

Relationship Between Personality Traits and Career Decision-making Using MbtI Approach Among Interns in a Private Medical College in Coimbatore, India

suganathan Soundararajan soundararajan

suganathan85@gmail.com

PSG Institute of Medical Sciences & Research

Dr. G.M. Muhammad G.M

PSG Institute of Medical Sciences & Research

Sandhiya Venkatesan V

PSG Institute of Medical Sciences & Research

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Abstract

Introduction:

Personality refers to the enduring characteristics and behaviors that comprise a person's unique adjustment to life. The Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a self-report inventory used to assess personality preferences. Being aware of personality type allows one to deliberately engage in decision-making.

Aim

The aim of the present study was to assess the patterns of personality traits among interns using online MBTI tools and to obtain their opinions on their own personality traits and career decision making.

Methodology:

A questionnaire study was conducted among 24 medical interns posted in primary healthcare centers selected by purposive sampling. Personality patterns were assessed using a free online MBTI. Subsequently, 16 personality patterns were explained to them through an interactive lecture. A Google form was then circulated to assess their perception and attitude toward changing their career decision-making. SPSS version 28.0 was used to obtain descriptive data.

Results

Among the 24 interns, the most common personality patterns reported were (ENFP) (29.2%) Extroverted, Intuitive, Feeling and Perceiving, (INFJ) (12.5%) Introverted, Intuitive, Feeling, and Judging and (ISFJ) (12.5%) Introverted, Sensing, Feeling and Judging. Majority of the participants (63%) found the assigned personality types to be accurate; however, 38% wanted to change it. Judging, introvert and extrovert traits were found to be the most challenging to get along with, while the comfortable traits were extrovert and perceiving types. Only four participants wished to change their careers after knowing their personalities.

Conclusion

Most common personality pattern is ENFP, INFJ and ISFJ. Majority felt happy with their personality and only 16% wish to change their career decision making. MBTI can be a useful tool for interns to know themselves, understand others and career decision making.

INTRODUCTION

Personality is a variable that correlates with specialty selection and practice type among medical professionals at all levels. Personality refers to the enduring characteristics and behavior that comprise a person's unique adjustment to life. ⁽¹⁾

Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a self-report inventory that is used to assess personality preferences and helps career decision making. ⁽²⁾

Medical interns face challenges in their team work and have difficulty in deciding their career progression

MBTI tool is helpful to understand themselves and others in their workplace for effective teamwork, services and to decide their career matching their personality

This career decision-making process is ongoing throughout their professional life and as their career progresses, they may find using this process again ⁽³⁾.

This psychometric test was created in the 1940s by Isabel Myers and her mother Katherine Briggs based on Jung's idea of different psychological types. It takes 15 to 25 minutes to complete the 93 questions on the current version of the MBTI form. The results of this tool are presented through four dichotomies: Extraversion (E) vs Introversion (I), Sensing (S) vs Intuition (I), thinking (T) vs Feeling (F) and Judging (J) vs Perceiving (P) with these four dimensions leading to 16 different possible combinations, or types ⁽⁴⁾.

The four dimensions that are measured by the MBTI tool are ⁽⁵⁾:

1. Extroversion or Introversion (E-I): While the interests of an introvert are more inwardly focused on concepts and ideas, those of an extravert are more outwardly focused on actions, objects, and people.
2. Sensing or Intuition (S-N): During the intuitive perception of the connections, opportunities, and significance of experience, the sensing person gathers information from the immediate, tangible, and practical aspects of life.
3. Thinking or Feeling (T-F): The thinker considers the causes of events and the potential outcomes of decisions while rendering impartial and dispassionate judgments. The feeler weighs the values of options and how they affect other people before making subjective personal judgments.
4. Judging or Perceiving (J-P): To govern and control events, the judger desires to live in a definite, organized, and systematic manner. The perceiver strives to comprehend life and makes adjustments to it by leading to an impulsive, adaptable existence.

There are no studies examining the MBTI profile of medical interns in the medical literature. An understanding of the effect personality traits have on decision making among medical interns would help them make an informed decision of the specialty that they would pursue in the future, making the assessment of their personality traits essential. The present study was conducted with the aim of assessing the patterns of personality traits among interns using an online MBTI tool and to obtain their

opinions on the personality traits they obtain, which can help understand the effect the traits have on their future career decisions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was a descriptive study that included medical interns from the community medicine department posted in community healthcare centers of a medical college located in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, between September and October 2023. The study was conducted after obtaining clearance from the Institutional Human Ethics Committee (IHEC) dated 3.10.2023 with reference number PSG/IHEC/2023/Appr/Exp/329 as well as informed consent from the participants.

