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Trust in Name Brand Assessments: The Case of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

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Name brands act as simple cues for consumers, signaling products' reliability and quality. This phenomenon is explored in the context of employee assessments and is applied specifically to the widely recognized name brand Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assessment. Selecting or evaluating assessments based on simplistic name brand cues rather than substantive but difficult-to-evaluate properties (e.g., validity) can substantially impede optimal evidence-based management. Organizational practitioners (human resources professionals, n = 112) and organizational scholars (industrial-organizational psychologists, n = 75) rated their preferences for using name brand assessments and then completed cognitive and affective measures of trust in the MBTI. Practitioners placed far more trust in the MBTI (d = 1.97 and 1.88) than did organizational scholars, and differing preferences for name brand assessments helped to explain this difference. Further, participants' intuitive (but not rational) decision-making styles led to greater preferences for name brand assessments, which in turn led to greater trust in the MBTI. The decision-making processes of practitioners and scholars highlighted here sheds light on the MBTI's resounding popularity

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among practitioners despite scholars' concerns with the assessment. The implications of this study are twofold. First, branded assessments may not be evaluated critically in light of the intuitively derived cue-based evaluations that work in their favor. Second, high-quality unbranded assessments, which tend to be overlooked for use in the workplace, would likely benefit from branding cues (e.g., professional image, logos) to encourage acceptance and use.

Keywords: assessments, brand trust, name brands, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, decision-making

Assessments can be very useful in guiding a wide array of employee-related workplace decisions. High-quality assessments can provide valuable data to assist with hiring, promotion, or employee development decisions. Although the use of assessments represents an important step in the use of evidence-based management, assessments vary greatly in terms of their quality. Ideally, assessments would be selected based on scientific qualities and their ability to predict desired outcomes (Guion, 2011). As described here, however, it is possible that many assessments are selected in a far less rigorous way, specifically by reliance on relatively superficial cues such as name brand recognition.

The current study sheds light on the influence of name brands in the selection and evaluation of employee assessments. To the extent that employee assessments are selected uncritically on the basis of superficial characteristics, suboptimal assessments may be chosen, yielding suboptimal data for important organizational decisions. This study also provides insights into the contentious popularity of the name brand Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assessment. Although the MBTI is extensively used by practitioners to assess employees, organizational scholars tend to be quite critical of the assessment's validity and reliability. As demonstrated in this study, differing preferences for name brand assessments can help to explain these differing perceptions of the MBTI.

Preferences for Name Brands

Consumers often prefer products that carry a name brand. Examples include selecting a name brand hotel chain over an unbranded hotel or selecting name brand clothing over unbranded clothing (Kayaman & Arasli, 2007; Liljander, Polsa, & van Riel, 2009). Name brands provide a simplistic cue to help consumers evaluate a product's likely performance, reliability, and value (Lassar, Mittal, & Sharma, 1995; Nandan, 2005). As many decision theories emphasize, decision makers generally strive to reduce or suppress decision uncertainty as much as possible (Lipshitz & Strauss, 1997). Name brands help to achieve this goal by reducing the perceived risk involved in purchasing a product (Kapferer, 2012; Liljander et al., 2009). In fact, name brands reduce perceived risk so much that people are often willing to pay substantially more for name brand products than for unbranded products (Kapferer, 2012).

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

To evaluate the role of name brands in employee assessment decisions, we chose to examine the MBTI. Although there are many name brands in this market, we chose the MBTI because of its highly developed and widely recognized name brand. The MBTI is arguably the most popular employee assessment. It is administered to millions of people annually and used by thousands of businesses, including most Fortune 500 companies (Cunningham, 2012; Essig, 2014). The MBTI is described as a personality inventory by its developers (Myers, McCaulley, Quenk, & Hammer, 2009). The MBTI assesses four personality type dichotomies: extraversion–introversion (E-I), sensing–intuition (S-N), thinking–feeling (T-F), and judging–perceiving (J-P) that result in four-letter personality type codes (e.g., ENTP). Readers interested in a comprehensive review of the MBTI can refer to Myers et al. (2009) or Gardner and Martinko (1996).

