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Correlation of Myers-Briggs Personality Traits Inventory and Moral Decision Making

Kamden Havens⁶

Myers-Briggs personality trait inventory was examined against modified moral scenarios by philosopher, Victor Grassian. The research conducted was a non-directional correlational study between personality types, extroversion/introversion, observation/intuition, thinking/feeling, judging/prospecting and the five moral scenarios presented. There was no significant correlation between any of the personality traits and any of moral scenarios.

Part of the human experience is having to make difficult decisions in life. Whether it is to experience something for yourself or make a decision that will impact the life of another, we are faced with these choices. There are many systems and facets that are apart of making different moral decisions such as, who is involved, what are the outcomes for either the decider or the people involved in the scenario, etc. According to Grassian (1992) there is a right way and a wrong way to make this decision. Grassian's model demonstrates that a person in a situation has two choices within a given scenario: one choice provides the decision maker with an outcome that would be beneficial to them, whereas the other choice would not be. If the decider chooses something that is more beneficial to the decider then, he or she has made the incorrect decision, versus if he or she chooses the least beneficial of the two decisions, then he or she has made the correct decision (1992).

This model for moral decision making may seem simple to some, but in a study done in 1976 by Candee, D suggest that moral decision-making is based off a set of 6 stages modeled after Kohlberg's moral judgement theory. Each stage is labeled as to how morality is developed in people and is then sorted in to five stages; obedience and punishment, instrumental relativists,

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personal concordance, law and order, social contract and individual principles (Candee, 1976; Haan, Smith & Block, 1969). Before distributing the study, Candee hypothesized that those who have an increase of Kohlberg's moral judgement theory structure and choice in moral reasoning.

To conduct this study, 372 participants, mostly in the New England area, were recruited and consisted between the ages of 17 to 25. Participants were given a 20 question survey with different moral scenarios pertaining to the Watergate and Leutenant Calley scandal, such as 'Was Hunt and Libby's break-in at Ellsberg's psychiatrist justified? (No)' (Candee, 1976). Upon the conclusion of the survey and measuring the data by chi-square, Candee found there was a significant positive correlation between moral structure and choice $F(3,356)= 59.37, p < .001$, For the stages measure on the rights index, stages two through five yielded means of 48, .57, .70, and .86 (1976).

Another study that used Kohlberg Moral Judgement Scale was Haan, Smith and Block in 1969. This study conducted aimed to focus on identifying moral types of college youth and Peace Corps volunteers and examine the difference between each of the five stages type of political-social behavior, family background, ideal self, etc (Haan, Smith & Block, 1969). For the purposes in relation to this present study, just the correlation between the stage types and means of ideal self-description will be reported.

Before beginning the study, Haan, Smith and Block recruited a total of 957 subjects that had been sent letters randomly at school or within their organization at University of California, San Francisco State College and the Peace Corps volunteers in training. Each participant was given 5 out of 10 stories from Kohlberg's scale and was then classified into the respective stage of moral choice, which was categorized into one of three broader categories; pre-moral, conventional and principled (Haan, Smith & Block, 1969). To measure the ideal self, participants

were asked to self-report as having or not having selective personality traits, i.e; ambitious, aloof, stubborn, etc.

After concluding the study, results yielded a positive difference between moral stage and the ideal self-description. Haan, Smith and Block found that participants who scored into the principled category of moral structure also show a 'firm sense of autonomy' in regard to life, tend to be more open about who they actually are, and illustrate high social activity (1969). For participants who fall under the conventional category, there was a high demonstration of personal confidence in self, report modelling self after parents, and tend to be politically/socially uninvolved (Haan, Smith & Black, 1969). The last category of pre-moral participants measured as the highest social participants, are forthcoming about who they are and who they want to be and were dubbed the most 'radical' (Haan, Smith & Black, 1969).

Somewhat examined and reported by Hann, Smith and Black, was the source of personal identification from family background. Researchers, Vukasovic and Brakto expanded upon further in a meta- analysis of genetic influence on heritability as a possible explanation for personality. These researchers examined about 134 published primary studies that totaled about 100,000 participants from 12 different countries (Vukasovic & Brakto, 2015).

