
Clear personality differences were found for a sample of academically talented students when compared to a general population of same age students. On the Myers-Briggs dimensions, the academically talented students differed significantly from the comparison group on all four dimensions. Specifically, the academically talented group expressed greater preferences for introversion, intuition, and thinking. Although there were more judging types in this group than in the comparison group, overall more academically talented students expressed a preference for a perceptive style. They also tended to be higher on achievement motivation and lower on interpersonal and social concerns. In particular, a cognitive style that emphasizes a thinking over a feeling mode appears to mediate gender differences in mathematics ability and achievement.


The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) was administered to 1247 gifted adolescents from the United States and a comparable sample of 309 gifted Irish adolescents, all of whom were attending summer programs for the academically talented. Strikingly similar patterns of cognitive and psychological styles were found for the gifted students in both Ireland and the U.S. These patterns are quite different than those found in normative samples of U.S. students. The most consistent finding was that the majority of gifted students score highly on N (Intuition), indicative of a preference for the abstract and theoretical. This is in contrast to studies showing the majority of U.S. students from the general population have a preference for the factual and pragmatic. Many of the gifted students from both societies showed preferences for modes of thinking and learning that may be at odds with typical instruction styles. Implications for educational practices and policy are suggested.

The Murphy-Meisgeier Type Indicator for Children (MMTIC) was administered to 240 academically talented third through sixth graders. Type was compared to the norms of the MMTIC and to 345 eighth through tenth grade students of comparable ability who had been administered the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. The most common type was ENFP (Extraversion, Intuition, Feeling, Perceiving), accounting for over 45% of the sample. The participants were more likely to be N and P than the normative group. Academically talented males were more likely to be Extraverted and academically talented; females were more likely to be Introverted. Large differences were found between the older and younger groups, with the younger students showing greater preference for Extraversion, Sensing, Feeling, and Perceiving.