The *Personal Profile System*® and Models of Personality

Research Report

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Research Summary

For over thirty years, the *Personal Profile System*® has been available to assist people in understanding themselves and others. It has offered an easy-to-use, inexpensive, and popular vehicle for self development to participants and facilitators world-wide. Much has been written by the author, publisher, and Carlson Learning Company distributors about the theory and history of this instrument. Readers know the theoretical model came from a 1928 publication by Dr. William Moulton Marston and was adapted as a training instrument by Carlson Learning Company. However, now we need to know how it relates to contemporary personality theories.

The question this research report is based on is: How does the *Personal Profile System* and the model on which it is based relate to present personality theories? This report is written to put the *Personal Profile System* in both a historical and a contemporary context in order to test the validity of the model in relation to other models of personality, and to discuss the advantages and limitations of both the model and the instrument. This report will also guide the user to appropriate application and interpretation.

The results of this study show that while the *Personal Profile System* has much in common with current research on personality, it is clearly different in method and purpose from instruments used in clinical settings to determine the emotional health of an individual. In addition, this study found that now sixty years after Marston published his theories, an array of investigations have confirmed that in the realm of *interpersonal* behavior, they hold true. What Marston offered is a theory of how people relate to each other, rather than a description of core traits.

This is fitting for the purpose for which the *Personal Profile System* is most commonly applied. The *Personal Profile System* is not designed to provide clinical insights into people's psyches. It is designed to be self-scored and self-interpreted; because the respondent, not someone else, is regarded as the expert on himself or herself. For this purpose, the instrument displays considerable construct validity, given the literature reviewed here.

Relevant Personality Theory and Research – Past and Present

Dr. Marston was interested in the physiology of the brain and in relating its physical properties to human emotions and behavior. He attempted to validate his hypotheses by interviewing clinical psychologists and observing the behavior of their patients. He carried out this work at a time when psychology was still in its childhood and two kinds of research predominated: laboratory research based on physiological measurements and clinical research based on direct observation of human subjects.

His purpose was to link the two by creating a theoretical bridge which he labeled "motor consciousness." He used that phrase to mean an individual's awareness that he/she is reacting pleasantly or unpleasantly to a stimulus and his/her attempts to explain or control them.

It is not known whether Marston shared his theories with other psychologists of his day who were developing theories of personality. However, many of his assumptions align themselves with theirs. During the l930s, Gordon Allport (l937) emphasized that behavior is goal-directed, as did Marston. To allow for successful adaptation and mastery, Allport wrote, an individual's traits must remain flexible, so the influence of those traits may be changed or eliminated according to specific demands of the moment. Marston also explained the interaction of his four "primary emotions" as one following another as a situation unfolds and the individual moves toward the emotional goal of dealing successfully with the situation.

Marston explains human emotion as a reaction to other people, situations, and events in the person's environment. A famous contemporary, H.A. Murray (l938) wrote that the individual and his/her environment must be considered together. And he further elaborated on two kinds of "environment"—consensual reality and personal reality. *Consensual reality* is shared with others while *personal reality* is the individual's own history, which provides a basis for interpreting new experiences.

Marston's theory integrates the two, by suggesting how the individual's personal reality or internal experience of feelings and emotions reflects his or her experiences in the environment shared with others.

As the United States prepared for World War II and faced the task of staffing a giant war machine, psychological research focused on job analysis and matching the right person to the job. New psychometric methods were applied to personality as well as ability, and Raymond Cattell became famous for his pioneering work in identifying broad personality factors—the basis for the *16PF* instrument in use to the present day.

Complex statistical analysis produced new personality tests which required considerable training in order to score and interpret, among them the *Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory* (MMPI) and the *California Psychological Inventory* (CPI). Personality measurement was done only by trained professionals trying to classify personality characteristics and by researchers trying to predict specific behavior. Attempts to predict behavior based on personality measures produced disappointing results. By the end of the 1960s, psychologists criticized personality measurement as lacking construct validity (too many unproved theories and poorly defined dimensions, even fads, directed current research) and suffering from measurement problems—such as response biases and disappointing results from self-report questionnaires.