Upon examining direct heritability, there was no significant correlation overall, with one study showing a small correlation in extroversion and introversion being heritable (Vukasovic & Brakto, 2015). Another facet examined was the personality being genetic was the use of three different personality model scales to measure personality, which all concluded there was no correlation between any of the models and heritability of personality (Vukasovic & Brakto, 2015). The final correlation tested was to see if there was a gender difference in heritability of personality, which again yielded no significant results (Vukasovic & Brakto, 2015).

Method

Participants

Participants were of all ages (18 plus) and were either Lindenwood University students or were parts of the general population. Some of the Lindenwood University students were recruited from the Lindenwood Participant Pool, also known as the LPP, which includes introductory courses in departments such as psychology, anthropology and sociology. Every participant recruited through the LPP was either over the age of 18 or had a parent permission form from the LPP if they were under the legal age of 18. The LPP students were recruited via internet with the survey being link to in to the program Sona Systems (47). The other Lindenwood University students were recruited through fliers posted around campus and provided a direct link to the survey (0). Participants recruited through the general public were recruited through a direct link posted on Psi Chi (0). Each participant recruited through the LPP received one extra credit point toward their LPP eligible course. Participants recruited through survey fliers or Psi Chi received no compensation for their time.

Materials and Procedures

The study was conducted by an online survey posted on Qualtrics.com. In order to access the survey, participants who were recruited through the LPP had to log into Sona Systems where they saw my study posted. Upon selecting the study, participants would then be redirected to the survey in Qualtrics. Lindenwood University participants recruited by flier, upon receiving the link would then enter the URL in to their internet search bar and be directed to the survey on Qualtrics. (see Appendix A) Participants recruited through Psi Chi were provided a link upon viewing active studies and were directed to the survey in Qualtrics upon selecting the survey. Before participating in the stud, the participants read the consent statement and only those who were at least 18 years old or were minors who have a parental consent filed with the

LPP who consented to taking part on the study were directed to the survey questions. (see Appendix B)

The first part of the survey was a measurement of the Myers-Briggs Traits Inventory personality type designed by Briggs and Briggs-Myers (2015). Personality type on this survey is measured by; introversion/extraversion, intuition/observation, thinking/feeling, and judging/prospecting. Introversion and extraversion is a measurement of the mind and defines how we are to interact with our environment. Intuition and observation is a measurement of energy and defines where our mental energy is directed. Thinking and feeling is a measurement of our environment and defines how we make decisions and cope with our emotions. Finally, judging and prospecting is a measurement of strategy and defines our approach to work, planning and decision making. (The Myers & Briggs Foundation, 2014) This portion of the survey consisted of 70 multiple choice questions. Each question asked the participants to select one of two answers about factors such as how they interact in social settings, personal preferences, and who they are as a person. (see Appendix C)

Upon finishing the personality portion of the survey, the participants were then presented with five moral dilemma questions modified from Victor Grassian's Moral Reasoning: 2nd Edition (Grassian 1992). This portion of the survey asked participants to respond to these morally ambiguous scenarios by selecting one of the two answers presented. One answer was considered the correct answer while the other was considered the incorrect answer. The correct answer to each scenario was based on the moral outcome being least beneficial to the decider whereas the incorrect answer would be the moral outcome being most beneficial to the decider. Each participant selected the answers based on their own personal analysis of the dilemma presented and took participants an estimated 10 to 15 min to complete. (see Appendix D)

After the completion of the survey, participants were then given a feedback letter restating the hypothesis of the study along with what the study specifically was measuring. Each participant was informed as well to his or her privacy and provided the primary investigators contact information as well as the faculty supervisor's information to answer any potential questions he or she may have had. (see Appendix E)

Results

Each adjoining personality trait, extroversion and introversion ($M= 1.79$, $SD= .62$), intuition and observation ($M= 1.43$, $SD= .45$), thinking and feeling ($M=1.70$, $SD= .46$) and lastly, judging and prospecting ($M= 1.17$, $SD= .38$) were all measured against each of the 5 moral decisions. Each moral decision is reported as follows; Moral A ($M=1.51$, $SD= .51$), moral B ($M= 1.64$, $SD= .49$), moral C ($M= 1.30$, $SD= .46$) moral D ($M= 1.28$, $SD= .43$), and finally moral E ($M= 1.26$, $SD= .44$).