The MBTI's products are professionally designed and branded, including assessment forms, an assessment website, a 420-page user manual, a certification program for practitioners, and an array of products guiding use of the assessment in the workplace (Hirsh & Kummerow, 1998; Kirby, Barger, & Pearman, 2009; Myers et al., 2009). Released in the 1940s, the MBTI predates competing products and even predates currently accepted models of personality such as the Big Five and HEXACO models by decades. The age and popularity of the assessment encourage familiarity and brand name recognition (Ha & Perks, 2005; Pappu, Quester, & Cooksey, 2005).

The MBTI also represents a particularly interesting case study because it is routinely criticized by scholars for issues concerning its format, reliability, and validity (Zickar & Kostek, 2013). In contrast to most assessments, the MBTI's scores are artificially dichotomized, which is problematic because vast evidence indicates personalities form normally distributed continua, meaning that valuable information is lost whenever scores are dichotomized (McCrae & Costa, 1989; Pittenger, 2004). The four-letter MBTI codes that are derived from these dichotomies appear to change over rather short periods of time. More than one third of people receive different four-letter MBTI codes after just a 4-week interval (Myers et al., 2009), a level of unreliability that could pose substantial problems. Finally, there are concerns about the construct validity and the criterion-related validity for work-related outcomes such as job performance (Grant, 2013; McCrae & Costa, 1989). See Pittenger (2004, 2005) or McCrae and Costa (1989) for comprehensive reviews of these issues.

Trust in the MBTI

Name brands by their very nature encourage trust and confidence. Brand trust refers to the expectations of high quality that one has for a particular brand and a particular brand's products (Delgado-Ballester, Munuera-Aleman, & Yague-Guillen, 2003; Sung & Kim, 2010). Trust can embody both cognitive and affective elements, with the latter sometimes referred to simply as brand affect (Back & Parks, 2003; Sung & Kim, 2010). In light of the fact that many product purchases involve a level of uncertainty, brand trust reflects a feeling of confidence that a product will meet one's needs (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003).

Name brand-related cues (e.g., price point, logo, brand image) are appealing, leading to preferences for products with name brands. These very same cues also influence the way that people evaluate the quality of name brand products. Congruity theory provides an explanation of this by describing how consumers strive for congruency between thoughts, feelings, and evaluations (Grewal, Krishnan, Baker, & Borin, 1998). When one has felt positively about, purchased, or invested time in using a name brand product, trusting and positively evaluating that product maintains mental congruity. To the extent that people have a preference for name brand employee assessments, people should also have positive impressions of how specific name brand assessments will perform. In this case, a generalized preference for name brand assessments is expected to lead people to trust the MBTI name brand and the MBTI assessment.

Hypothesis 1: Preferences for name brand assessments will relate to trust in the name brand MBTI.

As suggested above, use of the MBTI in the workplace remains contentious. Whereas many practitioners appear to prefer the assessment, many organizational scholars are quite critical of it (Grant, 2013; Zickar & Kostek, 2013). Divisions such as this between practitioners and scholars are not uncommon (Highhouse, 2008; Rynes, Colbert, & Brown, 2002), but few studies have investigated the decision processes that may lead to these so-called research-practice "gaps." To examine the possibility that preferences for name brands play a role in differing perspectives on the MBTI, we examined this phenomenon by sampling a group of organizational practitioners and a group of organizational scholars. Understanding the training and expertise of these groups leads to insights about the role of name brand assessment in the decision-making process of each.

The group of practitioners often tasked with selecting employee assessments is human resources (HR) professionals (Dessler, 2017; O-Net Online, 2018a).

HR professionals receive training in a wide array of legal, management, financial, and strategic domains, but tend to receive rather cursory training in personality and psychometric issues such as validity and reliability (Society for Human Resource Management, 2010).

