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PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS: THE CASE OF PEDAGOGICAL FORMATION STUDENTS

Research Article

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Abstract

In addition to the undergraduate programs provided by faculties of education, in Turkey, Pedagogical Formation Education Certificate Programs are also provided by these faculties. Graduates of such programs are positioned as teachers in Turkey, the same as the graduates of faculties of education. Individual differences of teachers are of great importance in terms of closeness and determination toward students. In addition to personality, psychological features are also closely related to their professional competence and success, quality of education in general, and –maybe more importantly- the safety of the students. In this study, it was aimed to provide insight about the individual differences of students who attend pedagogical formation training by investigating the psychological status of those students through the analysis of the relationship between depression, anxiety, stress, coping by humor levels, humor types and their type of personality. It was observed that 40.2% of participants were in mild depression while 25.9% of them were in moderate to severe levels. Associations were investigated by point bi-serial correlation technique and it was found that those participants with Type A personality had higher levels of depression, stress, anxiety, and self-defeating humor style.

Keywords: Teacher Training, Pedagogical Formation, A and B Type Personality, Depression, Anxiety.

1. Introduction

The teacher education system in Turkey follows a binary route. While undergraduate programs of faculties of education are the primary path to becoming a teacher, pedagogical formation training (PFT) programs offered by the same institutions serve as the secondary route for receiving teacher credentials. Teacher training task was considered as a matter of higher education and assigned to universities by Higher Education Law No 2547 which was effectuated in 1982 (Akyüz, 2006). All teacher training programs in Turkish universities were rearranged as 4-year B.Sc. programs in 1989. In order to meet the increased need for teachers, starting from 1997, compact teacher training programs were created in addition to the standard teacher training programs of the higher education institutions. However, the quality of those short-term teacher training programs is a hotly debated topic (Çocuk, Yokuş, & Tanrıseven, 2015; Eraslan, & Çakıcı, 2011; Kızılcıoğlu, 2006).

Instead of a full-fledged teacher training, PFT program provides students with a limited instruction but with full teacher credentials. Teacher credentials seem to not have a significant

predictive value in identifying competence of teachers (Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2004; Ripski, LoCasale-Crouch, & Decker, 2011). PFT programs enable those who don't hold a degree from a faculty of education to become a teacher. Despite not experiencing a formal higher education training, faculty of open university graduates are also entitled to receive teacher credentials by completing the aforementioned programs. What elevates the importance of the issue is the fact that those programs in question pave the way of being a teacher for anyone who wants to be one (Azar, 2011) over a period of time measured in months. The ability to earn full teacher credentials by a limited teacher training in a relatively short period of time is an important obstacle to training of qualified teachers (Köse, 2017).

PFT process has undergone many changes. The education in question which was applied in the form of a master's without thesis was started to be given through a "certificate education" after 2010-2011 academic year (Kartal & Afacan, 2013). In addition to the changes in the structure and contents of the program, PFT programs have been reinstated by the Council of Higher Education, despite being abolished many times due to lack of quality (Çocuk, Yokuş, & Tanrıseven, 2015). The fact that these programs have always been reopened in spite of being closed many times indicates that PFT practice will remain in effect for a while. Considering that the teacher is the most important element of the education system (Şişman, 2007); scientific examination of the PFT process which is the secondary route of the teacher training system and the persons who have the right to become teachers with PFT certificates will be useful for obtaining prior knowledge about the future structure of the Turkish education system.

It is considered as a serious problem by faculty members in these programs that candidates are not being tested for their personality and psychological status (Köse, 2017). Since their attitudes, behaviors and emotional reactions can affect the student from a young age, teachers should be competent in terms of all qualifications (Varış, 1988). In the process of the evaluation, selection, and training of the students who want to participate in the PFT certificate program, the personal characteristics of the candidate are important in terms of the competence, qualifications, and professional success of the trainee, and even of the quality of the education service in general (Süral, & Sarıtaş, 2015). Teachers' involvement with their students affects not only their school achievement but also their personality (Küçükahmet, 2005). Considering teachers' effects on and their capacities to reach the students, the safety of the students should not be overlooked as well.

