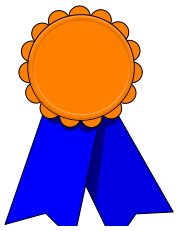

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Teaching Personality Type in Mainland China

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REPRINT

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In this article, the authors present rare statistics of the personality types of Mainland Chinese business professionals, including Managers, Engineers and Administrators. The first author also shares firsthand experience and instructions for teaching Type to people who were educated in Mainland China.

Abstract
The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) was administered to 119 mainland Chinese nationals who held managerial or professional positions in a Chinese joint venture company in the People's Republic of China in 1997-98. The results show high proportions of STJ, NTJ, sensing, thinking, and judging types, and slightly more introverts than extraverts. Almost 65% of females and over 80% of males preferred thinking. The verification process did not significantly change the proportions of types in this sample. Experiences unique to helping this population validate their types are discussed.

Introduction
Very little information has been published about using the MBTI with Chinese nationals. No information has been published about using the MBT with Chinese national business managers and/or business professionals. A dissertation by Yanping Yao at Mississippi State University used the MBTI to determine the personality types of 293 Chinese female school administrators in mainland China (Yao, 1993). At the ninth conference of the Association for Psychological Type, C. H. Huang and C. E. Huang presented their results in using the MBTI to determine the types of Taiwanese university students (Huang & Huang, l991).

Method and Scope
Participation in a two-day workshop to determine one's personality type by taking the MBTI was open to all managers and professionals on a volunteer basis in a Chinese joint venture company with approximately 800 employees. One hundred and nineteen managers and professionals chose to attend. Although the participants were currently living and working in Guangdong province in southern China, they had been born and raised in provinces throughout China.

Genders, Ages: There were 66 males (55%) and 53 females (45%). The group ranged in age from 22 to 43 years. The average age of the group was 29.8 years; the median age was 28 years. Seventy-three participants (61%) were age 22 to 29; thirty-five participants (29%) were in their thirties; 4 participants (3.3%) were age 40 to 43. Seven participants (5.9%) did not report their age. All participants had completed all of their schooling in China.

Education: All participants had completed at least 14 years of school. All but 5 (96%) had degrees from Chinese universities. Forty-two participants (35%) had been trained as engineers. Since students usually graduate from Chinese universities when they are age 23 or 24, the majority of the participants were recent university graduates with a few years of very successful work experience.

Employment: Fifty-five participants (46%) were employed in professional or administrative positions, e.g., training instructor, executive secretary, purchasing agent, human resources administrator, customer service representative, and the like. Forty-two participants (35%) were trained as engineers. Thirty-four participants (29%) were managers. (Engineers who were employed as managers were counted in both categories.)

Workshops Described. A total of nine two-day workshops were presented. The number of participants per workshop ranged from 12 to 28 people; the average class size was 15 people. The workshops were presented in a relaxed, living-room-like environment off-site from the organization's offices. The workshops were designed and facilitated by Eileen Broer (an American woman) in English with Chinese translation. Written workshop materials were presented in both English and Chinese, and included the English and Mandarin versions of Introduction to Type in Organizations (Hirsh & Kummerow, 1990). The participants had varying degrees of facility with the English language. (English is a compulsory course in the PRC starting in elementary school.) Most of the participants could speak and understand English fairly well. The translator and the participants themselves helped everyone understand each other so that the facilitator could ensure that the participants correctly validated their types.

After an hour-and-a-half long group exercise of introductions and trust building, and a brief introduction to the developmental history and objectives of the MBTI, the participants took the self-scorable Form G of the MBTI in either the English or Mandarin version. Most chose to take the Mandarin version (and thereby, to participate in the validation of the Mandarin version of the Indicator, which is in progress.) Some of the participants referred to both the English and Chinese versions of the Indicator to clarify some of the questions. The length of time it took individual participants to take and score the Indicator ranged from 30 to 70 minutes. Immediately after taking the MBTI, the group participated in a day-and-a-half of lectures, group exercises and individual exercises to validate their types. Participants were particularly encouraged to be open to changing one or more of their preferences and to view their MBTI results as only a starting point. Since, ultimately, validated types are a more accurate measure of type, we will be using validated types rather than indicated types in most of the ensuing discussion of our results.

Results

The distributions of both indicated and validated personality types for all participants are shown in Tables 1 and 2. The distributions of indicated and validated types for men and women separately are shown in Tables 3-6. The indicated types of the managers, engineers, and administrative/professionals are shown in Tables 7-9. (Again, engineers who were also managers were counted in both categories.) All types were represented in the total sample.

