



The correlation between teacher's personality and level of student's anxiety

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Abstract

School is one of the most important social-educational institutions and the main pillar of formal education. The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between teachers' personality and anxiety level of female students in Isar Elementary School, District 12, Tehran. The research method was descriptive-correlational. The population of this study included all-female teachers ($N = 6$) and all-female students ($N = 180$). Tehran during 2018–2019. 60 students answered the Spence Children Anxiety Scale and all teachers answered the Neo personality inventory through a simple random sampling method. Spss16 software was used for data analysis. The correlation test results indicated a correlation between teachers' personality traits and students' anxiety, personality traits can predict anxiety. Furthermore, there was a significant inverse relationship between student agreeableness and anxiety. The paper concluded that as the level of conscientiousness increases, the students' anxiety decreases.

Keywords: Personality traits, anxiety, teachers, female students, correlation.

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1. Introduction

School is one of the most important social-educational institutions and the main pillar of education being established and managed for teaching students appropriately in religious, moral, scientific, educational, social dimensions, discovering talents, and guiding students' balanced spiritual and physical growth based on the goals approved in educational courses and the rules and regulations of the Ministry of Education (Dehkordi et al., 2012) Education is an important system and the first thing coming to the human mind by hearing the word education is a teacher. A teacher is a trustworthy leader in the process of education and is the most effective element in realising the missions of the education system (Ardakani et al., 2018) Undoubtedly, personality traits are one of the main and fundamental topics in psychology. Since these traits form the basis of individuals' behavioural system, dealing with this category can clarify certain aspects of individuals' performance in various fields. (Hadian & Taheri, 2015) Studying personality is critical both in terms of satisfying the sense of curiosity and social interactions. Thus, it should be noted that establishing inefficient social relationships leads to stress, anxiety, and depression among adolescents. Stress refers to the stressful relationship between the person and the environment and when he is unable to deal with this situation, he will suffer from psychological and physical problems. Anxiety is another factor influencing the mental health of adolescents requiring special attention and study. Anxiety is an unpleasant and inappropriate feeling of fear of the future, which is often associated with physiological symptoms (Hadian & Taheri 2015). Personality is derived from the Latin word *persona* referring to the mask worn by actors in the play. The five-factor personality model (neuroticism, extroversion, introversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) being associated with a wide range of behaviors indicated a relationship between these dimensions of personality and job performance. These five factors can predict individual differences, mental health, and job performance. (Hadian & Taheri 2015)

Anxiety was derived from the word 'anxietas', which means restlessness and refers to a physical and psychological sensitivity in response to a threat whether real or imaginary threat by the organism. In fact, anxiety refers to a set of symptoms that results from human incomplete compatibility with stresses in life. The importance of adolescence becomes clearer when their health is regarded as the foundation of society health. Thus, it should be noted that inefficient social relationships lead to stress, anxiety, and depression among adolescents preventing the formation of a healthy identity as well as the flourishing of their talents and intellectual–emotional ability. Anxiety and stress have a critical relationship with student learning. In addition, anxiety and stress are highly related to the process of socialisation, social communication, and academic achievement (Hadian & Taheri 2015). In a study by Hadian and Taheri (2014) entitled 'The effect of teachers' personality traits on anxiety, stress, and depression among female students in Shiraz', the results indicated a significant relationship between personality traits and students' anxiety. In a study conducted by Ardakani and Okhot (2018) entitled 'The role of teachers' psychological ability on students' anxiety in Ardakan', the results indicated a significant negative relationship between teachers' psychological ability and students' academic anxiety at 99% confidence level and a correlation coefficient of -0.612 . In a study by Jamaluyi et al. (2013) entitled 'The relationship between the five-factor personality model and negative emotion with work-family conflict among teachers', the results revealed a significant positive relationship between neuroticism and work-family conflict based on time, pressure, and behaviour, while a significant negative relationship between extraversion and work-family conflict based on time, pressure, and behaviour. There was no significant relationship between openness to experience – agreeableness and conscience with work-family conflict. In a study by Farahani et al. (2011) entitled 'The relationship between personality dimensions and job burnout of male physical education