The fact that teachers are very close to and have crucial effects on children from early ages on makes the individual characteristics of the teachers important as well as their professional competence. Characteristics that dispose a person towards certain behaviors, choices, and experiences such as personality traits and emotional states may play important roles in a teacher's ability to interact in meaningful, engaging, and effective ways with students (Ripski, LoCasale-Crouch, & Decker, 2011). Özdemir and Polat (2016) stated that teachers should have a "solid and balanced personality" because of their effects on the lives of students. Arı (2015) argues that, in addition to qualifications specific to teaching profession, certain personality characteristics must be found in teacher candidates. Ripski, LoCasale-Crouch, and Decker (2011) state that "personality traits, separate from their educational training, are useful in predicting attitudes, behaviors, performance, and outcomes in organizational setting" (p. 77).

Considering that they are role models for students; besides their professional qualifications and personalities, the psychological status of teachers can also influence the psychological states of the students (Özdemir & Polat, 2016). Mentally and psychologically healthy teachers are needed to guide the students (Evers, Tomic, & Brouwers, 2004). Studies have indicated that teachers' performance in the classroom is linked to emotional states such as depression, anxiety, and stress levels (Hamre & Pianta, 2004; Ripski, LoCasale-Crouch, & Decker, 2011;

Uzman & Telef, 2015). Depression, anxiety and stress are the most common psychological and / or psychiatric health problems teachers experience (Uzman & Telef, 2015). Moreover; Haslam, Atkinson, Brown, & Haslam (2005) report that depression and anxiety have been shown to impair work performance and safety.

Ripski, LoCasale-Crouch, and Decker (2011) reported that the levels of depression, anxiety, and stress were lower for prospective teachers when compared to non-teacher peers. In the same study; it has been reported that teacher candidates, who had higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress when they start teaching education, have implemented a less qualified teaching in the following years when they interact with students. Finally, Evers, Tomic, and Brouwers (2004) argue that mental issues may give way to teacher burnout which they describe as "emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment". They argue that teacher burnout negatively affects teachers, their students, and the educational system. Since perceived personal accomplishment is a factor in the teachers' strategies for coping with job stressors, psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, and stress weaken individual's ability to cope with those problems by reducing their sense of personal accomplishment through burnout. Moreover, interventions that reduce levels of anxiety and depression improve work performance (Ripski, LoCasale-Crouch, & Decker, 2011). Dumont and Provost (1999) conclude that social support doesn't necessarily help individuals with stress and depression. They argue that self-esteem, problem-solving and coping strategies, and positive social relationships are better protective factors.

Ripski, LoCasale-Crouch, and Decker (2011) stated that teacher's disposition and emotional state –particularly depression and stress- are related to his performance in the classroom and that this effectiveness is measured by the interaction between teachers and students. High negative emotions are predictive of poorer interactions between children and teachers (Hamre & Pianta, 2004). In addition to contributing to interaction between teachers and students, Chauvet and Hofmeyer (2007) state that humor is beneficial to both psychological well-being as well as a learning experience. They emphasized in their work that humor is a useful "coping strategy" in relation to psychological health. Özdemir, Sezgin, Kaya, and Receptoğlu (2011) emphasized that humor is a way of coping that enhances social relations, promotes interpersonal communication and relationship, and is useful for psychological health. Previous research indicate that humor is a natural and effective strategy for coping with stressors and negative emotional states (Brcic, Suedfeld, Johnson, Huynh, & Gushin, 2018; Eisenbarth, 2019; Lin, Li, & Han, 2018; Tagalidou, Loderer, Distlberger, & Laireiter, 2018; Tripathy, Tripathy, Gupta, & Kar, 2019). Hence, coping by humor is a strategy closely related to the psychological state of the individual and influences the interaction of the teacher with his / her students and therefore is closely related to the professionalism of the teacher.

Teacher burnout is associated with psychological status including psychosomatic symptoms (Sakharov & Farber, 1983) and mental health (Brenner & Bartell, 1984). Jepson and Forrest (2006) argue that, in addition to the environmental stressors and factors intrinsic to the teaching profession, personality may be another main contributory factor to teacher stress and burnout which is significantly related to teacher retention, turnover, and quality in teaching. They argue that individuals with Type A personality would show more pronounced physiological and emotional reactivity compared to Type B individuals and Type A behavior appears to mediate the existing effects of environmental stressors. It is necessary to develop and promote the use of instruments to accurately measure teacher burnout. Shedding light on the relationship between Type A personality and emotional states such as depression, anxiety, and stress may help develop a deeper understanding of individual differences required to better identify teachers and teacher candidates who are prone to such threats. It will also help develop better

coping strategies and methods which are especially useful for most vulnerable teachers and teacher candidates.

