

A CRITICAL ENQUIRY IN TO
ENNEAGRAM
AS AN ANCIENT TECHNIQUE
FOR JUDGING PERSONALITY TYPES

ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION :

This section focuses on the study as a whole. It has been divided into sections. The first section covers the introduction and the rationale of the study, the second section covers the research design. The third section focuses on the tools, fourth and fifth sections focus on the major findings, importance, limitations and future relevance of this study.

The concept of personality testing gained importance after 1930's then triggering scientific and systematic psychological test construction in the west and subsequently in India.

A new concept of personality testing is very rapidly entering the field of psychology and likely to gain a lot of importance with its dynamic approach. The concept namely **Enneagram** is pronounced as "Any-A-Gram". This word is derived from Greek terminology "Ennea" means Nine and "gram" means Drawing so that means "A drawing with nine points.

One of the major problem with the introduction of Enneagram arises is that its exact origins are lost to history. No one really knows precisely who discovered it or where it came from. Some writers maintain that Enneagram just surfaced among certain orders of Sufi's, a mystical sect of Islam which began in the tenth and eleventh centuries. No matter how or where originated, it was used for centuries by the secret brotherhoods of the Sufi's to identify personality types.

The Enneagram was totally unknown to the west until George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (1877-1949) popularised it firstly in Europe in 1920's and then subsequently, it reached United States and to the rest of the world.

Enneagram is a system of explaining anything and everything in the universe including the nine types of personality as envisaged in the concept. It is a study of nine basic types of people. Enneagram explains why we behave the way we do and points to specific directions for individual growth. It is an important tool for improving relationships with family and friends and it also provides alternatives to our patterns of behaviour.

The nine types of personality proposed and described in Enneagram are :

Ones	Perfectionists
Twos	Helpers
Threes	Achievers
Fours	Romantics
Fives	Observers
Sixes	Questioners
Sevens	Adventurers
Eights	Asserters
Nines	Peace-makers

This may be mentioned here that these names are not final or universally accepted labels. In Sufi-brotherhood, they just call them as one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight and nine by numbers only. One group of authors (Baron and Wagele, 1994) have used these names. Some others have used other names for these types. In fact in this system names do not matter very significantly and terms like perfectionist or Romantic do not convey the exact meaning and characteristics of the personality types envisaged by these terms.

A brief descriptions of the nine types are given below :

1. Perfectionists :

Individuals belonging to this type have very high ideals of becoming a perfect person. They take things very seriously and become tense if they are not able to complete the work on time and in perfect manner. They are very sensitive to any criticism made against them.

2. Helpers :

Helpers are very compromising, caring and loving types. They are always ready to help their relatives and friends. They are very much dependent on others for their confidence. They are generous, warm and nurturing in times of needs. Helpers drain themselves out in overdoing for others in their hour of needs because they cannot say no to anybody. They become upset if others do not reciprocate when they (helpers) are in need.

3. Achievers :

Achievers are born to achieve success and avoid failures. They are confident of themselves, are efficient, hard-working, responsible, friendly, competent and able to motivate people. Achievers struggle a lot to continue with their success and keep on comparing themselves with those who do better (than Achievers) in life or in performance.

4. Romantics :

Romantics are warm, creative and expressive. They admire the beautiful things in life and try to be unique. They experience feeling deeply and they are able to find meaning in life. They are well at forming relations with people and are able to

understand their feelings. Romantics have high expectations from life and themselves. They sometimes become depressed, stubborn and jealous and are dependent on others for their emotional support. Romantics get easily hurt when others misunderstand them or they disappoint others.

5. Observers :

Observers are very aloof type of people. They like to be lonely rather than in company. They are keen observers. They observe the world and try to analyze it. Even in hard times, they keep calm. They are kind and self-sufficient and are not very poor at expressing their feelings and emotions. They become very contentious, negative and at times suspicious.

6. Questioners :

They are responsible and hard working. They adopt faithful and warm behaviour. They are people with good intellect and have confidence. They seek other people's approval for doing things. They are poor at decision making and risk-taking. They always need backing to do anything.

7. Adventurers :

Adventurers are basically happy, fun loving, generous and light hearted people. They enjoy the company of others. They are risk-taking people and love to travel a lot, they adopt and are optimistic in life. Adventurers are restless and possessive types. They themselves are responsible and want others to be responsible.

8. Asserters :

Asserters are direct, confident and authoritative type of people. They speak in straight forward manner not thinking that it may hurt others. They adopt a supportive and generous attitude, they feel very uncomfortable with other people's incompetence. They drive themselves very hard. They are not able to express their feeling of appreciation.

