

# Honey and Mumford learning style



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It is commonly believed that most people have a preference with regards to interacting with, taking in and processing information to allow them to learn (Smith, 2003). Different people adopt different learning styles where an optimum style allows the individual to learn best. The concept of individualised learning styles has gained a great deal of popularity in recent years ever since the idea was proposed in the 1970s. To date, there has been a massive abundance of tests that can be performed to assess a person's learning style (Sprenger, 2003).

The project is divided into two parts:

Part A: To identify and analyze my learning style preferences through various questionnaires; the VARK test, Honey and Mumford learning style, Myer Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Belbin's team inventory. Prem and Phil stated that " Learning affects performance because all performance can be improved through learning." (Prem & Phil, 2008). Thus, this allows me to gain an understanding of who I am as a learner and how this knowledge may affect my performances, both individually or within a team environment.

Part B: To discuss my personality type and how my learning style may affect my career choices. However, it is worth noting that although " personality is a possible contributor to learning, it is difficult to define" (Davies, 2008).

Sigmund Freud used the analogy of an iceberg to explain the complexity of human personality by suggesting that most of the personality is hidden out of sight under water (Freud, 2003). Hence, identifying one's personality is not an easy task, and tests should only be used as a ' starting point' rather than as a means to make definite judgements (Bayne, 1997). Nonetheless,

my results will give a general idea of a career field that most closely match my personality and strengths.

## **Part 1: Who I am as a learner?**

### **1.1 VARK Test**

The VARK test is one of the most commonly used models to help identify an individual's preference for receiving and analysing information with regards to learning. It can help people to develop additional learning strategies.

There are four modes for people to use, such as visual, aural, read/write and kinaesthetic (VARK, 2009). It is a framework to assess a person's learning style.

The results of the VARK test (Appendix A) suggest that my strengths in a learning context rest on my aural skills. I have a strong preference for aural based learning since I like to listen to others during discussion to gain a different perspective which allows me to understand more of the topic being discussed. My group mate agrees with this by saying "Although Yin Sung is normally quiet during group activities, she is an active listener of other people's views and cares about other people's thoughts," (Vicky, 2010).

Another part of the test results that I particularly agree with is that my written/reading skills quite weak and isn't my preferred method of learning. Having only recently moved to study in the UK, English is not my first language which could explain why this type of learning is not one of my main strengths, although my proficiency is improving a lot. Since, the western educational system places a lot of emphasis on reading and writing, I believe

that I will gain a lot of improvement in this learning aspect as time goes on with added practice.

However, I am a bit surprised by my low score on my kinesthetic skills. I have always thought that I am someone that learns well when given the opportunity to experience something via a 'hands on approach'. For example, I find that I am able to pick up new skills easily (i. e. badminton) when I am able to physically try it out rather than just reading from a book on how to play.

## **1. 2 Honey and Mumford Learning Style**

The Honey and Mumford's (1992) Learning Style identifies and categorises an individual's learning style. There are four possible styles; an activist, reflector, theorist and pragmatist, with a total of eighty questions in the test (Honey and Mumford, 1992).

According to the results of the Honey and Mumford learning style questionnaire (Appendix B) I adopt a high reflector mentality. I agree with the majority of the description of the reflector which I believe fully describes me. A Reflector is a careful person who prefers to take a back seat in group discussions (Honey and Mumford, 1992). I like to listen to other people's views before I come to conclusions and take my time before making any decisions. Being less assertive and tending to hold back from participation, I believe that I will work well and learn more efficiently if placed around an activist, as one would be able to encourage me to tackle situations via a more 'head on' approach. This would enhance my participation in group activities and discussions.

In agreement with my VARK results, the Honey and Mumford test suggests that I am a good listener which is one of the strengths of a reflector. I fully agree with this since I have always been someone that likes to listen to everyone in the group thoughtfully. This gives me an opportunity to gain different perspectives from different angles before I come to conclusions.