It should also be noted that, according to a study conducted on individuals between the ages 18 and 65 years in Oslo, capital of Norway, 13.4% of the population suffers from personality disorders (Torgersen, Kringlen, & Cramer, 2001). Jepson and Forrest (2006) state that personality trait appears to mediate the existing effects of environmental stressors. They argue that personality and individual differences are pivotal to understanding why some people suffer work-related stress.

Moreover, Arsenault and Dolan (1983) state that tolerance of stressors such as working conditions depends on individual characteristics such as Type A personality and “interaction between stressors and individual characteristics results in either ‘fit’ or ‘misfit’ which can be measured by the presence or absence of various signs and symptoms of strain”. They classify these signs and symptoms as “physiological (i.e. blood pressure, cholesterol, serum uric acid, etc.); psychological (i.e. depression, anxiety, job dissatisfaction, etc.); and behavioral (i.e. performance, absenteeism, sexual problems, drinking, excessive eating, etc.)”. Jepson and Forrest (2006) report that Type A behavior significantly predicts perceived stress and Type A personality shows more pronounced physiological and emotional reactivity compared to Type B. Thus, profession, personality traits, and physiological states have a dynamic relationship in which Type A personality seems to be a predictor.

Type A and B personality theory was first described by Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman in 1950s while researching the risk of developing coronary heart disease. Type A personality is characterized by time urgency, impatience, and hostility and traditionally reported to be associated with coronary heart disease (Hisam, Rahman, Mashhadi, & Raza, 2014). Friedman (1996) suggests that Type A behavior is expressed through three major symptoms: (1) free-floating hostility, which can be triggered by even minor incidents; (2) time urgency and impatience, which causes irritation and exasperation usually described as being "short-fused"; and (3) a competitive drive, which causes stress and an achievement-driven mentality. They are often described as impatient, hasty, impulsive, ambitious, hyperalert, proactive, anxious, hostile, angry, workaholic, and overly concerned with time management. Friedman (1996) describes Type B personality as the contrast to those of Type A. They are often described as comparatively more tolerant, more relaxed, less competitive, more patient, and easy-going. People with Type B personality tend to experience lower levels of anxiety and display a higher level of imagination and creativity (McLeod, 2017).

With the light of the research above, it seems that a teacher's psychological well-being is a crucial factor both for their own and students' further developmental process. In order to be more specific, those questions should be answered: What is the prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress among students attending the PFT program at Akdeniz University? To what extent do those students use humor as a coping strategy and which humor styles are employed? How do such negative emotional states, coping by humor, and humor styles relate to Type A personality?

In this study; it was aimed to investigate the psychological status of the students who attend the pedagogical formation education certificate program by examining the relationship between depression, anxiety, stress, coping by humor, humor types, and personality.

2. Method

Throughout the study, the ethical rules set by Akdeniz University have been observed and only consenting individuals have participated in the research.

2.1. Research design

The correlational research method was utilized in the research. There are a total of nine variables in the study. "Type A and B Personality" is the independent variable of the research. It is a dichotomous nominal variable and can only have values of 0 (Type B Personality) and 1 (Type A Personality). The other eight variables are continuous and used as dependent variables. Dependent variables of the study are: Severity of Depression, Trait Anxiety, Perceived Stress, Affiliative Humor Type, Self-Enhancing Humor Type, Aggressive Humor Type, Self-Destructive Humor Type, and Coping by Humor.

2.2. Participants

The data were collected through questionnaires from prospective teachers who were attending the pedagogical formation education certificate program at Akdeniz University Faculty of Education. A total of 111 teacher candidates from the certificate program participated in the study. While 69 (61.6%) of the participants were female students, 42 (37.8) were male. Participants were between 20-46 years of age and 74% were in 20-25 years age range. Of the students who participated in the survey, 51 (45.5%) –who are almost half of the participants- graduated from Turkish Language and Literature department.

