Comparing Results of Clifton StrengthsFinder (CSF) Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Values-in-Action (VIA)

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The Myers Briggs MBTI

- Pioneer test in positive psychology
- Suddenly became popular (tipped) in the 1970’s
- Norms available by category for proportion of people in different jobs (but not their happiness in the job).
- Variant versions on web

QuickTime™ and a TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor are needed to see this picture.
Clifton StrengthsFinder (CSF)

- Developed from years of experience using strengths-oriented interviews to match people to jobs.
- Organized into 34 “strengths”
Values in Action (VIA)

- Partly based on what philosophers wrote on character and virtues
- Partly builds upon Gallup “Wellsprings” project as well as psychological research on specific virtues such as “gratitude”.
- Sponsored by the Mayerson Foundation and available on-line.
Some differences between the instruments

- MBTI items force choices between two ends of a dimension. Result is a forced opposition of eight categories on four dimensions.
- VIA uses five-point scales with many reverse scored. Each item relates to one scale.
- CSF has each item compared against a “distracter” that is usually not scored in order to avoid creating forced oppositions. Distracter provides a context. Also, some items scored on more than one scale.
Questions driving this investigation

• How do the VIA, MBTI and CSF relate to one another?
  – Are there strengths covered by one instrument that the others miss?
    • If so, what are they?
    • If so, do the three instruments then complement one another to provide a more comprehensive portrait?
    • If not, are they redundant?
This report will show that..

- The MBTI serves a useful orienting function to think about one’s strengths
- The VIA and CSF results complement each other and add richness to a student’s self-understanding
  - One test situates some strengths of the other.
    - Example: VIA’s “Leadership”
    - Some strengths have special functions
      - Example: VIA’s “Zest”
- The MBTI results identify an area of sparse strengths coverage in both the VIA and CSF
Our comparison of the three instruments

- Information gathered from students in a large (non-required) applied social psychology class at Harvard, with feedback an integral part of the course content.
  - Participants were 39 Freshmen, 43 Sophomores, 80 Juniors and 116 seniors.
  - Most concentrators in economics (25%), psychology (25%), government (19%).
- VIA and CSF staffs kindly provided scores on each scale, not just the “top five” scores.
- Meyers-Briggs type scores mainly from a short online version. Many students had taken the MBTI previously and reported the online results generally agreed with prior testing.
Overall CSF Class Profile
(2004 shown; 2005 is similar)
Top VIA Strengths of Harvard students

- Judgment, critical thinking and open-mindedness 3.97
- Capacity to love and be loved 3.94
- Kindness and generosity 3.94
- Humor and Playfulness 3.93
- Honesty, authenticity and genuineness 3.90
- Gratitude 3.89
- Curiosity and interest in the world 3.88
- Social intelligence 3.85
- Perspective wisdom 3.86
Lowest VIA Strengths of Harvard students

- Modesty and humility 3.27
- Spirituality, sense of purpose, faith 3.29
- Forgiveness and mercy 3.34
- Appreciation of beauty and excellence 3.36
- Self control and regulation: 3.40
- Love of learning 3.46
- Caution, prudence and discretion 3.47
Distribution of our students compared with MBTI norms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MBTI category</th>
<th>Student %</th>
<th>MBTI norms %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introversion</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensing</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuition</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judging</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceiving</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MBTI: *Sensing* vs *Intuitive*

- “People who prefer *Sensing* tend to focus on the present and on concrete information gained from their senses”
- “People who prefer *Intuition* tend to focus on the future with a view toward patterns and possibilities.”
MBTI: Sensing vs Intuitive

- Make
- Production
- Build
- Experience
- Sign
- Literal
- Prefers realistic people
- Prefers those who say what they mean.
- Do in accepted way.
- Prefer to be conventional
- Values having commons sense

- Create
- Design
- Invent
- Theory
- Symbol
- Figurative
- Prefers imaginative people
- Prefers those with original ways of saying things
- Invent a way of your own
- Prefer to be original
- Values having vision
MBTI Types: 
*Judging vs Perceiving*

- People who prefer *Judging* tend to like a planned and *organized* approach to life and prefer to have things settled.
- People who prefer *Perceiving* tend to like a flexible and *spontaneous* approach to life and prefer to keep their options open.
  - Example items: Does the idea of making a list of what you should get done over a weekend appeal to you, leave you cold, or positively depress you?
  - Do you find the more routine parts of the day restful or boring?
High MBTI “judging” types are high in these CSF and VIA scales:

- Achiever \( t = 2.51 \quad p = .013 \)
- Analytical \( t = 3.451 \quad p = .0007 \)
- Discipline \( t = 10.15 \quad p < .0001 \)
- Consistency \( t = 5.97 \quad p < .0001 \)
- Focus \( t = 3.543 \quad p = .0002 \)
- Harmony \( t = 3.96 \quad p < .0001 \)
- Learner \( t = 2.274 \quad p = .022 \)
- Caution, prudence and discretion \( t = 3.798 \quad p = .0002 \)
- Industry, diligence and perserverence \( t = 3.265 \quad p = .0013 \)
- Self control and regulation \( t = 2.246 \quad p = .0257 \)
High MBTI “perceiving” types are high in these CSF and VIA scales:

