Personality And Psychological Assessment In Athletes: A Comparison Of Four Varsity Sports

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PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT IN ATHLETES: A Comparison of Four Varsity Sports

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation with Honors to the Department of Education: Health, Physical, and Teacher Carroll College, Helena, Montana

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April 7, 2003
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to say thank you to the following people for their help with this project. Without your help this accomplishment would not have been possible. First, I would like to thank my Honor Thesis Director, Dr. Lauri Fahlberg for her willingness to take on this project. Dr. Fahlberg's shared wisdom and guidance, gave me the courage to complete this task. Her support and constant availability was extremely generous and much appreciated.

I would also like to recognize my readers, Dr. Gloria Lambertz and Dr. Brad Elison, for their contributions and insights in this investigation. Many thanks go to Jack Oberweiser, who performed all the statistical analysis for my investigation. Thank you Tom Hamilton, for another viewpoint into statistics. In addition, a special thank you to Dr. Brad Elison for kindly being my supervisor while I administered the Meyers-Briggs Personality Assessment tests and for showing me how to score the tests. I must also thank the Student Development Center, Rosalie (Rosie) K. Walsh, LCPC, NCC, Director of Counseling and Career Center, Director of Testing Services and Lucia Flynn, Office Manager for making me aware of the requirements and details involved with administering the Meyers-Briggs Personality Tests and for answering all my questions.

I would like to acknowledge the help I received from members of the athletic teams and the cooperation of the coaches. Without them I would not have been able to coordinate this investigation. I thank all of you for your time, flexibility and consideration during the months of this project.
A special thank you to my family for supporting me during this time. My sister Karen read and edited my honor thesis. Also thanks to Karen and Carl (brother-in-law) for taking care of my dog Sophi so this task could be finished on time. I want to thank my brother John, his special lady Judy, also my sister Connie and Chuck (brother in-law) Clinton Neal, my father and MaryBelle Deckard Neal, my mother, Robert (Trey), my son and my loving daughter Brandi, Steven for coming over a thousand miles to see me graduate. I am truly blessed to have such a loving, caring, and supportive family.
ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT IN ATHLETES

The purpose of this study was to investigate differences in personality types among athletes and how personality plays a role in sport participation and selection. In this investigation of male and female varsity athletes, results from the Enneagram Personality Assessment and the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator Assessment (MBTI) were similar according to gender. According to the MBTI and Enneagram, no gender differences were found in athletes of four varsity sports at Carroll College. Results from the Enneagram Personality Assessment indicated that 94% of all athletes participating at Carroll College (male basketball, female basketball, male football and female volleyball players) received a personality score of “Eight,” which is considered “The Powerful, Dominating type.” Eight’s are usually considered to be self-confident, decisive, willful, and confrontational.

The interpretation of the above results suggests the athlete (despite gender) is more outgoing, socially confident, socially aggressive, dominant, and a strong leader. They also have higher social adjustment, prestige, and social status. Moreover they are stronger competitors, less anxious, more emotionally stable, and less compulsive. Furthermore, athletes tend to have a greater tolerance for physical pain. The athletic personality type, regardless of gender, demonstrates that competitiveness will be propelling them forward long after they leave the game.
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Chapter I
INTRODUCTION
Statement of the Problem

It has long been commonly believed that certain psychological characteristics are related to success in athletic endeavors. No intelligent individual would make light of the importance of physical skills or talent, but what is “success” when talent is measured across male and female athletes? In certain athletes, such as football players, female and male basketball players, and female volleyball players what actually creates a winning athlete, or eventually, a winning team? Does personality play a role in types of sport participation and selection? It is possible that any one of the several athletes such as football players, basketball players and volleyball players could achieve greatness. It might also be said that how much she or he “wants” the victory is often purported to be a factor in the eventual victory. The purpose of this study was to determine whether personality types play a role in the types of sports athletes participate in or select. This study consisted of varsity male and female athletes from Carroll College in Helena, Montana. For the purpose of this study, only the team sports with fulltime coaches on campus were used. The participants included the male and female basketball team, the male football team, and the female volleyball team.

In recent years, individuals interested in this relationship between psychological characteristics and athletic endeavors have collected personality data in the hopes of clarifying the question. A few specific questions have been raised and research reflects each of them. These questions include:
• Is there a specific personality profile that characterizes a certain sport choice, such as football, basketball, or volleyball?

• Are successful individuals and teams characterized by a specific personality profile?

• Does athletic participation influence the personality of the athlete?

