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Jennifer C. Miller
University of Northern Iowa

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A Study of the Personality Types of Presidential Scholars at the University of Northern Iowa

By Jennifer C. Miller

History of Psychological Types:

No two people are the same: they think differently, they believe differently, they behave differently. These differences are not at all difficult to see, and it is precisely these variations in behavior and attitude that define a person's personality. This theory (that people are different in fundamental ways) was explored in great depth in the 1920s by psychologist Carl Jung. According to Jung, people have the same multitude of instincts (archetypes) which drive them from within. No one instinct is any more important than another, but what is important is our preference for how we "function" (Keirse3). Because a person's preference for a given "function" is characteristic, people may be "typed" by this preference (Keirse3). Thus, Jung invented the "function types" or "psychological types."

History of the Presidential Scholarship Program at the University of Northern Iowa:

This scholarship program was developed in 1985 at the University to recognize students coming to the school who had high academic and leadership abilities. The scholarship is awarded to fifteen high school seniors every year. The process to choose who recipients is a lengthy and involved one. First, hundreds of applications are sent to eligible high school seniors. To be considered "eligible," the students must have a 3.3 grad point average and an ACT score of 28. In addition, they must have been involved in a number of extracurricular activities and demonstrated a great deal of leadership. The applicants are also asked to write a 500 word essay about themselves. On the basis of

this information, the Presidential Scholars Board invites 45 students to the university campus to be formally interviewed by the Board and to write yet another (impromptu) essay.

Those students who are awarded the Presidential Scholarship are expected to maintain a 3.5 grade point average while working toward their degree and must enroll in special seminar classes each semester. In addition, they are expected to complete a senior thesis or project during their last year of undergraduate study.

The Experiment:

As a Presidential Scholar, I became interested in how those people who were awarded the scholarship differed in their personality types from those equally intelligent and involved people who did not. Thus, I decided to compare the personality types of the University of Northern Iowa Presidential Scholars to those members of Omicron Delta Kappa, which is the highest academic honorary society on campus. I chose to compare Presidential Scholars to ODK members because the ODK society emphasizes many of the same qualities as the Presidential Scholars Program: academics, leadership, and service. To become a member of ODK, a student must have at least a 3.3 grade point average and be involved in a wide variety of extracurricular activities. However, for the purposes of this experiment, I chose to involve only those students with a 3.5 grade point average or higher.

To determine the personality types of these students, I decided to use the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which is a 126-question forced choice questionnaire. The person taking the MBTI is asked to indicate his/her preference for a given set of circumstances or word meanings. Once the questionnaire is completed, the person is identified as one of sixteen personality types. The MBTI assigns four dimensions to a person's type:

theses are the Extraversion/Introversion dimension, the Sensing/Intuition dimension, the Thinking/Feeling dimension, and the Judging/Perceiving dimension. It is important to note that a person is not completely an Extrovert or completely an Introvert. Instead, a person's preference is measured on a scale which indicates the strength of his/her preference for a given function.

The Extrovert/Introvert dimension indicates where a person tends to focus his/her attention (Myers 1987, p.5). While the Extrovert (about 75 percent of the general population) focuses on the **outer** world of people, action, and things, the Introvert (about 25 percent of the general population) prefers to focus on the inner world of contemplation and reflection (Martin). As a result, the following tendencies often occur (Barr 48):

Extrovert (E) Tendencies:

- Interactive
- Openly expressive
- Good in groups
- Prefers external events
- Shares the self
- Enthusiastic, high energy
- Instigates action
- Seeks many "friends"
- Likes meeting new people
- Reacts to stress by increasing activity
- Energized by activity
- Impatient with long jobs
- Talks first
- Chimes in
- Decides quickly
- Gathers info quickly
- Doesn't mind interruptions

Introvert (I) Tendencies:

- Reflective
- Private
- Good one-on-one
- Internal reaction
- Controls personal disclosure
- Reserved
- Keeps confidences
- Discriminates between friends and acquaintances
- Postpones meeting new people
- Reacts to stress by decreasing activity
- Energized by depth and intimacy
- Patient with long jobs
- Reads or observes first
- Waits until asked
- Thinks things out first
- Gathers info thoroughly
- Longer attention span

The Sensing/Intuition dimension illustrates how a person prefers to acquire information. While the Sensor tends to rely on direct experiences of the senses (sight, taste,

touch, smell, and sound), the Intuitor relies on a less concrete "sixth sense" of possibilities (Myers 1987). As with the E/I preferences, about 75 percent of the general population tend to be sensors, and 25 percent tend to be intuitors (Martin). Again, everyone uses both of these processes, but the following tendencies do occur (Barr 59):

