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Gender Based Analysis of Myers-Briggs Personality Profiles and Stress Coping Styles of Academic Managers Occupational Stress

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Abstract

Inventory-revised (OSI-R) to measure coping styles among academic managers. In order to select representative sample from the population, simple random sampling technique was used. Total sample size was 120. Data was collected through registered mail and personal visits to the offices of principals. For data analysis; both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. For data analysis percentages, mean, standard deviation and t-test were used. Data analysis revealed that significant differences were found in responses of male and female academic managers regarding personality type and coping styles.

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Introduction

Gender is referred as a social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable.

Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Personality concerns the most important, most noticeable parts of an individual's psychological life. Personality concerns whether a person is happy or sad, energetic or apathetic, smart or dull. Personality is made up of the characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors that make a person unique. It arises from within the

individual and remains fairly consistent throughout life. Personality is the particular combination of emotional, attitudinal, and behavioral response patterns of an individual.

Coping has been defined in psychological terms as constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person. Stereotypes between male and female population regarding personality are plentiful, to say the least; females are usually seen as quiet, sensible, logical and deadline-minded, while males are pictured as loud, daydreaming, emotional and free-spirited. Such stereotypes can be hard to displace, simply because there are few ways to effectively research the subject. One method of examining differences in personality between genders is the Myers-Briggs Type indicator, or MBTI. The test, known as the standard for evaluating personality types, determines a user's personality based on four different categories. By analyzing the percentage of males and

females who belong to each category, a general sense of each gender's personality can be attained.

In Pakistan, gender issues are a matter of comparatively serious and sensitive concern. Yet, unfortunately, much significant work is yet to be done in this field. A considerable difference can be seen in the personality pattern, and area of responsibilities and work role expectations among male and female academic managers. The aim of the present study is to analyze the MBTI personality profile and coping styles of academic managers in higher education institutions.

Literature Review

Term of personality has been and is still debated. Global concept that includes all physical, mental, emotional and social characteristics that make people unique are called personality. (Gladding, 2001) (Darst, 1998) defined personality as it often includes attitudes, skills, physique, interests, emotional, social qualities, and intelligence. According to (Wallace and Goldstein 1994), most psychologists agree that personality is "expressed through behavior" and "that the goal of personality theory and research is the understanding and prediction of behavior." "Personality is the entire mental organization of a human being at any stage of his development. It embraces every phase of human character: intellect, temperament, skill, morality, and every attitude that has been built up in the course of one's life." (Warren & Carmichael, 1930). According to (Robbins, Judge & Sanghi, 2008) The Myers-Briggs type indicator (MBTI) is a personality test that taps four characteristics and classifies people into 1 of 16 personality types. The Myers-Briggs type indicator (MBTI) is the most widely used personality assessment instrument in the world. It is a personality test that asks people how they usually feel or act in particular situations. On the basis of their answers, individuals are classified as extraverted or introverted (E or I), sensing or intuitive (S or N), thinking or feeling (T or F), and judging or perceiving (J or P). These terms are defined as follows.

- 1) **Extroverted/Introverted:** Extroverts are sociable, outgoing and assertive

while introverted individuals are quiet and shy.

- 2) **Sensing/Intuitive:** Sensing types are practical and prefer routine and order. Intuitive relies on unconscious processes and look at the big picture.
- 3) **Thinking/Feeling:** Thinking types use reason and logic to handle problems. Feeling types rely on their personal values and emotions.
- 4) **Judging /Perceiving:** Judging types prefer their world to be ordered and structured. Perceiving types are flexible and spontaneous.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is used to measure personality. The MBTI is a questionnaire that measures four personality dimensions based on Jungian typology: introversion-extroversion, sensation-intuition, thinking-feeling, and judging-perceiving. Extroverts are described as focused on and energized by people and the world outside them, whereas introverts are focused on and energized by their inner world, of ideas, concepts, and feelings (Gailbreath, Wagner, Moffett, & Hein, 1997). Coping is thus expending conscious effort to solve personal and interpersonal problems, and seeking to master, minimize or tolerate stress or conflict. (Carver, C. S.; Connor-Smith, J. 2010). Psychological coping mechanisms are commonly termed coping strategies or coping skills. The term coping generally refers to adaptive or constructive coping strategies, i.e., the strategies reduce stress levels. Coping responses are partly controlled by personality (habitual traits), but also partly by the social context, particularly the nature of the stressful environment.

There is no exact definition of coping (Dewe, 2000). According to (Matheny, 1986) coping is "any effort, healthy or unhealthy, conscious or unconscious, to prevent, eliminate, or weaken stressors, or to tolerate their effects in the least hurtful manner". The effects of occupational stress are encountered by using physical and psychological resources. Coping is essential for relieving the stress which is developed due to stressful events. Coping maintains the individual's health and well-being (Endler & Parker, 1990).

