

# Investigation Personality Traits of Teachers who Work in Mainstream Schools and in Schools for Children with Learning Difficulties/Disabilities According to some Variables

By

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## Abstract

*The aim of present study was to investigate the personality traits of teachers who work in mainstream schools and in schools for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (SEN) according to some variables. This study included the teachers who worked during academic year in Kutahya and other cities in Turkey. A total of 340 teachers, 174 worked in SEN schools and 166 worked in mainstream schools, were participated voluntarily. "Personal Information Form" prepared by the investigator and "Eysenck Personality Questionnaire" were used to collect information of teachers. As a statistical method, SPSS packet programme was used to analyze the data at the level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  meaningfulness. In order to determine whether the personality traits of teachers differ with respect to the variables of age, gender, marital status, exercise and school type; independent samples t-test and One-way ANOVA were employed. For the differences between groups, Tukey HSD was performed as the second level test. The results of this study showed that there were found significant differences in personality trait points of teachers according to age groups, gender, marital status and exercise, while there were no found significant difference regarding to school type. Eventually, it was concluded that teachers in this study generally tended to show more extrovert behavior and less psychotic behavior in all personality tests.*

**Keywords:** Education, Learning disabilities, Personality, Exercise

## 1. Introduction

Personality is a term including whole interests, attitudes, skills, physical appearances, speech style and orientation of people. In addition, personality is unique and a whole with harmony (Yanbasti, 1990). According to another definition, personality is a combination of hereditary characters and developmental effects. In other words, personality is a consistent correlation factor which associates the innate features and learning obtained after birth and differentiates the people from the others (Kaya, 2003). According to Feshbach, personality is a total of characteristics of physical, social and cultural environment (Feshbach and Weiner, 1991). Teachers' ability to organize classrooms and manage the students' behavior is highly important in achieving positive educational outcomes (Braden and Smith, 2006; Oliver and Reschly, 2007; Burkett, 2011; Aliakbari and Darabi, 2013). Teachers, as leaders, are able to affect their students' performances, goal attainment, and behaviors. According to Etheridge (2010) differences in personality among teachers can affect teacher's communication with students, teachers' abilities to consider students' needs and handle differences in thoughts about discipline and classroom management. Compared to other professions, teaching is considered a high stress occupation (McShane and Von Glinow, 2005). This results in higher levels of job stress among educators, which, in turn, lead to increased amounts of turnover, higher job dissatisfaction, poor performance and staff health problems. Nevertheless, some researchers (Male and May, 1997) argue that teachers in special education may experience higher levels of stress than their colleagues in general education. High stress levels in special educators result in various adverse situations such as job dissatisfaction, burnout and eventually leaving the field of teaching

or transferring to mainstream schools (Lazuras, 2006). So that, teachers' personality traits are so important factor in school environment.

To measure personality traits, there are so many personality scales, which are used all around world. One of them is The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ). The EPQ (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1975; Barrett and Eysenck, 1984) is the most well-known and studied assessment instrument that measures the three broad dimensions of Eysenck's personality theory; that is, psychoticism, extraversion and neuroticism and also includes a lie scale measuring dissimulation/conformity (Ortet et al, 1999). Neuroticism is the first basic dimension which differentiates adaptation and emotional stability in regard to not being able to adopt and emotional instability. The typical neurotic has a tendency towards anxiety and depression, has low self-esteem, is emotional and reacts irrationally. Extraversion is a basic personality dimension which relates to sociability and being friendly. Persons with high scores on a dimension of extraversion are talkative and friendly, self-assured, active, like excitements, by their nature are cheerful, optimistic and full of energy. The typical psychoticism high scorer is aggressive, cold, antisocial, tough-minded and insensitive to others (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1975).

In conclusion, the aim of present study was to investigate the personality traits of teachers who work within mainstream schools and schools for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (SEN), according to variables of age, gender, marital status, exercise and school type.

## 2. Methods

### *Participants*

The universe of study is made up of the teachers working in the cities of Kutahya, Bilecik, Bursa, Isparta and Antalya in the academic year. A total of 340 teachers (141 males, 198 females), were selected through random selection method from the universe, participated voluntarily in this research.