teachers in Zanjan (2011)', the results indicated a significant relationship between emotional burnout and openness to experience ($p = 0.001$) and in other cases no significant relationship was observed. ($p \geq 0 / 5$) In a study by Haji Hasani & Kaveh (2016) entitled 'Determining the share of organisational support goal orientation and five major personality factors in predicting the job engagement of female teachers in Shahrekord', the results indicated that some personality components such as (openness to experience and neuroticism) and components of goal orientation (increased learning and performance), as well as perceived organisational support in the final model can predict job engagement. In addition, in a study by Bakhshayesh (2012) entitled "The relationship between classroom management styles and personality traits of elementary school teachers in Yazd", the results revealed that most of the teachers have an interactive management style. Data analysis indicated a relationship between teachers' personality traits and their management style. In a study by Ghorbani and Sadoughi (2015) entitled 'The relationship between teachers' personality traits and student happiness', the results showed that among the independent variables, the components of extraversion and neuroticism can predict students' happiness. Based on the above-mentioned points, dealing with a small part of education being highly related to students' mental health has an important role that should be considered by the professors and students of psychology and education. The current world is a ladder for the increasing knowledge and science in our beloved country.

1.1. Aim of the study

Since students establish a clear future with mental and social health, thus based on the above-mentioned points, this study aims to discover if there is a relationship and correlation between teachers' personality type and its effects on students' anxiety?

2. Methods

This study used an *ex post facto* method in terms of foundation and implementation method. All of the students in Isar Elementary School, District 12, Tehran (fourth, fifth and sixth academic years) formed the population of this study. In this study, 60 female students were selected as a sample using the best sampling method (simple random sampling) to measure anxiety and six teachers were selected to measure teachers' personality. It should be noted that all six teachers of the school were selected for assessment due to the low population of teachers and 10 students were randomly considered from each class (20 students for each grade). In order to analyse the data of this study, SPSS16 software and descriptive statistics methods (screening, frequency, median, mode, mean, etc.) and inferential statistical methods (Pearson test and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test) were used. NEO personality inventory: This questionnaire was developed by McCrae and Costa (1992) for the normal population and has been extensively used in research and clinical studies during the past decade. The reported alpha coefficient was 0.74–0.89 with a mean of 0.81. However, in an estimation by Benchard et al. (1999), this coefficient was reported to be 0.85 in neuroticism, 0.72 in extroversion, 0.68 in openness, 0.69 in agreeableness, and 0.69 in conscientiousness (Fathi Ashtiani, 2010). Regarding the validity of the short form Costa and McCrae (1992), Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.68 for openness and 0.86 for neuroticism. In terms of the validity of this questionnaire and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Questionnaire- Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory – California revised Inventory – Guilford - Zuckerman Temperament Scale – List of traits and interpersonal traits scale, a high relationship was reported (Fathi Ashtiani, 2010). Spence Children's Anxiety Scale: This scale includes 45 items, 38 of which are scored and six of which, as positive questions, are not calculated. In addition, this test has an open-ended question being answered to by children descriptively and it is developed for the ages of 8 to 15 years. The Children's Anxiety Scale was designed by Spence (1997) for evaluating children's

anxiety. This questionnaire has 45 questions and six domains. The four-option Likert scale is used with questions such as (I'm worried about everything) to evaluate children's anxiety.

3. Findings

Table 1. The descriptive indicators of personality in the study

Personality components	Mean	Median	Standard deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score
Neuroticism	21/1667	20/5	7/626	34	13
Extroversion	35/50	35/50	3/619	41	30
Openness	26/83	27	3/06	31	23
agreeableness	32/33	32	4/546	40	27
Conscientiousness	38/33	36	5/88	46	31

As indicated in Table 1, the mean and median scores are almost equal in all dimensions of personality. It can be concluded that the distribution of personality traits is almost normal

Table 2. The descriptive indicators of anxiety in the study

Grades	Mean	Median	Deviation	Mode	Maximum score	Minimum score
Sixth A	44/50	41/50	2/721	31	74	5
Sixth B	34/30	33	1/484	32	53	12
Fifth A	36/80	32/50	1/580	20	65	20
Fifth B	42/90	41/50	11/425	34	64	28
Fourth A	45/70	37/50	2/479	17	96	17
Fourth B	41/50	41/50	1/241	31	61	23

Table 3. The intensity of anxiety according to the questionnaire

Intensity value	Lower limit	Average limit	Upper limit
	0-44	44-88	More than 88

Based on Table 3, the level of anxiety among the students of Isar School in District 12 is at the lower limit (0-44).

Table 4. Normality test

Variables	Sig
Personality	0/200
Anxiety	0/200

Based on Table 4, the significance level of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test for the scores of personality and anxiety is more than 0.05 (sig. 0.200) indicating that the scores are normal at 95% confidence.

Table 5. The correlation coefficient between neuroticism and anxiety

Neuroticism	Correlation coefficient	0/50
	Significance	0/30

Based on Table 5, the correlation coefficient between neuroticism and anxiety is 0.50 indicating a linear direct relationship between these two variables. In addition, the significance coefficient for these two variables is 0.30 indicating no significant relationship between the two factors.

