

“Graduate-Gestalt” Case Study Analysis of DSU And DSBS Students

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Openness to learning is a critical competence and capabilities as we advance in the new normal and post-pandemic world. Assessing student personality, learning styles and ability to learn is essential to any business school's success.

A b s t r a c t

The Graduate-Gestalt Test is a personality assessment tool developed by Neuflex Talent Solutions Pvt Ltd, Pune. This tool is beneficial in understanding the characteristics of a student to choose first of all the most relevant career path and second, to know how to improve performance in curriculum-based tests and exams using appropriate study methods that are relevant to the student.

The assessment to delineate student characteristics and learning styles was carried out in February 2021 for students of the School of Commerce & Management Studies, Dayananda Sagar University, Bengaluru. The test also placed students in various categories which are relevant to required job skills as signified by industry in general and organizations in particular like, empathy, personality, creativity, innovation, emotional and resilience. The test outcome is a brilliant foundation for the mentorship process that follows the assessment and was used as a counselling tool where a student's learning experience during their MBA program was immensely improved.

Key Words: *Gestalt Assessment, Personality Traits, Competencies, Reasoning Ability, Memory, Creativity, Emotional Resilience.*

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1.1 Introduction

The organization agreed for a phenomenological exploration to enhance awareness and insight about learning, thoughts, feelings and personal responsibility. This would help to remove unhealthy behaviour. This therapy is more of a client focused approach which induces to understand what is currently happening in the students' life. The idea is to drift away from the perception of what is happening based on experiences.

DSU has a standardized business process and for the GRADUATE GESTALT assessment and there were organized efforts made to implement the best practices for standardization. Students were offered certain levels of flexibility which would enable them to operate under productive or conducive eco-systems. DSU is moreover considered as an innovator when it comes to the education space.

The GRADUATE Gestalt Assessment is a phenomenological technique which is based on holistic and humanistic principles. It helps in developing a deeper understanding of individuals from aspects like how they cope with family, external environment, and close ones. The primary aim of this exercise was to help students undertaking the assessment creatively adjust to the environment by understanding and empowering through self-awareness of the present moment or situation. The therapists worked to assess the client's experiences, resilience, and non-verbal aspects of personality. In this exercise, non-verbal cues were paid attention to over-cognitive ones and emphasis was paid to developing a therapeutic understanding of the self. Eventually, with intervention and constant monitoring of the students to flexibly adapt to the environment, certain behavioural aims of self-improvement can be achieved by close mentoring or counselling.

DSU – "Dayananda Sagar University" was established in 2014 by Late Sri Dayananda Sagar in Bangalore, Karnataka. It offers 53 courses in 9 different streams which can include UG, PG, and Doctorate courses. This study was conducted on the masters of business administration, full-time students of this university. DSU is committed to take knowledge to the people for transforming today's students and making them responsible citizens. The university aims at multitude

of streams which are important to disseminate knowledge across multiple levels.

DSBS – "Dayananda Sagar Business School" is an autonomous business school of the Dayananda Sagar group and operates independently. It is a vigorous and dynamic intellectual community which plays an important role in the research space.

"Neuflex Talent Solutions Pvt Ltd" is a registered organization which fosters employability and innovation by promoting holistic talent landscaping solutions for academic institutions. They are also in AI-Driven by personalized career development and have won national and International EduTech awards in the area of AI-based counseling and AI Solutions development. "Neuflex Talent Solutions Pvt Ltd" is headed by Dr. Bhooshan Kelkar- an AI expert and inventor of 22 U.S patents in multiple technologies and is an "IBM Master Inventor". Dr Kelkar along with his colleague-Madhura Kelkar who is a psychologist and an educational counsellor, together have developed the "Gestalt Assessment Suite" of which "Graduate-Gestalt" is one test.

The three organizations came together with the motive of assessment in order to promote long-term change in student personalities and assist them to achieve their short-term goals like learning through learning style assessments etc. This would not only assist the school to increase student employability but also holistically develop students for a robust life ahead.

