
This paper examines the theory underlying EI and MBTI. Overlap between EI and extraversion is evident. The MBTI dominant and auxiliary functions play a key role in understanding the relationship between personality type and EI. Eight propositions are presented regarding this relationship.

Managers are increasingly aware that human resources are their most valuable, yet elusive, assets (Weatherly, 2003). Accordingly, organizations must understand, engage and develop employees, tap into their enthusiasm and talent, and ensure a good person/job fit, not only by focusing on mental and technical abilities, but also by focusing on less easily defined and measured attributes. Two constructs which have received widespread use in organizations in order to achieve this goal are Emotional Intelligence (EI) and personality type, as measured by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).

The MBTI is the most widely used psychological assessment instrument in North American industry (Clawson, Kotter, Faux, & McArthur, 1992; Gardner & Martinko, 1996). It has been the subject of more than 4000 research articles and more than 50 years of development (Myers, McCauley, Quenk & Hammer, 1998). Its goal is to help people understand variations in behaviour patterns, in others, and in themselves, through an understanding of personality differences which, Myers and Briggs argue, stem from innate preferences in how people like to deal with their surrounding environment (Myers & Myers, 1995).

More recently, an interest in EI has resulted in a proliferation of articles in the academic, practitioner, and popular press. [See Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2000) in the academic literature; Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee (2002) in the popular literature; Bar-On & Parker (2002) in the practitioner literature.] EI can be described in general terms as a person’s ability to accurately perceive, express, understand and manage emotion, in self and others (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000, p. 396). Another definition is “an array of emotional, personal, and social abilities and skills that influence one’s ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures” (Bar-On, 1998, p. 2). Much of the $50 billion spend on training each year by American industry is devoted to developing the social and emotional abilities of their employees (Cherniss, 1998).

An examination of the dimensions of EI and MBTI suggests that a relationship should exist. The relationship between one dimension of the MBTI, extraversion/introversion, and EI appears to be particularly strong. Preliminary empirical studies found positive correlations

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between EI and MBTI- extraversion. See Farnsworth, Gilbert & Armstrong (2002), Higgs (2001) and Torrington (2001) for further details on the nature and strength of the correlations. However, although preliminary empirical pieces point to a relationship, there is scant research exploring the conceptual nature of the relationship which would provide the underpinnings to discuss an empirical association. Correlations have been run, but theoretical discussion is limited. In the EI literature, explicit reference to the extraversion/introversion dimension of the MBTI and the role that it plays in EI is not made. In the MBTI literature, Gardner & Martinko (1996) state that management researchers have virtually ignored the extraversion/introversion dimension, even though it is relevant for understanding managerial behaviour. Furthermore, virtually no research exists which examines the impact of the MBTI constructs of dominant and auxiliary functions on EI, which we believe may be the key to understanding the nature of the relationship.

It is important for practitioners and researchers to understand the nature of the relationship. From a practitioner’s perspective, this research program began when a consultant, who uses both MBTI and EI extensively, asked whether the two constructs might possibly be measuring the same thing. In fact, some researchers claim that EI is not a new and distinct construct; it is merely another measure of personality (Davies, Stankov & Roberts, 1998). From a researcher’s perspective, “if emotional intelligence is to be of value, it must measure something unique and distinct from standard personality traits” (Caruso, Mayer & Salovey, 2002, p. 306).

The purpose of this paper is to clarify the nature of the conceptual relationship between EI and the extraversion/introversion dimension of the MBTI. The first sections describe EI and MBTI, with a focus on the extraversion/introversion dimension and the dominant and auxiliary functions. The next section outlines the nature of the relationship based on an understanding of the theory behind each. It is argued that the two constructs are related, but not synonymous, and that current conceptualizations of EI favour extraverts. Eight propositions are made about the role of the dominant and auxiliary functions in predicting the relationship between EI and extraversion/introversion.

**Emotional Intelligence**

As interest in EI has burgeoned, two major, and divergent, models of the construct have emerged. First, the conceptualization referred to as the ability model will be outlined. Second, the approach referred to as the mixed model will be outlined.

A recent definition of EI is “1) the ability to perceive and express emotion, 2) assimilate emotion in thought, 3) understand and reason with emotion, and 4) regulate emotion in self and others” (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000, p. 396). These researchers argue that within their model, EI is a mental ability which falls within the wide umbrella of general intelligence, and meets the necessary criteria to be considered a “scientifically legitimate” component of intelligence. The model has four branches identified in the above definition. They are described as hierarchical, with the first being a measure of the most basic emotional abilities and the last being the most advanced.

