

A Comparison of MBTI and Big Five Personality

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Abstract:

This article explores the two most common measurements in the world today, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the Big Five Personality (Five-Factor Model). Furthermore, the article casts a critical eye on the MBTI, dissecting its methodology, reliability, and validity. It highlights measurements' strengths, such as its ability to offer a framework for self-understanding and its user-friendly nature, while also addressing the common criticisms levied against it. These include concerns about its scientific rigor, the potential for misinterpretation of results, and the static nature of the personality types it proposes. The discussion then pivots to the Big Five Personality Inventory, exploring its origins and the evolution of its use in contemporary psychological research and practice. The overarching goal of this paragraph is to present a comprehensive study that not only illuminates the advantages and disadvantages of these personality assessments but also opens the door to considering alternative psychological instruments. By doing so, the article aims to provide readers with a broader perspective on how these tools can be utilized to enhance various aspects of life, including academic study, the recruitment process in organizations, and the promotion of mental well-being. This holistic approach encourages a more informed selection of psychological resources, ultimately leading to more effective strategies in these areas.

Keywords: MBTI; Briggs Myers; popularity; big five personality; personality traits; measurements.

1. Introduction

The definition of personality is a way to identify people's "traits" by classifying clusters of psychological words [1]. According to McCrae's most recent definition, traits are biologically based dispositions that

contribute to a person's unique life adaptation and, as a result, result in comparatively consistent thought, feeling, and behavior patterns over time [2]. Several types of personality tests include self-report inventories, projective tests, and behavioral assessments [3]. Nowadays, self-report Inventories are increasingly

accepted by people, especially the young. They featured themselves with the results of the personality tests in daily conversation. When people post content online, they usually use this tag to describe themselves instead of indicating what their personality is like so that people who have the same sense will follow them. Some corporations also use personality tests to evaluate how candidates fit the job and help them adapt to the atmosphere better. In Asia, MBTI, one of the Self-Report Inventories, particularly influenced many aspects of society, such as people's friendships, matchmaking, recruitment, etc [4]. MBTI even has been commercialized. In contrast, other personality tests that are more acknowledged in academics, like the Big Five personality, 16PF, and dark personality, are not as popular as MBTI. Therefore, the study will compare these self-report inventory methods and their popularity and discuss the situation in which they fit in separately. The article aims to find the blindness and the characteristics of these personality tests to provide a reference for their differences and connections.

2. Method

Google Scholar and the academic databases ScienceDirect and Wiley were used to perform a thorough literature search. The following search phrases were typed in, along with their derivatives: Personality test, Briggs Myers, MBTI, Big Five, Big Five application, MBTI popularity, personality traits, and variables. Studies were accepted if they (i) provided actual data, (ii) discussed the current state of affairs, (iii) discussed development, and (iv) discussed advantages and disadvantages. Fourteen empirical studies in all were found in the literature.

3. Literature Review

3.1 MBTI

3.1.1 Current studies

Some data from Google Trends show the popularity of MBTI searches worldwide. MBTI is going to be popular in recent years. Starting from the end of 2019, searches for MBTI increased and reached peaks in July 2022 and June 2024. By region, South Korea, which is far more popular than other nations, is the nation most passionate about MBTI, and other countries on the top of the list are mainly from Asia. It is much more popular in Asia than in the United States, where it originated.

As for the two countries, South Korea and China, in Asia, which are most affected by MBTI, it has aroused so many social phenomena. In South Korea, Like horoscopes,

MBTI has become somewhat of a pseudoscience thanks to the influence of celebrities and a sizable fan base in online communication [5]. Many corporations and media have used MBTI as a marketing tool, which divides commercial products with different types of personalities to attract the young. The womenswear brand MIXXO launched personality-matched outerwear to capitalize on the MBTI trend among younger shoppers. Particularly, more and more Korean employers are asking candidates to upload their MBTI scores on job boards, and some banks are even asking applicants to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses as a person [5].

3.1.2 Applications

The measurement can even be applied to the presidential election issue. As with the same fever in China, the popularity of the topic started to rise at the end of 2019 and has spread widely on social media to date. As of December 16, 2023, 31.2817 million people had seen MBTI-related topics gain real-time popularity on China's version of Instagram, the Xiaohongshu app, over the course of the previous 180 days [4]. On Weibo, the number of distinct conversation threads concerning MBTI was getting close to one million [6]. Being in the Asian culture, the Chinese also like using MBTI in commodity trading, corporate recruitment, and friendship.

