What Makes Students Tick? The Instinctive Drive™ System as a Means to Improve Study Group Performance
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The purpose of this paper is to introduce the notion of Instinctive Drive™ (ID). It discusses the I.D.™ System, where it came from, how it is employed and what value is attached to knowing the outcome of Instinctive Drive measurements and future work and/or study opportunities. This paper presents results from an open-ended questionnaire applied to a group of students undertaking a Master of Business and Commerce. This is an exploratory part of a much larger study to validate the I.D.™ System that will add to current thinking in the field of Organisational Behaviour. Results from this survey suggest that students found the Instinctive Drives™ questionnaire a useful tool to better understand their behavioural stimuli, and that it could be utilised to improve study group and team performance.

The problem with putting together study groups is the teacher’s inability to predict whether a study group is likely to succeed. An assessment of the technical expertise of individual team members may be only one aspect of team effectiveness. Questions such as “do we have the right kind of people, will they work well together, what kind of conflicts will they have?” are commonly encountered.

There is no shortage of literature on team building and team dynamics. The literature describes team building as putting people together because they have complimentary skills or expertise necessary to get the job done (Fitzpatrick, Askin, & Goldberg, 2001; Wood et al., 2004). This literature suggests specialisation and diversity to be the key to success and efficiency, also in study groups. Such specialisation occurs through the development of highly efficient, high performing cross-functional teams of people. Ideally, individuals are brought together to take advantage of the synergistic outcomes associated with teams (French, Bell, & Zawacki, 2000; Lingard & Berry, 2002; McShane & Travaglione, 2003). However, the team building literature acknowledges that teams put together for cognitive abilities alone often still fail, and the importance of attitude surfaces. Attitudes are evaluative assessments, both favourable and unfavourable, concerning witnessed experiences relating to objects, events and people (Berry & Lingard, 2004; Robbins et al., 2003; Thomas, 1998). Attitudes influence our intentions to behave in a certain way and include both cognitive and affective components. Cognition being the reasoned part of attitude while affection incorporates feeling and emotive factors (Berry & Lingard, 2004; Robbins et al., 2003; Thomas, 1998). Despite the efforts to improve attitudes of team members by measuring their behaviour for greater individual understanding of self and others, few diagnostic tools measure overall team effectiveness, and even fewer writings address study group performance and outcomes.

It is clear that skills are essential and attitudes matter, no matter what the purpose of the team or study group is. Human behaviour and motivations are infinitely interwoven with the environment, and anchored in history. The literature is full of behaviour measurement tools. Some psychologists endorse personality profiles that are considered good predictors of adult behaviour. Such tools include the Myer Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), the Jungian 16 personality typology test, Locus of control tests, Type A and type B personality tests,
handling ambiguity, etc (Martinez, 2001; Wood et al., 2004). In addition to learned behaviour, other (more obscure) tests include variation in behaviour according to birth order, variation in behaviour according to ABO blood type, and altering attitude according to the ratio of length from the index finger to ring finger (Fox, 2002).

In 1999, Kolbe and Kolbe acknowledged that team effectiveness depends on the right mix of natural abilities. Kolbe claims that people strive in natural patterns, or “modus operandi”(MO). This MO is ingrained, it is an innate ability of the mind and therefore you can trust it. As psychologists acknowledge, the mind is made up of three domains: 1) the cognitive domain (skills); 2) the affective domain (shared values underpinning attitudes: and 3) the conative domain (instinctive approaches). Kolbe’s research is in the conative domain. Conative actions are those derived from striving instincts. Striving instincts are subconscious and immeasurable. However, conative actions can be quantified. These actions are translated into the Kolbe Conative Index, which measures what people do (Kolbe & Kolbe, 1999).

Instinct, and instinctive drive™ doesn’t change and may be the constant variable researchers have been looking for when investigating and predicting team (and in particular study group) effectiveness. Previous studies of components of the mind (cognition, emotional interpretation and conation) often ignored the notion of conation. At the beginning of modern psychology both emotion and conation were considered central to its study. However, interest in these topics declined as measuring overt behaviour and cognition received more attention. The notion of instinct as the primary source of motivation was abandoned for several reasons, the common one being that this may place human beings on the same level as other animals (Burgess, 2003b; Morrow, Hansen, & Pearson, 2004).

Snow and Jackson (1993) suggest that the three parts of the mind are not as distinct from each other as is suggested. Snow and Jackson (1993) developed a model that clearly indicates the three parts of the mind are closer connected and overlap by personality and intelligence. The taxonomy of conative influences, as depicted figure 1, would suggest a relationship between Intelligence and conative drive, which is one of the factors being investigated in the larger study currently on the way.