There are various mixed models of EI. Although these models share some basic characteristics, such as an interest in factors that contribute to “life success” (there is no consensus on the meaning of this term), they also vary in the specific elements they include as EI. A content analysis of the EI literature by Petrides and Furnham (2001) identified 15 diverse factors, such as empathy, assertiveness, social intelligence, personal intelligence, ability EI, relationship skills, stress management, trait optimism, self-motivation and several other factors
which the researchers consider might contribute to “life success.” The mixed model of EI initially made popular by Goleman (1995) includes elements such as “self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself” (Goleman, 1995, p. xii) and even extends his conceptualization of EI to include “character” (Goleman, 1995, p. 28). In their discussion of the mixed models, Petrides and Furnham (2001) indicated they believe that EI should be studied “within a personality framework” (p. 426).

While there is no single, unifying conceptual definition of EI within the mixed model, Reuven Bar-On, who has worked extensively in this area, describes EI as a “multifactorial array of interrelated emotional, personal and social abilities that influence our overall ability to actively and effectively cope with daily demands and pressures” (Bar-On, 2000, p. 385). Bar-On includes five comprehensive areas he believes to be related to one’s potential to succeed: 1) intrapersonal skills (emotional self awareness, assertiveness, independence), 2) interpersonal skills (empathy, interpersonal relationship), 3) adaptability (flexibility, problem solving), 4) stress management (stress tolerance), and 5) general mood (optimism, happiness). This model is comparatively well refined, developed and tested. It has resulted in the oldest instrument used to measure EI, the BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory (Bar-On, 1997). This instrument is used extensively in organizations.

In sum, the ability model conceptualizes EI as a relatively narrow and specific construct, with a major tenet being that EI is a type of intelligence. It is focused on a person’s ability to perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions in oneself and others. Conversely, the mixed model is much more far ranging, and encompasses a multitude of factors which researchers believe may contribute to “life success”.

**Myers Briggs Type Indicator**

The theory of psychological type and the MBTI are based on psychologist Carl Jung’s theory of personality type, developed in the early twentieth century. In brief, the psychological type theory of personality states that peoples’ personalities differ from one another based not on chance, but instead on differences between individuals’ innate preferences (Myers & Myers, 1995). Currently, the MBTI is one of the most widely used personality assessment instruments in work settings (Offerman and Spiros, 2001), and it has clearly had an impact on the way people in organizations assess personality preferences and human behaviour.

Type theory advocates that all people have innate preferences in four different important areas that, in combination, ultimately determine their personality type. The first area is related to the preference for focusing one’s mental energy, with a preference for either an external focus on the world of people, called extraversion, or the inclination to focus on an inner world of ideas and reflections, called introversion. The second of these areas relates to one’s preferred method of gathering information, characterized by a preference for either sensing [taking in information by observation and use of the senses (e.g., eyes and ears)] or intuition (focusing on the big picture and making theoretical connections). The third preference relates to how one likes to organize information and make decisions. It involves a preference for either thinking (making decisions based on logical consequences and objective, analytical problem solving) or feeling (decision-making based on person-centred values aimed at considering and supporting the other people involved). The fourth set of preferences describes our desired method of relating to the outer world. It involves either an innate preference to live our lives in a planned and systematic way with an emphasis on reaching efficient decisions, referred to as judging, or to live in a
spontaneous and adaptable way with an emphasis on gathering useful information, referred to as *perceiving*. (See Myers, 1993, and (Quenk 2000), 2000, for further discussion.)

These four dichotomous dimensions: 1) *extraversion* or *introversion*, 2) *sensing* or *intuition*, 3) *thinking* or *feeling*, and 4) *judging* or *perceiving*, determine our personality type and contribute to our behaviour. Type theory advocates that we prefer to operate, and are more comfortable operating, in one way or the other. However, it does not advocate that we cannot operate effectively in our non-preferred way. The common analogy is the inclination of being right or left-handed - it is not that we are unable to use our other (less preferred) hand but rather that we are most comfortable, confident and skilled when using our naturally occurring preference (Myers & Myers, 1995). Additionally, type theory does not suggest a particular preference is more or less desirable than another preference. According to Myers and Myers, one preference is simply different from the other and each preference carries with it strengths and weaknesses. The MBTI dimension that is the focus for this paper is extraversion/introversion. In order to explore its relationship with EI, its theoretical background and development will be presented next.

