

Thomas™ International Comparison Overview

Introduction

The following document is based on written information sourced from the internet and collected from January – June 2011. This document has been created to support trainers when comparing the DiSC® Classic profile to the Thomas™ Personal Profile Analysis (PPA). Although it has been the overall goal to include all relevant information about the two models, we cannot guarantee that this has been accomplished. This document is to be treated confidentially.

You may share this document with your DiSC Certified Trainers and Associate Partners, but this document may not be distributed to others. You may use the information contained within this document as part of a discussion when asked about the differences between the DiSC Classic profile and the Thomas Personal Profile Analysis (PPA).

About Thomas International

Publisher: **Thomas International** was founded in Marlow, England in 1981. Thomas International is a global provider of people assessments that help organizations recruit, retain, develop and manage their people. Thomas International's Personal Profile Analysis (PPA) was first launched in the United States in 1972.

The Chairman and Chief Executive of Thomas International UK is Martin Reed, who has been with the company since 1991. Peter Farrow is the Managing Director (since 2007) and Rod Cornwell is the International Business Development Director.

Thomas International is represented in over 60 countries through local Thomas International offices and local representatives. Certification in the PPA is provided by Thomas International's network of local trainers.

Website: www.thomasinternational.net

About the Thomas Personal Profile Analysis (PPA)

Questionnaire:	The Thomas Personal Profile Analysis questionnaire consists of 24 sets of four items. Each item corresponds to either the D, I, S or C scales with 1 item per scale in each of the 24 boxes. Respondents choose two trait adjectives from a block of four, one that is "most like" and one that is "least like" themselves. This is repeated 24 times, giving a total of 24 "most" adjectives and 24 "least" adjectives selected.
Graph Representation:	The report generates three different graphs based on the responses to the 24 sets of four pairs of items (a total of 96 adjective pairs). <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Graph I, is called the Work Mask and is based on the raw scores from the "most like" responses.- Graph II, is called Behavior under Pressure and is based on the raw scores from the "least like" responses.- Graph III, is called the Self Image and is derived from subtracting the "least scores" from the "most scores."

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<p>Graph Representation:</p>	<p>Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytical theory of personality is also used as an analogy to interpret the three graphs. Graph II represents the Id, the core part of personality, which is purely pleasure driven and theorized to be present from birth. Graph I represents the Superego, often called the moral arm of personality. Graph III represents the Ego, suggested to have direct contact with reality.</p> <p>While the use of various labels such as the ones used by Thomas™ above as descriptions of Graphs I, II and III are not uncommon among the various DISC tools in the marketplace, there is no known evidence that the graphs can show this. Therefore, this interpretation of the graphs is not supported in the field of psychology.</p>
<p>Certification:</p>	<p>2-day certification required (price in Denmark for 2010, USD3,000)</p>
<p>Trainer Materials:</p>	<p>Written and video-recorded case studies are available online. When certified, trainers receive a CD containing information useful for post training.</p>
<p>Primary Use:</p>	<p>Thomas International divides its products into four categories: Recruit, Retain, Develop and Manage, and it applies the PPA to all four areas. From a dialogue with recently (2008) certified Thomas trainers in the UK, it is believed that the majority of product use is for recruitment.</p>
<p>Languages:</p>	<p>The PPA 24 item questionnaire exists in the following languages; Afrikaans, Arabic, Chinese (Hong Kong), Czech, Danish, Dutch (two versions), English (13 versions), Estonian, Finnish, French (three versions), German, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese (two versions), Russian, Slovak, Spanish (two versions), Swedish, Thai and Turkish.</p> <p>Reports are generated in English and may not be available in all of the languages listed for the questionnaire.</p>

The Interpretation Process

Graph I (work mask), shows how the respondent perceives him/herself. This graph gives information about current work behaviors and about reactions to the current work situation. Thomas suggests that it is easier for an individual to identify their “positive” behaviors (their most responses), which they attribute to showing the respondent’s own “conscious level.”

Graph II (behavior under pressure), is designed to give information about the motivations and core behaviors adapted when the respondent is working under pressure. This graph is also interpreted as the unconscious self, and is suggested to show how the respondent may behave when working under pressure and without

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considerations of social interactions or cues. As part of the interpretation of Graph II, Thomas suggests that it is more demanding for a respondent to identify their “negative” behaviors (their least responses), which they attribute to showing the respondent’s own “unconscious level.”

Graph III (self-image), is the sum of Graph’s I and II and is described as the respondent’s behavior when both the main energies (Graph II) and society’s demands (Graph I) are taken into consideration; showing the respondent’s most balanced and long term behavior.

