

TYPE A BEHAVIOR PERSONALITY AND GENDER DIFFERENCE IN MANAGING STRESS

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the significance relationships between Type A Behavior Personality and Preferred Human Capital Approach in managing stress within a semi-government organization in Kota Kinabalu. It is necessary to cope with stress from the perspectives of individual level, team level, and organizational level. The research study aimed for identifying the personality stressors and coping strategies. The objectives were to seek the influence of Type A Behavior Personality and preferred human capital approach in coping with stress self approach, and Management Support of employees toward managing stress. Human Personality, Occupational Stressors and Non-work stressors that affected the respondents are examined, yet difference between male and female in coping with stress is study. The results concluded that Type A Behavior Personality has significant relationship with Self-coping Approach, and Management Support. Organizational Stressors and Non-work Stressors are not discussed in this article.

Keywords: Type A Personality Behavior, Gender Difference, Self-coping Approach, and Management Support.

1.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A study by Sparks and Cooper in year 1999 revealed significant statistical association between a number of workplace factors and indicators of mental ill health, free-floating anxiety, and somatic and anxiety, or even depression. There is a significant positive relationship between organizational stressors and work stress as reported in previous studies (Roselina, Leong, and Chua, 2003; Aizzat, Ramayah, and Kumaresan 2003). Role conflict also has been found to have a positive relationship with work stress (Roberts, Lapidus, and Chonko, 1997). In addition, Foot and Venne (1990) also revealed that there is a relationship between career advancement and work stress. Working environment that is associated with unpleasant organizational climate, lack of privacy, a lot of hassle in conducting work, and distractions could result in higher stress (Miller and Ellis, 1990; Eugene, 1990). Various studies also provided evidence that individual's personality traits play substantial roles on stress especially occupational stress (Cooper, Kirkcaldy and Brown, 1994; Davey, 1994; Wilson et al., 1990).

Every individual have different personality, and not all can be concluded as the Type A. Some of them can be categorized as the Type B behavior person. However, it is possible that an individual can falls in the middle range between Type A and Type B. As denoted by Psychological personality test, the personality between Type A and Type B is categorized as Type X.

Cooper, Krickaldy and Brown in year 1994 stated that various study have also shown that individual's personality traits, such as Type A personality, locus of control, and emotional intelligence play substantial roles toward occupational stress. Furthermore, the general conceptualization is that stressful employees can be solved through counselling sessions. However, is counselling the only way to cope with this problem, or organization and its managers are also accountable in helping employees to deal with their stress.

In Malaysia, counselling services are practiced by professional counsellors. In comparison with the developed western countries, managers play the role in counselling to resolve problems. In eastern Asia, the practice is to engage the employees to any professional counsellor or psychologist. Different personality of individual might have different type of stressors and preferred approach in coping with stress. The research main objective is to find out the different personality, gender and coping strategy for every individual / respondent. Kota Kinabalu Municipal Hall Management Centre was selected as the location for a case study. The main objectives of the study are to find out the significant relationship between personality types and the preferred human capital approaches, and to seeks out the difference between male and female in coping with stress.

The significance of the study is that the research on stress management in Malaysian working environment is limited, and the understanding toward the factors that contribute to occupational stress is necessary to improve stress management programs in Malaysian Organization (Amat, Fortaine and Chong, 2003). This research provides findings on whether Type A and Type B personality have the same stressors of occupational stress and their preference in managing stress.

The independent variable for this study is Type A Personality. In the context of this research, a Type A behavior employee is individual with higher tendency of the following characteristics. The characteristics are the employee frequently tries to do several things at once; when it comes to temper, he or she finds it hard to control at times; the employee would always feel rushed; the satisfaction and enjoyment for the employee most are job related activities; the employee would rather at work than take a vacation, at the end of typical work day; the employee would usually feel like he or she needed to get more done than he or she did; the behavior of the employee as the respondent is governed by a desire for recognition and achievement; enjoyment for the particular employee comes from winning; and the employee as the respondent likes to associate with people who are dedicated to getting ahead.