Certain purposes of the assessment of the athletic personality are inherent in the aforementioned questions. Moreover, if there is a specific set of personality characteristics that comprise exemplary football, basketball, or volleyball players, then the coach could select the individuals who have the qualities for successful performance. Personality selection becomes increasingly important if certain personality profiles predict certain sports performance. In addition to selection, a more humanistic viewpoint might be to promote within the individual those characteristics, which allow for increased self-actualizing performance. Self-actualizing is when the athlete sees him/herself actually accomplishing his/her goal. For example, a basketball player wants to make a basket. The player then visualizes the task. The player is on the floor, then moving up the floor toward the hoop, then takes the step to set up the shot and watches the ball go in the basket for a two or three point score. The step-by-step visualization works in sport activities and is a great way to prepare for competition.

There is much to be gained by appreciating differences and much to be lost by ignoring or condemning them. The first step toward seeing others as distinct from oneself is to become better acquainted with one’s own traits of character. The best way to determine one’s traits of character is to watch what one actually does from time-to-time and place-to-place and in different company and situations. Self-examination is
foreign to some people, and so instruments like the “Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator Assessment” (see appendix C for the 16 personality types) and the “Enneagram Personality Inventory” (see appendix B for the 9 personality types) can be useful in creating an awareness about preferred attitudes and actions.

It could be postulated that participation in sports might actually influence the participant’s personality. As a result, various claims could be made for sport participation; such as enhancing cooperation, building leaders, and developing aggressive tendencies. Such claims have been made despite of limited or no evidence from the scientific community. This oversight reinforces the continual need of a theoretical base for research in the assessment of personality in athletics.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Trait Approach

The trait approach, which is based on behavior and how it is influenced by situations, has long been used in personality assessment. Research by Endler & Hunt (1966) has certainly raised an issue about the validity of explaining behavior using this tactic. They contend that when one attempts to understand, explain, or predict the behavior of another person, several pieces of information are needed. For example, is knowing that a person scores high on the scale of aggression enough to conclude that aggressive behavior is an expected outcome? Perhaps there are situations where aggressive behavior would be moderated or eradicated. According to Endler & Hunt (1966) a person’s personality trait will only account for less than ten percent of behavioral variance in any given situation. Therefore, the type of situation and how a person reacts to the environment is unaccounted for at least 90 percent of the time. Such findings certainly give little confidence in any explanation or prediction of future behavior from knowing the level of the personality trait. The solution to predicting behavior lies in taking a more sensible and realistic approach in accounting for all the variables and not aggression. The question is not trait or situation, but rather it is in interaction of the personality characteristic and the present situation that evokes the behavior.

The Scope of Latent State-Trait Theory

The basic idea of Latent State-Trait Theory (LST) is that an observed variable (e.g., a test score) can be decomposed into a latent state variable and an error variable Endler & Hunt (1966). The latent state variable can be decomposed into a latent trait
variable and an occasion-specific residual. Thus meaning, it takes into account the fact that not only persons but also situations and the interaction between persons and situations are important sources of variance in psychological measurement (e.g., Bowers, 1973; Endler & Hunt, 1966; Sarason, Smith, & Diener, 1975; Unes & Nation, 2000; Cox, 1994). However, the trait approach continues to be the predominant conceptual framework for the description of human personality and the prediction of behavior (Matthews & Deary, 1998; Cox, 1994, Unes & Nation, 2000).

**Assessment Using the Trait Theory**

In assessing personalities of individuals from the trait viewpoint, it is difficult to see every aspect of personality. For example, under certain situations even a person highly disposed to aggression (trait) will remain inactive and the reverse is also true. For example, the character “Superman” is described as mild-mannered reporter Clark Kent. In a crisis, Clark Kent emerges from the telephone booth as “Superman.” This demonstrates the idea of inactive and active aggression and must be considered, or the behavior may appear paradoxical. Athletes undoubtedly play various roles in sport situations and these roles may be quite different from their personality characteristics. Moreover, in a sport such as basketball there are strong sanctions against certain aggressive behaviors (e.g., throwing elbows, shoving, etc.) It is the assumption of the scientific community that personality traits can predict future behavior. However, the athlete may also exhibit behavior that no paper and pencil assessment takes into consideration. For example, if a coach positively reinforces the “rah rah” type of behavior, it may not be surprising to find a preponderance of emoting athletes (even if they might be highly introverted). Understanding the values to be allegedly derived
from sport participation and the impact of sport in the lives of many people, it would be surprising if an athlete's behavior was consistent with his/her personalities.

**Various Studies**

Considering the status of knowledge concerning specific sport personality types, independent of all possible reservations Ogilvie (1968) has long claimed that "general sport personalities" exist. This conclusion is drawn from a survey of the literature and from data reportedly collected from thousands of athletes in various sport groups. As far as Ogilvie is concerned, such types as the "football player" and the "race car driver" can be identified. Kane, (1973) supports this personality typology concept and delineates a small number of characteristics that certain sport personality types possess. However, he does add a qualifier to this conclusion when he states that these specific personality types are not altogether unlike other athletes in total personality. It would appear that his support for this concept is derived from isolated trait differences. Even in an earlier study by Carter and Shannon in 1940, Kroll & Crenshaw (1968); Slusher, (1964) reported similarities between football players and wrestlers in personality profiles and these profiles differed from other sport groups. This finding leads the investigators to raise the question of similar demand characteristics such as: why should one expect dissimilarities in personality if the athlete is expected to elicit similar behavior? These results are also supported by Darden (1972) and Rushall (1970). Even today these results are purposed by Cox (1994) and Unes & Nation (2000).