However, a possible weakness that I see in myself by being a reflector is that I spend a long time when performing set tasks. For example, during my last assignment, it took me in excess of two months to complete it as I was dwelling too much on the preparation stage. I spent too long researching information before I finally began writing my assignment which is due to my cautiousness with regards to deciding how to write it.

Although I do show a cautious mentality, I don't fully agree with the description that a person with reflector behaviour never likes to take risks. I occasionally like to step out of my 'comfort zone' to experience things that I have never experienced before to broaden my own knowledge. For example, I chose to leave my home and familiar surroundings in Hong Kong to study in the UK. I also like to take up activities and hobbies that I have never tried before.

### **1.3 Myers Briggs Type Indicator**

The Myer Briggs type Indicator (MBTI) is a questionnaire used to identify an individual's personality type based on Carl Jung theories. MBTI categorises individuals into two functions, such as extraversion or introversion which is the preference in which an individual prefers to direct their energy (Madeline & Rebecca, 1988). For example, one that likes to direct their energy to deal

with outer things, situations or other people is deemed to have a preference for extraversion. Conversely, a person that likes to deal with ideas, information, explanations or the 'inner world', then their preference is introversion.

The results of the MBTI (Appendix C) suggest that I have a dominant introverted function, with a high preference for introverted sensing as demonstrated by my high score in ISFJ. These results show that I like to listen to others and to absorb as much information as possible in a particular situation, to expand my knowledge and to achieve a clear understanding of a topic. These compliment well with my results from the Honey and Mumford test mentioned above.

The results also suggest that I am a hard working individual, which I feel describes me well. I like to start early and ensure that I perform tasks to the best of my ability. Regarding my academic life, I tend to study at least five hours a day. I also begin my research for assignments long before the deadline. For example, although this professional project is due for submission in April 2010, I have been preparing and doing the necessary reading since October 2009.

The MBTI results also suggest that I have an important preference for extraverted feeling, as demonstrated by my high ESFJ score. I am someone that likes to focus on building harmony in the world around me and build positive relationships. Also, I always value other people's contributions during work or other activities. My previous employer said " Sung Yin is a

very personable individual that is popular with the customers and staff which creates a very positive atmosphere around the place," (Mrs Poon, 2008).

I will always try to persuade people to agree with my views if their opinions are different to mine. However, I always need to be careful not to offend those around me while trying to do so. Briggs Myers stated that although 'ESFJ's' are "friendly and sympathetic, they are very persevering and insist that others share the same views as them." (Myers, 1995).

## **1.4 Belbin Team Inventory**

The Belbin Team Inventory is a test used to gauge insight into a person's behavioural tendency in a team environment (Furnham, Steele & Pendleton, 1993). The test allows us the opportunity to determine not only our individual aptitude strengths, but also gives an awareness of our position within a team and how we are expected to contribute. It "scores people based on how strongly they express traits from nine different team roles." (Belbin, 1981).

According to my Belbin test results (Appendix D), I have a major preference for a role as a 'shaper' within a team. A 'shaper' contains behavioural traits that correspond to my results from the MBTI. For example, a 'shaper' displays a drive to succeed and to overcome obstacles which complements my desire to fulfil my ambitions and follow my clear goals. Although I display 'reflector' characteristics, I also see myself as a competitive individual that thrives on pressure and challenges, which forms the basis of the 'shaper' role. My high school P. E teacher wrote on my school report "Sung Yin has demonstrated her competitive side during badminton class and has the

necessary personality and desire to become a good player in the sport in future," (Mr. Yeung, 2001).

The results also show that I am a 'monitor evaluator' suggesting that I am an individual that likes to evaluate all options before coming to a conclusion, which allows me to make accurate judgements. This agrees with my Honey and Mumford test results which say that I am one who likes to gain different perspectives in discussion before making decisions (being a reflector).

