

A study on the various personality type tests



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It is only fairly recently that personality tests have become a common practice by companies looking to employ people. These personality tests enable organizations to match people to specific jobs and tasks. The tests also help to eliminate false information given in the interview. For example: A person being interviewed is asked how well they can work as part of a group. Naturally the person will say they like working as part of a group. A personality test will make it more difficult for the person to lie about things like that.

History

The basic principles or foundation of the modern personality type test can be traced back to the ancient Greeks. The ancient Greeks identified four personality traits known as the four temperaments or four humours. These four types are cheerful, sombre, enthusiastic, and calm. These four temperaments provided Carl Jung with the inspiration to develop his own physiological theory. Carl Jung's physiological theory provided the foundation for Myers Briggs and David Keirsey to build their assessment systems. These two systems are considered the modern day personality tests.

Carl Jung's functional types

Carl Jung categorised psychic energy into two types. The types are introverted and extroverted. These two categories are used extensively in the world today. They are two of the main types of personalities identified and used by the Myers Briggs personality test. Jung did not just leave it at this. He then went on to create four psychological types, these being: Thinking, Feeling, Sensation and Intuition. Jung also stated that things were either rational or irrational. Thinking and Feeling he considered to be

rational. Sensation and Intuition he classified as irrational. Though his theories make sense the application of these theories for test purposes was difficult and tedious.

Myers Briggs type indicator

This type indicator is probably the most commonly used personality type test. It is based on Carl Jung's physiological theory. It is in the form of a questionnaire with the purpose of measuring psychological preferences with regard to how people make decisions and how they perceive the world around them (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator). Myers Briggs converts Carl Jung's theory into a methodology and system that can be used to understand and assess personalities. The Myers Briggs model can be used for:

Gaining an understanding of and developing oneself

To develop and understand other people

Gain insight as to what motivates other people

Assess other people's strengths and weaknesses

Developing and working in teams

Agreeing on and allocation of tasks and responsibilities

The Myers Briggs test is composed of four pairs of personality types. These types are: Extrovert vs. Introvert (EI), Sensing vs. Intuition (SN), Thinking vs. Feeling (TF), and Judgers vs. Perceivers (JP).

Once an individual takes the test he/she will fall into one of sixteen possible personality groups. The sixteen personality groups are all the possible combinations of the four pairs of personality types. The sixteen personality groups fall into four distinct groups. These groups are: Internal Sensual Group, External Sensual Group, Internal Intuition Group, and External Intuition Group. This can be seen in the table below taken from Kersey. com (Keirsey Temperament Website).

Internal Sensual Group

External Sensual Group

Internal Intuition Group

External Intuition Group

ISTJ

ESTJ

INTJ

ENTJ

ISFJ

ESFJ

INFJ

ENFJ

ISTP

ESTP

INTP

ENTP

ISFP

ESFP

INFP

ENFP

The advantage of this test is that if done honestly it can accurately reflect the individual's personality. This would enable managers to assemble a team of people with different personalities and each personality suited for the job required.

The disadvantage is that this test may not necessarily be accurate as the individual could choose an option that they would most likely perform in their current state of mind. This could mean that the result could change if they were to take the test again under different circumstances. This would mean that their true personality would not be identified as the result is subject to the person's current mood and chain of thought.

David Keirsey's Personality Types

Another personality type test is that of David Keirsey. Known as the Keirsey Temperament Sorter it helps people to better understand others as well as themselves. This test has been developed from the four temperaments and

from Carl Jung's theories. Like the Myers Briggs test Keirsey categorises human personality into sixteen types and each type belongs to one of four categories.

The four categories are:

Artisans - these are people who say what is and they do what will work.

Guardians - these people say what is and do what is right.

Rationalists - these are people who say what is possible and do what will work.

Idealist - these are people who will say what is possible and do what is right.

Keirsey places the sixteen personality types into the four categories as seen in the table below taken from Keirsey. com (Keirsey Temperament Website).

Artisan

Guardian

Rationalist

Idealist

Promoter (ESTP)

Supervisor (ESTJ)

Fieldmarshall (ENTJ)

Teacher (ENFJ)

Crafter (ISTP)

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Inspector (ISTJ)

Mastermind (INTJ)

Counsellor (INFJ)

Performer (ESFP)

Provider (ESFJ)

Inventor (ENTP)

Champion (ENFP)

Composer (ISFP)

Protector (ISFJ)

Architect (INTP)

Healer (INFP)

Note: The letters in brackets are the equivalent Myers Briggs personality types.

