

Stress and personality of college teachers

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Teaching is a complex profession. Depending on the type of college or university, teachers may have many responsibilities such as fulfilling teaching and research requirements at research colleges and universities. Personality characteristics of an individual to a large extent are responsible for appraising a situation as stressful. Several studies have clearly indicated that certain personality types are stress prone. Though personality traits are fairly constant in an adult, awareness of one's stress level and the personality type can help the individual consciously mobilize coping strategies and manage the stress well. Present study was conducted to examine relationship between stress and personality of college teachers. Data were collected from 300 college teachers in six institutions. The results of correlation showed that the stress levels and personality types of the sample are independent of each other. It could be inferred that, for the present sample of college teachers, the personality types are fairly stable, not depending on their stress levels. This supports the fact that personality traits are more enduring, independent of the situational stressors.

Keywords: stress, personality types and college teachers

After colleges enlarged the scale of student recruitment, the numbers of college students have increased rapidly. But the number of college teachers' increase is disproportionate, which causes the relative shortage of college teachers and results in the increasing intensity of college teachers' work load. Some college teachers have to take on teaching task of many compulsory courses during a single term. Some teachers even have to cope with other teaching tasks, such as that of elective courses and double degree courses (Liyun & Li, 2009).

Scientific research pressure

Currently quantitative indicators are important factor for colleges to appraise their research capability of teachers, such as the quantity and quality of the published articles and completed research projects. Colleges will reduce their salary and even dismiss teachers if teachers cannot complete these quantitative tasks. So college teachers have to publish many high-level articles and complete research projects in order to get promotions (Liyun & Li, 2009).

Mid career study pressure

With the popularity of network communications and the update speed of knowledge, a great deal of modern educational technology continues to emerge. So it is necessary for teachers to select and use teaching methods flexibly and creatively. Therefore, college teachers have to expend more energy on teaching than ever before in order to keep up with the development of new technology. And college teachers still have to study further in order to enrich their knowledge. After they get a Masters Degree, they still have to obtain a Doctorate (Liyun & Li, 2009).

Workplace stress

Workplace stress is the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when there is a poor match between job demands and the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. A variety of factors contribute to workplace stress such as negative workload, isolation, extensive hours worked, toxic work environments, lack of autonomy, difficult relationships among coworkers and

management, management bullying, harassment and lack of opportunities or motivation to advancement in one's skill level (Thomas, Collagen, & Higgins, 2006).

Personality types

Personality derives from the Latin word *persona*, which refers to a mask used by actors in a play. Personality is the visible aspect of one's character as it impresses others (Schultz & Schultz, 2005).

The concept of personality types can be defined as the psychological classification of people on the basis of their personality traits. The advances in the field of psychology and the deeper understanding of the psyche of man have come up with personality Types A, B, C and D. People from every walk of life, based on their behavior and personality traits they exhibit, can be grouped under one of the Types (Kanade, 2011).

Type A personality

The individuals that come under personality Type A are of a highly independent nature. They are competitive in nature; in fact they thrive on it as if it is the fuel of their life. Type A people are said to have greater chances of suffering from hypertension and heart diseases. Individuals of personality Type A are risk takers which characterize an entrepreneurial spirit (Kanade, 2011).

Type B personality

They are mostly calm and composed, and in contrast to Type A personalities, Type B people are never in a hurry. They are the ones who will start talking when they are standing in a line, and by the time their turn comes, they will have made friends. They will always be thinking about others' problems and always lend a helping hand. They are equally hardworking as Type A personalities, but they do not hurry. They also do not get stressed easily and if ever they become stressed they usually become more productive. Type B personalities do not face much of health problems (Shinde, 2011).

Type C personality

Type C personality people are perfectionists and tend to take everything seriously. They dress very neatly and work very devotedly. They have a tendency to go deep into details of things and

are always striving for accuracy. Type C individuals are very consistent and follow all the rules and procedures in both work and life in general. Type C people are deep thinkers, who like to know each and every detail of how and why certain things work. Type C people are very patient and do not rest unless and until they get at the bottom of things. One of the peculiar traits is that these people are unable to express their emotions, feelings or needs to other people. These people lack assertiveness. When faced with an opposition, they are unable to hold on to what they stand for. They are much more likely to conform to the wishes of other people. They have a tendency to please other people, even if it means that they hurt themselves in the process (Dogra, 2011).