The group of scholars most relevant to employee assessment is industrial–organizational (IO) psychologists. The training of HR professionals and IO psychologists overlaps considerably, but IO psychologists tend to receive extensive training in personality, validity, reliability, statistics, and test development/evaluation (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 1994, 1999; O-Net Online, 2018b). IO psychologists have been utilized in previous studies because of their scholarly proficiency in the employee assessment and hiring domains (Rynes et al., 2002; Rynes, Giluk, & Brown, 2007). The differing levels of expertise these groups have in personality and psychometrics have implications for the way that assessments are likely to be evaluated.

Choosing an optimal employee assessment is complex because it requires careful consideration of reliability, validity, employee reactions, administration time, and price among other factors (Guion, 2011). This information-intensive and complex decision-making task could pose a challenge for scholars and practitioners alike, but based on the level of training in personality and psychometrics, this task would be particularly challenging for practitioners. When faced with complex decisions involving unfamiliar domains, it is often necessary to use trust as a means of complexity reduction (Gefen, 2000). Placing trust in a name brand like the MBTI would make the choice of an assessment far more manageable. Indeed, the use of superficial cues such as name brand to make decisions becomes especially likely when facing decisions that are complex (Bettman, Luce, & Payne, 1998).

Hypothesis 2: Organizational practitioners will, relative to scholars, have a greater preference for name brand assessments.

Hypothesis 3: Greater preference for name brand assessments will lead practitioners to place greater trust in the MBTI than do scholars.

Decision-Making Styles and Trust in Name Brands

Name brand cues are relatively simplistic and superficial in nature. Rather than having to investigate a product's substantive qualities, name brands allow relatively easy evaluations of products. Placed into the context of dual-process cognition, name brand cues involve the use of Type I (intuitive) thinking as opposed to deeper Type II (rational) thinking (Maheswaran, Mackie, & Chaiken, 1992).

People exhibit relatively stable preferences for thinking intuitively or rationally (Scott & Bruce, 1995). Exploration of these decision-making styles can enhance understanding of the mental processes used to evaluate employee assessments. Intuitive decision-making, involving reliance on feelings, emotions, and instincts (Scott & Bruce, 1995), should be associated with increased trust in MBTI due to its name brand appeal. Rational decision-making, on the other hand, involves reliance on facts, figures, data, logic, and reasoning. The relatively small amount of evidence relating to the validity of the MBTI for important workplace outcomes, coupled with the MBTI's simplistic dichotomous treatment of personality, should lead rational decision-making to be associated with decreased trust in the MBTI.

Hypothesis 4: An intuitive decision-making style will lead to greater preference for name brand assessments and thus increased trust in MBTI.

Hypothesis 5: A rational decision-making style will lead to reduced preference for name brand assessments and thus reduced trust in MBTI.

Method

Participants

Organizational practitioners were recruited by e-mailing members of multiple professional HR groups around the Midwest United States. Of 668 e-mails sent, 112 (17%) provided responses, a rate very similar to previous studies (Rynes et al., 2002). Most participants were female (89%) and averaged 17 years ($SD = 12$) of experience in HR. Roughly one half had Master's degrees (46%), and the other half had baccalaureate degrees (47%). About half (55%) held executive/managerial HR positions, 20% were generalists, 11% were consultants, and 7% were specialists.

Organizational scholars were recruited by e-mailing members of a national association of industrial–organizational psychologists. Of 330 e-mails sent, 75 (23%) provided responses. The slight majority (51%) were male and the group averaged 10 years ($SD = 10$) of experience in the field. As is typical in this field, most (79%) held doctorates, and 18% held Master's degrees. About 35% worked in academia, 27% as consultants, and 21% worked in organizational research roles.

Measures

To assess preference for name brand assessments, participants rated the "importance of using a personality assessment that is a recognized name brand" using a five-option response scale ranging from *not important at all* to *extremely important*. This was part of a larger measure that assessed ratings of importance for 12 attributes (e.g., validity, ease of use, popularity) that may be considered when selecting a personality assessment.