1.2 Research and Analysis

The entire GRADUATE GESTALT assessment process was completed within a span of 2 days for each student. The assessment included cloud-based, AI powered online 35-minute test. For 119 students, the process took around a week to be wrapped up. The process of examination appearance and completion was spread over a span of 2 days with gaps of 9 hours in between two parts of the examination. The research was conducted through online written interviews, administered by "Neuflex Talent Solutions Pvt Ltd", through pre-determined sub-tests on personality, creativity, cognitive abilities, exam anxiety, and memory within a stipulated time. 119 students at the university took the Graduate-Gestalt

assessment on multiple parameters which are listed below –

- Learning style
- Creativity Style
- Emotional Resilience
- Anxiety
- Reasoning ability
- English verbal ability
- Differential Memory Analysis
- Personality traits among group

The tangible process was driven by values like –

- Fostering internal efficiency.
- Inculcating best practices to enhance student personality.
- Disseminating the best practices across multiple levels for standardization.
- Developing a positive culture for a knowledge-sharing environment

The results of the GRADUATE GESTALT Assessment of 119 students are segregated according to different skills as mentioned below -

1.2.1 Learning Style

Learning style is the most convenient way in which a student absorbs, comprehends or retains information. Since all student personalities are different, their learning styles differ due to personal experiences, emotional and environmental factors.

There are different learning styles which are mentioned below: –

Visual –Visual Learning style is more of a self-explanatory mode where spatial awareness, colours, modes, brightness, contrast and tones are utilized. Students pick up skills more efficiently through pictorial graphs, pie charts, pictures etc.

Auditory – Auditory learning is about individuals or students learning to effectively manage skill adoption through listening. Such personalities prefer to listen to audiobooks, hear instructions and adopt more of non-hands-on activities.

Kinaesthetic–This learning style is for personalities who prefer learning from hands-on activities (Haptic learning), like model building, lab experimenting, and penning down problems rather than listening to a lecture or watching demonstrations about a specific skill.

The learning style of DSU and DSBS students is more on the auditory front where they prefer more learning resources like videos, audiobooks and online activities. All the DSU and DSBS Students were categorized at a Medium level.

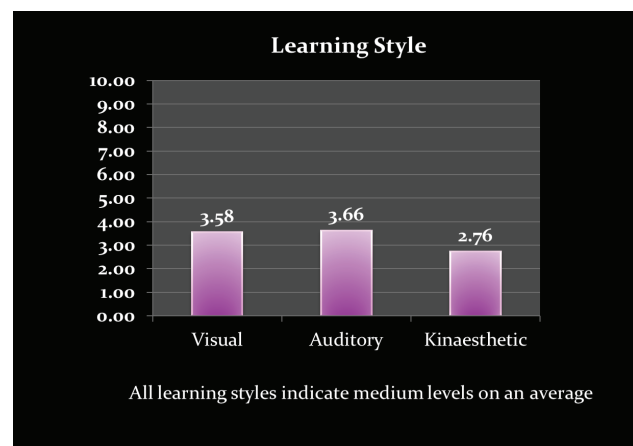


Figure 1.2.1

1.2.3. Creativity Style

Creativity is ingenuity and innovation. It is a blend of both divergent and convergent thinking.

1.2.4. Convergent style

This thinking focuses on establishing answers to problems, by deriving or selecting the best possible solution from the given and is used as a tool in problem-solving. Certain standards are used to make judgements or probabilities for accepting solutions. The probabilities are used to make judgements.

1.2.5. Divergent style

Divergent thinking helps in developing many possible solutions in contrast to convergent thinking. Divergent creativity means ideation. It is mostly “free-flowing” and “spontaneous”. It is a “non-linear” approach where multiple ideas emerge cognitively.

In the process of innovation, once the process of divergent thinking is complete, the ideas and information can be structurally used for convergent thinking.