Overwhelmingly STJ (37%): The group overwhelmingly preferred STJ (37.0%), which was evenly split between ESTJ (18.5%) and ISTJ (18.5%).

NTJ (18.5%) was only half as popular. More preferred INTJ (11.8%), though, than ENTJ (6.7%).

Least Represented Types. Those types that were least represented were ISFP (1.7%), ESFP (1.7%), INTP (2.5%), ENFJ (2.5%), and INFJ, INFP, ENFP and ESTP, each of which was preferred by 3.4% of the participants.

Slightly more Introverts (52.1%) than Extraverts (47.9%). Slightly more people (52.1%) preferred Introversion than Extraversion (47.9%).

Sensing (60.5%) versus Intuition (39.5%). Those with a preference for Sensing (60.5%) outnumbered those with a preference for Intuition (39.5%).

Three quarters Thinking (74%) versus Feeling (26%). Those with a preference for Thinking (74%) outnumbered those with a preference for Feeling (26%) almost three to one.

Judging 70% versus Perceiving (29.2%). The Judging preference (70.6%) was greatly preferred over the Perceiving preference (29.2%).

Similarities and Differences By Gender. The males were almost evenly split into the Extraverted preference (53%) and the Introverted preference (47%). A larger proportion of females (58.5%) preferred Introversion. The majority of both genders preferred Sensing, Thinking and Judging. However, the percentage of males who preferred Sensing (65.2%), Thinking (82%) and Judging (78.8%) was higher in each case than the percentage of females who preferred Sensing (54.7%), Thinking (64.2%) and Judging (60.4%). Changes in Type During Self-Validation. Twenty-one people (17.6%) changed one or two of their preferences. Twenty people (16.8%) changed one preference. Only one person changed two preferences; no one changed more than two preferences. SRTT analyses (Table 10) showed no significant differences between indicated and validated types. However, especially in sample sizes like this, we cannot take the absence of significant differences as indicating there is no cause for concern.

Discussion

Total Sample Biases. All determinations from these data must be made in light of the biases in this sample:
- sample size was small: 119 people
- 46% held professional or administrative positions
- 35% were engineers
- 29% were managers in a Chinese Joint Venture
- 96% graduated from a Chinese university
- 100% had at least two years of schooling in a Chinese university
- 100% completed all their schooling in the People's Republic of China
- 100% self-validated their types
- 61% were age 22 to 29
- 91% were age 22 to 39

All Types Represented. First of all, it is interesting to note that, with all of the biases, especially those of career choice and sample size, all personality types were represented. Participants said they were encouraged to (and did) base their choice of professions mainly on the ability of those professions to produce the biggest incomes. The most obvious example of a career mismatch might be the INFP who was very unhappy in her job as an auditor.

Introversion Slightly Preferred Over Extraversion. The finding in our study that more people preferred introversion (52.1%) than extraversion (47.9%) is consistent with Huang & Huang's findings (1991), which reported that over 64% of their Taiwanese university students preferred introversion. However, Yao's sample (1993) of female school administrators was more extraverted (64.2%) than introverted (35.8%). Huang & Huang (1991), stated that "findings of higher introversion should not be surprising since these are the same findings which have been reported in many previous studies of Chinese personality." Huang & Huang (1991) also reference numerous studies that used instruments other than the MBTI, but had factors that correlated well with introversion as measured by the MBTI.

Sensing Over-represented. Extremely large percentages of the Chinese mainland female administrators in Yao's study (1994) preferred sensing (85.0%). The majority of Huang & Huang's (1991) Taiwanese university students preferred sensing (76.2%). The majority of our subjects (60.5%) also preferred sensing.

Thinking Over-represented. Almost all (93.2%) of the Chinese mainland female administrators in Yao's study (1994) preferred thinking. The majority (61.3%) of Huang & Huang's (1991) Taiwanese university students preferred thinking. The great majority (73.9%) of the present study also preferred thinking.

Judging Over-represented. An extremely large percentage (85.7%) of the Chinese mainland female administrators in Yao's study (1993) preferred judging. The great majority of Huang & Huang's (1991) Taiwanese university students preferred judging (79.9%). The majority (70.6%) of our subjects also preferred judging, but to a lesser degree.

