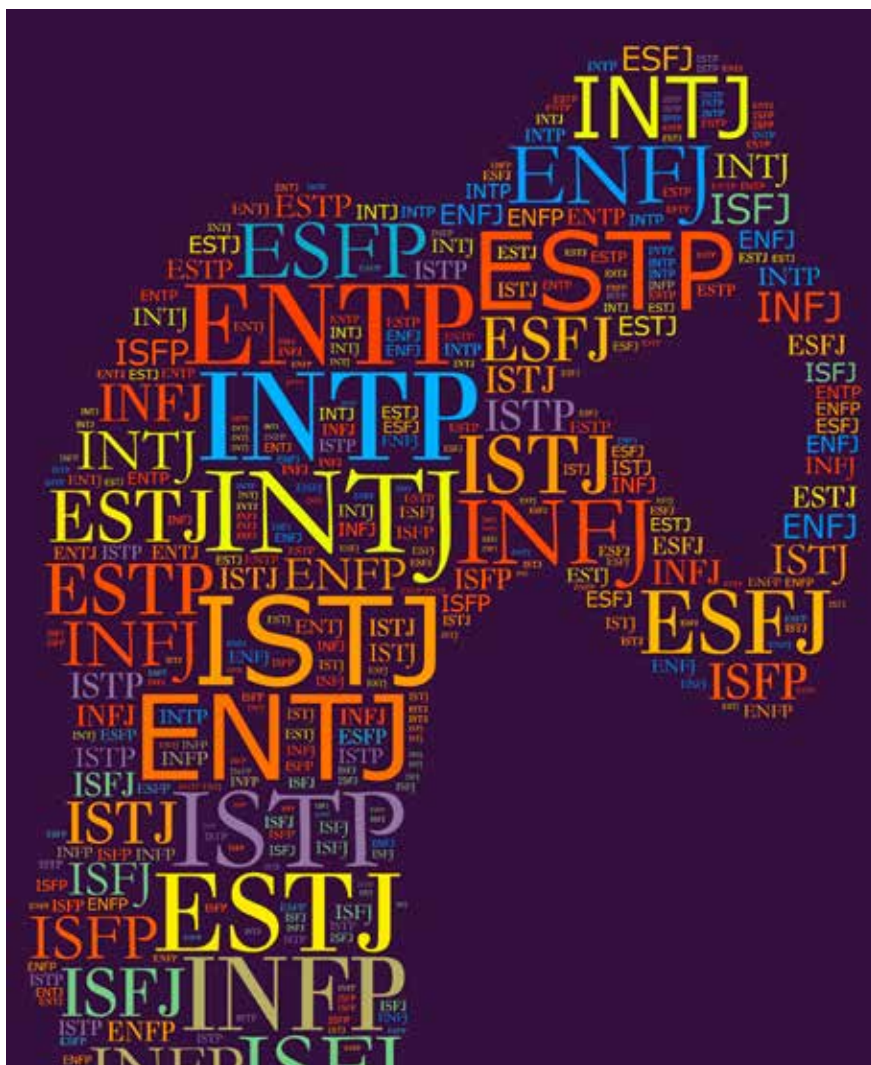


Research

Are Cork Counsellors Predictable Types?

By Hugh Morley



Introduction

Put simply, this research asks the question “what are ye like?” of a city’s counsellors and examines the implications of their answer. Specifically, it explores if the Jungian psychological types of I.A.C.P. accredited counsellors in Cork City bear out hypotheses from the literature about in-born

disposition to their work. An exploratory field study is taken to test the following four hypotheses

1. That these counsellors are more likely to employ feeling in decision-making than thinking.
2. That they are more likely to take an intuitive approach to

taking in information than a sensing approach.

3. That they are therefore likely to demonstrate what Myers (Myers et al., 1998, p.42) calls the “enthusiastic insightful” psychological type (equating to what Keirse (1998) calls the “idealist temperament”).
4. That this indicates a pre-disposition to the work of client-centered counselling and contra-indicates a pre-disposition to the work of quantitative research (which the conference in which the paper is delivered seeks to promote.)

