

The relationship between personality types A and B in stress and stress-causing characteristics of mother and child

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ABSTRACT

The present study is intended to investigate the relationship between personality types A and B in stress and stress-causing characteristics of mother and child. The research method is descriptive-correlational. To this end, 100 individuals (63 subjects with type A and 37 subjects with type B) were selected through simple random sampling method from the intended population including mothers working as a nurse in Kashmar hospitals aged between 25 and 35 years with at least one child and completed Abidin Parenting Stress Index Questionnaire (1990), Friedman and Ulmer Personality Type Inventory (1984) and Rice Job Stress Questionnaire (1992). Further, to analyze the data, descriptive statistics method, Pearson correlation method, multivariate regression analysis and independent t test were applied. The research results demonstrated that the rate of job stress is significantly different between individuals with personality types A and B ($P < 0.05$). Besides, the rate of maternal stress in people with personality type A and those with personality type B shows significant difference ($P < 0.05$). As a result, personality types A and B significantly predict stress and stress-causing characteristics of mother and child.

KEY WORDS: PERSONALITY TYPES A AND B, STRESS AND STRESS-CAUSING CHARACTERISTICS OF MOTHER AND CHILD

INTRODUCTION

Stress is one of the most important causes of the incidence of physical and mental disorders. Some have considered stress as the non-specific response of the body to any situation that needs compatibility; whether it is a

pleasant (job promotion) or unpleasant (dismissal from work) situation. However, new findings suggest that there are physiological differences between the stress caused by favorable and unfavorable situations. Stress is associated with health and performance; its low level can improve the health and performance and its high

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levels endanger the health and impair the performance (Dadsetan, 2007). Numerous and different antecedents, causes and sources can be introduced for stress so that Lazarus and Folkman (1984) believe that all events are potentially stress-causing and Holmes and Rahe (1967) observe that all changes in life, whether positive or negative, produce stress. Lazarus (1971) states that stress refers to a wide range of problems that are distinct from other problem areas. He believes that the individual's reaction depends on how the individual (consciously or unconsciously) interprets or evaluates the meaning of these traumatic, threatening or challenging events (Zaharakar, 2008). As mentioned, one of the stress-causing factors is job and conditions of the workplace, which includes any physical event or mental discomfort occurring in the working environment. These events cause disorder in the individual's performance and ultimately disorder in the organizational function in the long run (Nicole & Tymnz, 2005). A large group of these employees comprise nurses. Nursing profession creates great job stress due to the need for high skill and concentration at work, strong team coordination and 24-hour care (Vickers, 2003). Nursing staff in the workplace are faced with a large number of stressors (Koshneer, 2000). International Labor Organization has estimated the costs imposed on countries due to job stress to be 1 to 5.3 percent of the gross domestic product (Tangri, 2003). Currently, with regard to raising the awareness of employees and correcting the legal laws, percentage of the problems and costs associated with job stress is on the rise (Hole et al., 2006). It has been determined in various studies that around 30% of the labor force in developed countries suffers from job stress and this rate is even greater in developing countries.

Parental stress is a term that determines the perception of stress in the parent-child system which embraces both the child's stress-causing characteristics and parents' responses to these characteristics (Abidin, 1983). Experience of parental stress by different researchers (e.g. Miller & Sillie, 1980; Kwok & Wong, 1999; Creasey & Jarvis, 2003) showed that parenting is stressful for both parents, but mothers experience more parental stress than fathers (Wook & Wong, 1999). Development in young children demands closer attention and monitoring on the part of mothers due to the functions of the dynamics of development in early childhood (birth to seven years old). Mothers spend more time with their child while fathers spend this time outside the house. This attention and monitoring can itself be a source of stress in parents especially mothers (Shek & Tsang, 1993; Creasey & Jarvis, 2003).

Adjustment of mothers with parenting problems and the resulting pressures has encouraged the researchers to study the impact of parental stress on the mother's

health. By the same token, Lahelma, Arber, Kivela and Roes (2002) consider parenting alongside spousal relationships as one of the multiple roles which have negative effects on various components of maternal health. Investigations of Gelfand, Teti and Fox (1992) revealed the influence of parental stress on increased depression and stress in parents as two major components of mental health (Rodrigous et al., 2003).

One of the most remarkable efforts made to build a relationship between personality differences and the ability to cope with stress belongs to Friedman and Rozenmen (1959). They introduced two personality types A and B. Personality types A refers to someone who is highly competitive, bored, vengeful and vibrant and speaks quickly. Personality type B is characterized by people who are less competitive, are not vengeful and difficult, have more patience and speak or move with more peace; additionally, the latter group is less prone to cardiovascular diseases (Panel, 1981). Some individuals create stress for themselves or aggravate their stress with the help of irrational beliefs. Some other create stress as a result of type A behavior (Spencer; cited in Hamzeh Ganji, 1999). Conversely, type B individuals take things easy and give more importance to the quality of life and have less stress (Spencer; cited in Hamzeh Ganji, 1999). Based on the foregoing, the present study seeks to investigate whether there is a significant relationship between personality types A and B with stress and stress-causing characteristics of mother and child.