2.3. Data collection tools

A demographics questionnaire was developed by the researchers and used to collect demographic data of the respondents. In addition to the demographics questionnaire, a total of six scales were used. Type A and B Personality Scale was used for determining whether the respondent is more likely to be Type A or B in terms of his or her personality. Beck's Depression Inventory was used for measuring severity of depression of the participants. Trait Anxiety Inventory was utilized for measuring trait anxiety. For measuring stress, Perceived Stress Scale was employed. Coping by Humor Scale was utilized to measure the degree to which respondents make use of humor in coping with stress. Finally, in order to assess four dimensions relating to individual differences in uses of humor, Humor Styles Questionnaire was used. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was used to get the factors from the scales. Table 1 depicts the factors extracted from questionnaires.

Table 1. *Factors extracted from questionnaires.*

Variable	Number of Items	Loading Range	Eigenvalue	% of (Total) Variance
Depression	21	0.686 - 0.237	5.119	24.378
Trait Anxiety	20	0.812 - 0.182	6.622	33.109
Perceived Stress	10	0.802 - 0.536	4.471	44.714
A and B Type Personality	25	0.741 – 0.014	5.420	21.681
Coping by Humor	7	0.792 - 0.187	2.842	40.601
Humor Types				(43.300)
Affiliative	8	0.743 - 0.595	3.738	46.730
Self-Enhancing	8	0.752 - 0.280	3.262	40.771
Aggressive	8	0.643 - 0.278	2.263	28.285
Self-Defeating	8	0.757 - 0.159	2.834	35.422

All variables were constructed as interval variables. A new dichotomous variable for Type A and B Personality was formed, and those scoring above 73.14, which is the average of this scale, were evaluated as type A person (1) and those scoring below 73.14 were evaluated as type B person (0). Results of the reliability analyses in terms of Cronbach's alpha value are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *Results of reliability analysis for scales and subscales.*

Scale	Variable	Cronbach's α
Beck's Depression Inventory	Depression	0.828
Trait Anxiety Inventory	Trait Anxiety	0.881
Perceived Stress Scale	Perceived Stress	0.860
Coping by Humor Scale	Coping by Humor	0.716
Type A and B Personality Scale	Type A and B Personality	0.815
Humor Styles Questionnaire	Affiliative Humor Style	0.830
	Self-Enhancing Humor Style	0.780
	Aggressive Humor Style	0.629
	Self-Defeating Humor Style	0.715

2.3.1. Type A and B Personality Scale

The scale was developed by Rathus and Nevid (1989) based on the work of Friedman and Rosenman (1974) to determine whether individuals have type A or type B personality traits. It was adapted for Turkish by Batıgün and Şahin (2006). The Turkish version of the scale (A ve B Tipi Kişilik Ölçeği) is a 5 point Likert type scale consisting of 25 items. Score range is 25-125 and higher scores indicate the intensity of type A personality traits in individuals. The scale is: 1=Certainly not appropriate for me, 2=Not appropriate for me, 3=Occasionally appropriate for me, 4=Comparatively appropriate for me, 5=Certainly appropriate for me. In this research, Cronbach's alpha value of the scale is 0.815.

2.3.2. Beck's Depression Inventory

The inventory was developed by Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock, and Erbaugh (1961) for measuring the severity of depression. It was adapted for Turkish by Hisli (1988). Turkish version of the scale (Beck Depresyon Envanteri) is a 4 point Likert type scale consisting of 21 items. Score range is 0-63 and higher scores indicate more severe depressive symptoms. The scale is: 0=I do not feel sad, 1=I feel sad, 2=I am sad all the time and I can't snap out of it, 3=I am so sad or unhappy that I can't stand it. The standard cut-off scores are: 0-9: minimal depression, 10-18: mild depression, 19-29: moderate depression, 30-63: severe depression. In this research, Cronbach's alpha value of the scale is 0.828.

2.3.3. Trait Anxiety Inventory

The inventory was developed by Spielberger, Gorsuch, and Lushene (1970) to diagnose trait anxiety and to distinguish it from depressive syndromes. It was adapted for Turkish by Öner and Le Compte (1983). The Turkish version of the scale (Sürekli Kaygı Envanteri) is a 4 point Likert type scale consisting of 20 items. Score range is 20-80 and higher scores indicate greater anxiety. The scale is: 1=Almost never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Almost always. In this research, Cronbach's alpha value of the scale is 0.881.

2.3.4. Perceived Stress Scale

The scale was developed by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein (1983) to measure the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. It was adapted for Turkish by Yerlikaya and İnanç (2007). The Turkish version of the scale (Algılanan Stres Ölçeği) is a 5 point Likert type scale consisting of 10 items. Score range is 0-40 and higher scores indicate more perceived stress. The scale is: 0=None, 1=Almost none, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very Often. In this research, Cronbach's alpha value of the scale is 0.86.

