

PERSONALITY TRAIT AND ACADEMIC HARDINESS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN MANDALAY EDUCATION COLLEGE

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the personality trait and academic hardiness of pre-service teachers in Mandalay Education College. In this study, a total of 320 participants of the student teachers from Mandalay Education College (160 males and 160 females) were selected by using random sampling technique. To study the personality trait and academic hardiness of the student teachers, two instruments were used. The EPQR- A extraversion scale was modified from (Eysenck, Eysenck & Barrett, 1985). Academic hardiness scale consists of the 19 items devised by Benishek and Lopez (2001). The collected data was analyzed by using descriptive statistic and independent sample *t* test. The findings also showed that academic hardiness scale of female students was higher than that of male students. There was significant difference in academic hardiness by gender. By grade, the result for academic hardiness scale of first year students was higher than that of second year students. The result of the study indicated that extraversion scale of art students was higher than that of science students. And also academic hardiness scale of art students was higher than that of science students. There were significant differences in extraversion scale and hardiness scale of student teachers by subject stream. According to the results, there was a significant positive relationship between extroversion and hardiness of student teachers from Mandalay Education Colleges. This means that the student teachers who are high in extroversion are also high in hardiness accordingly. It is hoped that finding presented in this study will provide some insight in the study of personality trait and academic hardiness of student teachers in the future.

Keywords: Personality, Extraversion, Hardiness, Academic hardiness

Introduction

Improving the quality of education and investment on educational and human resources are regarded as effective factors paving the way for a country's pervasive development. Hence, improvement of students' academic achievement is also among the basic goals of educational planning. And also, academic achievement hardiness is provided the academic hardiness. It's through academic achievement students can fully actualize their talents and capabilities in line with educational goals. In fact, academic achievement is considered as one important criteria of educational quality.

On other hand, learners are different personality characteristics according to family backgrounds, age and gender, etc. these differences can help educators recognize their students' individual differences. Educators have always asked whether people's personality characteristics can help them attain higher academic hardiness or people's personality characteristics can help them attain lower academic hardiness. The continuity of the effect of childhood personality on achievement criteria is worthy of attention, because school adjustment and academic performance are believed to have cumulative effects in the course of time (Caspi et al., 2005).

Big five personality characteristics are: Neuroticism: emotional stability or neuroticism is the most important aspect of personality comparison; Neuroticism reflects individual differences in one's disposition towards constructing, perceiving and feeling realities in threatening, disturbing or problematic ways. Extroversion: describes the intensity and quality of an

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individual's relationship to the environment; Extroverted people seek connection with the environment and are warm, energetic, and sociable (Klinkozs et al., 2006).

Aims of the Study

The main aim of the study is to investigate personality trait and academic hardiness of pre-service teachers in Mandalay Education College.

Definitions of Key Terms

Personality: The combination of characteristics or qualities that form an individual's distinctive character (English oxford dictionary).

Extraversion (Extroversion): An orientation of one's interest and energies toward the outer world of people and things rather than the inner world of subjective experience (APA Dictionary of Psychology).

Hardiness: Hardiness is a personality style, which is characterized by a sense of commitment, control and perception of problems as challenges. (Santrock, 2006)

Hardiness: An ability to adapt easily to unexpected changes combined with a sense of purpose in daily life and of personal control over what occurs in one's life. Hardiness dampens the effects of stressful situation through information gathering, decisive actions, and learning from the experience (APA Dictionary of Psychology).

Academic hardiness refers to the resilience of students to academic failure: hardy students display a willingness to engage in challenging academic work, commit to academic activities and pursuits, and perceive they have control over their academic performance and outcomes (Benishek & Lopez, 2001; Maddi, Harvey, Kho Shaba, Fazel, & Resurreccion, 2009).

Review of Related Literature

Psychologically speaking, personality is all that a person is. It is the totality of one's behavior towards oneself as well as others. It includes everything about the person, his physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual make-up. It is all that a person has about him.