Finally, the test results also consider me to have a preference for a 'specialist' role that displays single mindedness and dedication. These are traits that I agree with since I am a rather stubborn person that doesn't like to change my mind once I have my mind set on something. Mr Robinson, my previous employer said "Sung Yin is a very driven person with a clear path with where she wants to be and is unlikely that she will be swayed from it," (Mr. Robinson, 2007). I am always dedicated to my tasks at hand and always give my best to do them as well as I can. This has allowed me to develop my skills and knowledge to a level that means I can give a useful contribution within a team.

Despite what I feel is a fairly accurate assessment of my preferential roles within a team, I do not fully agree with a 'resource investigator' being my least preferred role. This is because I believe that I am a communicative person which is a key trait of the resource 'resource investigator'. As demonstrated by previous test results, I am a person that possesses strong aural skills. Despite regularly adopting a cautious approach to group discussion activities (in line with my reflector personality), I like to ask



questions and participate in activities once I feel comfortable enough to express my views once I have gauged other people's viewpoints.

## **Part 2: Implications for career choice**

### **2.1 Lifelong Learning**

Even from a young age, I have always been aware of the importance of learning new things to broaden my own knowledge base having been constantly reminded by my parents to "work hard till old, and to learn till old." With an ever-changing society and increasing demand for 'talent' in any professional career, it is mandatory that an individual should not only acquire new skills, but to also constantly upgrade these skills to meet challenges set by the changing work environment. This is the act of life-long learning which is the deliberate progression throughout life of an individual, where our knowledge is constantly being expanded which allows us to effectively 'survive' in society (Peter, Jenny and Shelagh, 1998). The essentiality of life-long learning has been well documented even as early as the 17th century where Comenius wrote that "no age is too late to begin learning." And that one should never make the mistake of 'standing still' in terms of skill acquisition (Comenius, 1996). Through my practical experience and life in general, I have come to the realization that continuous learning is a necessity to maintain a competitive advantage over the many individuals that seek the same career opportunities as me. Hence, I search for any opportunities to improve myself through life-long learning.

With my desire to improve, I have recently resigned from my job to study my bachelor's degree in Northumbria University. Prior to my resignation and subsequent move to partake in full-time studies, I worked three years in the <https://assignbuster.com/honey-and-mumford-learning-style/>

Bank of China as a Customer Service Officer (Appendix E). During that time, I was working full-time, while studying part-time during evenings by attending studying classes. The part-time study has allowed me to develop many key skills to heighten my proficiency in doing my job in minimal time. This is important because of the current unstable and competitive job market. It has now become a requirement for me to identify a clear career path for me to pursue and then to develop my knowledge towards the relevant areas to fulfil the needs of my future employers. I am now studying an 'International Business Management' degree course with the aspiration to achieve a future career in the business sector.

Life-long learning will help me provide a solid base for the development of essential transferable skills (as discussed later) that would stick to me throughout life and to aid me in the progression towards my career goals. It is also important for making me a 'better' person. After all "it is the bottom rung of the ladder of personal development." (Peter, Jenny and Shelagh, 1998).

## **2. 2 Career Choice**

Having conducted various learning style tests on myself, I have been able to gain a better understanding of my learning preferences, personality and environments where I am likely to thrive upon. It is expected that knowing an individual's learning style preference may help that person to delineate a possible career path that is best suited for them, or even influence that person towards certain career choices. Indeed, it is common for managers to use questionnaires to identify ideal personality traits in their candidates that would most likely be suitable for their jobs which would aid them in the

selection process. However, it is worth noting that human behaviour is highly complex, and such tests may not necessarily give an accurate or thorough assessment of an individual's personality (Freud, 2001). Hence, results of these tests should not be held absolute and should only be used as a guideline to aid a person with regards to making key decisions such as possible career paths to take. Despite obvious drawbacks with using these tests, I agree with most of the suggestions made by them regarding my learning preferences and some aspects of my personality.