2.3.5. Coping by Humor Scale

The scale was developed by Martin and Leftcourt (1983) to measure the use of humor in coping with stress and the association between sense of humor and mental health. It was adapted for Turkish by Yerlikaya (2009). The Turkish version of the scale (Mizah Yoluyula Başa Çıkma Ölçeği) is a 4 point Likert type scale consisting of 7 items. Score range is 7-28 and higher scores indicate greater frequency of mirthful behaviors. The scale is: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree. In this research, Cronbach's alpha value of the scale is 0.716.

2.3.6. Humor Styles Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed by Martin, Public-Doris, Larsen, Gray and Weir (2003) to assess four dimensions relating to individual differences in uses of humor: affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating. It was adapted for Turkish by Yerlikaya (2003). The Turkish version of the scale (Mizah Tarzları Ölçeği) is a 7 point Likert type scale consisting of 32 items. The scale is: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Somewhat disagree, 4=Indecisive, 5=Somewhat agree, 6=Agree, 7=Strongly agree. In this research, Cronbach's alpha values for affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating humor styles are respectively: 0.83, 0.78, 0.629, and 0.715.

2.4. Data analysis

The data was transferred to the computer by the researchers. The scores of the latent variables were calculated by summation of the numerical values of the participants' responses. Data analysis was carried out by statistical measures. SPSS software was used for the general arrangement and analysis of the data, and evaluation of the results (IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22). Since the independent variable was dichotomous and dependent variables were continuous, relationships between variables were measured by point bi-serial correlation technique.

3. Findings

A Type Personality was the sole independent variable. Eight latent variables calculated from other scales served as dependent variables. Results of the descriptive analysis of the variables are shown in Table 3.

It was observed that, 51 (45.5%) of the participants were Type A, and the remaining 60 (53.6%) was Type B. While 59 (52.7%) of the participants were high on stress, 53 (47.3%)

were low. Results showed that more than half of the participants were high on stress. While 51 (45.5%) of the participants had trait anxiety, 61 (54.5%) did not. Only 38 (33.9%) of the participants were in the minimal depression level which is the lowest one. Of the participants, 45 (40.2%) were in mild, 26 (23.2%) were in moderate, and 3 (2.7%) were in severe depression levels. Depression severity levels are shown in Table 4.

Table 3. *Descriptive results.*

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Perceived Stress	7	37	20.91	6.699	44.875
Severity of Depression	0	31	13.58	7.420	55.057
Depression Severity Level	1	4	1.95	0.826	0.682
Trait Anxiety	28	70	45.65	9.742	94.914
Coping by Humor	10	28	18.20	3.541	12.538
Affiliative Humor	15	56	42.18	8.792	77.301
Self-Enhancing Humor	8	53	35.35	8.698	75.652
Aggressive Humor	8	42	21.12	7.424	55.113
Self-Defeating Humor	9	52	27.04	8.588	73.755
Personality	43	106	73.14	12.787	163.500

Table 4. *Depression severity levels.*

	f	%
Minimal Depression	38	33.9
Mild Depression	45	40.2
Moderate Depression	26	23.2
Severe Depression	3	2.7

Note: “f” represents frequency while “%” stands for the percentage.

It was observed that; there was a positive and statistically significantly correlation between Type A Personality and Stress ($r_{pb}=0.302$, $p<0.001$), Depression ($r_{pb}=0.327$, $p<0.001$), Anxiety ($r_{pb}=0.330$, $p<0.001$), and Self-Defeating Humor ($r_{pb}=0.282$, $p<0.01$). Type A Personality did not correlate with Coping by Humor, Affiliative Humor Style, Self-Enhancing Humor Style, and Aggressive Humor Styles. Significant correlations between Type A personality and dependent variables are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Correlations with Type A personality.

	r_{pb}	p
Perceived Stress	0.302	<0.001
Depression	0.327	<0.001
Trait Anxiety	0.330	<0.001
Self-Defeating Humor	0.282	<0.01

Note: " r_{pb} " represents point bi-serial correlation coefficient while "**p**" stands for the statistical significance.