Participants were included in the study during internship period when posted in peripheral health centers during community medicine postings. Participants were excluded if they did not provide their consent to participate in the study. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, and 24 medical interns were included in the study based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The personality patterns of these 24 interns were then ascertained using a free MBTI online tool on the website Truity.com, after which they underwent an orientation lecture on the same day to inform them of the different personality types.

After the participants were educated on the different personalities, they were sent Google forms that contained open-ended questions to obtain their opinions on personality traits as well as their role in their career decisions. The collected data were then exported into excel sheets, and SPSS software v 28.0 was used to obtain descriptive statistics. Open ended questions to obtain their opinion were analyzed by manual content analysis.

RESULTS

The present study included 24 participants among the majority of whom were females (75%) (Fig. 1). Most of the participants had obtained the personality ENFP (29.2%), followed by INFJ and ISFJ (12.5%), each and the other personality types (Table 1).

Table 1
Distribution of MBTI patterns among interns

Personality preferences	n (%)
ENFJ	1 (4.2%)
ENFP	7 (29.2%)
ENTJ	1 (4.2%)
ENTP	1 (4.2%)
ESTP	1 (4.2%)
INFJ	3 (12.5%)
INFP	1 (4.2%)
INTJ	2 (8.3%)
INTP	1 (4.2%)
ISFJ	3 (12.5%)
ISFP	1 (4.2%)
ISTP	2 (8.3%)
Total	24
ENFJ: Extroverted, Intuitive, Feeling, and Judging, ENFP: Extroverted, Intuitive, Feeling, and Perceiving, ENTJ: Extroverted, Intuitive, Thinking, and Judging, ESTP: Extroverted, Observant, Thinking, and Perceiving, INFJ: Introverted, intuitive, Feeling, and Judging, INFP: Introverted, Intuitive, Feeling, and Perceiving, INTJ: Introverted, Intuitive, Thinking, and Judging, INTP: introverted, intuitive, thinking and perceiving, ISFG: Introverted, Observant, Feeling, and Judging, ISFP: Introverted, Sensing, Feeling, and Perceiving, ISTP: Introverted, Sensing, Thinking, and Perceiving	

Table 2 considered the individual personality traits involved in the study, the most common trait reported was intuition (70.84%) followed by feeling (66.67%), perceiving (58.33%), introversion (54.17%), extroversion (45.83%), judging (41.67%), thinking (33.33%) and sensing (29.16%). Figure 2 depicts the opinion on feelings of the participants regarding the personality type that they had been assigned, and the results showed that most found it to be accurately assigned (63%). When given the option to change their assigned personality type, one third participants (38%) wanted to do so (Fig. 3).

Table 2
Distribution of the individual traits of the MBTI personalities among interns

Individual MBTI personality	n (%)
	N = 24
Extroversion (E)	11 (45.83%)
Introversion (I)	13 (54.17%)
Sensing (S)	7 (29.16%)
Intuition (N)	17 (70.84%)
Thinking (T)	8 (33.33%)
Feeling (F)	16 (66.67%)
Judging (J)	10 (41.67%)
Perceiving (P)	14 (58.33%)

The perceived personality traits that were challenging to get along with at the workplace were introversion, extroversion, and judging. The traits that were easier to get along with included extroversion and perceivers. The most comfortable personality types to have at a workplace are ENFP followed by ENTP, ISTP, ISFJ, ESFJ and INFJ. Figure 4 shows that 4 participants (17%) want to change their career decisions based on the results of the MBTI test.

Opinion of study participants regarding personality traits and career decision making

Personality Type:

One participant expressed about his personality “I feel great overall, would definitely love to change a few things about it”

This suggests the participant openness to improvement in specific areas while still maintaining an overall positive outlook. Further exploration into the desired changes would provide valuable insights into areas of potential growth or enhancement.

