PERCEIVED INTERORGANIZATIONAL SIMILARITY-DISSIMILARITY AND THE ATTRACTION PARADIGM

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ABSTRACT

PERCEIVED INTERORGANIZATIONAL SIMILARITY-DISSIMILARITY AND THE ATTRACTION PARADIGM

By

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This study examined whether interorganizational attraction on five dimensions of organization delineating Activity, Scope, Value and Operational Orientation, Perspective, and Size, affected the initiation of cooperative interaction between subject organizations and a stimulus organization. The agencies sampled represented a variety of interests and services in the general areas of health, welfare, education, and recreation. These organizations were matched for perceived similarity on each of the five organizational dimensions, and were randomly assigned to one of three treatment conditions: "High," "Intermediate," and "Low" similarity. Similarity was manipulated by varying the content of a written communication (i.e., a letter) to subject organizations from the stimulus organization requesting their participation in a work-conference program. Dependent measures consisted of an Attraction Scale, indicating the degree to which subject organizations

interacted with the stimulus organization, and two behavioral indices of attraction.

The results indicated that similarity-dissimilarity, as manipulated by varying the content of a stimulus letter sent to subject organizations from the stimulus organization, failed to support the experimental hypothesis that interorganizational attraction would be significantly influenced by perceived interorganizational similarity on the critical dimensions examined.

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By

Lynn Thomas Keith

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A review of the literature on interorganizational phenomena reveals that experimental analyses of interorganizational relations have been relatively neglected by organizational analysts. A plethora of complex problems arise, as Evan (1968) points out, in conceptualizing and measuring interactions among organizations. Both the conceptual and methodological problems have obstructed progress in structuring the "science" of organization as contrasted with the more fully developed "art" of organization.

Perceiving a formal organization as a particular type of social system, with the study of interorganizational relations involving an analysis of intersocial system relations, Evan (1968) usefully distinguishes a number of issues to be considered and resolved in interorganizational analyses. At the conceptual level these issues include identification of organizational dimensions--considered within the context of the environmental system ("organizational-set") within which the specific organization operates. These conceptual dimensions subsume such variables as an organization's input-output resources, its comparative versus normative reference set, the number of subsystems comprising the organization, composition of membership, and goals and values. Methodological problems focus on issues of operationalizing and reliably measuring patterns of organizational relations and interactions. One way of focusing on these issues is to investigate interorganizational exchange.

Interorganizational Exchange

Certain attributes or dimensions of organizations can be identified to be either more or less influenced by interactions or exchanges with systems in its environment. Interorganizational exchange is operationally defined by Levine and White (1961, p. 55) as "any voluntary activity between two organizations which has consequences, actual or anticipated, for the realization of their respective goals or objectives."

Dimensions of organizational systems can be generically differentiated into inputs, structures, functions, and outputs. Triandis (1968) for example, has suggested that inputs are defined by characteristics of the environment and the resources available to the organization; structures are defined by the relationship among essential elements of the organization; functions refer to processes that must occur in order to obtain a given output or product.

Organizations typically coordinate their activities in form of exchanging some aspect of their resources to achieve their specified goals. In this sense they enter into purposeful interactions for the achievement of an explicit objective. Few organizations possess or control the full range of resources which are necessary elements to attain the objective(s) for which it was established. Funds, facilities, personnel, specialized knowledge, clients, and other resources may at some time, and in some measure, be wanting by the organization. In this case the stewards of organizations may seek to initiate exchanges or cooperative interactions with one another to secure access to the needed resources. This describes a particular state of coexistence between organizational systems, in which the development of cooperative interactions are of potentially reciprocal advantage. To better understand how interactions among organizations are developed and maintained, it is appropriate to consider the basic relationships that exist among organizations.

Modes of Coexistence Among Organizations

Litwak and Hylton (1962) suggest that the interface among organizations may be delineated by one of three concepts: independence, interdependence, and conflict. It is useful to briefly consider these basic conceptual modes of "coexistence" as they affect the initiation of interactions among organizations.

Independence.--If two organizations function without access to or need of, the other's resources to accomplish its goals, and if neither is interfering with the other's goal attainment, the organizations may be described as independent of one another. Given a normal state of affairs, the probability of close coordination of efforts between such agencies would be minimal.

Interdependence.--If the agents of two organizations perceive that the achievement of their own goals can be facilitated with the usage of the other's resources, they may be described as being interdependent. Reid (1969) suggests that the exchange of resources by interdependent agencies to reciprocally advance one another's goals is perhaps the most general explanation underlying the occurrence of organizational coordination.

Organizational interdependency appears largely to be a function of the perception by representatives of the relevant agencies that their objectives can best be met through access to the resources of the other agency, though, as Reid (1969) emphasizes, the goals of participating organizations need not be identical or even similar. Similarity of goals, however, though not universally essential to cooperative interactions, has been found to promote cohesion between organizations and can lead to more extensive and stable coordination (Levine, White, and Paul, 1963). Thus it appears that there may be greater interdependency and hence, more extensive and stable exchanges between agencies to the extent that there is greater perceived similarity of mutually dependent objectives. The effect of perceived similarity on organizational interactions of other dimensions of organization, such as complexity of functions or technology, operational policies and procedures, size, hierarchical structure, membership composition, centralization of power and decision-making, professionalization, standardization of operations, specialization (division of labor), and formalization (the extent to which rules, procedures, instructions, and communications are written), is moot. There is little experimental evidence available explicating the relationship between organizational patterns and sources of interorganizational relationships. Hall (1972, p. 320), drawing upon an unpublished paper by Brian C. Aldrich, reports that "the limited evidence that is available suggests that similarities in operating principles, priorities, and organizational structures lead to cooperative interactions, while the absence of these, plus competition for scarce resources, contributes to conflict."

It should be noted in this context that a variety of conditions may mediate the probability of interactions between representatives of different organizations, the saliency of these factors bearing directly on organizational interdependency. Litwak and Hylton (1962) emphasize that before cooperative exchanges can take place, an organization must be known to exist, and its agents must be cognizant of the interdependence between the systems. Further, they must also perceive a possible matching of goals and resources that would lead to more effective goal achievement for each.

Conflict.--Organizations may be described as existing in a state of conflict when the goal achievement of one or more organizations detrimentally interferes with the goal achievement of others. Similarly, the initiation of exchange between two organizations is obstructed without some form of agreement or understanding, however implicit, between agents of organizations. These exchange agreements, Levine and White (1961) state, are contingent upon the organizations' respective domains. The domain of an organization refers to the specific goals its agents seek to attain and the functions its agents undertake in order to achieve desired objectives. Domain consensus between organizations refers to the degree to which there is agreement and acceptance between the agencies about what their representatives perceive to be the legitimate goals and functions of each. The role of perception of key organizational dimensions is particularly important in this connection. When organizational domains are unclarified, competition may develop between the two agencies offering the same services or providing the same outputs. It is tenable to conclude that the probability of initiating cooperative interactions is appreciably reduced when organizational domains are perceived as ambiguous, or are imperfectly understood.

Overview of Organizational Exchange

It would now be helpful to iterate some of the principle observations outlined in preceding sections, describing factors postulated to interact with the initiation and development of organizational exchange.

1. Cooperative intersystem exchanges appear to be initiated in order to obtain access to the resources controlled by the participating organizations. The utilization of these resources is perceived by agents of the interacting organizations to facilitate the goal achievement of each (Levine and White, 1961; Levine, White, and Paul, 1963; Litwak and Hylton, 1962; Reid, 1969).

