

A Survey on the Distribution of Personality Traits among Generation Z College Students: Based on Students Majoring in Chinese Language and Literature

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Abstract: Generation Z college students have grown up with the blessing of the internet. Their personality traits bear the imprint of the times and are completely different from the older generation. Generation Z college students are the current educated groups in universities. The transfer of personality traits posed challenges to traditional higher education models. This study adopted DISC assessment method to test and analyze personality traits of four cohorts of Generation Z students from the same university and major. Comparing and analyzing the test result, we can find that their personality traits and style of action have obvious common characteristics and different complementary features. The research findings will be applied to optimize the education model. First, personality traits will be introduced into seminar based teaching, which is the most popular teaching method in higher education to fostering effective learning teams. Second, these insights will be applied to career planning for college students. By grasping the dynamics of personality traits, Career counseling will be transformed from static services to dynamic guidance.

Keywords: DISC Assessment; Generation Z College Students; Seminar-based Teaching; Career Planning

1. Introduction

Personality traits are the psychological structures that actively engage in the initiation and guidance of an individual's psychology and behavior, serving as the core components that make up personality [1]. Generation Z college students are those born between 1995 and 2009, a new group of university who grew up with the internet [2]. As digital natives, they have personality traits and behavioral patterns that are

significantly different from their predecessors, so traditional higher education paradigms must evolve to accommodate this.

2. Research Methods

2.1 Affiliations

College students from the same generation have personality traits that vary, factors like regional cultural background, social environment, and academic major are factors that influence this. Because data collection has limitations in scope and methods, this study only focused on students majoring in Chinese Language and Literature. To accurately describe the personality traits of Generation Z students in this context, 189 participants were chosen from four cohorts at the School of Humanities, Heilongjiang Bayi Agricultural University, namely, the 2021 class (28%), the 2022 class (20%), the 2023 class (30%), the 2024 class (22%), The DISC Test Scale was administered group-wise by class, and the collected personality trait data serve as the main research basis.

2.2 Research Tools

This study on personality traits among Chinese Language and Literature Undergraduates draws upon the DISC assessment model developed by scholars, which has been widely used tool for identifying normal human behavioral patterns. The DISC model uses 40 questions to describe individual self-perception to uncover characteristics across psychological traits, latent abilities, interpersonal communication, behavioral styles, stress coping mechanisms and personal strengths/weaknesses, categorizing personalities into distinct types [3]. The four most representative single-factor personality traits are D (dominance), S (steady), I (influence) and C (compliance). Each personality type has specific behavioral patterns, which continuously change based on individuals, context and

environment. Building on these four core traits, 12 dual-factor composite traits have appeared, which add complexity to personality profiles with most people having combinations of these traits. In practice, people usually develop a lot of mixed personality traits, which include three or more factors.

Table 1. Results on the Application on DISC Assessment Theories in Teaching over the Years

Author	Application	Year
Liao yuling et. al	Improve teaching methodologies	2020
Fan hongzhi	Carrying out his duties as a homeroom teacher	2025
Li bin	Classroom management	2018
Wang zhixuan	Strategies for supporting academically challenged students	2016
Pan mingyun	Enhance communication efficiency between university counselors and students	2015
Fang xiaobo	Career planning for college students	2014
Guo chunrong	Fostering interpersonal relationships	2021

This research conducted using DISC assessment theory to the cultivation of Chinese Language and Literature majors mainly explores the correlation between professional groups' identifying areas and learning styles and career planning, integrating identifying areas as influencing factors in professional talent cultivation and management. The results of this research can be expected to provide a research foundation for adjustments in higher education.

3. Current Status of Personality Trait Development among College Students Majoring in Chinese Language and Literature

All participants in this study were born after 2000. Generation Z members have grown up with digital technologies. The internet and smart devices have transformed their lifestyles and entertainment habits, and also changed their social behaviors, personality development and career preferences. This research deal with the collective patterns of personality development for college students in the Generation Z demographic, to find areas needing improvement in higher education traing paradigms. DISC assessment results from four cohorts of Chinese Language and Literature majors. as illustrated in Table 2. reveal that dual-factor mixed traits account for 66.67%, Among them, the proportion of students with CS/SC double mixed traits combining compliance and steady is the highest. Nearly 20% of students have a single-factor predominant personality type, with S being the most common. D' proportion of less than 2% is very rare. Moreover, 13.76% of the population shows

The DISC assessment theory is widely applied in the process of human resource management [4]. As the same time, it has also played a important role in the field of teaching and educating people. Table 1 specifically lists some scholars, such as Liao et.al. [5], Fan [6], Li [7], Wang [8], Pan [9], Fang [10], Guo [11].

multi-factor composite personalities, which are strong in flexibility and adaptability.