4. Discussion

The purpose of the study was to investigate the psychological status of the students who attend the pedagogical formation education certificate program by examining the relationships between depression, anxiety, stress, coping by humor, humor types, and personality. The results indicated that almost half of the students fall into Type A personality category which is significantly associated with depression, anxiety, stress, and self-defeating humor. Results also indicated that proportion of individuals suffering from depression, anxiety, and stress are significantly higher than norm values.

Mean perceived stress level of PFT students (20.91) was lower than previously reported mean values. Gvendi and Hazar (2016) reported that mean perceived stress for students of physical education teaching, classroom teaching, and pre-school teaching departments were 27.7, 28.1, and 28.1, respectively. However, the proportion of students who have higher stress levels (52.7%) was greater than what Bayram and Bilgel (2008) reported as the proportion of university students who have stress levels of moderate severity or above (27%). Results indicate that stress is prevalent among PFT students but its severity seems to be lower than expected. The decrease in mean stress level may be a result of the new job opportunity that PFT certificate provides. Dumont and Provost (1999) state that self-esteem is the "prominent protective resource that youth can use against daily negative life events". They argue that a strong perception of control and confidence in abilities "guard against negative perceptions of daily stressful situations". It seems that PFT students may be feeling that PFT certificate is an instrument increasing their capacity to cope with unemployment. Thus, being a PFT student may result in a more positive personal perception and, as a consequence, higher self-esteem.

Mean trait anxiety (45.65) was higher than what Spielberger (2010) reported as norm mean values for working adults (34.89 for males, 34.79 for females) and college students (38.30 for males, 40.40 for females). In addition to the mean value, percentage of participants who had anxiety (45.5%) was also greater than what Uzman and Telef (2015) reported as the proportion of teachers who suffers from anxiety (%30.7). Results indicate that even though PFT students are better at coping with stress, their anxiety persists at higher levels. Teacher candidates who do not seek support from mother, father or siblings, who do not believe that they will be helped, who fear from being judged by others, and who have low self-confidence have higher levels of anxiety (Uzman & Telef, 2015). Haslam et al. (2005) report that high-anxiety individuals perceived a lack of understanding among their colleagues and managers about the nature of anxiety, felt that their managers offered little help, felt stigmatized, and "were reluctant to tell people at work about their illness". Students enroll in PFT programs because their current professions do not provide them with satisfactory job opportunities. It seems that PFT students perceive themselves to have lower social status because of their unserviceable profession. They

may be feeling that nobody can help them because of the nature of the economy and job market. PFT certificate program seems to lower their stress but their anxiety persists because of the uncertainty about their social and economic status due to the quality of the education provided by those programs.

Mean severity of depression (13.58) was higher than the norm mean value (9.14) reported by Whisman and Richardson (2015). They also reported that 74% of undergraduates had depression scores lesser than 13 and only 12% had depression scores higher than 19. Among teachers, Uzman and Telef (2015) reported as low as %5.5 as a proportion of individuals suffering from depression. In this study, PFT students who have moderate to severe depression levels (depression level > 19) constitute 25.9% of all the participants. Results indicate that both mean levels and the proportion of participants who suffer from moderate to severe depression are considerably higher than norm levels and values reported in previous research. It seems that PFT students need serious help regarding this negative emotional state.

Herman-Stahl and Petersen (1996) state that ineffective coping is a risk factor for depression. They report that individuals with depressive symptoms have poorer coping skills, more negative self-efficacy expectations and outcome expectancies, and less satisfactory relations with family and peers. Dumont and Provost (1999) also highlight the negative relationship between coping skills, satisfactory relations with family and peers and depression. They also report that self-esteem and positive personal perception also correlate with depression. It seems that PFT students struggle with the social and economic consequences of having an unserviceable profession. While self-esteem, self-confidence, coping skills, and personal perception seem to be the intrinsic risk factors for depression; interpersonal relationships especially the ones with family and peers, and outcome expectancies may be extrinsic risk factors. Enrolling in a PFT program helps reduce perceived stress levels but more serious and deeper emotional states such as anxiety and depression seem to be persisting.

Among humor styles, 45.5% of the participants are inclined only to Self-Defeating Humor Style and they can't use humor even as a coping strategy. Humor is an important coping strategy and it is useful for coping with psychological health problems such as depression, anxiety, and stress. Humor also enhances social relations, promotes interpersonal communication, and influences the interaction between teacher and his / her students. Depression, anxiety, and stress reduce the ability of the individual to cope with stressors and weaken his or her social relationships. These individuals need to improve their coping techniques and be more socialized. The inability of most PFT students to use humor as a coping strategy is an indication that they need external help to improve their coping skills.

