

CHAPTER 8

SELECTION TECHNIQUE: MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR

8.1 Introduction

Van Rooyen (1992:5) defines the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) as: "a forced-choice, self-report inventory that attempts to classify individuals according to an adaptation of Carl Jung's theory of conscious psychological type" .

MBTI is a personality test that taps four characteristics and classifies people into one of 16 personalities as defined by Robbins (1998:54).

The MBTI is based on the assumption that human behaviour is orderly and consistent. Although it is perceived as random and diverse, this is due to basic differences in the way individuals prefer to use perception and exercise judgement.

Individuals are classified as:

- Extroverted or introverted (E or I);
- Sensing or intuitive (S or N);
- Thinking or Feeling (T or F); and
- Perceiving or Judging (P or J)

according to the answers they give in the MBTI as illustrated in figure 8.1. These results are then classified into 16 personality types which differ from the 16 primary traits according to the 16-PF.

FIGURE 8.1: VERIFYING YOUR TYPE PREFERENCES – WORKSHEET.

<p>E - Extravert Energised by the outer world</p>	<p>Introvert - I Energised by the inner world</p>
<p>S - Sensing Work with known facts</p>	<p>Intuition - N Look for possibilities and relationships</p>
<p>T - Thinking Base decisions on impersonal analysis and logic</p>	<p>Feeling - F Base decisions on personal values</p>
<p>J - Judgement Prefer a planned, decided, orderly way of life</p>	<p>Perception - P Prefer a flexible, spontaneous way of life</p>
<p>Very clear Slight</p>	<p>Slight Very clear</p>

The MBTI is a widely used personal growth and development tool and Gibson et al (2000:114) report that over 2-million people per annum use the MBTI to diagnose personality.

8.2 Background

Isachsen and Berens (1988:30) state that in the 1920s a Swiss psychologist, Carl Jung developed a cognitive-style theory of personality. Jung declared that human beings consisted of two basic human types:

- extraverted - object-orientated and
- introverted - abstract type.

Jung then added the factors of intuition, sensation as well as thinking and feeling.

This theory was later converted into the MBTI in the 1940s by the American mother-daughter team of Katherine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers as reported by Gibson *et al* (2000:114).

Cognitive style as defined by Jung's theory refers to the mental processes associated with how people perceive and make judgements from information according to Kreitner *et al* (1999:135).

8.3 Perception and judgement

Myers *et al* (1998: 6) define the J-P dichotomy as a design to identify the process a person prefers to use when dealing with the outer world.

➤ Perception

Demarest (1997:2) states that people with a preference for perceiving like to gather information and generate alternatives. They approach life in an unstructured manner, prefer to keep their options open and are more inclined to be flexible.

➤ Judging

People with a preference for judging like to approach life in a structured and orderly manner, and like to decide and reach closure according to Demarest (1997: 10).

8.4 Sensing and intuition

One way to find out is through sensing (S). The eyes, ears and other senses tell one what is actually there and actually happening. Sensing is especially useful for gathering the facts of a situation. The other way to find out is through intuition (N), which registers meanings, relationships and possibilities that are beyond the reach of one's senses. Intuition is especially useful when deciding what a person might do about a situation. People use both sensing and intuition, of course, but not both at once and not, in most cases, with equal preference according to Hirsh and Kummerow (1998:3).

8.5 Thinking and feeling

One way to decide is through thinking (T). Thinking predicts the logical result of any particular action a person may take. Then it decides *impersonally, on the basis of cause and effect*. The other way to decide is through one's feeling (F). Feeling takes into account anything that matters or is important to a person or to other people (without requiring that it be logical), and decides on the basis of personal values. People use both thinking and feeling, of course, but not both at once and not, in most cases, with equal confidence according to Myers et al (1998:6).

