

Notes on the Derivation of the DISC Model from the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue)

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Abstract

This white paper presents the derivation and validation of the TEIQue-DISC®, a novel DISC assessment instrument derived from the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue). Widely used in workplaces for behavioral profiling despite well-documented psychometric limitations, the DISC model categorizes individuals along four dimensions: Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness. By extracting DISC profiles from the scientifically grounded TEIQue framework, the white paper introduces a robust alternative to existing DISC tools. Using multiple large datasets (N ranging from 101 to 13790), we implemented data-intensive methods, including machine learning techniques to identify items meeting stringent criteria for circumplex structure, internal consistency, and normative measurement. Multidimensional scaling analyses of three independent samples confirmed excellent fit to the theoretical DISC model, with the four traits arranged at approximately 90° intervals. Baseline internal consistency estimates were satisfactory across traits and datasets. Wide-ranging testing of 28 prespecified hypotheses examined relationships with gender, established personality measures (16PF, TEIQue, and NEO), occupational roles, managerial levels, and industry sectors. All hypotheses were supported, exhibiting theoretically expected convergent and discriminant validity patterns. The TEIQue-DISC® offers several advantages over legacy DISC instruments: empirically proven circular arrangement, protection against response manipulation through semantic concealment, dual assessment efficiency simultaneously providing both trait emotional intelligence and DISC profiles, and identification of up to 20 distinct behavioral styles through a mathematically exhaustive classification system. While constrained by inherent limitations of the DISC model, the TEIQue-DISC® constitutes an advancement in personality diagnostics, bridging sophisticated psychological theory with practical applicability.

Trait emotional intelligence (trait EI) is defined as a constellation of emotional perceptions assessed through questionnaires and rating scales (Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007). Put simply, it concerns how good people believe they are in understanding and managing their own and other people's emotions. Trait EI theory emphasizes emotional perceptions and offers a solid operationalization framework for analyzing the impact of emotions and perceptions on human behavior. It occupies a prominent place in the scientific literature, having been the subject of hundreds of peer-reviewed studies (see Petrides et al., 2016, for a review) and major dedicated special issues (Pérez-González, Saklofske, & Mavroveli, 2020).

The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue; Petrides, 2009) is the operationalization vehicle of trait EI theory (Petrides et al., 2016). It is a comprehensive measure of trait EI comprising 15 facets, four broad factors (Well-being, Self-control, Emotionality, and Sociability) and the global trait EI score at the apex of the hierarchy (see Table 1). The TEIQue family of instruments is among the most commonly administered measures of emotional intelligence worldwide. They have been translated into more than 30 languages and consistently exhibit outstanding reliability, validity, and cross-cultural stability, as evidenced in hundreds of peer-reviewed studies.

Table 1

The Trait EI Sampling Domain with Brief Facet Descriptions

Factors and Facets	High scorers perceive themselves as...
Well-being	
<i>Self-esteem</i>	...successful and self-confident.
<i>Happiness</i>	...cheerful and satisfied with their lives.
<i>Optimism</i>	...confident and likely to "look on the bright side" of life.
Self-control	
<i>Emotion regulation</i>	...capable of controlling their emotions.
<i>Stress management</i>	...capable of withstanding pressure and regulating stress.
<i>Impulse control</i>	...reflective and less likely to give into their urges.
Emotionality	
<i>Emotion perception</i>	...clear about their own and other people's feelings
<i>Emotion expression</i>	...capable of communicating their feelings to others.
<i>Relationships</i>	...capable of having fulfilling personal relationships.
<i>Empathy</i>	...capable of taking someone else's perspective.
Sociability	
<i>Social awareness</i>	...accomplished networkers with excellent social skills.
<i>Emotion management</i>	...capable of influencing other people's feelings.
<i>Assertiveness</i>	...forthright, frank, and willing to stand up for their rights.
<i>Adaptability*</i>	...flexible and willing to adapt to new conditions.
<i>Self-motivation*</i>	...driven and unlikely to give up in the face of adversity.
Global trait EI	

Note. *This facet is not keyed to any factor, but feeds directly into the global trait EI score.

Relationship between Trait Emotional Intelligence and the General Factor of Personality

The General Factor of Personality (GFP) is a higher-order personality factor capturing broad socio-emotional adjustment. It can be found in most standard personality inventories and composite personality scores, spanning diverse cultures and age groups, from adolescence through to adulthood. In a major meta-analysis ($k=142$ samples; $N=36268$) van der Linden, Pekaar, Bakker, Dunkel, Schermer, Vernon, and Petrides (2017) showed that the GFP overlaps extensively with trait emotional intelligence ($r \approx .85$). In exploratory factor analyses, trait EI was found to be the highest-loading indicator on the first unrotated general factor; in confirmatory factor analyses, the best-fitting hierarchical model placed trait EI almost on top of the GFP. With the TEIQue, the overlap was so pronounced that the model only converged when the GFP and trait EI were constrained to be identical (i.e., practically the same latent factor).

On the strength of these results, van der Linden et al. (2017) argued that the GFP and trait EI are essentially synonymous, both indexing broad perceived socioemotional adjustment and effectiveness. They contended that individuals high on the GFP/trait EI tend to behave in ways that are seen as emotionally stable, extraverted, open, agreeable, and conscientious across situations, which helps explain why and how specific personality facets covary. Overall, van der Linden et al.'s (2017) central claim is that trait EI effectively captures the substantive core of the GFP, so researchers who treat trait EI as substantive should do the same for the GFP and vice versa.

If the TEIQue does indeed capture the core variance of individual differences in personality, it follows that it should be possible to isolate within it the contours of personality models other than trait EI, especially crude models that attempt to describe individuals on the basis of a handful of dimensions or types. Interestingly, the psychometric challenge here is to identify which parts of the TEIQue variance should be suppressed in order that a more simplistic personality model may be recovered from TEIQue data. The present white paper examines this question in relation to the popular workplace profiling tool known as DISC.

The DISC Model

The DISC model is loosely derived from the work of William Moulton Marston (1928), which conceptualizes human behavior along four distinct types: Dominance (D), Influence (I), Steadiness (S), and Conscientiousness (C). It highlights observable patterns of action and communication, rendering it particularly relevant for workplace applications and interpersonal skill development. However, just like the theory of trait emotional intelligence that was priorly reviewed, it is fundamentally based on perceptions, mainly of one's presumed self. Its underlying two-axis framework ("task versus relationship orientation" and "extraversion versus introversion" or "expansion versus protection" and "closedness versus openness") yields four quadrants that correspond to the four pure DISC styles. Each style reflects distinct approaches to problem-solving, interaction, and work pace, although individuals often exhibit a combination of these tendencies instead of a single, pure type (Fertig et al., 2022; Grosbois et al., 2020).