Type B Personality consists of the employees that have the opposite characteristics of the Type A personality employees. The characteristics of a Type B employee would be: the employee tends to take things one at a time; the employee does not seem to be able to manage his or her temper; the employee would hardly or never feel rushed in doing things; the employee would prefer leisure time activities rather than activities related to work; nothing at work is important enough to interfere with his or her vacation; the employee that feels of accomplishment in everything he or she needed to do; and what he or she wants to do is not to try to satisfy others; the social interaction is more important for Type B individuals; the employee would feel easy-going and take life as it comes.

For dependent variables, preferred human capital approach in this research means the coping strategies of the employee in dealing with stress. The approach consists of various self-approach, and management support. Self-Coping Approach consists of *Habitual Coping*, *Cognitive Coping* and *Habituation Coping*. *Habitual Coping* is a coping strategy by eating, drinking, sleeping, exercise, and managing time. *Cognitive Coping* comprises of positive

thinking, self-talk, and imagery thinking that considered as part of the strategy to cope with stress. *Rest / Habituation Coping* include of activities such as relaxation, yoga, meditation, pray, break, holiday, leisure and exercise. Rest and Habituation coping are the strategy that inclusive of human activities and mind resting.

Management Support Approach is a key variable that comprised the role of manager to communicate, the needs for counselling skills of the managers, and the preference of stress seminar and training. Manager communication generally is about the approach of manager implementing counselling skills. But in this research, the term of counselling service of the manager is simplified as communication skills of manager. The reason of using the term of "communication" to replace the "counselling service" of manager is due to the reason that the respondents might misunderstood "counselling service" with "professional counselling". Hence communication has been used to imply the terms of counselling service provided by the superior. Counselling service of managers is about communicate and gaining the feedback from the employee to finding out of employee problem. The term of "Needs for Workplace Counselling by Manager" is a term that involves the commitment of manager to communicate and give non-professional / licensed counselling service. Basically, the manager's communication and the needs for workplace counselling are inter-related whereby it is gauged the needs for manager to possess counselling skills and utilizing such skills to communicate with the employees. In this research, Stress Seminar and Training is another perspective of Management Support that can be provided by the management to assist the employees to cope with stress.

2.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

The unit of analysis is at the individual (employee) level in Kota Kinabalu City Hall Management Centre. A total of 150 copies of questionnaires have been distributed to the employee in Kota Kinabalu City hall Management Centre. The completed and returned is 142 copies. Hence, the unit of analysis is based on the 142 individuals (employees) from the Kota Kinabalu City Hall Management Centre. The sampling frame of the study was among employees from all four divisional departments, from front office up to the upper management. The sampling frame is an open approach, which is to say that all employees are be taken as the sample regardless of any specific requirement or assessment. The reason for this is to obtain as much input as possible. The second reason is to sample respondent with an open-ended sampling. Non-specification of the frame is required, because the study does not involve strict and specific qualification. The sampling used in this study was based on the random sampling, and the technique that been used are purposive and convenience sampling technique. The purpose of the random sampling is to covers all the employees (individuals) from all management level. The purposive and convenience are appropriate for this study because one of the objectives is to find out the preferred human approach of the employees of the Kota Kinabalu City Hall Management Centre. The study has adopted the questionnaire made by Michael T. Matteson and John M. Ivancevich (1982) and some sections of the questionnaire were developed from Model of Stress and Outcome, published by Ivancevich (2005) in his book, *Management and Organizational Behavior*.

Section A is the demography section. The section is related to the age groups, gender, managerial level, marital status, number(s) of dependents, educational level, and respondents' gross salary. Section B of the questionnaire focuses on the Personality Test for Type A and Type B. It includes of 9 items that were adapted from the Type A Personality Test developed by Michael T. Matteson and John M. Ivancevich (1982). Section C, Occupational Stress that discusses the type of occupational stress that faced by the individuals via three perspectives,

which are Intrapersonal Level, Interpersonal Level, and Organizational Level. Section D, is Non-Work Stressors includes of the number of dependents, lack of quality, and the financial factor of the respondents. Section E is includes of Self-coping approaches in dealing with stress. The Self Approach coping strategy is constructed by three major coping approach which are the habits-based coping approach, cognitive approach, and Rest and Habituation as the approach for coping with stress. Section F is the Management Support Approaches coping strategy. Question in this section is aimed to find out the need of counselling services by the employee of the Kota Kinabalu City Hall, which can be classified into Internal Counselling Service, External Counselling Services, and the Counselling Skills practiced by their manager.



