

Personality Differences among School Professionals:  
Implications for Consultation Effectiveness

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Abstract

Response to intervention has fundamentally changed the special education referral and eligibility process from a refer-test-place model to a tiered problem solving model in public schools. These changes have necessitated increased reliance on consultation and collaboration among public school professionals. Using the NEO PI-R, this study examined the relationship between personality traits of school psychologists, school counselors, and school teachers and the respective consultation process within school systems. Differences among the three groups and implications for consultation are discussed.

*Keywords:* consultation, personality traits, school psychologists, school counselors, school teachers

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Public Law 94-142 in 1975 and all of its subsequent reauthorizations mandated eligible students ages 3 to 21 to be provided a free and appropriate public school education, regardless of disability (U.S. Department of Education [DOE], 2017). Students are identified by multidisciplinary teams as being eligible for special educational programming when they have an identified disorder that significantly hinders their academic performance in the classroom. The most recent data from 2013-2014 indicates there are 6.5 million students, or 13% of total public school enrollment, receiving special education services (DOE, 2017). Moreover, this large proportion of students receiving services requires a substantial professional infrastructure at the school level to ethically and legally serve them. With the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA; 2004) and the subsequent adoption of the Response-to-Intervention model of service delivery by public schools across the United States, the role of the professionals serving this population of students has changed, requiring more consultation and collaboration (Powers, Hagans, & Busse, 2008). It is important, therefore, to better understand how personality differences among school professionals might contribute to successful consultation.

**Special Education Referral Process**

Historically, the special education referral process was defined by a refer-test-place model (Powers, Hagans & Busse, 2008). In this model, teachers identified students who were

struggling to make progress in the classroom and referred them for special education eligibility determination. However, changes in federal law (i.e., No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB] and IDEA) catalyzed the Response to Intervention (RTI) model, in which students failing to meet district-approved benchmarks were identified and provided academic interventions to improve their academic performance prior to referral for eligibility determination (Cicek, 2012). A student's failure to respond to research-based interventions was used as evidence that the student has a disorder and therefore needs special educational programming.

The general education teacher is typically responsible for collecting progress monitoring data which indicates if the interventions are having an effect on the student's performance. Multidisciplinary teams, consisting of school psychologists (SPs), school counselors (SCs), and general and special education teachers, then consult weekly or bi-weekly to review progress monitoring data and to discuss action plans. In contrast to the refer-test-place model, the RTI model requires more consultation and problem solving by a larger team of school professionals who work in concert to problem solve and to meet the needs of struggling students.

### **Consultation**

Consultation can be defined as an indirect problem solving and decision-making approach that involves the efforts of a consultant and consultee to determine student needs and to develop, implement, and evaluate intervention strategies (Sheridan, Richards, & Smoot, 2000). A consultant is usually the SP, SC, or special educator and their role is to provide expertise in the areas of collecting and analyzing data, developing appropriate intervention plans, and evaluating the outcomes of the interventions (American School Counselors Association, 2014; National Association of School Psychologists, 2014). The consultee is usually the general education teacher. Their role is to deliver the intervention programs that are designed to improve the student's academic or behavioral performance. Consultation is often delivered through the use of a dyad which includes a consultant and consultees (Feldman & Kratochwill, 2003).

Due to federal legislation (e.g., NCLB and IDEA), indirect school psychological services including school-based consultation have become an increasingly common and necessary practice in many school systems (Bradley-Johnson & Dean, 2000). Under RTI, consultants work with consultees on instructional delivery, classroom management, progress monitoring data collection and interpretation, and data-based decision making based on student performance (Bianco, 2010; Powers et al., 2008). Additionally, intervention plans to ameliorate any identified issues are developed during the consultation process (Feldman & Kratochwill, 2003).

According to Erchul (2003), educational and psychological consultation includes problem solving through interpersonal relationships that grow through occasional face-to-face contacts between consultant and consultee. The term "interpersonal" is important in this context because any interaction between a SP, SC, teacher, or parent in order to facilitate positive outcomes is an interpersonal process (McGivern, Ray-Subramanian, & Auster, 2010). Naturally, social and interpersonal skills are an important aspect of consultation. Kratochwill (2010), for example, explained that the interpersonal relationship between the consultant and consultee is assumed to be a key aspect in the use and effectiveness of consultation. As such, the consultant's social skills and overall psychosocial adjustment are paramount. In particular, personality

characteristics such as acceptance, openness, nondefensiveness, and flexibility positively affect the relationship between consultant and consultee (Kratochwill, 2010).

