Journal of Exclusion Studies
Vol. 3 No. 1, February 2013, 53-56
DOI: 10.5958/j.2231-4555.3.1.004

Research Article

The Relationship between Type A and Type B Personalities and Perceived Upward Mobility among Engineers

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the relationship between A and B personality types among engineers. The aim of this investigation was to determine the relationship between personality types, age, sex and perceived upward mobility among engineers. Five hypotheses were tested. Findings showed that (1) perceived upward mobility is different between engineers with different personality types A and B. (2) Perceived upward mobility is not different between female and male engineers. (3) The incidence of personality type A is not more in female engineers than in their male counterparts. (4) Perceived upward mobility is different between younger and older engineers. (5) Perceived upward mobility is different between governmental and private engineers. On the basis of the results achieved, it has been suggested that engineers with personality type A should be recognised and counselled to modify their behaviour.

Keywords: Type A, Type B Personality, Perceived Upward Mobility, Stress

INTRODUCTION

Stress refers to a particular kind of state of the organism resulting from some interaction between him/her and the environment. Stress in an organisation has been defined in terms of misfit between a person's skills and abilities and the demand of his/her job, or misfit between person's needs not being fulfilled by his/her job environment (Cook *et al*. 1997; Saiyadain 2003). At some point in your career, you will experience burnout. Regardless of how much you like your job there will come a time when you just do not feel like doing it anymore. If you could choose between being sick and going to work, you would actually choose to be sick. It would be far less aversive than facing your boss, your co-workers, your clients and your desk (Baum *et al*. 1997; Gordon 1998). What exactly is burnout? It is defined as "exhaustion of physical and emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration": Who's stressed and frustrated? Many people. Many are afraid of losing their jobs and are therefore working harder and longer hours to prove their worth (Brown and Pranger, 1992; Guthrie *et al*. 1998; Aries and Ritter 1999).

Type A behaviour patterns are described as showing high levels of competitiveness, irritability and time urgency (they are always in a hurry). Type B behaviour patterns are the opposite in each of these respects: someone, who is relaxed, not very competitive and easygoing in relation with others (Morris and Maisto 1999; Sarason and

Sarason 1999). In several researches, we have found that Type A's were more than twice as likely as Type B's to experience serious heart disease. They seem to respond to stress with greater physiological arousal. For example, when performing stressful tasks, Type A's have higher blood pressure and pulse rates than do Type B's. Given such reactions, and the frequency of stress in modern life, it is far from surprising that Type A's suffer more heat attacks than do Type B's. In work situations, Type A's did have more accidents and absences, and they suffered more job stress and burnout (Bernstein and Nash 1999; Sarason and Sarason 1999).

This research investigated the relationship between A and B personality types and perceived upward mobility. The aim of this investigation was to determine the relationship between personality types, age, sex, type of department (private or governmental) and perceived upward mobility of engineers.

The basic purpose of upward mobility is to provide employees better chances for utilising their abilities, skills and knowledge that can benefit organisation as well as help fulfil employees their own goals. It also helps in enhancing morale, loyalty and sense of belongingness on the part of employees.

Cook and Waters (1998) investigated lawyers and engineers from Hobarth, Australia, and found that the proportion of women in high positions in engineering matches their educational qualification rates, whereas the proportion of women in high positions in law is considerably lower than their educational qualification rates. Kalleberg and Mastekaasa (1998) aimed their study to explain the relationship between an organisation's size and a person's probability of experiencing inter-organisational mobility (i.e., quits and layoffs) on a sample drawn from a broadly representative panel study of Norwegian organisations and their employees. These findings reveal that employees of larger establishments in a private sector are less likely to be laid off and to quit their jobs.

Most studies have found that variables such as age, race, gender, socioeconomic status, income, education, family environment, job stress, job security, social support, work involvement, former experience and personality characteristics (being A or B personality types) correlate with perceived upward mobility.

Research hypotheses were as follows:

1. Perceived upward mobility is different between engineers with different personality types A and B.
2. Perceived upward mobility is different between female and male engineers.
3. The incidence of personality type A is more in female engineers than in their male counterparts.
4. Perceived upward mobility is different between younger and older engineers.
5. Perceived upward movement is different between governmental and private engineers.

