

12-1990

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The Relationship between the MBTI
and a Values Conflict Resolution

by

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B.A., University of North Carolina, 1989

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the University of Richmond

in Candidacy

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

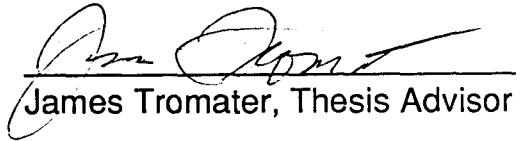
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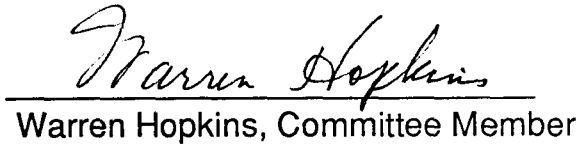
December, 1990

Richmond, Virginia

I certify that I have read this thesis and find that, in scope and quality, it satisfies the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.


James Tromater, Thesis Advisor


Scott Allison, Committee Member


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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between Jungian type personality dimensions and an intrapersonal values conflict resolution. Seventy subjects filled out the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) which assesses the sixteen Jungian personality types. Subjects returned in approximately two weeks to complete the Values Conflict Resolution Assessment (VCRA) which assesses the degree of their resolution about a particular values conflict. It was hypothesized that the thinking-feeling function of mind would positively correlate with scores on the Ethical-Emotional subscale and negatively correlate with scores on the Rational-Behavioral subscale of the VCRA. The result did not confirm our hypotheses. Reliability and a principal components analysis with a varimax rotation was performed to determine if the VCRA is an appropriate tool for the college undergraduate population. It is suggested that caution be used when interpreting the VCRA with undergraduates.

The Relationship Between the MBTI and a Values Conflict Resolution

Helping individuals resolve intrapersonal values conflicts is a major focus of mental health practitioners (Fretz, 1982). Basic training and main strategies concentrate on developing problem-solving skills and improving decision-making capabilities, but little research has addressed how personality variables affect our intrapersonal values conflicts. It seems reasonable that the value choices we make would be reflected in our personality and so the present study investigated the relationship between personality type and values conflict.

Terhune (1970) summarized the results of 30 studies which indicated a relationship between personality and conflict behavior. The emphasis in much of the past research has been on using the Prisoner's Dilemma game to study the interaction of individual differences and situational influences in interpersonal conflict

behavior. Terhune found that many subjects took the simulated prisoner's dilemma game no more seriously than a game of Monopoly. Rapoport and Chammah (1965) reported that in some prisoner's dilemma studies individual behavior potentials were masked by the interaction effect with the situation. When investigating personality effects in interpersonal conflict behavior, attitudinal measures, self-esteem, and global self-concept seemed to be the focus of assessment (Depetro, 1975; Fitzpatrick, 1975; Guziak, 1975).

An investigation which applied of the MBTI to modes of interpersonal conflict handling was proposed by Kilmann and Thomas (1975). The investigators found that a feeling preference on the TF scale was significantly related to accommodation in a conflict situation. Individuals who scored higher on feeling were less competitive, less assertive, and more cooperative. The investigators concluded that the Jungian dimensions, as measured by the MBTI, are useful in explaining and documenting psychological bases of

interpersonal behavior in conflict situations (Kilmann & Thomas, 1975).

The MBTI was developed to represent four personality dimensions: extroversion-introversion, sensing-intuition, thinking-feeling, and judging-perceiving (Myers, 1980). With relevance to this study, sensing-intuition and thinking-feeling, the MBTI classifies two distinct and sharply contrasting ways of perceiving: sensing and intuition. Sensing occurs when data is taken in through the five senses. Individuals with a sensing preference are interested in the actuality around them, rely on their own experiences, and examine all the facts (Myers, 1980; Keirsey & Bates, 1984). Intuition, the other perceiving process, involves the incorporation of ideas which the unconscious attaches to perceptions coming from the outside. Intuitive people are appreciative and perceptive of the views of others by relying on inner understanding, principles, ideals, and values (Myers, 1980; Keirsey & Bates, 1984).