So definitely, the term personality signifies something deeper than more appearance of outward behavior. How should it be given a proper definition is a difficult problem. Actually subjective nature does not allow to reach to a clear-cut, well agreed definition. That is why, it has been defined by many psychologists in so many ways according to their own point of view.

First, J.B. Watson (1930) who is the famous behaviorist. He defined, personality is the sum of activities that can be discovered by actual observations over a long enough period of time to give reliable information (1930). Thus, Watson give emphasis on the behavior of an individual and consider personality as nothing but the useful effect one makes upon the person coming in his close contact.

Cattell (1950:2-3) has given the definition of personality: "Personality is that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation. The goal of psychological research in personality is thus to establish laws about what different people will do in all kinds of social and general environmental situation. Personality is concerned with all the behaviors of the individual, both overt and under the skin."

Most definitions emphasize on the role of individual characteristics-traits influencing their behaviour.

The term personality is used in a number of ways including the apparent features of a person. However, psychologists use it to refer to the characteristic pattern of thinking, feeling and acting. By characteristic pattern we mean the consistent and distinctive ways our ideas, feelings and actions are organized. When people talk about personality people usually refer to the totality or whole of the person. Thus, the enduring pattern expressed by the person in various situations is the hall mark of personality.

Interestingly the theories of personality go beyond the literal meaning of “personality” which stands for large masks used by actors in ancient Greek drama. Contrary to this the personality theorists view ‘personality’ as the essence of the person. It is a person’s “true” inner nature. The unique impression that a person makes on others is equally important in understanding personality. However the concept of personality has been defined by psychologists in many ways and it is the theoretical perspective or position which directs our attention to particular aspects of personality.

Understanding personality has proved to be a difficult and challenging task. It’s so complex that no single theory is able to cover the total personality. The different theories approach the structure and functioning of personality from different positions. There are many theories of personality each provides different answers about the way they treat the issues about personality functioning. In the present lesson you will learn about four major theoretical perspectives of personality. They include psychoanalytic, trait, humanistic and social-cognitive perspectives.

According to Bandura, models have great influence on personality development of children and formed their own personality through observation and imitate their model's behavior. He believed that a variety of personal factors control human's behavior. Self efficacy, i.e. an individual's confidence in the ability to perform certain behavior would lead to favorable outcome. Thus, when self-efficacy is perceived as high, the person would feel confident that he can perform the response necessary to gain favorable outcome. Perception of low efficacy could influence the morale of the actor to perform the response.

Walter Michell, from Colombia University, is an advocate of Bandura's social learning theory. However, he asserted that people behave differently in different situations. For example, a person is an introvert in school, but might be an extrovert at home. Because of this, Mitchell (1990) maintains that human's behavior is characterized more by situational specificity rather than consistency. According to him, both the person and the situation are important factors that determined behavior, and thus the concept of personality does not require complete consistency in behavior.

Mount and Barrick (1995) mentioned that it appears that many personality psychologists have reached a consensus that five personality constructs, referred to as the Big Five, are necessary and sufficient to describe the basic dimensions of normal personality. This study prefers to use the Big Five Model because it widely used to measure personality. According to Paunonen and Ashton (2001), the Big Five personality dimensions of neuroticism, extroversion, agreeableness, openness to experience and conscientious have been studied extensively and have been associated with a variety of work attitudes and behavior.

These five personality dimensions are broad dimensions that are theorized to subsume most narrowly focused personality traits. The breadth of these dimensions is a benefit in that it distils a large number of personality traits into a parsimonious set of dimensions for use in research. It means that this model is widely used and suitable to use in any research. As stated by Harris and Fleming (2005), the Five Factor Model has enjoyed widespread popularity in the field. Five personality traits collectively classify the higher-level dispositions of an individual according to the Five Factor Model.

According to Eysenck (1986), extraverts tend to seek interaction with others, novel experiences and complex, varied and intense stimuli, extroverts, on the other hand, prefer their own company and prefer the familiar and unfamiliar. While Costa and McCrae (1992) stated that extroverts are gregarious, assertive, activity and excitement-seeking. It similar with Mount and Barrick (1995) which mentioned that extraversion is most often described as the degree to which an individual is sociable, gregarious, talkative, assertive, adventurous, active, energetic and ambitious.