![Figure 1 Taxonomy of conative influences. Adapted from Snow and Jackson (1993).](image-url)
Equally, Huitt (1999) believes that conation is the connection of knowledge and effect with respect to behaviour and is associated the issue of ‘why’. It is a striving component of motivation or the pro-active aspect of behaviour. Hence, rather than just focussing on one part of the mind, all three overlapping parts (cognition, conation and emotion) influence team performance. Burgess (2003b) proposes that instinctive drive is at the core of all performance. Understanding the core will help deal with the more visible influences of individual and team performance, such as behavioural influences. The question is not ‘what?’ is the action of behaviour (as Kolbe suggests), rather ‘why?’.

Burgess developed the Instinctive Drive™ System to measure actions at a much deeper level than existing personality typology tests, by questioning why participants act in the way they say they will act. It acknowledges the influences of the cognitive and affective parts of the mind as important factors to consider when employing strategies to improve team performance. The questionnaire surveys what really drives and motivates team members (Burgess, 2003a, 2003b). The I.D.™ System is different from well-known personality classification tests that tend to explain behaviour (the ‘what’), rather, it aims to explain why people behave the way they do. The ID™ system is not just a questionnaire, but comprises of a comprehensive system of interdependent components: The whole system includes 1) combination and intensity of scores, team environment, comparisons with individual attributes and influences etc; 2) relationship between ID™ and demographic data; 3) The Peak Performance Indicator measuring tool; 4) The onion skin model and relationship between the ‘visible’ and ‘invisible’; 5) The strategies developed for each ID; and 6) the delivery methodology and ongoing counselling of individuals and teams to help them reach their combined potential (Burgess, 2003b).

The I.D.™ System goes beyond a profiling tool by giving immediate, practical strategies that make sense and produce measurable results. The team members learn what they (and their colleagues) need to do to be their best – producing top quality work, feeling fulfilled and working together as a team. Link-up International, the consultants employing the ID™ system, has been extremely successful deploying this tool. Their clients include AM Corporation, AMP Ltd, Cisco systems, Clark Rubber, numerous accounting and financial planning firms, hospitals, The New South Wales (NSW) Institute of Sport, Tilecraft, NSW Waste Service and many more companies in Australia, the USA and more recently Asia. Link-up International pledge guaranteed success with a focus on measurable results.

The I.D.™ System applies an ‘onion skin model’ and portrays the instinctive drive to be at the core of all behaviour and knowledge that is learned. It is not about values, beliefs, intelligence, personality, skills, confidence or emotions. These are onion rings and encapsulate the core of instinct from a level of visibility to the invisible. Surrounded by influences in the cognitive and affective domains, including personal attributes, demographics, life experiences, intelligence, knowledge that surround and ‘cloud’ the Instinctive Drive™.

Once you know your natural operational approach (invisible and instinctively driven), and behave accordingly, you are in fit with your peak performance indicator. If this fit is out of alignment, misalignment stress can cause physical unwellness and disfunctionality.

The I.D.™ System initially can be compared to Kolbe’s action modes. However, the Australian I.D.™ System measures the ‘why’ of actions, and its strength is in the follow up counselling. Although individual core instincts can be relatively easily measured, it is what needs to be done with the measurements to improve organisational performance that is at the foundation of the I.D.™ System. This need to follow-up (and strategise according to team members’ I.D.™) is evidenced by the notion of overlap and influence between the three parts of the
mind, as is also suggested by Snow and Jackson and Huitt.

The paper is not about assessing reliability and validity of the I.D.™ questionnaire and follow-up system, as this research is currently being undertaken at University of Western Sydney. Equally, we are not reporting on the quality of outcomes of suggested interventions in this paper. This paper first explores the development of the questionnaire, then discusses the result of an open ended questionnaire given to 15 Masters students to evaluate the worthiness of knowing their I.D.™ configuration for future work and study opportunities.

Development of Questionnaire
The central principle of the I.D.™ System is that it defines the underlying motivation or overriding drive, not the resulting (visible) behaviour, action or personality. Paul Burgess’ fascination with ‘why’ resulted in a questioning technique he calls ‘4th level questioning’. This questioning technique, allowed him to get to the core of why people behave the way they do and formed the basis of the Instinctive Drive™ questionnaire. His own experience as a parent confirmed that ‘drive’ is not the result of conditioning. He wondered what could be so subtle and deep within each person that even young children would do things a certain way before they could consciously determine reasons for that behaviour. He identified this phenomenon as a ‘drive’, or force, that was not the result of any conditioning. This was not just preference, personality or intelligence. He also noted that whenever an attempt was made to change such behaviour, the attempt was met with all sorts of resistance (Burgess, 2003b).

Burgess observed that people are driven to do some things and not others. This drive often overrides their stated intentions, stated preferences, promises and fears. No amount of training, discipline, desire or coercion could change the basic drive and that this drive is apparent in young children and in adults (although often suppressed or camouflaged due to conditioning and effects of life experiences) (Burgess, 2003b).