Thinking and feeling are alternative ways of judging. Thinking is the logical, analytical, impersonal process of coming to conclusions. Thinking individuals govern their conduct by thought out conclusions, analyze the possibilities before making decisions, and are consistent in their behavior. Dwelling upon the details of the concrete case and upon the facts of experience are all attributes of the thinking preference. (Myers, 1980; Keirsey & Bates, 1984). In contrast, feeling individuals reach conclusions by bestowing on things a personal, subjective value. Feeling individuals strive for harmonious emotional relationships by making decisions which attend to the needs and goals of others and the values and principles of humanity. In summary, judging is concerned with making decisions and coming to conclusions, and in contrast, perceiving emphasizes the processes of becoming aware of people, things, and ideas.

In order to better understand the relationship of the MBTI to conflict behavior, it might be useful to narrow the scope in the wide

field of conflict and deal more specifically with values conflict.

Raths, Harmin, and Simon (1978) first introduced the terms "values clarification" and "value indicators" in the literature on conflict behavior. They developed a concept of values clarification to emphasize the human capacity for intelligent, self-directed behavior, and reserved the term "value" for feeling, attitudes, and beliefs that satisfy seven criteria: (1) prizing and cherishing, (2) publicly affirming, (3) choosing from alternatives, (4) choosing after thoughtful consideration of the consequences of each alternative, (5) choosing freely, (6) acting upon choices, and (7) acting with a pattern, repetition, and consistency. Raths et al. and Janis and Mann (1977) believe a good stable choice is chosen with thoughtful consideration from the available alternatives and that once the choice is made, the individual is committed and the behavior is repeated during one's life. For psychologists such as Bem (1970) and Bandura (1977), a choice is considered good if it feels right, is congruent with the person's

self-concept, and is compatible with the goals of humanity.

In the area of intrapersonal conflict, research has been very limited, inspiring Kinnier (1987) to develop the Values Conflict Resolution Assessment (VCRA) which determines how resolved (or conflicted) an individual is regarding a specific values conflict.

Kinnier felt that using attitudinal measures, self-esteem, and global self-concept to assess intrapersonal values conflicts could be problematic as the subjectivity of these self-report judgements may contaminate the findings. Kinnier reported that positive changes in self-concept or self-esteem do not determine that a person is more clarified about a particular values issue. Kinnier (1987) stated that before determining if an individual is resolved about a particular values conflict, a theoretically based criteria of a clarified value choice or a good decision must be established.

Based on the related literature on values clarification and decision making, Kinnier (1987) developed the VCRA to have two subscales,

Ethical-Emotional and Rational-Behavioral, which combine to give the total score of conflict resolution. In order to be valid, the VCRA must be able to discriminate between difficult and easy conflicts, that is, most subjects should be less resolved and obtain lower VCRA scores on conflicts that they perceive to be difficult than on conflicts that they perceive to be easy to resolve. As predicted, subjects score higher on their easy conflicts and evaluate their easy conflicts more positively than they evaluate their difficult conflict resolutions.

The higher the score the more clearly resolved the person is in regard to the specific values conflict. All subscores may be used to point out the resolution's strengths and weaknesses. For example, one person may be emotionally but not rationally resolved about a conflict issue.

The present study was designed to study the relationship between Jungian type personality dimensions on the MBTI and a values conflict resolution on the VCRA. It was hypothesized that the thinking-feeling

function of mind is highly positively correlated with the Ethical-Emotional subscale. The second hypothesis was that the thinking-feeling function of mind is negatively correlated with the Rational-Behavioral subscale. If the hypotheses are supported it would indicate that individuals with a feeling preference perceive the resolution to be emotionally fulfilling and congruent with self-concept. Feeling types would believe the resolution was consistent with personal principles, moral principles, and humanitarian goals. Individuals with a thinking preference would believe the resolution was thoughtfully formulated and consistently acted upon. Thinking types would be committed to the resolution after careful appraisal of alternatives and consideration of choice implications and consequences. The relationships between the sensing-intuition function of mind with the Ethical-Emotional subscale and Rational-Behavioral subscale were examined but no specific hypothesis was proposed since this analysis was intended to be

exploratory.