It is no secret nor do we materially diverge from received academic wisdom on the point that the DISC model suffers from serious conceptual and operationalization limitations. The peer-reviewed literature reports tangible evidence of DISC's deficiencies in multiple domains (e.g., Martinussen, Richardsen, & Vårum, 2001). Unlike established personality models with bona fide empirical foundations, DISC falls short of validity requirements, lacks predictive utility, oversimplifies personality complexity, and suffers from cultural bias

concerns. These systematic failures explain why DISC remains largely outside mainstream personality psychology despite its commercial popularity. In a nutshell, the empirical evidence simply does not support its claims for scientifically adequate personality evaluation.

Nevertheless, it would be misleading to overlook some of the pragmatic advantages that explain DISC's enduring appeal in applied settings. Its simplicity, ease of administration, and intuitive visual presentation make it accessible to users with little or no background in psychology (and none in psychometrics), thus offering organizations and educators an easy entry point into conversations about tendencies, traits, and interpersonal dynamics. DISC-based training can promote self-awareness, enhance communication, and improve teamwork by introducing a common, non-technical language for discussing differences in working and interaction styles (Pepe et al., 2025).

DISC has been widely used as a facilitative tool for contemplation, leadership development, and the strengthening of collaboration across diverse professional groups. Moreover, despite its weaknesses, DISC has proven practically useful when applied flexibly (e.g., in tailoring communication and motivational strategies in clinical rehabilitation settings, where patients of all DISC types showed sustained improvements in quality of life and wellbeing; Grosbois et al., 2020).

Typically utilized in business and organizational contexts, DISC has become widely adopted in leadership development, team dynamics, and communication training. It has been further used to enhance collaboration, improve hiring and placement decisions, and increase awareness of how behavioral differences influence performance and conflict resolution. The model has also been adapted for use in healthcare and education, where understanding communication styles can support patient care, teaching effectiveness, and team cohesion. DISC is valued for its practical, behavior-focused approach, emphasizing adaptability and the possibility of change over time (e.g., Fertig et al., 2022; Milne et al., 2019;). Multiple sources support its use as a flexible, empirically informed tool in occupational and clinical settings, aligning with contemporary needs for soft skill development, interprofessional collaboration, and adaptive leadership (Fertig et al., 2022; Grosbois et al., 2020; Pepe et al., 2025).

Some research substantiates the view that DISC possesses specific, situational applicability, underscoring its role as a targeted rather than comprehensive measure. For example, in surgical residency training, integrating DISC into a leadership curriculum enhanced residents' understanding of communication styles, promoting improved teamwork and leadership capabilities (Pepe et al., 2025). Similarly, in pulmonary rehabilitation, tailoring motivational and educational strategies to patients' DISC profiles improved adherence and maintained benefits over the long term (Grosbois et al., 2020).

In our opinion, DISC can serve as a preliminary point of entry into psychological exploration, prompting individuals to reflect on patterns of action that might otherwise remain unexamined. From this perspective, even a crude framework, such as DISC certainly is, is preferable to ignoring the role of personality altogether, as low a bar as that may sound. By at least acknowledging that differences in interpersonal style can influence learning, work, and health, DISC provides a conversational bridge between lay practice and more rigorous psychological models, albeit one that should be treated more as a heuristic tool than a bona fide scientific assessment.

Aims and Hypotheses of White Paper

The present white paper aims to describe the derivation process of the DISC model from the TEIQue and to report key data on the circumplex structure, reliability, and validity of the resulting instrument. Eventually, it is intended to form the technical foundation for the TEIQue-DISC® manual, serving as the primary reference in conjunction with the established TEIQue base manual.

A series of hypotheses were formulated to examine the construct and criterion validity of the TEIQue-DISC®, which are presented collectively below. Given its derivation from one of the leading personality inventories globally, the TEIQue-DISC® should demonstrate superior validity compared to existing DISC-based offerings. However, it cannot be expected to transcend the limitations inherent in the underlying DISC model itself.

An efficient way to evaluate the validity of a new personality measure is by demonstrating theoretically meaningful convergence or divergence with recognized “gold-standard” measures in the field. Accordingly, we tested hypotheses concerning the relationships between the four TEIQue-DISC® traits and well-known personality variables. We also examined criterion validity through hypotheses related to gender differences and, more extensively, with reference to occupational variables including job role, managerial level, and industry sector. Collectively, these tests provide a comprehensive examination of the TEIQue-DISC®’s construct validity.

Hypotheses with categorical criteria were analyzed using chi-squared (χ^2) tests, while those with continuous criteria using orthogonal contrasts. Orthogonal contrasts are planned statistical comparisons that are mathematically independent, meaning each contrast tests a unique hypothesis without shared variance. In the present analysis, weights of +3 and –1 were applied to the focal and comparison groups, respectively, such that each TEIQue-DISC® profile was contrasted with the mean of the remaining three profiles.

Hypotheses with Gender

Gender differences in broad personality tendencies are typically small-to-moderate yet directionally consistent in large samples. Accordingly, we advanced directional hypotheses for mean differences on the four TEIQue-DISC® traits.

Hypothesis 1: Males will score higher than females on TEIQue-DISC® Dominance.

Hypothesis 2: Females will score higher than females on TEIQue-DISC® Influence.

Hypothesis 3: Females will score higher than females on TEIQue-DISC® Steadiness.

Hypothesis 4: Males will score higher than females on TEIQue-DISC® Conscientiousness.

These predictions function as a basic external-generalizability check; evidence of mean differences in the expected directions would support the TEIQue-DISC®’s capacity to reproduce well-documented population patterns.

Hypotheses with the 16-PF

The 16PF provides a well-established set of primary traits some of which map cleanly onto DISC style features. Accordingly, we advanced convergent predictions between each TEIQue-DISC® domain and theoretically proximal 16PF factors, using planned orthogonal contrasts for evaluation.

Hypothesis 5: TEIQue-DISC® Dominance will score higher on 16PF Dominance.

Hypothesis 6: TEIQue-DISC® Influence will score higher on 16PF Liveliness.

Hypothesis 7: TEIQue-DISC® Steadiness will score higher on 16PF Apprehension.

Hypothesis 8: TEIQue-DISC® Conscientiousness will score higher on 16PF Vigilance.

Support for these predictions would bolster convergent and discriminant validity, indicating that TEIQue-DISC® captures distinctive style signatures rather than undifferentiated personality variance.

Hypotheses with the TEIQue

Given that the TEIQue-DISC® was derived from the TEIQue, we expected systematic, conceptually grounded links with TEIQue facets that are theoretically relevant to each DISC domain. These convergent and discriminant patterns constitute a stringent test of construct mapping without redundancy.

Hypothesis 9: TEIQue-DISC® Dominance will score higher on TEIQue Stress management.

Hypothesis 10: TEIQue-DISC® Influence will score higher on TEIQue Emotion perception.

Hypothesis 11: TEIQue-DISC® Steadiness will score higher on TEIQue Relationships.

Hypothesis 12: TEIQue-DISC® Conscientiousness will score lower on TEIQue Emotion expression.

Hypotheses with the NEO “Big Five”

To locate the TEIQue-DISC® within the broader personality space, we examined its relations with the NEO domains. The hypotheses below specify where each style should sit relative to the so-called “Big Five” dimensions.

Hypothesis 13a-13b: TEIQue-DISC® Dominance will score higher on NEO Conscientiousness and lower on NEO Neuroticism.