Rationale for Research

The author seeks to highlight that should counsellors follow predictable Jungian psychological type patterns, there are important professional implications around potential group-think and collective blind spots which demand serious attention. There is also an implication for assessment of the suitability of applicants applying for professional courses.

Psychological Type & Occupational Choice

“Someday”, said Carl Jung, “psychologists will have to agree upon certain basic principles secure from arbitrary interpretation, if psychology is not to remain an unscientific and fortuitous conglomeration of individual opinions” (Jung, 1921, p.506). His psychological type theory, based on years of clinical observation, was a search for such basic principles. He was to hypothesise that people develop behavioural preferences in structured ways early in life and that these preferences are universal, inborn and lasting. Jung linked these behavioural preferences to vocational choices

(Jung, 1921). Indeed, he believed that all psychic energy had a teleological (or purposeful) function.

Based on Jung’s work and demonstrating the courage to modify it partially, Isabel Briggs Myers and her mother, Katherine Cook Briggs developed a psychometric profile for Jungian type theory called the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), and over time provided ample research evidence to support Jung’s pioneering hypothesis about behavioural preference. Although Jung’s observations were based on clinical observation of patients, the two women published their work for use by the wider public to assist in gaining improved self-awareness and an understanding of psychological type and dynamics (Briggs Myers & Myers, 1980, Briggs Myers, 1998). Their original purpose for doing this was to assess vocational suitability in war time America (Myers & Myers, 1980). From a young age, people are most interested in their preferred processes and particularly in exercising their dominant one “becoming more skilful and differentiated in their use” (Myers et al. 1998, p.27). “Most people, from infancy up, enjoy one more than the other... their enjoyment extends from the process itself to activities requiring the process” (Myers and Myers, 1980, p.2). It is possible to hypothesise therefore that we are born to our most sensible occupational choice (akin to the idea of “vocation”) based on preferred skills and qualities which will differentiate us as we use them, presuming we have the opportunity.

By the arrival of the twenty first century, “continuing research and development for more than 50 years has made the current MBTI® the most widely used instrument

for understanding normal personality differences” (Kennedy and Kennedy, 2004, p.38). For Carl Jung, it seems, the “someday” had arrived.

Myers Briggs Type Indicator

Specifically, the MBTI® measures “behavioural preference” on four *ipsative* (or forced-choice) axes of preference which are combined to result in one of 16 different psychological types, denoted using four letters. These “sort people into equally valuable groups to which in accordance with Jung’s theory, they already belong” (Myers, McCaulley, Quenk and Hammer, 1998, p.11).

The first axis of preference (E-I) assesses the favoured attitude a person adopts in sourcing their energy. An extravert (E) sources it from the outer world of objects, people and action whereas an introvert (I) sources it from within themselves, the inner world of ideas and reflection.

The second axis of preference (S-N) assesses the favoured function a person employs in the process of taking in information. A sensing person (S) takes in information through their five senses and focuses on practical facts and realistic details whereas an intuitive person (N) looks to the big picture, seeking patterns and underlying meaning, enjoying imagination, abstraction and possibility.

The third axis of preference

(T-F) assesses the favoured function a person employs in the process of decision making. A thinking person (T) tends to make objective decisions with a focus on reason and logic whereas a feeling person (F) tends to put an emphasis on feelings, personal values and needs. The fourth axis of preference (J-P) assesses the favoured attitude in dealing with the world. A judging person (J) tends to live a structured, controlled life, which is systematic, scheduled and organised whereas a perceiving person (P) prefers a spontaneous, exploratory, adaptive and flexible approach to life.

The four preferences selected by the candidate lands them in one of sixteen psychological types, each with a list of associated characteristics. *ESFJ* is a possible example (see figure 1).

“In terms of the theory, people may reasonably be expected to develop greater comfort and facility with the processes they prefer to use and with the attitudes in which they prefer to use them” (Myers et al. 1998, p.7). This does not mean that they cannot develop behaviours associated with their non-preferences, it simply takes more time and energy to do so. It is easier to swim with the tide than against it.