Method

Subjects

Seventy introductory psychology students from the University of Richmond served as subjects. Fifty-eight females participated in the study which included thirty-seven freshmen, sixteen sophomores, and five juniors. Twelve males participated in the study, all of whom were in the freshman class. All questionnaires were coded with identification numbers so that anonymity was assured.

Measures

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985). The MBTI, Form G, is presented in a self-report format in which the choice responses are marked according to how closely each describes the way one perceives oneself. The MBTI contains four separate indices, of which only sensing-intuition (SN) and thinking-feeling (TF) are relevant to this study.

Values Conflict Resolution Assessment (Kinnier, 1987). The VCRA is designed to assess the extent to which a person is resolved about a particular values conflict. The VCRA consists of three phases in which a subject (a) describes an intrapersonal conflict, (b) attempts to resolve the conflict in writing, and (c) evaluates the resolution by responding to 17 questionnaire items. Reliability coefficients were .81 for the Ethical-Emotional subscale, .76 for the Rational-Behavioral subscale, and .84 for the total score. Test-retest correlations were .84 for Ethical-Emotional, .88 for Rational-Behavioral, and .94 for total score.

Procedure

Subjects completed the MBTI in an Introductory Psychology class at the beginning of the semester, and returned during the next two weeks to complete the VCRA. The VCRA instructions encouraged subjects to make real-life commitments and take as much time as they needed to formulate the best resolution to their values conflict

at that particular time. Subjects were instructed to write a resolution which clearly indicated what they would do if they were going to carry it out.

Results

Analysis of the thinking-feeling function of mind as a predictor revealed no correlation with the obtained score on the Ethical-Emotional subscale, ($r = .01$, ns.), or the Rational-Behavioral subscale, ($r = .04$, ns). Analysis of the sensing-intuition function of mind as a predictor revealed no correlation with the obtained score on the Ethical-Emotional subscale, ($r = .05$, ns.), or the Rational-Behavioral subscale, ($r = .02$, ns). The correlations associated with this effect are presented in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

For the VCRA, the split-half reliability coefficients showed a

correlation of .69 between the halves of the test and the

Spearman-Brown formula produced a reliability coefficient of .82.

The mean scores on the seventeen items ranged from 3.3 to 4.4. See

Table 2 for means.

Insert Table 2 about here

A principal components analysis with a varimax rotation was performed on the test items. The analysis yielded six factors that had eigenvalues above 1.00 and accounted for 65% of the variance. After factor loadings were examined and a scree test was applied, two factors emerged as most distinct and accounted of 36% of the variance.

Insert Table 3 about here

Of the seven items that appeared on Kinnier's Ethical-Emotional subscale, four loaded on factor 2 and three loaded on factor 1. Factor 1 also included two of the items that appeared on Kinnier's Rational-Behavioral scale. All the remaining items had loadings below .30.

Discussion

The results from this study do not support the hypotheses that the thinking-feeling function of mind correlates with either the Ethical-Emotional or the Rational-Behavioral subscale of the VCRA. Furthermore, there was no supporting evidence to validate the findings of Kilmann and Thomas. One possible explanation is that Kilmann and Thomas were interested in modes of handling interpersonal conflict, whereas the VCRA measured resolutions of intrapersonal conflict, which may have accounted for the difference.

Other considerations centered around the nature of the VCRA. The VCRA measures how resolved an individual is on a particular values conflict at the present moment. The MBTI measures personality characteristics which are considered relatively stable and enduring factors influencing one's choices. Myers (1980) suggested using caution when applying the MBTI to high school students who are still learning and discovering the self and the world. A majority of the

introductory psychology students are just entering their first year of college which can be characterized as an emotional/transitional time period that is likely to impact on one's values. Berger (1988) reported that in early adulthood, personality conforms to social expectations and young adults are more susceptible to reinforcement and modeling of their peers. The first year of college could possibly be very influential in personality type development as many things are changing which may affect values. For example, new college environments, peer pressure, and freedom from parental discipline could be important factors influencing value choices.