Two forms of trust in the MBTI were measured: cognitive and affective. The cognitive measure focuses on one's confidence in the MBTI for certain specific purposes, whereas the affective measure focuses on one's global feelings of trust in the MBTI. Cognitive trust was assessed by asking participants to evaluate 11 claims about the MBTI including properties of the test (e.g., "the MBTI has excellent reliability") and validity/utility of the test for various purposes (e.g., "the MBTI can be used during hiring to select the best employees"). Most of these statements are not supported by research evidence; even the MTBI manual, for example, states that the MBTI should not be used during the hiring process (Myers et al., 2009). Estimates were evaluated along a five-option scale ranging from *completely false* to *completely true*.

Affective trust in the MBTI was assessed with a six-item measure intended to capture broad, overall feelings of trust. Sample items included "I trust the MBTI to accurately assess people" and "the MBTI is completely trustworthy." Responses were collected using a five-option *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* scale.

Intuitive and rational decision-making styles were assessed using measures from Scott and Bruce (1995). Intuitive items involved making decisions based on instinct and inner feelings, for example, "I generally make decisions that feel right to me." Rational items involved making decisions based on careful analysis, for example, "I make decisions in a logical and systematic way." As shown in Table 1, all measures were internally consistent with α values at or above .73.

Results

Experience With the MBTI

Participants from both samples were equally familiar with the MBTI. Seventy-five percent had previously completed the MBTI, $\chi^2(1, N = 187) = .16$, $p = .69$, 62% knew their four-letter MBTI code, $\chi^2(1, N = 187) = 1.17$, $p = .28$, 25% had personally administered the MBTI to an employee,

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Study Variables in Practitioners (Human Resources [HR] Professionals; Shown Above Diagonal) and Scholars (Industrial–Organizational [IO] Psychologists; Shown Below Diagonal)

Variable	Practitioners (HR professionals)		Scholars (IO psychologists)						
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5
1. Preference for name brand assessment	3.09	1.26	2.10	0.96		.36**	.31**	.15	.12
2. Cognitive trust in MBTI	3.88	0.59	2.56	0.75	.16	(.94)	.79**	.18	.18
3. Affective trust in MBTI	3.88	0.71	2.21	1.03	.14	.82**	(.97)	.24*	.20*
4. Intuitive decision-making style	3.48	0.74	2.73	0.76	.12	.25*	.30*	(.88)	−.24*
5. Rational decision-making style	3.90	0.61	4.38	0.42	.06	−.19	−.18	−.31*	(.78)

Note. MBTI = Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. The α values are shown in parentheses along the diagonal.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

$\chi^2(1, N = 187) = .16$, $p = .69$, and 16% had received specialized training to administer the MBTI, $\chi^2(1, N = 187) = .18$, $p = .68$.

Hypothesis 1: Preferences for Name Brand Assessments Will Relate to Trust in the Name Brand MBTI

The first hypothesis concerned the link between a preference for name brand assessments and trust in the MBTI. As expected, preferences for name brand assessments were related to cognitive, $r = .45$, $p < .001$, and affective, $r = .41$, $p < .001$, trust in the MBTI. A more nuanced conclusion is reached, however, when separately examining these correlation values within the context of each sample. As shown in Table 1, preferences for name brand assessments were related to both forms of trust in the MBTI for practitioners (cognitive trust, $r = .36$, $p < .01$, and affective trust, $r = .31$, $p < .01$), but this relation was markedly weaker for scholars (cognitive trust, $r = .16$, $p = .18$, and affective trust, $r = .14$, $p = .26$). This could be the result of reduced variability in scholars' preferences for name brands, and thus somewhat restricted range. It could also indicate that scholars are less likely to associate an assessment's quality with having a name brand. Hypothesis 1, therefore, was supported, but with greater support for practitioners than for scholars.

