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Measuring certain personality traits of physical education teachers and their relationship to occupational stress

Abdenacer REBBOUH[1], Ahmida NECIR[1], Mouloud KENIOUA[1]*

[1] Department of Physical Education and Sports, University of Ouargla, BP.511 Ghardaia Road, Ouargla 30000, Algeria

***Correspondence:** Mouloud KENIOUA; e-mail: moukenioua@gmail.com

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Abstract: This study sought to investigate the correlation between personality factors and occupational stress in physical education instructors. The sample comprised 65 middle school educators in the city of Ouargla, utilising a Personality Traits Questionnaire and an Occupational Stress Scale. The findings revealed that physical education instructors demonstrate elevated levels of personality characteristics, encompassing responsibility, emotional stability, self-control, and social features. Furthermore, their levels of work stress were very low. A notable inverse link was identified between emotional stability and occupational stress, indicating that instructors with more emotional stability encounter less stress levels. Moreover, educators with greater years of expertise indicated markedly reduced stress levels. The study advocates for the creation of programs aimed at improving teachers' emotional resilience and fostering a supportive work environment to mitigate occupational stress. These measures can enhance teachers' general well-being and professional performance.

Keywords: personality traits, occupational stress, years of experience, physical education teacher

Introduction

Every individual has a distinct array of characteristics that delineate their personality and affect their behaviour. These characteristics delineate an individual's personality and elucidate their reactions to diverse circumstances (McCrae & Costa, 1999). A teacher's personality, akin to that of any human, comprises several dimensions and traits that influence their interactions (Roberts et al., 2017). These attributes are essential for enabling educators to navigate the challenges of the teaching profession, foster a constructive learning atmosphere, and inspire students to participate actively in the educational process (Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021).

Personality qualities are crucial for comprehending an individual's behavioural habits. They signify persistent patterns in human behaviour and assist in recognising individual distinctions among people (John & Srivastava, 1999).

Some jobs necessitate particular personality qualities owing to the inherent work-related stress they entail. Individuals' capacity to manage work stress differs according to their personality types (Judge & Zapata, 2015). Teaching necessitates special traits, as researchers have consistently highlighted the significance of a teacher's personality in their effectiveness (Çetin & Jennings, 2024). Educators are pivotal in influencing future generations, rendering their personal characteristics a critical element in good pedagogy.

Workers in diverse occupations encounter occupational stress, anxiety, and tension (Beehr & Newman, 1978). Educators, specifically, encounter numerous demands associated with students, school officials, coworkers, and the resources accessible inside their organisations (Travers, 2001). These pressures considerably affect their pedagogical efficacy and general job satisfaction (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005).

Occupational stress is characterised as any enduring external or internal stressors that disturb an individual's emotional and physical balance (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). It transpires when job expectations beyond an individual's capacity to manage, resulting in psychological distress and possible health hazards (Bakker et al., 2014). The prolonged duration of these stressors exacerbates their detrimental impact on mental and physical health (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

The phrase "occupational stress" encompasses two dimensions: firstly, external environmental factors that generate discomfort and tension; and secondly, the internal psychological responses of individuals to these stressors (Shirom, 2003). Researchers concur that workplace stress occurs when professional responsibilities surpass an individual's coping capacity, resulting in diminished job performance and well-being (Hakanen et al., 2006).

Occupational stress significantly endangers employees' psychological, bodily, and behavioral well-being (Maslach et al., 2001). Educators with elevated stress levels frequently encounter difficulties with focus, motivation, and professional involvement (Travers & Cooper, 1996). Chronic stress may lead to burnout, emotional fatigue, and diminished job satisfaction, ultimately impacting students' learning experiences (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017b). Nonetheless, individuals differ in their capacity to handle stress, contingent upon their personality characteristics and coping mechanisms (Deary et al., 2003).

Personality qualities significantly influence how individuals cope with work stress (John & Srivastava, 1999). Studies indicate that educators possessing strong emotional stability, resilience, and flexibility are more adept at managing stressful classroom settings (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005).

A physical education and sports instructor must demonstrate attributes including leadership, accountability, emotional resilience, and sociability (Capel & Whitehead, 2013). These traits allow them to interact with pupils efficiently, uphold discipline, and cultivate a constructive learning atmosphere (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Moreover, robust personal attributes enable educators to manage the difficulties inherent in their job, such as student conduct, administrative demands, and resource constraints (Burić & Moè, 2020).

Educators exhibiting these personality traits are more inclined to adeptly manage work stress (Çetin & Jennings, 2024). They are more adept at managing pressure from students, colleagues, and the school administration, so assuring the fulfilment of their obligations with assurance and efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017a).