9. *Peace-makers :*

Peace makers are peace loving people. They try their best to avoid conflicts and make other people comfortable. They are accepting and caring type. Peace Makers, to a certain extent, lack decision making ability. They often become confused about what they really want. They are confident and believe that they know what others will think of them.

Enneagram gains are not only theoretical, but also of practical importance. It is equally applicable in our day-to-day life of an individual. It may help us understand other people in their various aspects of life.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator :

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a personality inventory based on the conceptual foundation of personality types, particularly ideas of Extraversion and introversion of Carl G. Jung.

The inventory is based on identification of 8 preferences classified in 4 sub-scales. There are two preferences for each of the four sub-scales. The basic two preferences are Extraversion and Introversion types, rest of the three scales and six preferences are derived from Extraversion - Introversion itself. The scales are

1. Extroversion - Introversion (E - I) :

Whether people relate to external or internal world.

2. Sensing - Intuitive (S-N) :

How people prefer to take in or perceive information.

3. Thinking - Feeling (T-F) :

How people prefer to make evaluations and take decisions.

4. Judging - Perceiving (J-P):

How people live : whether they are organised and seek closure or spontaneous and open.

All the above 8 preferences have been further re-grouped to make sixteen combinations. Each of the 16 type consists of a combinations of one preference from each of the above pairs of traits, e.g. If a person has preference of Extroversion, Sensing, Thinking and Judging he is referred to as ESTJ. So following are sixteen possible combinations of the types viz.

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

Leadership Styles :

A great many researches have defined leadership as a " social influence process with which a person steers members of group towards a goal." Leadership is basically the ability to shape the attitudes and behaviours of others. According to Stogdill & Shartle (1948); "A leader is a person who is formally designated as such and for that, Stogdill

emphasize (i) Personal characteristics, (ii) Social background, (iii) Intelligence and ability, (iv) Personality and (v) Task relatedness characteristics as the most important personal traits of effective leadership.

Following 4 leadership styles are studied in the present context :

- (1) Authoritative Style
- (2) Participative Style
- (3) Task-oriented Style
- (4) A combination of Assertive + participative & Nurturant Styles

METHODOLOGY :

AIM OF THE STUDY :

The aim of the study was to develop a test to measure nine dimensions of Sufi's Personality Types known as Enneagram (as defined above) and to relate them with sixteen dimensions of MBTI and four leadership styles viz. Task oriented, Authoritative, Participative and a combined type of Assertive, participative & Nurturant (A, p +N) style of leadership.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

Following were the objectives of the study :

1. To develop a personality test to measure personality typology as given in Sufi tradition known as Enneagram.
2. To develop personality profiles of managers and supervisors belonging to each of the nine types of Enneagram.
3. To test the relationship between each of the nine Enneagram types to each of 16

MBTI types as described by Wagele & Baron (1994), i.e., to see whether such relationship exist or operate in Indian situation.

4. To relate Enneagram typology with four leadership styles.

HYPOTHESES:

1. The predominant feature of perfectionists is Judging. They are organised structured as they are likely to be related to INTJ, ISFJ, ENTJ and sometimes when perfectionists are perceiving type they are likely to be ESFP and ENTP.
2. Helpers tend towards Extroversion, so they are talkative, energetic and likely to be related to ESFJ and ESTP types.
3. The predominant features of Achievers are their Extroversion, action orientation and fast paced approach to life so they are likely to be related to ENTJ, ESTP and sometimes to ISTP.
4. The predominant features of Romantics are Introversion, Seriousness, reserved and withdrawn. So they are likely to relate with INFJ, INTJ type. Even when Romantic is Introvert he is, also likely to be an ESTJ.
5. The predominant characteristics of an observer are their introversion, detached, reserved and quiet approach so they are likely to be related to ISTP, INFP dimensions of MBTI. When an observer is extroverted he is likely to be an ENTP.
6. Questioners correlate with several MBTI types so their dimensions are likely to be INFJ, ESTJ, ESTP and ENTP. They tend to swing back and forth between preferences.
7. The predominant characteristics of an Adventurer are that they are Extroverted,

fun loving and sociable. That means, they are likely to be related to ENTP, ESFP and when they tend towards Introversion, they are expected to relate to INFJ type of MBTI.

8. Characteristic features of Asserters are their privacy, reserved and quiet outlook. They are likely to relate to ISTP and INTP dimensions of MBTI.
9. Since characteristic features of Peace Makers is perceiving type they are likely to be related to ESTP, ISFP, ESFP and when they are judging type they tend to be ESFJ type of MBTI.