Hypothesis 14: TEIQue-DISC® Influence will score higher on NEO Extraversion.

Hypothesis 15: TEIQue-DISC® Steadiness will score higher on NEO Agreeableness.

Hypothesis 16a-16b: TEIQue-DISC® Conscientiousness will score lower on NEO Openness and higher on NEO Neuroticism.

Confirmation of these patterns would situate the TEIQue-DISC® within the Big Five framework, demonstrating theoretically meaningful convergences and divergences with established trait dimensions, thereby strengthening evidence for construct validity

independently of the parent TEIQue inventory from which it was derived. A series of hypotheses were accordingly tested to evaluate the new instrument's utility in occupational settings, and these are summarized below.

Hypotheses with Occupational Role

The distribution of TEIQue-DISC® styles over different job roles offers insight into how they relate empirically to real-world vocational preferences and success. Based on the theoretical underpinnings of the four pure DISC profiles, we tested specific hypotheses regarding the overrepresentation of each in roles that correspond to their characteristic behavioral patterns. Chi-square tests examined whether TEIQue-DISC® profiles were unevenly distributed across occupational roles, focusing on adjusted residuals that signaled overrepresentation in theoretically congruent categories.

Hypothesis 17: TEIQue-DISC® Dominance will be overrepresented in General/Corporate Management positions.

Hypothesis 18: TEIQue-DISC® Influence will be overrepresented in Counselling, Social, and Guidance Services positions.

Hypothesis 19: TEIQue-DISC® Steadiness will be overrepresented in Administrative and Secretarial Work positions.

Hypothesis 20: TEIQue-DISC® Conscientiousness will be overrepresented in Engineering, Science, and Technology positions.

The aforementioned hypotheses rest on the theoretical fit between TEIQue-DISC® profiles and vocational requirements: Dominance, with its assertiveness and leadership drive, suits management; Influence, with its interpersonal and expressive characteristics, suits helping roles; Steadiness, with its emphasis stability and support characteristics, suits administrative positions; and Conscientiousness, with its analytical and systematic characteristics, suits technical and scientific work.

Hypotheses with Managerial Level

The distribution of TEIQue-DISC® styles by managerial level can reveal how style configurations relate to leadership hierarchy. Following DISC theory, we tested hypotheses about overrepresentation of specific profiles in managerial levels that align with their behavioral tendencies. In this case, we advanced hypotheses only for Dominance and Steadiness because managerial level constitutes a vertical dimension of organizational structure to which the D-S axis maps directly. The Influence and Conscientiousness styles represent behavioral modalities that are less directly relevant to hierarchical positioning, characterizing how individuals perform roles rather than where they sit in authority structures. As in the previous section, these hypotheses were evaluated with chi-square tests, paying particular attention to adjusted residuals to identify cells with significant overrepresentation relative to independence expectations.

Hypothesis 21: TEIQue-DISC® Dominance will be overrepresented in Executive and Senior Management positions.

Hypothesis 22: TEIQue-DISC® Steadiness will be overrepresented in Non-Management positions.

Hypotheses with Industry Sector

The distribution of TEIQue-DISC® styles over different industry sectors could offer insight into how they relate empirically to real-world vocational choices. Implementing this approach at the sectoral level of the economy, however, is challenging. Industry sectors are far wider and more heterogeneous than occupational categories, encompassing a multitude of roles that diverge from the sector's overarching orientation. For example, think of the financial sector, where client-facing advisors, quantitative analysts, compliance officers and IT support staff all operate under one umbrella. This heterogeneity poses limitations for drawing inferences from sector-level analyses of this kind.

Based on the theoretical underpinnings of the four pure DISC profiles and the overarching orientation of each sector, we tested four hypotheses regarding the overrepresentation of each style in sectors that correspond to their characteristic behavioral patterns. Chi-square tests examined whether TEIQue-DISC® profiles were unevenly distributed across industry sectors, focusing on adjusted residuals that indicated overrepresentation in theoretically congruent categories.

Hypothesis 23: TEIQue-DISC® Dominance will be overrepresented in the Construction and Building sector.

Hypothesis 24: TEIQue-DISC® Influence will be overrepresented in the Business and Management Consultancy sector.

Hypothesis 25: TEIQue-DISC® Steadiness will be overrepresented in the Health and Education Services sector.

Hypothesis 26: TEIQue-DISC® Conscientiousness will be overrepresented in the Finance sector.

Method

Conditions of Measurement

TEIQue-DISC® items were extracted from the full form of the instrument (Petrides, 2009) with the express purpose of creating a DISC assessment meeting the standard psychometric criteria required for such a measure (and which are nevertheless not clearly established or met in the extant DISC literature). The requisite criteria were:

Normative measurement: The TEIQue-DISC® utilizes a normative format that allows for meaningful comparisons between individuals and groups to support conventional reliability

and validity analyses. This format is the accepted standard in research and applied contexts requiring between-person comparisons.

Circumplex structure: The DISC model is typically specified as a circumplex with two roughly orthogonal axes forming four quadrants (D, I, S, C). The expected correlational pattern in a true circumplex is (a) moderate positive correlations for adjacent styles and (b) strong negative correlations for opposing styles. We decided at the outset that the TEIQue-DISC® should adhere empirically to the model's conceptual arrangement.

Internal consistency: Given that the DISC categories constitute broad composites and not narrowly defined constructs, very high internal consistencies are neither expected nor required. Nevertheless, even though the instrument's primary emphasis lies in capturing general stylistic tendencies and ensuring practical usability, it is still advisable to target Cronbach's alpha values that exceed the minimum threshold of .60. For cases involving borderline classifications, additional items should be incorporated as needed to enhance classification confidence and precision.

Exhaustive mapping of DISC profiles: The TEIQue-DISC® outclasses the traditional two-dimensional DISC matrix by utilizing a 4-sphere (hypersphere) structure to identify up to 20 distinct behavioral styles: D, I, S, C, DI, ID, DS, SD, DC, CD, IS, SI, IC, CI, SC, CS, ISC, DSC, DIC, and DIS. This mathematically exhaustive classification goes well beyond the typical offerings of extant DISC providers.

Language Considerations and Datasets

The development of the TEIQue-DISC® was conducted exclusively on English-language samples. Although the underlying theoretical framework and analytical methodology are generalizable, cross-linguistic adaptations necessitate independent validation through comprehensive analyses of sufficiently large, language-specific participant pools. At present, the instrument is available only in English.

Given the analytical complexity of the process, multiple large-scale datasets were extracted from the English TEIQue archives. Demographic characteristics included near-equal gender distributions and age ranges spanning 17 to 80 years, with the larger samples being broadly representative of the general population.

We report on four distinct datasets to address different analytical requirements. Three datasets of varying scales (small, moderate-to-large, and very large) were employed for the circumplex analyses, allowing for cross-replication with different sample sizes. The largest of these was also used for validation purposes, with a fourth dataset specifically designated for validity analyses with the Big Five factors of the NEO personality model.