Table 6. The correlation coefficient between extroversion and anxiety

Extroversion	Correlation coefficient	0/61–
	Significance	0/19

Based on Table 6, the correlation coefficient between extroversion and anxiety is –0.61 indicating a linear inverse relationship between these two variables. In addition, the significance coefficient for these two variables is 0.19 indicating no significant relationship between the two factors.

Table 7. The correlation coefficient between openness and anxiety

Openness personality trait	Correlation coefficient	0/062–
	Significance	0/90

Based on Table 7, the correlation coefficient between openness and anxiety is –0.062 indicating a very low linear relationship between openness and anxiety very low while they are inversely related to each other. In addition, the significance of these two variables is 0.90 indicating no significant relationship between these two variables.

Table 8. The correlation coefficient between agreeableness and anxiety

Agreeableness	Correlation coefficient	0/80–
	Significance	0/054

Based on Table 8, the correlation coefficient between agreeableness and anxiety is –0.80 indicating a high linear relationship between agreeableness and they are inversely related. In addition, there is a significant relationship between agreeableness and anxiety.

Table 9. The correlation coefficient between conscientiousness and anxiety

Conscientiousness	Correlation coefficient	0/74–
	Significance	0/090

Based on Table 9, the correlation coefficient between conscientiousness and anxiety variables is –0.74 indicating a linear inverse relationship between the two variables. In addition, the significant

coefficient between conscientiousness and anxiety variables equals 0.90 indicating no significant relationship between these two variables.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The correlation test was used for studying the research hypotheses. The results indicated a linear inverse relationship between teachers' personality traits and students' anxiety. According to the study by Hadian and Taheri (2014) entitled 'The effect of teachers' personality traits on anxiety, stress, and depression of female students in Shiraz', the results showed the correlation coefficient of -0.028 and the significance of 0.04 . The results indicated a significant inverse relationship between personality traits and students' anxiety. Given the lack of research literature in this regard, the researcher explained the data. According to the obtained data, teachers' personality traits can certainly affect the level of students' anxiety in their class. It can be claimed that if the social relationships between the teacher and student are healthy and dynamic and the teacher treats students with high openness and agreeableness, better interaction will occur and anxiety is observed less in students. Pearson correlation was used for investigating the first hypothesis. The results of Pearson's correlation method indicated a positive correlation coefficient and a direct relationship between teachers' neuroticism and students' anxiety. Due to the lack of literature, it can be explained that no relationship exists between the level of anxiety and its relationship with this personality trait in the statistical population. Pearson correlation was used for investigating the second hypothesis. The results of Pearson correlation method indicated a linear inverse relationship and a negative correlation coefficient between teachers' extroversion and students' anxiety. In addition, there is no significant relationship between teachers' extraversion and students' anxiety. Based on the study by Hadian and Taheri (2014) entitled 'The effect of teachers' personality traits on anxiety, stress, and depression of female students in Shiraz', there is a linear inverse relationship between these two variables. It can be concluded that the individuals having extroversion always use creative techniques for teaching and interacting with their students. Such individuals attempt to be more social and it can be concluded that their students are raised with less anxiety. Pearson correlation was used for investigating the third hypothesis. The results of Pearson correlation method indicated a negative inverse correlation coefficient between teachers' openness and students' anxiety. Furthermore, there is no significant relationship between teachers' personality traits and students' anxiety. Due to the study by Hadian and Taheri (2014), the inverse relationship was also reported. According to these researchers, the teachers with the personality traits of openness typically welcome new methods and new approaches for thinking about problems. Furthermore, they pay attention to internal emotional experiences and independent judgment and less anxiety is observed among their students. Pearson correlation was used for investigating the fourth hypothesis. The results of the Pearson correlation method indicated a negative inverse correlation coefficient between teachers' agreeableness and students' anxiety. There is also a significant relationship between teachers' agreeableness and students' anxiety.

Considering the study by Hadian and Taheri (2014), no significant relationship was reported between the two variables. It can be concluded that based on the statistical population, there may be some differences between personality traits and anxiety in different populations. Pearson correlation was used to investigate the fifth hypothesis. The results of the Pearson correlation method indicated a negative inverse correlation coefficient between teachers' conscientiousness and students' anxiety. In addition, there is no significant relationship between teachers' conscientiousness and students' anxiety. Due to the study by Hadian and Taheri (2014), a significant relationship was reported

between the two variables. Thus, it can be concluded that as the level of conscientiousness increases, the students' anxiety decreases.

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