METHODS

The present research is descriptive-correlational. The statistical population comprises mothers working as a nurse in Kashmar hospitals with the age of 25 to 35 years with at least one child. With respect to the mentioned statistical population, the sample size of this study includes 100 people who were selected through simple random sampling and were assigned into two A and B groups based on the 25-question personality test (A -%63) (B -%37).

RESEARCH TOOLS

1) Parenting Stress Index Questionnaire (PSI): To measure parental stress, Parenting Stress Index Questionnaire (Abidin, 1990) was used. Alpha reliability coefficient for each subtest, each domain and total scores was calculated by the test-maker. The rate of reliability in the population of 2633 people is 0.70 to 0.83 in the child domain and 0.70 to 0.84 in the parent domain and in the whole scale, the rate of reliability is 0.95. This rate of reliability coefficient can represent the internal con-

sistency of evaluations (Hatami, 2009). In a study conducted interculturally, the reliability rate of the scale is similar to that of the original sample. The consistency rate of the test was obtained in four different studies through assessing reliability using test-retest method. Three weeks after the initial implementation, Spearman correlation coefficients in the child and parent domains were obtained to be respectively 0.817 and 0.706, which indicate the existence of a strong and significant correlation ($P < 0.01$) during three weeks (Abidin, 1990). Moreover, in terms of reliability, the researcher estimated Cronbach's alpha to be 0.92 (Hatami, 2009).

2) Friedman and Ulmer Personality Type Inventory: To separate personality types from each other, Friedman and Ulmer Personality Type Inventory (1984) was used. This scale has been developed by Friedman and Ulmer (1984), Matthews et al. (1982) and Mourant et al. (1983) according to the characteristics of type A individuals. Positive responses have been prepared based on type A behavior and show type A behavior. Ganji has translated this questionnaire in 2002. In most of the studies conducted regarding the validity of this scale, coefficients above 70% have been achieved (Hasanzadeh, 2005).

3) Rice Job Stress Questionnaire: To measure job stress, Rice 57-question scale was employed. This questionnaire has been tested in relation to 275 school teachers. Three sections of this questionnaire are quite similar to other questionnaires of this type. The rate of validity is 0.921 for the whole questionnaire and 0.898, 0.883 and 0.816 for its three sections. The full validity is equal to 1. Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire was calculated to be 0.89 (Hatami, 2009).

RESULTS

The average age of mothers in the experimental group is 29 years and in terms of education, 85 subjects have a bachelor's degree and 15 subjects have a master's degree.

Descriptive statistics of the research variables have been provided in Table 1.

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between personality type A and job stress of mothers.

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between personality type B and job stress of mothers.

It should be initially proved that job stress of mothers is normally distributed in both personality types. For this purpose, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied. The significance levels of this test for the variable of job stress of mothers in each of personality types A and B were respectively 0.954 and 0.717, which are greater than 0.05. Hence, job stress of mothers has a normal distribution in each personality type. In the following, independent t-test was used to compare the average job stress in both A and B groups.

Significance level of t test is 0.00 which is lower than 0.05. Thus, there is significant difference between personality types A and B in terms of job stress. Here, hypotheses 1 and 2 were proved, meaning that the rate of job stress is different in people with personality types A and B.

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between personality type A and maternal stress (stress-causing characteristics).

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between personality type B and maternal stress (stress-causing characteristics).

It should be initially proved that maternal stress is normally distributed in both personality types. To this end, like the first and second hypotheses, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied. The significance levels of this test for the variable of maternal stress (stress-causing characteristics) in each of personality types A and B were respectively 0.324 and 0.218, which are greater than 0.05. Therefore, the variable of maternal stress

Table 1.

Research components	Number	Job stress		Maternal stress		Total stress	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Group A	63	145.62	12.608	153.38	9.37	145.62	12.608
Group B	37	130.68	14.756	137.76	11.696	130.68	14.756

Table 2. Independent samples test to compare the average job stress in A and B groups

Student's t-test for the assumption of the equality of means			Levene's test for the assumption of the equality of variances			
Degree of freedom	Significance level	Mean difference	Standard error deviation	T	Significance level	F
98	0.000	14.943	2.783	5.369	0.777	0.080

Table 3. Independent samples test to compare the average maternal stress in A and B groups						
Student's t-test for the assumption of the equality of means			Levene's test for the assumption of the equality of variances			
Degree of freedom	Significance level	Mean difference	Standard error deviation	T	Significance level	F
98	0.000	15.624	2.130	7.334	0.378	0.785

(stress-causing characteristics) has a normal distribution in each personality type. In the following, independent t-test was used to compare the average maternal stress (stress-causing characteristics) in both A and B groups.