**The Extraversion/Introversion Dimension of the MBTI**

Although the general public and even members of the scientific community associate extraversion with being friendly and outgoing and introversion with being shy and detached, these were not Jung’s original intentions when he introduced the constructs (Bradley, 1996). In the translation of Jung’s work (1921/1971), extraversion refers to an outward flow of psychic energy to the external world, whereas introversion involves an inward flow of psychic energy. Similarly, Myers et al. (1998) conceptualization of extraversion and introversion, following Jung (1921/1971), emphasizes a flow of energy. Extraverts tend to focus their energy and attention on people and objects. Introverts, alternatively, are drawn primarily to an inner world where they tend to focus their energy on ideas and internal experiences.

It is difficult to observe and measure a flow of psychic energy. Consequently, the MBTI indicates preferences by more accessible and observable characteristics referred to by Myers and Myers (1995) as “surface traits” (p. 3). These traits are only indications of a deeper personality type, and Myers and Myers (1995) describe surface traits metaphorically as “merely straws to show which way the wind blows” (p. 23). When we exercise a preference for either extraversion or introversion, we become more comfortable in the preferred orientation. Extending from this preference is the acquisition of a set of overt behavioural traits. For extraverts, their inclination is reflected in lots of activity, social interactions, and verbal communication. Conversely, for introverts, excessive interaction tires them. They instead prefer solitude to concentrate on their own interests (Myers et al., 1998) and may not develop the same set of skills to deal with the external world. Instead, they may develop and strengthen skills around reading, writing, and more contemplative activities.

In either case, as individuals exercise or practice their preference, their experience in their preferred world becomes more positive. These preferences and accompanying surface traits should be well developed. The extravert may be characterized by a preference for verbal communication, sociability, expressiveness, and an ability to take initiative in work and relationships (Myers & Myers, 1995; Myers, 1993). In contrast, introverts are more likely to exhibit preferences for written communication, subtlety, privacy, and a tendency to reflect before acting or speaking (Myers & Myers, 1995; Myers, 1993).
Dominant and Auxiliary Functions

Type theory also develops the construct of dominant and auxiliary functions (See Myers and Myers, 1995; Myers et al., 1998; Gardner and Martinko, 1996), which are key to understanding the relationship that we propose exist between psychological type and emotional intelligence. Myers and Myers (1995) use the analogy of each of us needing a dominant function to guide and direct us, like a ship needs a captain to set the course. A ship cannot reach its destination if several people take the helm with each altering the course. Likewise, people cannot achieve their goals without some guiding force to help establish goals and maintain a consistent focus.

As discussed, individuals have preferences for ways of gathering information, either through sensing or intuition, and ways for making decisions, either through thinking or feeling. In type theory these two areas are referred to as functions, and the theory develops the concept that for each person one of the functions is dominant and one of the functions is auxiliary. Each personality type will have a dominant function that is associated with a preference for either gathering information or making decisions. Both functions are essential and everyone does both, but some personality types tend to focus on gathering useful information (called perceiving), while others tend to focus on efficient decision making (called judging). If a person’s dominant function is perceiving, then the auxiliary function will be judging, and vice versa. If a person’s dominant function is perceiving, then the person relies most heavily on his or her preferred method of gathering information, either sensing or intuition.

Type theory further asserts that individuals use their dominant function in their preferred world - externally for extraverts, internally for introverts. Accordingly, extraverts use their dominant function when dealing with other people, and use their auxiliary function when dealing in their less preferred or internal world. Conversely, introverts use their auxiliary function when dealing with others and reserve their strongest, or dominant, function for dealing with a preferred internal world of concepts and ideas. For the purposes of this paper, it is not essential to be able to determine each personality type’s dominant and auxiliary function, rather it is important to understand that each person has a dominant and auxiliary function, and the impact that the development of one’s dominant and auxiliary has on his or her emotional intelligence. (For a description of dominant and auxiliary functions, see Quenk, 2000, pages 5-18.)