Tendency for the Majority of Subjects to Score as Sensing, Thinking and Judging on the MBTI. Given the vocational and educational biases in our study and in the two referenced studies (Yao, l994; Huang & Huang, 1991), and given that the combined total number of subjects in the three studies is small (1,471), one would normally be ill advised to extrapolate these results to the general Chinese population. However, the very large proportions of subjects in all three studies who preferred sensing, thinking and judging would lend support to the statement that the majority of the general Chinese population may prefer sensing, thinking and judging. In addition, given the biases, it would also seem likely that the proportions of the general Chinese population who prefer sensing, thinking and judging are smaller than the proportions reported in ours and the other two studies. Huang & Huang (1991) attribute the finding that 76.2% of their Taiwanese university students preferred sensing, to the "hard competition for admission to Chinese universities, and the strategy which students are taught to use to obtain high marks on the admissions test: answer the questions exactly the way they are expressed in the textbooks" (italics added by the authors). Thus Huang & Huang (1991) say, "students memorize every lesson in Chinese language textbooks." The skill of memorizing facts and details is seen in type theory as a talent or strength of those with a

preference for Sensing. One hundred percent of our subjects passed the university admission test, and, therefore, would also have needed to become skillful at this facet of the sensing preference. In addition, after they had learned type theory, our well-educated participants strongly speculated that the Chinese culture and educational system highly values the development of sensing skills. Their opinion was that those who prefer intuition must develop their less preferred function very well and very early in life in order to succeed in the Chinese educational system.

Effects of Validation on the Indicated Types. In addition, based on the changes in preferences that took place when the participants in our study validated their types, it is also likely that the number of subjects in the other two studies (Yao, l993; Huang & Huang, l991) who preferred sensing, thinking and judging would have been lower if their research methods could have included validation by the participants. In our study, twenty-one participants (17.6%) changed one or more of their preferences after learning type theory. Only one person validated his preference from intuition to sensing, but four of those whose MBTI index showed sensing as their preference validated their preference as intuition. Six people whose MBTI index showed thinking as their preference validated their preference as feeling. No one whose MBTI index showed feeling as their preference validated as thinking. Lastly, six people whose MBTI index showed judging as their preference validated as perceiving. No one whose MBTI index showed perceiving as their preference validated as judging. Looking at the data another way, 8.5% of those who validated as preferring intuition showed sensing as their preference on the inventory; 19.3% of those who validated as preferring feeling showed thinking as their preference on the inventory; and 17.1% of those who validated as preferring perceiving showed judging as their preference on the inventory. Said another way, there was a greater tendency for people who preferred intuition, feeling and perceiving to choose their opposite preference on the inventory than there was for those who preferred sensing, thinking and judging to chose their opposite preference on the inventory. However, when SRTT analyses were conducted comparing indicated types to validated types, no significant differences were found. This may be partly due to the small sample size; differences would have had to be relatively large and consistent in order to reach significance. Additional research would be needed to verify statistically the trends described above. In the meantime, users and researchers should be alert to the possibility that the Indicator may overestimate S, T, and J in groups such as those studied here.

Comparisons with Estimated Frequencies of Types in the U.S. population. When we compared our indicated type findings with the CPP adult norms (Table 11), we found that our group showed significantly higher percentages of ISTJ (23.5% vs. 15.6%), ESTJ (21% vs. 9.9%), INTJ (8.4% vs. 3.5%) and ENTJ (10.9% vs. 2.8%). These differences could be attributed to the fact our sample consisted mainly of engineers and managers, and the types of both these professions tend to fill the four corners of the type chart, and to show preferences for sensing, thinking and judging. It should be noted, however, that these findings are consistent with those of Yao (l994) and Huang and Huang (1991), who also found greater proportions of sensing, thinking and judging types among Chinese populations.

Gender Differences When Compared with Estimated Frequencies of Types in the United States. The percentage of females who preferred thinking (75.5%) versus feeling (24.5%) is opposite in direction from the CPP female norms (Hammer & Mitchell, 1998), which showed that 38.8% of females prefer thinking and 61.2% of females prefer feeling. Again, this could be attributed at least in part to the vocations of our sample.

Comparisons to U.S. managers and administrators. When compared to a CAPT sample of managers and administrators (Table 12), this sample (according to indicated type) was significantly overrepresented by thinking types and underrepresented by feeling types. This sample was also significantly more ST and TJ than its U.S. counterpart. Chinese vocational sub-types (indicated) compared to all vocational types (indicated). When compared to the total sample (Tables 13-15), the engineering subset was found to be significantly more T and TJ; the managers more E, J, EJ, SJ, and ES; the administrative/professional staff were significantly more F, P, NF, and FP.