**Characteristics of a successful consultation.** McGivern et al. (2010) noted that personal attributes (i.e., qualities and personality characteristics intrinsic to an individual) can influence relationships among SPs, SCs, teachers, and parents. For instance, warmth, genuineness, and trustworthiness are important personal attributes SPs and SCs should possess in order to increase the likelihood of obtaining a positive consultative relationship (McGivern et al., 2010). They also noted that empathy, positive regard, self-disclosure, and feedback were pivotal.

Research has also identified teacher resistance as an influence in consultation breakdown. Teacher resistance increases when the consultee finds the consultation too punishing or if the intervention is inadequately reinforced or if there is a perception that the cost of accessing consultation outweighs the benefits of utilizing it (Gonzalez, Nelson, Gutkin, & Shwery, 2004). This resistance, or opposition, can manifest through the appearance of hostility or withdrawal. Furthermore, the consultee might do the opposite of what is intended, withdraw from participation in the consultation, or drop out completely (McGivern et al., 2010). Gonzalez et al. (2004) posited that potential factors influencing teacher resistance include (a) time demands of consultation, and (b) perception that needing help is an admission of failure or professional incompetence. Additional factors include anxiety, discomfort over interpersonal processes, perceptions of losing control of the problem, and fears associated with confidentiality. However, it should be noted that compared to experienced teachers, new teachers are more likely to recognize their developmental needs and more likely to initiate consultation (Gutkin & Bossard, 1984; Jensen, Sandoval-Hernández, Knoll, & Gonzalez, 2012; Martines, 2008; Stenger, Tollefson, & Fine, 1992).

Beutler, Moleiro, and Talebi (2002) provided four examples of client/consultee based problems that may lead to the breakdown of consultation: (a) absence from sessions, (b) lack of active participation in sessions, (c) anger and resentment toward the consultant, and (d) failure to follow through with homework/assignments. The authors also offered several strategies to remediate the problems including examining expectations and preferences, using empathy to convey understanding, examining the consultee's coping style, expressing positive regard while avoiding blame and rejection, and reexamining barriers. Many of these problems can be avoided with adequate training, social skills, and personality traits.

### **Personality Traits**

Changes in federal law, with the increased emphasis on tiered interventions, has led to an increased demand for school-based consultation (Powers et al., 2008). Thus, it is important to understand those factors that influence the consultative process. One such factor is the role of personality. While research (Kratochwill, 2010; McGivern et al., 2010) shows that interpersonal factors influence the consultation process, little research has been conducted examining specific personality traits of SPs, SCs, and school teachers and how their personality traits could influence consultation. Research is also limited with respect to understanding the role of personality in the school system, especially in consultation.

Due to changes in federal law, SPs, SCs, and teachers work together differently and more frequently throughout the special education process, especially in a consultative role. However, there has been little research conducted that examines the personality characteristics that SPs, SCs, and teachers possess. Moreover, there is no research that assesses the interaction of personality characteristics between these three groups to draw implications as it relates to the consultation process.

## Method

### Participants

Participants for this study included 127 adults divided into three groups. With new teachers being more inclined to initiate the consultation process (Gutkin & Bossard, 1984; Jensen et al., 2012; Martines, 2008; Stenger et al., 1992), it was of interest to assess individuals who were entering the teaching profession. Data from the teacher group ( $n=72$ ) was obtained from a pre-existing data set of regional teachers-in-training who were engaged in student teaching and in their final semesters of their program. This data set was generated the same year in which the current study was conducted. The SC group ( $n=35$ ) and the SP group ( $n=20$ ), however, were certified practitioners who were contacted via email solicitation. Those who agreed to participate in the study provided consent via SurveyMonkey, and were then mailed the research materials, including a self-addressed, prepaid postage envelope in which to return the completed assessment.

The SCs had master's degrees while the SPs had specialist level training (master's degree plus 40 graduate hours). The participants in the current study were predominantly female ( $N = 101$ ; 79.5%). The age range for: (a) the teacher group was 21 to 46 years with a mean age of 25.8 ( $SD = 5.9$ ); (b) the SC group was 23 to 67 years with a mean age of 37.4 ( $SD = 13.3$ ); and (c) the SP group was 27 to 64 years with a mean age of 40.4 ( $SD = 10.6$ ). No personally identifying information was archived. All methodological procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Board at the authors' university.

### Instrumentation

The NEO Personality Inventory Revised (NEO PI-R) (Costa & McCrae, 1992) was used to measure the personality traits of the participants. The NEO PI-R is a comprehensive assessment of normal adult personality dimensions consisting of 240 items. The examinee answers each of the items using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The instrument takes 30 to 40 minutes to complete. Raw scores are converted to T-scores using the NEO norm tables. There are separate norms for males and females and for college students and general population adults. The teachers-in-training were compared to the college norms while the SCs and SPs were compared to general adult norms. T-scores were categorized from very low to very high based on the following ranges: 35 and below = very low; 36 to 44 = low average; 45 to 55 = average; 56 to 65 = high average, and; 66 and above = very high. If a score is described as high average, the test-taker has more of that trait than others. Conversely, when a test-taker has a very low score, they have less of that trait than others.