Another large study was conducted by Sage (1972) and Fisher (1976). This data was collected over a ten-year period and included eight sport groups. Sage and Fisher found no specific sport personality types. In other words, all personalities across sport
groups were similar. Therefore, they cautioned the reader to be wary of studies utilizing limited data. According to Sage (1972) using limited data can create false findings in sport personality types. Sage (1972) and Fisher (1976) suggested the use of a combination of personality variables to look at sport selection.

Examining a study by Rushall (1970), sport typology has been called into question by utilizing rigorous examination across several sport groups, including various sporting environments over long periods of time. His findings strongly refute the concept of specific sport personality types. Similar to the important findings of Endler, Hunt, and Rosenstein (1966), Rushall (1970) reports small proportions (17%) of behavioral variance attributed to personality traits. He contends that the environment is the largest source of variance in personality, which causes him to caution the researcher from against that there is such a thing as a football, basketball, or volleyball environment—each is different.

There are many reasons why a participant initially chooses a specific sport, such as peers, parents, role models, availability, to name a few. According to Rushall (1970), it appears to make little sense to search for personality consistencies when the participant is subject to the surrounding environment and the impact it has on an athlete. It is more logical and reasonable to note that the environment, friends, and family have a great impact on the athlete’s choices (Unes & Nation, 2000).

Assuming that the environment has an impact on the athlete’s choices, is it possible to profile successful athletic personality profile? Ogilvie, B. C. (1968) declares that there are consistent findings supporting that successful athletes are characterized by emotional stability and high need for achievement. There are also additional characteristics that appear with the successful athlete, such as aggression, the
“never give up” attitude, and a good work ethic. This finding is somewhat close to the theory of the survival of the fittest, only the strong survive. Only select athletes remain in competition, the higher the level of performance the drop out rate increases, because the athlete cannot endure what it takes to succeed. The equations for success are endless. Personality could be an important aspect of success but it is not the only aspect.

The research demonstrates that changes in personality due to participation in sports cannot be denied, however, causation is not easy to determine (Cox, 1994). Undoubtedly, it is not just the matter of participation in the sport, but it is also the degree of involvement in the sport. If changes in personality were to occur, they would likely differ across individuals and across sports. It is difficult to measure personality change (Unes & Nation, 2000). The whole question of personality is tied to the reliability of the instruments utilized. Apparent personality differences may be the result of change over time or due to low reliability coefficients. A typical approach by sport psychologists is to assess personality characteristics after some prolonged period of participation and then attribute these characteristics to participation. In other words, these characteristics are present to begin with and the majority of the literature on personality supports this statement. It may seem unreasonable to expect mere participation in sport to cause personality changes without some planned and concentrated effort. The sport psychology literature indicates that certain personality characteristics are more amenable to change than others. The literature is nearly unanimous in concluding that no consistent changes in personality occur as a result of sport participation, nor is an athlete’s personality developed.
There are several tests that an athlete can take to find out his/her own personality profile. The instruments selected for this study were The Enneagram Personality Assessment (1980) and the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator Assessment (1956). The Enneagram is defined as a figure that describes the nine basic personality types of human nature and their complex interrelationships. While the Enneagram suggests that there are nine basic personality types of human nature, there are of course, many subtypes and variations within the nine fundamental categories. Nevertheless, the assertion of Enneagram theory is that these nine adequately map out the territory of “personality types.” The Enneagram has a symbol that maps out the ways in which the nine types are related to each other. This instrument offers a framework for understanding basic personality types.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Assessment (MBTI) (1956) is a psychological tool used to help people understand personality types. The tool is structured as a questionnaire that asks questions about how you view the world and how you make decisions. The output of the MBTI is a four-letter personality “type.” There are sixteen different personality types, each of which represents a unique combination of the four preferences. The MBTI is based upon the work of C.G. Jung (1956), a Swiss psychiatrist who developed one of the many comprehensive theories explaining human personality. Katharine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers translated Jung’s theory of personality types into a format more practical and useful in people’s lives, thus popularizing C. G. Jung works. The MBTI is currently the most widely utilized personality preference instrument in the world, Myers (1998).