METHODS

Subjects: Statistical population includes engineers of Kashmir division. The statistical sample included all the chosen population that is 120 engineers.

Measures: In this research, to collect data two questionnaires were used: (1) Personality type questionnaire and (2) Perceived upward mobility questionnaire. Personality type questionnaire was developed by Matterson and Ivanevich (1982) and Perceived Upward Mobility Questionnaire (Shaukat 2002). The personality type questionnaire consists of twenty-one items, and perceived upward mobility questionnaire consists of forty items. Research method is correlation once. Two questionnaire face and content validity were established using a panel of experts. Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.96 for perceived upward mobility, and test–retest reliability of 0.84 for the personality type questionnaire were obtained.

RESULTS

In this study, *t*-test was used for statistical analysis. Results are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

The results show in Tables 1 and 2 that first, four and five hypotheses were accepted. Moreover, second and third hypotheses were rejected. Thus:

1. Perceived upward mobility is different between engineers with different personality types A and B.

Table 1: Means and standard deviation of research variables

Groups	Personality type		Perceived upward mobility		Gender (type as)		Age		Type of engineer	
	A	B	Females	Males	Females	Males	Younger	Older	Government	Private
Means	24/28	18/7	22/58	20/47	109/1	109/7	22/51	17/54	23/27	15/3
Standard Deviation	99/82	101/8	119	99/39	294/1	162/6	109/1	88/03	112/4	48/68
Total	57	63	50	70	26	31	92	28	90	30

Table 2: Results of *t*-test and hypotheses

T-test hypotheses	T_{ob}	T_{cr}	*P*-Values	Results
First	3.04	1/98	<%5	Accept hypothesis
Second	1/1	1/98	<%5	Reject hypothesis
Third	0/17	2	<%5	Reject hypothesis
Four	2/26	1/98	<%5	Accept hypothesis
Five	3/89	1/98	<%5	Accept hypothesis

2. Perceived upward mobility is different between female and male engineers.
3. The incidence of personality type A is more in female engineers than in their male counterparts.
4. Perceived upward mobility is different between younger and older engineers.
5. Perceived upward mobility is different between governmental and non-profit engineers.

DISCUSSION

A wrong career is very stressful and can be frustrating. Many people are in the wrong career. They are either tired of a career they once liked or they chose poorly in the first place. Others are in a right career but in the wrong job. Either way a change may be in order. It may involve a career change or simply a change in work place.

Therefore, as you can see, there are many factors that cause people stress, frustration and perceived upward mobility with their jobs. Perceived upward mobility usually happens as a result of stress and frustration.

In a study, Suresh and Anantharaman (2001) found that round-the-clock duty, lack of time to spend with family and political pressure from outside the department were related with most stressful and perceived upward mobility situations. Chand and Sethi (1997) found a significant positive relationship between job stress and role overload, role conflict and role personality conflict. A host of issues such as job security, fear of job loss, obsolescence or retirement and numerous performance appraisals can create stress and perceived upward mobility (Gordon 1998; Robbins 1998; Saiyadain, 2003). Roy (1997) conducted a study on twenty-three junior and thirty senior scientists. His results revealed that junior scientists experienced greater occupational stress and perceived upward mobility than did their senior counterparts. The research evidence suggests that certain kinds of professions or occupations cause greater stress and burnout than do others. For example, technocrats experience greater stress and perceived upward mobility in their job when compared with non-technocrats (Singh 1993). Railway guards than railway motorman, bus drivers as compared with bus conductors felt more perceived upward mobility (Barnes 1992). In a study, Mishra and Rani (2001) showed that nurses experience greater stress and burnout in their job as compared with doctors.

On the basis of the results achieved, it has been suggested that:

- Engineers with personality type A should be recognised and counselled to modify their behaviours.
- Young engineers should be provided with the necessary training in order that they can control their job stress.
- The influence and effect of perceived upward mobility should be studied relative to the engineers.
- More enhanced research should be made regarding reasons for perceived upward mobility.

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