Figure 1: Research Framework

3.0 FINDINGS

From this research, it is found out that the respondents do not only fall into Type A or Type B, but some of the respondents fall in between the Type A and Type B. Hence, there is a new type of personality that has been discovered that shown a high frequency. The personality Type X is to be considered as Type AB. Type AB Personality basically is the personality that being defined by Matteson and Ivancevich as Type X since year 1982, in their Type A Personality Test. However, the term of Type X has been used by Douglas McGregor in his publish "The Human Side of Enterprise" year 1960, which is Theory X and Theory Y Motivational Theory. McGregor has defined Theory X as the assumption of the average human being has an inherent dislike of work. Due to that reason, the Type X respondents of this research will be redefined as Type AB as to ensure there is no confusion or overlapping between McGregor's motivational theory (1960) and the term Ivanceveich and Matteson used in 1982. Hence, if there is any respondent that falls into the type between A and B will be categorized as Type X in accordance to Ivancevich (2006), the Type X (Type A and B) is being rectified as Type AB. The purpose of redefining Type X as Type AB is to void the overlapping definition of Type X in Personality Type and Motivational Theory.

Profile of the Respondents

Of the 150 copies of questionnaire distributed, 142 were completed and returned. The profiles of the respondents are tabulated in figure below.

Factor	No. (%)	Factor	No. (%)	Factor	No. (%)
Personality		Gender		Total Sample	
Type A	52 (36.6%)	Male	61 (43%)	Distributed Sample	150 (100%)
Type B	58 (40.8%)	Female	81 (57%)	Response Rate	142 (94.6%)
Type AB	32 (22.5%)				

Hypotheses Testing

Multiple regressions were used to calculate the significance value between the independent variables and the dependent variables. One way ANOVA was used to test and analyze the differences between personality Type A and Type B toward the Total Self Approach, and Management Support. T-Test was used to seek for differences between male and female.

Hypothesis 1

H1: There are significant relationships between Personality Type, Occupational Stressors, Non-work Stressors and Self Approach coping strategy.

Model Summary	Adjusted R Square		Durbin-Watson
	.099		1.571
Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
(Constant)	Beta		
Personality of Respondent	-.182	-2.265	.025
Total Occupational Stressor	.103	1.257	.211
Total Non-occupational Stressor	.236	2.881	.005

a Predictors: (Constant), Total_Non_Occupational_Stressor, Personality of respondent, Total_Occupational_Stressor

b Dependent Variable: Total Self Approach

Based on the result shown, it was found that the Personality Type of the respondents and Non-Occupational stressors have significant relationship with the Self Approach coping strategy. Both significance levels are 0.025 and 0.005. However, Occupational Stressor is found to be not significant for the relationship with the Self-Approach coping strategy. Standardized coefficients test also shows that Beta value of the personality type is -.182. This indicates that the higher the Type A is, the higher the self-approach coping strategies. Based on it, it shows that a Type A person is more attached to self-coping approach than Type B. This was tested using the Linear Regression. With R Square= 0.99, and significance at 0.001 variables of Personality Type, Occupational Stressors, and Non-work Stressors are only affecting the Self-Approach coping strategy by only 9.9%. This percentage indicates that there are many more factors that affect the Self Approach coping strategy, more than the three independent variables (factors).

Hypothesis 2

H2: *There are significant relationship between Personality Type, Occupational Stressors, Non-work Stressors and Management Support.*

Model Summary	Adjusted R Square		Durbin-Watson
	.071		1.852
Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
(Constant)	Beta		
Personality of Respondent	-.198	-2.432	.016
Total Occupational Stressor	.163	1.958	.052
Total Non-occupational Stressor	.106	1.270	.206

a Predictors: (Constant), Total_Non_Occupational_Stressor, Personality of respondent, Total_Occupational_Stressor

b Dependent Variable: Total Management approach

Based on the Coefficient table, it shows that Personality of the respondent and the occupational stressor are significant to the Management Support coping strategy. The significance p value is at 0.16 for the personality, and 0.052 for the occupational stressors. Although it is exceeded the maximum limit significance, but the value is less than 0.055 which it is still considered as 0.052. However, the third independent factor, the non-work stressor, does not have significant relationship with the management and environment of the organization with a value of 0.206. Two independent variables are accepted as having significant relationship with the management support coping strategy. Based on the results, the summary shows the model is comprised of 0.71 R Square and the significance level at 0.04. From the results, it can be concluded that the total effect of the independent variables of Personality Type, Occupational Stressors and Non-work Stressors are only affecting the dependent variables for only 7.1%. This indicates that there are many other factors that can affect the Management Support preference. Thus, this hypothesis is partially accepted.