It has been noted that there are considerable male-female mean differences on the T-F scale (Harvey & Greenberg, 1996). As of 1991, two-thirds of men preferred Thinking, and more than six in ten women preferred the Feeling pole of the T-F scale while slightly more women preferred Sensing (71%) and Judging (61%) as compared to men (64% and 55%, respectively) (Hammer & Mitchell, 1996). The rationale for the differential scoring system is that social desirability issues and cultural pressures influence women even if they have a clear preference for Thinking in their behavior and attitudes (Myers & McCaulley, 1985)

MBTI explores the naturally occurring differences. This view is also supported by (Pearman, Roger, Sarah & Albritton, 1997) in their study in which they explored that the MBTI focuses on normal populations and emphasizes the value of naturally occurring differences. (Keirsey & Bates, 1984) describe people "who have the combination of sensing and perceiving (SPs) as disliking routine, enjoying risk taking, and having a strong play ethic. People with this temperament usually do not fit well into a traditional classroom setting and are usually less successful in school. People who have an SJ (sensing and judging) are almost total opposites of the SPs. They love rules, regulations, duty, and honor and they usually do very well in traditional school settings. People with the NT (intuitive and thinking) combination are described as natural-born scientists; they do well in the fields of science, mathematics, philosophy, architecture, and engineering. People in the last temperament type, NF (intuitive and feeling), are on a never-ending search of self. However, they prefer subjects that deal with people, such as the humanities and social sciences, particularly psychology. NTs and NFs are over-represented among college professors, except in the more applied disciplines of business and education." (Antoniou, A.-S., Polychroni, F., Vlachakis, A.-N. 2006) found that females have different ways of dealing and interpreting with problems on job while (Grundy, 2000) found negative association between extraversion and burnout. Type-A behavior, low self-esteem, avoidant coping style, and External locus of control has been positively related to burnout.

Women carry on family responsibilities; they are more often confronted with role conflicts than men. Although both men and women practice the equivalent stressor but difference in strain is seen may be because women have better adaptive strategies. (Milkie & Peltola, 1999). Coping strategies can be categorized as problem-focused or emotion-focused strategies. Problem-focused strategies aim to change the stressful situation or to solve the problem. While to adjust the emotions that are aroused by it are aimed by emotion-focused coping strategies. Problem-focused strategies is considered more effective in use as it intends to eliminate the stressor rather than emotion-focused coping strategies because it simply modifying the negative effects of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Endler & Parker, 1990). Researches indicate that emotion-focused coping strategies are commonly used by women (Muhonen & Torkelson, 2001; Tamres, Janicki & Helgeson, 2002), whereas men prefer to use problem-focused strategies (Hurst & Hurst, 1997).

(Decker & Borgen, 1993) found no significant relationship of gender with coping resources. Results of a study conducted by (Torkelson & Muhonen, 2003) showed that perceived stress is more related to the organizational level than gender among men and women of equivalent positions and jobs. Similarly conflicting findings are found in studies examining gender differences in coping strategies (Greenglass, 1995).

(Niles and Anderson, 1993) found that males and females scores different on the coping styles. They reported that "female clients reported average scores for coping; men reported lower score to coping scores." Earlier researches relating to coping have made it difficult to depict conclusions regarding the relationship between genders and coping (Torkelson & Muhonen, 2003). However, (Greenglass, 2002) points out few gender differences in coping are found when education, occupation, and position in the organization are controlled.

(Greenglass et al, 1998) suggested that women utilize support from others to cope with stress, while men do not. External and internal coping

resources assist the individual to overcome stressful events (Callan, 1993). Gender differences in coping strategies are the ways in which men and women differ in managing psychological stress. There is evidence that males often develop stress due to their careers, whereas females often encounter stress due to issues in interpersonal relationships. (Davis, M.C.; Matthews, K.A.; Twamley, E.W. 1999). Early studies indicated that "there were gender differences in the sources of stressors, but gender differences in coping were relatively small after controlling for the source of stressors"; (Billings, Andrew G.; Moos, Rudolf H. 1981). Study conducted by (Ball et al., 2002; Krebs et al. 1998) found that certain personality traits associated with specific coping styles. A number of studies have shown there are associations between other personality traits (e.g. optimism and pessimism) and coping styles (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992; Mosher, Prelow, Chen, & Yackel, 2006).

(Krebs et al., 1998) found that Individuals with low self-directedness may be less likely to engage in active coping styles such as problem-focused and emotion-focused coping as this requires higher cognitive functioning (Matsudaira & Kitamura, 2006). MBTI is a personality indicator, not a personality test (Myers & McCaulley, 1985); measures type, preferences, not abilities; and highlights strengths, not weaknesses (Myers & McCaulley, 1985; Myers & Myers, 1995).