### *Data Collection Tools*

Personal Information Form was used to collect socio-demographic characteristics of teachers (Age, gender, marital status, school type and exercise). Eysenck Personality Questionnaire were used to collect personality traits information of teachers. Francis et al. (1992) made up Revised Short Form (RSF) by revising the EPQ (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1975) and the shorter version of it (48 questions) (Eysenck, Eysenck and Barrett, 1985). In Turkey, studies of the validity and reliability of EPQ - RSF were made by Karanci et al. (2007). In this form, there are the four indices of extraversion, neuroticism, psychoticism and the lie scale each contain 6 items. The participants are asked to respond to 24 questions as Yes (1) – No (0) format in this survey. The point which can be obtained from each personality trait ranges 0-6. However, substances of 3, 5, 7, 10, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, are scored reversely.

### *Statistical Analysis*

As a statistical method, SPSS packet programme was used to analyze the data at the level of  $\alpha= 0.05$  meaningfulness. In order to determine the levels of personality traits of the teachers, measures of mean and standard deviation were calculated. Besides this, to be able to determine whether the levels of personality traits of teachers differ with respect to the variables of age, gender, marital status, exercise and school type; independent samples t-test and One-way ANOVA were employed. In order to determine the differences between groups, Turkey HSD was performed as the second level test.

## 3. Results

The sample consisted of 340 individuals (141 males, 198 females) aged 20–50 and above. The results of this study showed that there were found significant differences between subscales of personality scale and age groups of teachers, which are extraversion ( $F_{2,775} = ,012$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and lie scale ( $F_{3,043} = ,007$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 1). The points of extraversion in the age groups of 25-28 ( $M= 3,80 \pm 1,80$ ) and 38-43 ( $M=$

4,21±1,73) were significantly higher than the 44-49 age group (M= 2,29±1,65) ( $p < 0.05$ ). The points of lie scale in the age groups of 20-24 (M= 3,68±1,55) and 25-28 (M= 3,80±1,66) were significantly lower than in the 50 and above age group (M= 4,91±1,31) ( $p < 0.05$ ). Moreover, the highest score is belong to lie scale and secondly, extraversion follow this. The lowest score is belong to the psychoticism subscale.

**Table 1. Variance analysis results regarding to points of personality traits and age**

|                     | <i>Groups</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Sd</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| <i>Extraversion</i> | 20-24         | 3.74        | 1.91      | 2.775    | .012*       |
|                     | 25-28         | 3.80        | 1.80      |          |             |
|                     | 29-33         | 3.63        | 1.97      |          |             |
|                     | 34-37         | 3.42        | 2.03      |          |             |
|                     | 38-43         | 4.21        | 1.73      |          |             |
|                     | 44-49         | 2.29        | 1.65      |          |             |
|                     | 50- +         | 4.00        | 1.95      |          |             |
| <i>Neuroticism</i>  | 20-24         | 2.71        | 1.90      | 1.419    | .207        |
|                     | 25-28         | 2.64        | 1.78      |          |             |
|                     | 29-33         | 2.34        | 1.79      |          |             |
|                     | 34-37         | 2.47        | 1.96      |          |             |
|                     | 38-43         | 2.74        | 1.99      |          |             |
|                     | 44-49         | 2.19        | 1.81      |          |             |
|                     | 50- +         | 1.57        | 1.56      |          |             |
| <i>Lie Scale</i>    | 20-24         | 3.68        | 1.55      | 3.043    | .007*       |
|                     | 25-28         | 3.80        | 1.66      |          |             |
|                     | 29-33         | 4.17        | 1.52      |          |             |
|                     | 34-37         | 4.04        | 1.64      |          |             |
|                     | 38-43         | 4.64        | 1.51      |          |             |
|                     | 44-49         | 4.62        | 1.56      |          |             |
|                     | 50- +         | 4.91        | 1.31      |          |             |
| <i>Psychoticism</i> | 20-24         | 1.62        | 1.16      | 1.352    | .234        |
|                     | 25-28         | 1.64        | 1.43      |          |             |
|                     | 29-33         | 1.32        | 1.31      |          |             |
|                     | 34-37         | 1.30        | 1.29      |          |             |
|                     | 38-43         | 1.07        | 1.11      |          |             |
|                     | 44-49         | 1.05        | 1.12      |          |             |
|                     | 50- +         | 3           | 7         |          |             |