When giving feedback on the Personal Profile Analysis it is suggested to begin with Graph III, starting with a discussion around the higher plotting points and then moving onto the lowest plotting points. Graph I and Graph III are then compared in a discussion about changes in behavior in order to adapt to the work situation. The last step in the feedback session is including behavior under pressure (Graph II) in the discussion of adapted behavior. The PPA describes common behavior profiles in detail and names them according to the shape of Graph III (for example, High D and low I).

Thomas® Personal Profile Analysis

Dominance

Influence

Steadiness

Compliance

Comparing DiSC® Classic and Thomas™ Personal Profile Analysis

We consider the DiSC Classic and the Thomas Personal Profile Analysis to be competitive tools. Therefore, the two tools should not be used simultaneously. This is especially important because the two tools are different although they may **appear** similar to the casual user and could cause confusion if used together.

The Thomas Personal Profile Analysis attribute its origins to the writings of William Moulton Marston, and from further research conducted in the 1950s by several scholars. Dr. Thomas Hendrickson produced the first Thomas Personal Profile Analysis for the workplace in 1951. While Thomas International state that the Thomas Personal Profile Analysis is based primarily on Marston’s work, it also draws on the contribution of Carl G. Jung.

The Thomas DISC model and Inscape’s DiSC Classic model differ as they have opposite labels on the x and y axis, resulting in a different graphical representation of the four styles: D, I, S, C, not clockwise as with DiSC Classic, but counter-clockwise. In other words, starting at the top left going clockwise: Dominance (D), Compliance (C), Stability (S) and Influence (I).

Thomas International submitted some norming data on the UK population for their UK BPS review, however this data was not stratified (by gender, occupational level, industrial context). Furthermore, in the BPS review it is commented that the Thomas Personal Profile Analysis documentation does not include norm tables and “scores are represented graphically on three charts in which raw scores are scaled non-linearly.” Since norms would be based on a representative sample of a given population, it would provide a means of interpreting an individual’s scores from the DISC questionnaire to that of an entire population. Thomas’ Personal Profile Analysis does not do this. Therefore, the quality of the data points on the graph and the ability to appropriately interpret the results are not optimal.

There are several N-words in the Thomas Personality Profile Analysis. N-words are items in the questionnaire that are found to not adequately measure the scale they are intended to measure. It may be that the N word works well as either a “Most” word or a “Least” word for a particular scale, but it may not work well as both a “Most” word and as a “Least” word. Therefore when a respondent is completing the questionnaire and

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selects an N word, that response may not be taken into consideration when producing the report. In the Thomas™ Personal Profile Analysis, the maximum scores on each of the 4 scales, D, I, S and C, vary from 15 to 21 depending on which graph is considered. The minimum scores vary from -21 to 0. Therefore, the number of N words varies from 3 to 9 per scale. High and low scores on each scale are identified in a grey shaded zone, and a central horizontal line divides each chart into two equal areas.

When interpreting the graphs, Thomas suggests that Graph I (“most” responses) shows the “work mask,” Graph II (“least” responses) shows “behavior under pressure,” and Graph III shows the “Self Image.” These interpretations of the three graphs are strong claims. While it is not uncommon to find the use of these types of labels applied to the interpretation of graphs in various DISC models in the marketplace, these labels are not mentioned anywhere outside the area of DISC, nor have they been supported scientifically. Interestingly, labels for Graphs I and II, such as the unconscious and conscious methodology, was included in Inscape Publishing’s **early assessments**. However, Inscape Publishing discontinued teaching this methodology because there currently exists no substantive research to support this theory.

Thomas International appears to follow a cost leadership strategy in some markets, where reports are heavily discounted. Inscape’s strategy is to differentiate itself from competitors through a focus on investment in research and development in order to produce high quality instruments. Therefore it is not a surprise that the Thomas Personal Profile Analysis reports are significantly shorter (4 pages) than DiSC® Classic, and include some very strong suggestions as to why an individual expresses certain behaviors. This is for instance seen in a sample report where there are discrepancies between the three graphs, and where the following is concluded: “There are indications within Tom Sample’s profile that he is currently showing signs of frustrations, problems or pressures which appear to be work related.” This allows for a large leap of faith in the interpretation of the three graphs. In contrast to the DiSC Classic report which focuses on learning and development.

Resources

Available Resources:	<p>Thomas PPA, Sample Report: http://www.thomasinternational.net/Portals/70/PR_Marketing/Sample%20Reports/Thomas%20Sample%20Report%20PPA%20Profile.pdf</p> <p>Thomas PPA graphs and scores: http://www.thomasinternational.net/Portals/70/PR_Marketing/Sample%20Reports/Sample%20Reports/Graphs%20and%20Scores.pdf</p> <p>BPS review: Test Review for Thomas International Inc. Personal Profile Analysis (2007). The report is available for purchase at http://www.psychtesting.org.uk/.</p>
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