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Comparison of Two Personality Tests –
Myers-Briggs Type Inventory and NEO-PI

Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) is a psychometric questionnaire that is specifically designed to answer certain questions regarding an individual's personality, how he would behave in real life, how a person perceives the world around him and his decision making process (Myers, 1995). In short I is a way of measuring certain personality characteristics and establish personality types against which individual behaviour can be assessed and predicted. MBTI assessment is used as a reliable means of evaluating an individual's personality type and it also assists individuals greatly in gaining insights about themselves, how they interact with other people so that they can improve the way they communicate and work. MBTI provides a firm foundation for making decisions to bring positive change in one's personality, improving relationships, harnessing innovation and improvements (CPP, Inc., 2014).

Another widely used personality indicator is the NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI). It is a psychological personality indicator that uses the similar questionnaire technique as MBTI to assess the personality type of an individual. It is derived from the older version of inventories dating back to 1978. The first version of NEO-PI was published in 1990. IT is globally recognized as a gold standard personality assessment technique (Lord, 2007).

MBTI is based on Carl G. Jung's theory of psychological types which was presented in his book in 1920s. The instrument of assessment has been around since 1943. According to Jung's theory humans experience the world through four psychological functions, namely: sensing, intuition, thinking and feeling; one of which is dominant in every personality type (Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2009). Jung has developed another model to assess the personality types which is even more famous. It is the distinction between introvert and extrovert personality types. Introverts are more inclined towards their internal thoughts and feelings, whereas extroverts are more concerned with what is outside and external world of people and feelings (Kasprzak, 2002). In contrast with the MBTI, the NEO-PI inventory purports to measure the intensity level of the big-five personality traits in an individual. The model was developed by Paul Costa and Robert McCrae during their research on how a person's personality changes as he ages (Bell, Rose, & Damon, 1972). The first model of the inventory included the most agreed-upon and widely recognized personality traits of Neuroticism, Extraversion and Openness to Experience (hence the name NEO-I only). The revised version of the inventory included two more personality traits of Agreeableness and Conscientiousness to measure what is collectively known as the big-five traits of personality.

The MBTI model purports to utilize the basic differences in the way people think, perceive and act in order to identify their specific personality type. The standard MBTI questionnaire contains

93 (MBTI Step I) questions or 144 (MBTI Step II) questions that are self-administered by individuals. The answers are used to identify an individual's preferences for each of the 4 sets of opposite personality types called dichotomies (Quenk, 2009). The MBTI dichotomies are as follows.

1. Introversion and Extraversion – Identifies the extent to which an individual focuses his attention on the inside and outside world.
2. Sensing and Intuiting – It relates to the way a person accepts information. Sensing means taking information in a sequential step-by-step manner, whilst intuiting means taking a big picture view of presenting and accepting information
3. Thinking and Feeling – This relates to the rational function because it involves applying mind to make rational decisions. A person may do so by evaluation of ideas and information analytically (thinking) or by assessing his overall emotional response thereto (feeling).
4. Judging and Perceiving – These indicators measure how to react with the outside world. Judging implies a more planned and proactive approach to dealing with things, whereas perceiving is more of a spontaneous nature of dealing with tasks and deadlines (CPP, Inc., 2014).

In contrast with the abovementioned dichotomies, the NEO Personality Inventory measures the five major personality traits with six facet scales under each of the five personality traits through a series of 240 questions. The table containing all five personality traits and the facets under each of them is as follows.

Neuroticism	Extroversion	Openness to experience	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness
Anxiety	Warmth	Fantasy	Trust	Competence
Hostility	Gregariousness	Aesthetics	Straightforwardness	Order
Depression	Assertiveness	Feelings	Altruism	Dutifulness
Self-consciousness	Activity	Actions	Compliance	Achievement Striving
Impulsiveness	Excitement Seeking	Ideas	Modesty	Self-Discipline
Vulnerability to Stress	Positive Emotion	Values	Tender-mindedness	Deliberation

Brief description of each of the five major personality traits in contrast with the MBTI dichotomies is as follows.

1. Neuroticism – It refers to the continuing emotional instability and adjustment that an individual has to forego. High N personalities are more prone to psychological pressure and stress.
2. Extraversion – This refers to the extent an individual prefers to be in touch with others and his requirement for interpersonal interactions, need for stimulation and joy. NEO-PI defines it in terms of distinguishing characteristics and facets whilst MBTI uses the two extremes and combines it with other personality traits to form different combinations of distinguishing personality characteristics.
3. Openness to Experience – This includes the tendency of individual to seek and appreciate the new experiences for their own sake. Individuals with High O are curious and more open to novel ideas and innovative thoughts.
4. Agreeableness – This includes the personality of an individual in terms of friendliness and soft-hearted behaviour on a continuum from compassionate to highly hostile and antagonist.
5. Conscientiousness – This pertains to the level of organization, direction, control and motivation an individual has towards his goals. High C is characterized in individuals who are industrious, organized, hard-working and more ambitious towards their goals (PsychPress, 2015).

In MBTI each of the dichotomies are represented by their first letter of alphabet. 16 different combinations of personalities are possible and each personality type has a different characteristics and features of how they interact with the world. For example, persons with ESFJ personality type are known to like harmony with others. Based on an individual's answer to the questionnaire he is assigned one of the 16 types of personalities. The good thing about MBTI is that it does not require exercise of human judgment, and no on particular type of personality is better or superior to other. It is just an assessment of an individual's preferences and an evaluation of his of all the attributes – behavioural, temperamental, emotional and mental--that characterize his unique self. It provides valuable information that can be used to identify compatibilities and incompatibilities, career choices and likes and dislikes (Kasprzak, 2002). The NEO-PI on the other hand provides a detailed assessment of individual personality based on the famous five factor model. It provides a systematic evaluation of interpersonal, experiential, emotional, attitudinal, and motivational style of an adult. This information can be useful in many ways and help an individual cope in different circumstances.

MBTI is particularly popular because it can be easily used to predict behaviour and personality in a wide range of fields including organisational behaviour, education, career planning and succession, team building and dynamics, matrimony and relationships and assessing personality

characteristics and multicultural settings (Quenk, 2009). Besides it is also easy to understand and apply and provides numerous options in terms of administration and application. Conversely NEO-PI model is more qualitative and seeks to identify what is better than the other. For example, a pharmaceutical organization looking to hire a research analyst would be more inclined to look for individuals with High Openness to Experience (O), creativity and ideas than those with low O. Similarly with Agreeableness (A) as well. Low A personalities are less preferred and not likes.

The MBTI assessment is widely used in organizational management and is considered ideal for a range of business applications, namely:

1. Leadership management – It provides a detailed insight to the leader about his personality and feedback about how he can communicate effectively with the personality type of his followers.
2. Conflict resolution – Provides knowledge about the sources of incompatible personalities and where conflict may arise so that timely action can be taken to avoid any interruption in the business processes.
3. Team development – Helps team members in understanding their personality types and helping each other to maintain group harmony and increase team performance and productivity.
4. Stress management – Develops skills in identifying and containing/managing stress triggers.
5. Career planning and succession – Enables individuals to identify their area of interest and helps in career development.

Compared with MBTI, NEO-PI is more often used in clinical and psychological fields than business management and career planning. It has some useful applications in psychiatry, clinical research, educational research and industrial/organizational psychology.

It can be summed up that both the personality evaluation models assess some major personality traits and characteristics in an individual. MBTI measures the presence or absence of a trait in combination with others, whilst NEO-PI is more suitable in determining the extent or intensity of a particular personality trait in an individual. The two inventories also vary in their usefulness and application.

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