With regard to the dominant function, Myers and Myers (1995) state that people must allow it to develop fully, so that it provides unity and direction to their lives. However, in order for a person to be balanced, the auxiliary function must also be adequately, but not equally, developed (Myers and Myers, 1995). If individuals are able to fully develop the dominant function, then they have direction, if they have an adequately developed auxiliary function, then they have balance. Those lacking an adequately developed auxiliary tend to have an overwhelming dominant function that can be a burden rather than an asset. Furthermore, the auxiliary function provides balance between extraversion and introversion. For example, an extrovert with an inadequately developed auxiliary may come across as superficial and lacking depth. Conversely, an introvert with an inadequately developed auxiliary may come across as unable to relate to the external world. Myers and Myers (1995) state “the extraverts’ auxiliary gives them access to their own inner life and to the world of ideas; the introverts’ auxiliary gives them a means to adapt to the world of action and to deal with it effectively” (p. 19). As Myers and Myers (1995) state “The success of introverts’ contacts with the outer world depends on the effectiveness of their auxiliary. If their auxiliary process is not adequately developed, their outer
lives will be very awkward, accidental, and uncomfortable. Thus, there is a more obvious penalty upon introverts who fail to develop a useful auxiliary than upon extraverts with a like deficiency” (p. 12).

The Nature of the Relationship Between MBTI – Extraversion/Introversion and EI

The MBTI and EI both focus on a person’s understanding of themselves and of others. More specifically, from a theoretical perspective there should be an association between EI and MBTI - extraversion. As was developed above, MBTI - extraverts are naturally drawn, through an innate preference, into the external world of people and events. Interacting in this environment enables extraverts to develop surface traits that increase their ability to effectively cope with the demands and pressures of the external world. In other words, these interactions provide opportunities for extraverts to increase the interpersonal aspects of EI. Additionally, extraverts who have a well developed dominant function and an adequately developed auxiliary function will likely develop both interpersonal skills, and intrapersonal skills because they are operating effectively in both their preferred external (interpersonal) world, and in their less preferred internal (intrapersonal) world.

The relationship between EI and extraversion should be particularly strong with the mixed model of EI. Although the conceptual definitions of EI provided by mixed models are wide ranging, in general they point to a person’s skills and abilities to cope with the demands of the external world and encompass dimensions such as assertiveness, empathy, adaptability and interpersonal skills. These components seem similar to surface traits of MBTI - extraverts, such as sociability, expressiveness, learning through discussing and taking initiatives in relationships. For example, qualities contained in the mixed model of EI, such as assertiveness, independence and successful formation of interpersonal relationships, would require a person with the extraverted surface traits of being capable of initiating plans or ideas. In essence, the mixed model of EI is a construct that focuses on a person’s ability to deal with others and cope with the external world. This is the environment where MBTI - extraverts feel most natural and comfortable and consequently tend to develop skills that enable them to flourish in it.

In contrast, MBTI - introverts are naturally drawn, through innate preference, to their internal world of concepts and ideas. This is not, on balance, an environment that contributes to the development of the skills associated with the interpersonal aspects of EI, particularly in the mixed model of EI. As discussed, the preferred environment of MBTI - introverts facilitates the development of skills (or surface traits) such as the ability to communicate through writing, to be more contemplative, and to reflect before acting or speaking. When MBTI - introverts are forced to move into the external world of people and events, and deal with EI - related concepts, such as interpersonal relations, empathy, and emotions it feels unnatural and tiring.

Although, on balance, MBTI - extraverts should have higher EI than introverts, there may be some dimensions of EI where the introvert would actually be more skilled than the extravert. Part of EI is understanding and managing your own emotions. It makes intuitive sense that introverts may be more skilled at dimensions of EI requiring introspection, such as emotional self-awareness and self-actualization. The higher skill levels in these categories would improve overall EI.

The relation between EI and MBTI - extraversion should not be interpreted to mean that the two constructs are synonymous. Theoretically, MBTI - extraversion deals with an innate preference to engage in activities in the external world, which contribute to a particular personality type, whereas EI is about a skill or ability that, at least on several dimensions, can be
developed. However, when examining the development of the constructs in more detail the overlap does seem to be strong, particularly between the mixed model of EI and the surface traits of MBTI - extraversion. EI can be envisioned as a sphere encompassing a wide variety of cognitive abilities, personality traits, and skills, which overlap significantly with the surface traits included within the sphere of MBTI - extraversion. The sphere of MBTI - introversion also overlaps with EI, albeit to a lesser extent, on qualities that require self-reflection and introspection to promote goal actualization. Because of this, one would expect some limited association between EI and MBTI - introversion.

Furthermore, because MBTI deals with a *preference* for extraversion or introversion, as opposed to a skill level or ability, it is possible, in theory, for an MBTI - introvert to have higher EI than an MBTI - extravert. The analogy would be a naturally left-handed person, who writes better with their right hand than a naturally right-handed person - either through natural ability or training. However, this is probably comparatively rare, and it requires effort, in that it does not feel natural, for the introvert (or the left-handed person) to operate outside their preferred domain.