MBTI® and Temperament

In his book, “Please Understand Me II: Temperament, Character, Intelligence” Keirse (1998)

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ	ESFJ - Warm hearted, conscientious and cooperative. Want harmony in their environment, work with determination to establish it. Like to work with others to complete tasks accurately and on time. Loyal, follow through even in small matters. Notice what others need in their day to day lives and try to provide it. Want to be appreciated for who they are and what they contribute.
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP	
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP	
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ	

Figure 1. MBTI® Reported Types – with characteristics shown for one of the 16 types, *ESFJ*. (Based on Myers, 1998)

MBTI® Types	Keirsey Temperament	Characteristics
SP (Sensing with Perceiving)	Artisan	Want to be free to follow impulses, show skillfulness and make an impression
SJ (Sensing with Judging)	Guardian	Will want to belong, do duty and be responsible
NF (Intuition with Feeling)	Idealist	Wish to be authentic, unique, self-actualising and to aim for the best, need purpose and significance, like cooperation and look to act ethically, trust their intuition first, enjoy empathic relationships, gifted at unifying diverse people and helping individuals realise their potential
NT (Intuition with Thinking)	Rational	Wish to achieve, show competence and exercise ingenuity, like to understand operating principles and value expertise, consistency, precision and progressive ideas, tend towards pragmatic and utilitarian action, trust their logic and analysis first, enjoy complexity, theory and models, research

Figure 2. MBTI® mapped to temperament

mapped temperament to the Myers Briggs Type Indicator®. While type theory and temperament theory are separate ways to explain personality, they have similar constructs (see figure 2).

It is of particular interest in this study to contrast idealist and rational temperaments and they are therefore presented above in more detail. The former is the temperament predicted for counsellors in the literature and the latter is the temperament most suited to the activity of research which the conference seeks to promote. Interestingly, the author contends that only the idealist temperament holds Maslow's self-actualisation as a conscious goal. Idealists alone value themselves to the degree that they achieve this aim. It is speculated by Keirsey (1998) that Maslow and Rogers, two giants of humanistic counselling were of idealist temperament.

Characteristics

Statistically, the idealist

temperaments "predominate among providers of psychological services, are overrepresented among client-centered psychologists, and are overrepresented among students seeking counselling". This research is attributed to Quenk & Quenk

(1996) and is just one of many studies looking at MBTI® profiles amongst counsellors. Newman (as cited in Myers et al., 1998, p.247) for example reported that intuitive types (N) scored significantly higher than sensing types (S) on ability to identify implied meanings. DiTiberio (as cited in Myers et al., 1998, p.247) found intuitive types (N) higher for covert feeling messages. Both skills are useful in counselling.

In each of the following studies, a significantly higher number of Feeling preferences were recorded than Thinking preferences, which seemed to confirm the hypothesis that the profession attracts more Feeling than Thinking types. There was also a predominance of Feeling (F) paired with intuition (N), the "enthusiastic insightful" psychological type (equating to the Idealist temperament) (see figure 3).

According to Tieger and Barron-Tieger (1995), "it is no coincidence that more NFs become therapists than people of any other temperament. Understanding people, helping them to grow,

Researcher	Population Studied For Psychological Type Patterns
Casas & Hamlet (1984)	Canadian student counsellors were assessed in a clinical training center to determine client-counsellor compatibility.
Coan (1979)	Psychologists were assessed in this examination of personal and theoretical pathways.
McCaulley (1977)	Psychiatrists and child psychiatrists were assessed to identify typology patterns.
Newman (1979)	Counselling students were assessed to examine if they used their typology in counselling.
Passmore et al. (2010)	Counsellors and business coaches were assessed to explore differences and the implications for practice for therapists and coaches: It posed the question: are executive coaches really like counsellors?
Beck*	Counselling supervisees
Levell*	Counsellor trainees
Levin*	Psychotherapists of various orientations
Terrill*	Secondary school counsellors

Figure 3. Topics researched for type patterns within counselling arena

*as cited in Briggs Myers et al., 1998, p.247

develop and become happier in their lives is a central drive for many NFs (p.101)". Myers and Myers (1980) comment that "the personal warmth and commitment with which the NF people seek and follow up a possibility are impressive. They are both enthusiastic and insightful and they are most likely to find success and satisfaction in work that calls for creativity to meet a human need. They may excel in counselling, clinical psychology, psychiatry" (p.3). Indeed the work of A.L. Hammer (1993) shows that counselling is an occupation recommended for psychological types INFJ, INFP and ENFP in particular, based on psychological type surveys.