Statistical Analyses

All statistical analyses were fully informed by our deep understanding of trait EI and DISC theories; without this theoretical grounding, the task would have been futile in light of its complexity. This complexity stemmed from the need to simultaneously satisfy multiple analytical conditions, as outlined in the preceding section, while adhering to the constraint of working exclusively with the 153 items of the TEIQue.

We employed a range of data-intensive methods to identify items that consistently met the specified criteria. Alongside conventional analyses (e.g., Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlations, and multidimensional scaling) we incorporated machine learning techniques, including the elastic net and random forest algorithms.

Results

We have divided this section into three subsections: Circumplex structure, internal consistency, and validity.

Circumplex structure

To evaluate whether the TEIQue-DISC® conforms to the expected structure, we implemented two-dimensional PROXSCAL multidimensional scaling with Euclidean distances separately on three independent datasets. All three solutions achieved outstanding fit, with very low normalized raw stress and near-unity dispersion accounted for (DAF), indicating that a 2D configuration adequately captured the inter-profile distances among the four pure TEIQue-DISC® styles.

Specifically, for Dataset 1 ($N = 101$), the solution yielded Stress-I = .056 with Tucker's coefficient = .998, evidencing an excellent fit. Results were nearly identical for Dataset 2 ($N = 2235$; Stress-I = .048, Tucker's coefficient = .999) and Dataset 3 ($N = 13790$; Stress-I = .051, Tucker's coefficient = .999). Other stress and fit indices (e.g., normalized raw stress, S-Stress, DAF) were likewise within the range reflecting near-perfect reproduction of proximities.

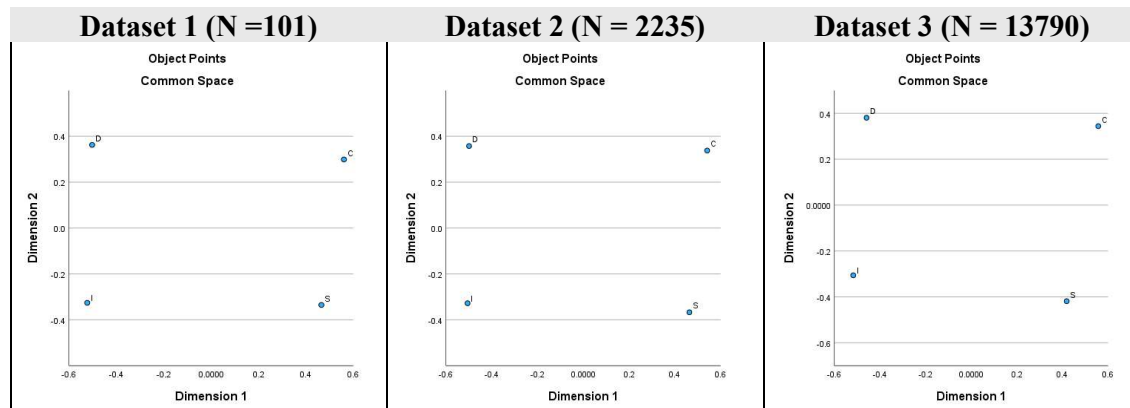
The obtained spatial maps (Figures 1a-c) consistently revealed the same circular arrangement of the four pure TEIQue-DISC® styles. Dominance (D) and Steadiness via Submission¹ (aka Stability; S), were located on opposite poles of the first dimension, while Influence (I) and Conscientiousness via Constraint² (aka Compliance or Correctness; C) occupied opposite poles on the second dimension. In each dataset, the four variables were arranged at approximately 90° intervals around the two-dimensional space, consistent with the standard stipulations of the DISC model.

Taken together, these results replicate a stable DISC circumplex with excellent 2D fit in datasets of varying sizes: the small Dataset 1 ($N = 101$), the moderate-to-large Dataset 2 ($N = 2235$), and the very large Dataset 3 ($N = 13790$). The near-identical goodness-of-fit indices across datasets, coupled with the consistent angular arrangement, support the robustness and generalizability of the recovered structure.

¹ DISC theory fails to identify and consequently remains silent on the principal mechanism underpinning the Steadiness (S) style, viz., submissive tendencies. Submissiveness can be defined as a propensity to defer to others' preferences and accommodate their needs in interpersonal interactions, prioritizing relational harmony over personal assertiveness. Far from being a deficit, it like all personality characteristics presents context-dependent advantages and disadvantages. Recognition of this fact opens up new vistas for understanding this style, what it seeks, and how it relates to others.

² DISC theory fails to identify and consequently remains silent on the principal mechanism underpinning the Conscientiousness (C) style, namely constraint tendencies. A constrained personality is characterized by behavioral inhibition, heightened sensitivity to potential negative consequences, and preference for predictable environments over novel or uncertain situations. Far from being a deficit, it like all personality characteristics presents context-dependent advantages and disadvantages. Recognition of this fact opens up new vistas for understanding this style, what it seeks, and how it relates to others.

Figure 1a-c



Note: Two-dimensional MDS solutions of the TEIQue-DISC® styles in three independent datasets: Dataset 1 (N = 101), Dataset 2 (N = 2235), and Dataset 3 (N = 13790). In each case, the four styles are arranged in the expected circular pattern with D and S on opposite poles of Dimension 1, and I and C on opposite poles of Dimension 2.

Internal consistencies

Table 2 presents internal consistency estimates (Cronbach's α) for the four pure DISC styles in the three datasets. These estimates constitute conservative lower bounds, as they are calculated using the minimum number of items necessary for participant classification into TEIQue-DISC® categories. When participant profiles exhibit borderline characteristics, a common occurrence given the crude nature of the DISC model, additional items are administered through adaptive measurement procedures to resolve ambiguous classifications and enhance diagnostic confidence. Consequently, the internal consistency estimates reported in Table 2 serve as floor benchmarks for respondents with clearly differentiated DISC profiles.

Table

2

Cronbach's Alphas for the TEIQue-DISC® Styles in Three Datasets

	DATASET 1 (N = 101)	DATASET 2 (N = 2235)	DATASET 3 (N = 13790)
D	.57	.65	.64
I	.60	.65	.66
S	.77	.73	.70
C	.68	.68	.66

Validity

Tests of Four Hypotheses Concerning Gender (H1-H4)

This analysis comprised 7674 participants drawn from Dataset 3 (N = 13790) distributed across the four pure TEIQue-DISC® styles as follows: Dominance (n = 1731; 22.6%), Influence (n = 1857; 24.2%), Steadiness (n = 1924; 25.1%), and Conscientiousness (n = 2162; 28.2%). A chi-square test of independence examined the association between the four styles and gender ("female, male, I'd rather not say"). Necessary assumptions were met (0.0% of cells had

expected counts < 5) and the resultant relationship was highly statistically significant, $\chi^2(6, N = 7674) = 755.29, p < .01$; Cramer's $V = .222$.

Four hypotheses were tested regarding the overrepresentation of TEIQue-DISC® profiles by gender, all of which were supported by the data. First, Dominance was overrepresented among males. Of the 4275 males, 1234 had Dominance profiles, compared to an expected count of 964. The adjusted residual of 8.7 indicated a strong positive association ($p < .01$).

