retained.

Summary

Of all the research hypotheses tested, only five were supported
by the data. There is a significant negative relationship

between high scores on the Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scale--
indicating numerous errors in mechanics can be found in the deans'
written communication to faculty--and high scores for the Total
Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire--indicating the faculty
perceive the deans as effective administrators. This same negative
relationship exists between Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scores and
LBDQ Consideration scores. Of course there is always the possibility
that the relationship is an artifact, not real, and that Type I errors
were committed in the retention of the two research hypotheses. Since
the coefficients in each case were sufficiently large to be signif-
icant at even the .01 level, this relationship ought to be studied
further. To rule out the possibility of any analyst-bias in scoring
the writing scales (for instance, scoring deans with low effectiveness
ratings more meticulously than others), the Leader Behavior Description
Questionnaires were not tallied until after all of the writing scales
had been scored.

Correlations of personal characteristics and effectiveness ratings
were all low, resulting in retention of the last three hypotheses.
Possible explanations for these results and conclusions to be drawn
from them will be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

This study was designed to test the hypothesis that there is a relationship between the quality of the written communication which faculty receive from a community college dean and their perceptions of that dean's effectiveness as an administrator.

Eight community colleges in southern and western Michigan were included in the sample, and 21 deans from these colleges participated. Samples of their writing covering a two-month period before they were asked to participate were measured on four scales: Flesch's Reading Ease Scale (1948), Flesch's Human Interest Scale (1948), Gibson's Stuffiness Scale from the "Style Machine" (1966), and a Grammatical Usage and Accuracy Scale developed for this research. Their Mean scores on these four instruments were used as indicators of the deans' written communication and were correlated with the effectiveness scores given them by their faculty on Ohio State's <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u> (1957). These scores were obtained from a random sample of 10 faculty members, or all the faculty under a dean when there were fewer than 10. The <u>LBDQ</u> measures leadership effectiveness on two dimensions: Consideration and Initiating Structure (basically, organization and efficiency), so each dean had three scores, one for each dimension and a Total score which was a combination of the two.

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The possible combinations of the scores for the writing measures and the effectiveness scores resulted in 12 research hypotheses:

H_1 There is a high correlation between Reading Ease scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Consideration scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>.

H_2 There is a high correlation between Reading Ease scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Initiating Structure scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>.

H_3 There is a high correlation between Reading Ease scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>.

H_4 There is a high correlation between Human Interest scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Consideration scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>.

H_5 There is a high correlation between Human Interest scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Initiating Structure scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>.

H_6 There is a high correlation between Human Interest scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>.

H_7 There is a high correlation between Stuffiness scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Consideration scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>.

H_8 There is a high correlation between Stuffiness scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Initiating Structure scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>.

H_9 There is a high correlation between Stuffiness scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the <u>Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire</u>.

H_{10} There is a high correlation between Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Consideration scores as rated by their faculties on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

H_{11} There is a high correlation between Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Initiating Structure scores as rated by their faculties on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

H_{12} There is a high correlation between Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scores of community college deans' written communication to faculty and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

These hypotheses were tested by applying the formula for Pearson r to the data. The resulting coefficients of correlation were not significant at the .05 level for all but two of the hypotheses. Only H_{10} and H_{12} had significant coefficients, and these (-.761 and -.678, respectively) were large enough to be significant even at the .01 level. Therefore, all the other hypotheses were rejected, and the only hypotheses retained were those dealing with the relationship of Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scores to Consideration scores and Total scores.

Three additional hypotheses were tested concerning the relationship of deans' personal background and their effectiveness ratings. Background data concerned academic training, teaching experience, and numbers of publications. Since previous research generally showed that these background factors had little influence on effectiveness ratings, these hypotheses were stated as follows:

H_{13} There is a low correlation between the academic training of community college deans and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the Leader Behavior Description

Questionnaire.

H$_{14}$ There is a low correlation between the teaching experience of community college deans and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

H$_{15}$ There is a low correlation between the number of publications of community college deans and the deans' Total scores as rated by their faculties on the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

All three of these hypotheses were retained. Correlating the ranked highest degrees earned produced a coefficient of -.057, and correlating the years of teaching experience produced a coefficient of .032. (Both were correlated with Total LBDQ scores for the deans.) At the .05 level both were insignificant, so the indicated correlation was low. "Teaching experience" could also refer to subjects taught, but when the Mean scores for each of the seven subjects taught were examined, they were found to be very close to the sample Mean of 84.3. Only the last hypothesis had data that appeared to indicate a higher coefficient of correlation. Since 15 deans had not published at all, the point-biserial correlation coefficient was used on the data, with those who had published being given a "1" and those who had not being given a "0." The resulting coefficient of .387 was signif- icant at the .10 level, but not at the .05 level. Therefore, this hypothesis was also retained, as no high correlation was shown between publication and effectiveness as a leader.

The data finally supported only two relationships: low Grammat- ical Usage and Accuracy scores, indicating few errors in written com- munication, correlate with high effectiveness scores for Consideration; and low Grammatical Usage and Accuracy scores on written communication also correlate with high Total scores for the deans' effectiveness.