2. The specific interfacial configuration between organizations that engage in exchange is likely to be influenced by the degree to which the agents of each organization perceive the other's goals to be similar. Greater intersocial cohesion and more stable coordination between organizations appear to be related to greater

similarity of goals and other organizational patterns (Hall, 1972; Levine, White, and Paul, 1963).

3. The cooperative exchange agreements that develop between organizational agents appear to be largely contingent upon the domain consensus between the interacting organizations, regarding the legitimacy of the perceived goals and functions of each. Domain "dissensus" engenders intersystem conflict which may preclude the initiation of effective coordination (Levine and White, 1961; Levine, White, and Paul, 1963).

4. Organizations can be described as being interdependent to the extent that their agents perceive that the achievement of the individual organization's goals can be advanced by the utilization of the other's resources (Levine and White, 1961; Reid, 1969). To this extent, the probability of their initiating cooperative exchange may be increased.

Similarity and Attraction

There appears to be more speculation than empirical fact regarding determinants of the initiation of formal interaction between agents of two or more organizational systems. Basically descriptive analyses of organizational relations that have been conducted in the field setting, and the more abundant theorizing derived from such studies, suggest that the probability of initiating formal interactions between organizations is significantly influenced by perceptions of the similarity of each regarding certain critical organizational dimensions, and the agreement (domain consensus) that the goals and functions of each organization are legitimate and will not lead to interorganizational conflict. Certainly, the relationship between perceived similarity with respect to different organizational dimensions and the initiation of interorganizational interaction is an area of inquiry worthy of an experimental analysis conducted in the naturalistic setting.

To this end, the present research represents an attempt to empirically determine if perceived similarity on selected dimensions of organizational structure affects the initiation of interorganizational exchange with respect to a proposed cooperative activity. The hypothesis advanced in this study derives directly from consistent findings that interpersonal attraction is strongly influenced by perceived similarity (e.g., see Berscheid and Walster, 1969). The research reported herein is distinctive in that the locus of experimental analysis is on the level of interorganizational attraction (with respect to top management level agents of organizational systems) rather than interpersonal attraction. Interpersonal relations within systems is not the subject of inquiry. However, in view of the paucity of empirical research on the issue of interorganizational relations, perceived similarity of organizational dimensions, and attraction, it is necessary to attempt to extend salient findings from the interpersonal attraction literature to the problem of interorganizational attraction. This represents an effort to integrate two areas of psychology, that concerned with interpersonal relations, and that focusing on organizations, which to date have had little interaction. To this end, an important caveat must be kept in mind. It is an empirical question whether findings reported in the interpersonal attraction literature may be validly generalized to the organizational level.

Two major types of similarity have been related to interpersonal attraction. First, people tend to perceive greater similarity of personality attributes between themselves and those they like than between themselves and others whom they dislike (Beier, Rossi, and Garfield, 1961; Broxton, 1963; Miller, Campbell, Twedt, and O'Connell, 1966). Second, and most salient to the present research, a strong and consistent relationship has been reported between preceived similarity of attitudes and interpersonal attraction (Byrne, 1969; Newcomb, 1961), and the degree of verbally expressed positive or negative feelings toward another.

Two recent field studies by Hansson and Fiedler (1972) tested the hypothesis that individuals would be attracted to an organization to the extent to which they perceived their own personality, values, and attitudes to be similar to members of that organization. This relationship was posited to exist only for "relationship-motivated" persons (those who are motivated to have close interpersonal relations with their co-workers), and not for "task-motivated" persons (those who are motivated primarily by task-related goals). In differentiating persons on the basis of measured motivation (as measured by the Least Preferred Coworker Scale), the investigators reasoned that an extension of the similarity-attraction research from individuals to organizations requires recognition that individuals join an organization for diverse reasons, and that they remain affiliated with the organization to the extent that their goals continue to be met through interaction with it. Hansson and Fiedler's findings confirmed their expectation that the similarity-attraction research may be generalizable to the organizational context, only for individuals who are "relationship-motivated," and not for those who are "task-motivated."

An important implication of this finding, extended to organizational systems per se, is that attraction by agents of an organization vis-a-vis another organization may be mediated by perceived similarity for certain specific dimensions of organization, and may apply only for selected agencies. The probability that interorganizational exchanges will be initiated and maintained may be affected by the frequency with which an agent of a given organization has engaged in interactions with agents formally representing other organizations, and the reinforcing outcomes which may be associated with such interactions.

In regard to the relationship between perceived similarity of attitudes and interpersonal attraction, numerous studies have supported the hypothesis that attitude similarity is a determinant of interpersonal attraction (Byrne, 1961a; Byrne, 1961b; Byrne, 1969; Byrne, 1971; Byrne and Blaylock, 1963; Byrne, Clore, and Griffitt, 1967; Byrne, Griffitt, Hudgins, and Reeves, 1969; Byrne, London, and Griffitt, 1968; Byrne and Nelson, 1964; Byrne and Nelson, 1965; Newcomb, 1961).

Byrne and Nelson (1965) for example, compared the effect upon attraction of the proportion of similar attitudes expressed by a stranger with the effect of the number of similar attitudes expressed. The results clearly indicated that attraction was significantly affected only by the proportion of similar attitudes expressed. Subsequent studies by Byrne and his associates (e.g., see Byrne and Clore, 1966; Byrne and Griffitt, 1969) have confirmed the finding that interpersonal attraction is a positive linear function of the proportion of attitudinal statements attributed to an individual which are similar to the attitudes held by the subject.

Factors that may mediate the regularity with which perceived attitudinal similarity determines attraction have also been investigated. Byrne (1961a) examined the effect of topic importance on attraction. He postulated that a person who is perceived to share similar attitudes on issues held to be important to the evaluating subject would be better liked than one who shared similar attitudes on trivial matters. The results supported the hypothesis. Attraction was greater toward that person who was perceived to have attitudes similar with the subject on important issues, than was the case for the person who shared similar attitudes with the subject on unimportant issues.

The media by which attitudinal similarity-dissimilarity is communicated has not been found to affect attraction. For example, Byrne, Young, and Griffitt (1966) examined the effects on attraction of written statements with attitudinal content. They found that the linear relationship between proportion of similar attitudes and attraction is unaffected by the form in which the attitudes are expressed. Similarly, a field study by Brewer and Brewer (1968) examining effects on attraction of oral statements with similar-dissimilar attitudinal content conveyed in face-to-face interactions resulted in the familiar similarity-attraction relationship. Even in this uncontrolled situation where individuals were freely interacting and expressing their opinions according to no prearranged schedule or sequence, attraction was found to be a function of the proportion of similar attitudes expressed by interactants.

The effect of attitudinal similarity on attraction has been extended from the paper and pencil manipulation of attitudes to attitudinal material conveyed on tape recordings, in movies, on videotape, as well as face-to-face interactions. The linear relationship between similarity of attitudes and attraction was found to be consistent across the divergent stimulus modes of presentation (Byrne, 1971; Byrne and Clore, 1966).

In summary, a large body of research on interpersonal attraction has found that there is a strong and consistent linear relationship between attraction and perceived attitudinal similarity in a wide variety of interpersonal situations, and with a wide range of stimuli as mode of presentation.

Consistent with implications of the findings reported in the interpersonal attraction literature, recent field research by Tornatzky (1973) indicates that the perception by agents in some organizational systems regarding similarity of goals, tasks, and potential benefit of collaboration, is strongly related to the variety and number of communicational exchanges between organizations. The results of a Cluster Analysis suggested that the greater the perceived interorganizational similarity vis-a-vis the salient dimensions, the more interorganizational exchanges occurred.