Changing Personality Type

I often feel very disorganised, messy and difficulty in initiating and maintaining habits and I would like to change

I would like to be a more extroverted person who can work more without my emotions getting in the way

Maybe the judging part where in the point being that person being organised doesn't mean will be judging

After knowing his/her personality participants express his eagerness to be organized and easy in initiating things, change judging trait and to expand one's social circle, possibly indicating feelings of loneliness, a desire for connection, or an interest in broadening his experiences through interactions with others towards building relationship and communication and potentially seeking support from wider networks of individuals.

workplace personality challenge:

Introvert- it's difficult to get along with new people or start a conversation

Very Extrovert people, people who are calculative and very disorganized

Participant expresses that people who are introvert and judging are challenging to get along in workplace whereas few expressed very extrovert are also challenging. This may affect their work relationship. Whereas one participant said he/ she adopts to other personality so its manageable. Adjusting with other's behavior and developing good relationships and great interactions with others, will regulate emotions and adapt behavior to different situations emerges as crucial factors driving this phenomenon.

Comfortable personality at workplace:

Participant expressed his feeling as uplifted and inspired by others interactions. His adaptability in combination of sympathy in the workplace, and gentleness had a profound impact on their emotional well-being and sense of belonging. Majority of participants said extrovert, organized and perceiving as comfortable personality at workplace.

Changing career decision making

One participant expressed after knowing his personality pattern by MBTI Tool said

" it will help to make a career decision in the future "

Another participant said *"No, because I am happy with my decision to pursue medicine"*

This shows that many interns were not ready to take major career decisions change even though knowing their personality is contrasting against the present situation

DISCUSSION

The present study included 24 participants, 18 of them were females. This is in line with a recent trend which has seen an increase in female students in medical colleges.^{6,7} The results also show that most participants had obtained the personality ENFP (29.2%) and by INFJ and ISFG with (12.5%) followed by the other personality types. The results of a study conducted by Chang YC et al enumerated that the most predominant personality types among the junior doctors were ESTJ, INTP, and ESFJ, while among the attending physicians, the most common types were ISTJ and ESTJ.⁸ A study conducted by Haider M et al assessed which personality types were more common among ophthalmologists and the results showed that ENTP, ESTJ, and ISTJ were the most common personality types.⁹ Andrew J et al, in his study regarding selection of orthopaedics residents among 135, 4th year students attending US Medical schools in which majority them were ESTJ (33) and ENFP (13) ⁽¹⁰⁾

Majid Allamah et al, in his study on distribution of MBTI Types in an emergency residents training programme in Saudi Arabia found ENTJ (14.8%) and ESTJ (14.1%) among 142 participants ⁽¹¹⁾.

Mohamed Haider et al, in his study on MBTI Indicators personality Types among 66 ophthalmology residents at Ohio found the common personality types were ENTP (16.6%) And ENTJ (16.6%) ⁽¹²⁾ In the present study majority were ENFP 7 (29.2%), INFJ 3(12.5%) and ISFJ 3(12.5%) among 24 interns

Gaining more insight into the personality preferences of doctors might improve their professional awareness and, consequently, their approach to patient care. Personality preferences can also reveal information about doctors' risk tolerance and how they make decisions in a clinical situation.¹³⁻¹⁵

This adds to evidence that the medical profession has more individuals that belong to the extroverted personality groups which can be a valuable quality to engage with patients and colleagues alike.

The most common individual personality trait reported was intuition, followed by feeling, perceiving, introversion, extroversion, judging, thinking, and sensing. Yang et al. assessed the association between MBTI and psychiatry as a specialty choice, and the results showed that aspiring psychiatrists preferred introversion over extroversion, intuition over sensing, judging over perceiving and no preference for thinking vs feeling and none of these preference choices were statistically significant.⁸ Chang YC et al found that personality preferences for sensing, thinking, and judgement were indicated by both attending physicians and junior doctors. Nonetheless, attending physicians showed more polarized personality preferences for sensing ($p = 0.038$), thinking ($p = 0.032$), and judgement ($p = 0.024$) when compared to junior doctors. Furthermore, this study found that junior doctors had less pronounced personality preferences.¹² Another previous study found that there was no statistically significant difference between sensing and intuition, but ophthalmology residents were statistically more likely to be classified as judging than perceiving ($p = 0.007$), thinking than feeling ($p = 0.027$), and extroversion than introversion ($p = 0.049$). It was discovered that the J:P ratio increased with training level, starting in the postgraduate second year and continuing to the graduate level.²⁰ Intuition and extroversion were found to

be more prevalent in emergency medicine residents than in the Saudi population, according to a previous study and the most prevalent personality types were ESTJ (14.1%) and ENTJ (14.8%).²² This shows that early medical professionals have a propensity toward being more intuitive, feeling and perceiving but as their career trajectory goes upward, they tend to incline toward the judging personality type and this could be reflected on the judging type being the more focus and task oriented as well as the more logical which are qualities that medical professionals garner with experience.

