

The impact of personality type on student pharmacists' communication skills

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Objective

- To assess the impact of personality type on student pharmacists' communication skills during patient counseling skills assessments.

Methods

- A voluntary, self-assessment survey was administered to third-year student pharmacists from four (4) pharmacy institutions between Spring 2022 and Spring 2024 following summative patient counseling skills assessments.
- The survey collected demographic information, Myers-Briggs personality type (www.16personalities.com), and included self-assessment questions regarding personality traits' impact on student pharmacists' communication skills.
- Global communication (GC) skills were assessed by faculty at each institution using a validated rubric with these categories:
 - Verbal Expression mechanics and content; Non-Verbal Expression; Interaction with patient/healthcare professional; Organization and Logic.
- Survey results were compared to patient counseling GC skill scores and analyzed using descriptive statistics.
- The study received IRB approval from each institution.

Student Pharmacist Self-Assessment Questions

Self-Assessment Questions	Responses
How confident are you in your patient counseling skills?	a. Confident b. Somewhat confident c. Not confident at all
How would you rate your overall communication skills with patients?	a. Excellent b. Good c. Needs improvement d. Unsatisfactory
What is your top strength related to your communication with a patient?	a. Verbal Expression b. Non-Verbal Expression c. Response to Patient's Feelings and Needs d. Degree of Focus, Logic, and Coherence
What is your top weakness related to your communication with a patient?	a. Verbal Expression b. Non-Verbal Expression c. Response to Patient's Feelings and Needs d. Degree of Focus, Logic, and Coherence
Which personality trait (E/I, N/S, T/F, J/P) identified through your Myers Briggs personality test do you feel most contributes to your communication skills?	a. E - extrovert b. I - introvert c. N - intuitive d. S - sensing e. T - thinking f. F - feeling g. J - judging h. P - perceiving
Please describe why you believe this personality trait most contributes to your communication skills:	Open-ended response
Do you believe that personality traits affect your communication with a patient?	a. Yes b. No
Please explain your answer to the previous question:	Open-ended response

Results

- A total of 50 student pharmacists completed the survey.
- Most participants were aged 18-25 (72%) and identified as female (70%).
- 82% worked in a pharmacy and 66% of these practiced communication skills at work.
- The majority (92%) indicated that personality traits affect patient communication skills.
- Students noted several factors for why and how personality attributes may impact patient communication: empathy, confidence, interpersonal connection, and personality type.
 - Empathy and interpersonal connection were commonly noted for those with Feeling subtypes (66%).
 - Confidence with initiating patient communication was commonly noted for those with Extrovert personality subtypes (25%).