Extending the findings of Tornatzky (1973) and those reported in the interpersonal attraction literature, it is plausible to deduce that interorganizational attraction may be importantly affected by perceived interorganizational similarity-dissimilarity on various organizational dimensions. This is an empirical question which the present study seeks to experimentally explicate. Moreover, it is important that such a socially pertinent issue be experimentally investigated in the naturalistic setting, as emphasized by Fairweather (1967; 1972). Research which employes techniques affording a maximal degree of experimental control in the field (exemplified in the work of Fairweather, Sanders, Cresslar, and Maynard, 1969, on an innovative alternative treatment paradigm to institutionalization for the mentally ill), yields detailed and multiply validated information which provides insight into the complex interrelationships of phenomena as they manifest and interact under real-life conditions. Clearly, an empirical analysis of interorganizational phenomenon such as that considering factors having implications affecting interorganizational exchange and cooperative interactions, requires study under conditions afforded in the naturalistic environment.

Purpose of the Research

The locus of the present research encompasses issues of both theoretical and methodological interest in the domain of interorganizational analysis. In terms of theoretical ramifications the research attempts to provide information contributing to a more acute understanding of factors which may influence interorganizational attraction. Broadly defined, attraction is a construct referring to the degree of positive and negative valence--in the present instance, among agents representing different organizational systems. As used herein, attraction refers to the extent to which an agent of an organization may be said to have interest in another organization, and is objectively indicated by the relative probability of participating in an interorganizational interaction which operates to produce an observable and measurable environmental consequence with respect to attainment of an explicit goal. Specifically, the study attempts to empirically determine how perceived similarity-dissimilarity on dimensions delineating an organization's "activity" (function), "scope" (complexity of function), "value and operational orientation" (policies and operational procedures), "perspective" (geographic domain), and size, affects the enlistment of a proposed cooperative interaction among agents formally representing organizations. In terms of methodological ramifications, the research may indicate the relative viability of a strategy which could plausibly increase the probability of developing interorganizational exchanges, with special implications for initiating cooperative interactions.

Experimental Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that interorganizational attraction is significantly positively affected by perceived interorganizational similarity. Attraction is posited to be greater for those organizational agents who perceive their own individual organization to be more similar to a stimulus organization soliciting the initiation of interaction between them. Specifically, interorganizational similarity as perceived by agents at the top management level, on organizational dimensions delineating (1) Activity, (2) Scope, (3) Value and Operational Orientation, (4) Perspective, and (5) Size, is expected to increase the probability that interorganizational interactions shall be initiated.

CHAPTER II

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Experimental Design

The independent variable in the present study is the degree of perceived similarity-dissimilarity on each of five organizational dimensions (described below), between a subject organization and a stimulus organization--the "Community Services Assistance Program of the Department of Psychology at Michigan State University." This is the name given to a unit of the Ecological Psychology Interest Group of the Department of Psychology at Michigan State University, for purposes of the present research. The Ecological Psychology Interest Group is an existing program at Michigan State University.

Similarity was manipulated by varying the content of a written communication (i.e., a letter) to subject organizations from the stimulus organization urging their participation in a work-conference program.

The principle dependent measure consisted of a 1-5 Attraction Score on an ordinal scale indicating the degree to which the subject organization interacted with the stimulus organization. The scale was as follows: 1 = no interaction desired; 2 = information only desired; 3 = interview only desired; 4 = willing to participate in a work-conference (no subsequent attendance); 5 = willing to participate in a work-conference (subsequent attendance).

A three-cell design for three matched groups was utilized to test the experimental hypothesis, and is shown in Table 1. After organizations were matched among themselves on each of five organizational dimensions (see below), _subject organizations_ were randomly assigned in units of three to treatment conditions.

Table 1. Experimental design.

Proportion of Similar Organizational Dimensions		
Condition High Similarity 100%	Condition Intermediate Similarity 60%	Condition Low Similarity 20%
_n_ = 38	_n_ = 38	_n_ = 38

Note.--Each cell _n_ indicates the number of _subject organizations_ originally assigned to the condition.

Similarity in the present study is defined by three treatment conditions: "High" (100%), "Intermediate" (60%), and "Low" (20%) with respect to a total of five organizational dimensions, and refers to the degree of perceived similarity (as manipulated by a stimulus letter) between a subject organization and a stimulus organization (the Community Services Assistance Program) about which the subject is unaware. In the 100% similarity condition five of the five dimensions were manipulated by the experimenter to convey similarity between the stimulus and subject agency; in the 60% similarity condition, three of the five dimensions were manipulated to convey similarity; in the 20% similarity condition only one of the five dimensions was manipulated to convey similarity. The specific dimensions manipulated to convey similarity in the written communication between the stimulus and subject organizations were determined by a randomized procedure for each subject organization.

Selection of Sample

The sample of subject organizations for the present research was selected from public and private service agencies operating within the Greater Lansing, Michigan area. The specific organizations were selected from the book: The Answer to Service Available in the Greater Lansing Area (1972), a public directory listing and describing voluntary nonprofit and governmental agencies which provide direct public service in the general areas of health, education, welfare, and recreation.

Also listed and described in the directory are community action and organization groups and special interest groups and committees. This publication is financed by Lansing Model Cities and is compiled by the Community Planning Council of Lansing (the latter agency bearing responsibility for publication), and is designed to provide concise information to community workers on the services and resources available to residents. This summary information was provided and/or approved by the appropriate agencies prior to inclusion in the directory.

The sample is comprised of organizations matched in triplet (i.e., units of three) on a set of five organizational dimensions pertaining to Activity, Scope, Value and Operational Orientation, Perspective, and Size (see below). The total *N* = 114 subject organizations. The number of subject organizations for each of the three treatment conditions are given as follows: "High" similarity (100%), *n* = 38; "Intermediate" similarity (60%), *n* = 38; "Low" similarity (20%), *n* = 38. The inclusion of a subject organization in the sample was based on meeting a rating reliability criterion, described below.

Procedure of Communication With Subject Organizations

The listed director of each organization in the three treatment conditions received by mail a standardized introductory stimulus letter about the Community Services Assistance Program which was manipulated on the five critical dimensions indicated. It was assumed that the stimulus letter would indicate the degree of similarity between the stimulus and subject organization for each of the five dimensions considered. It should be kept in mind that the similarity-dissimilarity variable in this research was manipulated with respect to the degree of perceived similarity on each of the five criterion dimensions between the sending and receiving agency, in each of the treatment conditions.

Only one stimulus letter was mailed to each subject organization. The letters were mailed to all agencies on the same day. Representatives of each organization were invited to participate in a cooperative activity in form of attending a work-conference sponsored by the Community Services Assistance Program, to be held at Michigan State University on a date exactly three weeks following that date on which the stimulus letter was mailed. Each organization was requested to return a prepared registration form accompanying the letter, on which they were requested to indicate whether or not they intended to attend the work-conference (see Appendix A for a sample copy of the stimulus letter, and Appendix B for a sample copy of the work-conference registration form). A stamped, self-addressed envelope was provided for this purpose.

Within a period of seven days from the date on which the stimulus letters were mailed, the experimenter telephonically contacted each of the subject organizations and asked to speak to the executive director of the agency (to whom the letter was addressed), or in his absence, his representative. All of the telephonic contacts were made within a minimal period of time (three days) in attempt to control for possible interaction effects of time of contact with treatment condition. The order in which telephonic contacts were made with subject organizations was determined by a randomized procedure. In talking to the representative of each agency the amount of elapsed time (in seconds) was measured from the onset of verbal communication to its termination. A Telephone Contact Protocol (see Appendix C) was developed which was utilized as the standardized message delivered to the appropriate agent of each subject organization.