Second, Influence was overrepresented among females. Of the 3328 females, 903 had Influence profiles, compared to an expected count of 805. The adjusted residual of 3.4 indicated a strong positive association ($p < .01$).

Third, Steadiness was overrepresented among females. Of the 3328 females, 1275 had Steadiness profiles, exceeding the expected count of 834. The adjusted residual of 15.3 indicated a strong positive association ($p < .01$).

Fourth, Conscientiousness was overrepresented among males. Of the 4275 males, 1472 had Conscientiousness profiles, exceeding the expected count of 1204. The adjusted residual of 7.7 indicated a strong positive association ($p < .01$).

Tests of Four Hypotheses with the 16PF (H5-H8)

Fifty-two participants from Dataset 1 ($N = 101$) were classified into the four pure TEIQue-DISC® styles as follows: Dominance (D; $n = 12$), Influence (I; $n = 13$), Steadiness (S; $n = 13$), and Conscientiousness (C; $n = 14$) profiles.

Results supported all four hypotheses despite the small size of the sample. Thus, the Dominance group scored significantly higher on 16PF Dominance than the other groups, $\Delta = 15.72, F(3, 48) = 6.57, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .291$. The Influence group scored significantly higher on 16PF Liveliness, $\Delta = 9.56, F(3, 48) = 3.07, p = .037$, partial $\eta^2 = .161$. The Steadiness group scored significantly higher on 16PF Apprehension, $\Delta = 11.44, F(3, 48) = 8.23, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .340$. Finally, the Conscientiousness group scored significantly higher on 16PF Vigilance, $\Delta = 12.90, F(3, 48) = 5.05, p = .004$, partial $\eta^2 = .240$.

Tests of Four Hypotheses with the TEIQue (H9-H12)

This analysis comprised 7674 participants from Dataset 3 ($N = 13790$) distributed across the four pure TEIQue-DISC® styles as follows: Dominance (D; $n = 1731$), Influence (I; $n = 1857$), Steadiness (S; $n = 1924$), and Conscientiousness (C; $n = 2162$) profiles.

Results supported all four hypotheses. Thus, the Dominance group scored significantly higher on TEIQue Stress management than the other groups, $\Delta = 1.64, F(3, 7670) = 269.38, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .095$. The Influence group scored significantly higher on TEIQue Emotion perception, $\Delta = 1.71, F(3, 7670) = 1045.10, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .290$. The Steadiness group scored significantly higher on TEIQue Relationships, $\Delta = 0.74, F(3, 7670) = 748.53, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .226$. Finally, the Conscientiousness group scored significantly lower on TEIQue Emotion expression, $\Delta = -4.93, F(3, 7670) = 1788.02, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .412$.

Tests of Six Hypotheses with the NEO-PI-R "Big Five" (H13a-H16b)

One hundred seventy-six participants from Dataset 4 ($N = 321$) were classified into the four pure TEIQue-DISC® profiles as follows: Dominance (D; $n = 42$), Influence (I; $n = 47$), Steadiness (S; $n = 43$), and Conscientiousness (C; $n = 44$) profiles.

Results supported all six hypotheses. Thus, the Dominance group scored significantly higher on NEO Conscientiousness, $\Delta = 24.90, F(3, 172) = 3.84, p = .011$, partial $\eta^2 = .063$ and

significantly lower on NEO Neuroticism than the other three groups, $\Delta = -41.99$, $F(3, 172) = 6.10$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .096$. The Influence group scored significantly higher on NEO Extraversion, $\Delta = 25.01$, $F(3, 172) = 17.42$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .233$. The Steadiness group scored significantly higher on NEO Agreeableness, $\Delta = 50.37$, $F(3, 172) = 9.20$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .138$. Finally, the Conscientiousness group scored significantly lower on NEO Openness, $\Delta = -25.65$, $F(3, 172) = 5.96$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .094$, and significantly higher on NEO Neuroticism, $\Delta = 43.23$, $F(3, 172) = 6.10$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .096$.

Tests of Four Hypotheses concerning Occupational Roles (H17-H20)

The analysis comprised 7674 participants from Dataset 3 ($N = 13790$) distributed across the four pure TEIQue-DISC® profiles as follows: Dominance ($n = 1731$, 22.6%), Influence ($n = 1857$, 24.2%), Steadiness ($n = 1924$, 25.1%), and Conscientiousness ($n = 2162$, 28.2%). A chi-square test of independence examined the association between the four styles and occupational roles. Necessary assumptions were met ($\approx 2.7\%$ of cells had expected counts < 5 , with none < 1) and the resultant relationship was statistically significant, $\chi^2(81, N = 7674) = 616.00$, $p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .16$.

Four hypotheses were tested regarding the overrepresentation of TEIQue-DISC® styles in particular roles, all of which were supported by the data. First, Dominance was overrepresented in Corporate and General Management positions. Of the 956 individuals in these roles, 363 had Dominance profiles, compared to an expected count of 216. The adjusted residual of 12.2 indicated a strong positive association ($p < .01$).

Second, Influence was overrepresented in Counselling, Social, and Guidance Services. Of the 63 individuals in these roles, 22 had Influence profiles, exceeding the expected count of 15.2. The adjusted residual of 2.0 indicated a significant positive association ($p < .05$).

Third, Steadiness was overrepresented in Administrative and Secretarial Work. Of the 245 individuals in these positions, 125 had Steadiness profiles, well above the expected count of 61.4. The adjusted residual of 9.5 indicates a strong positive association ($p < .01$).

Finally, Conscientiousness was overrepresented in Engineering, Science, and Technology professions. Of the 363 individuals in these fields, 135 had Conscientiousness profiles, compared to an expected count of 102. The adjusted residual of 3.9 indicated a significant positive association ($p < .01$).

Together, these findings support the hypothesized relationships between TEIQue-DISC® profiles and vocational preferences, with each profile showing distinct patterns of distribution within occupational roles.

Tests of Two Hypotheses concerning Managerial Levels (H21-H22)

The analysis included 6774 participants from Dataset 3 ($N = 13790$) distributed across the four pure TEIQue-DISC® styles as follows: Dominance ($n = 1551$; 22.9%), Influence ($n = 1662$; 24.5%), Steadiness ($n = 1647$; 24.3%), and Conscientiousness ($n = 1914$; 28.3%). A chi-square test of independence examined the association between the four styles and managerial level (executive/senior, middle, first-line, non-management). Necessary assumptions were met (0.0% of cells had expected counts < 5) and the resultant relationship was highly statistically significant, $\chi^2(9, N = 6774) = 595.94$, $p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .171$.

Two hypotheses were tested regarding the overrepresentation of TEIQue-DISC® profiles in particular managerial levels, both of which were supported by the data. First, Dominance was overrepresented in Executive and Senior Management positions. Of the 1856

individuals in such roles, 657 had Dominance profiles, compared to an expected count of 425. The adjusted residual of 15.0 indicated a strong positive association ($p < .01$).