Figure 1: Student Pharmacist Confidence in Patient Communication Skills

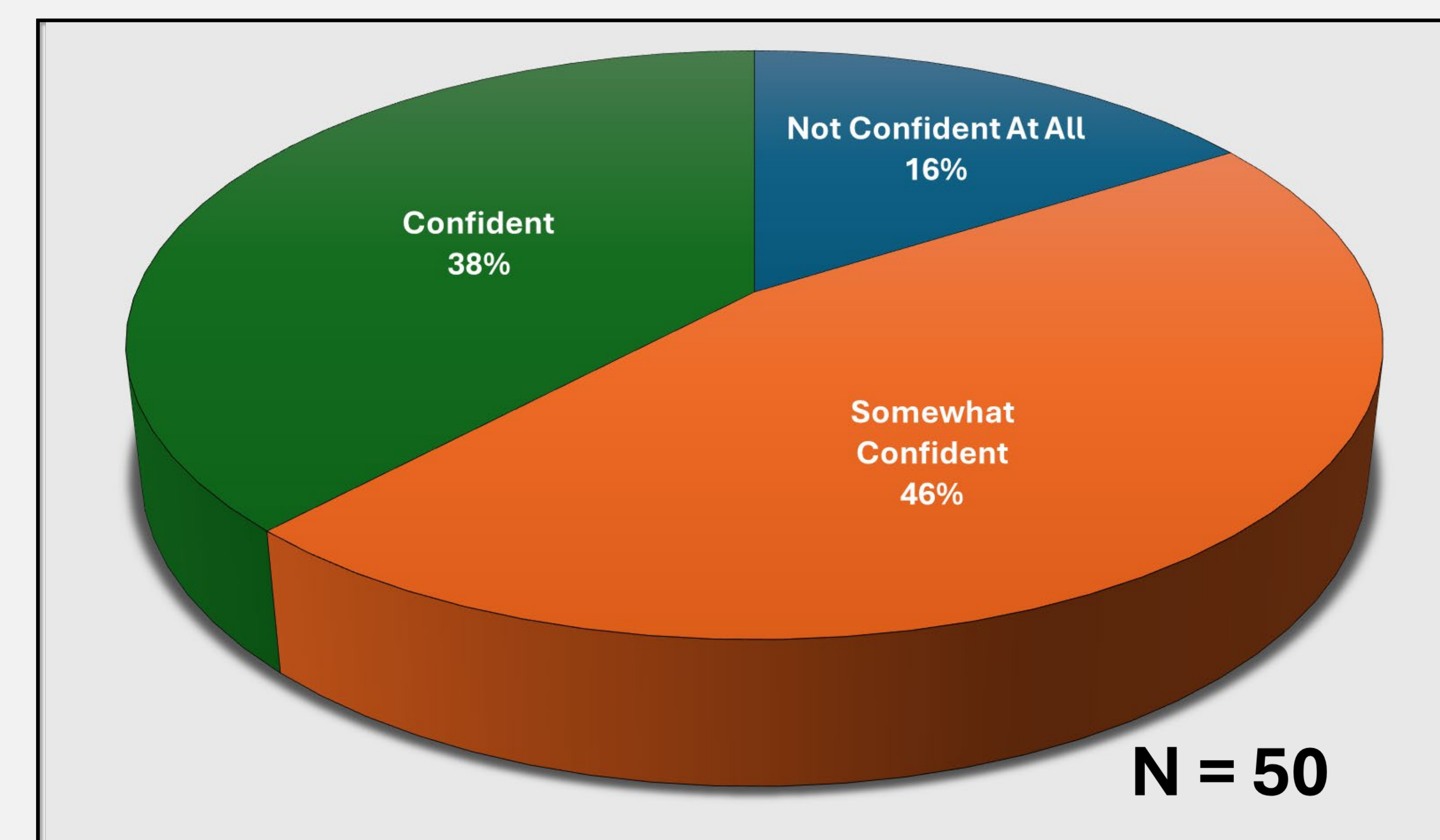
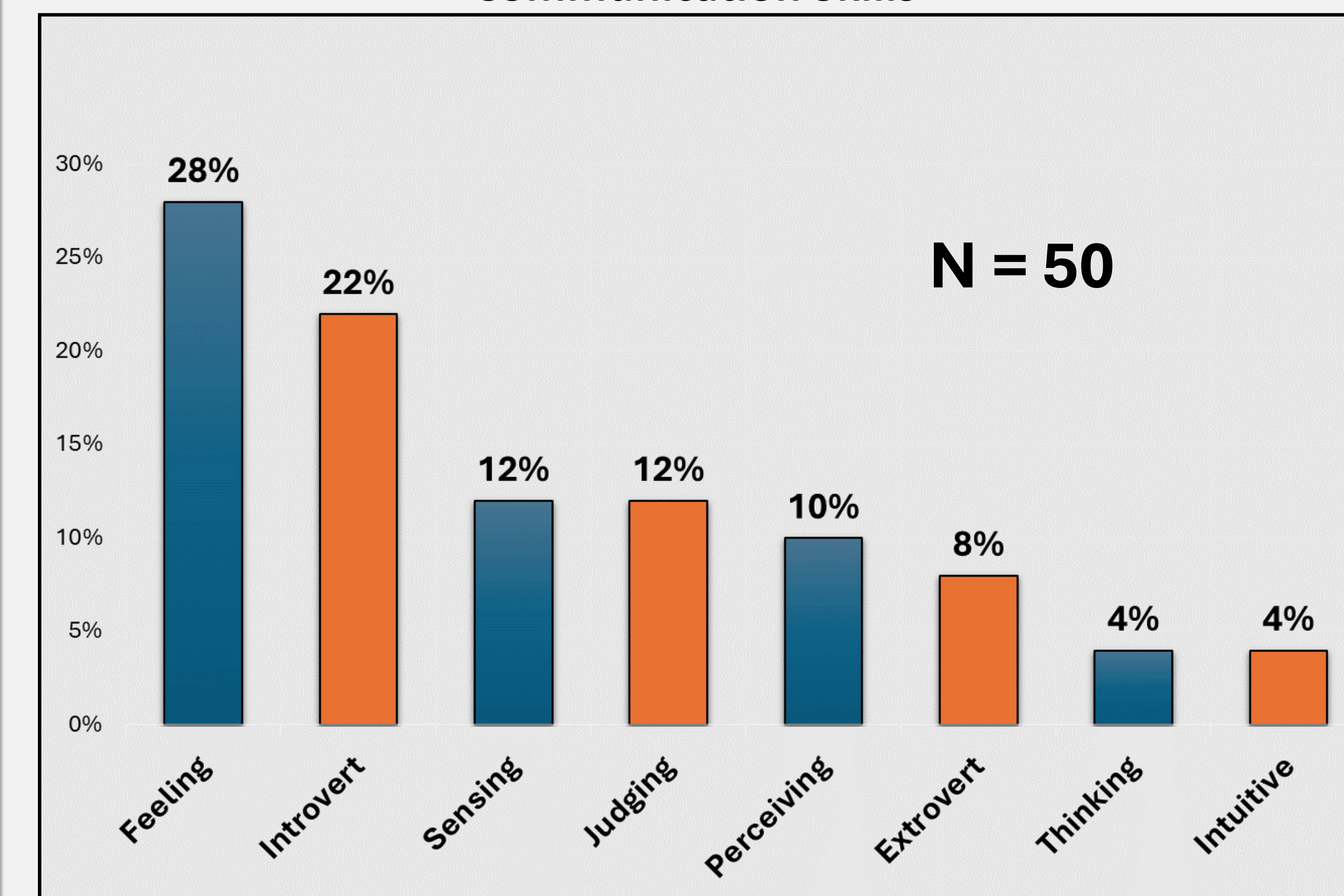