Sensor (S) Tendencies:	Intuitor (N) Tendencies:
Experience	Hunches
Realistic	Speculative
Actual	Possible
Fact	Fiction
Practical	Idealistic
Hands-on	Theoretical
Focus: today	Focus: tomorrow
Present enjoyment	Future enjoyment
Physically competitive	Intellectually competitive
Produces steadily	Produces cyclically
Unknown is uncomfortable	Unknown is challenge
Step-by-step	Overall view
Examples	Theories
Cautiously tests ideas	Generates and accepts ideas
Accepts norms	Challenges norms
Incremental reformer	Wholesale reformer
Linear	Simultaneous
Task-driven	Improvement-driven
Likes proof	Likes possibilities

The Thinking/Feeling scale of the MBTI reflects how a person makes decisions (Myers 1987, 6). This third dimension of type differentiates between men and women. Because women naturally tend to be more feeling and men naturally tend to be more sensing, separate scales were devised to reflect these differences. In the general population, feelers tend to make up 65 percent of the female population and 40 percent of the male population. Therefore, thinkers comprise approximately 35 percent of the female population and 60 percent of the male population (Martin). The thinker tends to objectively make logical connections when making decisions, while the feeler usually

subjectively weights values and people concerns to decide (Myers 1987). The tendencies of each of these preferences are rather predictable (Barr 123):

Thinker (T) Tendencies:

Principles
 Policy
 Justice
 Fairness
 Truth
 Analyzes ideas, plans
 Task oriented
 Achievement is priority
 May enjoy argument
 Clarity is valued

Feeler (F) Tendencies:

Harmony
 Social values
 Humane
 Loyalty
 Values
 Raises comfort levels
 People oriented
 Appreciation is priority
 Avoids conflict
 Personal approach valued

The final dimension assigned by the MBTI is the Judging/Perceiving scale. This particular dimension combines a person's preferences from the N/S scale and T/F scale and reflects the way a person orients toward the outer world (Myers 1987, 6). Judgers (who make up about 55 percent of the general population) live in planned, orderly lives and seek to control events. Perceivers (approximately 45 percent of the general population), on the other hand, tend to live spontaneously, with curiosity, and seek to understand life (Martin). They also display the following tendencies (Barr 136):

Judger (J) Tendencies:

Structure
 Look to what's ahead
 Systematic
 Completes
 Conclusions
 Focused interests
 Goal-oriented
 Determined
 Accomplished
 Manages time well
 Motto: "Win the race"

Perceiver (P) Tendencies:

Variety
 Open to whatever
 Adaptable
 Initiates
 Curiosities
 Many interests
 Process-oriented
 Flexible
 Easy-going
 Has relaxed approach
 Motto: "Smell the flowers"

As previously stated, these four preferences or dimensions, when taken together as a whole, comprise a person's personality type. The sixteen personality types are:

ESTJ (extravert, sensor, thinker, judger)	ISTJ (introvert, sensor, thinker, judger)
ESFJ (extravert, sensor, feeler, judger)	ISFJ (introvert, sensor, feeler, judger)
ENTJ (extravert, intuitor, thinker, judger)	INTJ (introvert, intuitor, thinker, judger)
ENFJ (extravert, intuitor, feeler, judger)	INFJ (introvert, intuitor, feeler, judger)
ESTP (extravert, sensor, thinker, perceiver)	ISTP (introvert, sensor, thinker, perceiver)
ESFP (extravert, sensor, feeler, perceiver)	ISFP (introvert, sensor, feeler, perceiver)
ENTP (extravert, intuitor, thinker, perceiver)	INTP (introvert, intuitor, thinker, perceiver)
ENFP (extravert, intuitor, feeler, perceiver)	INFP (introvert, intuitor, feeler, perceiver)

Hypothesis:

Based on this research into different personality types and what I knew personally of the Presidential Scholars and the Presidential Scholar Board, I believed that when testing the Presidential Scholars there would be a higher incidence of intuitives than there would be with the ODK members. This hypothesis stemmed from the fact that intuitives tend to be intellectually competitive, enjoy working with ideas and theories and have their eyes on the future. In addition, I believed that the Presidential Scholars Board would look for people who could not only achieve academically but who would put their knowledge to use in generating more ideas and challenging the norms. While I expected some ODK members to exhibit these same qualities, I anticipated a much higher rate of intuitives in the Presidential Scholars.

In addition, I predicted that the Presidential Scholars would display a higher incidence of extraversion in comparison to the ODK members, because the interview when applying for the scholarship is such an important part of the process. Naturally, I expected a more out-going, talkative person to be considered more attractive by the Board members, and the Scholars' high rate of involvement in extracurricular activities and participation in group activities also led me to believe that they would be more ex-

traverted than introverted.

Methods:

Approximately 54 percent of the current Presidential Scholars agreed to participate in my research, and I asked a nearly-equal number of ODK members take part. In all, 32 Presidential Scholars and 30 ODK members completed the MBTI. As previously mentioned, only ODK members with grade point averages of 3.5 or better were eligible so that their academic standing would be comparable to the Presidential Scholars'.

