



**Use of *Personal Profile System*[®]
as an Indicator of Stress
Compared to the Coping and
Stress Profile[®]**

Research Report

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Use of *Personal Profile System*[®] as an Indicator of Stress Compared to the *Coping and Stress Profile*[®]

The Personal Profile System (DiSC[®] Dimensions of Behavior)

The *Personal Profile System*[®] asks respondents to describe how they tend to feel and behave in a particular environment by designating words as Most like them and Least like them. Responses are obtained as Most-Least preferences among 28 sets of four word choices. Scores from those responses are then plotted on four scales—Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Conscientiousness—on three graphs.

Graph I shows the plotting of Most choices, Graph II shows the plotting of the Least choices, and Graph III is the combination—the mathematical difference—of Most and Least. From the scales on Graph III, an individual is led through an interpretation of his or her highest DiSC dimension of behavior and an interpretation of one of fifteen Classical Profile Patterns based on his or her scores on each of the four scales.

Coping and Stress Profile

The *Coping and Stress Profile*[®] asks respondents to evaluate the stress they may be experiencing in four areas of life on four profiles: Personal Profile, Work Profile, Couple Profile, and Family Profile. Stress is assessed in each of the four areas of life and scores are provided on Personal Stress, Work Stress, Couple Stress, and Family Stress.

The *Coping and Stress Profile* also reflects the ability of the respondent to use problem solving, communication, closeness and flexibility resources to cope with the stress they may be experiencing in any or all of the four areas of life. Finally, general satisfaction is reflected for each of the four areas of life: Personal, Work, Couple, and Family.

Question

It has been hypothesized by some users of the *Personal Profile System* that respondents who have dissimilar profile patterns between Graphs I and II of the *Personal Profile System* are experiencing more stress in their lives than respondents who have identical or closely similar profile patterns on Graphs I and II. Thus, these users have assumed, pattern differences between *Personal Profile System* Graphs I and II are a direct measure of stress.

None of the empirical data gathered in research studies before this had supported this assumption. Nor does the publisher Inscape Publishing, sanction the use of that assumption in training or consultation using the *Personal Profile System*.

In order to test this hypothesis specifically, an analysis was done in the fall of 1994, using data from a national sample of 215 professionals who took both the *Personal Profile System*[®] and the *Coping & Stress Profile*[®].

This study sample of 215 people consisted of 127 (60%) women and 88 (40%) men. Most participants were Caucasian (85%), with some African Americans (10%). Most were between the ages of 30 and 55, with the largest numbers of people in the 40-49 age (32%) and 50-59 (38%) age groups.

Most of the sample had completed graduate or professional school (47%), or were college graduates (36%). Most classified their employment as professional (50%) or supervisory (20%). Many worked in the wholesale and retail trade (39%), some worked in utilities (23%), and some were employed in health services (19%). The rest were employed across a variety of employment settings.

Results

First, the differences between Graph I and II segment scores were computed for each of the four DiSC[®] Dimensions of Behavior of the *Personal Profile System*. It was found that differences in segment scores between Graph I and II for each of the four Dimensions of Behavior were less than 1.0 segment. So, most respondents had less than one segment difference in their scores from Graph I to Graph II.

The actual mean of the difference in segment number scores on Graphs I and II for each of the four dimensions were:

Dominance	-.30
Influence	.00
Steadiness	-.49
Conscientiousness	.26

Second, comparing the results of the DiSC Dimensions of Behavior from the *Personal Profile System* with the Personal Stress scale from the *Coping and Stress Profile* resulted in few correlations much greater than zero. None of the correlations were statistically significant.

Conclusion

This study showed that DiSC segment scores on Graph I were generally very similar to the DiSC segment scores on Graph II. Because there was so little difference between the two graphs, the assumption that Graph I and II differences indicate stress becomes moot.

The differences that did exist between scores on the two graphs did not correlate to indicators of stress as measured by the *Coping and Stress Profile*[®]. So, it is safe to say that this study clearly demonstrates there is no correlation between stress and differences in Graph I and Graph II segment scores as obtained by the *Personal Profile System*[®].

This study also shows that one's total difference score across all segments does not relate significantly to any other measure in the *Coping & Stress Profile* (Problem Solving, Communication, Closeness, Flexibility, or Satisfaction).

Therefore, it is not appropriate to use the *Personal Profile System* as a measure of stress. To assess stress and coping resources, the *Coping and Stress Profile* is specifically designed for that purpose.

It is also not appropriate to assume that differences in Graphs I and II of the *Personal Profile System* indicate that someone is experiencing more stress in his or her life than people whose results on Graph I and II are similar or identical.