• Activator \( t = 1.36 \) \( p = .142 \)
• Adaptability \( t = 6.475 \) \( p = .0001 \)
• Command \( t = 2.561 \) \( p = .0117 \)
• Ideation \( t = 5.459 \) \( p < .0001 \)
• Self-assurance \( t = 2.72 \) \( p = .0076 \)
• Strategic \( t = 3.874 \) \( p = .0005 \)
• Woo \( t = 1.919 \) \( p = .0562 \)
• Bravery and valor \( t = 1.922 \) \( p = .055 \)
• Creativity, ingenuity and originality \( t = 3.249 \) \( p = .0009 \)
• Humor and playfulness \( t = 2.544 \) \( p = .0116 \)
Which instrument do the students find most valuable?

- MBTI 14%
- VIA 32%
- CSF 53%

- Students often preferred the test that provided what they thought to be the “best fit”
- Most prefer more detailed pinpointing of the CSF and VIA. Some complained the CSF was the most aggravating to take.
- MBTI seen as providing useful overview
Introverts prefer VIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>ChiSquare</th>
<th>Prob&gt;ChiSq</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>5.287</td>
<td>0.0711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson</td>
<td>5.285</td>
<td>0.0712</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=235
Spontaneous students prefer VIA

Test          ChiSquare    Prob > ChiSq
Likelihood Ratio  5.904       0.0522
Pears on         6.044       0.0487

N = 234
Feeling people tend to prefer MBTI

Only 34 preferred MBTI out of 235
Intuitives slightly tend to prefer MBTI

Only 34 preferred MBTI out of 235; Chart p = .18
To interpret correlations between scales, it is necessary to consider an overall “g” factor found in our Harvard VIA results

- Similar to “g” as a general intelligence factor, the VIA scales correlate an average of .30 with each other, while the CSF scales only correlate an average of .16 with each other.
- VIA scales correlate an average of .12 with CSF scales
- Negative correlations between VIA scales are very rare; more common in CSF.
VIA scales that correlated an average of more than .30 with other VIA scales

- Bravery and valor, .35
- Capacity to love and be loved, .34
- Curiosity and interest in the world, .37
- Fairness equity and justice, .35
- Gratitude, .38
- Honesty, authenticity and genuineness .33
- Kindness and generosity .36
- Leadership .37
- Perspective wisdom .38
- Social intelligence .34
- Zest .35
VIA scales that correlated an average of less than .30 with other VIA scales

- Modesty and humility: .07
- Spirituality: .20
- Creativity, ingenuity and originality: .21
- Humor and playfulness: .21
- Self control and regulation: .23
- Caution, prudence and direction: .24
- Appreciation of beauty and excellence: .24
CSF scales that correlate an average of .20 or more with VIA scales are:

- Achiever .22
- Arranger .24
- Belief .23
- Learner .27
- Positivity .20
- Relator .20
- Responsibility .23
- Self assurance .25
- Woo .22
CSF scales that correlate an average of about zero (-.09 to +.09) with VIA scales are:

- Adaptability
- Analytical
- Command
- Competition
- Context
- Deliberative
- Discipline
- Empathy
- Consistency
- Harmony
- Ideation
- Individualization
- Intellection
- Maximizer
- Restorative
- Significance
How MBTI & CSF results shed light on what is VIA “Leadership”

• Example VIA “leadership” items
  • “I can always get people to do things together without nagging.”
  • (reverse score) “I am not very good at planning group activities.”
  • “In a group, I try to make sure everyone feels included.”

• High leaders score characteristic of these MBTI categories:
  • Extravert \( t = 2.93 \quad p = .004 \)
  • Feeling \( t = 2.98 \quad p = .003 \)
VIA’s “Leadership” correlations with CSF scales

- **High correlations**
  - Achiever \(0.24\)
  - Arranger \(0.37\)
  - Learner \(0.24\)
  - Positivity \(0.32\)
  - Relator \(0.30\)
  - Responsibility \(0.24\)
  - Self Assurance \(0.22\)
  - Woo \(0.23\)

- **Low correlations**
  - Adaptability \(0.00\)
  - Analytical \(-0.13\)
  - Command \(-0.01\)
  - Competition \(-0.01\)
  - Consistency \(-0.01\)
  - Deliberative \(-0.27\)
  - Empathy \(0.07\)
  - Harmony \(-0.01\)
  - Ideation \(-0.02\)
  - Individualization \(0.03\)
  - Intellection \(-0.04\)
  - Maximizer \(0.02\)
  - Restorative \(0.01\)
  - Significance \(0.01\)
VIA’s “Zest” as an amplifier for some strengths