The MBTI is a useful and practical tool for achieving an understanding of the differences of others. The MBTI is a method in which to assess an individual’s
preferences and a positive look at the characteristics that define how we live and work. The MBTI is not a test, there are no “right” or “wrong” answers or types. MBTI is not an indicator of abilities, likelihood of success, intelligence, or skills. Nor is MBTI a tool for selecting employees, assigning tasks, or evaluating performance. The MBTI is a self-reported personality inventory designed to give people information about their Jungian psychological type preferences. There were four dimensions of the MBIT used in this study. First, Extroversion (E) or Introversion (I); this is how you get your energy and where you focus the energy. Second is Sensing (S) or Intuition (N); this is how you receive information about the outside world. The third dimension is Thinking (T) or Feeling (F); this is how you make decisions on information from your world. The last is Judging (J) or Perceiving (P); this is how you organize activities within your world.

Results on the MBTI are generally reported with letters representing each of the preferences as indicated above. There are sixteen possible ways to combing the preferences, resulting in 16 MBTI types: ISTJ, ISTP, ESTP, ESTJ, ISFJ, ISFP, ESFP, ESFJ, INFJ, INFP, ENFP, ENFJ, INTJ, INTP, ENTP, and ENTJ. (see appendix C)

Though many factors combine to influence an individual’s behaviors, values, and attitudes, the four-letter type descriptions summarize underlying patterns and behaviors common to most people of that type.

The previously discussed studies have attempted to explain personality types and sports participation. The findings suggest that differences in athletes’ personality variables could vary with sport type. There is little consensus of what influences personality from the psychologist’s or sport psychologist’s point of view. Definitions of personality vary according to theoretical viewpoints. Therefore, this lack of information on what influences personality makes for difficult understanding of
personality. Confusion abounds on personality and whether it is inherited or environmentally enhanced (Unes & Nation, 2000). At the risk of providing a very superficial underpinning of personality concepts, some reasonable positions that personality theories need to encompass are suggested below.

- The theory needs to account for a degree of consistency (a genetic component) exhibited across like situations, but it also must leave room for the behavioral fluctuations (an environmental component).
- Personality is more than we see on the surface and so overt responses are not always good indicators of the underlying personality structure.
- The concept of individual differences must be heeded. Not all individuals will perceive a so-called similar situation in the same manner. Therefore, it is to be expected that there will be inter-individual variability of behavior even in these similar situations.

The aforementioned points have certainly not exhausted all the premises that a good personality theory needs to encompass, but they are mentioned in order to provide a framework against which to compare some of our sport personality assessment practices.

A majority of the research in sport psychology has been oriented around the factor theory, which embodies “traits” as a basic assumption. The first trait theorist, Gordon Allport (1937) believed that motivation is more than what is in the unconscious, but he also recognized the limitations of trait theory in that environmental influences are also important. Allport believed we would find the source of traits in the nervous system (CNS as conceptual nervous system versus Central Nervous System—prelude to Cognitive theorists). According to this perspective, behavior is expected to
be quite consistent and predictable across situations. Therefore, the specific situation in which the behavior is exhibited is not important. This specific situation in which the behavior is exhibited could be observed in non-sport situations and the responses could be generalized to various sport situations.

R.B. Cattell’s (1973) Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire employed the methods of factor analysis in his study of personality and he firmly believed that his test measured the sixteen source traits or first-order traits of personality. Factor analysis procedures allow the researcher to identify major factors or clusters associated with a particular test. Cattell and his associates have conducted extensive research over the last forty years to find support and verification for these source traits (Cattell, Eber & Tatsuoka, 1980). Dozens of researchers may have violated their own beliefs of what personality consists of because they did not realize the underlying premises of factor theory. This oversight reinforces the continual need of a theoretical base for research in the assessment of personality in athletics.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODS AND MATERIALS

Subjects

The subjects for this study included 23 female and 43 male athletes. There were 12 female basketball players, 11 female volleyball players, 12 male basketball players and 31 male football players. A total of 66 subjects participated in the study and their participation was voluntary.

Before Data Collection

Team coaches were approached and asked if they would be willing to have their athletes to participate in this study. It was explained that the testing would take between forty-five minutes to one hour. The time factor depended on the individual abilities of concentration and understanding of the process. Each of the 66 subjects was given two personality tests, the Enneagram Personality Assessment and the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator Assessment.

Instruments

The Enneagram Personality Assessment Test is a geometric figure that delineates the nine basic personality types of human nature and their complex interrelationships. While the Enneagram suggests that there are nine basic personality types of human nature, there are, of course, many subtypes and variations within the nine fundamental categories. Nevertheless, the assertion of Enneagram theory is that these nine adequately map out the territory of “personality types.” The Enneagram is a questionnaire of 144 pairs of statements in a forced choice format, which yields a rich cache of information not only about the user’s main personality type but also about
which areas of the personality are underdeveloped. In the vast majority of cases, the person's true personality type will be one of the top three scores. (see Appendix A, B).