It was clear to him that when people were left to their own volition; they reverted to doing ‘what comes naturally’. When people are free to perform in a manner consistent with this drive, they deliver their best performance, were happy, fulfilled, and that this was a need (meaning that deviation from ‘what comes naturally’ causes stress and can impact upon health). Our instinctive drive™ is like a mental thumbprint, which provides structure that needs to be maintained in order for us to perform optimally and is a natural state. Burgess’ observation was that ultimately our intellect doesn’t rule supreme at all, nor does personality. Burgess believes that these base drives are aspects of our “instinct”.

Burgess derived his definition of Instinctive Drive™ as follows: “Innate propensity to do seemingly rational acts, which do not change in intensity over time and must be honoured to enable optimum performance and fulfilment. Operating out of this alignment with an I.D.™ will lead to stress, ill health and eventually death”(Burgess, 2003b, p4)

So, if they do exist, how many drives are there and how do they work? Burgess interviewed over 200 people and applied 4th level questioning to expose deeper truths. He finally arrived at four drives.

- The instinct to Verify
- The instinct to Complete
- The instinct to Improvise
- The instinct to Authenticate

These drives arose from saturated in-depth interview analysis, where invariably every person he spoke with would be driven, or driven away (to avoid that instinct), from these four instinctive drives.

The next challenge was to identify and measure them in a way that would be user friendly. He devised a questionnaire and piloted it with 200 people for 20 iterations. The questionnaire was reduced from 50 questions to just 32 questions. From his interviews, he determined every option for each question on each instinct using words, phraseology or behaviours that those with such instincts used, or
were repelled by. Each scenario had to be relevant to people from all walks of life – old, young, business, education, sport, managers, followers etc. Each set of 4 questions needed to be neutralised, so that no option appeared to be ‘more correct, appropriate or more popular’ than others. Then an algorithm was designed to measure the intensity of each drive, as well as a way to present the results that would make sense to all respondents (Burgess, 2003b).

Although not independently tested for reliability and validity yet, Burgess attempted to measure internal reliability by testing and retesting the questionnaire. His findings were 1) of the 300 people who took the questionnaire several years later, 85% received identical overall results; 2) people who have re-taken the test could answer as few as 4 questions exactly the same and still their overall result was identical to their original score; 3) When interviewing people who did not receive identical scores the second time around, they had either prior knowledge of the questionnaire, a heightened self-awareness (from learning about their I.D.™ result) or an intention to manipulate the score; 4) Anecdotally, no matter what the discrepancy between first and second I.D.™ scores, the candidates confirmed or demonstrated through in-depth discussions and observation that their first I.D.™ score was accurate (Burgess, 2003b). These claims will be formally tested in the validation research.

In terms of content validity, each question option was carefully validated against the other three options included for that question to ensure that the options provided for each of the 32 scenario’s are drawn from the 4 classifications of instinctive drive. (Each person is driven to either use or avoid all 4 instinctive drives and to varying levels of intensity. The direction of each instinct impacts on the application of others. This means that where two people score a 7 in a particular instinct, the application of that instinct will vary depending on their score in each of the other 3 instincts). This was a very intensive and complex process requiring continuous refinement. In terms of construct validity, research is currently under way to test consistent agreement by individuals with what the results reveal and to compare findings with existing theory.

Thus far we have discussed some relevant literature and have recounted much of the development of the I.D.™ System. Next, we will outline the findings of an open ended questionnaire of 15 Master students who completed the I.D.™ System questionnaire and gave their opinion about the results of their individual I.D.™ findings. In an effort to display independent face validity, students were also asked how knowing their individual I.D.™ may or may not help them in their future work and study group opportunities.

Evaluations from Students

We surveyed 15 students in the Master of Business and Commerce. All of these students are mature aged and have work experience. Most of these students (n=11) were from outside Australia. Four students originate in Asia, 5 students are from Europe and 2 students are from Northern America.

Most respondents initially believed that measuring instinctive drive™ was not an important consideration, because they had either no knowledge of the concept of instinctive drive, or they assumed they behave in the way they do because of their upbringing and that what they learned through life experience or at university. One respondent noted: “I never thought about instinct; I had always assumed that I behave the way I do because I was taught that way, or I observed it from others”.

However, when asked how recognizable the result of the I.D.™ questionnaire is to each respondent, they overwhelmingly agreed that the results were extremely recognizable to them and their families because it explained to them why they act the way they do. One respondent wrote: “I see myself clearly in the report and it was good to see the reasons why I behave the way I do” and another person wrote: “When I read the report to my mother, she said it explained so many things she observed while I was growing up”.