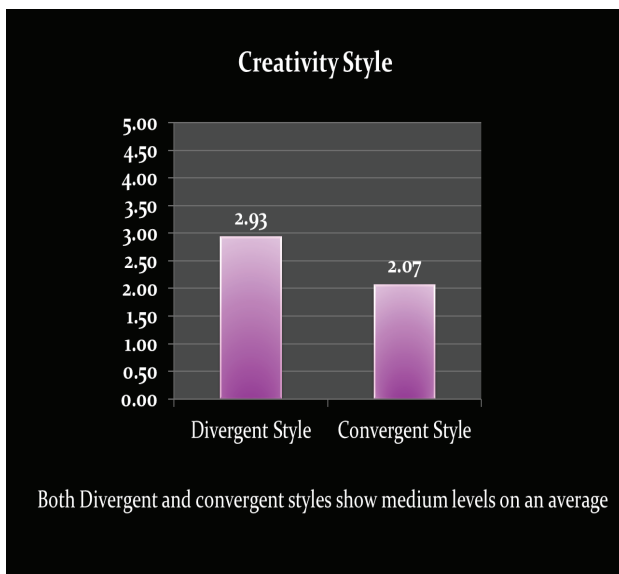


Figure 1.2.5

For DSU and DSBS Students, the divergent style dominates the convergent style wherein students prefer to ideate, imagine and come up with multiple solutions to a single problem.

1.2.6. Emotional Resilience

Resilience is the ability to adapt to stressful situations and handle the ups and downs of life. It helps individuals tackle problems with grit and perseverance and ease the difficulties of life. Emotional resilience helps individuals build through adversity and have an optimistic outlook.

The emotional resilience of 119 students who took the GRADUATE GESTALT assessment was 3.6 which is graded as a medium.

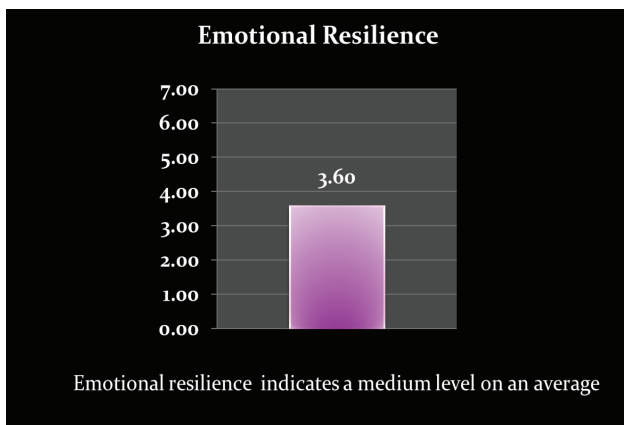


Figure 1.2.6

1.2.7 Exam Anxiety

Exam anxiety is an indicator of whether a student faces situational stress, nervousness, fear and tension about his/her performance in an exam. Physiological, cognitive and social factors contribute to this anxiety.

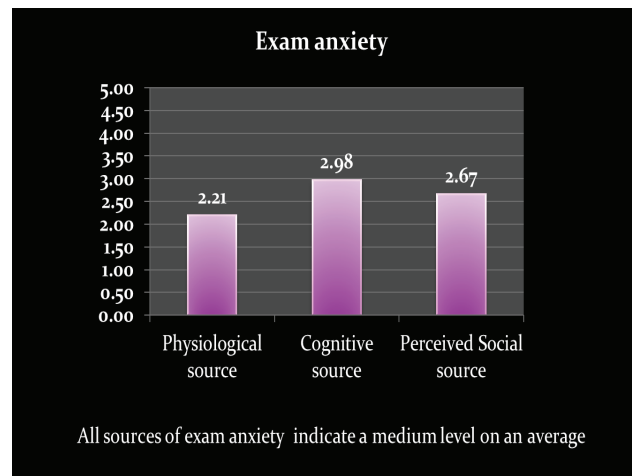


Fig 1.2.7

For DSU and DSBS students, the cognitive source is the primary factor causing anxiety. Coping techniques were suggested as an intervention.

1.2.8. Reasoning Ability

The reasoning ability of individuals is the process of evaluating situations in a logical aspect and deducing conclusions. It precedes problem-solving. There are multiple ways of improving reasoning ability like some card games, puzzles, Rubik's cube etc. The score of reasoning ability is 3.51 and is considered as Low - medium amongst DSU students.