The other instrument used in the study was The Myers Briggs Type Indicator Assessment (see Appendix C). Based on the studies of Swiss Psychologist Carl Jung, the instrument was developed by a mother-daughter team, Katharine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers. Their goal was to teach individuals to better understand individual differences and thereby increase communication and decrease interpersonal conflict.

This personality instrument is based on the premise that there are four scales by which humans receive information, make decisions, interact and behave with one another and their world. Each individual falls along a continuum and the combination of four preferences can give insight to personal behaviors, how these behaviors can impact personal satisfaction, interpersonal communications, and individual success.

**Data Collection**

All the requirements for the study were explained to the coaches and athletes, and the researcher was available to answer questions. There were six data collection sessions with the athletes over a three-month period of time. The first testing session was with the 12 female basketball players at 2:00 p.m., on Tuesday January 8, 2002 in room 176 at the Carroll College PE Center. The next testing session was the 12 male basketball players at 3:45 p.m. on Tuesday January 8, 2003 in room 176 at the Carroll College PE Center. The third testing session was again at Carroll College PE Center room 176 on Sunday February 10, 2002 at 5:00 p.m. with the 11 female volleyball players. The fourth session of testing was completed within the week starting on Tuesday February 26, 2002 in rooms 158 and 176 at the Carroll College PE Center twenty-two male football players were tested by 4:30 p.m. Thursday February 28, 2002
was set up for the fifth testing session with the male football players. This session started at: 1:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m., and 4:00 p.m., in room 176 of the Carroll College PE Center. On Tuesday March 26, 2002 the final session of testing with the remaining male football players was held in room 176 at 3:00 p.m., at the Carroll College PE Center. The subjects were asked to assign themselves a number, (such as team shirt number) for tracking purposes. The sign-in sheet and questionnaire requested: name of player (for researcher’s tracking purposes only) age of player, position on team, year in school, birth order in family, number of family members, and the years they have played in the current sport (see Appendix D). It was explained to the subjects that pencils, tables, seating, room, and materials needed for the testing would be provided. What was needed from the athletes was about an hour of their time. The researcher was present at all sessions to answer all questions. The researcher also offered to supply each athlete with the results of his/her testing. All test results were delivered to the coaches and individuals on April 12, 2002. Thank-you notes were then written to the coaches and athletes immediately following the testing, thanking them for their participation in this study.

The teams were coded as follows:

1. The female volleyball players were coded—FVI
2. The female basketball players were coded—FBI
3. The male basketball players were coded—MBI
4. The male football players were coded—MFI
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator Assessment Results

The Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator Assessment has sixteen types available but for the purposes of this study only four types were used for analysis:

Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male Subjects</td>
<td>Female Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrovert</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introvert</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensing</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The aforementioned findings are the result of several months of testing specific sport athletes. Only those athletes in a sport with a full-time coach on campus were selected for this study. Assessment of the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator Types using a Chi Square test of independence revealed that personality type was not dependent on gender when male and female athletes were compared.
Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Extrovert</th>
<th>Introvert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male Athlete</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Athlete</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the MBTI indicated that 56% of the male athletes in the study were “extroverts,” and 44% were “introverts.” Similarly, 59% of the female athletes in the study were “extroverts,” and 41% of the females were “introverts.” For definitions of Extrovert and Introvert (see Appendix C).

Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Sensing</th>
<th>Intuitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male Athlete</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Athlete</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A P value of .58 indicated no significant difference between gender and sensing and intuitive traits.

Of the male subjects, 72% were “sensing” and 28% were “intuitive.” Likewise 81% of the female subjects were “sensing” and 23% were “intuitive”.

When reading the above numbers it is easy to ascertain how the male and female athletes compare in sensing and intuitive traits and why they tend to be very competitive. For the definitions of Sensing and Intuitive (see Appendix C).
Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Extrovert</th>
<th>Introvert</th>
<th>Sensing</th>
<th>Intuitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male BB</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male FB</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A P value of .98 indicated no significant difference between extrovert, introvert, sensing and intuitive traits. For definitions of these traits (see Appendix C).

Of the male basketball subjects 18% were "extrovert" and 14% of male basketball subjects were "introverts" and of male basketball subjects 26% are "sensing" and lastly the male basketball subjects 14% are "intuitive." Of the male football subjects 37% are "extrovert" and 30% are "introvert" and 47% are the "sensing" and 14% are "intuitive"

Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Extrovert</th>
<th>Introvert</th>
<th>Sensing</th>
<th>Intuitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female BB</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female VB</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The female athletes scored similarly and the proportion of personality types is almost identical to the male basketball/football athletes (Table 3). This shows us that across sports and the male and female athletes that gender equalizes.

Of the female basketball subjects, 36% were "extrovert" and 18% were "introvert" and 45% of basketball subjects were "sensing" and 18% were "intuitive".
Of the female volleyball subjects, 32% were “extrovert” and 18% were “introvert” and 36% of the volleyball subjects were “sensing” and 18% were “intuitive”.