Second, individuals with Steadiness profiles were overrepresented in Non-Management. Of the 1994 individuals in such positions, 773 had Steadiness profiles, exceeding the expected count of 485. The adjusted residual of 17.9 indicated a strong positive association ($p < .01$).

Tests of Four Hypotheses Concerning Industry Sectors (H23-H26)

The analysis comprised 7671 participants from Dataset 3 ($N = 13790$) distributed across the four TEIQue-DISC® profiles: Dominance ($n = 1729$, 22.5%), Influence ($n = 1857$, 24.2%), Steadiness ($n = 1923$, 25.1%), and Conscientiousness ($n = 2162$, 28.2%). A chi-square test of independence examined the association between the TEIQue-DISC® profiles and industry sectors. Necessary assumptions were met ($\approx 4.3\%$ of cells had expected counts < 5 , minimum expected count = 4.28) and the resultant relationship was highly statistically significant, $\chi^2(66, N = 7671) = 260.39$, $p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .11$.

Four hypotheses were tested regarding the overrepresentation of TEIQue-DISC® in particular sectors. First, Dominance was expected to be overrepresented in the Construction and Building sector. Of the 423 individuals in this sector, 114 had Dominance profiles, compared to an expected count of 95.3. The adjusted residual of 1.9 was marginally significant at $p < .06$. Although not explicitly hypothesized, it is noteworthy for validation purposes that the Dominance group was significantly under-represented in the "I'd rather not say" category, consistent with its postulated confidence in self-presentation and preference for directness. Of the 537 individuals who declined to report what industry sector they work in, 89 had Dominance profiles compared to an expected count of 121, with the adjusted residual of -2.9 indicating a significant negative association ($p < .01$).

Second, Influence was overrepresented in the Business and Management Consultancy sector. Of the 380 individuals in this sector, 119 had Influence profiles, exceeding the expected count of 92. The adjusted residual of 2.8 indicated a significant positive association ($p < .01$).

Third, Steadiness was overrepresented in the Health and Education Services sector. Of the 545 individuals in this sector, 172 had Steadiness profiles, well above the expected count of 137. The adjusted residual of 3.0 indicated a positive association ($p < .01$).

Finally, Conscientiousness was overrepresented in Finance. Of the 515 individuals in this sector, 182 had Conscientiousness profiles, compared to an expected count of 145. The adjusted residual of 3.1 indicated a positive association ($p < .01$).

Discussion

This white paper derives and validates a DISC assessment directly from the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue), using heterogeneous datasets to test a priori hypotheses concerning measurement structure, internal consistency, and a series of external criteria with a particular occupational focus. Built upon one of today's most thoroughly validated personality tests, the TEIQue-DISC® should logically exhibit superior validity compared to other DISC-based tools. Nevertheless, the instrument remains tied to the fundamental limitations of the underlying framework itself. These limitations stem from well-documented theoretical and psychometric deficiencies in the DISC model, including that its four dimensions are neither independent nor sufficiently corroborated, but instead reflect simplified composites of recognized personality traits.

Oversimplification imposes undue restrictions on the scientific credibility of any DISC-based assessment, irrespective of the rigor of its construction. It says something when most of the useful variance captured by the full TEIQue must be suppressed in order for DISC's coarse categorical model to be reproduced. Consequently, while the TEIQue-DISC® represents a psychologically deeper and psychometrically superior option than other DISC instruments, it cannot approach the standards of the parent TEIQue inventory.

With these inherent caveats acknowledged, our empirical evaluation herein sought to determine whether the TEIQue-DISC® nonetheless constitutes a meaningful improvement within the DISC category. Across all analyses, the findings converged to a single conclusion: despite the theoretical constraints of the DISC system, the TEIQue-DISC® emerges as a reliable, valid, and practically useful solution, with the evidence indicating clear advantages over legacy DISC products. Below, we interpret the results against the prespecified hypotheses and situate them within relevant literatures.

Structural validity: the expected DISC circumplex

We hypothesized that interrelations among the four DISC styles would form a circumplex. Multidimensional scaling solutions reproduced the expected circular ordering with Dominance and Steadiness on one axis and Influence and Conscientiousness on the orthogonal axis, showing excellent fit indices in three independent samples. This pattern matches the conceptual model used in practice-oriented DISC applications, demonstrating it empirically on normative data in a way that legacy vendor instruments seldom deliver (cf. Grosbois et al., 2020; Milne et al., 2019). Replication of the circular arrangement across samples ranging from small ($N = 101$) to very large ($N = 13790$) is proof of structural robustness and generalizability across diverse sampling frames.

The TEIQue-DISC® captures the latent geometry that DISC theory prescribes, laying out the ground for construct validity. Empirical confirmation of the circumplex structure underlying DISC theory alone is more than enough to set the TEIQue-DISC® apart from other DISC products. This is because the circular arrangement remains a widespread assumption in DISC applications, but the TEIQue-DISC® delivers normative data that substantiates it empirically. Comprehensive testing gives users confidence that their assessment truly measures what DISC theory intends, surpassing the generic credibility narratives that prevail in commercial settings. By delivering empirical support for the circumplex model, the TEIQue-DISC® offers practitioners a scientifically validated tool that bridges the gap between theoretical assumptions and measurable reality.

Reliability: internal consistency in a behavior-type framework

Table 2 presents Cronbach's alpha coefficients representing minimum reliability thresholds for participants demonstrating clearly differentiated DISC profiles. When participants exhibit indeterminate characteristics, which is not uncommon due to the categorical nature of the DISC, supplementary items are administered via adaptive measurement algorithms to resolve classificatory ambiguity and improve measurement precision.

As can be seen in Table 2, although behavioral “types” in DISC are not classical reflective indicators, the TEIQue-DISC® nevertheless achieved adequate internal consistency across datasets. This is an important practical check because occupational users must rely on score stability and interpretability at scale. The pattern of alphas, together with the item provenance from the TEIQue pool, is consistent with the depth and breadth typically reported for TEIQue facets and factors (Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007). In conclusion, notwithstanding its

typological basis, the TEIQue-DISC® exhibits robust internal consistency that adequately supports both individual and group-level analyses within organizational contexts.

Criterion validity I: Gender

Gender-linked distributions followed expectations (H1-H4) and add an informative demographic layer to criterion validity. As in one of the leading legacy DISC instruments (Scullard, Howard, & Salcedo, 2022) Dominance (H1) and Conscientiousness (H4) were more prevalent among men, whereas Influence (H2) and Steadiness (H3) were more prevalent among women.

Crucially, these are distributional tendencies as opposed to deterministic categories. They should be used to inform coaching and training design, not to stereotype individuals or constrain opportunities. In this sense, the gender findings strengthen criterion validity by showing that the TEIQue-DISC® captures stylistic regularities that generalize over large and heterogeneous samples while remaining compatible with person-centered development practices.

Criterion validity 2: Convergence with established personality measures

The pattern of associations with the 16PF, TEIQue, and NEO inventories was fully consistent with the a priori hypotheses, pointing to a coherent nomological network for the TEIQue-DISC® profiles (H5-H16b).