For extroversion and introversion there was a weak, negative correlation between moral a, ($r= -.2$), moral b, ($r= -.004$), moral d, ($r= -.14$) moral e, ($r= -.04$), and a weak positive correlation between moral c ($r=.15$).

For intuition and observation yielded a weak positive correlation between moral a ($r= .07$), moral b ($r= .02$), moral c ($r= .004$) and moral c ($r= .13$) while having a weak negative moral d ($r= -.01$)

For thinking and feeling there was a weak negative correlation between moral b ($r= -.006$), moral c ($r= -.19$), moral d ($r= -.19$) and moral e ($r= -.26$) and a weak positive correlation between moral a ($r= .12$)

For judging and prospecting there was a weak negative correlation between moral b ($r= -.13$), and moral c ($r= -.05$). There was a weak positive correlation between moral d ($r= .02$) and moral e ($r= .25$). There was only a moderately positive correlation between Moral a ($r= .33$)

Overall, there was no significant strong correlation between any one the personality traits and any moral decisions made, thus rejecting my null hypothesis of being a significant correlation.

Discussion

In the future, I'm unsure if I'd like to continue with this research topic. If I were to, I would experiment using different morality models like using Kohlberg's model or pulling from other philosopher's ideals of 'what is moral'. I'd also would consider examining the moral difference between generations to see if there is a trend in differences instead of focusing on personality. After reading my literature; I believe it has changed my initial idea that there was some significance between personality and the moral decisions we make.

A few limitations to this research were potentially the number of participants; having more of a sample to pull from could be more effective. Another limitation could have been the questions themselves that were given. I acknowledge that they 'right answer' could have been too easy to figure out by selecting one of two answers, instead I think a open answer could have been more effective. As far as my participants as I was reviewing my data, many of them had only taken about ten to five min to complete the survey, when it really should have been around twenty min to complete. This leads me to believe people were just clicking answers, especially since every participant was in the LPP, to just receive the extra credit point instead of accurately self-reporting.

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Appendix A
Survey Flier

**HOW DO YOU
MAKE
DECISIONS?**

AND DOES IT RELATE TO
YOUR **MBTI** PERSONALITY?

**Take part in an online survey that will
measure your Myers-Briggs personality type
and how that relate to HOW you make moral
decisions.**

Follow the link on to any internet
browser. Direct any following
questions/ comments to the
student researcher Kamden Havens
at ch381@lindenwood.edu

Kamden Havens at
ch381@lindenwood.edu
https://lindenwood.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_25JR3RUBP1a9Pk9

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Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Statement

Informed Consent Form

Introduction

The researcher conducting this project is an undergraduate student at Lindenwood University who is enrolled in the PSY40400: Advanced Research Methods course. The primary purpose of this research project is to find if there is a correlation between your Myers-Briggs personality type and the moral decisions you make. The preliminary findings of this project may be presented at the Student Research Conference April 18, 2018 at Lindenwood University.

Procedures

This survey asks you to respond to a few demographic items to gather a general knowledge of the participants. After the quick demographic portion, the first part of the survey will begin and will be a series of questions to determine your personality type from Harley Friedman, MD at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. The second portion of the survey will present a set of dilemma scenarios modified from Victor Grassian's book; Moral Reasoning. This survey is to be conducted online using a Qualtrics-created survey and should take between 20-25 minutes.

Risks/Discomforts

There are no known risks associated with this study. You are free to skip questions or withdraw anytime without penalty if you do not feel comfortable completing any part of this survey.

Compensation and Benefits

If you are recruited through the LPP, 1 bonus point will be accredited toward your LPP participating course. If you are recruited via Psy Chi or in person flier, then there will be no compensation presented. You will also gain more knowledge about yourself and if you are interested in learning more about this project or would like to learn about the results of this project once completed, please contact Kamden Havens at ch381@lindenwood.edu.

Confidentiality

No personally identifying information will be collected, including your IP Address. All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregate format (by reporting only combined results and never reporting individual ones). All questionnaires will be concealed, and no one other than the researchers listed below and their course professor, Dr. Michiko Nohara-LeClair will have access to individualized data. The data collected will be stored in the HIPPA-compliant, Qualtrics-secure database until it has been deleted by the primary investigator.