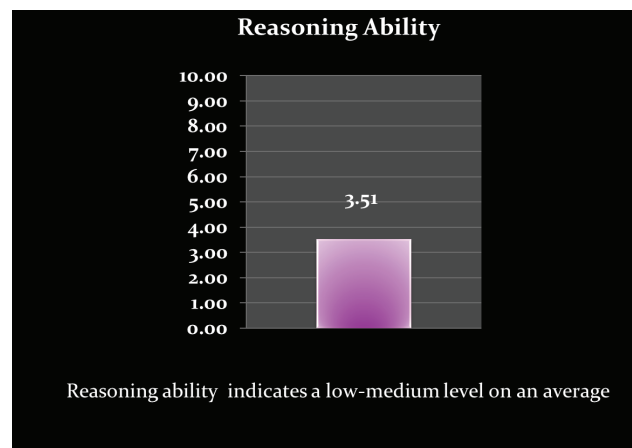


Figure 1.2.8

1.2.9 English verbal ability:

This is the ability to understand English language, comprehension and vocabulary.

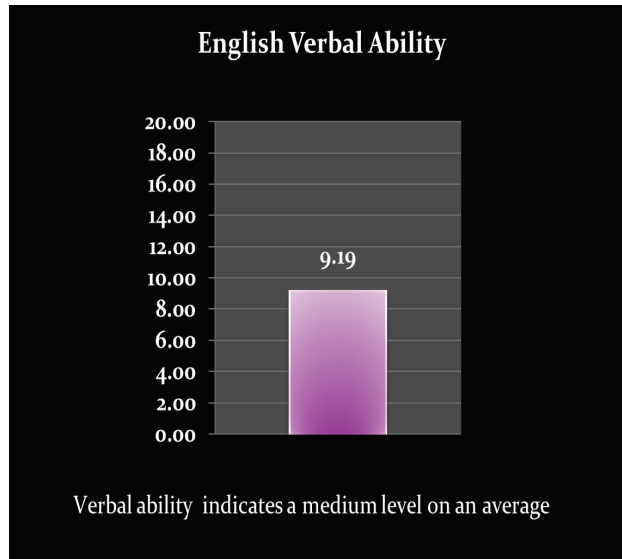


Fig 1.2.9

DSU and DSBS students showed medium-level English verbal proficiency. The intervention was suggested to improve English verbal ability.

1.2.10 Memory

This test result consists of an assessment of both short-term and long-term memory, which was evaluated on the 3 information input formats such as word, numbers and pictures.

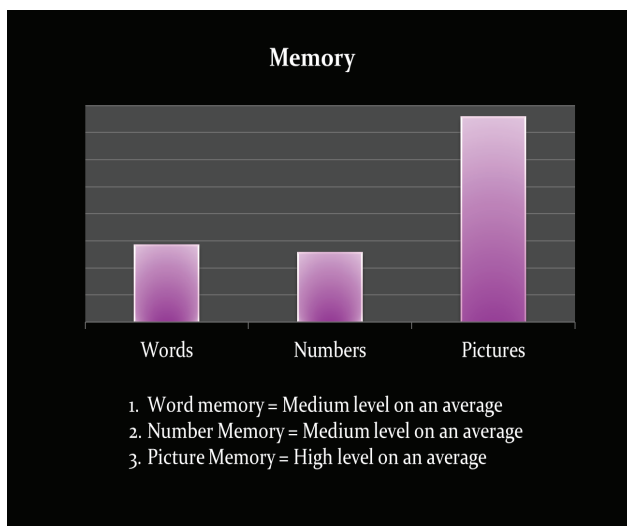


Fig 1.2.10

It was found that overall DSU and DSBS students have strong pictorial memory, whereas word and number memory fall in a medium range.

