

Course Material (E-Content) of Psychology

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Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

Today, the MBTI inventory is one of the most widely used psychological instruments in the world. The Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator is a self-report inventory designed to identify a person's personality type, strengths, and preferences. The questionnaire was developed by Isabel Myers and her mother Katherine Briggs based on their work with Carl Jung's theory of personality types.

The Development of the Myers-Briggs Test

Both Isabel Myers and her mother Katherine were fascinated by Jung's theory of psychological types and recognized that the theory could have real-world applications. During World War II, Myers and Briggs began researching and developing an indicator that could be utilized to help understand individual differences. By helping people understand themselves, Myers and Briggs believed that they could help people select occupations that were best suited to their personality types and lead healthier, happier lives.

Myers created the first pen-and-pencil version of the inventory during the 1940s, and the two women began testing the assessment on friends and family. They continued to fully develop the instrument over the next two decades.

Based on the answers to the questions on the inventory, people are identified as having one of 16 personality types. The goal of the MBTI is to allow respondents to further explore and understand their own personalities including their likes, dislikes, strengths, weaknesses, possible career preferences, and compatibility with other people.

No one personality type is "best" or "better" than any other one. It isn't a tool designed to look for dysfunction or abnormality. Instead, its goal is simply to help you learn more about yourself.

The questionnaire itself is made up of four different scales:

1. Extraversion (E) - Introversion (I)

The extraversion-introversion dichotomy was first explored by Jung in his theory of personality types as a way to describe how people respond and interact with the world around them. While these terms are familiar to most people, the way in which they are used here differs somewhat from their popular usage.

Extraverts (also often spelled extroverts) are "outward-turning" and tend to be action-oriented, enjoy more frequent social interaction, and feel energized after spending time with other people. Introverts are "inward-turning" and tend to be thought-oriented, enjoy deep and meaningful social interactions, and feel recharged after spending time alone. We all exhibit extraversion and introversion to some degree, but most of us tend to have an overall preference for one or the other.

2. Sensing (S) - Intuition (N)

This scale involves looking at how people gather information from the world around them. Just like with extraversion and introversion, all people spend some time sensing and intuiting depending on the situation. According to the MBTI, people tend to be dominant in one area or the other. People who prefer sensing tend to pay a great deal of attention to reality, particularly to what they can learn from their own senses. They tend to focus on facts and details and enjoy getting hands-on experience. Those who prefer intuition pay more attention to things like patterns and impressions. They enjoy thinking about possibilities, imagining the future, and abstract theories.

3. Thinking (T) - Feeling (F)

This scale focuses on how people make decisions based on the information that they gathered from their sensing or intuition functions. People who prefer thinking place a greater emphasis on facts and objective data. They tend to be consistent, logical, and impersonal when weighing a decision. Those who prefer feeling are more likely to consider people and emotions when arriving at a conclusion.

4. Judging (J) - Perceiving (P)

The final scale involves how people tend to deal with the outside world. Those who lean toward judging prefer structure and firm decisions. People who lean toward perceiving are

more open, flexible, and adaptable. These two tendencies interact with the other scales. Remember, all people at least spend some time extraverting. The judging-perceiving scale helps describe whether you extravert when you are taking in new information (sensing and intuiting) or when you are making decisions (thinking and feeling).

Each type is then listed by its four letter code:

- ISTJ - The Inspector
- ISTP - The Crafter
- ISFJ - The Protector
- ISFP - The Artist
- INFJ - The Advocate
- INFP - The Mediator
- INTJ - The Architect
- INTP - The Thinker
- ESTP - The Persuader
- ESTJ - The Director
- ESFP - The Performer
- ESFJ - The Caregiver
- ENFP - The Champion
- ENFJ - The Giver
- ENTP - The Debater
- ENTJ - The Commander

Taking the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator can provide a lot of insight into our personality, which is probably why the instrument has become so enormously popular. Even without taking the formal questionnaire, we can probably immediately recognize some of these tendencies in ourselves.

According to the Myers & Briggs Foundation, it is important to remember that all types are equal and that every type has value. When working in group situations in school or at work, for example, recognizing our own strengths and understanding the strengths of others can be very helpful. When we are working toward completing a project with other members of a group, we might realize that certain members of the group are skilled and talented at performing particular actions. By recognizing these differences, the group can better assign tasks and work together on achieving their goals.

Difference of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator From Other Personality Instruments

1. First, the MBTI is not really a "test." There are no right or wrong answers and one type is not better than any other type. The purpose of the indicator is not to evaluate mental health or offer any type of diagnosis.

2. Also, unlike many other types of psychological evaluations, our results are not compared against any norms. Instead of looking at our score in comparison to the results of other people, the goal of the instrument is to simply offer further information about our own unique personality.

Reliability and Validity

According to the Myers & Briggs Foundation, the MBTI meets accepted standards of reliability and validity. However, other studies have found that the reliability and validity of the instrument have not been adequately demonstrated.

Studies have found between 40 and 75 percent of respondents receive a different result after completing the inventory a second time. A 1992 book by The Committee on Techniques for the Enhancement of Human Performance and the National Research Council suggests that "...there is not sufficient, well-designed research to justify the use of MBTI in career counseling programs. Much of the current evidence is based on inadequate methodologies."