Hypothesis 2: Practitioners Will, Relative to Scholars, Have a Greater Preference for Name Brand Assessments

The second hypothesis concerned a possible difference in preference for name brand assessments as a function of sample (practitioners vs. scholars). Keeping in mind that preferences for name brand assessments were made along a 1-to-5 scale, it is evident from the means, 3.09 and 2.10, that neither group overtly expressed a strong preference for a name brand assessment. Practitioners had a moderate preference, whereas scholars had rather little preference for name brand assessments. In support of the hypothesis, practitioners had stronger name brand preferences than did scholars, $M = 3.09$ and 2.10, respectively. This difference was significant and indicative of a large difference, $t(177) = 5.67$, $p < .001$, $d = .83$.

Hypothesis 3: Greater Preference for Name Brand Assessments Will Lead Practitioners to Place Greater Trust in the MBTI Than Do Scholars

The third hypothesis concerns practitioners and scholars having divergent levels of trust in the MBTI due to differing preferences for name brand

assessments. First the dependent variable, trust in the MBTI, was examined. Both cognitive and affective trust in the MBTI were higher for practitioners ($M_{cognitive} = 3.88$ and $M_{affective} = 3.88$) than for scholars ($M_{cognitive} = 2.56$ and $M_{affective} = 2.21$), reflecting large differences[1], $t_{cognitive}(170) = 12.99$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.97$, and $t_{affective}(169) = 12.50$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.88$.

After having confirmed that there are differing levels of trust in the MBTI, the next step was to determine if this could be explained by preferences for a name brand assessment. To this end, a bootstrapped mediation model was constructed, using the dichotomous sample variable as the predictor, preferences for name brand assessments as the mediator, and trust in the MBTI as the outcome. Coefficients for two mediation models, labeled A and B, respectively, can be seen in Table 2. Sample (practitioner vs. scholar) had direct and indirect effects on trust in the MBTI. The indirect effects from sample to trust in the MBTI via name brand preferences were significant for both forms of trust, coefficients = .07 and .08. These standardized coefficient estimates indicate partial rather than full mediation. Hypothesis 3 was supported. Greater preference for name brand assessments led practitioners to place greater trust in the MBTI than did scholars.

Hypothesis 4: An Intuitive Decision-Making Style Will Lead to Greater Preference for Name Brand Assessments and Thus Increased Trust in MBTI

The fourth hypothesis concerned intuitive decision-making as possibly leading to greater preference for name brand assessment, which would in turn lead to greater trust in the name brand MBTI. Two mediation models were constructed to evaluate this, and the resulting coefficients are presented in Table 2 as Models C and D. Intuition had direct and indirect effects on trust in the MBTI. The indirect effects from intuition to trust via name brand preferences were significant for both forms of trust, coefficients = .09 and .08. These standardized coefficient estimates indicate partial rather than full mediation. Intuition led to greater preferences for name brand assessments, which, in turn, led to greater trust in the MBTI. Hypothesis 4 was supported.

Hypothesis 5: A Rational Decision-Making Style Will Lead to Reduced Preference for Name Brand Assessments and Thus Reduced Trust in MBTI

The fifth hypothesis concerned rational decision-making as leading to decreased preference for name brand assessments, which would in turn lead

[1] Missing data and pairwise deletion led to slightly different degrees of freedom for these two *t* tests.

Table 2
Results of Bootstrapped Mediation Models

Model and variables	Standardized coefficient estimates				Bootstrapped bias-corrected 95% CI for indirect effect
	Direct effect x → m	Direct effect m → y	Direct effect x → y	Indirect effect	
Model A x: Sample m: Preference for name brand assessments y: Cognitive trust in MBTI	.39**	.21**	.62**	.08*	[.04, .14]
Model B x: Sample m: Preference for name brand assessments y: Affective trust in MBTI	.39**	.17**	.62**	.07*	[.03, .12]
Model C x: Intuitive style m: Preference for name brand assessments y: Cognitive trust in MBTI	.29**	.31**	.36**	.09**	[.05, .15]
Model D x: Intuitive style m: Preference for name brand assessments y: Affective trust in MBTI	.29**	.28**	.40**	.08**	[.04, .14]
Model E x: Rational style m: Preference for name brand assessments y: Cognitive trust in MBTI	−.07	.40**	−.24**	−.03	[−.08, .02]
Model F x: Rational style m: Preference for name brand assessments y: Affective trust in MBTI	−.07	.38**	−.23**	−.03	[−.08, .02]