**Propositions**

We assert that the key to understanding the nature of the relationship between EI and the extraversion/introversion dimension of MBTI will be found in a more thorough examination of the MBTI construct of dominant and auxiliary functions. In most articles on MBTI, this construct is either omitted or glossed over, and there does not appear to be any previous research examining the link between EI and the dominant and auxiliary functions. Based on the concepts discussed in this paper, we propose several specific relationships between EI and the extraversion/introversion dimension of the MBTI, based on one’s dominant and auxiliary functions. These are summarized in Table 1, below.

**TABLE 1**

**The Impact of Dominant and Auxiliary Functions on the Relationship Between MBTI - Extraversion/Introversion and EI.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOMINANT FUNCTIONS</th>
<th>Extraverts</th>
<th>Introverts</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Fully Developed</td>
<td>Not Fully Developed</td>
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<td>AUXILIARY FUNCTIONS</td>
<td>Adequately Developed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Not Adequately Developed</td>
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It is predicted, not surprisingly, that the group with the highest EI would be extraverts with fully developed dominant and auxiliary functions. (See Table 1 - Cell A.) Their dominant function provides direction and unity as they operate in their preferred external world dealing with people and events, thus developing the concomitant skills that contribute to EI. Their auxiliary function provides balance when they operate in their less preferred internal world of ideas and concepts, enabling them to develop reflective and self-awareness skills, which also contribute to EI. Therefore our first proposition is:

Proposition 1: Extraverts, with a fully developed dominant and adequately developed auxiliary function, would possess the highest emotional intelligence when compared to all other MBTI extraverts and introverts.

It is predicted the group that would have the second highest on EI would be MBTI-extraverts with a fully developed dominant function, but an auxiliary function that is not adequately developed. (See Table 1 - Cell C.) Because so much of EI deals with the ability to cope with the external world, this group would deal well on that dimension but would not develop the skills to deal with the internal world of ideas and concepts, and consequently the reflection and self-awareness dimensions of EI. Therefore our second proposition is:

Proposition 2: Extraverts, with a fully developed dominant function, but with an auxiliary function that is not adequately developed, would possess the second highest emotional intelligence when compared to all other MBTI extraverts and introverts.

Of particular interest, is our next proposition that introverts with a fully developed dominant function, and an adequately developed auxiliary function would have the third highest EI. (See Table 1 - Cell E.) Their dominant function provides clear direction as they operate in their preferred internal world of ideas and concepts, which would give them strength on the reflective and self-awareness components of EI. Their adequately developed auxiliary function provides balance when they operate in their less preferred external world and enables them to develop the necessary EI skills when dealing with people and events. Thus, we argue that this group would possess higher EI than extraverts with a dominant function that is not fully developed. Therefore, our third proposition is:

Proposition 3: Introverts, with a fully developed dominant and adequately developed auxiliary function, would possess the third highest emotional intelligence when compared to all other MBTI extraverts and introverts.

Furthermore, it is predicted that the group that would have the fourth highest EI would be introverts with a fully developed dominant function and an auxiliary function that is not adequately developed. (See Table 1 - Cell G.) Their dominant function would provide clear direction as they operate in their preferred internal world and consequently they would do well on the reflective and self-awareness dimensions of EI. However, their inadequately developed auxiliary function would not provide balance when they operate in the external world. Nonetheless, it is argued that this group would still have higher EI than extraverts with a dominant function that is not fully developed even if their auxiliary is adequately developed. (See Table 1 - Cell B.) Extraverts without a fully developed dominant function have a serious handicap because they would not have the direction and confidence as they operate in their preferred external world and deal with people and events that a fully developed dominant function provides to MBTI-extraverts. Consequently, even though they are extraverts, and have a
natural preference for the external world, they may not develop the EI skills that are helpful in dealing with it. Therefore our fourth and fifth propositions are:

Proposition 4: Introverts, with a fully developed dominant function, but not adequately developed auxiliary function, would possess the fourth highest emotional intelligence when compared to all other MBTI extraverts and introverts.

Proposition 5: Extraverts, with a dominant function that is not fully developed, but with an adequately developed auxiliary function, would possess the fifth highest emotional intelligence when compared to all other MBTI extraverts and introverts.