Based on Watson and Clark (1997), extroverts have been found to be socially engaging, gregarious, assertive, expressive, articulate, comfortable in group settings and have a great number of friends. Williams (1997), extraverts also tend to be high in positive affectivity, self-efficacy and optimism. According to Harris and Fleming (2005), extroversion represents various aspects such as sociable, gregarious, assertive and talkative. However, Manning et al., (2006) stated that extroversion is about the extent to which people are comfortable in social relationships, how socially inhibited, and the extrovert who is comfortable in social relationships and socially uninhibited. Tallman and Burning (2008) stated that extroverts' need for power and recognition may also cause them to take more risks in the job and they would expect the organization to support their work activities. Besides, Tallman and Burning (2008) also stated people high in extroversion tend to be high performers and committed to the organization and their work. They will develop psychological contracts that reflect their hard work, commitment and willingness to work with others.

Kobasa's theory of psychological hardiness (Kobasa, 1979; Ouellette, 1993) provides a useful framework for understanding why certain students are more willing to engage in more challenging academic course work than others. Hardiness and others), challenge (i.e., perceiving change rather than stability as an expected and normal theory posits that three cognitive appraisal processes serve to buffer the deleterious effects of stressful life situations. These cognitive processes are: commitment (i.e, perceiving one's life activities as valuable to self part of life and viewing change as beneficial to personal development), and control (i.e., perceiving oneself as having personal control over important life events). The quality of students' Academic hardiness is influenced by wide range of environmental factors. The variable is very important for students, institutions of learning, educationists and curriculum practices. Psychological hardiness comprised of three obliquely related attitudes (Kobasa et al., 1982). The three interrelated hardiness attitudes of commitment, control, and challenge enhance the person performance (Maddi and Kobasa, 1979). Moreover it was found that there was a negative relationship between individuals' hardiness scores and mathematics anxiety (Ashcraft, 2002). There is different between boys and girls math experience in school but researches have shown that there was no significant gender difference with respect to academic achievement and general abilities (Lingard et al., 2005; karimi, 2009).

Research Method

The descriptive research design survey method was used in this study.

Sampling

The participants for the study were first year and second year student teachers chosen from Mandalay Education College. A total of 320 student teachers were selected by simple random sampling technique. Among 320 student teachers, 160 were males and 160 were females.

Instrumentation

The research instruments were the EPQR-A extraversion scale and academic hardiness scale. The EPQR-A extraversion scale was drawn from Eysenck, Eysenck and Barrett (1985). Academic hardiness scale included 19 items devised by Benishek and Lopez (2001).

The 19-items Academic Hardiness Scale (Benishek and Lopez, 2001) assesses the three components of academic hardiness - commitment, challenge, and control - which were proposed in Kobasa's (1979a, 1979b) theory of psychological hardiness. Students respond to items using a 4-point Likert scale.

Procedure

This study intends to investigate personality trait and academic hardiness of pre-service teachers in Mandalay Education College. The selection of the research title and gathering the related literature review were done by studying related books, journals, articles and research reports from the library and internet sources. And, the appropriate instruments to be used in this study were prepared by the guidance of supervisor. After preparing it, the questionnaires were assessed by the experts in the field of Educational Psychology in order to confirm face and content validity of the questionnaires. According to the validation of the expert reviews, the questionnaires were modified to be suitable and able to assess the students.

A pilot testing was conducted to pre-service teachers in Sagaing Education College. The questionnaire were re-modified to be more accomplished by correcting misunderstanding, requisites and inappropriate uses. A survey study was conducted with pre-service teachers from Mandalay Education College. The necessary data were collected and then, the data were entered into a computer data file and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software version 20. In order to examine the responses, Descriptive, Pearson product moment correlation and independent sample *t* test were used. Independent sample *t* test was used to examine whether there were significant differences in personality trait and academic hardiness of pre-service teachers by gender, grade, and subject stream. And research paper was written and submitted with the guidance of supervisor. Finally, the interpretation of finding was made and conclusion was drawn.