General Conclusions

The high correlation between grammatical accuracy and effective leadership revealed by the data in this study deserves attention. For this sample of community college deans from southern and western Michigan colleges, those who made few mechanical errors in their written communication to faculty were perceived by those faculty as being more considerate and generally better leaders than were those who made more mechanical errors. The same relationship might not be true for administrators at other levels or in other types of institutions, but the possibility should be investigated, since the coefficient of correlation was even larger than previous studies have indicated. Of course, there is always the possibility that the high coefficients resulted from Type I errors in retaining the two research hypotheses when null hypotheses were true.

It cannot be said that these deans were more effective because they wrote better memos and letters. Perhaps they were more careful, dependable people than the poorer-scoring deans, and this characteristic displayed itself both in their personal relationships and in their writing. Perhaps they were really no more effective at their jobs than the other deans were, but the difference was all in faculty perceptions. They may have been viewed as effective because their written presentations of themselves were impressive, and faculty with little personal contact with them were subconsciously influenced by what they read. It is possible that the highest-rated deans were also the most intelligent; this strength could have made these deans

better at leading as well as better at writing. More data from simi-
lar studies are needed before researchers can begin to say which, if
any, of these possibilities is the case.

There are several possible explanations for the non-significant
coefficients of correlation for effectiveness scores and the other
writing scores. Of course a Type II error can have been made and null
hypotheses erroneously rejected. Other possibilities include the fol-
lowing:

1. There is no relationship between the quality of a dean's
   written communication to faculty (other than grammatical
   accuracy) and his/her perceived effectiveness as an adminin-
   trator.

2. There is a relationship between the quality of written communi-
   cation and the dean's perceived effectiveness, but the instru-
   ments used to measure the two concepts in this study either
   did not measure the important characteristics or did not
   measure with sufficient accuracy to reveal the relationship.

3. There is a relationship between the quality of written commun-
   ication and the dean's perceived effectiveness, and the study
   used instruments which could measure the concepts accurately,
   but a larger, more heterogeneous sample would be needed to
   produce a significantly large coefficient.

All three of these explanations are quite likely. Several deans
used in this sample were inconsistent in their writing behaviors, so
their Mean scores did not tell very much about them. They sometimes

wrote memos that scored quite high on Reading Ease, for instance, but at other times they wrote nearly unreadable memos with very low scores. On the Stuffiness scale Mean scores were nearly all in the 6-to-8 range, not providing enough variation to show much correlation.

To provide a further test of these rejected hypotheses an experimental study could be run. One that manipulated the characteristics of the written communication and then measured and compared effectiveness ratings would be most conclusive. Possibly all of the faculty members under a dean could be randomly placed in one of two groups. Group A would receive memos carefully prepared to rate high on readability and human interest and low on stuffiness. Group B would receive the same content in their memos but would get versions purposely written to receive bad scores. After the two groups had been receiving the two versions of memos for six months or a year, both groups could fill out the LBDQ to evaluate the dean. If the Means for the two groups were close to identical, the hypothesis that there is a relationship between the quality of the written communication and the perceived effectiveness of the dean would again be rejected. However, an appreciable difference in the Means would substantiate the hypothesis. While this design is interesting in theory, it would be extremely difficult to carry out. What dean would be willing to run the risk of deliberately alienating half the faculty by sending them messages designed to be unreadable, boring, and stuffy?

The low correlations between academic training, teaching experience, and publishing history and effective leadership demonstrated

by the data in this study are in agreement with previous research. These very characteristics are often given substantial weight when prospective deans are being interviewed, perhaps because they are tangible and easy to verify. However, their apparent lack of connection with effective job performance should make interviewing committees search for alternative predictors of success.

Recommendations

Very little research has so far been done on the actual communication skills and performances of educational administrators. Several possible studies would be worthwhile:

1. Further research on the relationship between grammatical accuracy and perceived effectiveness revealed here. Replicating these results at other levels of administration and in other kinds of institutions could establish their generalizability.

2. Experimental research involving the manipulation of written communication to discover the effect on perceived effectiveness when the communication suddenly became either much better or much worse.

3. Research aimed at developing a better instrument to measure the tone of memos, whether written in an educational setting or in business. A semantic differential scale should be developed to measure a sample of written material on a continuum from "warm" to "cold," "strong" to "weak,"

"polite" to "impolite," "friendly" to "unfriendly." Additional research to validate Gibson's "Style Machine" would also be worthwhile.

4. An in-depth study of effective deans to see what they have in common--philosophy, personality traits, skill at oral or written communication. A study on the same scale as the Hemphill-Griffiths-Frederiksen research on elementary principals (1962) would be invaluable.

5. An investigation of deans' communication skills which would be broader than a study of their writing. This could encompass their speaking abilities and their social skills, such as their ability to interpret nonverbal messages. However, before such an investigation could take place, measuring techniques would need a great deal of refinement.

6. A study of the influence of institutional size on the importance placed on administrative communications. A possible hypothesis to be tested is that written communication would be more influential at larger institutions than at smaller institutions.