**Table 6.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Extrovert</th>
<th>Introvert</th>
<th>Sensing</th>
<th>Intuitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A P value of .85 indicated no significant difference between gender and the following traits; extrovert, introvert, sensing, and intuitive, and for the definition of traits (see Appendix C).

This is important because it shows no gender differences with these personality types for male and female athletes. Meaning in the above types gender does not enter into the equation.

Of the male subjects, 56% were “extrovert” and 44% were “introvert” and 72% were “sensing” and 28% were “intuitive.”

Likewise the female subjects, 59% were “extrovert” and 41% were “introvert” and 77% of the female subjects were “sensing” and 23% were “intuitive.” The subjects counter balance each other making for very competitive athletes regardless of gender.
Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Extrovert</th>
<th>Introvert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male Athlete</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Athlete</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A P value of .8 and an across the board P value of .22 demonstrates that there is not a significant difference when we consider gender.

Of the male subjects, 56% were “extrovert” and 44% were “introvert”.
Likewise 59% of female subjects were “extrovert” and 41% were “introvert.” As can be seen in the percentages of data the male and female athletes are very similar in types.
This personality trait may account for great competitive effort on the athlete’s part.

**Enneagram Personality Assessment Results**

The Enneagram Personality Assessment has nine types available and for this study all nine types were used for analysis (see Appendix B). The findings are the result of several months of testing specific sport athletes. Only those athletes in a sport with a full-time coach on campus were selected for this study. The Enneagram results were an amazing 94% of all athletes, male/female were the personality type “Eight” otherwise known as “Ego-Vengeance/The Challenger,” who is self-confident, decisive, willful, and confrontational. The remaining 6% of all athletes were a combination of types “Seven,” “One” and “Nine” (see Appendix B).

The findings of the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator Assessment and Enneagram Personality Assessment test indicate that gender and the sport that the athlete participates in, appears not to matter.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study reveal that the Enneagram Personality Assessment and the Meyers & Briggs Type Indicator Assessment (MBTI) tests were both similar according to gender. According to the MBTI and the Enneagram, no gender differences were found in athletes of four varsity sports at Carroll College. Results from the Enneagram Personality Assessment indicated that 94% of all athletes participating at Carroll College (male basketball, female basketball, male football and female volleyball players) received a personality score of “Eight,” which is considered “The Powerful, Dominating type.” Eight’s are usually considered to be self-confident, decisive, willful, and confrontational. The interpretation of the above results suggests the athlete (despite gender) is more outgoing, socially confident, socially aggressive, dominant, and a strong leader. Moreover they are stronger competitors, less anxious, more emotionally stable, and less compulsive. The athletic personality type, regardless of gender, demonstrates that competitiveness will be propelling them forward long after they leave the game.

Although the volume of literature on personality and psychological characteristics as they relate to sports and athletics is considerable, the literature is confusing, somewhat contradictory, and often inconclusive. Many studies have found no or little difference between athletes while others have found significant differences. As Singer (1975) pointed out, “we cannot be sure to what extent these differences existed before sports participation, were they caused by sports participation, or by the interaction of these two factors” (p. 97).
Often athletes have been described as noble individuals who pursue the “highest” values and aspirations. If there were any basis for the glowing descriptions of athletes’ personality characteristics, sport participation would appear to foster the development of many socially desirable personality characteristics. The ancient Greeks described the athlete as reborn each time they “came to grips” with themselves in the struggle for perfection (1966). The Delphic spirit asked athletes “to learn of the truth, to dare to do the best we can, and to endure in our efforts,” Genasci & Klissouras (p. 45). Athletes are thought to play hide and seek with reality, avoiding facing the “truth” about themselves; but in sports this is not possible. The truth about one’s self shakes the core of the athlete (male/female) due to success and failure in reality. As a result, sport leads to the most remarkable self-discovery of limitations, as well as of abilities. For example, feeling tired does not necessarily mean that one is reaching the limit of exhaustion. But rather, the discovery is mental and is brought about by the stresses which sport imposes (Bannister 1964). The benefits of sport participation as related to personality include several personality characteristics: mutual respect and understanding, acceptance of all persons for who they are, determination, sensitivity to life, and self-control and persistence. However, in spite of the variability, a few traits have emerged. The athlete (male/female) can be described, as a person who strives for personal excellence, tends to be outgoing, dominant, and self-confident.

Support was obtained for the main hypothesis of this study. The Enneagram Personality Assessment and the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator Assessment found no gender differences in the male/female athletes tested at Carroll College. Although football is a contact sport and basketball, volleyball are non-contact sports, personality traits of male/female athletes and gender were studied across sports. A further
longitudinal study is recommended on sport participation and personality in order to
learn more about the athletes and what makes them “tick”. To find the true effects the
study should include athletes as young as pre-school age through adulthood.