Psychological Types

The theory of psychological type was originally developed by Carl Jung (Myers & Briggs, 1980, 1995). Jung proposed the existence of two dichotomous pairs of cognitive functions: the "rational" (judging) functions: thinking and feeling and the "irrational" (perceiving) functions: sensing and intuition. Jung went on to suggest that these functions are expressed in either an introverted or extraverted form. Jung's typological model regards psychological type as similar to left or right handedness: individuals are either born with, or develop, certain preferred ways of thinking and acting. The Myers Briggs Type Indicator sorts some of these psychological differences into four opposite pairs, or dichotomies, with a resulting 16 possible psychological types. The four pairs of preferences or dichotomies are Extraversion (E) (I) Introversion; Sensing (S) (N) Intuition ; Thinking (T) (F) Feeling Judging (J) (P) Perception. Myers-Briggs literature uses the terms extraversion and introversion as Jung first used them. Extraversion means "outward-turning" and introversion means "inward-turning" (Myers, Briggs & McCaulley, 1985).

The preferences for extraversion and introversion are often called attitudes. Briggs and Myers recognized that each of the cognitive functions can operate in the external world of behavior, action, people, and things (extraverted attitude) or the internal world of ideas and reflection (introverted attitude). The MBTI assessment sorts for an overall preference for one or the other. Jung identified two pairs of psychological functions: the two perceiving functions, sensing and intuition and the two judging functions, thinking and feeling (Myers, Briggs & McCaulley, 1985).

Review of literature

Ofoegbu, Nwadiani and Mon (2006) conducted a study on 'Level of perceived stress among lectures in Nigerian universities'. The purpose of the study was to provide empirical evidence on the level of stress among lecturers in Nigerian universities. On the whole, eight universities were used for the study. A sample of two hundred and twenty eight (one hundred and twenty three male and one hundred and five female) lecturers was selected according to the variables of age, sex, marital status, experience, domicile, areas of specialization, and administrative responsibilities. The Stress Research Questionnaire developed by the researchers was used to collect data on the level of stress in relation to the variables. The results revealed that the level of stress among academicians is significantly high.

The objectives of the research done by Contaifer, Bachion, Yoshida and Souza (2003) were knowing the perception of stress within the university teaching staff from the health care area,

determining the stress factors with higher impact on this population, identifying the referred symptoms and evaluating the level of stress they go through. 68 teachers were interviewed from 1999 to 2001 who revealed that they perceived stress through tiredness, anxiety and loss of balance. Regarding stress factors with higher impact, they mentioned: inadequate wage, payment deduction, lack of material and long meetings. The most frequent stress signs and symptoms were cold fingertips and anxiety, among others. The stress level, in general, varied from mild to moderate.

Yin and Lee (2012) conducted the study on 'Be passionate, but be rational as well: Emotional rules for Chinese teachers work'. Employing the concepts of emotional labor and emotional rules, the study explored the emotional rules governing teachers' work in the context of Mainland China. The results showed that teachers can be seen as emotional workers in teaching and there are four emotional rules for Chinese teachers' feelings and emotional expressions. They rationally instrumentalise their emotional experience and expression to follow the professional and ethical norms in teaching.

Carrillo and Baguley (2011) evaluated a study on 'From school teachers to university lecturer: Illuminating the journey from the classroom to the university for two arts educators'. The article aimed to provide insights into the journey of two artist teachers who currently work as arts educators at the university level. The result showed the unique characteristics of those who work in the arts are also explored and provide important understandings in relation to the mentoring and support required for educators who work in this context.

Shaw et al. (2010) conducted the study on 'Individual differences in vigilance: Personality ability and states of stress'. Vigilance is notoriously hard to predict from personality measures. The study adopted a new multivariate approach based on attention resource theory. Measures were taken of the Five Factor Model (FFM), more narrowly-defined 'cognitiveenergetic' traits, cognitive ability and stress and coping scales. Two hundred and ten Participants performed one of two related high-workload visual vigilance tasks. Results showed that personality traits were weak predictors of correct detection rate, although extraversion was negatively correlated with performance. Ability, subjective task engagement, and coping scales were more strongly associated with vigilance. However, both the FFM and cognitiveenergetic factors related to subjective states experienced during performance.