- Example items:
  - “I throw myself into everything I do”
  - (reverse score:) “I mope a lot”
- “Zest” correlates -.21 with Modesty and humility, but an average of .35 with other VIA scales.
  - Correlations especially high with “Curiosity and interest in the world” (.64) and “Hope optimism and future mindedness. (.66)
Correlations of “Zest” with CSF Scales

- **High correlations:**
  - Achiever  .39
  - Activator  .40
  - Arranger  .39
  - Communication  .45
  - Focus  .36
  - Learner  .40
  - Positivity  .44
  - Self assurance  .41
  - Woo  .52

- **Low correlations:**
  - Adaptability  -.07
  - Analytical  -.13
  - Deliberative  -.21
  - Empathy  -.04
  - Consistency  -.18
  - Harmony  -.14
  - Restorative  -.19
How VIA virtue scales relate to CSF scales

• “Forgiveness and mercy”
  – Correlates with “includer” .38
    • Includer item: “I accept many types of people.”
  – Also correlates with “positivity” .34

• “Appreciation of beauty and excellence”
  – Correlates with “connectedness” .40, “empathy” (.37 and “input” (.36)

• “Gratitude” correlates with:
Generally, those high on an MBTI type are also high on the corresponding VIA and CSF scales

- True for Introvert, Extravert, Thinking, Feeling, Judging and Perceiving types.
  - Each represented by a good number of categories
- VIA and CSF scales not relevant to a MBTI type usually show little relation to the type dimension.
- However contrasts between Sensing and Intuitive types seem to reveal a gap in VIA and CSF strengths coverage:
Do the VIA and CSF do justice to strengths of those who are high on the MBTI sensing category?

- Our Harvard MBTI Sensing students significantly higher (p < .05) than Intuitives only on these few scales:
  - **CSF**:
    - Consistency. $t = 6.014$ $p = 0.0001$
    - Discipline $t = 3.17$ $p = .0004$
    - Harmony $t = 5.052$ $p = .0001$
  - **VIA**:
    - Citizenship, teamwork and loyalty: $t = 1.98$ $p = .0489$
    - Modesty and humility $t = 3.088$ $p = .0023$
By contrast, Harvard MBTI Intuitives are significantly higher than Sensing students on all these CSF scales

- Ideation: $t = 7.115$  $p = .0001$
- Intellection $t = 3.33$  $p = .0010$
- Strategic $t = 5.626$  $p = .0001$
- Creativity $t = 6.307$  $p = .0001$
- Belief $t = 2.034$  $p = .0427$
- Learner $t = 1.96$  $p = .0520$
- Input $t = 3.604$  $p = .0098$
- Futurististic $t = 2.750$  $p = .0064$
- Positivity $t = 3.045$  $p = .0026$
- Self-assurance $t = 3.808$  $p = .0002$
- Command $t = 3.23$  $p = .0006$
- Woo $t = 3.039$  $p = .0027$
- Communication $t = 2.322$  $p = .021$
- Connectedness $t = 5.811$  $p = .0001$
- Activator $t = 2.190$  $p = .03$
And, our Harvard MB *Intuitives* are significantly higher than *Sensing* students on these VIA scales

- Bravery and valor  \( t = 2.704 \)  \( p = .0074 \)
- Fairness, equity and justice  \( t = 2.156 \)  \( p = .0321 \)
- Curiosity and interest in the world  \( t = 3.662 \)  \( p = .0003 \)
- Love of learning  \( t = 2.495 \)  \( p = .0133 \)
- Judgment, critical thinking and open mindedness:  \( t = 1.915 \)  \( p = .0567 \)
- Perspective wisdom:  \( t = 2.098 \)  \( p = .03 \)
- Appreciation of beauty and excellence  \( t = 3.73 \)  \( p = .0002 \)
- Forgiveness and mercy  \( t = 2.502 \)  \( p = .0135 \)
- Hope, optimism  \( t = 1.77 \)  \( p = .06 \)
- Humor and playfulness  \( t = 2.117 \)  \( p = .03 \)
- Zest  \( t = 2.893 \)  \( p = .0044 \)
Why do those respondents high in *Sensing* not get a fair shake in identifying their richness of strengths?

- Possible CSF reason: Sensing people of less interest for matching people to managerial jobs; Classic manager is an ENTJ.
  - But CSF is used in schools and other contexts. Should serve *Sensing* types equally well.

- Possible VIA reason: Philosophers are high *Intuitive* and don’t understand how *Sensing* respondents think
  - More likely to devise items that appeal to *Intuitives* who are higher on Piaget abstract reasoning or Kohlberg scale.
Some suggestions

• CSF distracter items should be as abstract as strength items.
  – CSF distracters tend to be concrete in ways that might appeal to sensing types

• VIA and CSF can include more items that use these MBTI words appealing to sensing types:
  – “make”, “craft”, “build”, “be realistic”, “have common sense”, “stick to the facts”, “feet on the ground” etc.

• Similar studies are needed to verify whether these cross-instrument relationships hold for other groups.

• Also, investigations might identify ways Sensing people appreciate beauty, express hope, are brave, etc.