1.2.11. Personality Traits amongst the group

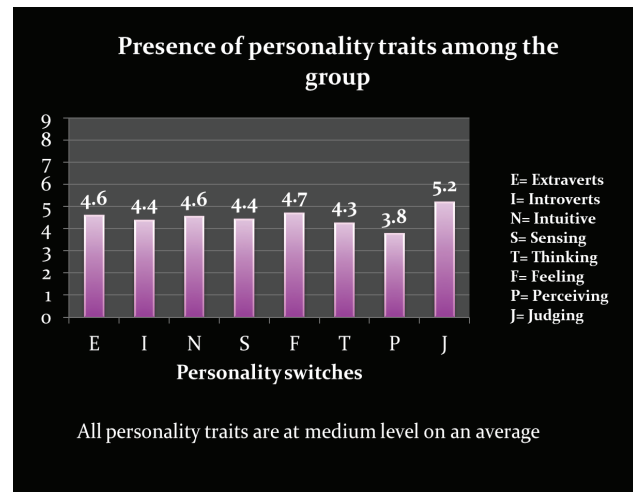


Figure 1.2.11

Personality traits lead to consistency, stability and social skills which reflect people's characteristic patterns.

There are 8 traits majorly, which are EINSTFPJ. The students are all at a medium level.

They are –

- Extraverts – Extraverts are outgoing and socially confident people.
- Introverts- Introverts are quiet, thoughtful, and reserved individuals.
- Intuitive–Intuitive is more of understanding conceptually and seeing the big picture.
- Sensing – Sensing is more of understanding through facts and figures primarily with the help of the 5 senses.
- Thinking – Giving preference to task completion than emotions, rational judgements, and logic.
- Feeling – Feeling is more about being sensitive to emotions and empathetic to people.
- Perceiving - Perceiving is more about being open-minded, flexible, and spontaneous.

- Judging -Judging is more about being structured, organized and planned. Following rules and regulations.

Though overall, the students show a medium level at all personality switches, we may say that they are slightly more extroverted, intuitive, feeling and judging.

1.3. Conclusion and Scope of further study

According to the GRADUATE GESTALT Assessment, the following are the compiled findings.

Table 1.3.1

Graduate Gestalt test parameter	Level	Intervention needed?
Learning style – Auditory	Medium	
Creativity style – Divergent	Medium	Yes
Emotional resilience	Low medium	Yes
Reasoning ability	medium	Yes
Word memory	medium	
Number memory	medium	
Picture memory	High	
Personality parameters	medium	Yes

The GESTALT Assessment recommends intervention in three areas, such as Creativity, Perseverance and Empathy.

Top 3 Competencies	Bottom 3 Competencies
1. Negotiation skills	1. Creativity
2. Transformational Leadership	2. Perseverance
3. Learnability	3. Empathy

Table 1.3.2

Most recommended specialization	Least recommended specialization
Marketing, Strategy	Hotel Management (Chef/operations)

Table 1.3.3

Top 3 study skills	
Mind-mapping	
General Knowledge (GK) improvement method	
Exam Strategy- Last minute revision	

Top 3 Competencies	Bottom 3 Competencies
1. Negotiation skills	1. Creativity
2. Transformational Leadership	2. Perseverance
3. Learnability	3. Empathy

Table 1.3.4

Some web tools for improving the bottom three competencies –

Creativity	Perseverance	Empathy
Creative Thinking: Techniques and Tools for Success- edx.org	Learning from Failure and Developing Perseverance - via Amplify- Coursera.org	Empathy and Emotional Intelligence at Work by UC Berkeley (edX)
Creativity Toolkit I: Changing Perspectives (Coursera)		Developing Your Emotional Intelligence (LinkedIn Learning – Lynda)
Design Thinking and Creativity for Innovation- edx.org		Emotional Intelligence Courses (Udemy)
Creative Problem Solving- coursera.org		Leading with Emotional Intelligence (LinkedIn Learning – Lynda)

There is the massive scope of extending this research to improve both student and employee experience. It will also help in streamlining operations and demonstrating grouping principles in organizations. Moreover, this study can be extended to test both summative, and non-summative concepts and check organized patterns of perception.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Should DSU intervene in the three skills highlighted i.e., Creativity, perseverance, and empathy?
2. If you were the college placement in charge, what would you have done under the current circumstances?

3. Should only auditory learning dissemination be followed at the university post Graduate-GESTALT Research?
4. Reasoning ability is more of logical reasoning. Do you agree?
5. How to go about perseverance intervention?
6. Should courses and syllabus be more pictorial oriented?
7. What should be the way forward for improving verbal communication?

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