Zhang (2007) conducted a study on 'From career personality types to preferences for teachers' teaching styles: A new perspective on style match'. The research examined the issue of teacherstudent style match from a new perspective.

Two hundred and fifty-four students from a large university in Shanghai responded to the Preferred Thinking Styles in Teaching Inventory, the Short-Version Self-Directed Search, and to the Self-rated Ability Scale. Results suggested that although students preferred teaching styles that matched their career personality types precisely, they were also open to teaching styles that complemented their career personality types. It was proposed that the concept of "style match" be redefined.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to assess the level of stress of the sample who were the selected college teachers, to assess the personality of the sample and to find out the relationship between stress and personality of the sample.

Method

Participants

From Government College of Technology, Coimbatore, Avinashilingam Faculty of Engineering College, Pannimadai, N.P.A. Polytechnic College, Nilgiris, Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore, Ramakrishna College for women, Coimbatore and C.S.I Bishop Appasamy College, Coimbatore, 300 college teachers were randomly selected to serve as the sample. The age range of the sample was 22 - 60 years.

Instruments

Case Study Schedule was used to obtain the information about the demographic details such as gender, educational qualification, marital status, family type, socio economic status and area.

Stress Inventory (SI) developed by Dr. Hemalatha Natesan and Dr. Nandini Menon (2005) was used to assess the levels of stress in the sample. It consisted of 30 questions with Yes or No options. The Part-I assessed the physical conditions, the Part-II assessed the emotional conditions, Part-III assessed the cognitive conditions and the Part-IV assessed the behavioral conditions. The subjects were asked to tick the Yes or No options, which best indicated their feelings. The reliability and validity scores are 0.95 and 0.80 respectively.

Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) developed by Dr. Isabel Briggs Myers and Dr. Katharine Cook Briggs (1962) was used to assess the personality types of the sample. It consisted of 50 questions. The subjects were asked to select one of the two choices given, which applied to them by choosing either 'A' or 'B'. The scoring was done referring to the scoring key provided by the author. The reliability and validity scores are 0.61 and 0.87 respectively.

Procedure

The Case Study Schedule, Stress Inventory and Myers Briggs Type Indicator were given to the selected college teachers and collected after they have completed answering them.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Level of Stress of the Sample N=300

Level of Stress	Male (N=93)		Female (207)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Very high 20 and above	3	3	10	5
High 10-19	30	32	77	37
Moderate 5-9	33	35	72	35
Low 1-4	27	29	46	22

Percentages are rounded off

It is evident from Table 1 that nearly 35% of the sample had moderate to high stress levels. The teachers might have occupational stress due to the expanding enrollment in universities without a proportional increase in teacher resources and the fact that all promotions for university teachers are determined based on not only teaching but also the outcome of scientific research. Some teachers would find it difficult to balance their time for teaching and research. The pressures of publishing as many research articles as possible, obtaining official permission for attending conferences/ seminars/ workshops/orientation/refresher courses and organizing the same in their institutions can all play havoc on the well-being of some teachers who have not mastered the art of time management and personal management. Fortunately, very small percentage of the

sample reported of very high stress. It means that the sample may not be facing many issues regarding their teaching, in their personal lives and in their institutions.

It can also be noted from Table 1 that the percentage of female sample experiencing moderate to high stress is slightly higher than that of the male sample. The female teachers are bound to face both the occupational stressors as well as the stressors at home. Indian society, especially South Indian society is yet to regard women as equal to men. Working women in general have to play the dual roles of career women and of home makers.

Table 2: Mean Stress and Standard Deviation of the Sample

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Female	207	9.5266	6.97555
Male	93	7.8172	5.31394
Total	300	8.9967	6.54519

It could be noted that, on the whole the sample had a mean stress of 8.9967. According to the norms, the group as a whole has moderate stress. It is evident from Table 2 that the mean stress (9.5266) of female is higher than that of the male (7.8172). This difference in stress could be attributed to the fact that, though male and female teachers face similar stressors at work, the scenario at personal front would be different. Female teachers might have the additional burden of managing their homes, children, parents etc.

