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# Behavioral Expression of Type: A Multicultural Analysis

Presented By:

Rich Thompson

CPP, Inc.

Divisional Director of Research



## Research Team for this Project

- CPP, Inc.
  - Rich Thompson
  - Nicole Herk
- OPP, LTD.
  - Penny Moyle
  - Rob Bailey
  - Anne Herman



# CPP and the MBTI® Assessment



- CPP is the exclusive global publisher of the MBTI® assessment.
  - Work with a growing number of global distributors who provide the MBTI and other assessments to customers around the globe
  - In recent years, CPP and the distributors have made an effort to increase the number of local adaptations of the MBTI assessment
  - Has lead to many opportunities for me to interact with our distributors, and to encounter some interesting topics for research



# Culture

- One of the more fascinating areas is culture, and how culture and type may interact.
- As stated in *Type and Culture* (Kirby, Kendall, & Barger, 2007, p. 2), type does not cause cultural differences and cultural differences do not determine type distributions within a culture.
- However, it has been suggested that *behaviors* exhibited by different types can be influenced by culture





# Anecdotes Versus Data

- On one hand,
  - In interacting with different distributors I hear a number of anecdotes about culture and type, and how people express type differently in different cultures
  - Also discuss a number of different lenses with which to examine type and culture



# The Finns and Shoes

- The anecdote that sticks with me....
- A Finnish Introvert will look at their own shoes
- A Finnish Extravert will look at your shoes





# Anecdotes Versus Data

- On the other hand,
  - Our work on local adaptations of the MBTI assessment indicate it travels very well.
    - Consistent Item content in commercial versions
    - Basically two Step I versions in use around the globe
      - European Step I is in use or being researched in:
        - German, French, Danish, Dutch, European English, Finnish, Greek, Portuguese, Polish, Russian, Turkish
      - Form M is in use or being researched in:
        - US and Canada, Latin and North American Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Arabic, Afrikaans, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, Japanese, Korean
- So, there seems to be a disconnect between the indicator and what people claim to observe across cultures



## What to Do?

- Decided to do an initial investigation into Type, as it is behaviorally expressed in different cultures.
- Could not find any quantitative evidence that there are, in fact, differences in how type is expressed behaviorally
- Wanted to draw on experts from around the globe, and obtain their input on the topic
- From this initial look, we would consider next steps for the research effort



# Approach

- Decided on a quantitative and qualitative survey.
- Quantitative portion asked respondents to rate each of the eight preferences in terms of the behavioral similarity between the original definition and their own culture

According to your own experience, how similar or alike are the behaviors of a person with a preference for **Thinking** in your culture compared to the description provided above? (please indicate by putting an 'X' above your chosen response)

Not at all  
Similar

Dissimilar

Somewhat  
Dissimilar

Somewhat  
Similar

Similar

Very Similar



## Approach Continued

- Adapted Text from Introduction to Type to provide a concrete description of each preference pair

People who prefer to use Thinking in decision making like to look at the logical consequences of a choice or action. They want to remove themselves mentally from the situation to examine the pros and cons objectively. They are energized by evaluating and analyzing to identify what's wrong with something so they can solve the problem. Their goal is to find a standard or principle that will apply in all similar situations.

*Characteristics associated with people who prefer Thinking:*

- Analytical
- Use cause-and-effect reasoning
- Solve problems with logic
- Strive for an objective standard of truth
- Reasonable
- Can be "tough-minded"
- Fair – want everyone treated equally

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## Approach Continued

- Then asked each respondent to describe in writing differences they observe for each preference in their culture.

Please describe a typical person with a **Thinking** preference in your culture/country and explain how this may be different from the description provided above.

- Finally, asked each respondent to describe in writing other words beyond those provided in the ITT description that are used to describe the preference in their culture.

Are there any other words or phrases you commonly use to describe a **Thinking** preference in your culture/country?



# Respondents

- Participants were chosen as a result of knowledge and experience working with the MBTI in different cultures or subcultures
  - Included participants in the US as there are many different regions or areas of the country that have some cultural differences
  - Similarly, in the United Kingdom, there are cultural differences (e.g., Scotland versus Wales)
- Consisted primarily of individuals or organizations with whom the researchers had a relationship
- However, participants were invited to forward the survey to any MBTI experts they might know who would be interested in participating
- Received a total of 35 Responses from people in 22 different countries.
  - Cannot compute a response rate due to the open ended nature of the invitations.
  - Of those we asked directly, received about half back



# Participating Countries

- Australia
- Belgium
- Brazil
- Canada
- China
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- India
- Italy
- Korea
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Philippines
- Poland
- Russia
- South Africa
- Spain
- Sweden
- Togo
- United Kingdom
- United States



# Hypotheses

- Expected to find some differences in the ratings of similarity between cultures
- Expected to obtain some interesting anecdotal evidence of differences
- Expected to learn of unique ways that each preference is described in different cultures.