Data Analysis and Finding

The aim of the study was to investigate personality trait and academic hardiness of pre-service teachers in Mandalay Education College. The results and finding of the study were presented. The collected data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) 20 version. The findings and results were presented as follow;

In terms of descriptive statistics, minimum and maximum scores, mean and standard deviation of personality trait and academic hardiness of pre-service teachers in Mandalay Education College were calculated to analyze data. The results were described in table 1.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for the Personality Trait and Academic Hardiness of Pre- service Teachers

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Extroversion	320	17	48	34.18	3.997
Hardiness	320	40	66	51.96	4.335

According to the table 1, the minimum and maximum, mean and standard deviation of personality trait and academic hardiness of pre-service teachers were presented. The mean score of extroversion was 34.18 and mean score of academic hardiness was 51.96.

Gender based analysis was conducted to reveal the differences in personality trait between male and female students. The mean and standard deviation for personality trait of male and female students were reported in Table 2 and 3.

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviation of the Personality Trait for Pre-service Teachers by Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Mean Differences
Extraversion	Male	160	34.08	3.657	.200
	Female	160	34.28	4.319	

According to the table 2, mean score of male student teachers was 34.08 and mean score of female student teachers was 34.28. So, mean score of female students was slightly higher than that of male students for extroversion.

This may be because female student teachers are more talkative, flexible and lively than male student teachers in Mandalay Education College.

To find out the significant differences by gender, independent samples *t* test was used. The results were shown in Table 3.

Table 3 The Results of Independent Sample *t* test for the Personality Trait of Pre-service Teachers by Gender

Variable	Gender	N	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Extroversion	Male	160	-.447	318	.655
	Female	160			

According to table 3, there was no significant difference in extroversion because of that, most of the male students of Mandalay Education College are well behaved, afraid to speak in public, not open-minded.

But, Muhammad Irfan Arif, Aqeela Rashid, Syeda Samina Tahira, Mahnaz Akhter University of Education, Lahore, Pakistan, they studied prospective teachers' personality in 2016. They found this study show that there was a significant difference between the male and female prospective teachers on Extraversion trait of their personality. The mean score of male prospective teachers was greater than the mean score of female prospective teachers on their Extraversion personality trait. It means that male prospective teachers are dominant over female prospective teachers on their Extraversion personality trait There was a significant difference between the male and female.

Moreover, Soraya Hakami, Elaheh Hejazi, and Masoud Gholamali Lavasani, Department of Educational Psychology and counselling, University of Tehran, Iran, they studied the relationships between personality traits and academic achievement among students. According to the final results, ANOVA and *t*-test indicated there is no significant gender differences in the personality characteristics and academic achievement. But according to the research in pre-service teachers from Mandalay Education College, *t*-test indicated there is no significant in the extraverted characteristics by gender.

Gender based analysis was conducted to reveal the differences in academic hardiness between male and female students. The mean and standard deviation for academic hardiness of male and female students were reported in Table 4 and 5.

Table 4 Mean and Standard Deviation of Academic Hardiness for Pre-service Teachers by Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Mean Differences
Academic Hardiness	Male	160	50.94	4.645	2.025
	Female	160	52.97	3.751	

According to the table 4, mean score of male student teachers was 50.94 and mean score of female student teachers was 52.97. So mean score of female student teachers was higher than that of male student for academic hardiness.

To find out the significant differences by gender, independent samples *t* test was used. The results were shown in Table 5.

Table 5 The Results of Independent Sample *t* test for Academic Hardiness of Pre-service Teachers by Gender

Variable	Gender	N	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Academic Hardiness	Male	160	-4.290***	318	.000
	Female	160			

Note*** The mean difference is significant at the .001 level.

According to the table 5, there was significant difference in academic hardiness of student teachers by gender at .001 level ($t = -4.290, p < .001$).

Generally male students usually hang out with their friends and, female students have sense shame so that they emphasize on studying. That’s why female students were higher than male students for academic hardiness.