0.05

**Table 2. T-test Results Regarding to Points of Personality Traits and Gender**

|                     | <i>Groups</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Sd</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>Sig.</i> |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| <i>Extraversion</i> | <i>Female</i> | 3.81        | 1.92      | 1.807    | .072        |
|                     | <i>Male</i>   | 3.43        | 1.93      |          |             |
| <i>Neuroticism</i>  | <i>Female</i> | 2.42        | 1.84      | -0.24    | .810        |
|                     | <i>Male</i>   | 2.47        | 1.87      |          |             |
| <i>Lie Scale</i>    | <i>Female</i> | 4.38        | 1.53      | 3.054    | .002*       |
|                     | <i>Male</i>   | 3.85        | 1.63      |          |             |
| <i>Psychoticism</i> | <i>Female</i> | 1.20        | 1.19      | -3.004   | .003*       |
|                     | <i>Male</i>   | 1.62        | 1.38      |          |             |

0.05

The results of study showed that there were found significant differences between lie scale ( $t_{0.05:337} = 3,054$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and psychoticism ( $t_{0.05:337} = -3,004$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and gender of teachers, although there were not found in extraversion and neuroticism (Table 2). The points of lie scale in male ( $M = 3,85 \pm 1,63$ ) were significantly lower than in female ( $M = 4,38 \pm 1,53$ ) ( $p < 0.05$ ). The points of psychoticism in the male group ( $M = 1,62 \pm 1,38$ ) were significantly higher than in the female group ( $M = 1,20 \pm 1,19$ ) ( $p < 0.05$ ). The highest point is belong to lie scale and secondly, extraversion follow this. The lowest score is belong to the psychoticism subscale.

**Table 3. Variance Analysis Results Regarding to Points of Personality Traits and Marital Status**

|                     | <i>Groups</i>   | <i>N</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Sd</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------|-------------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| <i>Extraversion</i> | <i>Married</i>  | 255      | 3.62        | 1.93      | .426     | .654        |
|                     | <i>Single</i>   | 77       | 3.69        | 1.97      |          |             |
|                     | <i>Divorced</i> | 8        | 4.25        | 1.58      |          |             |
| <i>Neuroticism</i>  | <i>Married</i>  | 255      | 2.31        | 1.80      | 3.074    | .048*       |
|                     | <i>Single</i>   | 77       | 2.90        | 1.97      |          |             |
|                     | <i>Divorced</i> | 8        | 2.38        | 1.30      |          |             |
| <i>Lie Scale</i>    | <i>Married</i>  | 255      | 4.34        | 1.58      | 6.227    | .002*       |
|                     | <i>Single</i>   | 77       | 3.64        | 1.51      |          |             |
|                     | <i>Divorced</i> | 8        | 3.75        | 1.67      |          |             |
| <i>Psychoticism</i> | <i>Married</i>  | 255      | 1.24        | 1.25      | 5.271    | .006*       |
|                     | <i>Single</i>   | 77       | 1.74        | 1.27      |          |             |
|                     | <i>Divorced</i> | 8        | 1.88        | 1.29      |          |             |

:0.05

The results of study showed that there were found significant differences between neuroticism ( $F_{3,074} = ,048$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), lie scale ( $F_{6,227} = ,002$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), psychoticism ( $F_{5,271} = ,006$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and marital status of teachers, although there were not found in extraversion subscale (Table 3). The points of neuroticism in married group ( $M = 2,31 \pm 1,80$ ) were significantly lower than in divorced ( $M = 2,38 \pm 1,30$ ) and single group ( $M = 2,90 \pm 1,97$ ) ( $p < 0.05$ ). The points of lie scale in single group ( $M = 3,64 \pm 1,51$ ) were significantly lower than in divorced ( $M = 3,75 \pm 1,67$ ) and married group ( $M = 4,34 \pm 1,58$ ) ( $p < 0.05$ ). The points of psychoticism in married group ( $M = 1,24 \pm 1,25$ ) were significantly lower than in single ( $M = 1,74 \pm 1,27$ ) and divorced group ( $M = 1,88 \pm 1,89$ ) ( $p < 0.05$ ). The highest point is belong to lie scale and secondly, extraversion follow this. The lowest score is belong to the psychoticism subscale.

