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PERSONALITY TRAITS AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Abstract

Personality traits significantly influence mental health, particularly among school teachers who face unique psychological and professional challenges. This study examines the correlation between personality traits, as defined by the Five-Factor Model (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience), and mental health among secondary school teachers. A sample of 100 teachers (50 male and 50 female) from Nandurbar district was assessed using the NEO Five-Factor Inventory-3 and the Mental Health Scale. The results indicate that neuroticism has a significant negative correlation with mental health, whereas conscientiousness and openness to experience exhibit positive correlations. Gender differences were observed, with male teachers reporting better mental health compared to female teachers. Additionally, males scored higher in conscientiousness and openness to experience, while females exhibited higher neuroticism. These findings underscore the importance of considering personality traits in designing mental health interventions and support systems for educators, ensuring their psychological well-being and professional effectiveness.

Keywords: Personality traits, mental health, conscientiousness, neuroticism, gender differences, psychological well-being.

Introduction

Personality traits play a significant role in shaping an individual's mental health, particularly among school teachers, who experience unique psychological demands in their profession. Teaching is a challenging occupation that requires emotional resilience, patience, and strong interpersonal skills. The relationship between personality traits and mental health among teachers is crucial to understand, as it influences their well-being, job satisfaction, and overall performance in the classroom.

Research suggests that personality traits, as described by the Five-Factor Model (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience), are closely linked to mental health outcomes. For instance, high levels of neuroticism are often associated with stress, anxiety, and burnout, whereas traits like conscientiousness and emotional stability can contribute to greater psychological well-being. Additionally, extraversion and agreeableness may enhance social support and coping mechanisms, reducing the risk of mental health issues.

Given the high levels of stress and emotional demands in the teaching profession, understanding the link between personality traits and mental health is essential for developing strategies to promote teachers' well-being. Schools and policymakers can use this knowledge

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to implement mental health support programs, resilience training, and workplace interventions that align with teachers' personality profiles.

In today's fast-paced and competitive world, teachers are expected to meet ever-increasing demands for academic excellence. Continuous changes in the education system, the influence of technology, new teaching methodologies, growing objectives set by school administrations, and the expectations of parents and society collectively create a myriad of challenges for teachers. These factors directly impact their mental health and personality. Stress, workload, time management difficulties, financial instability, and social pressures can negatively affect their overall well-being.

Mental health encompasses the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of individuals, helping them effectively cope with life's challenges. However, poor mental health can adversely impact teachers' teaching abilities, their relationships with students, and their overall personality.

The Personality Variable Formally Designed

Personality formally defined as the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment (Allport 1937)**.**

According to Schacter, Gilbert, & Wegner (2009) personality is an individual's characteristic style of behaving, thinking and feeling.

Personality factors are the characteristic ways that people differ from one another. The five-factor model (FFM) of personality is a well-recognized model in the scientific community that organizes personality traits into five basic dimensions

Extraversion: A person's level of outgoingness

Agreeableness: A person's appreciation of others and their ability to forgive others

Conscientiousness: A person's level of organization and consideration of others

Neuroticism: A person's level of anxiousness

Openness to Experience: A person's level of curiosity, insight, and variety of interests.

Mental Health

According to the World Health Organization (2001)**,** mental health is a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community

According to Shalala (1996) described that mental health refers to how a person thinks, feels and acts when faced with life's situations. It is how people look at themselves, their lives and other people in their lives and explore choices

Review Of Literature

Digic (2018) conducted a study to examine the influence of personal and professional characteristics on teachers' lives. A sample of 148 teachers was selected and asked to complete personality assessments, including the Big Five Personality Questionnaire and the

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Locus of Control Test. The analysis revealed that traits such as openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and internal locus of control are strong predictors of a teacher's interactionist style. The study also emphasized the critical role these traits play in enhancing classroom management practices.

Gangeja Divya's (2021) study investigates the personality traits of secondary school teachers, focusing on their scientific outlook, self-concept, and mental health. The research involved 200 male and female teachers, with the proposed model employed to assess their personality characteristics. Data analysis included calculating the mean and standard deviation. Following this, the researcher computed the t-value, which revealed no significant differences between the personalities of male and female teachers. Consequently, the hypothesis was confirmed, indicating that the personalities of male and female educators are similar.