CONCLUSION

The most common personality types assigned to the medical interns were ENFP, INFJ, and ISFJ. Most participants were happy with their personality type, and only four wished to change their career decision-making. Personality traits are preferred over others in different medical fields and these traits have also been seen to change in individuals with increased experience with patients. The results of the present study warrant further research into this topic as the association between the different personality types and different characteristics can help future medical aspirants to make the right choices in their careers as well as patient care. The evidence obtained can also be used in medical training programs as well as career counseling services for students opting for the medical field.

Declarations

Author Contribution

1.Dr suganathan Soundararajan-Manuscript Development
2.Dr. G.M. Muhammad-Presentation in Malaysian Conference and main concept for Manuscript
3.Dr Sandhiya Venkatesan- Data Collection and Data analysis

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Figures

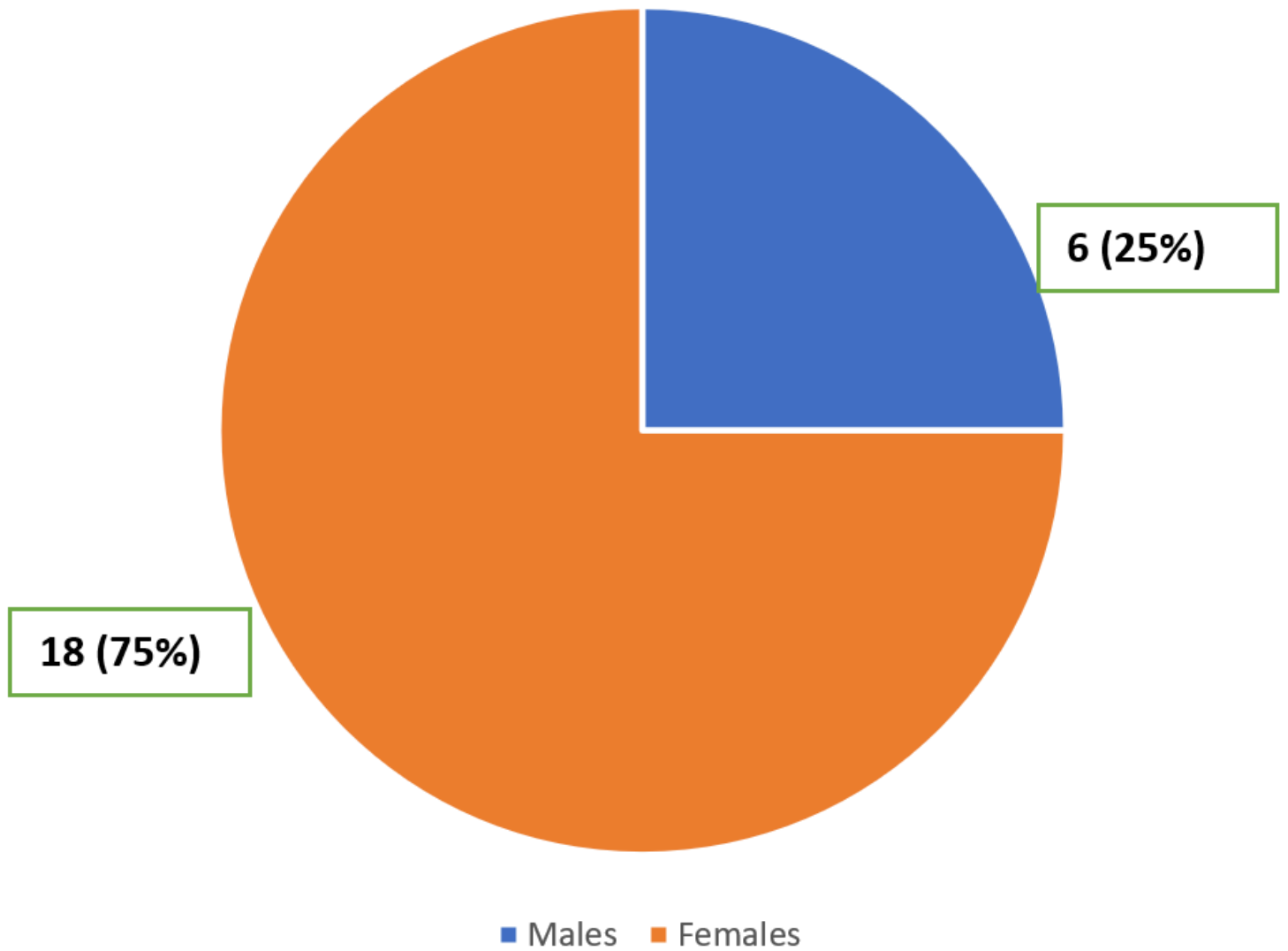


Figure 1

Gender wise distribution of interns

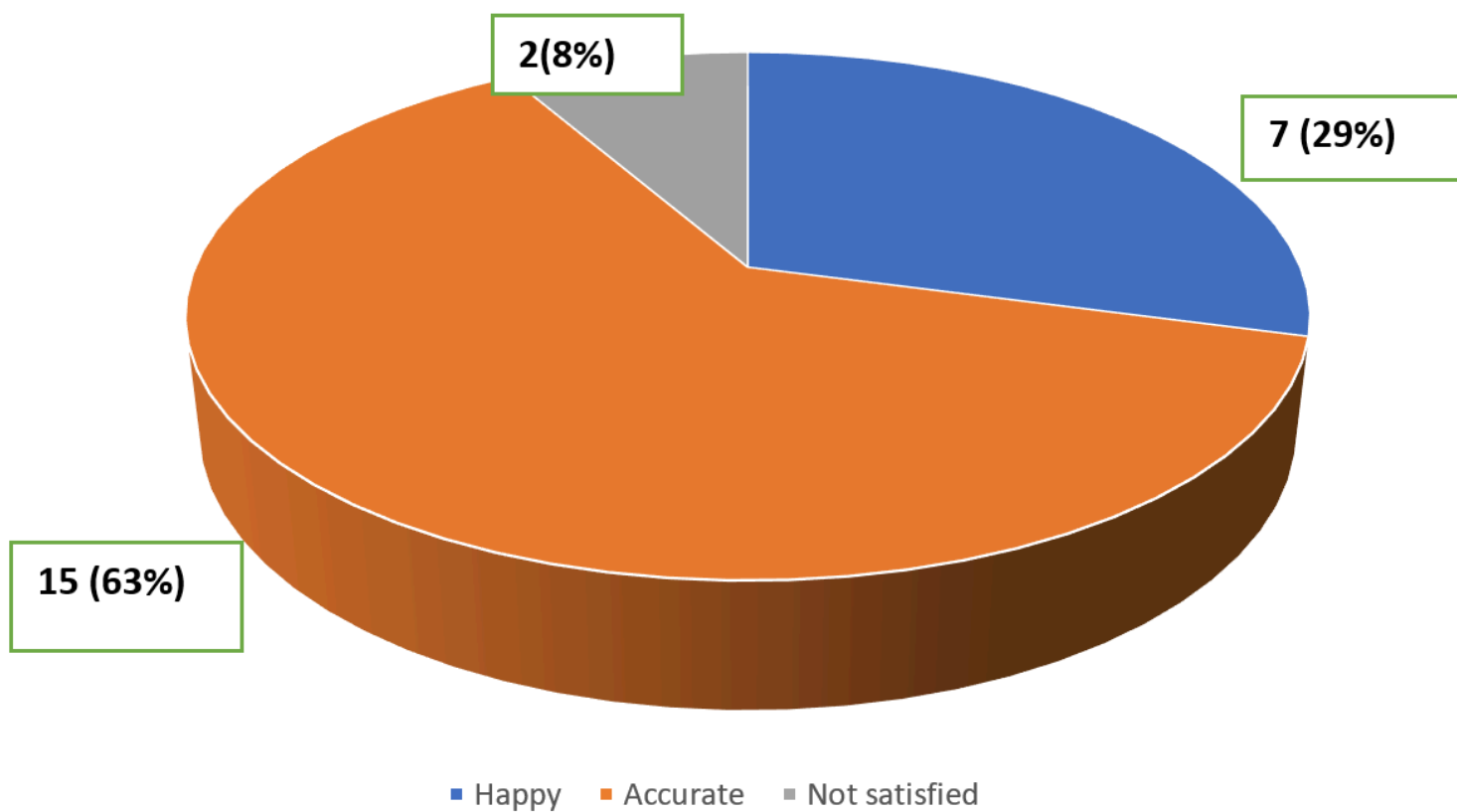


Figure 2

Feeling about their own MBTI type

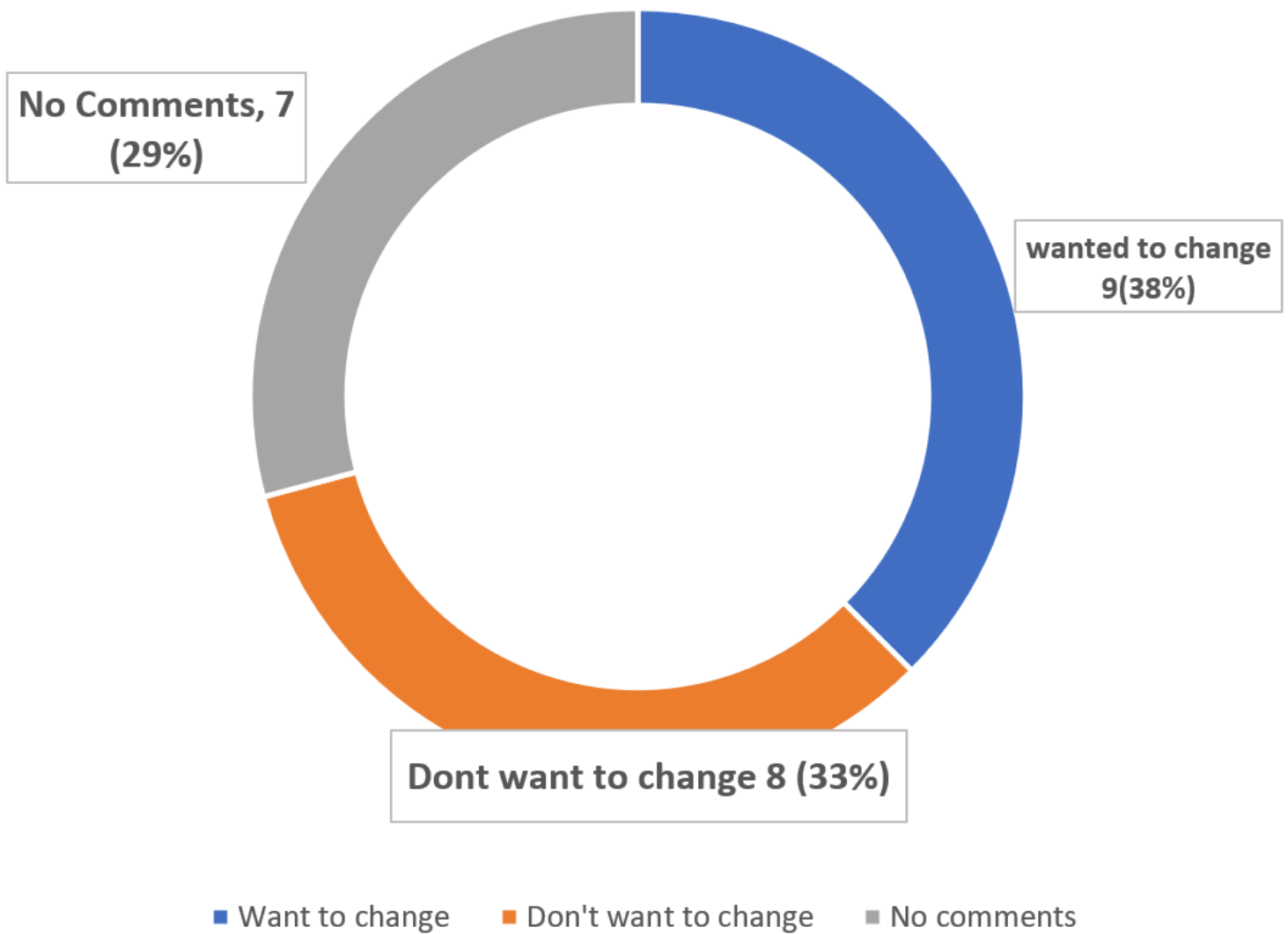


Figure 3

Opinion of changing personality type

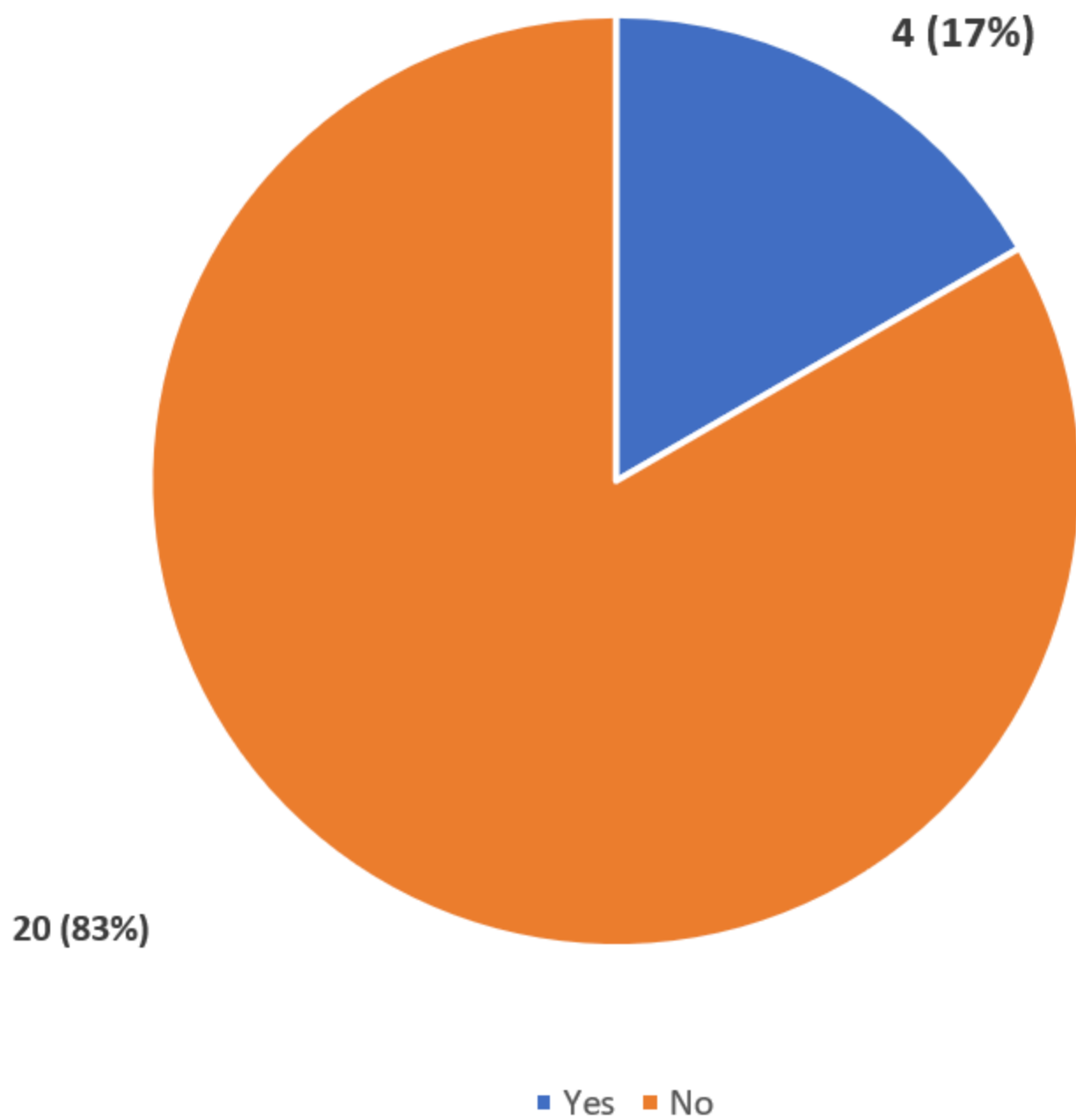


Figure 4

Change career decision after MBTI test