The basic purpose of the telephonic contact was fourfold: (1) to confirm receipt of the stimulus letter; (2) to convey an expression of encouragement that the subject organization be represented at the invitational work-conference; (3) to elicit a dichotomous yes/no response with respect to intention to attend the work-conference; and (4) to request that the work-conference registration/rejection form be completed and returned to sender in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided. In addition, the telephonic contact was utilized for purposes of measurement (see below).

In cases where questions about the Community Services Assistance Program were asked in the course of telephonic communications, the experimenter attempted to provide only minimal responses consistent with the manipulated content of the specific stimulus letter mailed to the given organization. This represented an attempt to minimize the intrusion of a possible contaminating effect on outcome measures generated by extraneous (non-standardized) variables in ad lib communication.

Rating and Utilization of the Organizational Dimensions

Two judges (A and B) independently rated and categorized each agency listed in The Answer book with respect to domain applicability for each of five generic organizational dimensions. In addition, the experimenter independently rated and categorized these same agencies for each of the five dimensions. The order in which organizations were rated was randomly determined for each judge. In addition, the order in which specific organizational dimensions were rated for each organization was randomly determined for each judge. This represented an attempt to control for possible effects generated by the order in which both organizations and organizational dimensions were rated.

The organizational dimensions utilized in this research are rubricized below in the form of dichotomies, both ends of which could be accurately ascribed to the Ecological Psychology Interest Group (sponsor of the Community Services Assistance Program), and are also dimensions on which the subject organizations can be rated. A brief definition is given for each dimension along with the contextual expression used as the manipulated variable in communicating with subject organizations. The operational definitions utilized by the judges in rating and categorizing agencies for each of the five dimensions are presented in Appendix D.

1. Activity--

Definition: The specific function or task formally claimed by an organization as its sphere of action with respect to operating on its environment. This may also describe the organization's formal goal(s).

Item Format: a) "the planning, coordination, and study of issues"

versus

b) "the development of direct service activities"

2. Scope--

Definition: The extent or range of view, outlook, application, or operation of an organization with respect to carrying out its formal function(s) or goal(s).

Item Format: a) "a focus on multiple interrelated problems"

versus

b) "a focus on specific, selected problems"

3. <u>Value and Operational Orientation</u>--

Definition: The ideals, customs, or institutionalized method of operation held by an organization with respect to any given object or event.

Item Format: a) "an emphasis on the methods of science and technology"

versus

b) "a clear emphasis on humanitarian concerns"

4. <u>Perspective</u>--

Definition: An organization's formal domain with respect to a given geographic boundary or locale.

Item Format: a) "state and national issues"

versus

b) "local issues"

5. <u>Size</u>--

Definition: The magnitude of an organization with respect to its extent, volume, or dimension in terms of relationship to resources (including physical, material, and personnel resources).

Item Format: a) "large size"

versus

b) "small size"

Permutations of Organizational Dimensions.--Permutations of the above five organizational dimensions yield a total of thirty-two different possible combinations. Some permutations are generally salient to any given agency listed and described in The Answer book. For example, any given agency can be described as having a Perspective which either focuses on services restricted to the local community (or sub-unit thereof, such as a particular neighborhood)--a "molecular" emphasis, or which extends its services over a broader geographic range (such as the State)--a "molar" emphasis. An agency can be described as relatively large in Size in terms of direct access to manifold resources, such as personnel, funds, facilities, client population etc., and the number of formal organizational units, divisions, or branches which comprise the organization, or it can be described as relatively small in terms of the converse. An agency may be specialized in its Scope, servicing highly specific, unidimensional needs (e.g., providing transportation services for geriatrics, referral information etc.), or emphasize the interface of a range of more complex, multiple interrelated problems (e.g., family counseling and medical services). It is obvious that these represent ordinal dimensions and therefore require the use of independent judges in rating and categorizing agencies on the basis of the saliency of these dimensions.

Following the judges (A and B) rating and classification of each agency listed in The Answer book, comparisons were made between the ratings by the two judges for each case rated. The total sample pool (from which subject organizations would be selected) was comprised of those agencies on which the two judges agreed in identically rating at least four out of the five dimensions. That is, agencies on which the judges exhibited no more than one disagreement in rating each of the five organizational dimensions met the rating reliability criterion for inclusion in the base sample pool. A total of 281 agencies were rated by judges. In those cases where the judges disagreed in rating only one of the five dimensions for a given agency, the experimenter (who, it will be recalled, independently rated each agency) served as expert judge in resolving the disagreement. These organizations (along with those on which the judges completely agreed in rating all five dimensions) comprised a sample pool containing a total of 154 agencies, which involved twenty-one permutations. Because the experimental design required that organizations be treated in multiples of three, only those permutations could be retained which were applicable to three or more agencies in the sample pool. A total of thirteen dimensional permutations met this criterion (these permutations are given in Appendix E). The sample pool was correspondingly reduced to a total of 144 organizations.

From this total of 144 agencies representing thirteen permutations it was necessary to further delete a number of organizations--by means of a randomized procedure--such that each permutation contained only multiples of three organizations. The result produced a total of 129 agencies.

Following this it was determined that several agencies in the sample pool had either (a) gone out of existence, or (b) had knowledge of or previous contact with, the Ecological Psychology Program at Michigan State University, or its representatives (i.e., faculty and/or students). These organizations were deleted from the sample pool. This necessitated that an additional number of agencies be deleted--by a randomized procedure--to yield only triplet units of organizations for each permutation affected by the original reduction. The final sample that emerged from this procedure represented a total *N* = 114 subject organizations distributed across thirteen permutations, each permutation containing at least three agencies or multiple units of three agencies.

Training of Judges

Two judges (A and B) were supervised by the experimenter in a series of joint and independent exercises in rating and categorizing a sample of organizations on each of the five dimensions. The experimenter served as expert judge. The sample of agencies rated in the training sessions did not include any of those represented in The Answer book from which the experimental sample was selected. Both judges received a total of approximately twenty-four hours of training.

Estimation of Reliability of Ratings

Inter-rater reliability should serve as a measure of the clarity of operational definitions and the discreteness of salient categories. An estimate of inter-rater reliability was obtained for each of the five organizational dimensions rated by judges A, B, and the experimenter. These reliabilities were obtained for the total original sample (*n* = 281) rated, and are presented in Table 2.

This estimate of inter-rater reliability is in terms of percentage of agreement between judges (number of agreements/number of agreements + disagreements) for each of the five organizational dimensions rated.

Table 2. Estimate of inter-rater reliability of ratings by judges for each of five organizational dimensions in terms of percentage of agreement.

Judges	Organizational Dimensions				
	Activity (%)	Scope (%)	Value and Operational Orientation (%)	Perspective (%)	Size (%)
A & B	87	88	70	75	78
A & E*	90	86	79	86	83
B & E*	91	85	82	81	86

Note.--Total cases rated per judge: $\underline{n}$ = 281.

*Experimenter.

Work-Conference

A half-day work-conference was given by the faculty and graduate level students of the Ecological Psychology Program, which served to introduce the Community Services Assistance Program to attendees. The experimenter, as Program Coordinator, assumed responsibility to organize and schedule the program of activities in collaboration with appropriate personnel of the Ecological Psychology Interest Group. In terms of general orientation, the work-conference was divided into lecture and small group discussion sessions. Information about the Ecological Psychology Program was provided on the following issues: personnel, resources (through affiliation with Michigan State

University), value and methodological perspective, domains of professional competencies in both research and direct service areas, past and current achievements in research and service work, range of research and community service interests, and the potential for contributions to the social welfare through cooperative interactions with salient agencies in the community.

