

Evaluation of the DiSC® Assessment Tool in a First-Year Pharmacy Healthcare Communication Course

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Background

- Personal assessments can help improve teamwork, communication, and productivity by enhancing understanding of self and others.¹
- The DiSC assessment is a type of personal assessment tool comprised of four main personality profiles and includes natural inclination and situational adapted styles²:
 - **(D)ominance**: Someone primarily in the ‘D quadrant’ is results-focused, confident, blunt, outspoken, and demanding.
 - **(i)influence**: Someone primarily in the ‘i quadrant’ is influential, persuasive, enthusiastic, optimistic, open, trusting, and energetic.
 - **(S)teadiness**: Someone primarily in the ‘S quadrant’ is cooperative, sincere, loyal, dependable, calm, and deliberate.
 - **(C)onscientiousness**: Someone primarily in the ‘C quadrant’ is independent, detail-oriented, and quality and accuracy-driven.
- Most tend to fall into one or two main DiSC quadrants (Figure 1).

Objectives

- Identify Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) student perceptions and expectations of the DiSC assessment.
- Determine correlation between DiSC natural and adapted traits.

Methods

- First-year PharmD. students in a required healthcare communications course completed a baseline assessment (Table 1) followed by a survey (Table 2) before and after taking a DiSC assessment seminar.
- The seminar encompassed an untimed DiSC assessment, receipt of personal results, and a trainer-led follow-up session.
- Survey questions focused on DiSC perceptions, familiarity, usefulness, impact, and value.
- Pre-assessment hypothesis assumed significant correlation between DiSC-natural and -adapted results.
- Pre-post data were evaluated with paired T-tests, and Spearman’s Rho was used for correlations (Microsoft Excel v.16.70).

Results

Figure 1: DiSC Assessment Quadrants

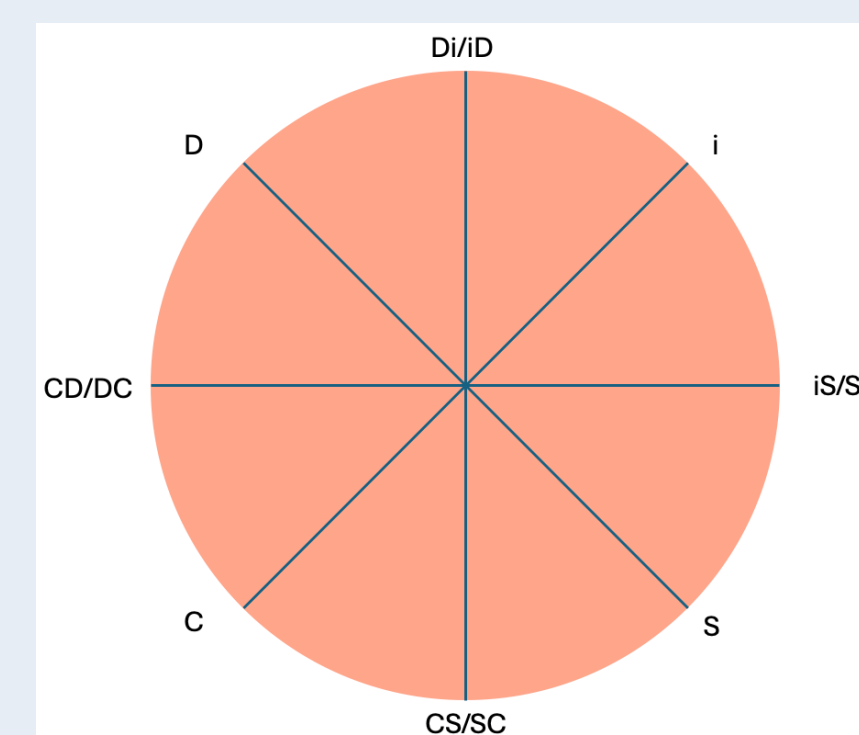


Table 1: Pre-survey baseline assessment

Question	Pre-survey (n, %)
I have previously completed a DiSC survey.	Yes: 0 (0%) No: 30 (100%)
Which of the following categories do you consider to be a PRIMARY personality trait for you? (choose one).	Dominance: 2 (6.7%) Influence: 5 (16.7%) Steadiness: 7 (23.3%) Conscientiousness: 16 (53.3%)
Which of the following categories do you consider to be your SECOND MOST predominate personality trait? (choose one).	Dominance: 4 (13.3%) Influence: 4 (13.3%) Steadiness: 14 (46.7%) Conscientiousness: 8 (26.7%)