During the 1970s and 1980s many psychologists lost interest in personality theory, and researchers turned their attention to cognitive processes and understanding how individuals formed a self concept. Research topics came and went, and few studies of personality brought new insights. Observations made in the 1930s continued to be regarded, however, as highly relevant.

At the end of the 1980s, several researchers working with word lists from various personality measures identified five broad dimensions common to most of them. These "Big Five" personality prototypes have reawakened interest in personality research.

During the 1990s we have seen further efforts to enlarge understanding of emotions, motivation, and the self. Researchers are learning that to predict behavior, we have to do a better job of defining the behavior we want to predict, develop more accurate measuring tools, and explain the link between the predictor and the outcome. They recognize there are no short cuts and that one study must build on the other, so the cumulative knowledge will produce significant insights.

While there is a renewed interest in measuring and understanding personality, there is also a new respect for how hard it is to obtain meaningful results. Researchers are more aware of the complexity of interactive forces (in the person and environment) that are responsible for any one behavior (Pervin, 1990).

Currently, there is a demand for personality measures that will offer easy answers to human resource issues. In responding to this demand, we need to remain aware of what a self-scored, self-report instrument can actually reveal about people and confine its application to what it does well. It is also necessary to understand the theory on which the *Personal Profile System*® is based and its validity today.

The next sections describe current thinking about personality and relate some of the findings to the *Personal Profile System*®. This information is designed to increase understanding of where the *Personal Profile System* fits into current thinking about personality and, by relating it to a broad knowledge of personality, to see how to apply the instrument to current needs.

The Nature of Personality Traits

Recently, there has been a debate between psychologists who believe that traits are only a convenient device for assigning labels to human behavior and those who maintain they are real, internal characteristics which distinguish one individual from another. No one argues that people vary in innumerable ways and that a useful way to find consistency and predictability in human behavior is desirable.

One way to resolve the issue is to consider two kinds or levels of personality traits (Meehl, 1986). Those categories of behavior we can see and label are *surface traits*. By measuring them reliably, observers can reach considerable agreement on what they are and the extent to which they exist. Surface traits describe behavior.

Those internal characteristics that presumably direct behavior are *source traits*. These can only be inferred from observed or reported behavior. They are used to explain a person's behavior. Less agreement is found among explanations of behavior, because they are theoretical and cannot be proved. Advocates accept them on faith, based on the evidence they have seen.

Strong believers are satisfied with *face validity* alone: "it makes sense to me." Folk wisdom, myth, and knowledge gained from personal experience all fall in this category. Skeptics look for an accumulation of evidence based on scientific principles. They want to see the elements of a theory validated (*construct validity*) and find whether predictions based on the theory bear out in real life.

When personality measurement focuses on surface traits, it is sufficient to establish a consensus about what the traits mean and to measure them appropriately. When personality measurement focuses on source traits, a significant body of research needs to be accumulated, and face validity is not sufficient to justify them.

The *Personal Profile System* is designed to measure surface traits—those behaviors readily seen and reported. Each dimension of behavior—D, i, S, C—is reliably measured because we can show that items on each scale contribute to the total score for that scale.

Marston himself focused his attention on emotions—the link between physical-neurological reactions and behavior. His theory of person-with-environment interaction was used to explain emotional experience, which is always changing, rather than the enduring disposition of the person.

Thus, it is essential to avoid talking about the surface traits of Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Conscientiousness as if they were source traits. This means the user must regard D, i, S, and C not as internal dispositions but as semantic labels for patterns of behavior that may vary from situation to situation. An individual can use the *Personal Profile System*® as a tool for understanding self and others, and its value is enhanced when comparisons across situations are made. But it is at the level of describing behavior, not explaining what causes the behavior, that the instrument yields valid information.