Grade based analysis was conducted to reveal the differences in personality trait between First Year and Second Year student teachers. The mean and standard deviation for achievement motivation of First Year and Second Year students teachers were reported in Table 6 and 7.

Table 6 Mean and Standard Deviation of the Personality Trait for Pre-service Teachers by Grade

Variable	Grade	N	Mean	SD	Mean Differences
Extroversion	First Year	160	34.30	3.962	.238
	Second Year	160	34.06	4.040	

According to the table 6, mean score of first year students was 34.30 and mean score of second year students was 34.06, mean score of first year students was higher than that of second year students for extroversion.

This may be because first year student teachers are more likely curiosity in new experiences than second year student teachers in Mandalay Education College.

To find out the significant differences by grade, independent samples *t* test was used. The results were shown in Table 7.

Table 7 The Results Independent Sample *t* test for the Personality Trait of Pre-service Teachers by Grade

Variable	Grade	N	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Extroversion	First Year	160	.531	318	.596
	Second Year	160			

According to table 7, there was no significant difference. Because of first year students and second year students are at the same age, same thought and there might not be differences in their environmental experiences. And also, their behavioral patterns are same to each other.

Grade based analysis was conducted to reveal the differences in academic hardiness between First Year and Second Year student teachers. The mean and standard deviation for achievement motivation of First Year and Second Year students teachers were reported in Table 8 and 9.

Table 8 Mean and Standard Deviation for Academic Hardiness of Pre-service Teachers by Grade

Variable	Grade	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Mean Differences
Academic Hardiness	First Year	160	52.54	4.478	1.163
	Second Year	160	51.38	4.120	

According to table 8, mean score of first year student was 52.54 and mean score of second year students was 51.38. So, first year student teachers are higher than that of second year in academic hardiness. This is because second year students seen to focus not only on school also on other external stuff.

To find out the significant differences by grade, independent samples *t* test was used. The results were shown in Table 9.

Table 9 The Results Independent Sample *t* test for Academic Hardiness of Pre-service Teachers by Grade

Variable	Grade	N	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Academic Hardiness	First Year	160	2.417*	318	.016
	Second Year	160			

Note* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level for academic hardiness.

According to the table 9, there was significant difference in academic hardiness of student teachers by grade. ($t = 2.417, p < .05$).

First year students matriculated not very soon and they had to work so hard in order to get high marks to study in the Universities they want to attend. This may be reason why they work like a horse.

Subject stream-based analysis was conducted to reveal the differences in personality trait between art and science students. The mean and standard deviation for achievement motivation of art and science students were reported in Table 10 and 11.

Table 10 Mean and Standard Deviation of the Personality Trait for Pre-service Teachers by Subject Stream

Variable	Subject Stream	N	Mean	SD	Mean Differences
Extroversion	Arts	160	34.71	3.894	1.063
	Science	160	33.65	4.039	

According to table 10, mean score of art students was higher than that of science students for extroversion. This may be because student teachers in Art section are more interested in reading general knowledge and more active participation not only in other school activities but also outside activities of Mandalay Education College.

To find out the significant differences by subject stream, independent samples *t* test was used. The results were shown in Table 11.

Table 11 The Results of Independent Sample *t* test for the Personality Trait of Pre-service Teachers by Subject Stream

Variable	Subject Stream	Number of Items	N	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Extroversion	Arts	12	160	2.395*	318	.017
	Science	12	160			

Note* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level for extroversion.

According to the table 11, there was significant difference in Extroversion of student teachers by subject stream. ($t = 2.395, p < .05$).

More extraversion features can be found in art students than that of science students. Art students are more curious in new environment and experience. Besides that they are more likely to take part and compete every single school activities. And they show a great interest not only in school talks and seminar also in external conferences. So that, we can make an inference that art students are more extrovert than science students.

Subject stream-based analysis was conducted to reveal the differences in academic hardiness between art and science students. The mean and standard deviation for achievement motivation of art and science students were reported in Table 12 and 13.