Significance level of t test is 0.00 which is lower than 0.05. So, there is significant difference between personality types A and B in terms of maternal stress (stress-causing characteristics). Here, hypotheses 3 and 4 were proved, meaning that the rate of maternal stress is different in people with A and B personality types.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The overall results of the research demonstrate that there is a significant relationship between personality types A and B with job stress of mothers and also, there is significant difference between these two personality types in terms of maternal stress and job stress of mothers. For example, it can be said that these two personality types do not show similar reactions in the face of mental pressure and job stress and based on the foregoing, the more the stressful events of life, the greater the job stress will be. Further, individuals with personality type A (high scores in the test) show less compatibility with pressure and stress and are likely to receive mental pressure and on the contrary, more compatibility with stress and mental pressure is seen in people with personality type B.

First and second hypotheses: The results suggested that the rate of job stress is different in individuals with personality types A and B. These results are consistent with the findings achieved by Aqilinezhad et al. (2007), Nasrollahi et al. (2013), Keergard (2001), Kittel (2005), Friedman and Rosenman (1974), Friedman (2006), Atashafrouz (2007) and Yarahmadi Khorasani (2013). In explaining the existing results, it can be stated that with regard to the component of personality types A and B, a significant relationship exists between the component of personality type and job stress of mothers. It should be remembered that each of personality types A and B has its own special features and accordingly, type A can be distinguished from type B. For example, type A is always on the move whereas type B has no concern about time. Type A individuals walk quickly but type B individuals are patient. Type A group eats fast while

type B group eats food slowly and calmly. Type A talks rapidly but type B does not brag and speaks slowly. The tone of speech in type A individuals is harsh while type B individuals have a gentle tone. Type A people are not satisfied with their job and attempt to reach higher levels whereas type B people are happy with their job. Considering the mentioned features, it can be easily claimed that these two personality types are significantly different from each other and type A is more susceptible to exhaustion and physical and mental problems. Based on what has been said so far, it can be concluded that the closer the personality type to A group, the higher the risk of job burnout will be and vice versa. Consequently, based on the foregoing, hypotheses 1 and 2 are confirmed and it can be said that there is a significant relationship between personality types A and B with job burnout and also, a significant difference exists between these two personality types in terms of the risk of job burnout.

Third and fourth hypotheses: The results indicated that the rate of maternal stress is different among individuals with personality types A and B. Additionally, it can be mentioned that the dimensions of stress-causing characteristic of the mother such as depression and dissatisfaction, parental attachment, role limitations, sense of competence and social isolation have a significant relationship with the personality type of mothers and a significant difference was observed between these two types. Results of the present research are congruent with the studies carried out by Lawson and Shen (2002), Schaefer (1991), Chandan (2005), Stura (1990), Greenberg and Baron (2003) and Ross (2001).

In explaining these results, it can be stated that type A individuals feel threatened and stressed even under normal conditions because of their low self-esteem and thus make extra efforts to improve their condition. In this regard, Callahan (1989) came to the conclusion that mothers with low self-esteem experience higher levels of parental stress and often seek medical help, but there is a possibility that low self-esteem in mothers who constantly get sick results from low levels of parental stress and in this case, they should benefit from counseling and psychological support more than medical care. In such cases, before adopting any therapy method, health status of parents should be examined. With respect to

what has been mentioned above, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between the dimensions of stress-causing characteristics of mothers and their personality type, meaning that parents with personality type A have more problems particularly in connection with their children and show features such as low self-esteem, few friends, depression and greater anxiety compared to type B individuals. Therefore, a significant difference can be clearly seen between the two groups. Based on the foregoing, hypotheses 3 and 4 are confirmed.

This study was faced with some limitations. The first limitation of this research was related to the noncooperation of subjects since the questions were numerous and time-consuming so that it was difficult for most of mothers to complete the questionnaires because they spent most of their time in hospital. Another limitation included constant presence in the hospital environment and the mismatch between the time of presence and working shifts of nurses, which was resolved by continued presence in their workplace. Finally, since the data has been collected from a small city, caution should be exercised in generalizing the results to other areas and other healthcare environments. With regard to these limitations and given that this study has been implemented in a correlational manner, causal relationships are not clear in it. Thus, to obtain more accurate results, it is recommended that causal relationships between the research variables be determined by an educational approach in future studies using experimental and quasi-experimental methods and since the quality of the mother's relationship can have a significant impact on compatibility and cognitive features of the child, stress including job stress which is one of the most important types of stress should be under the control of individuals and organizations and steps must be taken to reduce it. In this respect, institutions and organizations are recommended to provide an environment so that the employee can work with more peace of mind. This peace of mind can include working time management, timely payment of salaries and benefits, reducing the working pressure using additional forces and also selection of individuals with respect to their personality and psychological characteristics. Besides, because the personality type of people determines their type of behavior in the face of stressors, it is suggested that the presence of individuals in the workplace be used with regard to their abilities before their assignment. For this

purpose, personality tests can be applied. Apart from these measures, it is also recommended that individuals who are under extra pressure at work should be screened and trained using cognitive and behavioral techniques. To this end, individual and group therapies can also be named.

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