Questions about the Research

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Kamden Havens at ch381@lindenwood.edu or direct your inquiries to the faculty supervisor, Dr. NoharaLeClair at mnohara-leclair@lindenwood.edu or (636)949-4371.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below. Clicking on the "Agree" button below indicates that:

- You have read the above information
- Voluntarily agree to participate
- If you were recruited through the LPP; you are at least 18 years of age or you are a minor but have a signed parental consent form filed with the LPP Office if need be.
- If you were not recruited through the LPP; you are at least 18 years of age.

I have read, understood, and printed a copy of, the above consent form and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Agree

Do Not Agree

Appendix C

Myers-Briggs Traits Inventory Survey Portion

Please read following questions in regards to your personality type and select one of the two answers below. Answer with how you truly are and not how you want to be. There is no penalty for how you answer.

At a party do you:

Interact with man, including strangers

Interact with few, known to you

Are you more:

Realistic than speculative

Speculative than realistic

Is it worse to:

Have your "head in the clouds"

Be "in a rut"

Are you more impressed by:

Principles

Emotions

Are you more drawn toward the:

Convincing

Touching

Do you prefer to work:

To deadlines

Just "whenever"

Do you tend to choose:

Rather Carefully

Somewhat impulsively

At parties do you:

Stay late, with increasing energy

Leave early with decreased energy

Are you more attracted to:

Sensible people

Imaginative people

Are you more interested in:

What is actual

What is possible

In judging others are you more swayed by:

Laws

Circumstances

In approaching others is your inclination to be somewhat:

Objective

Personal

Are you more:

Punctual

Leisurely

Does it bother you more having things:

Incomplete

Completed

In your social groups do you:

Keep up with other's happenings

Get behind on the news

In doing ordinary tasks are you more likely to:

Do it the 'usual' way

Do it your own way

Writers should:

Be forward with what they mean and say

Use analogies as expressions

What appeals to you more:

Consistency of thought

Harmonious human relationships

Are you more comfortable in making:

Logical judgements

Value judgements

Do you want things:

Settled and decided

Unsettled and open

Would you say you are more:

Serious and determined

Easy-going

When making a phone call do you:

Adjust to however the conversation goes

Rehearse what you'll say beforehand

Facts:

'Speak for themselves'

Illustrate principles

Are visionaries:

Somewhat annoying

Rather fascinating

Are you more often:

A cool-headed person

A warm-hearted person

Is it worse to be:

Unjust

Merciless

Should one usually let event occur:

By careful selection and choice

Randomly and by chance

Do you feel better about:

Having purchased

Having the option to buy

In company do you:

Initiate Conversation

Wait to be Approached

Common sense is:

Rarely questionable

Frequently questionable

Children often do not:

Make themselves useful enough

Exercise their fantasies enough

In making decisions do you feel more comfortable with:

Guidelines

Intuition

Are you more:

Firm than gentle

Gentle than firm

Which is more admirable:

The ability to organize and be methodical

The ability to adapt and make do

Do you put more value on:

Infinite

Open-mindedness

Does new and non-routine interaction with others:

Stimulate and energize you

Tax your reserves

Are you more frequently:

A practical sort of person

An imaginative sort of person

Are you more likely to:

Try to see how others are useful to you

Understand others point of view

Is it more satisfying:

To discuss an issue thoroughly

To arrive at an agreement for an issue

Which rules you more:

Your head

Your heart

Are you more comfortable with work that is:

Done under a contract

Done under a casual basis

Do you tend to look for:

Order and neatness

Casualty and disorder

Do you prefer:

Many acquaintances

Few close friends

Do you go more by:

Facts

Principles

Are you more interested in:

Production and distribution

Design and research

Which do you find more complimentary:

'You are a very logical person.'

'You are a very sentimental person.'