8.6 Combinations of perception and judgement

8.6.1 Sensing plus thinking

ST people are mainly interested in facts, since facts are what can be collected and verified directly by the senses - by seeing, hearing, touching, etc. They make decisions on these facts through impersonal analysis, because the kind of judgement they trust is thinking, with its step-by-step process of reasoning from cause to effect, from premise to conclusion.

8.6.2 Sensing plus feeling

SF people are also interested in facts, but make their decisions with personal warmth, because the kind of judgement they trust is feeling, with its power to weigh how much things matter to themselves and others.

8.6.3 Intuition plus feeling

NF people make decisions with the same personal warmth. But, since they prefer intuition, their interest is not in facts but in possibilities, such as new projects, things that have not happened yet but might be made to happen, new truths that are not yet known but might be discovered, or, above all, new possibilities for people.

8.6.4 Intuition plus thinking

NT people share the interest in possibilities but, since they prefer thinking, they approach these possibilities with impersonal analysis. Often the possibility they choose is a theoretical or technical one, with the human element more or less ignored.

The columns below present some of the results of these combinations:

TABLE 8.2: COMBINATIONS OF TYPE.

People who prefer:	ST SENSING + THINKING	SF SENSING + FEELING	NF INTUITION + FEELING	NT INTUITION + THINKING
focus their attention on:	Facts	Facts	Possibilities	Possibilities
and handle these with:	Impersonal analysis	Personal warmth	Personal warmth	Impersonal analysis
Thus they tend to become:	Practical and matter-of-fact	Sympathetic and friendly	Enthusiastic and insightful	Logical and ingenious
and find scope for their abilities in:	Technical skills with facts and objects	Practical help and services for people	Understanding and communicating with people	Theoretical and technical developments
for example:	Applied science Business Production Construction etc.	Patient care Community service Sales Teaching etc.	Behavioural science Research Literature and art Teaching etc.	Physical science Research Management Forecasts and analysis etc.

8.7 Summary of the four preferences

A person's type is the result of his/her own combination of preferences, which can be stated in four letters for convenience. ISTJ means an introvert who likes sensing and thinking and a mainly judging attitude toward the outer world. ENFP means an extravert who likes intuition and feeling and a mainly perceptive attitude toward the outer world. (N is used for intuition because I stands for introversion). A summary of preferences follows according to Myers et al (1998:64).

8.7.1 Extroverted thinking types - ESTJ & ENTJ

Extroverted thinkers use their thinking to run as much of the world as may be theirs to run. They organise their facts and operations well in advance, define their objectives and make a systematic drive to reach these objectives on schedule. Through reliance on thinking, they become logical, analytical, often critical, impersonal and unlikely to be convinced by anything but reason.

8.7.2 Introverted thinking types - ISTP & INTP

Introverted thinkers use their thinking to analyse the world, not to run it. They organise ideas and facts, not situations or people unless they have to. Relying on thinking makes them logical, impersonal, objectively critical, not likely to be convinced by anything but reason. Being introverts, they focus their thinking on the principles underlying things, rather than on the things themselves. Since it is hard to switch their thinking from ideas to details of daily living, they lead their outer lives mainly with their preferred perceptive process, S or N. They are quiet, reserved, detachedly curious and quite adaptable - till one of their ruling principles is violated, at which point they stop adapting.

8.7.3 Extroverted Feeling Types - ESFJ & ENFJ

Extroverted feeling types radiate warmth and fellowship. Reliance on feeling gives them a very personal approach to life, since feeling judges everything by a set of personal values. Being extraverts, they focus their feeling on the people around them, placing a very high value on harmonious human contacts. They are friendly, tactful and sympathetic, and can almost always express the appropriate feeling.

8.7.4 Introverted Feeling Types - ISFP & INFP

Introverted feeling types have a wealth of warmth and enthusiasm, but may not show it till they know you well. Reliance on feeling leads them to judge everything by personal values; being introverts, they choose these values

without reference to the judgement of others. They know what is most important to them and protect that at all costs. Loyalties and ideals govern their lives. Their deepest feelings are seldom expressed, since their tenderness and passionate conviction are masked by their quiet reserve.