Table 12 Mean and Standard Deviation of Academic Hardiness of Pre-service Teachers by Subject Stream

Variable	Subject Stream	N	Mean	SD	Mean Differences
Academic Hardiness	Arts	160	52.60	4.419	1.288
	Science	160	51.31	4.165	

According to the table 12, mean score of art student was 52.60 and mean score of science students was 51.31 for academic hardiness. So, student teachers in art section are higher than that of science section for academic hardiness.

Table 13 The Results Independent Sample *t* test for Academic Hardiness of Pre-service Teachers by Subject Stream

Variable	Subject Stream	Number of Items	<i>N</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Academic Hardiness	Arts	19	160	2.682**	318	.008
	Science	19	160			

Note** The mean difference is significant at the .01 level for academic hardiness.

According to the table 13, there was significant difference in academic hardiness of student teachers by subject stream. ($t = 2.682, p < .01$)

Art students are higher than science students in hardiness. This is because science students seen to focus not only on school also on other external stuff.

To find out the relationship between extroversion and academic hardiness of pre-service teachers, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used. The results were shown in Table 14.

Table 14 The Relationship Between Extroversion and Academic Hardiness of Pre-Service Teachers

Variables	Extroversion	Hardiness
Extroversion	-	.209**
Academic Hardiness	.209**	-

Note: **Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

According to table, there was a significant positive relationship between extroversion and academic hardiness of student teachers ($r = 0.209, p < .01$). This means that the student teachers who are high in extroversion are also high in hardiness accordingly.

In summary, teachers play a key role in the teaching learning process so they need to aware what they are doing and why they are doing. The relationship between personality trait and academic hardiness have important implication for research and pedagogical practices. Students high in academic hardiness are likely to experience less academic stress which may lead to better grade. Therefore, It can be interpreted that the higher the lack of extraversion in student teachers, the lower the academic hardiness.

Conclusion

Extroversion was the personality factors explained in this study. There are other important personality aspects, cultural factors and demographic variables that also be explored. It is hoped that this research will provide a variable insight into personality trait and academic hardiness of pre-service teachers by investigating student's response to extraversion and academic hardiness scale. In the future, more researchers are need to applied more relevant instrument for personality trait and academic hardiness possible. Qualitative research is good research method to investigate deeply about the feeling and experience of student teachers. It can be used in the further studies. The participants in this study are only from Mandalay Education College.

Further studies can investigate other Education colleges and to have comparison between different Education colleges. To be conducted, it is hoped that the findings presented in this study

will provide some insight in the study of personality trait and academic hardiness of student teachers in future. This study also lays a foundation for future personality traits research.

Behdokht Mall-Amiri, Department of Foreign Languages, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran was an attempt to investigate the difference between extrovert and introvert EFL teachers' classroom management. This study revealed a significant difference between extrovert and introvert EFL teachers' classroom management. It is found out that extrovert EFL teachers are better than introvert teachers at managing adult EFL learners' classes.

A great number of research suggests that hardiness acts as a protective factor in stressful situations, especially in work context. In the present research the factor structure of Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS; Bartone, Ursano, Wright, & Ingraham, 1989), and its factorial invariance across gender was examined. Furthermore, the relationships of hardiness to five-factor personality traits and several mental health outcomes (positive affect, negative affect and physical symptoms) were also explored.

On the other hand, the research finding was a significant positive relationship between extroversion and academic hardiness of pre-service teachers from Mandalay Education College. This means that the student teachers who are high in extroversion are also high in hardiness accordingly.

So, we should train our students, instead of introvert personality type, extrovert personality type suits today's generation as they are going to be future leader's of new age. Student teachers done need to give a talk in public since they have to lead and guide their pupils. We should hold more lively discussions, competitions, education talks, exhibition, and workshops in order to train our students to be extrovert leader.

According to the Myanmar culture, the ones who are silent and never argue with their parents and teachers are called well-behaved. However we need to improve this tradition, students done need to discuss with their parent and teachers openly but not with impolite manner. Holding discussion and education talks let the students gain wider knowledge and information. And then workshops, seminars, discussions and conferences to develop positive personality could be organized at school environment.

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