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Author(s): William K. Kay ; Leslie J. Francis

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Running head: Psychological type preferences of female Bible College students

Psychological type preferences of female Bible College students in England

William K. Kay

Bangor University, UK

Leslie J. Francis*

University of Warwick, UK

*corresponding author: telephone: 024 7652 2539
e-mail: leslie.francis@warwick.ac.uk

Abstract

A sample of 122 female students attending a Pentecostal Bible College in England completed Form G (Anglicised) of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The data demonstrated preferences for extraversion over introversion, for sensing over intuition, for feeling over thinking, and for judging over perceiving. The predominant type was ISFJ (16%), followed by ESFJ (12%). Comparison with the population norms demonstrated an over-representation of intuitives among this sample of Bible College students.

Keywords

Psychological type, MBTI, Bible College, Assemblies of God, personality, religion.

Psychological type preferences of female Bible College students in England

A small but growing number of recent studies have charted the psychological profile of men in England and Wales engaged in Christian ministry, training for Christian ministry or enrolled as Bible College students. Although these studies have identified differences from group to group and from denomination to denomination, the consistent finding has been that these groups of men have contained a much higher proportion of individuals with a preference for feeling than is the case in the male population as a whole. The United Kingdom population norms provided by Kendall (1998) found that 35% of men preferred feeling, compared with 65% who preferred thinking. In a study of 147 male Church of Scotland clergy by Irvine (1989), 69% preferred feeling. In a study of 427 male Anglican clergy in Wales (Francis, Payne, & Jones, 2001), 69% preferred feeling. In a study of 79 Roman Catholic priests by Craig, Duncan, and Francis (2006), 79% preferred feeling. In a study of 626 male Anglican clergy in England by Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater (2007), 54% preferred feeling. In a study of 278 male students in an Evangelical Bible College by Francis, Penson, and Jones (2001), 50% preferred feeling. In a study of 190 male students in a Pentecostal Bible College by Kay, Francis, and Craig (2008), 44% preferred feeling.

This clear preference for feeling among male clergy was explained by Craig, Duncan, and Francis (2006:163) in the following terms.

This result is explicable in the light of type theory: both the feeling preference and the Christian tradition are concerned with interpersonal human values, such as love, harmony and peace. Compassion for others and a loving relationship with God are aspects of . . . ministry which may appeal to feeling types.

Another explanation of the preference for feeling among male clergy may be provided by Brown's (2001) theory regarding the feminisation of the Christian churches in Britain. Those

men most likely to be strongly attracted to ministry in a highly feminised environment are likely also to have developed the feminine side of their own personality. Psychological type data demonstrate that, while the majority of men prefer thinking, the majority of women prefer feeling. For example, the United Kingdom population norms provided by Kendall (1998) demonstrate that 70% of women prefer feeling, compared with 35% of men.

Data on the psychological type profile of women in England and Wales engaged in Christian ministry, training for Christian ministry or enrolled as Bible College students remain much less plentiful, largely because of the way in which women have only recently been welcomed into ordained ministry as priests in some denominations like the Church of England (Francis & Robbins, 1999) and still remain excluded from ordination as priest in some denominations like the Roman Catholic Church (Louden & Francis, 2003). The two studies which have reported on the psychological type profile of women in connection with Christian ministry have both drawn attention to particular features of the data. Compared with women in general, the women connected with Christian ministry tend to have an even more pronounced preference for feeling. There is also a higher proportion of intuitives among women connected with Christian ministry than among women in general populations.

In the general population according to Kendall (1998), 70% of women prefer feeling and just 21% of women prefer intuition. In a study of 237 female Anglican clergy in England, Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater (2007) found that 74% preferred feeling and 65% preferred intuition. In a study of 213 female students in an Evangelical Bible College Francis, Penson, and Jones (2001) found that 81% preferred feeling and 34% preferred intuition.

Against this background, the aim of the present study is to examine the psychological type preferences of a sample of female students in a Pentecostal Bible College in England in order to compare their profile with the population norms provided by Kendall (1998).

Method

Mattersey Hall is the bible college and training centre of the British Assemblies of God. Although it functions as an interdenominational college, the emphasis is distinctly Pentecostal and charismatic. Mattersey Hall has had a continuing existence, albeit in two or three different locations in the United Kingdom and under different names, since it was founded in London in 1919. According to the current website, Mattersey Hall aims to prepare “men and women through an education that is innovative and marked by academic excellence for productive Christian service in vocations and ministries matched to the marketplace of the 21st Century”. The 126-item Form G (Anglicised) of the MBTI (Myers & McCaulley, 1985) was administered by one of the lecturers as part of the academic programme. The students were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Although given the option not to participate in the project, most students attending the seminars completed response forms. Data were obtained from 122 female students at the college. Of the total respondents, 7% were under the age of twenty, 53% were in their twenties, 22% were in their thirties, 15% were in their forties, and 4% were aged fifty or over.