Note. x = predictor variable; m = mediator variable; y = outcome variable; CI = confidence interval; MBTI = Myers-Briggs Type Indicator; IO = industrial–organizational; HR = human resources. Sample variable is dichotomously coded as 0 = scholars (IO psychologists) and 1 = practitioners (HR professionals).
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

to decreased trust in the name brand MBTI. Two mediation models were constructed to evaluate this, and the resulting coefficients are presented in Table 2 as Models E and F. The indirect effects from rationality to trust via name brand preferences were nonsignificant for both forms of trust, coefficients = −.03 and −.03. There were, however, direct effects from rational decision-making to trust in the MBTI. Closer examination of the correlations in Table 1 provides some possible explanation for the lack of indirect effect. For scholars, rationality showed the expected negative relation with trust in the MBTI, $r = -.19$ for cognitive and $r = -.18$ for affective trust. In contrast, for practitioners, rationality showed an unhypothesized positive relation with trust in the MBTI, $r = .18$ for cognitive and $r = .20$ for affective trust. A multigroup path analysis was constructed to separately estimate the coefficients within the context of each sample. Although the resulting coefficients differed in direction, the indirect effects did not reach significance; standardized coefficients ranged from .01 to .03 (bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals ranged from −.02 to .10). Hypothesis 5 was not supported.

Discussion

The role of preferences for name brands was evaluated in the context of selecting employee assessments. Greater preferences for name brand assessments led to more positive evaluations of a widely recognized name brand assessment, the MBTI. The link between name brand preferences and trust in the name brand MBTI appeared to be stronger for practitioners than for scholars, suggesting that name brand cues could be particularly salient for this group of organizational decision makers. Intuitive thinking—which was higher among practitioners—was associated with a preference for name brand assessments and trust in the name brand MBTI. Rational thinking, however, did not show a meaningful mediational relationship involving preferences for name brands and trust in the name brand MBTI. Interestingly, these results were obtained in spite of the fact that neither practitioners nor scholars reported particularly strong preferences for name brand assessments. This raises the possibility that name brand has an influence above and beyond what decision makers consciously recognize.

Broadly speaking, this work demonstrates the importance of considering decision-making processes when evaluating the tools that are used in the workplace. Assessments play a critical role in evidence-based management in domains such as hiring, promotion, or employee development. To get the most from decision aids such as assessments, however, it is imperative that the proper tools be used. The present study describes trust in the MBTI, an assessment that offers far less evidence of validity for important work

outcomes than other dominant personality frameworks like the Big Five (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Judge & Bono, 2001). This issue likely extends beyond the use of the MBTI, however. There are many assessments, tests, and tools available for use in the workplace, and it is possible that those carrying recognized name brands will be evaluated more positively than those that do not, regardless of substantive evidence (e.g., validity) supporting their use. This can be interpreted as a challenge for the organizational sciences, which have embraced unbranded public domain assessments (Ashton, Lee, & Goldberg, 2007; Goldberg et al., 2006) that practitioners may be inclined to overlook.

Implications for the Decision-Making Process

The choice of an employee assessment may be surprisingly similar to choices made in other consumer domains. A shopper could investigate all of the differences between a generic medicine and a name brand medicine, but that requires a great deal of knowledge that an average consumer likely does not have. It is instead far easier to select a name brand medicine, place one's trust in that brand, and assume that the brand is indicative of superior quality. Likewise, someone selecting an employee assessment could read through user's manuals, technical reports, and research articles to try to thoroughly evaluate it. Given the time and expertise constraints that practitioners are likely to face (see Lawler, 2007), however, it should not be surprising to see that a name brand might be used to infer quality and reduce the cognitive decision load.