What do you value more about yourself:

You are unwavering

You are devoted

Do you more often prefer the:

Final and unalterable statement

Tentative and preliminary statement

Are you more comfortable:

After the decision

Before the decision

Do you:

Speak easily and at length with stranger

Find little to say to strangers

Are you more likely to trust your:

Experience

Hunch

Do you feel:

More practical

More ingenious

Which person is more to be complimented-one of:

Clear reason

Strong feeling

Are you inclined more to be:

Fair-minded

Sympathetic

Is it preferable mostly to:

Make sure things are arranged

Just let things happen

In relationships should most things be:

Re-negotiable

Random and circumstantial

When the phone rings do you:

Hasten to get it first

Wait and hope someone else will answer

Do you prize more in yourself:

A strong sense of reality

A vivid imagination

Are you more drawn to:

'The big picture'

Small details

Which seems the greater error:

To be too passive

To be too objective

Do you see yourself as basically:

Hard-headed

Soft-hearted

Which situation appeals to you more:

The structured and scheduled

The unstructured and unscheduled

Are you a person that is more:

Routinized

Whimsical

Are you more inclined to be:

Easily approachable

Somewhat reserved

In writings do you prefer:

The more literal

The more figurative

Is it harder for you to:

Identify with others

Utilize others

Which do you wish more for yourself:

Clarity of reason

Strength of compassion

Which is the greater fault:

Being indiscriminate

Being critical

Do you prefer a:

Planned event

Unplanned event

Do you tend to be more:

Deliberate

Spontaneous

Appendix D

Victor Grassian's Modified Moral Scenarios

Moral Decisions

Please read these morally ambiguous scenarios and select one of the two answers. Please answer with how you truly feel or would do since there is no penalty for how you answer. All scenes depicted are fiction.

You are protesting peacefully at a local event. An officer is going to arrest a friend of yours if you keep protesting. You both protest to the arrest, but the officer tells you that if continue to protest he'll arrest a random citizen as well as your friend. If you stop, then he'll only arrest your friend. What do you do?

Stop protesting and let the officer arrest your friend. Keep protesting and let the officer arrest your friend and the citizen.

Your parent or guardian was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer which only one treatment has proven successful. The treatment is very costly, however, and you, even with the help of friends, cannot afford it. There is a miserly and eccentric old woman known to store her wealth in her home. If only there was way you could get some of the wealth. She has so much, you know she probably wouldn't even notice it. It is her property, but your guardian still has so much life to experience. If there was a way you could steal the money without any punishment you would right? So, what would you do?

Steal the money and get your parent treatment.

Don't steal the money and let the cancer take over

A friend confides in you that he/she have committed a particularly heinous crime and you promise to never tell. Upon over hearing the news on television, you find that an innocent person is accused of the crime and you plead your friend to give himself/herself up. He/she refuse and remind you of the promise you made. What should you do?

Allow the innocent person to be accused.

Break your promise and friendship.

Your co-worker, admits hating his/her partner and wanting he/she dead, puts poison in his/her coffee, thereby killing his/her partner. Your best friend also admits to hating his/her partner and wants he/she dead. One day, your best friend accidentally puts rat poison in his/her partner's coffee thinking it's creamer. Your best friend has the antidote and knows he/she are the

only one that can save his/her partner. Is your best friend's failure to act just as bad as your co-worker's action?

No

Yes

You are responsible for hiring a new associate for your workplace. Your best friend applies and is qualified, but someone else applies who seems to be more qualified. You want to give the job to your friend, knowing if you don't, this could ruin your friendship since you know he/she really need it. Maybe the more qualified candidate needs it too, you note? Who do you give the job too?

The more qualified candidate, risking your friendship.

Your best friend, risking being unethical.

Appendix E

Feedback/ Debriefing Letter

Feedback/Debriefing Statement

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The primary purpose of this project was for the primary researcher to examine any relation between personality traits to your moral decisions. The questions on this particular survey allowed me to find out your person personality type and present morally ambiguous scenarios. The personality type is modeled using the Myers-Briggs introversion/extroversion, intuition/observation, thinking/feeling, and judging/prospecting. The model to measure moral decisions is Victor Griassian's model of whether the decisions made is the right or wrong decisions.

Being this is a correlational study, I am examining a non-directional correlation hypothesis between Myers-Briggs personality type and moral decisions.

Although I cannot provide you with individual findings due to the fact that this survey was conducted anonymously, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about this study. Please feel free to contact me using the information below.

Thank you again for contributing data to my research!

Primary Researcher: Kamden Havens ch381@lindenwood.edu

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Michiko Nohara-LeClair 636-949-4371
mnohara-leclair@lindenwood.edu