As per description given in the various attributes of Enneagram, the following hypotheses have been drawn about the relationship of leadership styles with Enneagram types :

10. Positive correlations are hypothesized between Perfectionists and Task Oriented Leadership Style.
11. Helpers would be positively correlated with Participative and Assertive + participative, Nurturant (A, p + N) leadership style.
12. Achievers would adopt Task Oriented leadership style.
13. Romantics are hypothesized to be positively correlated with Participative Leadership style
14. Positive correlations are expected between Observers and Task Oriented Leadership style
15. Positive correlation is also expected between Questioners and Authoritative and Task Oriented Leadership style.

16. Adventurers are more likely to have Task Oriented Leadership style.
17. Asserters are hypothesized to have Task Oriented, Authoritative and A, p + N leadership style.
18. Peace Makers would yield have positive correlation with Participative Leadership style.

Enneagram was hypothesized to relate with eight dimensions of MBTI also.

19. Perfectionists are hypothesized to be positively correlated to Extravert, Sensing, Thinking, Judging of MBTI types.
20. Helpers are more likely to be Extraverts, Intuitive, Feeling and Perceiving types.
21. Achievers would be correlated to Extraverts, Sensing, Thinking and Judging MBTI types
22. Romantics might positively correlate with Introversion, Intuitive, Feeling, Perceiving dimensions of MBTI.
23. Observers might correlate to Introversion, Sensing, Thinking and Judging MBTI typology.
24. Questioners are hypothesized to be positively correlated with Introversion, Extraversion, Intuitive, Feeling and Perceiving MBTI types.
25. Adventurers might show positive relations with Extraverts, Sensing, Thinking and Judging MBTI types.
26. Asserters are likely to be related with Extraversion, Sensing, Thinking, Judging preferences of MBTI.

27. Peace makers would be inclined to Introversion, Sensing, Feeling and Judging types of MBTI.

SAMPLE :

The sample was randomly selected from the test provided by Personnel Department of each organisation from middle level managers and lower level executives class. The sample comprised of 150 respondents in all, from all the four organisations taken together. The distribution was O1 = 32, O2 = 15, O3 = 46, and O4 = 57.

TOOLS :

The tools used to measure the various dimensions of the three variables were as follows : The Enneagram Personality Typology Test was developed by the present researcher for this study.

(A) Myer Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

Apart from the original inventory of MBTI developed by Katherine Briggs and Isabel Myers in 1940's, several other versions are also available. One of them was developed by Tom Arastasi (1995). But as the author himself said, it was an unstandardised and non-validated test. That scale was used by the present researcher to validate and work out its reliability. This test measures the preferences of individual personality one for each of the four sub-scales of Extraversion-Introversion (E-I), Sensing-Intuitive (S-N), Thinking-Feeling (T-F), Judging-Perceiving (J-P). The test questionnaire consisted of 44 items, 11 for each sub-scale of MBTI. They are spread randomly in the questionnaire. Each item had two, A & B alternative responses and respondents were asked to encircle one of the two alternatives whichever was true to them. The test was put to reliability by Cronbach (α). The values obtained were I-E scale = 0.79; S-N scale = 0.76; T-F scale = 0.77 and J-P scale = 0.85

(B) Managerial Behaviour Questionnaire (MBQ) :

The initial version of MBQ which had eight dimensions of leadership was developed by Daftuar (1985). The present researcher included four sub-scales (styles) of MBQ leadership, namely, Task Oriented, Authoritative, Participative and A, p + N. These four styles included for the study had 16 items taken out of the original scale.

(C) Enneagram Personality Typology Test :

This questionnaire was developed specifically for the study which was designed to test an individual's personality on nine dimensions of Enneagram. All the steps of test construction beginning with literature-search to data collection for item analysis to working out reliability and validity of the test was carried out taking all the necessary precautions. The reliability of the test was found split-half method following the method of rational equivalence. The reliabilities found on 9 dimensions were 1-0.56, 2-0.61, 3-0.56, 4-0.62, 5-0.48, 6-0.52, 7-0.65, 8-0.53, and 9-0.62. The reliability value for the entire scale was 0.86. The validity of the nine dimensions was found by Guilford's validity. The validities of the 9 dimensions were 1-0.75, 2-0.78, 3-0.76, 4-0.79, 5-0.69, 6-0.72, 7-0.81, 8-0.73, and 9-0.71. The validity of the entire test was 0.93.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS :

Different statistics were used for different purpose. In the initial stage for the development of Enneagram typology scale, different psychometric methods were used. Later on regression analysis, t test, product-moment correlations were used.