Of course, the choice of employee assessment has serious implications for organizations and should not be taken lightly. Using poorly constructed or invalid assessments can result in inaccurate measurements, legal liability, and improper use of human talent. Echoing Rousseau and Barends (2011), evidence-based practice begins with a mindset that emphasizes critical thinking. Practitioners can consider doing something as simple as challenging the status quo by asking why particular assessments are being used (Rousseau, 2006). HR professionals may also wish to read through relevant research literature on personality, or converse with someone who has specialized training in psychometrics (Rousseau, 2006). If assessments are carefully and thoughtfully selected with an evidence-based mindset, we expect that overreliance on name brands would diminish.

Limitations and Areas for Future Research

MBTI research–practice gap. This work sheds light on a persistent divergence of opinion between practitioners and scholars regarding the use of the MBTI (Grant, 2013; Zickar & Kostek, 2013). These findings imply that

the MBTI benefits from its name brand and all of the cues of quality embodied therein (price, logo, professional image). However, it is evident from the current study that a preference for name brand assessments only partially explains the divergence of opinion between these two groups. Additional research could examine other features of the MBTI that, above and beyond the name brand, encourage positive evaluations of the assessment. For example, practitioners may appreciate the MBTI's simplicity (e.g., ipsative item format, easy-to-interpret dichotomous personality "types") and built-in respondent feedback (e.g., text descriptions of each personality type combination). Features such as these would help practitioners to efficiently administer the MBTI to large numbers of employees without requiring in-depth personality measurement expertise. Additionally, the MBTI emphasizes the positive elements of personality. Whereas a Big Five measure may present respondents with difficult feedback about, say, neuroticism, the MBTI describes all personality orientations as uniquely positive. Practitioners would presumably value this if it increases receptivity to and acceptance of assessment results.

In fact, regardless of one's opinion of the MBTI, most would agree that the assessment has been extremely successful at gaining buy-in from organizations and workers around the world. Some employees post their MBTI codes in their e-mail signatures; others post them on their desk for all to see. The MBTI has created a fun and accepting atmosphere surrounding its assessments that encourages positive feelings and buy-in. In contrast, highly researched assessments are often unbranded, bland, and lack the positive cues associated with branded assessments (International Personality Item Pool, n.d.). In short, there are many positive features of the MBTI that unbranded assessments could emulate so as to gain greater acceptance and facilitate greater use in the workplace.

Generalizability. There are two areas of discussion regarding generalizability of these findings. The first concerns the representativeness of the practitioner sample. The HR professionals that participated in this study were contacted through professional HR associations, and the sample is therefore likely to be more actively engaged in the profession than many practitioners. Many organizational practitioners have no background or formalized training in HR or related fields (Lawler, 2007). If practitioners, on average, are less familiar and comfortable with issues such as validity and reliability than the practitioners in this sample, then the true influence of name brands may be larger than what was observed here.

Organizational practitioners are, of course, not limited to HR functions; practitioners can serve in several roles not sampled here such as managers, executives, internal consultants, and external consultants. It is unknown whether HR practitioners differ from these other constituencies, but we suspect that HR practitioners have greater knowledge of relevant domains

(e.g., personality and testing). Therefore, if these results were replicated with a broader set of practitioners, there may be greater reliance on name brands than was observed here.

The second point regarding generalizability has to do with the generalizability of these findings to assessments beyond the MBTI. There are, of course, many name brand assessments available for use in the workplace. It is likely that the preference for name brands leads to positive evaluations of other name brand assessments as well. The exact extent of this generalizability should be investigated. The MBTI is a widely recognized name brand with a long history and a large market share. The current study does not allow for closer inspection of different types of brands, such as newly developed brands or brands that are less well-known. Future research in this area could also look at the characteristics (e.g., brand personality, Aaker, 1997) that are embodied by brands to further determine the appeal of name brand assessments. In conclusion, further examination of name brand influences on employee assessments can lead to increased awareness of the relevant decision-making processes and, ultimately, to improved evidence-based management through the use of carefully selected assessments.

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