How Can We Know That A Trait Exists?

We infer the presence of a trait by noting that the same behavior occurs repeatedly across times and situations. We may also note a situation-specific trait by observing that certain behavior occurs consistently whenever that situation exists. If we were free to measure behavior as often and wherever we liked, we could analyze it as the in figure 1 illustrates.

Figure 1.

	Situation A	Situation B	Situation C	…Situation X
Time 1				
Time 2				
Time 3				
…Time Y				

If behavior were different in different situations, we would have a situation-specific trait. If behavior were similar no matter what the situation, we would have a general trait, which is rare. Often we make the mistake of attributing a generalized trait to a person, when we say, "You *always* do that!" And the person, recognizing perhaps accurately the situational nature of the behavior says, "No I don't!"

When we examine the validity of an instrument designed to measure traits, we look, at a minimum, for evidence it yields similar results from Time 1 to Time 2 to Time 3, etc. Then we demonstrate its *test-retest* reliability. In so doing, we need to ensure we are taking repeated measures of the *same situation*, or we risk confusing the measure with true differences in a person's behavior from one situation to the next.

In using the *Personal Profile System*®, we do not assume behavior will be consistent from situation to situation. This is why we tell people to focus on a particular situation before they respond. Correspondingly, Profile interpretation needs to emphasize that *in this situation*, these are the tendencies a person has reported.

As stated, traits that express themselves consistently across various situations are rare. And most personality psychologists now accept as fact that traits and situations are interactive.

Human beings are inherently adaptive. In fact, inflexibility is considered abnormal, because survival depends on the ability to adapt. Thus, we learn to understand cues that tell us how to behave in a particular situation and we develop a set of behaviors from which we can draw those most appropriate to any situation.

We should encourage people to focus on specific situations before they complete the *Personal Profile System* and to complete another response page on another situation if they want to understand the varieties of behavior they are employing in different kinds of environments. From this exercise comes (a) a broader understanding of their behavioral tendencies and (b) a better understanding of how they may express different aspects of their personality in different situations.

It is also evident that most people learn to recognize which environments feel the most comfortable to them. To the extent they can, they seek to put themselves in these situations and avoid less comfortable ones. People also try to modify an uncomfortable environment actively (by trying to change it) or passively (by avoiding elements they don't like) to make it one in which they can succeed.

For this reason, self-aware individuals will see they exhibit certain behaviors more often than others, because they have succeeded in finding or arranging opportunities to do so. In fact, the underlying assumption of Marston's whole model is that individuals interact dynamically with their environment, by responding to favorable or unfavorable conditions in ways that reflect their personal power in relation to those conditions.

Because not all situations are uniformly favorable, individuals can be expected to vary their behavior in relation to favorability alone. And, because the playing field is not always level, individuals are forced to deal with power differentials whether the overall situation is favorable or not. Therefore, variability in *Personal Profile System* results should be expected from one kind of situation to another, based on the dynamic characteristics of the DiSC® model.

With so much variability, how can we be sure that traits exist at all? After all, each person is born into the world with a different inheritance that determines, to some extent, their personalities. No two people experience the same things, even identical twins raised together. Thus, an infinite combination of biological and social forces work to make each person unique. Our own observations tell us, however, that we are more like some people than others. And we learn that certain characteristics with which we're born shape our reactions to our environment in somewhat predictable ways.

For example, people who seem to be active every waking minute from the time they are born will experience the world differently from those who are more quiet. Certain combinations of genetic and environmental characteristics tend to happen together; and some of them occur together frequently enough and apart from other combinations, to produce groups of behaviors or surface traits that we can identify as relatively distinct.

Psychologists hypothesize about underlying or source traits when they want to explain the evolution of traits over a person's lifetime and attribute certain behaviors to motives or needs. Their hypothetical models are designed to generate a program of research that will help determine whether causal explanations are accurate for a majority of people to whom they apply. This is not the purpose of the *Personal Profile System*®. However, the surface traits it measures are useful, descriptive groupings of behaviors that occur together.