Research Design

The research approach in this local study is quantitative, using respondent-completed questionnaires to complete an analytic survey. The outputs of these questionnaires lent themselves to quantitative analysis and trend identification. The research is deductive, testing a theoretical structure through empirical observation. The research is nomothetic with "an emphasis on the importance of basing research upon systematic protocol and technique" (Gill & Johnson, 1997, p.37).

Population & Sampling

A sampling strategy is determined by defining the research population (registered I.A.C.P. counsellors and psychotherapists listed as operating in Cork City on www.iacp.ie) and by designing a means of accessing a random and representative sample. This enables the outcomes from the sample to be generalised to the larger population with a degree of confidence.

As of March 2017 there were

130 I.A.C.P. accredited practising counsellors in Cork City according to the I.A.C.P. website. The population size is therefore of this order. The sample size needed to achieve my goals is calculated statistically, tolerating a margin of error of 15% with a confidence level of 90%. The standard deviation is set at 50%, using statistical formula, the necessary sample size is 25 using the following sample size formula:

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{\frac{z^2 \cdot p(1-p)}{e^2}}{1 + \frac{z^2 \cdot p(1-p)}{e^2 N}}$$

Desired Confidence Level	z-score
80%	1.28
85%	1.44
90%	1.65
95%	1.96
99%	2.58

Where N = population size = 130, and e = margin of error = 0.15, and z = 1.65 (where z is the no. of standard deviations a given proportion is away from the mean as per the above table) and p = .5 standard deviations.

Questionnaire

Psychological type was assessed by the self-scoring version of MBTI® Step 1 (European English Edition), a proprietary questionnaire with forced-choice item format across 88 items using a simple approach to scoring, yielding raw scores which generate preference scores (Kendal, 1998). It requires trained administration and marking, a training which the author has received from its publishers, Oxford Psychological Press. The same questionnaire is available online

on OPPAssessment® (www.opp.com) and is made available as an alternative to all participants.

Respondents

Most names on www.iacp.ie are accompanied by full contact details. The author approached by email and by voicemail those of the 130 member population for Cork City who have listed both email and phone number. They were given a choice of doing the questionnaire online via OPPAssessment or by posting a questionnaire to fill out and a stamp-addressed envelope for its return to me, should they prefer.

Ethics

The IICP Education and Training Research Ethics Committee approved the research prior to commencement. The author also complied with the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy Code of Ethics and Professional Practice in relation to contacting potential participants. Potential risk to participants has been considered and ameliorated. Complete anonymity and confidentiality was imperative. It was also essential that the author held a current license for use of MBTI® product as it is a copyrighted product and photocopying of questionnaires is strictly prohibited. In looking for up to 25 participants to return complex questionnaires, the author did not offer any reward or inducement for their return.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data from the sample was collected and tabulated. The study needed a means to compare the sample with a base population in order to be able to test our hypotheses. We want to find out if our survey sample is representative of the general population, or significantly different in some way.

Because our survey is done in Cork, a suitable base population would be an Irish norm group. The best data available currently is a group of Irish nationality English-speaking OPPassessment respondents (n=7,710) taken from Oxford Psychological Press (2016). These are people from all walks of life (though there may be a professional bias due to the frequent use of OPPassessment by corporations.) We will assume also that this represents our client base. We can then employ Pearson's chi-square and Fisher's exact test to finish. These are statistical tests commonly used to see if there is good fit between observed sample data and data from a much larger base population.

Conclusions

Our first hypothesis, that I.A.C.P. accredited practising counsellors in Cork City are more likely to employ feeling (F) than thinking (T) in the process of decision-making, is verified with a confidence level of 90%. Even with a margin of error of 15%, the 88% of the sample expressing this preference (over 3 times the base population) makes it a safe conclusion.

Our second hypothesis, that I.A.C.P. accredited practising counsellors in Cork City are more likely to take an intuitive (N) approach than a sensing (S) approach to taking in information, is verified with a confidence level of 90%. Even with a margin of error of 15%, the 76% of the sample expressing this preference (over 1 and $\frac{3}{4}$ times the base population) makes it a safe conclusion.