Measures

The principle measure of organizational attraction by subject organizations consisted of an ordinal scale from which an Attraction Score was derived, and has been described in a preceding section of this paper.

Actual attendance by representatives of subject organizations at the work-conference was recorded on an Attendance List, on which the representative(s) of each attending agency was required to indicate his/her name, formal position in the organization, and the name of the agency which he/she represented.

In addition to the main outcome measure, data were obtained from two measures which were taken as behavioral indicants of relative attraction by subject organizations. Data were obtained on the amount of elapsed time (in days) from date of mailing of the stimulus letter to the date (indexed by postmark) on which subject organizations returned the work-conference registration form, as requested, to sender. Data were also obtained (by means of a sixty-second stopwatch) on the amount of elapsed time (in seconds) the experimenter verbally communicated via telephone with the representative of the subject organization to whom the stimulus letter was addressed. This "latency" measure represents the total amount of time the experimenter spent talking to the representative of the agency, from the onset of telephonic communication with the subject to termination of the communication. A Telephone Contact Protocol developed for use as the standardized message delivered by the experimenter to the appropriate representative of subject organizations is presented in Appendix C.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Data Analysis Procedures

The experimental hypothesis that interorganizational attraction is significantly affected by perceived interorganizational similarity on the selected dimensions considered, was examined by utilization of analysis of variance techniques. In the present instance a one-way analysis of variance (for unequal *n*'s) was computed to test for effects of varying proportions of perceived similarity of organizational dimensions on the principle outcome measure--an Attraction Score taken to indicate *subject organizations*' willingness to attend a work-conference. In addition, analyses of variance were computed to test for the effects of perceived similarity on the two behavioral indicants of interorganizational attraction: (a) length of telephonic contact, and (b) the number of days elapsed for return of the work-conference registration form by organizations.

It should be noted at this point that two of the thirty-eight *subject organizations* in the "Low" similarity (20%) condition could not be telephonically contacted.

These two agencies were therefore deleted for purposes of data analyses, thereby reducing the size of the "Low" similarity treatment condition to $\underline{n}$ = 36.

Before utilizing analysis of variance techniques, Hartley's maximum $\underline{F}$ ratio test (Winer, 1962) was computed to test for homogeneity of variance among the three conditions examined. This is a sufficiently sensitive test for the hypothesis of homogeneity of variance provided that the $\underline{n}$'s for the experimental groups are equal or are relatively close to being equal. At the .01 level, a significant departure from homogeneity was indicated only for the behavioral responsiveness measure of number of days elapsed for return of the registration form, with an $\underline{F}_{max}$ of 3.45. Even though it has been found (Young and Veldman, 1963) that heterogeneity of variance has a negligible effect on both the alpha level and the power of the $\underline{F}$ test, it was decided that a more conservative alpha level would be selected in analyzing the results of the computation of the analysis of variance for significance.

Analysis of Attraction Score

It will be recalled that the principle outcome measure utilized in this research consisted of an ordinal Attraction Score taken to indicate the degree of willingness by representatives of subject organizations to interact with a stimulus organization. Analyses of data reported herein in regard to the Attraction Score are based on scores for all subjects (N = 112) in the three treatment conditions.

The means and standard deviations for these scores are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations of attraction score with varying proportions of similar organizational dimensions.

Proportion of Similar Organizational Dimensions					
100% (n = 38)		60% (n = 38)		20% (n = 36)	
M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
3.92	1.22	4.00	1.04	4.00	1.07

Note.--N = 112.

In order to examine whether the proportion of similar organizational dimensions communicated in the stimulus letter generated differences between treatment conditions, an analysis of variance was computed. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4, which indicates that no statistically significant differences emerged between any of the three treatment conditions.

Table 4. Analysis of variance of attraction score.

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Total	134.9197	111			
Between groups	.1565	2	.0782	.0632	n.s.
Within groups	134.7632	109	1.2363		

Analysis of Behavioral Indicants of Attraction

It will be recalled that in addition to the principle Attraction Score, two more outcome measures were obtained which represent possible indicants of treatment effects. Specifically, data on length of telephonic contact with representatives of subject organizations were analyzed. It was assumed that this would serve as an index of response "latency." An additional measure involved the degree of expediency with which work-conference registration forms were returned to sender by organizations via mail. It was assumed that this measure would serve as an index of celerity or promptness of response. In the case of both behavioral measures, data were only analyzed for those agencies that agreed to attend the work-conference.

The means and standard deviations for length of telephonic contact are shown in Table 5.

In examining the effects of proportion of similar organizational dimensions on length of telephonic contact,

Table 5. Means and standard deviations of length of telephone contact with varying proportions of similar organizational dimensions.*

Proportion of Similar Organizational Dimensions					
100% (n = 26)		60% (n = 28)		20% (n = 26)	
M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
113.08	95.89	133.54	102.80	157.38	164.26

Note.--N = 80.

*Based on scores for those subjects who agreed to attend work-conference.

it is seen that there is a tendency for this "latency" measure to be inversely related to similarity; however, the results of analysis of variance shown in Table 6 reveals no statistically significant differences between any of the three treatment conditions.

Table 6. Analysis of variance of length of telephone contact.*

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Total	1215272.4875	79			
Between groups	25573.5231	2	12786.7615	.8275	n.s.
Within groups	1189698.9644	77	15450.6359		

*Based on scores for those subjects who agreed to attend work-conference.

The means and standard deviations by treatment condition for the number of days elapsed for return of the work-conference registration form are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Means and standard deviations of number of days elapsed for return of work-conference registration form with varying proportions of similar organizational dimensions.*

Proportion of Similar Organizational Dimensions					
100% (n = 22)		60% (n = 18)		20% (n = 18)	
M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
5.45	2.97	7.17	5.52	7.28	4.52

Note.--N = 58.

*Based on scores for those subjects who agreed to attend work-conference.

Inspection of these data indicate that there is a tendency for the number of days elapsed to be inversely related to similarity; however, the results of analysis of variance of the effect of the proportion of similar organizational dimensions on the number of days elapsed indicate, as shown in Table 8, that no statistically significant differences emerged between the three treatment conditions.

Table 8. Analysis of variance of number of days elapsed for return of work-conference registration form.*

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Total	1094.3449	57			
Between groups	42.7791	2	21.3895	1.1187	n.s.
Within groups	1051.5658	55	19.1193		

*Based on scores for those _subjects_ who agreed to attend work-conference.

Summary of Findings

The results of analyses of variance computed on the data as reported in Tables 4, 6, and 8 reveal that no significant differences emerged with respect to the principle outcome measure--the Attraction Score, or the behavioral indices of attraction--telephone "latency" and the number of days elapsed for return of the work-conference registration form, between any of the three treatment conditions. Hence, the examination of the tests for effects of varying proportions of similarity of selected organizational dimensions on interorganizational attraction (as measured in the present study) fails to confirm the experimental hypothesis that a _subject organization_ would be attracted to a _stimulus organization_ perceived to be more similar to itself on the salient dimensions.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

In the introduction it was pointed out that similarity between organizational systems, on certain key organizational structures and functions (e.g., goals, policies, operating principles, and priorities) is likely to positively influence the initiation of cooperative interorganizational exchange. The opportunity for functional interaction between organizations is thought to be enhanced to the extent that there is greater perceived interorganizational similarity on a variety of organizational dimensions. The formulation that similarity between organizations increases the probability for initiating cooperative interactions between them is consistent with a body of findings reported in the interpersonal attraction literature that attraction is a function of perceived similarity on certain important attributes of attitudes and/or behavior. Of course, this assumes that there is some basis for generalizability between attraction on the interpersonal and the interorganizational levels.