The Enneagram Personality Assessment and Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator
Assessment are valid indicators of personality. In this study it was discovered that
gender in relation to personality type in the athlete does not matter. In other words, the
characteristics are similar, if not the same, for male/female athletes despite the sport
participation. The literature comments upon the mystical belief in the link between
personality and sport participation, seem to strive on linking the concrete with the
abstract, the material with the spiritual, the physical with the metaphysical; themes to
which patrons of exercise have alluded to for centuries. Confer and Johnson (1960)
concluded that sufficient evidence had been produced to support the generalization that
the highly skilled athlete might be described as a “special breed.” While there are
occasional exceptions to the picture painted of athletes, no differences in social
adjustment exist between groups of athletes and non-athletes, there is not striking
contradiction and the picture is quite consistent.

When viewing athletes and personality, the research concluded athletes are
more out going, socially confident, socially aggressive, dominant, and leading. They
have higher social adjustment, prestige, and social status; being stronger competitors,
less anxious, more emotionally stable, and less compulsive; having a greater tolerance
for physical pain. These are several reasons why the majority of athletes scored and
“8” on the Enneagram Personality Assessment test. What this means is that team sports
create an understanding of teamwork and loyalty. Team sports build the athlete’s
confidence for the years to come. Team sports teach the athlete how to fail and recover
during and after a game. Team sports build courage and the ability to overcome many obstacles placed in an athletes’ way. Whether male or female the fierce and unapologetic competitiveness of a typical athlete will be propelling them forward in life long after they leave the game.
References


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Ogilvie, B. C. (1968). Psychological Consistencies within the Personality of High


Appendix A
Enneagram Symbol
Appendix A
Enneagram Symbol

Joy
Optimism
and hope
Pollyannish

Faithful
Loyalty
Ultra orthodox

Peace
Unifier
lazy, indolent

all powerful
strength
aggressive

all perfect
divine discontent
perfectionistic

Compassion
Caring
Smothering

Order
efficiency
success at any price

All wise
Perception
and wisdom
hoarding

Originality
Creativity and flair
Eccentric, moody

Enneagram
Appendix B
Enneagram Descriptive Definitions of Personality Types
Appendix B

Enneagram Descriptive Definitions of Personality Types

1. **Ego-Resentment/ The Reformer:** Persons who would be classified as this type of person are obsessed with an unreal perfection. They resent the world and everything in it, including themselves, because it is not good enough and they have to set it right. They are compulsively "the good boy/good girl." They only feel alive and okay when making an effort, when reacting against evil, chaos, and error. They have a lot of inner anger but they feel compelled to be good; as a result they resent. Type One is principled, purposeful, self-controlled, and perfectionist.

2. **Ego-Flattery/ The Helper:** Persons who would be classified as this type of person are compulsive helpers; they have no sense of identity apart from their service of others. They project, repress, and deny their own needs; "I do no need, the world needs." Although they appear very independent and without needs, they are socially very dependent, relying upon the expressed appreciation, attention, and affection of other people. Type Two is generous, demonstrative, people pleasing, and possessive.

3. **Ego-Vanity/The Achiever:** Persons who would be classified as this type of person are very image oriented, compulsively achieving and doing. They are active, efficient, orderly, and computerized; usually being successful in everything they undertake. They identify totally with their role, having no
sense of identity apart from that role. They have no sense of a private self. Type Three is adaptable, excelling, driven, and image-conscious.

4. **Ego-Melancholy/The Individualist:** Persons who would be classified, as this type of person cannot accept being ordinary, especially with regard to the joy and sadness they experience. They make ordinary suffering tragic and dramatic, ordinary joy sublime and euphoric. They and their experience have to be special. They become too special to fit in; their experience becomes so special that it becomes unreal. Because they are so special, they usually feel that other people cannot understand them; as a result, they feel alone and misunderstood. Type Four is expressive, dramatic, self-absorbed, and temperamental.

5. **Ego-Stinginess/The Investigator:** Persons who would be classified as this type of person, out of an inner sense of emptiness, feel compelled to “fill up,” especially with knowledge. They store up for the moment when they will come out with all wisdom; their only contact with reality becomes their elaborate perceptual system. Type Five is perceptive, innovative, secretive, and provocative.

6. **Ego-Cowardice/The Loyalist:** Persons who would be classified as this type of person are extremely unsure of themselves; they lack the capacity and the confidence to act effectively on their own. Dogmatic faith is used to overcome this doubt and self-blocking. They interject faith in an outside
authority into faith in themselves. They are the authoritarian personality.

Type Six is engaging, responsible, anxious, and suspicious.

