

# A “focus on the positive” may negatively affect students’ future influence in the pharmacy profession

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## Background

Pharmacists remain one of the most trusted professions in the United States. Seen as honest and ethical individuals, possessing integrity, pharmacists impact the health of Americans around-the-clock, 365 days per year. Accessibility exceeds that of healthcare peers, nurses and physicians, with no appointment needed. Yet, pharmacists are still not recognized as health care providers under Medicare Part B. A focus on student self-assessment results may provide insight into this phenomenon.

No Influencing Domain

## Objectives

To analyze students' most predominant characteristics according to the Gallup CliftonStrengths® assessment and the Student Leadership Practices Inventory® 360 (SLPI) outcomes and the implications these results may have on the pharmacy profession.

## Methods

Two colleges of pharmacy analyzed seven years of data from the CliftonStrengths assessment and SLPI in an exploratory effort to identify possible trends or themes.<sup>1,2</sup> All enrolled first-year students from the classes of 2020-2026 were surveyed, representing 1,282 number of total students. Inductive reasoning was applied to the results, along with existing research, to generate possible explanations or hypotheses of these data.

Lowest Challenge the Process

**References:**

1. CliftonStrengths for Students: Gallup Press; 2017.
2. Kouzes J. & Posner B. The student leadership challenge. 2nd edition. Wiley Publishing; 2014.
3. Rath T. & Conchie B. Strengths Based Leadership. Gallup Press; 2008.
4. Janke KK., Farris KB., Kelley KA, Marshall VD., Plake KS., Scott SA., Sorensen TD & Yee GC. StrengthsFinder Signature Themes of Talent in Doctor of Pharmacy Students in Five Midwestern Pharmacy Schools. American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education. 2015; 79 (4) 49.
5. Yee GC, Janke KK, Fuller PD, Kelley KA, Scott SA, Sorensen TD. StrengthsFinder® signature themes of talent in pharmacy residents at four midwestern pharmacy schools. Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning. 2018;10 (1).
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GALLUP CliftonStrengths® Domains

Executing Dominant Themes know how to make things happen	Influencing Dominant Themes help teams reach a broader audience	Relationship Building Dominant Themes hold a team together	Strategic Thinking Dominant Themes keep the team focused on what can be
Achiever	Activator	Adaptability	Analytical
Arranger	Command	Developer	Context
Belief	Communication	Connectedness	Futuristic
Consistency	Competition	Empathy	Ideation
Deliberative	Maximizer	Harmony	Input
Discipline	Self-Assurance	Includer	Intellection
Focus	Significance	Individualization	Learner
Responsibility	Woo	Positivity	Strategic
Restorative		Relator	

Students' Top CliftonStrengths from 2020-2026 [No Themes located in Influencing Domain]

Lowest Inspire a Shared Vision

## Results

Of the CliftonStrengths Top 5 themes, four themes were predominately represented year after year: Achiever, Learner, Harmony, and Restorative. These themes are in three of the four Gallup domains of CliftonStrengths: Executing, Relationship Building, and Strategic Thinking. **None of the cohorts' top themes were in the Influencing domain, a finding that remained consistent with previously published studies.**<sup>3,4,5</sup> SLPI results concluded students' rankings were lowest in two of the five practices: Inspire a Shared Vision and Challenge the Process (based on self-evaluation and blind reviews of observers).

## Implications

Students across fourteen cohorts have a self-identified weakness in their ability to Challenge the Process and Inspire a Shared Vision, which aligns with a lack of CliftonStrengths-identified Influencing themes. **The ability to effectively challenge existing systems and structures, and influence or inspire others toward a new vision, are important aspects of organizational and societal change.** Without an intentional curricular student development focus in these specific areas of opportunity, these limitations may affect students' ability to advance an agenda. Influencing healthcare stakeholders is essential to promote changes in pharmacy practice that ultimately impact patient care. With this in mind, if students matriculating to colleges of pharmacy continue to have similar assessment outcomes, one is left to wonder if future pharmacists will be “able to Advocate [sic] to promote the best interests of ... the pharmacy profession within healthcare settings at the community, state, or national level.”<sup>6</sup>