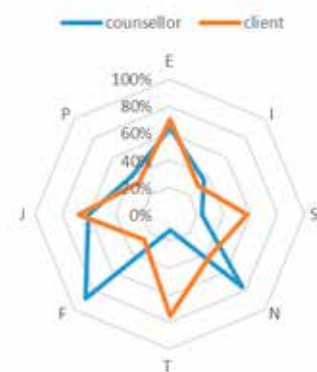
Our third hypothesis, that I.A.C.P. accredited practising counsellors in Cork City are more likely to demonstrate the "idealist temperament" than any other temperament, is verified with a confidence level of 90%. Even

with a margin of error of 15%, the 76% of the sample expressing this preference (over 6 times the base population) makes it a safe conclusion.

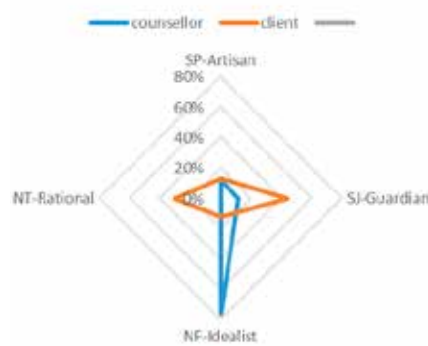
Our fourth hypothesis, that I.A.C.P. accredited practising counsellors in Cork City are predisposed to the work of client-centred counselling is suggested, but not proven, by the emphatic outcome of our third hypothesis above in conjunction with the work of Quenk & Quenk (1996) who showed that the idealist temperament predominates among providers of psychological services".

Professional Implications

Our Behavioural Preferences



Our Temperaments



Presuming our clients represent the general population, they are very different to their counsellors in how they take in information.

What a counsellor knows intuitively may need to be explained step by step to a sensing client. While a counsellor may want a client to get in touch with feelings, the client may legitimately want the counsellor to take a more rational approach. In other words, with self-awareness of our own preferred styles, we are best to tune in to the client's style and then flex our approach if necessary so that we are better understood by our clients. Where relational depth is a (and perhaps "the") key differentiator in counselling, this can only be facilitated where a counsellor has an awareness and model for understanding diversity in behavioural preference and knowing how to build bridges. Intuition is useful here.

Presuming our clients represent the general population, their temperaments are often very different to ours. According to Keirsey (1998), the wish to be authentic, to self-actualise and to aim for the best are (in the round) functions of the counsellor's Idealist temperament, and such ideas may not initially attract Artisans who will want to be free to follow impulses, show skillfulness and make an impression, may not initially attract Guardians who will want to belong, do duty and be responsible and may not initially attract Rationals who will want to achieve, show competence and exercise ingenuity. Again, we need to be aware of the basic differences when looking to relate, and be prepared to flex our style.

The need to appreciate diversity may emerge for counsellors, for which they will need special awareness and an ability to communicate across type preference. According to McLeod (2001) "Counselling and psychotherapy research is different from contemporary medical and pharmaceutical industry research,

in which breakthroughs are made in laboratories and then tested in the field; in counselling and psychotherapy, innovations and new ideas emerge from practice". If our profession is "bottom-up" in its approach, then the psychological type of the counsellor will have a huge bearing on practice development.

This research has added to the already plentiful work done on verifying the MBTI® as a self-assessment and self-awareness tool for would-be counsellors. While it is not recommended as a recruitment psychometric, it is certainly useful for counsellor personal development purposes. The MBTI® may be a useful self-assessment and self-awareness tool which might lower the drop-out rate in counselling and psychotherapy education.

The study seems to demonstrate that there are few counsellors who have a natural preference for the rational, realistic and detailed world of quantitative research, requiring S and T preferences. Counsellors tend to be Idealists, with a preference for qualitative, intuitive approaches. It is probably safe to infer they would prefer deductive than inductive research. Given the need for quantitative research to justify their work for both client and funding purposes, it is important they recognise their intrinsic bias against such research and act against that bias. While we all have particular behavioural preferences, this should never be used to limit our capacity as professionals. ☺

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