Results

The psychological type literature has developed a highly distinctive format for presenting type-related statistics through type tables. This format has been employed in table 1 to ensure comparability with that wider literature. This table presents the type distribution

- insert table 1 about here -

for the 122 female students attending the Pentecostal Bible College compared with the 865 women on the basis of whom Kendall (1998) published the United Kingdom population norms. In the sample of female students these data demonstrate preferences for extraversion (54%) over introversion (46%), for sensing (62%) over intuition (38%), for feeling (65%)

over thinking (35%), and for judging (67%) over perceiving (33%). The predominant type was ISFJ (16%), followed by ESFJ (12%).

Comparison with the population norms demonstrated that this group of female students attending the Pentecostal Bible College contained a significantly higher proportion of intuitives (38% compared with 21%). This group of female students did not significantly differ from the population norms in terms of orientation (introversion and extraversion), in terms of the judging process (thinking and feeling), or in terms of the attitude toward the outer-world (judging and perceiving). The three specific groups that were over-represented among the female students were ENFJ (5% compared with 2%), INTJ (6% compared with 1%) and ENTJ (5% compared with 2%). In terms of dominant types, there was a significantly higher proportion of dominant intuitives among the female students (18%) compared with the population norms (12%).

Conclusion

The present study has examined the psychological type profile of 122 female students enrolled at a Pentecostal Bible College. The main conclusions to emerge from this profile concerns the significant over-representation of intuitives within this sample (38%) compared with the female population norms (21%). This finding is consistent with the higher proportion of intuitives (34%) found among 213 female students enrolled at an Evangelical Bible College by Francis, Penson, and Jones (2001) and the much higher proportion of intuitives (65%) found among 237 female Anglican clergy by Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater (2007).

This finding prompts a closer analysis of the proportions of intuitives found among men in England and Wales engaged in Christian ministry, training for Christian ministry or enrolled as Bible College students. According to Kendall (1998), in the general population

just 27% of men prefer intuition. The proportions of intuitives found in studies among men connected with Christian ministry vary considerably from one group to another, but most of them exceed the proportion within the general population. The highest proportion of intuitives is found in the study by Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater (2007) among 626 Church of England clergymen (62%). Then in descending order intuitives accounted for 49% in the study by Craig, Duncan, and Francis (2006) among 79 Roman Catholic priests; 43% in the study by Francis, Payne, and Jones (2001) among 427 Anglican clergymen in Wales; 34% in the study by Francis, Penson, and Jones (2001) among 278 male students in an Evangelical Bible College; and 26% in the study by Kay, Francis, and Craig (2008) among 190 male students in a Pentecostal Bible College.

The consistent finding that the vocation to Christian ministry among both women and men attracts higher proportions of intuitives than are in the population as a whole, deserves considered reflection. On the one hand, there is the practical gospel of pastoral care which may attract the sensing-feeling preference. Here are the people responding to the call to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to visit the sick and to comfort the dying. On the other hand, there is much more to the Christian gospel than the practice of good works in the here-and-now. The Christian gospel holds out a vision for the future, and faith in that future proclaims the unseen and the intangible. Here is a vision which may be grasped more easily by intuitives than by sensors. The Christian gospel continually challenges its adherents to work for change, to build a better future and to transform existing structures. Here are challenges which may be welcomed more easily by intuitives than by sensors.

There is, however, considerable variety in the ways in which different branches of the Christian Church express their theological understanding of their faith and commitment. The main distinctions are generally drawn between Catholic and Evangelical interpretations and between liberal and conservative interpretations (Randall, 2005). It is the Catholic and liberal

end of these two continua which is more likely to appeal to the intuitive worldview, and the Evangelical and conservative end which is less likely to appeal to the intuitive worldview. This interpretation fits well with the finding that the Anglican Church attracts a higher proportion of intuitives than are attracted by the Evangelical Bible College and the Pentecostal Bible College.

This present study represents only the third study to have examined the psychological type profile of women connected with Christian ministry in England and Wales. The findings would benefit from replication studies among the groups already examined and extended to other groups.