The same logic, expressed in the five preceding propositions, would lead us to our sixth, seventh, and eighth propositions. Introverts without a fully developed dominant function would not have clear direction in their internal world of concepts and ideas, but with an adequately developed auxiliary, could function at least tolerably well in the external world of people and events. (See Table 1 – Cell F.) Extraverts without either a fully developed dominant or an adequately developed auxiliary function would be at a serious disadvantage in EI when compared to all other extraverts and most other introverts. They would lack both direction in their preferred outer world of people and events, and would not possess the balance that an adequately developed auxiliary could provide. Nonetheless, the external world is the arena in which they are most comfortable, and presumably, where they could operate with some ease. (See Table 1 – Cell D.) For obvious reasons, we predict the group that would score lowest on EI would be introverts with a dominant function that is not fully developed and an auxiliary function that is also not adequately developed. (See Table 1 - Cell H.) Therefore our sixth, seventh, and eighth propositions are:

Proposition 6: Introverts, with a not fully developed dominant function, but adequately developed auxiliary function, would possess the sixth highest emotional intelligence when compared to all other MBTI extraverts and introverts.

Proposition 7: Extraverts, with a dominant function that is not fully developed, and an auxiliary function that is also not adequately developed, would possess the seventh highest emotional intelligence when compared to all other MBTI extraverts and introverts.

Proposition 8: Introverts, with a dominant function that is not fully developed, and an inadequately developed auxiliary function, would possess the lowest emotional intelligence when compared to all other MBTI extraverts and introverts.

In brief, it is predicted that extraverts with well-developed dominant and auxiliary functions will possess the highest EI, and introverts with inadequately developed dominant and auxiliary functions will have the lowest EI. Of particular significance, is the prediction that certain groups of introverts, particularly those with well-developed dominant and adequately developed auxiliary functions, will have higher EI than certain groups of extraverts. This has significant organizational implications that will be noted in our paper conclusion.
Conclusion and Summary

The constructs of EI and MBTI-extraversion are similar, but not synonymous. Both EI and MBTI have similar goals: both are interested in helping people gain a better understanding of themselves and others in order to interact effectively with others. However, although the goals are similar, there are fundamental differences. MBTI deals with personality type. It describes an innate and enduring preference to engage our minds and focus our energy in a particular manner. Preferences are not right or wrong, they are simply different; all types have strengths and weaknesses. Conversely, EI is a skill or ability that can be developed and higher EI is considered better than lower EI. MBTI is descriptive, whereas EI is prescriptive.

As the constructs are developed beyond their fundamental stages, in order to be useful in organizations and eventually measured, the overlap between the two becomes greater. The overlap between the surface traits that are used to identify an MBTI-extravert and the components of the mixed models of EI are significant. Because MBTI-extraverts enjoy operating in the external world of people and events, they have an opportunity to develop the abilities, skills, and characteristics that contribute to EI. MBTI-introverts have an opportunity to develop skills that contribute to the self-reflection dimension of EI, but this is a smaller component of EI than that which deals with the external world. Additionally, there should also be an overlap between MBTI-extraversion and ability models of EI because extraverts place themselves in situations where they develop their abilities in perceiving and managing emotions.

From a practitioner’s perspective, it is important to understand that, although EI and MBTI-extraversion are not the same thing, because of the manner that they have been developed, and ultimately will be tested and measured, they are correlated. If organizations are heavily influenced by EI scores when making decisions, such as career directions, professional development, and even hiring, this could be problematic. They may be systematically and unknowingly channelling MBTI-extraverts into career streams, such as management, based on personality type, not EI, and excluding introverts from these positions. This would result in an imbalance within the organization and inability to draw on the strengths of various personality types.

From a research perspective, it is important to understand the theoretical similarities and differences. Tighter conceptual definitions, particularly for the mixed models of EI, are essential. Conceptual and operational definitions of EI should place more emphasis on, for example, contemplative elements. This would contribute to a more balanced representation of EI and would capture the contribution made by introverts. The instruments used to measure the constructs must capture the similarities and differences, and display adequate convergent and discriminant validity.

Finally, the MBTI construct of dominant and auxiliary functions may be key in understanding the impact of personality type on EI. Although it is proposed that MBTI-extraverts with appropriately developed dominant and auxiliary functions will be the EI “superstars,” MBTI-introverts with appropriately developed dominant and auxiliary functions will possess higher EI than some categories of less well-balanced extraverts. This is counter-intuitive and has organizational implications in that some introverts may be incorrectly considered to have lower EI based on their personality type, not their EI ability. Because the role of the MBTI-dominant and auxiliary functions is considered key in understanding the impact of extraversion/introversion on EI, it would benefit tremendously from further theoretical exploration and development. Empirical testing of the eight propositions outlined in the paper would make a tremendous contribution in developing this important relationship.
References