As illustrated in Table 3. A comparison of personality assessment data from four cohorts of Chinese Language and Literature majors (2021–2024) shows that the proportion of individuals with dual-factor composite traits is between 65% and 76%, which is the highest overall. This pattern conforms to general distribution norms: the CS/SC dual-factor personality traits contribute the most. However, notable variations emerge between cohorts: the IC/CI combination predominates among 2022 and 2023 students, while the SI/IS combination is more prevalent in the 2024 cohort. Regarding single-factor personality traits, 15%-25% of students demonstrate distinct tendencies, with and S being most common, whereas D traits are relatively rare. Although multi-factor mixed personality profiles are stable across all cohorts, their prevalence shows a decrease, especially in the 2023 and 2024 groups.

As shown in Table 4, the comparing of personality traits and established behavioral patterns of the tested groups. It's not difficult to notice that the same personality traits have many similar behavioral patterns. For example, they prefer working in harmonious, stable environments and a reluctance to take risks; they tend to follow established standards and norms, possess strong social skills, and are effective collaborators. However, they also have their own shortcomings. Efficiency is relatively low when they make decision. They can be weak in problem-solving and persisting in doing something for a long time.

Table 2. Distribution of Personality Characteristics among Students Majoring in Chinese Language and Literature

Single-factor trait	Dual Cause Mix						Mostly due to mixture
D/I/S/C	CS/SC	SI/IS	CD/DC	DI/ID	IC/CI	DS/SD	CDI/CIS/ISC/SIC/SCD/DCS/SID/CDS
19.58	32.28	8.47	4.76	7.94	7.41	0.053	13.76

Table 3. Comparison Table of Personality Characteristics Distribution between the Tested Groups (Class of 2021-2024)

Grade	Single-factor trait	Dual cause mix						Mostly due to mixture
	D/I/S/C	CS/SC	SI/IS	CD/DC	DI/ID	IC/CI	DS/SD	CDI/CIS/ISC/
2021	19.58	32.28	8.47	4.76	7.94	7.41	0.05	13.76
2022	23.08	30.77	7.69	7.69	9.62	26.92	1.92	15.79
2023	14.04	46.15	5.77	5.77	7.69	13.46	1.92	11.54
2024	24.39	39.02	14.63	2.44	4.88	7.32	0.00	7.32

Table 4 Behavioral Descriptions of Single/Dual Factor Personality Characteristics Based on DISC Assessment

Type	Feature	Type	Feature
S	Its high stability and strong harmony give it distinctive behavioral characteristics in interpersonal interactions and environmental adaptation. It is friendly towards others, consistently takes the initiative to resolve conflicts among stakeholders, and willingly contributes behind the scenes to foster teamwork. However, its excessive pursuit of stability and coordination may lead to delayed decision-making and limited adaptability.	I	Outgoing, socially adept, highly persuasive, confident, enthusiastic and lively, with excellent communication skills; enjoys group activities and prioritizes interpersonal relationships while seeking social recognition. However, exhibits insufficient attention to details, tends to be disorganized, and is emotionally volatile.
C	Introverted, with clear and cautious thinking, organized in task execution, meticulous attention to detail, perfectionist tendencies, capable of systematic analysis and problem-solving, adept at identifying facts, adherent to standard procedures, and committed to thorough execution based on detailed information. However, exhibits excessive focus on details and a tendency toward aloofness.	IS/SI	The ideal personality profile in interpersonal interactions combines liveliness with steadiness, along with a strong capacity for caring toward others. Such individuals are highly popular within teams, excelling at using positive language to motivate team members and sharing joyful moments to enhance work satisfaction. However, laziness is also inherent to their nature; they may conceal their true thoughts to maintain balanced relationships or overlook details in pursuit of swift consensus.
SC/CS	A personality type characterized by introversion and steadiness. They excel at repetitive tasks, are accustomed to listening attentively and acting gently, approach work with seriousness, and maintain strict logical rigor and standards—making them reliable partners. However, their excessive emphasis on stability may hinder innovation, while undue caution can impede efficiency.	CI/IC	Passionate yet meticulous, serving as a bridge within teams with strong leadership influence that unites members while rigorously identifying risks and avoiding pitfalls—ideal for creative industries and precision fields.