3.1.3 Reasons and trends

Hence, according to the data that shows 2019 is a starting point, the reason for MBTI being viral can be analyzed from subjective and objective. Many researchers have mentioned that the spread of COVID-19 worldwide is an important time point for MBTI's appearance. When the lockdown started, it caused teenagers a sense of isolation, which led to anxiety, sadness, loneliness, and other negative emotions. Therefore, MBTI can provide people with ego identity and further trigger group identity [7].

This is also a way for people to solve their behavior of human social anxiety caused by the competition for jobs or the decrease in the economic society and so on because MBTI classifies people as 16 types of personality, so the people who have the same personality will empathize. That will form a social community that creates "belonging." Meanwhile, MBTI has become a well-known intellectual property with well-established goods, services, and markets in terms of its commercial value [5].

3.1.4 Criticism

However, in the scientific community, scientists are not in favor of MBTI. They do not agree with its use in the scientific validity and practical applications. Despite being widely used, academic psychologists and psychometricians have criticized the MBTI, blaming its widespread

use on CPP's aggressive marketing [8]. Scholarly researchers have criticized the psychometric qualities of the MBTI. There are some possible reasons. First, the creators of MBTI, Katherine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers, didn't receive any psychological experience. Someone mentioned that reliance on continuous scores instead of dichotomous preference scores unnecessarily limits the depth of statistical analysis [9]. Second, the aggressive marketing made it entertaining, so the test is becoming less rigorous [7]. Third, The MBTI still has problems with dependability and utility, there are not enough articles to prove its effectiveness or the reason for its popularity [5]. Next, personality measures revealed surprisingly low degrees of validity in the selection context [10]. Then, people tend to be addicted to valuing themselves depending on the test of MBTI. The question of whether or not to judge a person by the personality test is too one-sided should be considered. Furthermore, subjectively, there are lots of samples that thought the results of the test did not correspond to their impression of themselves, and also, people's characteristics are always changing in different periods in everyone's life so the result is not precise permanently. Additionally, the major problem with the self-report questionnaire is that people may lack self-insight, even deliberately faking, so the accuracy of the questionnaire has also been significantly reduced.

3.2 Big Five personality

3.2.1 Definition

The Five-Factor Model, sometimes referred to as the Big Five personality traits, is a popular model for studying personality. It identifies five general dimensions that cover a range of characteristics and actions of people: Openness to Experience: this trait relates to an individual's willingness to engage with new experiences, ideas, and creative concepts. In contrast to those who score low and tend to prefer stability and tradition, individuals with high scores are often curious, innovative, and receptive to new thoughts. Conscientiousness: a person's degree of organization, reliability, and self-discipline is shown in this aspect. Those who score low may tend to be more spontaneous and less focused on details, whereas those with high scores are generally seen as reliable, diligent, and driven by goals. Extraversion: this trait measures an individual's tendency towards sociability and extroversion. Those who score low tend to be more introverted and enjoy solitude, while those with high scores are generally outgoing, confident, and thrive in social settings. Agreeableness: this dimension evaluates an individual's level of cooperation, compassion, and friendliness. Individuals with low scores tend to be more doubtful and competitive, whereas those

with high scores are often seen as sympathetic, reliable, and supportive. Neuroticism: this trait indicates an individual's ability to maintain emotional balance and their vulnerability to negative feelings such as anxiety, depression, and mood fluctuations. Those with low scores generally exhibit greater composure and resilience, whereas those with high scores are more prone to experiencing stress and emotional instability [11].

3.2.2 History

The initial study of the personality measurement is based on psychologists' category of the natural language of description. Allport and Odbert carried out a seminal lexical analysis of the personality-relevant terms in an unabridged English dictionary [12]. Nearly 18,000 terms made up their entire list. Then Allport and Odbert attempted to categorize their terms in some sort of order and distinguished four main groups: (1) Personality traits; (2) Temporary states, moods, and activities; (3) Highly critical assessments of one's reputation and behavior; (4) Physical traits, abilities, and talents, as well as terms that were unclearly related to personality and that did not fit into any of the other three categories [12]. Their original classification was later expanded, which separated the domain into seven content categories: activities, social roles, social effects, evaluative terms, anatomical and physical terms, stable biophysical traits, temporary states, ambiguous and obscure terms deemed useful for personality descriptive purposes, and activities [13]. However, after that, some researchers believe that distinctions between classes of personality descriptors are arbitrary and ought to be eliminated because a quick examination of the classifications reveals that the categories overlap and have hazy boundaries: on the other hand, promoted a prototype conception in which category membership need not be discrete but can be defined continuously, with each category being defined in terms of its distinct cases rather than its boundaries [14, 15]. This prototype concept was applied to characteristics, states, and activities by Chaplin and his colleagues [15]. They have also demonstrated that there is broad agreement on the conceptual definitions of states and characteristics. Cattell initially started his multidimensional mode of personality structure with the Allport and Odbert list in order to create a practical taxonomy [12, 16]. He narrowed down the 4500 trait terms to just 35 variables using both semantic and empirical clustering techniques, in addition to his own evaluations of the personological literature that was then available. Twelve personality factors were eventually included in Cattell's 16 Personality Factors (16PF) questionnaire after he completed a number of oblique factor analyses [16]. Although his statistics were pointed out to be wrong, the results appeared to have some relation to