In terms of employment, through my practical experiences, I have developed a strong desire to pursue a career in Marketing. The skills I have acquired to date have largely influenced my interest towards this career path which, together with my personality, has made me consider that I possess the 'raw' foundations to succeed in the marketing sector. In a survey carried out by Honey and Mumford, it was found that the majority of managers preferred employees that are 'reflectors' for Marketing jobs; a trait that they believe would bring the biggest success to their company. Having carried out a Honey and Mumford test on myself, it was concluded that I am a strong 'reflector', which makes me aptly suitable for Marketing.

'Reflectors' such as myself like to adopt a cautious approach during group activities. This means that I tend to take an initial back seat in group discussions, preferring to obtain different viewpoints before making key decisions. Being cautious, can also involve thinking ahead in anticipation of possible obstacles. With marketing jobs, it is important not to rush into decisions without first thinking and planning ahead. This is because, with the nature of the type of work, it is inevitable that there will be 'lean' periods so

hence, it is especially wise to be prepared for such periods and to have a plan to act accordingly. For example, a part of planning ahead is anticipation of changes in the markets and finding new products to promote. It is important to be aware that “ the best marketing entrepreneurs are always looking for the next big money marker.” They are always planning ahead (Scott Brooks, 2004). Hence, having a cautious approach to things can be a good trait as it means that I am less likely to make wrong decisions due to rushing into things and take necessary precautions. My Belbin results that conclude that I have a strong preference towards a ‘ Monitor evaluator’ who likes to evaluate all options before coming to conclusions adds further support of my suitability for a Marketing career.

“ The ability to remain calm is one of the most sought after personality traits in the Retail profession,” (John, 2007). Pressure can come in different ways, for example, when dealing with unhappy customers who are dissatisfied with the products sold to them; It is the job of the marketer to deal with the problem and to restore the customer’s opinion of the company. Hence, to achieve this, it is essential to remain calm under pressure when dealing with these situations. With marketing jobs, it is also important to be able to respond well and appropriately to strict targets and deadlines that are set and to work towards them, which can also lead to pressure building up. My Belbin test results suggest that I am suited towards a ‘ shaper’ role which is another reason why I feel that a Marketing career is suitable for me. ‘ Shapers’ are adept at performing under pressurising situations and with the added drive to succeed. This is important since there is a lot of competition within the market.

“ Only when you have your client on your side, are you able to effectively get what you want.” (John, 2007). I believe this quote highlights what a career in Marketing is essentially all about. Success within the field of Marketing and Retail is highly dependent on your clients or customers which means that good ‘ people skills’ allowing you to connect effectively with both colleagues and customers is essential. On a personality level, it is advantageous to be a ‘ likeable’ person which can involve being a pleasant individual with a ‘ cheery’ disposition. “ You are more likely to be able to negotiate better if your client likes you,” (Scott Brooks, 2004). My MBTI results have described me as having a strong preference towards extroverted feeling which means that I like to build positive relationships with people around me and to create harmony around me. This, in my opinion has contributed largely to me being a personable individual. The benefits of this personality trait are two-fold. Firstly, I would be able to sell my products to customers more easily since they are likely to find me a pleasant person. Secondly, I am more likely to be on the ‘ right side’ of my work colleagues and so they may be more likely to offer me their help.

Having identified a career field that best suit my personality as based on my personality tests, I seek to achieve a future career as a Marketing manager. A job of this kind would allow me the responsibility to make key decisions that will influence the success of the company. I crave the opportunity to manage a team, and to give a major contribution to the company that I work for.

A successful career as a Marketing manager demands certain personality traits in addition to those mentioned above. For example, it is important that <https://assignbuster.com/honey-and-mumford-learning-style/>

a Marketing Manager (Appendix F) is one that, not only is able to make accurate judgement, but also needs to stand by these judgements and not be too easily influenced by other people's words. In other words, they need to be prepared to "ignore naysayers, even if it's those that are closest to them." (Scott Brooks, 2004). Hence, being brave and also single minded can be seen as a requirement in this sense. The Belbin test results have identified me as being a 'specialist' where the key characteristic of this role is single mindedness. With me being a naturally stubborn person who doesn't usually change my mind having made my decisions, I believe I am suitable for this particular career choice.