# Findings

- Similarity between behaviors for each preference as described in survey and behaviors exhibited in participant's country/culture

Response	E	I	S	N	T	F	J	P
Not at all similar	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Dissimilar	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Somewhat dissimilar	0%	2.9%	0%	2.9%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Somewhat similar	8.6%	5.7%	2.9%	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%	2.9%
Similar	22.9%	40.0%	31.4%	25.7%	28.6%	25.7%	25.7%	14.3%
Very similar	65.7%	48.6%	57.1%	62.9%	60.0%	57.1%	62.9%	77.1%

N = 35



# Findings

- Descriptions of Typical Behaviors
  - Generally, most of the respondents indicated that the ITT descriptions were accurate descriptions of each preference (typically 70 to 80% of respondents)
  - For those comments that went beyond simple agreement, there were some interesting insights, although not necessarily the ones we were focused on in the Study.
  - Many of the comments provided beyond simple agreement with the ITT descriptions focused on:
    - Typecasting – where behaviors described were more or less extreme than the description
    - US Bashing – several comments took shots at the U.S. (mostly on extraversion)



# Findings

- Extraversion
  - Not as “loud” as Americans
  - ADHD people
  - Think aloud
  - 2 Seconders
  - Talkative
- Introversions
  - Shy
  - Aloof
  - Contained
  - 10 Seconders
  - Reserved
- *Generally, it seems that the behaviors are consistent, but there are matters of degree. Extraverts in all the cultures are more expressive, more talkative, seem to enjoy putting ideas out there. Introverts appear more reserved, more comfortable and energized being alone, etc.*
- *Extraverts and Introverts across cultures may express different things more readily (emotions), or with more volume (loud Americans), or appear more or less reserved, but once the culture is taken into account for such things, are basically the same.*



# Findings

- Sensing
    - Details
    - Scolding Mode
    - Present Oriented
    - Scientific
    - Boring
  - Intuition
    - Imaginative
    - Outside the box
    - Future Oriented
    - Big Picture
- 
- *Sensing seemed to get less positive comments from the participants*
  - *Cultures were noted as valuing these preferences differently*
    - *Italy, Canada, Southern California, were claimed to be more Intuitive*
    - *Korea claimed to value sensing more*



# Findings

- Thinking
    - More critical
    - Logic and Rational
    - Not everything is said
    - Dislike interpersonal decisions
  - Feeling
    - Empathetic
    - Personal Values
    - Fluffy
    - Friendly
- 
- *Had the strongest reaction from participants*
  - *Had the most value laden comments*
  - *Denmark participant noted that Thinking is very highly valued there, while feeling is very undervalued.*
  - *Several participants indicated Feeling was perceived to be feminine, and not appreciated by their culture*
  - *Korea participant noted that feeling is perceived as feminine*



# Findings

- Judging
    - Orderly and planful
    - Be prepared
    - Control
    - Status Quo
  - Perceiving
    - No Delivery
    - Opportunities Open
    - Out of Control
    - Change
- 
- *Cultures seem to differ in their emphasis on time and punctuality – again a matter of degree (e.g., Korea, Philippines)*
  - *Again, comments had a tinge of typecasting*



## Summary

- Both the Quantitative and Qualitative analysis revealed that type was generally perceived by participants as being similar across countries/cultures
- However, cultural norms or requirements can have a **slight** impact on how individuals within different countries/cultures express type – matter of degree
- Interested to see, or at least read into comments, some of the biases of our experts
- Universality of Type – Results seem to suggest that type is indeed universal, and that culture impacts the degree to which the “core preferences” are exhibited or embraced.



## Next Steps

- Need to decide if we will pursue this line of inquiry
  - Does not seem to be much variability in behavior
  - The survey methodology seems too crude to capture subtleties
  - Would Like to hear suggestions from the audience
  
- Questions, Comments, or Suggestions



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## Thank You

For more information:

Contact Rich Thompson, [rthompson@cpp.com](mailto:rthompson@cpp.com)

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