Results:

The results of this comparison proved to be very surprising in that there was a significant difference between the personality types of Presidential Scholars and ODK members in every preference scale, except the Female T/F scale, as illustrated below (those comparisons with chi-squared of 2.0 or higher are considered significant):

	E	I
Scholars	8	24
ODK	18	12

chi-squared = 7.79

	S	N
Scholars	11	21
ODK	19	11

chi-squared = 5.20

	T	F
Scholars	10	2
ODK	10	8

Males

chi-squared = 2.50

	T	F
Scholars	7	13
ODK	4	8

Females

chi-squared = .148

	J	P
Scholars	19	13
ODK	26	4

chi-squared = 5.80

As previously noted, I expected this higher incidence of intuitives among Presidential Scholars, but I certainly did not expect such a significant difference. As the chi-square indicates on the S/F scale, the incidence of Presidential Scholars who are intuitives is three times greater than ODK members. This means that one very important way the Presidential Scholars differ in their personality types from ODK members is that they tend to be more speculative, idealistic, and theoretical and see the unknown as a challenge rather than a discomfort. While Presidential Scholars tend to be improvement-driven and idea generators, ODK members tend to rely on proof, experience, and the realistic and be task-driven and focused on the immediate.

The difference between the incidence of extraverts and introverts when comparing the Presidential Scholars and ODK members was very surprising because the interview, which requires people to be openly expressive, enthusiastic, and energized plays such an important part in the selection process of Presidential Scholars. However, the results indicate that Presidential Scholars in fact tend to be very reflective, patient, and focused: the attributes of an introvert. ODK members differ from these tendencies in that they often gather their information quickly and make their decisions quickly. They are often impatient with long jobs and find it difficult to concentrate for very long on a single project.

As illustrated on Diagrams 1 and 2 on the following page, there was also a noticeable "clustering" of personality types who had a combined introverted and intuitive preferences in the Presidential Scholars: fully 25 percent of the Presidential Scholars demonstrated these preferences.

The difference between the two groups in the J/P scale also proved significant. While ODK members tend to live planned, orderly lives, Presidential Scholars have a much higher incidence of perceivers, who tend to live spontaneously and seek to understand life rather than control it. Along these same lines, a greater percentage of the Presidential Scholars than ODK members have many interests and are curious and adaptable.

The significant difference in the T/F scale for the males who were tested illustrated that male Presidential Scholars tend to be much more analytical, governed by a sense of principles, justice, and fairness than are male ODK members. ODK members (male) tend to prefer harmony, loyalty and humanitarian values more so than achievement and argument. As previously noted, there was absolutely no significant difference between female Presidential Scholars and female ODK members.

Conclusions:

Thus, it would seem that the Presidential Scholars and the members of ODK differ in many ways in their personality types. The "typical" Presidential Scholar seems to be a person who focuses on the inner world of contemplation and reflection and rely on a sense of the possibilities that exist in a given situation. He/She tends to be theoretical, speculative, intellectually competitive, and envision the future. In addition, he/she often is curious, initiates action, and adapts easily to new situations. They are people who look to the future.

The "typical" ODK member, on the other hand, is one who gathers his/her information quickly and makes decisions based on that information quickly as well. They tend to be energized by activity but impatient with long jobs and are also instigators of action. They also tend to rely on direct experiences of the senses and focus on today. They are often steady producers and enjoy structure, are goal-oriented, and have very focused interests.

Of course, none of these preferences is better than another. One of the benefits of knowing one's personality type is becoming aware of one's strengths as well as one's weaknesses to then improve on those same strengths and weaknesses. A person has the ability to succeed no matter what his/her personality type is.

DIAGRAM 1: PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR PERSONALTIY TYPES

<p>ISTJ</p> <p> </p>	<p>ISFJ</p> <p> </p>	<p>INFJ</p> <p> </p>	<p>INTJ</p> <p> </p>
<p>ISTP</p> <p> </p>	<p>ISFP</p>	<p>INFP</p> <p> </p>	<p>INTP</p> <p> </p>
<p>ESTP</p>	<p>ESFP</p>	<p>ENFP</p> <p> </p>	<p>ENTP</p> <p> </p>
<p>ESTJ</p> <p> </p>	<p>ESFJ</p> <p> </p>	<p>ENFJ</p> <p> </p>	<p>ENTJ</p>

DIAGRAM 2: ODK MEMBERS' PERSONALITY TYPES

<p>ISTJ</p> <p> </p>	<p>ISFJ</p> <p> </p>	<p>INFJ</p> <p> </p>	<p>INTJ</p> <p> </p>
<p>ISTP</p>	<p>ISFP</p> <p> </p>	<p>INFP</p>	<p>INTP</p>
<p>ESTP</p>	<p>ESFP</p>	<p>ENFP</p> <p> </p>	<p>ENTP</p> <p> </p>
<p>ESTJ</p> <p> </p>	<p>ESFJ</p> <p> </p>	<p>ENFJ</p> <p> </p>	<p>ENTJ</p>

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