

Hypothetical Estimate of Alignment **(Comparing a Specific Bargraph with the SYMLOG Optimum Profile)**

The Hypothetical Model:

When Professor Bales wrote the “Bales Report for the Bargraph”, he developed a framework for presenting the results of ratings on a specific image. He stressed that the report was intended to assist individuals or a group in understanding how they are likely to be perceived (if the ratings are accurate) and how leadership and teamwork might be improved.

Bales’ focus on teamwork meant that he categorized the 26 Individual and Organizational Values (IOVAL) items differently depending upon their relative impact on teamwork. The purpose for formulating these categories is to highlight the potential impact activating certain values may have on an individual or group’s perceived and/or actual effectiveness. The categories are:

- Values Contributing to Effective Teamwork
“Effective teamwork will not take the place of knowing how to do the job. Poor teamwork, however, can prevent effective final performance on the task. And, it can also prevent individuals from gaining satisfaction in being a member of the group.”
- Values That May Be Necessary Sometimes, But Dangerous to Teamwork
These values “may be needed as temporary emergency measures, but they are generally of the kind called ‘authoritarian’ and have a dangerous potential for provoking polarization in most groups.”
- Values that Almost Always Interfere with Effective Teamwork
These values “may serve the needs of particular individuals but interfere with teamwork except under the most unusual and temporary conditions. ... if they exist it is important to find the conditions which cause them ... as they generally indicate something of considerable importance needs to be changed.”

The feedback, and indeed the entire Bales Report, is intended to be educational and focuses on development and ongoing improvement. In reviewing the bargraph, it is important to recognize that each item potentially has a differential impact on teamwork and interpersonal effectiveness. It was his hope that individuals and groups could promote values that contribute to effective leadership and teamwork and proactively work to reduce or eliminate the expression of values detrimental to teamwork and interpersonal effectiveness. In essence, to take measures in the future to develop a balanced profile using the hypothetical “optimum profile” as a guide.

Comparing a bargraph to the “Optimum Value Profile”

It is important to ask: Can there be an Optimum Value Profile? Bales has addressed this question in his book: *Social Interaction Systems: Theory and Measurement* (Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey. 1999, Chapter 10, pp 287-304.) The short answer is that over fifty years of continuous research based at Harvard University has produced sufficient data to formulate a “hypothetically balanced profile most likely to promote active teamwork towards common goals, organizational unity.”

The purpose in comparing a bargraph on a single image with the hypothetical optimum (“most effective profile”) is to provide a basis for discussion as to whether the indicated problems really exist, and if so, whether identification of the problems may help in possible planning for change (improvements). In this way, the comparison is used to formulate heuristic (working) hypothesis, which need exploration, examination, and testing. This process of discussion and testing will determine the extent to which the observed alignment or lack of alignment of the bargraph in question and the “optimum profile” produce a meaningful basis to direct further development and guide planned change towards improvements.

Any “scores” associated with comparisons between a bargraph and the “optimum profile” should only be used as an “aide to the eye” in helping to focus the discussion, and never as an absolute measure of certainty.

Calculating the Hypothetical Estimate of Alignment with the Optimum Profile

It is possible to examine the bars on a single image bargraph and compare the alignment of the bars with the center of the range on any item in the hypothetical “Optimum Profile”. Those items that are shown outside of the range on the SYMLOG Interactive Display Tool (or depart by 5 x's on a written Bales Report) are considered to be worthy of closer inspection. The fact that a departure exists is not necessarily important but the eye is drawn to the departure as a way of helping to focus discussion on the potential impact of over- or underemphasizing that particular value in the situation being explored.

If you are using the SYMLOG Interactive Display Tool, the “Hypothetical Estimate of Alignment” will be calculated for you as a factor of which items are outside (over or under) the “effective” range. The calculations will be made according to the schema outlined below. An alternative approach is to use the written Bargraph Summary to determine which of the 26 items are marked as within, above, or below the effective range and then to apply the schema outlined below.

It is essential to remember that the Hypothetical Estimate of Alignment applies only to the bargraph of an image (not necessarily to the person rated) and is to be used as an aide to the eye in attempting to conduct analyses of potentially important departures in a particular bargraph.

The summary table is presented in three main sections.

I. Values contributing to effective teamwork (13 items)

1. Frequencies shown *close* to the optimum profile
2. Frequencies shown to be *overemphasized*
3. Frequencies shown to be *underemphasized*

II. Values that may be necessary sometimes, but dangerous (5 items)

4. Frequencies shown *close* to the optimum profile
5. Frequencies that are *overemphasized*
6. Frequencies that are *underemphasized*

III. Values that almost always interfere with teamwork (8 items)

7. Frequencies shown *close* to the optimum profile
8. Frequencies that are *overemphasized*

The hypothetical estimate of alignment score takes into account not only in which section an item appears, but also the extent to which the value associated with the item was rated (on average) as being associated with the image in question. Weights are assigned on the basis of an item's potential impact on effective teamwork in keeping with the SYMLOG theory of unification and polarization. Items treated negatively are subtracted from those items assigned a positive or neutral weight.

This estimate of alignment is meant to be an aide to the eye, to help individuals and groups focus on the areas where changes might be made and have the most significant positive impact. Please *do not use any estimate of alignment scores as your sole, or even primary, source of information* in assessing results.

Worksheet for Calculating Hypothetical Estimate of Alignment

To calculate the overall Hypothetical Estimate of Alignment of any bargraph profile associated with a particular image, refer to the Bargraph Summary Table located on the Bales Report on the Single Image Bargraph. Count the items in a noted section, and multiply that number by the constant provided.

Contribute to teamwork:

1. Optimum (close) range # ____ x 15 = ____
2. Overemphasized # ____ x 10 = ____

Necessary but dangerous:

3. Optimum (close) range # ____ x 5 = ____

Interfere with teamwork:

4. Optimum (close) range # ____ x 0 = ____

- Add 1, 2, 3 and 4 for **total optimum** = ____ (SUM 1)

Contribute to teamwork:

5. Underemphasized # ____ x 5 = ____

Necessary but dangerous:

6. Overemphasized # ____ x 10 = ____

7. Underemphasized # ____ x 5 = ____

Interfere with teamwork:

8. Overemphasized # ____ x 15 = ____

- Add 5, 6, 7, 8 for **total departures** = ____ (SUM 2)

Transfer SUM 1 and SUM 2 to the appropriate lines below. To obtain the total estimate, subtract the total departures from the total optimum.

(SUM 1) **total optimum** _____

(SUM 2) **total departures** - _____

Total estimate = _____

Assign a classification to your estimate according to the following:

High correspondence with optimum (220 - 155 points)

- 1 Appears very well aligned with optimum profile
2 Appears generally well aligned with optimum profile

Guidelines

220 - 190

185 - 155

Moderate correspondence with optimum (150 - 120 points)

- 3 Appears somewhat aligned with optimum profile

150 - 120

Low correspondence with optimum (115 - 80 or less points)

- 4 Appears to generally depart from optimum profile
5 Does not appear well aligned with optimum profile

115 - 85

80 or less