

## Q-methodology for international television and video studies

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**Q-Methodology For International Television And Video Studies**

**By**

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Q-METHODOLOGY  
FOR  
INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION AND VIDEO STUDIS

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1. Q-Technique

Q-technique and its methodology was invented and advanced primarily by William Stephenson. Although the Q-sort technique and associated statistical methods have been employed primarily in psychology. They are nevertheless of great importance to communication research in both normative and empirical respects. Many communication theorists and researchers have utilized Q-methodology.

Q-methodology asks a small number of respondents to make a large number of decisions or choices, whereas R-methodology (conventional survey techniques) generally asks a large number of people a small number of questions. Q-methodology is known to be its heuristic quality and its usefulness in exploratory research.

In R-methodology, the basic phenomenon of interest is the trait, attribute, characteristic which are presumed to be objective and measurable for all elements ( persons ) in the population. In Q-methodology, the basic phenomenon of interest is the whole response (viewpoint, conception, image, etc.) which is supposed to be non-fractional and subjective.

Q-methodology is concerned with the relative order of statements for each person with the degree of similarity between persons in the way they order the statements from high to low interests or orientations. A set of statements is given to a respondent to sort into a set of piles according to some criteria. The statements are about theoretical issues or research questions, and they are usually typed on the cards.

The respondent sort a set of cards ( Q-sort usually contains 50 -120 cards) along a quasi-normal continuum from those cards of statements with which the respondent mostly agrees, to the cards of

statements with which the respondent least agrees.

Q-distribution has usually 11 piles with varying numbers of cards of statements in each pile. The cards in the piles are assigned values from 1 through 11.

If the respondent believed a statement the most agreeable in the entire group of statements, he should place it in the pile marked 11. If on the other hand, the respondent believed a statement is neither good nor bad, but somewhere near the middle, the statement should be in the pile marked 6. If the respondent believed a statement is the least agreeable in the entire group of statements, he should place it in the pile marked 1. With the forced distribution, respondent is required to place a specific number of cards of statements in each pile to make a normal distribution. Q- statistical analysis is based on the value of cards in the piles.

Q-factor analysis can be conducted through a computer program, QUANAL. The program provides a single-execution method for handling all phases of Q-analysis.

## II. Usefulness of the Q-methodology for International Cultural Studies

The application of the concept of gatekeeper has been mainly in relation to news, especially in the "newsroom". Few have referred to entertainment and culture in the "culture-room". Television is not only a medium of news and information but is primarily a medium for entertainment and culture. The theory of gatekeeping holds not only with respect to "food channels" and "news channel" but also with respect to "culture channel". 'Mr. Gates' are found not only in the areas of world wires but also in the areas of world cultural industries - television and video. Studies of inner world of the world cultural gatekeepers seems to be very needed in the age of television & video.

Q-methodological study is one way to look into the inner world of gatekeeper. However, little research has been done in this area of international communication flow.

## III. Application of the Q-methodology

The Q-sorting resembles the known behavior of newspeople. Reporters and editors select news items, evaluate respective merit of the items available on a given day, and play up some items against others. They collect significant stories of the day, place stories on the front page, and discard many other minor ones. That is precisely what Q-respondents do in the Q-sorting.

As the above procedure suggests, Q-methodology is appropriate to the comparison of journalistic values cross-nationally. Suppose an identical set of news information is made available to news media professionals with different cultural origins. Would they sort items, select news and judge news-values similarly or differently ?

It compared news-value judgements conducted by news professionals from South Korea and the United States. Two groups of 24 media professionals from each country were sampled. Each group consisted of eight daily newspaper professionals, eight radio-television personnels, and eight college student journalists.

The Korean sample came from Seoul -the Chosun Ilbo (daily), Korea Broadcasting System(KBS-TV), and the Seoul National University. The US sample came from Cleveland -the Plain Dealer (daily), WKYC-TV (NBC -owned station), and Cleveland State University press. By including the student journalists in the sample, it is wanted to see how these beginning journalist exhibit value patterns different from the ones held by the experienced newspeople of the media. They were instructed to do the sorting based on their own professional values, regardless of their organizations' particular policies or practices.

The Q-sort consisted of 60 statements which were news stories based on conceptualization of the current issues in the international news flow. The 60 news stories covered a spectrum of diverse subject categories --politics, business-commerce, sports, art-culture, and general interest. A quasi-quota sample technique was employed to include in the set of "development news" as well as general-interest news.

Although this is a comparative study of two countries, there is no reason why not to include more than two countries. Q-methodology is appropriate to culture and entertainment as well as news and information.