The Evidence for Life-Long Behavior Patterns

Many people think of personality traits not just as clusters of behaviors, but as enduring dispositions, first evident in childhood, which distinguish people throughout their lives. While this assumption is appealing for those who wish to find order and predictability in human behavior, it also sets limits on how much we can expect people to change. In this section, evidence for the continuity of personality traits is discussed along with current theories about behavior change.

Not surprisingly, longitudinal research indicates that the correlation between a personality measure obtained at one time in a person's life and one obtained at another time, decreases as the time interval increases. In other words, a personality measure taken today may be different from one taken ten years ago, but may be similar to the same measure taken one year ago. Psychologists who attempt to explain this finding suggest it isn't because of fundamental personality changes, but that most people learn to adapt to different environments and assume different roles as time goes on. In other words, *source traits* may remain fairly consistent but *surface traits* may evolve, as new behaviors are acquired and old ones changed.

Most studies have examined changes over time in a group of individuals and concluded that at different stages in a person's life certain patterns appear. For example, in traditional families women tend to suppress more assertive tendencies and express higher levels of nurturing during child-rearing years, while men suppress nurturance and express more assertiveness and competition during this period.

Few studies examine individual changes over the course of life, but those that do have discovered large individual differences in personality continuity. In two studies, personality profiles obtained at early and late adolescence overlapped about 50%, while profiles obtained at late adolescence and adulthood overlapped about 25% for the whole group being tested. However, for *individuals* in the group, correlations ranged from almost no overlap to almost complete overlap in results. So, we can infer that *another characteristic of people is the tendency to change a lot or very little from one stage of their lives to another* (Caspi and Bem, 1992).

Further, there is evidence that individuals vary by how they adapt to changing environments. And the way they adapt may be the most consistent feature of their personalities.

For example, how a person handled the transition from grade school to junior high may relate more closely to how they handle the transition from college to full-time work than the results obtained from a measure of personality taken in college.

One can also infer that *behavior during transition points is not necessarily predictive of behavior during a period of relative stability*.

If most people learn to adapt to various roles and environments, it is not surprising that people tend to behave more similarly in situations that are well defined, where role requirements are specified and group expectations are clear. Personality differences may have less impact on outcomes in this situation, because the adaptive abilities of group members will move them toward a common set of behaviors. It is in situations that permit a variety of responses that individual differences in personality will become more apparent.

This evidence should not lead us to conclude that human personality characteristics are highly changeable, for they are not. Some source traits are quite consistent over the life span, such as shyness, aggressiveness, extraversion, and physical attractiveness.

However, since the *Personal Profile System*® does not measure source traits but surface traits, and emotionally healthy adults can adapt their behavior, *one should expect that individual* DiSC® *patterns may change to some degree as a result of learning to adapt to a variety of situations over a lifetime.*

How Readily can Individuals Change Their Personality

There are several forces in human nature which function to inhibit change because survival depends upon stability in things like body temperature, blood sugar levels, etc. One fact that works against change is that individuals become active agents in their own personality development, by selecting or constructing environments which are comfortable for them or allow them to achieve their goals. As the individual matures, he or she becomes more and more actively engaged in this purpose. People select friends, partners, and coworkers who tend to be similar to themselves, thus promoting continuity in the expression of their personalities. Individuals also elicit and selectively attend to information that confirms rather than disconfirms their self-concepts.

Then how does behavior change? There is some evidence, contrary to prevailing folk wisdom, that individuals do *not* change their personalities at crisis points in their lives. For it is in crisis times when they are most likely to revert to behavioral strategies they used when facing another crisis or challenge in the past. Experts admit they don't have a good theory for explaining personality change (Caspi & Bem, 1992). Thus, we are left to apply what we do know about human adaptability to conclude, for now, that individuals with the ability to adjust to different roles and relationships do so. They can find within their behavioral repertoire sufficient variety to select behaviors appropriate to a situation, or even to replace inappropriate behaviors when they choose.