Numerous recent research have investigated the correlation between personality factors and occupational stress among teachers, emphasising the significant impact of individual differences in addressing job-related issues. Bakker et

al. (2007) investigated the impact of personality traits on burnout and job engagement in educators, revealing that teachers exhibiting high conscientiousness and emotional stability encountered reduced stress levels and exhibited enhanced resilience. Montgomery and Rupp (2005) examined the influence of stress management strategies on teachers with varying personality profiles, demonstrating that those with high openness to experience were more inclined to employ adaptive coping mechanisms, thus mitigating the adverse effects of stress. Moreover, Çetin and Jennings (2024) investigated the impact of self-efficacy and personality traits on teachers' occupational well-being, determining that personality qualities substantially affect teachers' capacity to manage stress and sustain job satisfaction. These studies highlight the significance of comprehending personality traits in the teaching profession, as educators possessing particular characteristics, such as emotional stability and adaptability, are more adept at managing occupational stress and maintaining elevated levels of professional performance (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

This study seeks to investigate the correlation between personality factors and occupational stress in physical education instructors. Considering the rigorous demands of the teaching profession, especially in physical education, it is crucial to comprehend how individual personality traits affect stress management and job performance. The research aims to discover essential personality features that enhance teachers' capacity to manage occupational stress, adapt to obstacles, and uphold high professional standards. This research aims to offer significant insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers by analysing these linkages, so facilitating the development of focused measures that promote teachers' well-being and improve their efficacy in the classroom. Furthermore, the results may enhance the field of educational psychology by providing empirical information regarding the relationship between personality and occupational stress in educational settings.

Materials and methods

The Sample

The study sample comprised physical education and sports instructors at middle schools located in the city of Ouargla. The total number of participants was 65 teachers, constituting 65.00% of the study population. The participants were chosen by a basic random selection technique. The study sample distribution indicated that 32 teachers possessed fewer than 5 years of experience, whereas 22 teachers had between 6 and 10 years of experience.

Research Tools

The research employed the Personality Traits Questionnaire, adapted from the instrument utilised by Ghanam (2025), in her work "Personality Traits and Organisational Loyalty among Primary School Teachers." This questionnaire comprises 37 items categorised into four dimensions, offering five response options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Each comment received a score from 5 to 1, correspondingly. The smallest score on the scale is 37, and the maximum is 185, indicating the degree to which a teacher exhibits personality

traits. The questionnaire comprises four primary dimensions: Responsibility (9 items), Emotional Stability (9 items), Control (10 items), and Social Traits (9 items).

The research utilised the Occupational Stress Scale for Physical Education Teachers, created by Alaoui (1998). This measure comprises 36 items categorised into six factors: student-related stressors, material resources in the school, monthly salary, relationship with school administration, educational supervision, and relationship with other instructors. Each item offers five response alternatives, ranging from "Applies to me to a very great extent" to "Applies to me to a very small extent." Scores vary from 5 to 1 for good items, whereas negative items are scored inversely. The total possible score varies from 36 to 180, with elevated values signifying increased levels of occupational stress.

Psychometric Characteristics of the Research Instruments

The Personality Traits Questionnaire and the Occupational Stress Scale were administered in their preliminary forms to a pilot sample of 15 physical education teachers to evaluate the validity and reliability of the study items.

Discriminatory validity was assessed by the extreme group comparison approach. The findings indicated that the T-value for the Personality Traits Questionnaire was 4.50, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, so affirming the instrument's discriminatory validity. The T-value for the Occupational Stress Scale was 5.51, which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level, demonstrating robust discriminant validity for this scale.

Internal consistency was assessed for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The findings indicated that the reliability coefficient for the Personality Traits Questionnaire was 0.93, whilst the Occupational Stress Scale exhibited a reliability coefficient of 0.75. These scores signify that both instruments exhibit excellent validity and reliability, rendering them suitable for application in the study.

Statistical Examination

Various statistical approaches were applied to analyse the acquired data, ensuring precision and dependability in the interpretation of results. The arithmetic mean and standard deviation were employed to characterise the distribution of responses. T-tests were performed, comprising a single-sample T-test to compare the sample mean against a known value and a two-independent-samples T-test to assess differences between groups. Additionally, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilised to evaluate differences among several groups. These strategies facilitated the identification of substantial distinctions and trends within the data, enhancing the overall comprehension of the study's conclusions.

Results

The findings in Table 1 demonstrate that the sample mean for the whole scale exceeds the theoretical mean. The computed T-value (20.68) is significant at 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference favouring the sample mean. This indicates that physical education instructors exhibit a significant degree of personality traits.