Fifty-one (45.5%) of the participants were observed to have A Type personality. The strong correlation of A Type personality with stress, anxiety, and depression indicates that almost half of pedagogical formation students appear to need psychological support. A Type personality is often associated with impatience, impulsiveness, stress, anxiety, hostility, and anger. Results of this study indicate that almost half of the PFT students are in an unsteady psychological state. These individuals may not be fully ready to display a behavioral pattern traditionally expected from a teacher because of their A Type behavioral pattern which seems to be associated with negative emotional states. Their current perturbed and unsteady mood may also stem from the fact that for a considerable part of these individuals, teacher credentials is an escape from their current problematic social and economic status. Some of those individuals may be viewing PFT certificate as a last chance for a better paying job.

5. Conclusion

Findings revealed that, even though mean perceived stress level of PFT students was lower than previously reported mean values, the proportion of students who have higher stress levels was greater than previously reported proportion for university students who have higher stress levels. Mean trait anxiety of PFT students was higher than previously reported norm mean values for working adults and college students. Percentage of participants who had anxiety was also greater than the previously reported proportion of teachers who suffers from anxiety. Similarly, mean severity of depression was higher than the norm mean value and proportion of PFT student suffering from moderate to severe depression was also greater than previously reported proportion of teachers suffering from moderate to severe depression. Hence, results indicate that (a) PFT students had higher mean values for both depression and anxiety compared to population means values and (b) proportion of individuals suffering from depression or anxiety were considerably higher than values reported in previous research. Moreover, among humor styles, almost half of the participants were inclined only to self-defeating humor style and they seemed to be unable to use humor even as a coping strategy.

Results indicate that stress is prevalent among PFT students but its severity seems to be lower than expected. The decrease in mean stress level may be a result of the new job opportunity that PFT certificate provides. Enrolling in a PFT program helps reduce perceived stress levels but more serious and deeper emotional states such as anxiety and depression seem to be persisting. Depression, anxiety, and stress reduce the ability of the individual to cope with stressors. The inability of most PFT students to use humor as a coping strategy is an indication that they need external help to improve their coping skills. It seems that PFT students need serious help regarding negative emotional states such as anxiety and depression. PFT certificate program seems to lower their stress but their anxiety persists because of the uncertainty about their social and economic status.

6. Recommendations

Depending on the findings of the study, teacher educators should have their eyes on possible signs of depression and consider intervention strategies for teacher candidates who might need them. It should be noted that those who suffer from such emotional states may not seek for help or even may not believe others can help them. Creating environments and opportunities for teacher candidates for socialization and attending social activities may also help. In addition to psychological help, students may be provided with help for learning coping strategies against stress, anxiety, and depression.

In addition to creating intervention and protection strategies for helping with stress, anxiety and depression, stakeholders should note that letting severely depressed individuals become teachers and start teaching in schools may be harmful to the students, colleagues and for the education service in general. A strategy is needed for detecting and rightfully managing individuals who want to enroll in teacher training programs and who are suffering from such severe levels of emotional states and mental illnesses.

Most of the PFT students seem to be unable to use humor as a coping strategy which is an indication that they need help to improve their coping skills. Students of PFT programs should be able to access resources that will help them improve their coping skills not only for their personal psychological problems but also for helping them improve their skills for interacting with their future students.

Policymakers should reconsider offering teacher credentials as a life jacket through PFT-like programs to those who are in a great need for a job. The teaching profession should not be viewed as a solution for unemployment. Instead, programs offered by higher education

institutions may be better planned so that individuals will be spared from earning degrees which will result in an unserviceable job. In addition to that, those individuals who want to enroll in a license or certificate program that will grant them teacher credentials should be assessed with a sound personality testing process. At least those individuals with personality disorders that might put students and colleagues at risk may be directed to institutional help that they themselves do not even know they need. Finally, it appears that a considerable part of those PFT students are susceptible to teacher burnout when they start working in schools. Results of this study reveal that there is a room for improvement regarding teacher burnout by developing measures to detect those who are prone to teacher burnout, enhancing the content of the PFT program in a way so that it provides teacher candidates with resources to cope with factors leading to teacher burnout.

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