In reviewing the content of the conflicts on the VCRA, a majority of student value choices focused on "partying" versus studying, spending time with friends/participating in school activities versus making good grades, or having a boyfriend versus the freedom of college life. Several students noted that conflict resolutions would probably be different after college. In comparison, Kinnier developed

the VCRA on graduate students whose conflicts primarily involved family commitments versus career aspirations. The concerns of undergraduates would therefore seem less seriously related to later value decisions than the graduate norm group, which could account for the lack of association with the MBTI as the value decisions may be subject to change. Means on the seventeen questions of the VCRA hovered around 3 and 4 in the likert-scaled format of the VCRA, 1 indicative of very resolved and 5 indicative of not very resolved. Even though these students were presently experiencing this conflict, the degree to which they were resolved was not significant. Perhaps undergraduate students registering at the office of Counseling and Psychological Services on campus would provide a sample with more important concerns and would provide a more valid test of the hypotheses.

Kinnier performed a principal components analysis which yielded nine factors that had eigenvalues above 1.00 and accounted for 71% of

the variance. The two distinct factors that emerged accounted for 31% of the variance. The first factor was measured by 12 items and the second factor consisted of 9 items. A principal components analysis with a varimax rotation of the data in the present study with the college undergraduate sample, yielded six factors that had eigenvalues above 1.00 and accounted for 65% of the variance. In congruence with Kinnier, the factor loadings were examined and a scree applied which produced two distinct factors accounting for 36% of the variance. One factor had three items which were similar to the Ethical-Emotional subscale as identified by Kinnier, and two items which loaded on Kinnier's Rational-Behavioral subscale. The other factor consisted of four items that identified with Kinnier's Ethical-Emotional factor. The Ethical-Emotional factor identified by Kinnier seemed to be splitting into a self/other dimension. In other words, how the resolution was affecting other people and society as opposed to the self.

Reliability in the present study was comparable to that reported by Kinnier, indicating the VCRA has internal consistency for value choices in conflict behavior. Kinnier reported that the VCRA was developed based on a small restricted sample, and our results supported his admonition to use caution in interpreting the results of the test to new populations. We need to find out more about what the VCRA is measuring by correlating the test with other criteria related to conflict resolution.

Good criteria for a clarified values choice needs to be established in order to determine whether a person is resolved about a values conflict. In applying the VCRA and the MBTI to the present sample, no relationships of values clarification were found with college students. Evidence was provided which indicated that the VCRA may be measuring something different in college undergraduates. Content of the undergraduate conflicts appeared to be different in nature from the graduate student conflicts, suggesting the use of caution when

interpreting the test with the undergraduate population.

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Table 1

Correlation of the MBTI with the VCRA

	<u>EE</u>	<u>RB</u>	<u>I</u>
T/F	.01	.04	.00
S/N	.05	.02	.04

*Note: All correlations were nonsignificant.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for the Seventeen Questions on the VCRA

Item	Mean	S.D
Q1	3.3	.93
Q2	3.9	.99
Q3	3.3	1.2
Q4	3.6	.89
Q5	3.7	.97
Q6	3.9	1.0
Q7	4.2	.99
Q8	4.2	.99
Q9	3.4	.98
Q10	3.9	1.0

Table 2 (continued)

Descriptive Statistics for the seventeen items on the VCRA

Item	Mean	S.D
Q11	4.2	.94
Q12	4.4	.92
Q13	3.3	1.1
Q14	4.3	.86
Q15	3.7	1.0
Q16	4.2	.80
Q17	4.0	1.2

Table 3

Rotated Factor the VCRA

	Factor	
Item	1	2
Q11	.76	0
Q7	.75	0
Q15	.65	0
Q9	.47	0
Q1	.38	0
Q6	0	.85
Q10	0	.80
Q8	0	.58

Table 3 (continued)

Rotated Factor Matrix for the VCRA

	Factor	
	1	2
Q2	0	.44
Q3	0	0
Q4	0	0
Q5	0	0
Q12	0	0
Q13	0	0
Q14	0	0
Q16	0	0
Q17	0	0