The results of the present experiment provide no support for the hypothesis that interorganizational attraction in the form of willingness by agents of an organization to participate in a cooperative activity (i.e., attend a work-conference sponsored by a _stimulus organization_) is significantly affected by varying degrees of perceived similarity vis-a-vis the _stimulus_ and _subject organization_ with respect to the organizational dimensions examined. Inspection of Tables 4, 6, and 8 reveals that none of the comparisons investigated generated any significantly differential effects in terms of interorganizational attraction. Specifically, _subject organizations_ in the "Low" (20%) similarity treatment condition, who were expected to exhibit little or no interest in interactions with a _stimulus organization_ with which they ostensibly had little in common, were basically no different from the "High" (100%) and "Intermediate" (60%) similarity conditions in agreeing to participate in a work-conference program with a _stimulus organization_ with which they were unfamiliar.

Similar results were obtained with regard to the effect of manipulated similarity of organizational dimensions on the two behavioral measures assumed to indicate interorganizational attraction: telephone "latency," and the number of days elapsed to return the registration form (see Tables 6 and 8). Clearly, the experimental hypothesis that interorganizational attraction is significantly influenced by perceived interorganizational similarity on the dimensions examined, is not supported by these data.

It is interesting however, in analyzing the descriptive data reported in Table 7, to note that the mean response for number of days elapsed to return the registration form suggests a tendency in the predicted direction. That is, the greater the proportion of similar organizational dimensions communicated to subject organizations in the stimulus letter, the more quickly the organization conveyed a response to the stimulus organization. Of course, this assumes that celerity of response, as measured herein, is a valid and generalizable index of interest in or attraction toward another organization. In light of the present overall data, this can only be an assumption.

There are several possible explanations for the failure of the expected relationship between perceived similarity and measured attraction to emerge in the present research. One plausible explanation is that a "ceiling" effect occurred on the principle dependent measure. Inspection of the principle outcome measure--the Attraction Score (see Table 3)--indicates that the modal response by organizations was attendance at the work-conference (a score of 5 on the Attraction Scale). Of the 114 agencies invited to attend the work-conference, 70% agreed to attend, and 41% of these agencies subsequently did attend. This rather high rate of participation is unusual and inconsistent with previous data on community participation. For example, in a recent field experiment concerning community organization and child care programs by Hering (1973), the researcher found a notably low rate of verbal acceptance to participate in a proposed cooperative activity, and an extremely low rate of actual subsequent participation.

The data also suggest that perhaps the strongest manipulation in the present study was that of the telephonic contact itself, and that it functioned as a persuasive communication. In terms of mean "latency" an inspection of Table 5 reveals that the experimenter talked longer to <u>subjects</u> in the "Low" similarity condition than to those in the "High" similarity condition, though the differences failed to reach statistical significance. In interpreting these results it is plausible to speculate that the telephonic contact with <u>subject organizations</u> generated a possible "persuasion effect" which influenced those <u>subjects</u> who were basically undecided about interacting with the <u>stimulus organization</u>. This proposition would suggest that those <u>subjects</u> in the "High" similarity condition had probably determined to attend the work-conference prior to being telephoned by the experimenter. The decision made by these <u>subjects</u> would be posited to have been based on the content of the stimulus letter. Conversely, those <u>subjects</u> in the "Low" similarity condition may not have reached a firm decision with respect to the proposed interaction. The content of the stimulus letter, according to this formulation, failed to convince these _subjects_ to attend the work-conference. Rather, it was the telephonic contact itself that probably operated to persuade them about attendance. In this context, it is relevant to note that the modest trends suggested in the data on the number of days elapsed for return of the registration form (see Table 7) are consistent with the hypothesis that _subject organizations_ in the "High" similarity condition had determined their response about conference attendance prior to the telephone communication, while those in conditions of lower similarity were undecided about attendance. Registration forms were returned an average of more than a day earlier by "High" similarity _subject organizations_ as compared to the "Intermediate" and "Low" similarity agencies.

A parallel and perhaps equally plausible interpretation of the findings reported in this study would suggest that the manipulation of perceived interorganizational similarity failed to occur. The stimulus letter sent to _subject organizations_, in which similarity on the selected dimensions was manipulated, perhaps represented too subtle a manipulation to effect observable change as measured in this research. Possibly, the specific organizational dimensions selected for experimental manipulation and/or the specific mode or words used to delineate or depict those organizational dimensions, were inappropriate, or were too ambiguously communicated to effect measurable change as predicted. For example, one of the principle assumptions underlying the entire research was that organization director's perceptions of their <u>own</u> organization's dimensions were veridical with the dimensionality as scored by the two judges. This may be untenable. In order to perform a better test of the hypothesis it would have been ideal to obtain a prior rating, by organization directors, of how they actually perceived their organizations' dimensions. The similarity-dissimilarity manipulation would then have been accomplished vis-a-vis this "true" dimensionality. There are obvious difficulties in approaching the problem this way in the context of a field study, but perhaps they are not insurmountable.

Another issue regarding the manipulation of similarity-dissimilarity is the extent to which the ends of the dimensional continua were in fact dissimilar. For example, is "science and technology" perceived as being the polar opposite of "humanitarian concerns"? An alternative interpretation would be that it was different but not dissimilar. Here is an area in which some pilot-testing of the manipulation might have been productive. Related to this issue is the extent to which the five dimensions were or were not independent of one another. To the extent that they might have been highly interrelated, this could have also influenced the manipulation of similarity-dissimilarity. For example, the perception of similarity on one dimension may have influenced the perception of similarity on others which were highly correlated.

As a guide to future research on this subject, it would appear that the manipulation of perceived similarity-dissimilarity on critical organizational dimensions should be made stronger, and more coherent. The objective here is to optimize the probability that subjects would in fact be able to differentially and accurately perceive each of the target dimensions of organization communicated to them in a given stimulus mode. One way to accomplish this might be to make the manipulation of similarity of the content of a stimulus message communicated to an organization via telephone. Multiple contacts with the same subject might also possibly serve to strengthen or emphasize the subject's impression of the critical organizational dimensions manipulated for similarity-dissimilarity, thereby increasing the probability that the subject would actually perceive the manipulated variable. Telephonic communications could be compared for their individual effects in communicating manipulated similarity, or be combined with other modes of stimulus presentation (e.g., letter, face-to-face interactions). An interesting procedure would be to investigate the effects of face-to-face interaction as a stimulus mode used to convey manipulated similarity of organizational dimensions.

It would also be useful to attempt to manipulate similarity-dissimilarity on the basis of how organizations are actually perceived by their members. As mentioned above, this might necessitate a pre-survey of organization directors. It would also be worthwhile to be a bit more careful in selecting and developing the dimensions to be manipulated. There is some question in the present research regarding the independence of the dimensions used, and in the extent to which the ends of these continua represented polar opposites.

Related to these possible changes in design and procedure, future researchers might also devote more time--if possible in the context of a field study--to the piloting of instruments and procedures. It would also be appropriate, if possible, to further instrument such studies. For example, in the present research it would have been useful to have background descriptive and demographic information about the organizations in the sample. These data could have been used correlationally to determine the possibility of other intervening variables contributing to the observed effects.

In summary, while the explicit results of the present research were discouraging, there seems to be enough promise in the approach to warrant further research.