Table 2: Pre-post survey

Items 1 – 12 are ranked on a Likert scale: 5 – strongly agree, 4 – agree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 2 – disagree, 1 – strongly disagree	Pre-survey results Post-survey results (mean ± standard deviation)	p-value
1. I enjoy learning about aspects of my personality through assessment instruments.	4 ± 0.89 4.37 ± 0.66	0.005
2. I plan to take my DiSC assessment seriously.	4.5 ± 0.56 4.4 ± 0.66	0.448
3. I am familiar with the DiSC assessment.	1.55 ± 1.04 3.97 ± 0.98	0.000
4. I feel that the DiSC assessment will be a useful tool in understanding my personality traits.	3.6 ± 0.71 4.07 ± 0.77	0.002
5. I find standardized trait assessment tools to be helpful in my understanding of self-behavior.	3.5 ± 1.06 3.97 ± 0.84	0.014
6. The DiSC assessment is an important tool for healthcare providers.	3.53 ± 0.76 3.8 ± 0.87	0.118
7. The DiSC assessment can help me learn more about my peers.	3.5 ± 0.92 4.1 ± 0.79	0.004
8. Knowing my DiSC results will likely increase my professional self-confidence.	3.5 ± 0.81 3.87 ± 0.92	0.062
9. The DiSC assessment results are likely to influence my understanding of my strengths and areas of improvement.	3.73 ± 0.81 4.03 ± 0.66	0.059
10. The DiSC assessment results are likely to play a role in how I communicate with my colleagues.	3.67 ± 0.83 3.77 ± 1.02	0.610
11. The DiSC assessment results are likely to help me find my “place” in a team environment.	3.6 ± 0.95 3.87 ± 0.92	0.161
12. The DiSC assessment results are likely to help me identify personal struggles and weaknesses before they manifest in external environments.	3.6 ± 0.88 3.93 ± 1.09	0.283

Table 3: Correlation between natural and adapted styles

	D - ADAPTED	D - NATURAL	I - ADAPTED	I - NATURAL	S - ADAPTED	S - NATURAL	C - ADAPTED	C - NATURAL
Average	31.90	38.07	50.33	43.50	65.17	59.77	57.97	63.57
Std Dev	17.18	15.14	28.75	27.11	15.71	17.40	21.47	18.64
Correlation Rs		0.50		0.79		0.22		0.52
p-value		0.004		0.000		0.236		0.003

Results cont.

- Thirty students completed a paired survey and reported DiSC results.
- Participants demonstrated statistically significant improvement in agreement in enjoyment, familiarity, self-understanding, self-behavior, and peer assessment (p<0.05).
- In the natural environment, participants were most likely to exhibit conscientious and influence traits (n=14 and n=18, respectively).
- Significant correlation was observed between the dominance, influence, and conscientiousness adapted and natural traits (r^s=0.5, p = 0.004; r^s=0.79, p<0.001; and r^s=0.52, p=0.003, respectively, Table 3).

Conclusions

- The DiSC seminar resulted in improved student perception of DiSC use, purpose, and self-impact.
- PharmD students were most likely to exhibit conscientiousness, steadiness, and influence as predominant traits.
- Dominance, influence, and conscientiousness were significantly correlated between natural and adapted environments.

Implications

- Incorporating DiSC seminars into pharmacy education may be beneficial for students' self-awareness and interpersonal skills development.
- Predominant traits prevalence among PharmD. students may inform curriculum design, career guidance, and team dynamics.
- The significant correlation of dominance, influence, and conscientiousness between natural and adapted environments implies consistency in behaviors and potential for targeted personal growth development or adaptation skills training.
- Understanding personality traits in future pharmacists may influence patient interactions, and collaboration and problem-solving approaches with healthcare teams.

References

1. Gordon, Kimberley A., et al. Linking behavioral styles of leaders to organizational success: using the DISC model to grow behavioral awareness. IJAVET 2019;10(1):40-59. <http://doi.org/10.4018/IJAVET.2019010104>
2. DiSC styles. Personality Profile Solutions, LLC. www.discprofiles.com/disc-styles/. Accessed 20 June 2024.