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Table 1. Type Distribution for female Bible College Students compared with United Kingdom female norms
N = 122 + = 1% of *N* *I* = Selection Ratio Index * < .05 ** *p* < .01 *** *p* < .001

				The Sixteen Complete Types Dichotomous Preferences		
ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ	E	66 (54.1%)	<i>I</i> = 0.94
<i>n</i> = 10	<i>n</i> = 20	<i>n</i> = 3	<i>n</i> = 7	I	56 (45.9%)	<i>I</i> = 1.08
(8.2%)	(16.4%)	(2.5%)	(5.7%)	S	76 (62.3%)	*** <i>I</i> = 0.79
<i>I</i> = 0.96	<i>I</i> = 0.93	<i>I</i> = 1.42	<i>I</i> = 12.41***	N	46 (37.7%)	*** <i>I</i> = 1.82
+++++	+++++	+++	+++++	T	43 (35.2%)	<i>I</i> = 1.19
+++	+++++		+	F	79 (64.8%)	<i>I</i> = 0.92
	+++++			J	82 (67.2%)	<i>I</i> = 1.09
	+			P	40 (32.8%)	<i>I</i> = 0.85
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP	Pairs and Temperaments		
<i>n</i> = 2	<i>n</i> = 6	<i>n</i> = 6	<i>n</i> = 2	IJ	40 (32.8%)	<i>I</i> = 1.15
(1.6%)	(4.9%)	(4.9%)	(1.6%)	IP	16 (13.1%)	<i>I</i> = 0.92
<i>I</i> = 0.64	<i>I</i> = 0.63	<i>I</i> = 1.77	<i>I</i> = 1.58	EP	24 (19.7%)	<i>I</i> = 0.81
++	+++++	+++++	++	EJ	42 (34.4%)	<i>I</i> = 1.04
				ST	27 (22.1%)	<i>I</i> = 0.91
				SF	49 (40.2%)	*** <i>I</i> = 0.73
				NF	30 (24.6%)	** <i>I</i> = 1.60
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP	NT	16 (13.1%)	*** <i>I</i> = 2.47
<i>n</i> = 3	<i>n</i> = 9	<i>n</i> = 11	<i>n</i> = 1	SJ	56 (45.9%)	<i>I</i> = 0.85
(2.5%)	(7.4%)	(9.0%)	(0.8%)	SP	20 (16.4%)	* <i>I</i> = 0.65
<i>I</i> = 0.66	<i>I</i> = 0.67	<i>I</i> = 1.20	<i>I</i> = 0.39	NP	20 (16.4%)	<i>I</i> = 1.22
+++	+++++	+++++	+	NJ	26 (21.3%)	*** <i>I</i> = 2.93
	++	++++		TJ	35 (28.7%)	<i>I</i> = 1.42
				TP	8 (6.6%)	<i>I</i> = 0.70
				FP	32 (26.2%)	<i>I</i> = 0.90
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ	FJ	47 (38.5%)	<i>I</i> = 0.93
<i>n</i> = 12	<i>n</i> = 14	<i>n</i> = 10	<i>n</i> = 6	IN	18 (14.8%)	*** <i>I</i> = 2.45
(9.8%)	(11.5%)	(8.2%)	(4.9%)	EN	28 (23.0%)	* <i>I</i> = 1.56
<i>I</i> = 1.04	<i>I</i> = 0.62	<i>I</i> = 2.44**	<i>I</i> = 2.84*	IS	38 (31.1%)	<i>I</i> = 0.85
+++++	+++++	+++++	+++++	ES	38 (31.1%)	* <i>I</i> = 0.73
+++++	+++++	+++		ET	22 (18.0%)	<i>I</i> = 1.06
	++			EF	44 (36.1%)	<i>I</i> = 0.89
				IF	35 (28.7%)	<i>I</i> = 0.95
				IT	21 (17.2%)	<i>I</i> = 1.37

Jungian Types (E)			Jungian Types (I)			Dominant Types			<i>W.K. Kay and L.J. Francis</i>			
<i>n</i>	%	<i>I</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>I</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>I</i>				
E-TJ	18	14.8	1.32	I-TP	4	3.3	0.91	Dt. T	22	18.0%	1.22	<i>Psychological type preferences of female Bible College students in England</i>
E-FJ	24	19.7	0.90	I-FP	12	9.8	0.92	Dt. F	36	29.5%	0.91	
ES-P	12	9.8	0.67	S-J	30	24.6	0.94	Dt. S	42	34.4%	0.84	
EN-P	12	9.8	1.32	N-J	10	8.2	***3.73	Dt. N	22	18.0%	*1.53	