Table 1. Presents the values of the hypothetical mean, sample mean, calculated T-value, and statistical significance level for different personality traits

Variable	Hypothetical mean	Sample mean	T-Value	Significance level	Decision
Responsibility Trait	3.00	4.16	19.81	0.000	Significant
Emotional Stability Trait	3.00	3.84	12.69	0.000	Significant
Control Trait	3.00	3.92	15.12	0.000	Significant
Social Trait	3.00	3.96	15.69	0.000	Significant
Overall Score	3.00	3.97	20.68	0.000	Significant

Furthermore, the results indicate that the sample mean across all personality characteristics (responsibility, emotional stability, control, and social traits) exceeds the theoretical mean. The T-values (19.81, 15.69, 15.12, and 12.69) are all statistically significant at 0.05, hence reinforcing the existence of significant differences favouring the sample mean.

The results indicate that physical education teachers demonstrate a significant level of personality traits across all domains. The participants' responses to the personality traits scale reveal a significant prevalence of these traits, accompanied by an overall sense of contentment and acceptance with their personality attributes.

Table 2. Presents the comparison between the hypothetical mean and the sample mean for occupational stress levels among physical education teachers

Variable	Hypothetical Mean	Sample Mean	T-Value	Significance Level	Decision
OccupationalStress Scale	3.00	2.82	2.89	0.005	Significant

The findings in Table 2 demonstrate that the sample mean (2.82) is inferior to the theoretical mean (3.00). The T-value (2.89) is significant at 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference in favour of the hypothetical mean. This research indicates that physical education teachers encounter comparatively low levels of occupational stress. The unexpectedly low stress levels indicate that participants view their professional obstacles as manageable, enhancing their overall workplace well-being.

Table 3. Significance of differences in the degree of personal traits availability among physical education and sports teachers attributed to the variable of years of experience

Experience	Sample size	Mean	Standard Deviation	Degrees of freedom	F Value	Significance level
Less than 5 years	32	3.98	0.39	2	0.07	0.92(Not significant)
6 - 10 years	22	3.97	0.36			
11 years and above	11	3.93	0.38			

Table 3 indicates that the F-value attained (0.07) with a significance level of (0.92), which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 threshold. Consequently, there are no substantial differences in the availability of personal qualities among physical education and sports teachers as related to the variable of years of experience. This is evident in the proximity of the means, with a mean score of 3.98 for teachers with less than 5 years of experience, 3.97 for those with 6 to 10 years, and 3.93 for those with 11 years or more of experience. This suggests that years of teaching experience do not significantly influence the presence of personal attributes in the teaching profession.

Table 4. Presents the analysis of variance (ANOVA) results examining the differences in occupational stress levels among physical education teachers based on their years of teaching experience

Experience Level	Sample size	Mean	Standard Deviation	Degrees of freedom	F-Value	Significance level	Decision
Less than 5 years	32	2.93	0.48	2	3.84	0.02	Significant
6 - 10 years	22	2.82	0.47				
More than 11 years	11	2.46	0.46				

The findings in Table 4 demonstrate that the F-value (3.84) at a significance level of 0.02 is statistically significant at 0.05, indicating notable differences in occupational stress levels among physical education teachers according to years of experience.

The disparities in average values further corroborate this conclusion:

- Teachers with fewer than five years of experience exhibited the highest stress levels (M = 2.93).
- Teachers with 6 to 10 years of experience exhibited a marginally reduced stress level (M = 2.82).
- Teachers possessing over 11 years of experience exhibited the lowest stress level (M = 2.46).

The findings indicate that years of experience considerably influence occupational stress levels among physical education teachers, with more seasoned educators reporting markedly lower stress levels than their less experienced counterparts.

Table 5. Presents the Pearson correlation results between the personality traits of physical education teachers and their occupational stress levels

Personality trait	Occupational stress list	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Significance level
Responsibility Trait		0.08	0.51
Emotional Stability Trait		-0.28*	0.02
Control Trait		0.12	0.32
Social Trait		0.02	0.82
Overall Tool		-0.02	0.86

The findings in Table 5 reveal an absence of a significant association between general personality qualities and occupational stress levels among physical education teachers at the 0.05 significance level, as evidenced by a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.02, which lacks statistical significance. The Emotional Stability Trait exhibits a statistically significant negative link with occupational stress at the 0.05 level, indicated by a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.28 ($p = 0.02$).

This indicates that emotional stability is negatively correlated with occupational stress, implying that teachers with more emotional stability generally encounter reduced stress levels. Conversely, other personality traits and the whole personality profile exhibit no significant correlations with occupational stress levels in physical education teachers.