Source traits, particularly those linked to inheritance, may be relatively unchangeable. But surface traits—including the behavioral characteristics measured on the *Personal Profile System* —lend themselves to some degree of modification by (a) selecting an environment which does not inhibit change by causing fear or defensiveness and/or (b) by selecting behaviors within one's repertoire which are more appropriate to the situation.

It is important to keep in mind that needs, values and personality characteristics which are not measured by the *Personal Profile System* are likely to come into play in any change effort.

DiSC® in Relation to Other Models of Personality

Some of our confusion about source and surface traits in interpreting D, i, S, and C may stem from forgetting that the theory was developed to explain human emotions. Emotions are part of personality theory but not the whole of it. Most would define *personality* as an individual's enduring, persistent response patterns across a variety of situations. Those response patterns are made up of dispositional tendencies, motivations, attitudes, and beliefs all combined into a more or less integrated self-concept (Rorer, 1992). *Emotions*, on the other hand, are defined as a complex state involving bodily changes, mental excitement or strong feeling, and usually an impulse toward a behavior (Smith & Lazarus, 1992). By their nature, *emotions are not enduring.*

In applying DiSC® theory and the *Personal Profile System*® to everyday human development, users have tended to see it as more a measure of personality than emotion. However, it is important to remember the purpose for which the theory was developed and recognize that, even in its current form, the instrument uses some words more descriptive of emotions than personality traits. These words include: satisfied, cheerful, joyful, fearful, light-hearted, optimistic.

The *Personal Profile System* also uses words common to personality measures. Twenty-seven of the 112 words on the *Personal Profile System* 2800 response page (23%) are included in a core list of words used to study the "Big Five" personality prototypes (John, 1992):

Adventurous	Assertive	Calm
Cautious	Conscientious	Outspoken
Contented	Cooperative	Logical
Enthusiastic	Forceful	Thorough
Friendly	Generous	Dominant
Good-natured	Helpful	Insightful
Kind	Gentle	Original
Talkative	Refined	Reserved
Sociable	Sympathetic	Outgoing

As a tool for measuring personality traits, word lists have a long history, with early contributions from German and Dutch psychologists along with American researchers beginning with Allport and Odbert (1936). Using a dictionary of common English words, Allport and Odbert and the researchers who followed in their tradition, identified thousands of words which could describe personality. These were groped rationally, and several criteria were applied to determine which words to keep and which to discard to validly measure personality differences. Cattell (1943) used the Allport and Odbert list in his factor-analytic work on dimensions of personality.

More recent work has proceeded along several lines. One set of studies compares results from personality questionnaires (which use phrase or sentence descriptors) to results obtained from word lists, to determine if the same dimensions appear. Depending on the study, similarities are often found. However, word lists remain the more popular measurement tool based on a belief that fewer shades of meaning can apply to individual words.

Another set of studies compares self-ratings with ratings made by others. Results are mixed, but some researchers have obtained comparable dimensions from each approach. In fact, in much of the domain of personality research, most or all of the "Big Five" personality dimensions are found, regardless of how input is obtained.

More recent investigations are exploring the extent to which the outcome is dependent on the use of Germanic language (including German, Dutch and English). Early results from the Orient indicate that words translated into or developed from Japanese, Chinese and Tagalog (in the Philippines) produce similar dimensions of personality, though word sets originating in the native tongue appear to come closer than words translated from English.

Finally, some researchers have analyzed the content of narratives and case notes and compared descriptions by self with descriptions by others. Generally, they have found the Big Five personality prototypes represented in this form of person description as well.

Relation of DiSC® to the "Big Five" Personality Prototypes

How, then, do D, i, S and C relate to these "Big Five" dimensions? Obviously there are only four of the DiSC® dimensions and five of the others. A comparison needs to begin by noting one general difference between the *Personal Profile System*® and typical measures of personality: the *Personal Profile System* word list contains words most people regard as positive.