4. Exploration of Adjustments in the Training Program for College Students Majoring in Chinese Language and Literature from Generation Z

DISC testing has broad applications in higher education teaching. The evaluation results obtained from students in specific majors are solely intended to inform improvements in teaching methods and provide career planning guidance for these students. Details are as follows:

4.1 Optimizing the Formation of Learning Teams in Seminar-Based Teaching

The seminar-based teaching method is a student-centered approach centered on problem-solving, where teachers create specific scenarios or

topics for interactive discussions between instructors and students to deepen understanding and address challenges. In the context of Digital education, this methodology has gained increasing adoption in Chinese Language and Literature courses to enhance classroom engagement, foster collective awareness, and develop critical thinking skills. Typically conducted in small groups, these sessions involve teachers forming teams based on student IDs, academic performance, or self-selection criteria. However, practical implementation reveals issues such as some students remaining outside groups with low participation rates, while others exhibit weak collaborative skills or deviation from discussion objectives. Feedback indicates these problems often stem from flawed grouping mechanisms. Therefore, exploring

innovative team formation strategies to improve effectiveness is essential. This study directly applied DISC personality test results to classroom group discussions, where teachers determined group sizes and member quotas based on personality profiles. Students joined designated groups according to their traits, creating synergistic learning outcomes through complementary strengths. The specialized discussion team combines the leadership of Type D members, the facilitation of Type I members, the stability provided by Type S members, and the meticulous, logical analysis of Type C members.

Although initial coordination required some adjustment time, student feedback after the activity demonstrated that this grouping approach effectively addressed issues such as uneven participation levels, short-termistic approaches to tasks, and avoidance of challenges. Thus, DISC based grouping transforms learning groups in seminar-style instruction from Grassroots team into well-matched learning units aligned with individual personalities and capabilities. Moreover, within these new groups, students have developed essential skills including communication, collaboration, and active listening.

4.2 The Shift in Career Planning Counseling for College Students from Static Services to Dynamic Guidance

We adhere to the teaching principle of "student-centered education" and uphold the educational philosophy that "every individual has unique characteristics and possesses potential for success." By considering the developmental personality traits of college students, we provide academic and career planning guidance. During university years, individuals' career planning remains in a phase of exploration and adjustment. They establish clear career goals based on personal characteristics, market demands, and professional alignment requirements, often exhibiting collective tendencies or conformity behaviors. For example, Chinese Language and Literature majors showed the most prominent SC/CS combination traits found in this assessment. Analyzing the alignment between personality traits, academic disciplines and societal roles indicates that they are ideal for careers in education, finance, consulting and other fields. But it's important to know that DISC testing finds current behavioral strengths

and weaknesses, since individual personality traits differ across people, context and time periods. Individuals constantly evolve their behavioral patterns through external influences and self-adjustment. For students with dual or mixed trait profiles, their behavioral styles are very flexible; under certain motivational factors, their previous dominant traits might become key drivers, resulting in the development of new behavioral patterns. So, students have a significantly broader employment prospects. So, it is suggested that DISC testing be incorporated into a regular annual component of career planning counseling in higher education. This method allows educators to dynamically monitor changes in students' personality traits and design tailored extracurricular activities based on these characteristics, thus transforming career guidance from a static process to a dynamic one.

5. Summary

This study utilized the DISC assessment tool to measured and statistically analyze the personality trait of Generation Z college students. They are at the same university, majoring in the same major -Chinese Language and Literature. DISC test data displayed that more than 80% of these students have dual-factor or multi-factor mixed personality traits. And the CS/SC dual-mixed personality trait is the most prominent feature among them. It can be inferred from the data that personality traits of different student groups from different classes have both similarities and differences. The personality traits lead to different ways of doing things. Based on these analysis conclusion, we suggest applying DISC assessment tool to establish a learning organization in new teaching methods. As the same time, we suggest solidifying DISC assessment as a regular annual activity. So, personal career planning guidance for undergraduates will shift from static to dynamic.

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