On the 16PF, Dominance aligned with assertive and controlling tendencies (16PF Dominance; H5), Influence with energetic sociability (16PF Liveliness; H6), Steadiness with risk-aversion (16PF Apprehension; H7), and Conscientiousness with watchfulness and rule orientation (16PF Vigilance; H8). These results indicate that the four styles capture differentiable blends of interpersonal agency, affective tempo, and control rather than generic “desirable” responding.

With respect to the full form of the TEIQue, the profile signatures were equally interpretable: Dominance was characterized by superior stress management (TEIQue Stress management; H9), Influence by heightened emotion perception (TEIQue Emotion perception; H10), Steadiness by relationship-focused tendencies (TEIQue Relationships; H11), and Conscientiousness by a restrained approach to emotion expression (TEIQue Emotion expression; H12). This mapping connects the pragmatic language of DISC styles to the foremost socioemotional trait framework (Petrides et al., 2016), with each style corresponding to distinct aspects of trait emotional intelligence.

Analyses with the NEO Big Five further consolidated these associations. Thus, Dominance was linked to higher Conscientiousness and lower Neuroticism (H13a-13b), Influence to higher Extraversion (H14), and Steadiness to higher Agreeableness (H15). The Conscientiousness style displayed the expected compliance-via-constraint pattern, marked by lower Openness to experience and a more vigilant, risk-averse stance (H16a-16b).

Here, at last, is the appropriate juncture to highlight that DISC Conscientiousness and NEO-PI-R Conscientiousness are not equivalent constructs (Scullard et al., 2022). Within DISC tools, the C dimension emphasizes cautious accuracy, objectivity, adherence to rules, privacy, and sensitivity to errors. These characteristics align with lower Openness to experience and a watchful, risk-averse approach in evaluative situations. Conversely, the Big Five operationalization, more prevalent in the scientific literature, conceptualizes Conscientiousness as encompassing achievement-striving, order, and self-discipline, with the last aspect being distinct from the more pragmatic and instrumental forms of discipline underlying the D and C styles in DISC systems.

Criterion validity 3: Occupational context

We now turn to the findings concerning the three occupational criteria: job roles, managerial level, and industry sectors.

Occupational roles

Distinct TEIQue-DISC® configurations clustered in theoretically congruent occupational roles. This is compelling evidence of the meaningful relationships between TEIQue-DISC® personality profiles and vocational preferences that are fully in line with person-environment fit theory in psychology (e.g., Holland, 1997). Specifically, the observation that Dominance was overrepresented in Corporate and General Management positions (H17) converges with extensive research showing that individuals high in dominance-related traits tend to display the assertiveness, decisiveness, and goal-directed behavior that are fundamental to managerial effectiveness (Lu et al., 2025).

The overrepresentation of Influence in Counseling, Social, and Guidance Services (H18) exemplifies the broad alignment between interpersonally-oriented personality characteristics and helping profession demands. Those with high Influence traits are typically sociable, enthusiastic, and skilled at building relationships, all of which are required for effective counseling and social service delivery (Wilmot & Ones, 2021).

As hypothesized, Steadiness was overrepresented in Administrative and Secretarial Work (H19), yielding the largest adjusted residual in our analysis and indicating a particularly notable personality-occupation fit. The Steadiness profile, defined by stability, patience, and a supportive, accommodating nature, corresponds closely to the core demands of administrative roles (Anni, Vainik, & Möttus, 2025). Congruence between personality traits and vocational demands contributes to both job satisfaction and retention among individuals with Steadiness characteristics in administrative positions.

Conscientiousness was overrepresented in engineering, science, and technology professions (H20), reflecting the systematic, analytical, and detail-oriented nature of technical work. Research consistently demonstrates that individuals with these qualities tend to prefer STEM career paths and to excel in such occupations (Anni et al., 2025; Usslepp et al., 2020).

Managerial level

In line with our hypotheses (H21-H22), the results revealed a significant overrepresentation of Dominance among managers (H21) and of Steadiness among non-managers (H22). These findings corroborate extant research documenting personality differences across occupational hierarchies, particularly the association between assertiveness traits and leadership roles (Anni et al., 2025; Wilmot & Ones, 2021).

The observed distributions corroborate theories linking dominance characteristics to managerial effectiveness. Research has consistently shown that those in leadership positions exhibit elevated levels of dominance-oriented behaviors, operationalized as the dispositional inclination toward authority, control, and directive influence (Anni et al., 2025). This personality style seems to be a key component of managerial role requirements, distinguishing supervisory personnel from their subordinates in varied organizational contexts.

Industry sectors

Three of the four hypotheses involving broad industry sectors received compelling empirical support and the fourth came very close. Thus, the hypothesis regarding Dominance profiles in Construction and Building (H23) received marginal support ($p < .06$), falling short of

conventional statistical significance. The marginal support stems from the heterogeneity within the construction sector, which encompasses diverse roles ranging from hands-on trades to project management and strategic planning, each potentially attracting and shaping different personality configurations. Additionally, Dominance profiles were significantly underrepresented in the “I’d rather not say” category, consistent with the confidence in self-presentation and preference for directness that theoretically characterize this style (e.g., Grosbois et al., 2020). Such characteristics naturally predispose individuals toward disclosing rather than withholding their professional activities.

All other hypotheses concerning industry sectors were unequivocally supported by the data. Thus, Influence was overrepresented in Business and Management Consultancy (H24), Steadiness in Health and Education Services (H25), and Conscientiousness in Finance (H26), aligning with theoretical expectations regarding the behavioral demands and cultural orientations of these sectors. The significant overrepresentation of Influence in consultancy contexts reflects the interpersonal and persuasive demands inherent to client-facing advisory roles (Lallier Beaudoin et al., 2025). Similarly, the concentration of Steadiness in health and education sectors corresponds to the collaborative, service-oriented, and stability-focused nature of these fields (Rosen et al., 2018). The overrepresentation of Conscientiousness in finance aligns with the sector’s emphasis on precision, methodical analysis, and risk management (Pakhchanyan, 2016).

Despite operating within the inherent constraints of the DISC system, the TEIQue-DISC® constitutes a clear advancement in personality-based organizational assessment, as the comprehensive evidence presented above attest. Structural, reliability, and criterion validity analyses converged to highlight why this instrument offers distinct advantages over existing alternatives. Having established its validity credentials, we now turn to a brief examination of how they translate into practical benefits for workplace applications.

Psychometric Advantages of the TEIQue-DISC®

Creation of the TEIQue-DISC® marks an important methodological breakthrough in personality assessment in what is, to our knowledge, the first derivation of a circumplex model from a hierarchical instrument. This achievement required resolving substantial analytical challenges, as several psychometric criteria had to be satisfied concurrently using only the preexisting TEIQue item pool, as outlined in the Conditions of Measurement subsection above.

Unlike tools that employ transparent item content wherein behavioral dimensions are readily apparent, the TEIQue-DISC® benefits from semantic opacity; respondents cannot discern which items contribute to specific DISC classifications. Semantic concealment substantially reduces opportunities for deliberate response distortion, as the underlying measurement architecture remains veiled within the trait EI framework. This renders the instrument less susceptible to social desirability and impression management compared to DISC offerings with transparent item-to-scale mappings.