Factor I of the Big Five describes "surgency" or extraversion. Other personality measures refer to this same trait as: Extraversion, Activity, Assertiveness, Gregariousness, Excitement-Seeking, Positive Emotions, and Power.

Items from the *Personal Profile System* which appear to measure this Factor are: talkative (i), assertive (D), outgoing (i), outspoken (D), dominant (D), forceful (D), enthusiastic (i), sociable (i), and adventurous (D).

With nine of the *Personal Profile System*® items included on the Factor I list, it is clear that Dominance and Influence are not clearly separated in the broad personality categories generated by this research.

While they may be distinguishable at the individual scale level, they overlap in meaningful ways because of the initiation or dive implicit in both of them. In fact, there is a meaningful correlation between D and i on the *Personal Profile System*. However, they can be considered two separate expressions of personal power, based on Marston's theory (discussed further in a following section).

Factor II of the Big Five is generally labeled Agreeableness and on different personality instruments it is called Social Adaptability, Likeability, Friendly Compliance, and Love. The *Personal Profile System* items appearing on the Factor II list are sympathetic (S), kind (S), generous (S), helpful (S), good-natured (S), friendly (i), cooperative (S), and gentle (S). With one exception, this factor appears closely associated with the Steadiness dimension on the *Personal Profile System*.

Across various personality measures, these two Factors, extraversion and agreeableness account for most of the measured differences between people. This means that extraversion and agreeableness are among the most universally recognized features that differentiate one person from another.

Factor III of the Big Five is generally labeled Conscientiousness, and the four words appearing from the *Personal Profile System* on this list are from the Scale C: thorough (C), conscientious (C), cautious (C) and precise (C). However, on examination, it is evident the scales are not measuring exactly the same thing. Factor III of the Big Five is often described as an orientation toward work which is responsible, conscientious and, in that sense, reliable. It relates to measures of honesty and trustworthiness.

Factor IV of the Big Five includes two items from the *Personal Profile System*, both from Scale S—calm (S), and contented (S). Another word on the Big Five list is "stable." Indeed, this scale has been labeled Emotional Stability by Big Five investigators. At the negative end on Factor IV are items that generally describe neurosis, which the *Personal Profile System* does not intend to measure.

Factor V of the Big Five is variously labeled Intellect, Culture, Flexibility and Openness to Experience. Three items from the *Personal Profile System*® are also on this list—original (D), insightful (C), and logical (C). This is a broad measure of a person's readiness to learn, creative imagination, and resourcefulness. It does not appear to be represented on the *Personal Profile System*.

In sum, the *Personal Profile System* has a lot in common with the broad foundation of personality measurement as defined by the Big Five prototypes—particularly with the first three factors in the model, which account for most of the observed differences among people. This finding lends credibility to the assumption the *Personal Profile System* is measuring important aspects of human behavior on which people differ.

In addition, the *Personal Profile System* contains unique features not represented in the Big Five model—the separation of Factor I into Dominance and Influence, the combination of Steadiness items with Agreeableness on the S scale, and the presence of thinking items on the Conscientiousness scale. It also offers uni-polar scales which emphasize only the positive aspects of each dimension measured; and this fact clearly sets the *Personal Profile System* apart from most personality measures whose purpose is to distinguish healthy and unhealthy features of personality. As such, *the* Personal Profile System *is clearly different in method and purpose from instruments used in clinical settings.*

Comparison with Dimensions on Other Instruments

Dimensions on other instruments to which the *Personal Profile System* may be compared include the following:

16 PF (modeled after Cattell's research)

- D and i are compatible to the "Exvia" or extraversion scale on the 16 PF.
- S is somewhat comparable to the "Pathemia" or feeling scale.
- C may be compared to the "Superego Strength" scale, though only that subject of items which measures reliability and conscientiousness.