Avsec, Masnec, and Komidar (2009) conducted an exploratory study to examine the predictive validity of the Big Five personality traits and emotional intelligence in relation to the psychological well-being of teachers. A sample of 152 teachers was selected using a simple random sampling method, and they were asked to complete three questionnaires designed to measure the aforementioned variables. The analysis revealed that personality traits accounted for 22 to 43% of the variability in various psychological well-being scales, while emotional intelligence explained 1 to 3% of the variability.

Kumaravelu (2017) explained the study as a survey to assess the mental health of high school teachers, focusing on a sample of 220 teachers from different high schools selected using a simple random sampling technique. The researcher used the Mental Health Checklist (Pramod Kumar) for data collection. For analysis, mean, standard deviation, t-test, and regression were applied. The findings revealed that teachers, in general, exhibited higher levels of mental health. However, no significant differences were found in mental health based on gender, location, type of management, or school type.

Bauer et al. (2008) carried out an exploratory study to assess the working conditions in schools and their impact on the psychological and mental health of a sample of 949 teachers. The General Health Questionnaire was used to collect responses and assess mental health issues. The results revealed that nearly 30% of the teachers in the sample experienced mental health problems due to factors such as verbal abuse, insults, damage to personal belongings, the threat of violent behavior from students, and other risks present in the school environment.

Kumar, R. (2013). The t-test results indicated that urban elementary school teachers had significantly higher mean scores on mental health ($t = -16.06$; $p<.01$) compared to their rural counterparts, who scored lower. This suggests that greater awareness of self-mental health enables elementary school teachers to better manage stressful situations and effectively assess students' undesirable behavior at the elementary level.

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Objectives

1. To study the correlation between personality traits and mental health among secondary school teachers.
2. To explore gender differences in mental health among secondary school teachers.
3. To investigate gender differences in personality factors among secondary school teachers.

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant correlation between personality traits and mental health among secondary school teachers.
2. There is a significant gender difference in mental health among secondary school teachers.
3. There is a significant gender difference in personality factors among secondary school teachers.

Method

PARTICIPANTS

The study employed a random sampling technique to select 100 secondary school teachers aged between 35 and 55 from Nandurbar district. For the final testing, the participants were evenly divided into two groups: 50 male and 50 female teachers. All selected teachers had a minimum of 3 years of teaching experience in their current positions and lived with their family members.

TOOLS

Two standardized measures were selected based on the objectives of the study. Below are brief descriptions of the standardized tools used to collect data:

NEO Five-Factor Inventory - 3 (Costa & McCrae, 2010)

The 60-item NEO Five-Factor Inventory- 3 (NEO-FFI-3) was developed to provide a concise measure of the five basic personality factors (Costa & McCrae, 1989). The NEO PI-R has been developed by taking various samples of middle-aged and older adults, using both factor analytic and multi method validation procedures of test construction and can be appropriately used with individuals who are 17 years of age or older. The scales show a substantial internal consistency, temporal stability, and convergent and discriminate validity against spouse and peer ratings (Costa & McCrae, 1992, 1990). The instrument uses a five point Likert response format (0-4). There are 12 items in each domain. Internal consistency ranges from 0.68 to 0.86 (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Mental Health Scale (Sharma, 2009)

The scale consists of 60 items for use with adolescents and adults in the age range 12-45 years. These scale of 3-point Likert scales the positive and negative items are allotted a score for every statement has three alternate responses “yes” “indefinite” and “no” The subjects have to choose only one alternative response. The scheme of scoring it as below-on positive statements 2 marks for “yes”, 1 mark for “indefinite” and 0 marks for “no”, and for

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negative statements adopt just reverse marking-2 marks for "no", 1 mark for "indefinite" and 0 mark for "yes".

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive analysis, along with mean, standard deviation, t-test, and correlation, was employed to evaluate teachers' personality traits and mental health.

Results

Table: 1 Shows the Correlation Coefficient between five Personality Factors and Mental Health between males and female

Mental Health	Personality Factors				
	N	E	O	A	C
	-0.187*	0.141	0.183*	0.0178	0.367**

Note – ** $p<0.01$, * $p< 0.05$

Table: 2 Shows the table Mean, SD, and t value of Mental Health.

Mental Health	N	Mean	SD	t
Male	50	98.26	10.59	3.53*
Female	50	91.3	9.044	

Note – ** $p<0.01$, * $p< 0.05$

Table: 3 show the mean, SD, and t values of personality traits.