Hypothesis 3

H3: *There are significant relationship between Personality Type, Occupational Stressors, Non-work Stressors and Total Preferred Human Capital Approach.*

Model Summary	Adjusted R Square		Durbin-Watson
	.126		1.681
Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
(Constant)	Beta		
Personality of Respondent	-.227	-2.881	.005
Total Occupational Stressor	.158	1.958	.052
Total Non-occupational Stressor	.209	2.587	.011

a. Predictors: (Constant), Total_Non_Occupational_Stressor, Personality of respondent, Total_Occupational_Stressor

b. Dependent Variable: Total Human Capital Approach

Based on the results obtained from the data of 142 respondents, the model is fit to be used whereby the adjusted R Square reached 0.126, and the significance level is at 0.000, and 1.681 at Durbin – Watson analysis. From the coefficient table, the results show that Personality of the respondents is highly significant towards the Total Coping Approach. These data show

that different personality have different level of total coping strategy. For personality variable, based on the standardized coefficient Beta result, it is -0.227 which proving that the Personality Type A have higher total coping strategy, the higher the negative (-) value of the Beta, is the higher Type A will be in significant relationship with Total Coping strategy. From the same coefficients table, it is shown that all three variables, Personality of respondents, Total Occupational Stressors, and Total Non-work Stressors have significant relationships with the total human capital approach. Personality differences show high significant level of 0.005, as well as total non-work stress at 0.011 significant. Total occupational stress was also considered as significant with value of 0.052. By that, hypotheses 4 is fully supported and accepted.

Hypothesis 4

H4: There is significant difference of Preferred Self Approach coping strategy between Type A, and Type B groups.

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Group	1.763	2	.882	3.232	0.42
Robust Tests of Equality of Means		Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch		3.854	2	78.015	.025
Brown-Forsythe		3.274	2	114.745	.041

The measurement of analysis is ANOVA analysis. Based on the collected data with ANOVA measurement, Personality Type of the respondents have significant relationship to the total self approach. The measurement is based on the comparison of the mean for every types of the personality. The significant level is at $p = 0.42$ for between groups within groups. By that, hypotheses 5 is accepted and supported.

Hypothesis 5

H5: There is significant difference of Preferred Management Support between Type A, and Type B groups.

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Group	1.578	2	.789	3.486	0.33
Robust Tests of Equality of Means		Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch		3.303	2	77.869	.042
Brown-Forsythe		3.385	2	111.876	.037

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

For hypothesis 5, measurement of analysis is ANOVA analysis. Based on the data that computed, which is being processed via ANOVA measurement, Personality Types of the respondents have significant relationships to the total self approach. The measurement done based on the comparison of the mean for every types of the personality. The significant level

is at $p = 0.39$ for between groups within groups. Therefore, hypotheses 6 is accepted and supported.

Hypothesis 6a

H6a: There is significant difference of Preferred Self Approach coping strategy between gender groups (male and female).

Group Statistics	Gender of Respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total Self Approach	Male	61	3.0383	.57767	.07396
	Female	81	3.1605	.48908	.05434
Independent Samples Test	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test Equality of Means		
Total Self Approach	F	Sig.	T	df	(Sig.2-tailed)
Equal Assumed	2.241	.137	-1.363	140	.175
Equal not Assumed			-1.332	116.747	.185

In gender difference between male and female has been proved that the significant level of the hypotheses is at 0.137, which is exceeded 0.005. Hence, hypotheses 8a is not supported and rejected.

Hypothesis 6b

H6b: There is significant difference of Preferred Management coping strategy between gender groups (male and female).