It is hoped that the successes, mistakes, and experience of this researcher will better enable future workers to obtain a clear understanding of the relationship between organizational similarity-dissimilarity and interaction.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STIMULUS LETTER

STIMULUS LETTER

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY East Lansing, Michigan 48823

Department of Psychology, Olds Hall
Community Services Assistance Program
of the Department of Psychology

October 25, 1973

(Business Address)

Dear ____________:

This letter is to introduce you to the Community Services Assistance Program of the Department of Psychology, at Michigan State University, and to encourage your participation at an introductory Work-Conference to be held on November 15, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, at the Student Union Building, Room 31, at Michigan State University. There will be no cost for participation.

The goals of this Work-Conference are twofold: (a) to offer a comprehensive overview of the Community Services Assistance Program, its objectives, functions, capacities, resources, and potential for contributions to social improvements, and (b) to allow for interchange by participants on salient issues of common concern.

Consider how similar your interests and goals are to our own.

Briefly, the Community Services Assistance Program is concerned with (1) ACTIVITY with respect to a focus on the alleviation and resolvement of (2) SCOPE problems, both existing and imminent. The Program is structured explicitely to operate within the framework of (3) VALUE and OPERATIONAL ORIENTATION. The Program accords particular and strong emphasis to (4) PERSPECTIVE; its (5) SIZE is used to optimal advantage in working toward the efficient achievement of target objectives.

We hopefully encourage you (and your associates) to attend this Work-Conference. If you are unable to personally attend, you may choose to send a representative(s). As space is limited, we request that you complete the enclosed pre-registration form and return it to the Program Coordinator as soon as possible. Even if you do not plan to participate in the Work-Conference, please note same and return the form. This will be much appreciated. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

We shall be telephoning you soon in regard to your potential participation in the Work-Conference on the Community Services Assistance Program of the Department of Psychology at Michigan State University.

As an organization that has demonstrated particular skill in making socially significant contributions in our community, I look forward to having you join us.

Cordially,

Lynn T. Keith
Program Coordinator

Encs.

APPENDIX B

WORK-CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

WORK-CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Community Services Assistance Program
Department of Psychology
Michigan State University

Work-Conference -- 1973

Pre-Registration Form

Please complete and return this form as soon as possible,

to: Lynn T. Keith
Program Coordinator
Community Services Assistance Program
of the Department of Psychology
Olds Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

A stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided for your convenience.

Please check one:

_____ I do plan to attend the Work-Conference

_____ I do not plan to attend the Work-Conference

Name ______________________________

Address ____________________________

Organization _________________________

Position (Title) ___________________

Work-Conference Schedule

Time: 9 a.m. to 12 noon

Date: Thursday, November 15, 1973

Place: Room 31, Union Building, Michigan State University. The Union is located at Abbott Road entrance to campus, (between Grand River Avenue and West Circle Drive).

There is no fee for the Work-Conference.

You may choose to send a representative(s) of your organization.

APPENDIX C

TELEPHONE CONTACT PROTOCOL

TELEPHONE CONTACT PROTOCOL

"Hello, my name is __________, Coordinator of the Community Services Assistance Program of the Department of Psychology at Michigan State University. Recently we mailed a letter informing you of a work-conference to be held on November 15th, on the campus. I would like to make sure that you got the letter, and to encourage your participation."

(Subject Answer)

IF S INDICATED AN AFFIRMATIVE INTEREST IN CONFERENCE, SCORE THIS AS A "YES" AND SAY:

"Thanks for your interest, and I'll be looking forward to seeing you at the conference. Please be sure to send in your pre-registration form. Thank you, Goodbye."

IF S DOES NOT INDICATE EITHER YES OR NO ABOUT ATTENDANCE, THEN SAY:

"Do you think that you, or a member of your staff would be interested in attending?" GET YES-NO RESPONSE.

IF S INDICATES NEGATIVE ABOUT ATTENDANCE, THEN ASK:

"Since you are unable to attend the conference, would you like to have someone from the Program visit your agency in person?" GET YES-NO RESPONSE.

IF YES TO ABOVE, SAY:

"We will be contacting you in the near future for an appointment. Thanks for your interest. We'll be looking forward to meeting with you and your staff. Thanks. Goodbye."

IF NO TO OFFER OF VISIT, THEN ASK:

"Perhaps you would be interested in a written description of the Program. We could mail this to you in the near future." GET YES-NO RESPONSE.

IF YES TO ABOVE, SAY:

"You should be getting this in the mail soon. Thanks for your interest. Goodbye."

IF NO TO ABOVE, SAY:

"Thanks for your time. Goodbye."

APPENDIX D

DEFINITIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSIONS UTILIZED BY JUDGES

DEFINITIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSIONS

UTILIZED BY JUDGES

(1) ACTIVITY

Definition: The specific task or function formally claimed by an organization as its sphere of action with respect to operating on its environment. This may also describe the organization's formal goal(s) or objective(s).

(A) An organization that is primarily concerned with planning, coordination, and/or the study of issues should be rated by placing a check mark in column (A);
(B) An organization that is primarily concerned with direct service activities should be rated by placing a check mark in column (B).

Consider some of the following specific issues in deciding how an organization's Activity can be best described in terms of its principal or chief function(s).

(A) Planning, Coordination, Study of Issues--

Does the organization chiefly refer clients?

Does the organization chiefly prepare reports?

Does the organization chiefly determine needs and priorities for services, collect funds, and/or allocate resources?

Does the organization chiefly conduct research, collect information or data, develop proposals or programs?

Does the organization chiefly examine community problems/study existing services?

Does the organization chiefly evaluate services and/or proposals?

Does the organization chiefly provide for discussion and analysis of issues?

Does the organization chiefly serve as liaison between agencies, community groups, or committees?

Does the organization chiefly advise agencies or groups on development of services or identification of problems?

Does the organization chiefly make recommendations on services or resources?

(B) Direct Service Activity--

Does the organization chiefly provide direct service(s) (other than serving as referral service)?

Does the organization chiefly accept direct referrals from other agencies?

Does the organization chiefly provide resources, materials, or offer programs directly to clients which are designed to help, aid, inform, or assist them?

Does the organization have direct contact with public?

Is the organization chiefly concerned with directly helping clients?

(2) SCOPE

Definition: The extent or range of view, outlook, application, or operation of an organization with respect to carrying out its formal function(s) or goal(s).

(A) An organization that is primarily concerned with multiple, interrelated problems should be rated by placing a check mark in column (A);
(B) An organization that is primarily concerned with limited, highly specific problems should be rated by placing a check mark in column (B).

(A) Focus on Multiple, Interrelated Problems--

Does the organization have subgoals it seeks to achieve to attain a more complex goal?

Does the organization focus on several problems or issues?

Does the organization have more than one major goal, function, or purpose?

Is the organization involved with more than one type of problem?

Can the organization deal with different areas of client problems?

Are there different facets or parts to the organization's service, such as economic aid, counseling, and providing information, etc.?

Does the organization offer services to different client populations, such as handicapped, children, mentally retarded, etc.?

Does the organization provide more than one kind of service?

Does the organization provide different kinds of assistance/service to meet client needs?

Can the organization deal with different areas or aspects of client's problems (e.g., medical or psychological care, shelter, etc.)?

Are there different facets or parts of client problems which the organization is equipped to handle (e.g., need for information or referral, health/psychological care, material resources etc.)?

(B) Focus on Specific, Selected Problems--

Does the organization restrict or limit its focus to a single, unitary specific problem?

Does the organization look only at a highly specific issue?

Does the organization provide only one, limited kind of assistance/service?

Does the organization restrict itself to servicing a single, narrow, highly specific problem?

Does the organization restrict itself to evaluating issues or distributing information/materials only?