Personality Factors	Gender	Mean	SD	N	t
Neuroticism	Male	18.5	4.185	50	-1.93*
	Female	20.12	4.216	50	
Extraversion	Male	32.52	3.934	50	1.46*
	Female	31.36	4.008	50	
Openness to experience	Male	29.06	4.012	50	2.69*
	Female	27.06	3.395	50	
Agreeableness	Male	27.42	3.891	50	0.38*
	Female	27.72	3.964	50	
Conscientiousness	Male	38.78	4.734	50	2.75**
	Female	36.06	5.160	50	

Note – ** $p<0.01$, * $p< 0.05$

N = Neuroticism, E = Extraversion, O = Openness to experience, A = Agreeableness, C = Conscientiousness

Discussion

Table 1 presents the correlation between mental health and personality traits. Correlation coefficient r of mental health and personality traits. This indicates a significant positive and one factor is a negative relationship between mental health and personality factors.

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Neuroticism (N) r=0.187, p<0.05 A weak negative correlation but still significant at 0.05 level which suggests that higher neuroticism is slightly associated with poorer mental health. This aligns with research showing that neurotic individuals may experience more stress and anxiety. Extraversion (E) r= 0.141, p>0.05 a low positive correlation has been found which is not significant indicating that extraversion has positive relationship with mental health though statistically not significant. Openness (O) r=0.183, p<0.05 law positive correlation but significant at 0.05 level suggests that being more open to experiences may be slightly linked to better mental health. Agreeableness (A) = r= 0.0178, p>0.05 weak positive correlation meaning agreeableness has positive correlation with mental health but not significant at all. Conscientiousness (C) r= 0.367, p<0.01 The strongest positive and significant correlation indicates that higher conscientiousness is moderately associated with better mental health. This is expected, as conscientious individuals tend to have better self-control, discipline, and organization, which can contribute to psychological well-being.

Table no. 2 shows that the mean value of males has a higher mean mental health score (98.26,) compared to females (91.3), suggesting that males report better mental health on average. The SD for males (10.59) is slightly higher than for females (9.044), indicating a slightly greater variability in mental health scores among males. The computed t-value is 3.53, which suggests a statistically significant (p<0.001) difference between the two groups. This means that males have significantly higher mental health scores than females in this study.

The hypothesis is accepted at p<0.001 level of significance.

Table no- 3 presents a comparison of personality traits between males and females based on their mean scores, standard deviations (SD), and t-values. The findings provide insights into the differences and similarities between genders across five personality traits: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness**.**

1. **Neuroticism:** Females (M = 20.12) have slightly higher neuroticism scores than males (M

= 18.5), but the difference was statistically significant (t = -1.93, p<0.05). Thus the hypothesis stated that there is a significant gender difference in personality factors of neuroticism among secondary school teachers was accepted.

2. Extraversion: Males (M = 32.52) score slightly higher than females (M = 31.36) in extraversion, but the difference is significant (t = 1.46, p<0.05). Thus the hypothesis stated that there is a significant gender difference in personality factors of extraversion among secondary school teachers was accepted.

3. Openness to Experience: Males (M = 29.06) have a significantly higher openness to experience score than females (M = 27.06, t= 2.69, <0.05 Hence the hypothesis stated that there is a significant gender difference in personality factors of openness to experience among secondary school teachers was accepted.

4. Agreeableness: The scores for agreeableness are almost identical for males (M = 27.42) and females (M = 27.72), with t= 0.38, p<0.05 indicated that there is a significant gender difference in agreeableness. So the hypothesis stated that there is a significant gender

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difference in personality factors of agreeableness among secondary school teachers was accepted

5. Conscientiousness: Males (M = 38.78) score significantly higher than females (M = 36.06), with a t= 2.75, p<0.01 indicated that there is gender difference in conscientiousness among school teachers. Thus the hypothesis stated that there is a significant gender difference in personality factors of conscientiousness among secondary school teachers was accepted.

Conclusion

1. Neuroticism, Openness to experience and conscientiousness have significant correlations with mental health and on the other hand extraversion and agreeableness have non-significant positive correlation with mental health among school teachers.
2. There is a significant gender difference were found in mental health among school teachers
3. There is significant gender differences were found in all the personality factors.

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