

# Face Validity of the Value Systems Questionnaire

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The Value Systems Questionnaire (VSQ) was developed by jobEQ at the end of 2001. It's a survey aimed at measuring cultural patterns and combines several cultural models. It contains 150 test items grouped in 30 questions. The first model included is Clare W. Graves' Emergent Cyclical Double-Helix Model of Adult Bio-Psycho-Social Systems Development, popularly known as "Value Systems" or "Spiral Dynamics". The second part of the questionnaire contains a mix of patterns from different backgrounds and has been developed to complement the patterns measured by jobEQ's Inventory for Work Attitude and Motivation (iWAM). For a description of the VSQ instrument, see [www.jobEQ.com/VSQ](http://www.jobEQ.com/VSQ).

The purpose of this paper is to provide an insight into how potential participants might interpret and respond to the VSQ survey and its reports. According to Wikipedia, face validity is the extent to which a test is subjectively viewed as covering the concept it purports to measure. It refers to the transparency or relevance of a test as they appear to test participants. In other words, a test can be said to have face validity if it "looks like" it is going to measure what it is supposed to measure.

This paper is based on the survey results of 933 respondents who completed the VSQ feedback form between January 2002 and August 2014. This form allows respondents to indicate to what extent they Agree with the finds of the VSQ survey. For each paragraph, respondents can indicate whether they agree or not. Optionally, the feedback form can be used to ask for clarification by indicating a paragraph isn't completely clear or by adding general comments at the bottom of the form.

## Part 1 – Value Systems Model

This section of the report shows a standard text for the 2 or 3 value systems, which are evaluated as being the most "relevant"<sup>1</sup>. More specifically, these patterns are selected based on the preference of the test taker. The text shown corresponds to the value systems linked to the test items of which the respondent indicated that they were the most like them. On the feedback form, the test taker can indicate whether they agree or disagree with each of these 2 or 3 paragraphs.

When analyzing the respondents' feedback we found that 72 out of 933 respondents (7,72%) indicated they did NOT agree with 1 or more of these paragraphs. Only 1% doesn't agree with 2 patterns. This means that the face validity of this section of the report section is 92,28%.

Code	Value System	#Shown	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
G1	Human Herd (beige)	117	78	26	13
G2	Traditional Tribe (purple)	11	7	1	3
G3	War & Conquest (red)	58	44	10	4
G4	Rigid Rule Makers (blue)	35	31	2	2
G5	Materialism (orange)	401	340	42	19
G6	Humanism (green)	232	222	4	6
G7	System Thinker (yellow)	542	531	3	8
G8	Holistic Thinker (turquoise)	848	779	24	45

**Table 1: Feedback on the Graves Levels**

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<sup>1</sup> On average, 2,41 paragraphs were shown.

Based on the Value System test items, as well as some additional questions, the VSQ questionnaire also determines which values are important to the test taker. Under the title “Value Hierarchy”, it lists the highest ranked test item (value) from 7 of the VSQ questions. Out of the 933 respondents, 39 or 4,18% indicate that they disagree with this list and another 22 or 2.36% indicate that they are unsure about this result. The remaining 93,46% fully agrees.

## Part 2 – Additional Patterns

The second part of the report contains 5 paragraphs; one for each of the additional categories measured by VSQ instrument. These 5 paragraphs are always shown, with percentages indicating the scores of the person for the patterns. The score is determined based on the ranking given to the test items inked to these patterns. In this section of the report, the test taker can indicate whether they agree or disagree with each of these paragraphs separately. When combined over the 5 paragraphs, 116 out of 933 respondents (12,43%) indicate that they do not agree with one or more of these paragraphs. This means that the face validity of this section of the report section is 87,57%. When evaluated separately (see table 2), one can conclude that only 2,68% to 4,29% of respondents will not agree with the scores they obtained.

Code	Category Name	Disagree	Unsure
U	Type of Value-Orientation (Talcott Parsons) <i>Universal - Particular</i>	25 (2,68%)	61 (6,54%)
D	Scope of values and rules (Talcott Parsons) <i>Specific - Diffuse</i>	26 (2,79%)	67 (7,18%)
M	Discussion Style (at ease with conflict) <i>Match - Mismatch</i>	37 (3,97%)	32 (3,43%)
B	Thinking Style (Rodger Sperry) <i>Left Brain (Logic) – Right Brain (Creativity)</i>	40 (4,29%)	26 (2,79%)
EF	Efficiency & Flexibility	33 (3,54%)	49 (5,25%)

**Table 2: Feedback on the Additional Categories**

## Overall Report

When combining the responses for both sections of the report, we find that 179 respondents (19,19%) have indicated that they do not agree with 1 or more of the paragraphs of the feedback form. This gives an overall combined of “full face validity” for 80,81% of respondents. On average, the 933 respondents didn’t agree with 0,3 of the paragraphs. Only 6% will not agree with 2 paragraphs and 1% with 3 or more paragraphs.

## Conclusion

While face validity is subjective and therefore cannot be considered a validation of the instrument, it’s important to be able to anticipate how a test taker may respond. Based on the findings shared in this paper, one can conclude that during a feedback session with a test participant the overall feeling of the participant should be that the VSQ describes them well. In general, one can expect that there will be a disagreement with less than 1 paragraph of the report.

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### Further notes

**About the test sample.** Test participants have completed the VSQ in a variety of Languages, including Russian, English and Dutch. Due to the popularity of the VSQ instrument in Russia and Ukraine, 54,2% of respondents for this study come from these 2 countries. Some 18,6% of the sample comes from English speaking countries. 4,2% comes from Belgium, where the VSQ has originated. The remainder of the sample comes from 49 other countries.

**About Patrick Merlevede.** The author is the founder of jobEQ and the main developer of the value Systems Questionnaire. He can be reached at [PatrickM@jobEQ.com](mailto:PatrickM@jobEQ.com)