## **2.3 Transferable skills**

In addition to the right personality and job specific skills, a wise employer will also look to see what transferable skills a perspective employee can offer. The term transferable skills simply refers to a set of generic skills in which an individual needs in order to be effective members of a flexible, adaptable and competitive work force and for life-long learning. "At the heart of it all, most employers are looking for people with common skills and characteristics." (Phil O'Reilly, 2009). Unlike job specific skills, transferable skills can be used in many ways, gained through past experiences. They are skills that can be used in a variety of jobs and situations. In order to be successful in Marketing, there is a repertoire of skills that are required for me to effectively do my job which include time management, people skills, leadership, teamwork and good organisational skills, amongst others.

Marketing jobs rely on the ability to sell products through interaction with a variety of different customers. Hence, good communication skills are

essential. As identified by my VARK test results, I have strong aural skills that would be especially useful in Marketing since the job demands that I have a good understanding of customers' needs. Being a good listener, and also someone that likes to see things from different perspectives, this would allow me to communicate effectively with my clients. My ability to communicate well has been greatly developed through my past employment as a Customer Service Representative at the Bank of China and private tutor, teaching Maths and various languages to children. Therefore, good communication now represents one of my key strengths. I am tri-lingual giving me versatility in my communication skills allowing me to talk with a wider customer range. Good presentation skills is also an important aspect of communication skill that is required in my future career since it is likely that it would be needed when promoting new products for instance. Fortunately, my presentational skills have been greatly enhanced over time through past experience in giving presentations during my past employment and current studies.

Having a good understanding of the products that I am promoting and any new products on the market is also very important in Marketing. Hence, it is necessary to have good research skills and also to have an open mind with regards to learning new material. Being a 'reflector' means that I am happy to absorb information from many different angles and use it to make my decisions, while being a 'specialist' as identified by my Belbin test results suggests that I have a natural eagerness to learn and expand my knowledge in topics at hand.

As I am likely to be working within a team in my workforce with similar targets, there is no doubt that good teamwork skills are a requirement. I believe that I possess good teamwork capabilities having already been in employment where good teamwork is a must, such as working with my colleagues in the promotion and deriving of comprehensive financial plans during my previous job. I also actively partake in various teamwork sports that have allowed me to effectively build on my teamwork skills.

It is my target to achieve a career as a Marketing manager in future, which will demand additional skills in order to be successful such as leadership and ability to motivate myself and others within my team. Being a Marketing manager will mean that I will receive greater responsibility, managing a team or making key decisions that will affect company success. Although I believe that I possess an ideal personality to undertake such a role in a company, I feel that I will need to improve myself further before I am ready. With regards to transferable skills, I believe my biggest weakness lies in my leadership qualities, being a less assertive individual that likes to hold back from participation in group activities. I understand that if I am to be a good leader, I will need to improve this aspect by playing a more prominent role in group activities and essentially 'stamping my authority'. I do not fully agree with the notion that leadership is a quality that can't be taught, and some people are just born leaders. I feel that leadership is a skill that can be improved through life-long learning and experience; hence I will thrive to improve myself in this respect. "As with all skills, they need to be learnt and no-one is born with them." (Phil O'Reilly, 2009).



## **Conclusion**

Life-long learning is an essential process for me to learn new skills and also to improve existing ones. It is also highly important for my personal development towards being a 'better' person, and one that is able to adapt to an ever-changing world. The constant acquisition of new transferable skills is also vital for career progression and to give myself a competitive advantage over those thriving for the same opportunities as myself. By using a variety of different tests, I have gained an appreciation of my own personality, learning preferences and strengths. This information, together with my interests makes me ideally suited for a future career in the Marketing field.