Worth noting is that a significant amount of clinical training is required to interpret the profile obtained on the *16PF*. In addition, some of the scale labels, by themselves, are not user-friendly in a business setting. Because of its complexity it cannot be self-scored. All of these features may limit its application in the marketplace.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®

The *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* measures aspects of personality that differ from the *Personal Profile System*® in important ways.

- The *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* measures both thinking and behaving patterns, while the *Personal Profile System* focuses primarily on behavior.
- The *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* explains human behavior differently — for example, by describing how people orient toward the world and how they get information.

In some respects, there is no overlap between the instruments.

The *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* and *Personal Profile System* often compete in the marketplace among people interested in learning more about themselves and others. However, they actually stem from very different theoretical origins, have been designed to some extent for different purposes, and take different approaches to representing behavior patterns.

Therefore, it is inappropriate to make direct comparisons among the scales of each instrument.

Other Versions of the *Personal Profile System*®

Earlier versions of the *Personal Profile System* are not as reliable today as the current version, which was renormed in 1994 and is statistically valid and reliable. Of interest are the claims made about the number of meaningful profiles which can be derived from DiSC® scores. For reasons explained in Volume I of the *Personal Profile System* Facilitator's Kit, 15 different score patterns have been distinguished as reliable and meaningful among the many possible mathematical combinations obtainable from this instrument.

A change in only one response over all 112 response options can produce a mathematically different profile. However, if all other 111 responses remain the same, how meaningful is that difference? In fact, measurement error and changes in mood will account for a significant number of differences in scores from one occasion to the next.

If we attempt to interpret small differences among profiles, we are interpreting unreliability (i.e., natural variations in behavior from time-to-time) rather than patterns of behavior which help us understand ourselves and others.

Marston's Theory Today

Long before personality and social psychologists agreed that an individual and his or her environment are related in complex ways and behavior can not be understood without understanding the situation in which it occurs, Dr. William M. Marston developed a theory of how individuals respond to features of their environment. He defined the environment by its favorability. Favorable environments are supportive of the person, and he or she can feel comfortable in them. Unfavorable environments are antagonistic to the person, and he or she feels challenged by them. In both cases, a person responds emotionally either positively or negatively. This is the first principle.

The individual's behavioral response to the situation depends on how much power the person feels in relation to the supportive or antagonistic forces in the environment. For example, if I perceive myself as more powerful, I will act on the environment to achieve my purpose. If I perceive myself as less powerful, I will accommodate to the environment. This is the second principle.

These two principles intersect to produce four responses directed by emotions:

- The dominant response acts on an environment perceived as unfavorable to the self.
- The inducement response (later called influence) acts on an environment perceived as favorable.
- The submissive response (later called steadiness) accommodates to an environment perceived as favorable.
- The compliance response (later called conscientiousness) accommodates to an environment perceived as unfavorable.

What Have We Learned Since 1928 That Would Support or Refute These Assumptions?

The second principle, which defines how the individual perceives his or her power in relation to the environment, has been labeled more recently Locus of Control; and it is one of the ten most studied topics in personality and social psychology. An *internal* Locus of Control is the individual's perception that he or she is more powerful than forces in the environment, and an *external* Locus of Control is the perception that environmental forces are more powerful than the person himself or herself.

Recognizing that Locus of Control may be different in different situations, research has attempted to map in what variety of situations individuals will maintain an internal or external Locus of Control. A number of different instruments have been developed to determine how broadly Locus of Control perceptions appear to influence behavior. While this line of research has extended far beyond the principle as it is applied in Marston's model, it illustrates the persuasiveness of the idea among psychologists to the present day.

Another line of more contemporary research is labeled Belief in a Just or Unjust World and has developed out of an interest in "distributive justice." Psychologists have wanted to know under what circumstances individuals perceive their situation to be equitable in comparison with (a) someone else's situation or (b) the situation they feel they deserve. Their intent is to find whether there are reliable individual differences on a measure of perceived fairness and, if so, to relate the findings to understanding human motivation.