Discussion

This study's findings offer significant insights into the correlation between personality factors and occupational stress in physical education teachers. The

findings demonstrate that physical education instructors possess elevated personality traits such as responsibility, emotional stability, self-control, and social characteristics. These results correspond with earlier studies highlighting the significance of personality factors in occupational performance and stress regulation (McCrae & Costa, 1999; John & Srivastava, 1999).

A principal conclusion indicates that emotional stability has a substantial negative link with occupational stress, implying that instructors with greater emotional stability generally encounter reduced levels of job-related stress. This corroborates the findings of Montgomery and Rupp (2005), who determined that educators possessing strong emotional stability and resilience are more adept at managing classroom issues. Bakker et al. (2007) also emphasised that emotional stability correlates with reduced burnout rates and increased job engagement, underscoring the significance of this feature in mitigating occupational stress.

The findings demonstrate that years of experience are essential in influencing stress levels, since more seasoned educators report markedly lower stress levels compared to their less experienced peers. This outcome aligns with prior research (Hakanen et al., 2006; Çetin & Jennings, 2024), indicating that accumulating experience improves teachers' capacity to manage professional issues. Veteran educators are inclined to have cultivated efficient coping mechanisms over time, hence diminishing their vulnerability to professional stress (Shirom, 2003).

Unexpectedly, other personality traits such as responsibility, control, and social characteristics did not exhibit significant associations with occupational stress levels. This contrasts other studies (Judge & Zapata, 2015; Burić & Moè, 2020), which indicate that conscientiousness and social adaptation enhance stress management. A potential reason for this gap is that physical education teachers may depend more on emotional resilience than on organisational skills or social contacts to cope with occupational stress.

Moreover, the unexpectedly low levels of occupational stress identified within the sample indicate that physical education teachers regard their professional obstacles as manageable. This may be ascribed to the characteristics of their profession, which entails physical exertion and dynamic interactions, potentially functioning as stress alleviators (Capel & Whitehead, 2013; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). These findings correspond with Schaufeli and Taris (2014), who contend that job demands surpassing coping capacities result in stress, although good coping strategies can alleviate its adverse impacts.

A significant factor is the importance of workplace conditions, as emphasised in prior study. Elements include interactions with administrators, resource accessibility, and institutional backing significantly influence occupational stress levels (Beehr & Newman, 1978; Travers, 2001; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). This study primarily examined personality qualities; however, future research could investigate the interplay between individual characteristics and contextual factors in influencing stress experiences.

These findings underscore the necessity of cultivating emotional stability in physical education teachers to mitigate stress and improve job satisfaction.

Educational policymakers and school administrators should contemplate integrating professional development programs designed to enhance teachers'

emotional resilience and stress management methods. Moreover, mentorship programs that connect novice teachers with experienced professionals may assist new educators in cultivating good coping strategies early in their careers.

Notwithstanding the significant findings, this study possesses numerous limitations that warrant acknowledgement. The sample size was modest (65 participants), constraining the generalisability of the findings to a wider group of physical education instructors. Subsequent research ought to incorporate larger and more heterogeneous samples to improve the validity of the results (Çetin & Jennings, 2024). Secondly, the study depended on self-reported measures, which may introduce response bias, since participants could have offered socially desirable answers instead of truthful representations of their experiences (Shirom, 2003). Utilising supplementary data gathering techniques, such as interviews or observational studies, may yield a more thorough evaluation of personality traits and occupational stress (John & Srivastava, 1999). Third, the study was done in a specific geographical region (Ouargla), potentially constraining the generalisability of the findings to different educational situations. Subsequent research ought to investigate cross-cultural comparisons to ascertain the existence of analogous trends across diverse educational environments (Burić & Moè, 2020).

This study exclusively examined personality traits and occupational stress, excluding potential moderating factors such as organisational climate, leadership styles, and individual coping mechanisms (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Examining these supplementary variables may yield a more comprehensive insight into how physical education instructors cope with stress and sustain well-being in their career.

Conclusions

This study enhances the existing literature on personality traits and occupational stress by emphasising the significant influence of emotional stability on stress management in physical education teachers. The results indicate that although personality factors are significant, years of experience considerably affect occupational stress levels, with more seasoned teachers exhibiting reduced stress levels. Future research may investigate the interplay between external factors, such as the school environment and administrative assistance, and personality traits in relation to occupational stress. By executing focused interventions that bolster emotional resilience, educational institutions can assist instructors in managing stress more efficiently, resulting in enhanced well-being and professional success.

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