Like the Myers Briggs test Keirsey's test is subject to the individual's frame of mind when taking the test and can only marginally determine the individual's temperament and personality. Another con is that if the person applying for the job knows the desired personality he/she can determine the outcome of the test. There are books on how to answer the test to achieve the desired personality for the job.

Eysenck's Personality Inventory

Hans Eysenck brings a new dimension with the addition of emotional stability. Eysenck used two scales to measure personality, these being as follows:

Introversion and Extroversion

Stability and Instability

With these two scales Eysenck created four types of personalities:

Unstable introvert - means that the person can be moody, anxious and unsociable

Unstable extrovert - this means that the person is aggressive, impulsive and changeable

Stable introvert - means that the person tends to be even-tempered, calm, reliable and controlled

Stable extrovert - this category means that the person is outgoing, lively, easy-going and is a good leader

It is the dimensions of stable and unstable that sets Eysenck apart from systems of Myer Briggs and Keirsey. This helps to add a new view on the four temperaments. It also enhances the perspective of Jung's psychological types and adds to the Myers Briggs and Keirsey tests.

Katherine Benziger's brain theory type

Benziger has a different approach as compared to the likes of Myers Briggs and Keirsey. She places great importance on the fact that one should not try and falsify one's personality type. Benziger reckons that most people falsify their type so as to get the job for which they are applying. This could have an impact on their performance as they are not really the right people for the job. Like with the other tests she drew inspiration from Carl Jung's work. Her theory is that personality can be mapped in four quadrants of the brain:

The Rear Left part is for processing and routines.

The rear Right is associated with empathy and intuition.

The Front Left part is associated with logic.

The Front Right is associated with creativity and vision

These quadrants can be linked to Jung's functional types.

Benziger

Jung

Front Left

Thinking

Rear Right

Feeling

Rear Left

Sensing

Front Right

Intuition

The advantage of Benziger's test is that it places a strong emphasis on not falsifying personality type. There is even a section in the assessment that assesses the extent to which the person is falsifying their type. This can help in determining those who are honest and those who are not. This helps a manager select the best possible candidates for a position or a team.

DISC

This test determines four behavioural aspects by testing a person's preferences when it comes to word associations. The four dimensions of DISC are:

Dominance

Influence

Steadiness

Conscientiousness

Dominance and Influence represent extrovert. Steadiness and Conscientiousness represent introvert.

Some of the benefits of the DISC profile are:

Being able to understand behavioural challenges and strengths in others as well as yourself.

Gain an appreciation for the strengths and differences in others

Identify tools to aid in conflict resolution

Decrease conflict within the team and improve teamwork

Gain an awareness of how to deal with diverse people

Understand client behaviour resulting in increased sales

Enhance customer satisfaction

By identifying communication styles you can improve communication skills

These benefits can help place the right people in management. Being able to motivate and understand people is a very good trait to have as a manager.

The problem is that like most other assessments DISC is not one hundred percent accurate and therefore it does not display a reliable measurement.

The Big 5 personality test

This test measures your intensity to deal with change, people, work, and depression situations.

The five factors are:

Agreeableness or Accommodation - this is how you deal with people. The higher the degree the more agreeable or courteous you are. The lower the degree the more unpleasant and aggressive you are.

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Openness to change - the higher the degree the more open to sudden changes you are. A low degree means that you oppose change with vigour.

Extroversion - A high degree represents an extrovert while a low score represents an introvert

Conscientiousness - A high degree here means that you are focused and organized when it comes to work. On the other hand a low score means that you are lazy and dislike lots of work.

Neuroticism - This is your ability to handle depression. The higher the degree the more stability you have when pitted against depression. A low score means that you take a long time to recover from the shock caused by depression.

This type of test is considered better than the Myers Briggs and DISC test. This is because this test does not focus on types or temperaments. Instead it tries to measure your ability to handle five factors.

Conclusion

There are many personality tests out there all of which can be used to gain insight into others and ourselves. Companies may use personality type tests to gain an idea as to how people think and then based on the outcome of the test build the best possible team. Managers can also use these tests to help them place the right people in the right position. Though these are great positives the downside is that the tests are not 100% accurate and some people know how to answer the test as to get the desired outcome. This

means that you may get the wrong person for the job due to them being good liars.