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When we asked the participants about how important it is to know their I.D.™, many reported it is extremely important to be able to explain behaviours, or to seek a fit with job or role identification. Knowing the I.D.™ also helps them perform well in study group by anticipating likes and dislikes about the group, and have a better result because of that. One respondent exclaimed: “it is important to know I am not abnormal!”, whereas another person recognised the role of I.D.™ as a constant, rather than learned behaviour, which is a variable. One respondent commented: “I often think these things can influence negative thoughts”.

Most people answered ‘greatly’ when asked if knowing the I.D.™ will affect their future performance in study groups at university. They stated that now they know strategies to overcome their weaknesses when working with others. Some people answered ‘hardly’, because they claimed to be in tune with their drives and already performing well.

Most would recommend such a system in their companies or workplaces, as a way to understand their employees better and that it would be a good investment to make. One respondent commented: “yes, because it gets the maximum out of individual employees” and another person noted: “it is a better way of team building”.

The question: ‘Will knowing your I.D.™ alter your approach to study group work?” was answered with more variation. One person noted: “for me it is not about changing the way I am, the report simply pointed out a lot of strengths that I can use when doing study tasks”. Another person stated: “I will tell people how I act naturally at the beginning so tasks could be properly allocated”. The respondent then commented that others would have to know that instincts cannot be changed, and “if they [the other study group members] felt they could not work with me then I would have to change to another group if necessary”.

All respondents believe that effectiveness in study groups is in one way or another heavily influenced by variables such as experience, demographics (ethnicity, age, gender), and language skills. For example, students from an English speaking background often take up tasks due to a high expectation conveyed by other students that they can do the task more effectively. As one respondent said: "since English is my first language I have noticed that people expect more from me. They [students from non-English speaking backgrounds] feel I should be in charge and they also want me to check their work...... they lack confidence in their ability”.

Discussion

The I.D.™ System, when applied to a different context, such as tertiary education, is found to be worthwhile and beneficial to students as part of their self awareness. It enabled them to better integrate their learning at university with others, especially in study group tasks. Most respondents believed the understanding of individual I.D.s™ would help leaders better manage human capital to improve individual, group (and organisational) performance, no matter what the context is. The respondents’ value attached to knowing the individual I.D.™ for their future work and study opportunity was somewhat mixed. Some students already believed they work at their optimum performance levels. Others, who see the need for strategies to improve performance, believed it is extremely worthwhile knowing their I.D.™ for capitalising on future opportunities. Face validity was therefore confirmed.

Most respondents had knowledge of, or thought of the combination of personality and intelligence being factors that influence peak performance. However, although it is clear that the respondents were familiar with variables such as affection and cognition, none had been aware of the only constant of the mind: the conative influences on motivation and volition, The Instinctive Drives™. This would fit with the taxonomy of instinctive drive positioning adapted from Snow and Jackson (1993), and with Huitt’s assertion of overlapping of the three components of the mind (Huitt, 1999).
Respondents noted the external influences on study group effectiveness in variables such as demographics, life experiences, language skills, etc, which are all onion skins, surrounding the unchangeable core of instinct. This notion fits well with Burgess’ (2003) onion skin model.

These findings are important because it places Instinctive Drive™ measurement (and possible follow up counselling) central to team performance improvement, both in the work place and in study group situations. Measuring instinctive drives helps people understand why they do the things they do. Instinctive drives, as individual attributes, may be the constant that can be used to better predict study group effectiveness and performance.

It would be easy to classify this I.D.™ system as “yet another management fad”, to criticise the system as “under researched”, or to label people that apply and implement results from the questionnaire as “amateur psychologists”. However, the use of the I.D.™ system (according to Burgess) has been proven to be effective by in-house measurements and rapid growth of his management consultancy business. Therefore, it is worthwhile investigating the notion of Instinct and Instinctive Drive™, measure its impact, and its reliability and validity.

Once validated, the application for this tool and follow-up system can be applied to any contexts where it may be important to understand underlying reasons for individual behaviours in poor performing teams. One of those contexts is the tertiary education sector, where students are often nominally assigned to study groups. If students knew their I.D.™, this may help them make better choices when joining study groups? This is a topic of further research.

**Conclusion**

We have introduced the notion of instinctive drive. We have explored some of the literature; we have discussed the emergence and development of the I.D.™ system and how the system is used in practice. We presented data gathered from postgraduate students on what value they attached to results from the I.D.™ questionnaire and found the students were overwhelmingly positive towards ‘knowing their I.D.™ and how they can use this knowledge in future work and study opportunities.

The purpose of this paper was to introduce the notion of Instinctive Drive (I.D.)™. We conclude that the I.D.™ system’s strength is embedded in the follow-up strategies directed at how to get the best out of each individual and subsequently the group or team. The I.D.™ system could be used in any context where group performance may be influenced, including in tertiary education.

**References**