the big five dimensions, which were invented later. After that, Fiske used 22 of Cattell's variables to create much more simplified descriptions [17]. Tupes and Christal re-analyzed correlation matrices from eight distinct samples, ranging from first-year graduate students to airmen with only a high school education [18]. These samples included evaluations from peers, instructors, supervisors, or seasoned clinicians in a variety of settings, such as sorority houses and military training courses.

Meanwhile, Lewis Goldberg re-administered Norman's trait terms to a sample of college students in the 1980s, and he expanded on Norman's work [13]. For this study, Goldberg asked the students to rate themselves against these characteristics rather than having others do so. Even though the publishing environment for trait research improved in the 1980s, Goldberg's factor analysis results, which yielded the well-known five-factor structure (he called it the "big five"), were not released until 1990 [19]. There is a frustration during the 1960s-1970s. A paradigm shift occurred in the field of personality psychology during this time, as criticisms of the discipline essentially prevented the publication of trait research for over a decade. Personal personalities vary from different environments and develop over time.

New personality inventories were conducted from the mid-1980s to the 1990s. Costa and McCrae clustered Cattell's 16PF items; they discovered that openness to experience was merely discussed, so they created the NEO Inventory (NEO-I), which was first published in 1978 and subsequently redesigned as the NEO Personality Inventory in 1985 [16, 20]. Also, Costa and McCrae cite the research of Goldberg and Digman, which indicates that two crucial areas that ought to be included in their inventory are conscientiousness and agreeableness. Therefore, they created the contemporary TB5 construct while also integrating lexical and questionnaire approaches in mainstream trait research [19, 20]. It had 30 facets total, with six facets for each factor. Their TB5 questionnaire swiftly rose to prominence as the most significant and widely used inventory that employs the TB5 model due to its high validity and reliability as an instrument following the release of NEO PI and its later revisions to NEO PI-R [20]. The third and most recent version of McCrae and Costa's instrument, NEO PI-3, was released in 2005. They assert that it is much easier to read. Younger populations or adults with less education can now use the updated inventory [2]. To date, the Big Five has been the most studied and applied personality construct in the world.

3.2.3 Current studies

The Big Five has become more advanced and is applied to various regions. With the development of studying,

more and more studies show that the Big Five has stable consistency in some periods of life. Although not exactly fixed, our findings suggest that personality traits among working-age adults do seem to be consistent. Furthermore, there is scant evidence connecting unfavorable circumstances in a person's job, health, or family life to economically significant, intra-individual personality changes [21].

The Big Five can now be used in an exact range of applications thanks to additional research. Soldz and Vaillant's results support the idea that personality traits remain relatively stable throughout adulthood [22]. The Big Five is discovered to be influenced by the stage of life. For instance, they also found that Conscientiousness, which is strongly connected with eight life course variables at that time and with just one life course variable in late midlife, is the college personality trait that has the strongest correlation to later life course functioning. However, early adult adjustment, pack-years of smoking, extraversion toward maximum income, openness to psychiatric use, creativity, conservative political views, agreeableness toward social support, and conscientiousness toward defense maturity were all associated with neuroticism [22]. According to the findings, personality predicts outcomes of entrepreneurial success that go beyond starting and growing a business, and narrow personality traits are more accurate predictors of these outcomes than broad traits [23]. For example, Agreeableness only predicted invention entrepreneurship, whereas extraversion predicted overall entrepreneurial success. According to these findings, extroverted people are more likely to take part in a variety of entrepreneurial endeavors, including launching new companies, coming up with innovative ways to benefit society, and acting entrepreneurially within organizations.

4. Conclusion

This article analyzes the MBTI and the Big Five. The literature shows that The MBTI is less commonly employed in formal social contexts and focuses on enjoyment. It is used more in social settings. Some countries also use it in politics and corporate recruitment. Given its source and the questionnaire's difficulties, the MBTI's credibility is insufficient. In contrast, the Big Five Personality Index has undergone multiple adjustments and repairs over history, and because of its superior reliability and rigor, it may be utilized in a broader range of circumstances than the MBTI.

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