What One Might Expect When Teaching Workshops Using the MBTI® in Mainland China. Given the above discussion, one might expect to find numerous people who prefer intuition, feeling and/or perceiving to have MBTI indices which show their preferences as the opposite. One might also expect to find few people whose MBTI index shows their preference to be intuition, feeling and/or perceiving, to validate as the opposite. Expect to be surprised in delivering the workshops. Some exercises that work well with Americans do not work as well with Chinese, especially those exercises which teach the sensing and intuition preferences. In addition, the participants in our study

said they were not used to learning experientially, although they thoroughly enjoyed the individual and the group exercises. They also tended to speak out less in the total group, and were much more likely to speak out in smaller groups and even more so when the author was not (officially) observing. During the workshops, the facilitator asked each participant to make a presentation to the group using drawings, rather than words, on a piece of flip chart paper. The facilitator presented a few sample drawings to the participants as an example of what they were being asked to do. A noticeable number of the participants, although by no means the majority, drew pictures almost exactly like the ones that were presented to them as examples. The participants also tended to look at and duplicate each other's work as they were preparing their presentations. The participants said that this was the first time that they had been asked to do drawings in a "classroom." They said they were used to there being a "right" answer, rather than being asked to search within themselves for their own creative and unique responses to an assignment.

In a recent workshop, participants were exposed to type theory first, then given the MBTI. Many thought they were N, then took the Indicator, and it indicated they were S. So, many of them self-selected S. The Chinese are used to there being a right answer and to authority being correct. That is the core concern when using the Chinese version of the MBTI in China. With the instrument coming out predominantly S, it appears that, rightly or wrongly, our data on China will say they are overwhelming S for years to come.

S-N: Another exercise, which the facilitator uses successfully with American and other non-Chinese populations, did not have the expected outcome when used with these Chinese nationals. The exercise was developed by Leta Letize of PDS, Inc., in Florida; usually it dramatically shows the difference between people who prefer intuition and those who prefer sensing. The facilitator asks one participant who clearly prefers intuition and one who clearly prefers sensing to alternately leave the room. The author then asks the participant who stays in the room to close his or her eyes and to answer some questions. Normally, these questions are quickly and correctly answered by a person who clearly prefers sensing, but are more difficult for a person who clearly prefers intuition. Examples are: What color is the rug in the room? What color are the walls in the room? How many people in the room are wearing glasses? How many women and men are in the room? How many doors and windows does the room have? What color is the teacher's blouse? Shoes? These are all requests for factual, sensory data. In this study, even subjects who clearly preferred intuition were able to answer the questions quickly and accurately. Again, this may point to the proclivity of the Chinese culture to encourage the development of one's sensing preference skills regardless of one's preference.

J-P: The other challenge in teaching the Chinese about the MBTI is with J and P. The Chinese culture is decidedly P in many ways. It is not at all unusual for the Chinese to tell you about an important meeting, which they knew about somewhat earlier, on the day of the meeting, and indeed, sometimes the hour of the meeting. The Chinese have seemingly no stress when asked to drop everything and come to a meeting. They live in process in that regard. For example, the majority of 20 Human Resource managers from two Chinese phone companies did not confirm their attendance at the seven-day workshop until two weeks before the start, and five did not confirm their attendance until two days before the start! One must certainly learn to live in ambiguity in China. We had to proceed for over a month with all the planning, training the trainers, purchasing materials, etc. with no students confirmed and on the day before the starting day, negotiations for a room in which to hold the workshops were still being held. This was all normal procedure.

The facilitator also found the participants to be extremely eager to learn and to be delighted to learn their personality types. Few of the participants had been exposed previously to any personality instruments, or even to any psychology. Every participant was very happy to learn about type theory, and the majority seemed to easily assimilate it. Many were eager to find out the types of their co-workers, spouses and children. Every person spoke highly of the workshop and recommended it to their co-workers. Indeed, for the last few workshops, some people attended even when they could not register because the class was full. They just showed up. Participants' feedback included words like, "affirming," "empowering," and "enlightening," as well as "practical and useful" (ostensibly, the highest complements one can get from the Chinese). Many said they would like to learn more about the subject. The facilitator found working with the participants to be a thoroughly enjoyable experience. The facilitator especially delighted in watching the participants who clearly preferred perceiving find that their preference was valued – and to observe them permitting themselves to give more free rein to their playfulness.

Conclusion Obviously, much larger samples of the mainland Chinese population need to be studied before any firm extrapolations of this data can be made to Chinese national managers and professionals, or to the general Chinese population. As the industrialization and modernization of mainland China continues, and the accessibility of the people of mainland China to type researchers increases, researchers (including hopefully the first author) will have the opportunity to study more diverse populations of Chinese nationals and generate representative population norms Perhaps this will be made even more possible as more and more universities in China begin to use personality instruments to help students choose their professions. Hopefully, researchers also will be able to include validation of the types of their subjects in their methods, as it appears from this study that it could influence the accuracy of the data, and, thereby, the value of the experience to the participants.

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