**Table 4. T-test Results Regarding to Points of Personality Traits and Exercise**

|                     | <i>Groups</i> | <i>N</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Sd</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>Sig.</i> |
|---------------------|---------------|----------|-------------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| <i>Extraversion</i> | <i>Yes</i>    | 134      | 4.00        | 1.81      | 2.705    | .007*       |
|                     | <i>No</i>     | 206      | 3.43        | 1.97      |          |             |
| <i>Neuroticism</i>  | <i>Yes</i>    | 134      | 2.37        | 1.84      | -.609    | .543        |
|                     | <i>No</i>     | 206      | 2.49        | 1.85      |          |             |
| <i>Lie Scale</i>    | <i>Yes</i>    | 134      | 4.07        | 1.64      | -.843    | .400        |
|                     | <i>No</i>     | 206      | 4.22        | 1.55      |          |             |
| <i>Psychoticism</i> | <i>Yes</i>    | 134      | 1.49        | 1.26      | 1.362    | .174        |
|                     | <i>No</i>     | 206      | 1.29        | 1.30      |          |             |

:0.05

The findings of study showed that there were found significant differences between extraversion and exercise ( $t_{0.05:338} = 2,705$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), although there were not found in neuroticism, lie scale and psychoticism depending on exercise ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 4). The points of extraversion in the group of teachers who do exercise ( $M = 4,00 \pm 1,81$ ) were significantly higher than in the group of teachers who do

not exercise ( $M= 3,43\pm 1,97$ ) ( $p < 0.05$ ). Moreover, the highest point is belong to lie scale and secondly, extraversion follow this. The lowest score is belong to the psychoticism subscale.

**Table 5. T-test Results Regarding to Points of Personality Traits and School Type**

|                     | <i>Groups</i>     | <i>N</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Sd</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>Sig.</i> |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| <b>Extraversion</b> | <i>Mainstream</i> | 166      | 3.77        | 1.92      | 1.049    | .295        |
|                     | <i>SEN</i>        | 174      | 3.55        | 1.93      |          |             |
| <b>Neuroticism</b>  | <i>Mainstream</i> | 166      | 2.47        | 1.91      | .280     | .780        |
|                     | <i>SEN</i>        | 174      | 2.41        | 1.78      |          |             |
| <b>Lie Scale</b>    | <i>Mainstream</i> | 166      | 4.05        | 1.62      | -1.254   | .211        |
|                     | <i>SEN</i>        | 174      | 4.27        | 1.55      |          |             |
| <b>Psychoticism</b> | <i>Mainstream</i> | 166      | 1.23        | 1.19      | -1.868   | .063        |
|                     | <i>SEN</i>        | 174      | 1.49        | 1.36      |          |             |

:0.05

The psychoticism points of teachers in SEN schools ( $M= 1,49\pm 1,36$ ) were higher than teachers in mainstream schools ( $M= 1,23\pm 1,19$ ), although there were not found significant difference. Also, the highest point is belong to lie scale and secondly, extraversion follow this. The lowest score is belong to the psychoticism subscale in this study.

#### 4. Discussion

The aim of present study was to investigate the level of personality traits of teachers who work in mainstream and SEN schools according to some variables. The sample consisted of 340 teachers (141 males, 198 females), aged 20–50 and above, were participated voluntarily.