8.7.5 Extroverted Sensing Types - ESTP & ESFP

Extroverted sensing makes the adaptable realists, who good-naturedly accept and use the facts around them, whatever these happen to be. They know what the facts are, since they observe and remember more than any other type. They know what goes on, who wants what and who doesn't. And they do not fight those facts. There is a sort of effortless economy in the way they deal with a situation, never taking the hard way when an easier one will work.

8.7.6 Introverted Sensing Types - ISTJ & ISFJ

Introverted sensing types are made particularly dependable by their combination of preferences. They use their favourite process, sensing, in their inner life, and base their ideas on a deep, solid accumulation of stored impressions, which gives them some pretty unshakeable ideas. Then they use their preferred kind of judgement, thinking or feeling, to run their outer life. Thus they have a complete, realistic, practical respect both for the facts and for whatever responsibilities these facts create. Sensing provides the facts. And after the introvert's characteristic pause for reflection, their judgement accepts the responsibilities.

8.7.7 Extroverted Intuitive Types - ENTP & ENFP

The extroverted intuitives are the enthusiastic innovators. They are always seeing new possibilities - new ways of doing things, or relatively new and fascinating things that might be done - and they go all out in pursuit of these. They have a lot of imagination and initiative for originating projects, and a lot of impulsive energy for carrying them out. They are wholly confident of the worth of their inspirations, deal tirelessly with the problems involved, and

ingeniously with the difficulties. They get so interested in the current project that they think of little else.

8.7.8 *Introverted Intuitive Types - INTJ & INFJ*

The introverted intuitives are the great innovators in the field of ideas. They apply their intuitive insights to the relationships and meanings of things, regardless of established authority or popular beliefs. They trust their vision of the possibilities, regardless of universal scepticism. And they want to see their ideas worked out in practice, accepted and applied.

	SENSING TYPES		INSTUITIVES		
	WITH THINKING	WITH FEELING	WITH FEELING	WITH THINKING	
INTROVERTS	JUDGING	ISTJ Introverted Sensing with thinking	ISFJ Introverted Sensing with feeling	INFJ Introverted Intuition with feeling	INTJ Introverted Intuition with thinking
	PERCEPTIVE	ISTP Introverted Thinking with sensing	ISFP Introverted Feeling with sensing	INFP Introverted Feeling with intuition	INTP Introverted Thinking with intuition
EXTRAVERTS	JUDGING	ESTP Extraverted Sensing with Thinking	ESFP Extraverted Sensing with feeling	ENFP Extraverted Intuition with feeling	ENTP Extraverted Intuition with thinking
	PERCEPTIVE	ESTJ Extraverted Thinking with sensing	ESFJ Extraverted Feeling with sensing	ENFJ Extraverted Feeling with intuition	ENTJ Extraverted Thinking with intuition

8.8 Reliability and Validity

Myers *et al* (1998:165) state that the internal consistency of the four MBTI scales is quite high in all samples as well as in the test-retest reliabilities.

8.9 Conclusion

Given a fair criterion and a test with a good predictive validity for members of one group, however, there still remains the question of whether the test will be valid for some other group, particularly when there are marked differences in the cultural backgrounds between the members of one group and the members of the other. Even where the test is found to have good predictive validity for both groups, there may still be questions relating to the fairness of the test according to Linn (1973:140). The pursuit in search of more fairness in selection is an ongoing process.

In addition assessment instruments should be affordable, easy to administer and not time consuming. Students entering tertiary education institutions are already burdened with high class fees and expensive books. However, if “old” traditional psychometric tests are used for selection, the costs will be considerably higher.

The proposed Equity Bill states that:

“Psychometric testing of an employee is prohibited unless it has been validated and measures have been taken to ensure that it is culturally fair and unbiased towards members of designated groups.”

Erasmus and Arumugam (1998:41) states that:

“Psychometric testing is dead; long live situation-specific assessment”.