Arguably the greatest advantage of the TEIQue-DISC® is its parent inventory, one of the most rigorously developed personality instruments in the world today. The TEIQue has been showcasing excellent properties in hundreds of peer-reviewed studies and multiple cultural contexts, establishing an unparalleled nomological network (Pérez-González et al., 2020; Petrides et al., 2016). This extensive validation history gives the TEIQue-DISC® an empirical foundation that far exceeds those of extant alternatives, many of which rely on proprietary processes with limited, if any, scientific scrutiny.

The TEIQue-DISC® achieves high measurement efficiency by concurrently measuring trait emotional intelligence and DISC styles by means of a single administration. Integrating both frameworks, it eliminates the need for separate assessments without compromising the psychometric integrity of either. Organizations can therefore access sophisticated personality insights without the burden of multiple testing sessions, reducing time costs and user fatigue alike.

Seamless integration of the TEIQue and DISC models creates a unique bridge between sophisticated psychological theory and practical assessment. Practitioners can use the familiar DISC tool as an accessible entry point while also gaining deeper insights through trait emotional intelligence theory. Such integration enables them to move beyond surface-level descriptions and explore the emotional and perceptual processes that shape recurring patterns of action.

Legacy DISC offerings typically identify only a limited number of primary styles, whereas the TEIQue-DISC® employs a mathematically exhaustive 4-sphere (hypersphere) structure to capture up to 20 distinct behavioral profiles. This includes pure styles (D, I, S, C), combination styles (e.g., DI, DS, DC, IS, IC, SC), and complex styles (e.g., ISC, DSC, DIC, DIS). By offering exhaustive coverage, the framework empowers practitioners to recognize subtle distinctions in personality expression, simultaneously retaining the straightforward accessibility that drives the DISC system's appeal.

Unmatched in psychological depth, the TEIQue-DISC® stands apart from DISC alternatives that depend on ad hoc or homespun theories and proprietary materials with little scientific grounding. Anchoring DISC profiles in trait emotional intelligence theory, this measure offers practitioners and users clearer, research-based insights into behavioral tendencies. Such depth enhances both the diagnostic value of the instrument and the quality of developmental interventions that can be designed based on its results.

Practical Advantages for the TEIQue-DISC®

The TEIQue-DISC® preserves all appealing features of the DISC paradigm: its intuitive four-quadrant presentation, accessible terminology for non-psychologists, practical utility in team building and communication training, rapid applicability in coaching contexts, and demonstrable effectiveness in improving workplace collaboration when properly implemented. In addition, it yields several incremental advantages beyond legacy DISC measures, five of which we will now outline.

First, empirically validated circumplex structure with proven replicability. Unlike most DISC assessments that merely claim such a structure, the TEIQue-DISC® presents rigorous multidimensional scaling evidence from three independent datasets with excellent fit indices. This means users can confidently interpret opposing profiles (D-S, I-C) as genuine behavioral polarities and adjacent ones as gradual blends, yielding more refined team composition strategies and conflict prediction models than is possible with unverified DISC offerings.

Second, protection against response manipulation through semantic concealment. Unlike transparent DISC assessments where items clearly signal their purpose (e.g., “I take charge in meetings” → Dominance), the TEIQue-DISC® derives profiles from trait EI items whose DISC mappings remain completely opaque to respondents. Built-in protection against impression management is particularly valuable in selection contexts, performance reviews, and other high-stakes environments where legacy DISC instruments suffer from deliberate distortion.

Third, dual-assessment efficiency. A single TEIQue-DISC® administration yields both trait emotional intelligence profiles (15 facets, 4 factors, global EI) and DISC style classifications, while maintaining full psychometric integrity. This integration enables practitioners to analyze not just action patterns but also their emotional underpinnings. For example, it can help link Dominance to weaker relationship management and Influence to reduced restraint.

Fourth, criterion validity with occupational and demographic benchmarks. The TEIQue-DISC® features empirically derived base rates for profile distributions across industries, managerial levels, and job roles based on large respondent samples. Organizations can compare their workforce composition against sector-specific benchmarks to identify talent gaps, succession planning needs, and industry-aligned recruitment strategies that remain out of reach with generic DISC tools.

Fifth, scientific grounding in established personality theory. By anchoring DISC profiles within the TEIQue nomological network with its hundreds of peer-reviewed studies in multiple cultures, the TEIQue-DISC® connects behavioral styles to a wide nomological network including the Big Five, 16PF, and trait emotional intelligence. This factual foundation allows for evidence-based interventions and defensible decision-making in workplaces where unvalidated DISC instruments might face legal or ethical scrutiny.

Advantages like these, position the TEIQue-DISC® as the psychometrically superior option within the DISC assessment category, offering practitioners the familiar benefits of DISC-based development with the additional quantitative rigor required for contemporary talent management.

Future research and development

There is a noteworthy limitation concerning language that bears mentioning and another one concerning the DISC system per se that bears repeating. At present, the TEIQue-DISC® is available only in English. Although the underlying operations and analytical methods are generalizable, cross-linguistic adaptations would need to be developed independently, based on comprehensive analyses of large, language-specific datasets, before multi-language deployment can proceed

The limitation that bears reiterating concerns the inherent shortcomings of the psychologically crude DISC tool. Because DISC is a brief “language of behavior” rather than an all-encompassing trait inventory, its ceiling on construct coverage and validity sits well below the full TEIQue. In practice, DISC is positioned as a nonclinical, workplace-development aid for adults, not a diagnostic or high-stakes selection instrument. Its reports are best understood as situational snapshots of tendencies, describing how someone approaches tasks. Their results are sensitive to context and frame of reference, and the terminology itself can be misleading. One example is the “C” profile, often called “Conscientiousness,” which should not be mistaken for the very different Big Five trait. Hence, while the TEIQue-DISC® is obviously useful for coaching, the full TEIQue will always retain superior utility.

As outlined in the introduction, pioneering research by van der Linden et al. (2017) suggests that other personality models can be reliably derived from the TEIQue, provided these models include a General Factor of Personality (GFP). Ongoing work indicates that extracting Big Five dimensions from the TEIQue is considerably more straightforward than the DISC derivation process described herein.

Conclusion

The successful derivation of the TEIQue-DISC® highlights the potential to rehabilitate popular personality concepts with the help of advanced psychometric methodologies. It offers a constructive alternative to the habitual academic response of dismissing commercially successful but psychometrically inadequate assessments. By showing how established scientific instruments can serve as sources for creating commercial spin-off derivatives, this work opens a pathway for improving the overall quality of applied personality measurement without demanding the complete abandonment of familiar systems.

In closing, we conclude that the TEIQue-DISC® functions as a credible and practical workplace measure, suitable for all DISC applications but, more importantly, as a gateway to trait emotional intelligence theory. It is a benchmark for future psychometric development that balances rigor with accessibility and thoroughly commend it to the consulting, organizational, and coaching communities for international use with English-speaking respondents in the first instance.

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