Table 3: Personality Types of the Sample N=300

Sl.No.	Personality Type	Male (N=93)		Female (N=207)	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	INTJ	4	4	6	3
2	INFP	2	2	2	1
3	INTP	4	4	7	3
4	ENFP	1	1	3	1
5	ENTP	4	4	3	1
6	ENFJ	2	2	11	5
7	ENTJ	5	5	8	4
8	ISTJ	9	10	22	11
9	ISFJ	6	6	24	12
10	ISTP	3	3	7	3
11	ISFP	8	9	6	3
12	ESTP	2	2	12	6
13	ESFP	5	5	16	8
14	ESTJ	17	18	36	17
15	ESFJ	19	20	37	18
16	INFJ	2	2	7	3

Percentages are rounded off

I-Introversion, E-Extraversion, S-Sensing, I-Intuition, T-Thinking, F-Feeling, P-Perceiving, J-Judging

It could be noted from Table 3 that among men and women college teachers, ESFJ, Extraversion-Sensing-Feeling-Judging and ESTJ, Extraversion-Sensing-Thinking-Judging types are the most preferred. The next preferred types are ISFJ, Introversion-Sensing-Feeling-Judging and ISTJ, Introversion-Sensing-Thinking-Judging. It can be seen that females (12%) outnumber males (6%) in ISFJ type. As expected, women have more feeling component than men. The least preferred personality types are ENFP, Extraversion-Intuition-Feeling-Perceiving and INFP, Introversion-Intuition-Feeling-Perceiving. This shows that, the sample on the whole may not be relying on their intuitions. As college teachers

who are into teaching and research, they might value facts and scientific proofs more rather than on their gut feelings.

Table 4: Anova

		SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Personality	Between Groups	.421	1	.421	.025	.874
	Within Groups	5006.25	298	16.799		
	Total	5006.67	299			
Stress	Between Groups	187.50	1	187.50	4.427	.036**
	Within Groups	12621.50	298	42.35		
	Total	12808.997	299			

**Significant at .05 level

For personality types, the significance value of .874 is more than .05 and the difference between and within the groups is not statistically significant. It means that, overall, the personality types of male and female of the sample do not vary much.

In terms of stress, the significance value of .036 is less than .05 and the difference between and within the groups is statistically significant. It could be interpreted that, the stress levels of male and female in the sample vary significantly.

Table 5: Correlation of Stress and Personality of the Sample

		Stress	Personality
Stress	Pearson Correlation	1	-.046
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.427
	N	300	300
Personality	Pearson Correlation	-.046	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.427	
	N	300	300

It could be noted from Table 5 that the Pearson Correlation value is -.046 which is less than 1. It means that, the correlation is not statistically significant. Nevertheless, a negative value shows that when stress increases, certain aspects of personality have upward trend and vice versa. The Sig. (2 tailed) value is .427 which is more than .05. This means the correlation value is not statistically significant.

From the correlation values, it could be interpreted that the stress levels and personality types of the sample are independent of each other. It could be inferred that, for the present sample of college teachers, the personality types are fairly stable, not depending on their stress levels. This supports the fact that personality traits are more enduring, independent of the situational stressors.

Empirical findings

The sample on the whole had moderate stress level. Female teachers (M=9.5266) had slightly higher stress than male teachers (M=7.8172). There was a statistically significant difference in the level of stress among male and female teachers. Among female and male teachers, ESFJ (Extraversion-Sensing-Feeling-Judging) and ESTJ (Extraversion-Sensing-Thinking-Judging) were the most preferred personality types. The least preferred personality types were ENFP (Extraversion-Intuition-Feeling-Perceiving) and INFP (Introversion-Intuition-Feeling-Perception). There was no

significant difference in the personality types among female and male teachers. The Pearson correlation value between the stress and personality of the sample is -.046 and sig. (2 tailed) 0.427. Both the values are not statistically significant.

Limitations of the study

The present study, 'Stress and Personality of College Teachers' was conducted only in college teachers in six institutions. Hence, the results are applicable only to this population and cannot be generalized.

Recommendations and further research

Psychologists and Counselors can be appointed in colleges to help the teachers overcome stress. The Orientation Courses for College and University teachers could include Self-assessment and Self-awareness using Psychometric Tests and Stress Management Programmes could be tailor-made for groups of participants. Stress Inoculation Techniques could be employed as a preventive measure. Many more variables employing larger sample can be selected for further research.

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