The results showed that there were found significant differences between subscales of personality scale and age groups of teachers, which are extraversion and lie scale. Some studies also showed that older individuals are less extraverted than younger individuals (Donnellan and Lucas, 2008; Lucas and Donnellan, 2009; Anusic et al, 2011; Walton et al, 2012). Accordingly, it can be said that teachers in the age group of 25-28 and 38-43 tended to show more extrovert behavior than teachers in the 44-49 age group. Teachers in the age groups of 50 and above age group tended to say more lie than teachers in the age group of 20-24 and 25-28. Also, the results of t-test showed that there were found significant differences between lie scale and psychoticism of personality scale depending on gender of teachers. The points of lie scale in male were significantly lower than in female. In Karanci et al. (2007) study, female scored higher than male in the lie scale subscale. It should be noted that the results of the present study are as opposed to the results of Deniz et al. (2012) study. It was observed that the points of lie scale of male pre-service teachers' ( $M= 3.22$ ) were higher than in female pre-service teachers ( $M= 2.44$ ). The points of psychoticism in the male group were significantly higher than in the female group. Terence and Kirkcaldy (1998) found that males scored significantly higher than females on psychoticism. But, in Deniz' study (2012), there was no found a significant difference on psychoticism between gender. There was no significant difference on extraversion between gender in our study. Some studies support this finding (Terence and Kirkcaldy, 1998; Ulucan and Bahadir, 2011), although Gelissen and Graaf (2005) cited that women have a significantly higher score on extraversion. Consequently, it can be said that the female group tended to say more lie than the male group. In psychoticism subscale, the male group tended to show more psychotic behavior than the female group in our study.

In addition, the results showed that there were found significant differences between neuroticism, lie scale, psychoticism, and marital status of teachers, although there were not found in extraversion subscale. As a result, it can be said that teachers in the married group have less tendency towards neurotic behavior than teachers in the divorced and single group. Besides this, teachers in the married group

tended to say more lie than teachers in the divorced and single group. Furthermore, In psychoticism subscale, teachers in the divorced group tended to show more aggressive, cold, antisocial, tough-minded and insensitive behaviours than teachers in the single and married group. Also, neuroticism and consciousness have been found to be associated with early marriage (Kiernan, 1986; Lundberg, 2009). In particular, neuroticism has repeatedly related (negatively) to marital adjustment and satisfaction. Additionally, other broad personality characteristics, such as agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and openness have at times been associated with marital adjustment and satisfaction (Cook et al, 2005). For instance, in a study by Casillas and Watson (2003), examination of marital and other types of satisfaction showed that men and women who scored lower on neuroticism and higher on agreeableness measures at the beginning of the study reported being more satisfied with their marital relationship.

Moreover, the results indicated that there were found significant differences between extraversion and exercise, although there were not found in neuroticism, lie scale and psychoticism depending on exercise. Accordingly, it can be said that teachers who do exercise, tended to show more sociable, talkative, friendly, self-assured, active, like excitements, cheerful, optimistic and full of energy behaviours than teachers who do not exercise. These findings support literature showing that exercisers are more extraverted and less neurotic than their non-exercising counterparts (Howard et al, 1986; Potgieter and Venter, 1995; Szabo, 1992; Yeung and Hemsley, 1997; Courneya and Hellsten, 1998, Moor et al, 2006). The results of this study showed that there were not found significant differences between points of extraversion, neuroticism, lie scale and psychoticism of teachers according to school type. Consequently, it can be said that teachers in SEN schools tended to show more aggressive, cold, antisocial, tough-minded and insensitive behaviours than teachers in mainstream schools. Eventually, it was concluded that teachers in this study generally tended to show more extrovert behavior and less psychotic behavior in all personality tests.

## 5. Conclusion

The present study looked at the personality traits of teachers who work in mainstream schools and SEN according to some variables. When teachers' personality traits were analyzed according to age, it was found that teachers in the age group of 25-28 and 38-43 tended to show more extrovert behavior than teachers in the 44-49 age group. When teachers' personality traits were analyzed according to gender, the male group tended to show more psychotic behavior than the female group in our study. When teachers' personality traits were analyzed according to marital status, it was found that teachers in the married group have less tendency towards neurotic behavior than teachers in the divorced and single group. Furthermore, teachers in the divorced group tended to show more aggressive, cold, antisocial, tough-minded and insensitive behaviours than teachers in the single and married group. When teachers' personality traits were analyzed according to exercise, it was found that teachers who do exercise, tended to show more sociable, talkative, friendly, self-assured, active, like excitements, cheerful, optimistic and full of energy behaviours than teachers who do not exercise. When teachers' personality traits were analyzed according to school type, it was found that there were not found significant differences between points of extraversion, neuroticism, lie scale and psychoticism of teachers. At the end of this study, it can be said that teachers' personality traits are highly important in achieving positive educational outcomes in the both schools. Generally, teachers, who work with children with disabilities, under most stressful situation.

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