While this trend is not directly related to Marston's notion of an antagonistic versus supportive environment, it does offer one line of research that relates positive and negative perceptions of the environment with Locus of Control, or Principle 1 with Principle 2 in Marston's model. What most studies demonstrate is a closer relation between these two concepts (Belief in a Just World and Locus of Control) than Marston's model suggests. Marston assumes perceptions of the environment and perceptions of personal power are entirely independent of each other.

What the Just World and Locus of Control research shows is that when an individual perceives the world as unjust, he or she tends to view the environment as more powerful than him- or herself. And when the world is seen as just, the individual tends to regard himself or herself as more powerful. Therefore, Belief in a Just World offers an explanation for why some people perceive themselves as more or less powerful than their environment. Perceived fairness in the world is not the same as favorability, but a special case of favorability. Therefore, it raises a question, but does not disconfirm Marston's assumption that the two principles operate independently in explaining emotional responses and behavior.

Closer confirmation of Marston's theory is found in research directed toward understanding *interpersonal* relationships, an area within personality and social psychology. Wiggins (l991) has reviewed how people describe their interpersonal relations not only in English but in other languages as well, and he reports that a two-dimensional circumplex model generally accounts for what is reported. A circumplex model is a graphic representation of the relationship among concepts which maps out individual items or words in relation to the dimensions that explain them, similar to the way a geographical map positions an object in relation to coordinates. Two important comparisons can be made between the work of Wiggins and his associates and Marston's work.

The Circumplex Model

Marston, too, conceived of emotional response as occurring along a continuous wheel, and he compared the image to a color wheel, where one color blends into another around the wheel. We label colors blue, red, orange, etc., but infinite combinations are possible. Likewise we label the four dimensions of behavior in his model as Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Conscientiousness, but many combinations occur in human experience. Wiggins, too, offers the wheel as a theoretical representation of the interrelationships among personality characteristics, and he postulates that the wheel can be mapped against two bipolar dimensions.

The Content of the Model

Wiggins concludes that most measures of interpersonal behavior can be explained by two dimensions which he labels Dominance-Submission and Solidarity-Conflict or Affiliation-Hostility. Dominance-Submission is represented in just these terms on Marston's model as a bipolar dimension. These two "nodes" as he calls them represent the tendency to act on the environment versus the tendency to accommodate to it. The dimensions in Marston's model and Wiggins' model are identical in meaning.

Wiggins second dimension is also labeled similarly to Marston's. His Affiliation-Hostility is comparable to Marston's "alliance" and "antagonism"—terms he used to explain DiSC® theory in his early work. In research reviewed by Wiggins, White (l980) looked for whether there were concepts for describing interpersonal relations that were universal across languages. Finding there were these two, he concludes, *"These dimensions represent a universal conceptual scheme produced by the interaction of innate psycholinguistic structures and fundamental conditions of human social life, for example, the potential for concord or discord in the goals and actions of multiple actors (solidarity/conflict) and for the asymmetrical influence of one actor upon another (dominance/submission)"* (p. 759).

In other words, human beings naturally describe their relationships with each other in ways that point out the importance of acceptance versus antagonism and different levels of power, regardless of the language used. Over sixty years after Marston published his theories, an array of investigations have confirmed that in the realm of interpersonal behavior, they hold true.

Conclusion

Thus, what Marston offered is a theory of how people relate to each other, rather than who they are deep down as individuals. This is fitting for the purpose for which the *Personal Profile System*® is applied.

The *Personal Profile System* is not designed to provide clinical insights into people's psyche's; users don't need to have formal training in psychology to use it in their workshops or coaching sessions. And it places the instrument into the hands of participants themselves to better understand themselves and others, or more to the point, themselves in relation to others and to their environment, using words found in everyday language.

In addition, the four dimensions of behavior defined by the DiSC® model are closely associated with current theories of personality. This evidence supports the construed validity of the *Personal Profile System*.

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