An Analysis of the Reasons for the Popularity of MBTI Personality Tests

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Abstract: In recent years, with the increasing development of the Internet, more and more information is available, and a group of young people keen to discover various psychological tests on the Internet have emerged among the in-depth users. Under this craze, the personality test called MBTI came into being, dividing different personalities into sixteen personality types using eight letters. It quickly became known for its "accuracy" and "social attributes".

Keywords: MBTI, personality test, social media, network

1. Introduction

This paper attempts to analyse the reasons for its popularity in 3 ways. Firstly, where did people learn about the MBTI test. In this section we would like to discuss the psychological changes in different people who have been confronted with this test by analysing the ways in which they have learnt about it and why it has struck a chord in the two years that it has been suggested. Secondly, we will analyse the reasons why people choose to take the test. This branch will allow us to understand what aspects of life the MBTI test can be applied to and how it affects people's lives. Finally, the limitations of the MBTI test are discussed. As many psychological tests are not necessarily rigorous, we want to use this article to inform people who have taken the MBTI test, or want to take it, about the meaning behind the results and how the logic of the test affects the results.

2. How to know it

First, from the understanding of the channel analysis: After analysis and investigation, more than 90% of the people were recommended to learn about this personality test, divided into their own from the network (such as social media, website ads) to see or by friends and other acquaintances recommended. Among these people, those more likely to be influenced by social media and additional Internet information are generally deep Internet users. These people may learn about this information on the Internet at the beginning because of curiosity to click on the relevant articles to understand. Still, after that, the big data will continue to push content pertinent to him, thus increasingly strengthening his impulse to learn about the test to do this test.

On the contrary, people who learnt about this test from their friends may not necessarily be infrequent Internet users, but they will undoubtedly be wary of information on the Internet. They may

initially come home to the Internet with a certain amount of curiosity but simultaneously with a certain amount of scepticism, thinking that it may not be as accurate or as effective as advertised on the Internet. After a friend's recommendation, these people will have a more incredible urge to do this test. Like what we all consider when we see a test on the internet, there is usually a certain amount of scepticism，Pamela Readhead [1] argues that the tests selected must have a high co- efficient of validity and reliability, relative to the criterion. The other reason is that they trust their friends more than they trust the Internet, but they are also more easily persuaded because they already have some of this knowledge in advance.

Another in-between channel is to learn about such personality tests through some celebrities or TV programmes that interest you. First, the fact that these tests are mentioned in the programmes or talked about by the stars is a promotional effect. Secondly, some people may not be interested in this test when they see their friends recommending it or reading about it online. Still, when they see celebrities, they are interested in discussing their MBTI, it will arouse their interest in learning more about it because we know that when people talk about the MBTI, they usually use some letters to replace the notes to indicate whether they are introverted or extroverted, more organised, more or less intelligent, more or less intelligent. Organised or more spontaneous, and this will have some specific letters to replace their personality traits. These people are motivated to take the test by online information (programmes/internet celebrities) and by what they perceive as their "celebrity friends".

3. Why to do it

Secondly, the reason for choosing to go for this test is analysed. Most people want to do this test because of its social attributes. In our research, we found that many people have the experience that their friends will mention this test when they are chatting with their friends. Still, they are not motivated or interested in taking the MBTI test because they usually need to learn more about it. They prefer to avoid doing personality tests to understand themselves. However, the same scenario happens for the second and third time. In that case, it will keep on increasing their curiosity about the test and hence their decision to go for this personality test. By analogy, once one of them feels that the test results match their reality, they will recommend it to more people, thus spreading the MBTI personality test again.

Another genuine situation is in the workplace. As the MBTI has become more and more well-known and because it is often seen as a way of determining one's suitability for a job, many companies, especially those related to the Internet, include the MBTI in their recruitment process in an attempt to screen out candidates who are more capable of making a more significant contribution to a particular position. This is not an empty claim; in 1996, scholars were already proposing the use of personality tests in the workplace. Dr Vic Dulewicz argues that this enables us to understand the roles that people play in groups and thus get a more effective group mix [2]. Not only that, but earlier scholars have considered the narrow part of personality tests and suggested that we should consider other criteria as well, and that personality tests are only meant to measure the less outward side of a candidate's personality [3]. This extends the use of MBTI in everyday life. However, we must admit that there are times when the personnel department does not have a good understanding of personality tests, and it is likely that the results of the tests will be incorrectly assessed as a result. Mr Blinkhorn and Mr Johnson argue that personality tests can be easily abused because the testers don't understand the limitations of the tests and most HR workers don't include people with a background in statistics [4].