Should further research support the high correlation between perceived effectiveness and grammatical accuracy in written memos, this finding should be of interest to colleges that have programs to train prospective administrators as well as to those that merely hire administrators. Administrators-in-training could evaluate their own writing abilities more accurately if they had a clearer idea of

the role their writing plays in developing their images as effective or ineffective leaders. Interviewing policies, hiring priorities, and inservice programs might all be affected by greater knowledge of the relationship between effectiveness and writing performance.

The present study has shown that the written communication of community college deans can be measured and that at least one of these measures--grammatical usage and accuracy--appears to be related to the deans' perceived effectiveness. Additional research as described above needs to be done before scholars can answer the question, "How important is writing ability to the effectiveness of the community college dean?"

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APPENDIX A

ADMINISTRATORS' QUESTIONNAIRE

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ADMINISTRATORS' QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name _____ Age _____

   Institution _____ Position _____

2. How many full-time faculty (teachers, counselors, librarians,

   administrators) does your college have? _____

   How many of these report directly to you? _____

   How many report to your assistants? _____(If you have

   assistants, please attach a sheet listing their names, titles, and

   faculty reporting to them.)

3. How long have you held your present position? _____

4. What was your job before this one? _____

5. If you were promoted from within the college, how many years did

   you work there before you attained your present position? _____

   What other jobs in the college did you have? _____

6. If you were a teacher before becoming an administrator, what

   subject(s) did you teach? _____

   How many years did you teach at each of the following levels?

   ____Elementary   ____Undergraduate college
   ____Secondary   ____Graduate college
   ____Community College   ____Other (specify)

7. If you came into administration from a non-teaching background,

   briefly describe what your previous experience was.

8. What degrees do you hold, and from what institutions?

   Degrees   Institutions

9. If you have published articles, books, or other works, please list
   these below, or attach a sheet.

                          PUBLICATIONS

   Before becoming an administrator   Since becoming an administrator

10. In working with your staff, do you feel that written communication
    is (check one)

    ____Not very important?
    ____Important, but less so than face-to-face communication?
    ____Just as important as face-to-face communication?
    ____Even more important than face-to-face communication?

PLEASE ATTACH TO THIS SHEET A LIST OF FACULTY WORKING UNDER YOU (so that

I can administer the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire to a

random sample) AND MAIL IT IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE TO

Mrs. Maureen Taylor, 1928 Skyler Drive, Kalamazoo 49008.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

P.S.--Please suggest three or four dates when it would be convenient

to have me pick up your collection of memos. I would like to do this

as early in May as possible.

APPENDIX B

RESPONSES TO ADMINISTRATORS' QUESTIONNAIRE

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RESPONSES TO ADMINISTRATORS' QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Ages: 30 to 37 -- 6   Range: 35 years

           40 to 49 -- 10   Mean: 43.8 SD = 8.4

           50 to 56 -- 4

           65 -- 1

   Positions:

   Dean of Instruction -- 2

   Vocational Dean -- 4

   Dean of Arts and Sciences -- 2

   Dean of Business and Technology -- 2

   Dean of Student Services -- 5

   Associate Dean of Students -- 1

   Dean of Admissions -- 1

   Dean of Special Programs (in Student Services) -- 1

   Dean of Learning Resources -- 1

   Dean of Program Development -- 1

   Chief Business Officer -- 1

2. Number of subordinates: Range: 86 (4 to 90) Mean: 32.6

3. Length of time in present position: Range: 8.5 years

   .5 year -- 2   3 to 4 years -- 7

   1 year -- 1   5 to 8 years -- 4

   2 years -- 4   9 years -- 2

   2.5 years -- 1   Mean: 3.8 years SD = 2.7

4. Previous job: Instructor -- 4   Department Head -- 3

Lower Administrative Position -- 11   Counselor -- 2

Higher Administrative Position -- 1

5. Length of time in college before attaining present position:

Range: 20 years (0 to 20) Mean: 4.5 years $\underline{SD}$ = 5.5

0 years -- 8

1 to 3 years -- 3

4 to 6 years -- 5

7 to 8 years -- 2

12 years -- 1

20 years -- 1

6. Subjects taught:

Industrial Education -- 6   History -- 1

English -- 4   Science -- 1

Business -- 4   Mathematics -- 1

Speech -- 2   Unspecified -- 2

Years in Education: Range: 36 years (.5 to 36.5)

Mean: 8.4 $\underline{SD}$ = 7.8

Numbers reporting experience at each level:

Elementary -- 0   Undergraduate College -- 4

Secondary -- 17   Graduate College -- 1

Community College -- 9   Other -- 0

7. Non-teaching backgrounds: Only two, one in business and one

in engineering

8. Degrees earned (only highest degree reported)

Bachelor's -- 1   Master's -- 11

EdSp -- 1   EdD -- 4   PhD -- 4

(Only 4 out-of-state)

9. Publications:

   none -- 15

   one article before administrative job -- 3

   two articles before administrative job -- 1

   three articles before administrative job -- 1

   eight since administrative job -- 1

10. Importance of communication:

   Not very important -- 0

   Important, but less so than face-to-face communication -- 10

   Just as important as face-to-face communication -- 7

   Even more important than face-to-face communication -- 4