Group Statistics	Gender of Respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total Management Approach	Male	61	2.8743	.50977	.06527
	Female	81	2.9424	.46485	.05165
Independent Samples Test	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test Equality of Means		
Total Management Approach	F	Sig.	T	df	(Sig.2-tailed)
Equal Assumed	1.200	.275	-.829	140	.409
Equal not Assumed			-.818	122.612	.415

In gender difference between male and female has been proved that the significant level of the hypotheses is at 0.275 that exceeded 0.005. Hence, hypotheses 8b is rejected.

4.0 DISCUSSIONS

From the present study, it is found that Types of personality have significant relationship with the total self-approach. Total self approach is the computation and sum up of the three types of approaches, which are the Habits approach – eating, drinking, sleeping, exercise, and managing time, Cognitive Approach – positive thinking, self-talk, and imaginary thinking, and Rest and Habituation Approach – relaxation, yoga, meditation, pray, break, holiday, leisure, and exercise. In this matter, Personality differences have significant relationship, at the value

of 0.025 with the total self-approach coping strategy. It is also indicated that the higher the Type A person is, will be the more significant toward total self approach it might be. Personality types of the respondents also show that difference personality also play different roles in total management approach. Based on the data and results, it shows that the beta analysis is at -198 (negative value). This shows that the greater the Type A person is, is the higher management support that required by the Type A individuals. In this aspect, Type A individuals prefer management support more than self-approach which have been proved by the beta value which is -182 for the former, and -198 for the latter. Personality differences also have significant relationship with the human capital approach that preferred by the respondents. It is clear that the multiple regression analysis shows that there is high significant relationship between the personality and the total self-approach, which is at the value of 0.005. Based on the data analysis and frequencies table, the research has also found out that human capital in the various departments from Kota Kinabalu City Hall is not only categorized into Type A and Type B, but they also fell into the mid range, in between of Type A and Type B. According to the frequency table, of the 142 respondents, 52 individuals are Type A, 58 individuals are Type B, and the rest 32 individuals are type X. Type X in accordance to Marshall and Cooper 1978, person who falls in between Type A and Type B considered as Type X. but in management term, McGregor has used that word "X" to defines attitude and behavior. Hence, this research will identify the Type X as the Type AB. Based on the result obtained, it has been shown that there are no differences in coping with stress between male and female. Indeed, for both self-approach and management support coping strategies, male and female do not have any differences in dealing with stress. Hence, it is clear that both male and female groups might have the same strategies to cope with stress. Most importantly, both male and female groups require management support from the organization and the managers, as to lead the communication within the organization. In gender difference between male and female has been shown that the significant level of the hypothesis is at 0.137, which exceeded 0.005. Hence, hypothesis 8a is rejected. The implication of the study is respondent should be categorized into three types of personality type rather than Type A and Type B as Type AB (Type X) was at the level of 22.5%. Hence, the implication is Type AB (Type X) should always be considered as part of the Personality Test that will contribute meaningful finding for any research, as this Type AB (Type X) might be inconstant or changeable from time to time, either into Type A or Type B. In future time, this research can actually be developed into more depth framework that includes the health test or outcomes of stress. The outcome of stress can be comes into two options, one is before preferred coping strategy, or after the preferred coping strategy. The framework can be prescribed as the figure below.

5.0 THE PROPOSED FUTURE FRAMEWORK

The new dependent variable that can be added is the stress outcome of the employees. The outcomes consist of Behavioral Outcome, Cognitive Outcome, and Physiological Outcome. These three outcomes are also being stated in Ivancevich (2005), Model of Stress and Outcome. This study can be enhanced to focus on any respective industry. Future study can also focuses on health test. The Health Test questionnaire can be described as below. Based on such questionnaire with likert scale ranking, researcher would able to identify the level of stress. Indeed, the likert scale point can be enhanced into 5 points or 7 points weighting. By having such questions, researcher can identify the level of stress according to the type of stress as well. For example, the stress outcomes in the questionnaire are divided into Behavioral, Cognitive, and Physiological outcome. The questionnaire can also be enhanced into an open-ended approach than closed ended type of questionnaire. The open-ended questionnaire can leads to many explanation and findings that can give so much output to researcher. Although it seems like can be multi numbers of answers that be given by

respondents, the researcher can actually clustering it into forms of the factors that categorized by the researchers and the form of factors that being added by the respondents.

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