In addition, some people have to learn about this personality test because of their profession, such as psychology students or practitioners. Their work requires that they must have some knowledge about this kind of test. These people usually understand the personality test and its logic earlier and

more thoroughly than the general public and use their learning to come to a scientific conclusion on whether the test is accurate. For example, Mr. Bill Mabey，a con-sultancy which specialises impersonality testing, said that all tests are flawed, but this test has been shown to double the probability of selecting the right candidate. But equally, some scholars have suggested that there is no evidence that personality tests are sufficient to predict future job performance [5]. This point also reveals that although personality tests are useful in assessing the present situation, they cannot accurately predict future development. Don't limit your future development by characterising yourself based on the results of the test.

4. Limitations

There is no denying that the MBTI personality test is very popular on the internet nowadays, but it is important to realise that all tests have certain limitations and should not be used to define yourself or others. Firstly, the results are not always accurate. In terms of timing, the MBTI personality test has been around since the 1940's and at that time consisted of eight differentiators, which is consistent with the overall logic of the version we know today. In fact, logically speaking, the MBTI test itself is not rigorous enough. It uses four dichotomies to distinguish people with different character traits into 16 different personalities, but one of the major drawbacks is that if the test taker's tendencies are not obvious enough, then the results of the test will be very flawed. Simply put, if a person chooses "not sure" for most of the questions on the test, then the results of the test will be very difficult to determine the personality traits of the test taker, and even if the system gives a definite result, the result will still be inaccurate. Another problem is that personality tests often use group behaviour to infer individual behaviour, which ignores individual differences in individuals. For example, if a group concludes that libertarians are generally more adventurous, then for an individual who is judged to be a libertarian, there is a high probability that the system will give an inference that he is adventurous. But the fact is that not all libertarians like to take risks. However, the test taker may be misled by the result and change his or her behaviour after seeing the result. Secondly, personality tests are not always updated to keep up with social developments. With the passage of time and changes in people's thinking and living environment, the logic of judgement corresponding to psychological tests also needs to change in response to the situation, and outdated logic may also lead to inaccurate results.

In addition, from the perspective of the test taker, they will unconsciously "take the test" after seeing the results, meaning that if a person is introverted, he may become even more introverted after the test gives him an I (introverted) result. For example, in social situations, participants either actively or passively need to talk to others more. It may be that before the test the introvert would participate as much as possible in such situations even though he is not used to them, but after the test the test taker usually behaves in a way that he is even less talkative than before, even in necessary situations. Further, if someone in the social situation understands that the person is a Type I personality, they are very understanding, which gives the person a great deal of comfort that it is normal for them to do so in such situations. In the long run, the tester will become more and more introverted, do not like to communicate with others, and in more serious cases, may even have psychological problems. Another situation is that some testers will feel that the test results are inaccurate. There are two kinds of people, one is that although they feel inaccurate, they think that the test is more scientific and reliable, and overthrow their own ideas and determine their future development direction according to the work that the test gives that this kind of personality type is suitable for, however, in fact, it is the inaccuracy of the test results that affects the tester's judgement. Another may feel that the test results are inaccurate, which leads to an exploration of the logic behind the test and oneself, and through this process discovers that it is one's own faulty understanding and

judgement of oneself that has led to the inaccurate results. Either way, it reminds us that understanding ourselves through testing is indeed an effective way but it also requires our own judgement, not just trusting the test and sticking to our own ways.

5. Conclusions

Nowadays, there is not only the MBTI personality test, which is very popular on the Internet but also many different psychological tests or various types of difficulties related to exploring oneself that are increasingly being discovered. After our analysis, in the field of society and media, this is a way to get closer to the people around us. At the same time, this test is also helpful for people to understand their personality psychologically and know their future development direction. However, it is worth mentioning that everything in our daily lives is constantly changing, and we are also affected by changes in our environment, which can continuously impact our personality. Therefore, we should not base the results of this personality test to determine whether we are suitable or not suitable for a specific job or development direction; we should focus on improving ourselves and not be limited by this test.

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