Although a large amount of literature has analyzed the associations between personality and psychological distress and coping styles and psychological distress, less attention has been focused on the associations between personality and coping styles themselves. There is lack of uniformity of findings with regard to gender differences because of personality and coping styles. The amount of research systematically investigating the relationships of gender with personality and coping styles in the context of academic managers of higher education level have been ignored in the literature to date. There exists, therefore, a need to investigate how gender differences are related to personality and stress coping styles of academic managers.

Methodology

All the Public sector degree colleges of Punjab were taken as population of the present study. In order to select representative sample from the population, random sampling technique was used. The sample size was 120 heads of degree colleges. 60 male and 60 female heads of degree colleges were selected as a sample.

Two instruments were used to collect the data, for measuring the stress of the subjects in work place, the Occupational Stress Inventory – Revised (OSI-R) developed by (Osipow, 1998) was used. Another instrument for measuring the personality type, the MBTI inventory was used. Which was developed by Isabel Briggs Myers and Katherine Briggs and contains four separate indices. To explore the phenomenon, descriptive research design was used. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS-X) software was used to analyze the data in this study. Such as mean, standard deviation, percentages and t-test were used.

Discussion

(Table 1) compares personality factors among academic managers. This table highlights the main domains of personality characteristics among academic managers that are ESTJ (extroversion, sensing, thinking, judging). Scores indicate that female academic managers are less extroverted, less sensing and less thinking than their male counterparts. This study is supported by the study of (Harvey & Greenberg, 1996). which noted that there are considerable male-female mean differences on the T-F scale.

(Table 2) indicates that 't' value (1.082) is significant at 0.05 level of significance, So the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between male and female academic managers' personality type is rejected and it is concluded that there is difference between male and female academic managers' personality type. Male academic managers have higher mean score (52.23) than female academic managers (50.82) personality type questionnaire. The discussion on the influence of gender on academic manager' personality types indicates that male academic managers

have slightly higher mean score (52.23) to the female managers (50.82) on personality type questionnaire. So it is evident from the study that female academic managers and male academic managers have difference in personality types. This difference was shown on extraversion and sensing domains otherwise dominating personality among academic managers was found as (ESTJ). While some other studies have recognized a slightly higher percentage of Es in population of female (Myers-Briggs & Mary McCaulley, 1985).

Another study depicted that women don't score higher on the N scale (intuition) as "women's intuition" is a characteristic frequently argued in leadership and management literature (Ron Schultz, 1994). Comparative data of students at National Defense University for female Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) shows that male are more introverted, more thinking, more judging and more sensing, than their female counterparts (Mike McGee, 1996), while this study indicated that male academic managers are more extroverted, more sensing and more thinking than their female counterparts. (Table 3) indicates that 't' value (1.406) is significant at 0.05 level of significance, So the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between male and female academic managers' personal resources (coping styles) is rejected and it is concluded that there is difference between male and female academic managers' personal resources (coping styles). Male academic managers have higher mean score (92.07) than female academic managers (88.03) to personal resources questionnaire

(Niles and Anderson, 1993) also found that males and females scores different on the coping styles. This study also congruent with the study of (Antoniou, A.-S., Polychroni, F., Vlachakis, A.-N. 2006) that females have different ways of dealing and interpreting with problems on job. While (Decker & Borgen, 1993) found no significant gender based difference with coping resources.

Recommendations

Some limitations of this study need to be noted. One limitation is that the present study confined to gender based analysis of personality profile

and stress coping styles of academic managers, further research should be extended to wider jurisdiction. The results need to be interpreted with caution as a number of factors could be involved in influencing personality and stress coping styles. Future research could also analyze whether similar associations are found between personality and coping style

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Gender based analysis of personality type in academic managers

Table 1: Personality type in academic managers

	Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3		Factor 4		Total
	E	I	S	N	T	F	J	P	
Male	423	177	882	318	860	340	969	231	4200
%age	10%	4%	21%	7.5%	20%	8%	23%	6%	100%
Female	396	204	850	350	834	366	969	231	4200
%age	9%	5%	20%	8%	19.8%	8.7%	23%	6%	100%

Table 2: Difference between male and female academic manager’s personality types

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.
Male	60	52.23	8.265	1.082	106	.282
Female	60	50.82	5.870			

There is no significant gender based difference regarding personality type among academic managers

Table 3: Difference between male and female academic managers’ personal resources (coping styles)

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.
Male	60	92.07	17.562	1.406	118	.162
Female	60	88.03	13.624			

There is no significant gender based difference regarding personal resources (coping styles) in the academic managers