

In order to get a better understanding of high and low context cultures and clearer understanding of what classifies basic nonverbal messages the following research questions were asked:

RQ1: Are nonverbal facial expressions of emotion interpreted differently between black and white American culture?

RQ 2: Do people from opposite context cultures negatively or positively perceive each other's power or status through nonverbal cues?

### Methods:



Figure 1 (questions 1-2)

1. What is your perception of the female student?
2. How would you describe the relationship the female student has with the other students in the picture?



Figure 2 (question 3)

3. Is this a powerful person?



Figure 3 (question 4)

4. Which picture shows the woman with more authority?



Figure 4 (question 5)

5. The woman in the picture is:
- A. Student
  - B. Administrator
  - C. government official
  - D. a local citizen



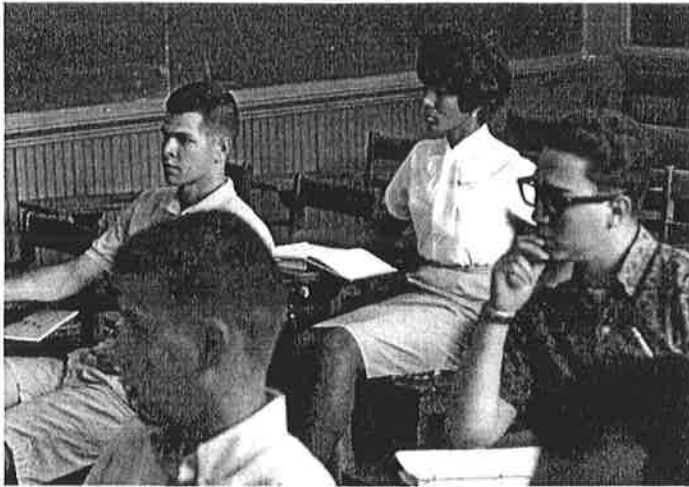
Figure 5 (question 6)

6. Does this organization have social authority based on this picture?

**Results:**

Totally 98 participants: 60 white (61%) 24 Black (24%) 14 others (Asian/Hispanic) (14%)

✓ good!



**1. What is your perception of the female student?**

15% (negative); Out of place, Alone, Uncomfortable, Nervous 30% black 70% white respondents

20% Same (neutral) 1% black 99% white respondents

65% (positive) Smart/Intelligence Determined, Studious, Attentive, Driven 58% black 42% white respondents

is there an interp here other than his/10 context?

% is % of racial group or overall # within answer

**2. How would you describe the relationship the female student has with the other students in the picture?**

100% (negative) No relationship, No interaction, Outsider, Unfriendly, Withdrawn, tense, isolated, standoffish, distant, Out numbered



**3. Is this a powerful person?**

Yes - 76 (52 (53%) white/ 18 (18%) black/ 6 (6%) others) No - 16 ( 5 (5%) white/ 5 (5%) black/ 6 (6%) others) Not sure - 6 ( 3 (3%) white/ 1 (1%) black/ 3 (3%) others)



7. Does this organization have social authority based on this picture?

Yes – 82 (48 (48%) white/ 20 (20%) black/ 14 (14%) others)

No – 6 (2(2%)white/ 4(4%) black)

Not Sure – 10 (10 (10%) white)

### **Discussion:**

Nonverbal communication is the primal part of communication. Some scholars believe nonverbal communication is the most authentic of all communication. Humans communicate nonverbally at all times whether it is behavior or facial expression. Research found that nonverbal communication is more biologically based than culturally based. Nonverbal communication is an innate quality of all humans, but is often done subconsciously. Some people are gifted at reading others nonverbal cues and determining their inner state. Hillary Elfenbein (2006) found that practice alone will help the average person become a skilled nonverbal cue reader. Elfenbein suggest the quality of training helps people better judge nonverbal behavior (p. 22).

Power is another element of nonverbal communication that was closely examined in this research project. Dovidio, Richeson, and Shelton state that power and status are relational