Can the organization deal only with a narrowly limited client problem?

(3) VALUE and OPERATIONAL ORIENTATION

Definition: The ideals, customs, policies, or institutionalized method of operation or practice held by an organization with respect to any given object or event.

(A) An organization that emphasizes the methods of science and technology should be rated by placing a check mark in column (A);
(B) An organization that emphasizes basically humanitarian concerns should be rated by placing a check mark in column (B).

Consider some of the following specific issues in deciding how an organization's Value and Operational Orientation can be best described in terms of its principal or chief function(s).

(A) Emphasis on the Methods of Science and Technology--

Does the organization use tactics of research and/or evaluation?

Does the organization use specific procedures, strategies, or methods essentially based on science or technology, by which to achieve its goals?

Does the organization have a well defined course of action or clear system of procedures by which it functions?

Does the organization draw upon an established body of knowledge, specialized or professional skills, or technology (e.g., in terms of material resource or personnel) in providing its service?

Does the organization base its actions on scientific or technological grounds or expertise, (e.g., medicine etc.)?

Is the organization's service or learning activity based upon professional expertise and/or an organized, established body of knowledge?

Does the organization's service/activity depend upon highly specialized or trained skills?

(B) Emphasis on Humanitarian Concerns--

Is the organization's goal(s) described as seeking to help or improve a given problem, without reference to expertise needed to achieve the goal(s)?

Does the organization emphasize helping, aiding, or assisting clients with no reference to a science/technology base in providing help, aid, or assistance.

Does the organization simply provide shelter, food, facilities, or other material resources which involve no technical or specialized skills?

Does the organization seek to obtain, coordinate, or organize resources for client welfare?

Is the organization chiefly concerned with distributing materials, resources?

Are services given by non-professionals?

Do learning activities provided by organization not require professionals?

(4) PERSPECTIVE

Definition: An organization's formal domain with respect to a given geographic boundary or locale.

(A) An organization which extends its focus to state and/or national (as well as local) issues should be rated by placing a check mark in column (A);
(B) An organization which is concerned exclusively with local (i.e., Tri-County* area) issues should be rated by placing a check mark in column (B).

Consider some of the following specific issues in deciding how an organization's Perspective can be best described in terms of its formal domain.

(A) State and/or National Perspective--

Does the organization have a national focus or a combination of state and local focus?

Does the organization accept clients/referrals from beyond the Greater Lansing or Tri-County area (e.g., other cities)?

*Tri-County = Ingham, Clinton, Eaton counties.

Does the organization have branches or divisions in areas outside the Tri-County area?

Does the organization extend its service to residents of the entire state (e.g., is it a division or unit of state or federal government)?

Is the organization formally affiliated with agencies located outside the Tri-County area (e.g., state or national organizations)?

Is the organization a subdivision of a state or national organization?

Is the organization concerned with clients/problems/issues in and beyond the Tri-County/Greater Lansing area?

Does the organization have a state chairman or other state official or representative?

Does the organization have "Michigan" in its formal name?

(B) Local Perspective--

Does the organization have strictly a local focus (e.g., Tri-County area)?

Does the organization focus on serving clients within the Tri-County area or a subdivision thereof (e.g., a given neighborhood)?

Does the organization focus on serving clients who are residents of a given Greater Lansing area (e.g., Model Cities, West Side, North Side, Ingham County)?

Does the organization service only residents of the Greater Lansing or Tri-County area?

Is the organization concerned only with clients/problems/issues in the Greater Lansing or Tri-County area?

Is the organization a city or county governmental agency?

(5) SIZE

Definition: The magnitude of an organization with respect to its extent, volume, or dimension in terms of relationship to resources (including physical, material, and personnel resources).

(A) An organization that is great in size in terms of relationship and direct access to vast (physical and/or material and/or personnel) resources should be rated by placing a check mark in column (A); (B) An organization that is small in size in terms of relationship and direct access to fewer (physical and/or material and/or personnel) resources, and which is flexible and tightly-knit as an organization, should be rated by placing a check mark in column (B).

Consider some of the following specific issues in deciding how an organization's Size can be best described in terms of its relationship to resources.

(A) Large Size--

Does the organization have more than one branch, subdivision, or unit?

Does the organization offer a range of services (each, for example, related to different areas of training)?

Does the organization have a large staff?

Does the organization have a large physical plant facility?

Is the organization a unit of government?

Does the organization have access to vast fiscal resources or large membership?

Can the organization handle large numbers of clients?

(B) Small Size--

Does the organization have a small (perhaps chiefly volunteer) staff?

Does the organization have few fiscal resources?

Is the organization unaffiliated with other agencies?

Is the organization extremely limited in its range of services (each related to different areas of training) and capacity to handle clients?

Can the organization only handle small or quite limited numbers of clients?

APPENDIX E

PERMUTATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSIONS

PERMUTATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSIONS

	Dimension	Permutation
1.	Activity	"the development of direct service activities"
	Scope	"multiple interrelated problems"
	Value and Operational Orientation	"an emphasis on the methods of science and technology"
	Perspective	"local issues"
	Size	"size, in terms of relationship and direct access to the vast resources of Michigan State University"
2.	Activity	"the development of direct service activities"
	Scope	"multiple interrelated problems"
	Value and Operational Orientation	"an emphasis on the methods of science and technology"
	Perspective	"state and national issues"
	Size	"size, in terms of relationship and direct access to the vast resources of Michigan State University"
3.	Activity	"the development of direct service activities"
	Scope	"specific, selected problems"
	Value and Operational Orientation	"an emphasis on the methods of science and technology"
	Perspective	"local issues"
	Size	"size, in terms of being a small, flexible, and tightly-knit organization"

4.	Activity	"the development of direct service activities"
	Scope	"multiple interrelated problems"
	Value and Operational Orientation	"an emphasis on the methods of science and technology"
	Perspective	"local issues"
	Size	"size, in terms of being a small, flexible, and tightly-knit organization"
5.	Activity	"the development of direct service activities"
	Scope	"multiple interrelated problems"
	Value and Operational Orientation	"a clear emphasis on humanitarian concerns"
	Perspective	"state and national issues"
	Size	"size, in terms of relationship and direct access to the vast resources of Michigan State University"
6.	Activity	"the development of direct service activities"
	Scope	"multiple interrelated problems"
	Value and Operational Orientation	"a clear emphasis on humanitarian concerns"
	Perspective	"local issues"
	Size	"size, in terms of being a small, flexible, and tightly-knit organization"
7.	Activity	"the development of direct service activities"
	Scope	"multiple interrelated problems"
	Value and Operational Orientation	"a clear emphasis on humanitarian concerns"

	Perspective	"local issues"
	Size	"size, in terms of relationship and direct access to the vast resources of Michigan State University"
8.	Activity	"the development of direct service activities"
	Scope	"specific, selected problems"
	Value and Operational Orientation	"a clear emphasis on humanitarian concerns"
	Perspective	"local issues"
	Size	"size, in terms of being a small, flexible, and tightly-knit organization"
9.	Activity	"the planning, coordination, and study of issues"
	Scope	"multiple interrelated problems"
	Value and Operational Orientation	"an emphasis on the methods of science and technology"
	Perspective	"local issues"
	Size	"size, in terms of relationship and direct access to the vast resources of Michigan State University"
10.	Activity	"the planning, coordination, and study of issues"
	Scope	"multiple interrelated problems"
	Value and Operational Orientation	"an emphasis on the methods of science and technology"
	Perspective	"state and national issues"
	Size	"size, in terms of relationship and direct access to the vast resources of Michigan State University"