Table 1: Personality Types and Average GC Score (N = 50)

Personality Type <small>(www.16personalities.com)</small>	Number (%)	Average GC Score (out of 15)
ENFJ	8 (16%)	11.8
ENFP	4 (8%)	
ENTJ; ESFJ; ESTJ; ESTP	4 [1 of each] (8%)	
ESFP	2 (4%)	
Extrovert Subtype Total	18 (25%)	
ISFJ	7 (14%)	12.7
INFJ	6 (12%)	
INTJ	4 (8%)	
ISTJ	4 (8%)	
ISTP	4 (8%)	
INFP	3 (6%)	
INTP	2 (4%)	
ISFP	2 (4%)	
Introvert Subtype Total	32 (75%)	12.3
Feeling Subtype Total	33 (66%)	

Figure 2: Personality Attributes that Impact Patient Communication Skills



Conclusion & Future Directions

- Despite the overall low response rate, results indicate that personality type may impact individual student pharmacists' patient communication skills. The total time required to complete the survey was a limiting factor as well as student pharmacist concerns with confidentiality or faculty bias since they had to provide their names to link survey results with GC scores.
- Certain personality attributes (Introvert, Feeling) may impact patient communication skills more than others; however other individual student pharmacist factors should be considered.
- Further investigation into how these attributes impact communication skills will apprise student pharmacist communication skills development and assessments.