7. **Ego-Planning/The Enthusiast**: Persons who would be classified as this type of person avoid and deny everything painful; nothing ever reaches them as "un-nice." They absolutely cannot tolerate the painful, the laborious, and the serious. Everything has to be fun and nice; they are on a compulsive high. They need to sober up, to face reality, to work. They are always on a head-trip, thinking about how nice things were or will be, rather than living and acting in the real world. Type Seven is spontaneous, versatile, distractible, and scattered.

8. **Ego-Vengeance/The Challenger**: Persons who would be classified as this type of person experience reality as hostile and undesirable. They are powerful; they can do; but they are out of touch with tenderness, weakness, and their "feminine" side. They can say "no" but they are unable to say "yes." They fail to see that some of reality is untainted and innocent, that not everything needs to be unmasked. They have a negative approach to reality and need to get more into affirmation. Type Eight is self-confident, decisive, willful, and confrontational.

9. **Ego-Indolence/The Peacemaker**: Persons who would be classified as this type of person adopt the attitude that "life just is not that big a deal." They have a low level of energy, a low level of awareness, a low level of affectivity. "What is there to get excited about?" They are narcoticized, as
though on tranquilizers; anesthetized to conflict, decision, turmoil. They just turn off the juice, deadening themselves and playing down the importance of everything. They seem to have no problem with being, but in reality they only live a pseudo-life. Type Nine is receptive, reassuring, agreeable, and complacent.
Appendix C
Meyers & Briggs Characteristic
Appendix C: Meyers & Briggs Characteristics

Characteristics Frequently Associated with Each Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensing Types</th>
<th>Intuitive Types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ISTJ</strong></td>
<td><strong>INTJ</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious, quiet, earn success by concentration and thoroughness. Practical, orderly, matter-of-fact, logical, realistic, and dependable. Take responsibility. Make up their own minds as to what should be accomplished and work toward it steadily, regardless of protests or distractions.</td>
<td>Have original minds and great drive for their own ideas and purposes. Have long-range vision and quickly find meaningful patterns in external events. In fields that appeal to them, they have a fine power to organize a job and carry it through. Skeptical, critical, independent, determined, have high standards of competence and performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ISFJ</strong></td>
<td><strong>INFP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet, friendly, responsible, and conscientious. Work devotedly to meet their obligations. Lend stability to any project or group. Thorough, painstaking, accurate. Their interests are usually not technical. Can be patient with necessary detail. Loyal, considerate, perceptive, concerned with how other people feel.</td>
<td>Quiet observers, idealistic, loyal: Important that outer life be congruent with inner values. Curious, quick to see possibilities, often serve as catalysts to implement ideas. Adaptable, flexible, and accepting unless a value is threatened. Want to understand people and ways of fulfilling human potential. Little concern with possessions or surroundings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTP</strong></td>
<td><strong>ENFP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cool onlookers—quiet, reserved, observing and analyzing life with detached curiosity and unexpected flashes of original humor. Usually interested in cause and effect, how and why mechanical things work, and in organizing facts using logical principles. Excel at getting to the core of a practical problem and finding the solution.</td>
<td>Warmly enthusiastic, high-spirited, ingenious, imaginative. Able to do almost anything that interests them. Quick with a solution for any difficulty and ready to help anyone with a problem. Often rely on their ability to improvise instead of preparing in advance. Can usually find compelling reasons for whatever they want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESTP</strong></td>
<td><strong>ENFJ</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good at on-the-spot problem solving. Like action, enjoy whatever comes along. Tend to like mechanical things and sports, with friends on the side. Adaptable, tolerant, pragmatic; focused on getting results. Dislike long explanations. Are best with real things that can be worked, handled, taken apart, or put together.</td>
<td>Responsive and responsible. Feel real concern for what others think or want; and try to handle things with due regard for the other's feelings. Can present a proposal or lead a group discussion with ease and tact. Sociable, popular, sympathetic. Responsive to praise and criticism. Like to facilitate others and enable people to achieve their potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESTJ</strong></td>
<td><strong>ENTJ</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical, realistic, matter-of-fact, with a natural head for business or mechanics. Not interested in abstract theories; want learning to have direct and immediate application. Like to organize and run activities. Often make good administrators; are decisive, quickly move to implement decisions; take care of routine details.</td>
<td>Frank, decisive, leaders in activities. Develop and implement comprehensive systems to solve organizational problems. Good in anything that requires reasoning and intelligent talk, such as public speaking. Are usually well informed and enjoy adding to their fund of knowledge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D
Sign-In Sheet and Questionnaire
Appendix D
Sign-In Sheet and Questionnaire

Varsity Football Personality Test

Male Sign-in Sheet and Questionnaire

Name of Player

________________________________________

Age ____________________________________

Position on team

________________________________________

Year in school

________________________________________

Birth order in family _______________________

Number of family members __________________

Years in current sport _____________________

February 28, 2002
1:00-2:00-3:00-4:00 pm
Room #158/#176
gari neal, experimenter