MAJOR FINDINGS :

Percentage frequencies showing relationship between nine Enneagram types and

16 MBTI types could not yield any even or systematic distribution. Only one hypothesis was fully accepted that predicted relationship between Asserters and ISTP, INTP MBTI types. The reason for not getting clear distribution might be because of the very small sample size.

Relationship between Enneagram and MBTI -

- Peacemakers and Introversion-Extraversion, Thinking-Feeling;
- Helpers and Thinking-Feeling, Judging-Perceiving and Introversion-Extraversion;
- Achievers with Judging-Perceiving preferences;
- Perfectionists with Sensing-Intuitive;
- Romantics with Thinking-Feeling, Judging-Perceiving;
- Observers with Introversion-Extraversion, Thinking-Feeling;
- Questioners to Thinking-Feeling and Perceiving;
- Adventurers to Judging-Perceiving dimensions;

was fielded confirming hypotheses 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27.

Relationship between Leadership Styles and Enneagram types -

- Task oriented leadership style and Perfectionists, Achievers, Questioners, Adventurers, and Asserters;
- Authoritative leadership style and Perfectionists, Achievers, Questioners, Adventurers, and Asserters;
- Participative leadership style with Perfectionists, Questioners, Adventurers, and

Asserters;

- A, p + V leadership style with Achievers, Questioners, Adventurers, Asserters and Peace makers

yielded significant relationship.

While comparing the manufacturing and service organisations on Enneagram dimension Perfectionists, Helpers, Romantics, Questioners and Peace-makers dimensions were significantly different. Only Thinking and Feeling dimensions of MBTI were significantly different.

While comparing the private and public sector manufacturing organisations Achievers, Asserters, Adventurers and Observers were found significantly different on nine Enneagram dimensions. Only Extraversion and Introversion dimensions of MBTI yielded significant differences.

On comparing the two public sectors one manufacturing organisation and other service organisation Perfectionists, Achievers, Questioners, Adventurers and Peace-makers Enneagram types yielded significant differences. Only Thinking and Feeling dimension of MBTI were significantly different.

On all the three comparisons Leadership styles could not yield significant difference.

Thus it can be concluded by overviewing the quantitative and qualitative analysis, that more or less the assumptions were supported well. It is expected that the results which could not support the assumptions well may help in generalisation of the assumptions with a larger sample.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY :

The concept of Enneagram is new in the field of psychology. Not many researches have been done in this field. Only a few people like Riso, (1990), Helen Palmer (1985) are known to do the work in the field. There are just a few dissertations are known to have been produced on Enneagram. Researches known till date are done in the West. That is, the concept of Enneagram is almost unknown in India. The present researcher have not come across any research in India. Even in the West most of the works are philosophical, not scientific enough. Reliability and validity of the tests developed in the West for example by Palmer (1985) have not been worked out till date. So, the concept of Enneagram is basically a philosophical concept in both East and the West.

One of the basic importance of the study is that a reliable and valid tool is developed to test Enneagram Personality Typology.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY :

A critical examination of the study reveals some of the limitations, with which the present research suffers. As the concept is new to psychology, it was not possible to access on the literature. The present researcher did not have any benchmark study to rely upon to compare with. This research started only with a generalised kind of book (Baron and Wagele, 1994) and a vague scale available, given in the book.

Even browsing on Internet a year back brought nothing new to notice. Only recently when this researcher was almost nearing completion, a website on Enneagram was located. In brief the study suffered with lack of literature though, again when the research was more than half-way through a few books could be located. Lack of literature, journal articles, books etc. were major handicaps for the present researcher.

Secondly, the concept of Enneagram is complex, overlapping within its own nine personality types for example various wings, directions of integrations and disintegration. This puts a serious limitation as it inhibits any clear labelling of an individual to any one particular dimension of personality. So it is difficult to test the personality types in terms of Enneagram points on the basis of a questionnaire, and label into one particular dimension as is expected to be done in any study on typology.

Third Limitation is that the hypotheses formulated about the relationships between nine Enneagram types and sixteen MBTI types could be verified only to a limited extent may be because of the small size of our sample and a limited timeframe, and the limitations of resources imposed upon us.

FUTURE RELEVANCE :

This study is a stepping stone for further research. It is dynamic in its nature and can give lots of hidden truth in the understanding of human personality. The present research offers a new vista for future research. Similar studies can be replicated; for example scientific rigour could be brought in Enneagram typology which could test the overall personality, keeping in mind the overlapping qualities of wings and dynamics of Enneagram types into the main points of Enneagram.

Secondly, the relationship between Enneagram can also be explored with a large sample so as to get better results about the relationships between Enneagram points and MBTI preferences the present researcher also recommends comparing Enneagram data with MBTI data collected on the original test by Myers-Briggs team.