The NEO PI-R measures the Five Factor Model of Personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The Five Factor Model consists of the Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness domains. Each domain is further delineated by six facets which measure more specific aspects of the domain. The six facets are combined to generate the overall domain for each of the five factors.

The core of the Neuroticism domain is the general tendency to experience negative effects, such as fear, sadness, embarrassment, anger, guilt, and disgust. Men and women with high scores in this domain tend to have irrational ideas, have less control over their impulses, and cope more poorly with stress than others. Individuals who score lower in this domain tend to be emotionally stable and can be described as calm, even-tempered, and relaxed. The facets of this domain are Anxiety (N1), Angry Hostility (N2), Depression (N3), Self-Consciousness (N4), Impulsiveness (N5), and Vulnerability (N6) (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

The Extraversion domain is comprised of traits, such as social skills, the ability to enjoy people, and a preference for large groups. Those who score high in this domain are assertive, active, talkative, upbeat, energetic, and optimistic. Those who score low in this domain can be described as introverts. Introverts are reserved, independent, and even-paced. The facets of this domain are Warmth (E1), Gregariousness (E2), Assertiveness (E3), Activity (E4), Excitement-Seeking (E5), and Positive Emotions (E6) (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

High scores in the Openness, or Openness to Experience domain identifies individuals who are imaginative, attentive to inner feelings, intellectually curious, and independent of judgment. They are often willing to entertain novel ideas and unconventional values. Those who score low in this domain prefer the familiar and often do not share emotional responses. The facets of this domain are Fantasy (O1), Aesthetics (O2), Feelings (O3), Actions (O4), Ideas (O5), and Values (O6) (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Individuals that score high in Agreeableness are often altruistic, sympathetic to others, and eager to help others. Those who score low in this domain are disagreeable, egocentric, and competitive. The facets of this domain are Trust (A1), Straightforwardness (A2), Altruism (A3), Compliance (A4), Modesty (A5), and Tender-Mindedness (A6) (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

High scores in the Conscientiousness domain identify individuals who are purposeful, strong-willed, and determined. These individuals are often cautious, punctual, and reliable. Low scores are often indicative of individuals that are careless in working towards their goals. The facets of this domain are Competence (C1), Order (C2), Dutifulness (C3), Achievement Striving (C4), Self-Discipline (C5), and Deliberation (C6) (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

The NEO-PI-R has been found to be a reliable and valid assessment of personality across age and culture. Specifically, internal consistency coefficients ranged from 0.86 to 0.95 for both self- and observer versions, which are high (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Van den Broeck, Rossi, Dierckx, and De Clercq (2012) found the NEO-PI-R was a valid and reliable personality measure for a sample of individuals aged 18 to 85 years and older.

**Hypotheses**

Based upon past research, it was hypothesized that SPs would score higher than the general population overall on the Extraversion domain. Next, it was hypothesized that teachers-in-training would score high on the Openness to Experience domain as they are often responsible for implementing interventions. Lastly, it was hypothesized that school teachers, SCs, and SPs would, as a group, score high on the Agreeableness domain because good consultants often possess traits, such as warmth and genuineness.

**Analyses**

First, using ANOVA, differences among the three groups on each of the five NEO-PI-R domains were determined, followed by post-hoc comparisons using Scheffe tests. Next, facet score differences were calculated with ANOVA and post-hoc Scheffe tests.

**Results**

Following a non-significant Levene’s tests, which indicated no violations regarding homogeneity of variance, an ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences among the three groups on the Neuroticism,  $F(2, 124) = 17.61, p < .05$ , and Agreeableness,  $F(2, 124) = 5.82, p < .05$ , domains. Specifically, SCs ( $M = 56.71; SD = 10.4$ ), and SPs ( $M = 52.65; SD = 9.5$ ) scored significantly higher than teachers-in-training ( $M = 44.83; SD = 10.1$ ) on the Neuroticism domain. See Table 1. Although the mean score for the SPs on the Neuroticism domain was still within the average range (i.e., 45-55), the mean score for the SCs was in the high average range (i.e., 56-65). With regards to the Agreeableness domain, teachers-in-training ( $M = 55.28; SD = 9.9$ ) scored significantly higher in this domain than SCs ( $M = 50.49; SD = 10.9$ ) and SPs ( $M = 47.00; SD = 12.1$ ). No statistically significant differences were found among the groups for the Extraversion,  $F(2, 124) = 1.29, p > .05$ , Openness,  $F(2, 124) = 0.13, p > .05$ , and Conscientiousness,  $F(2, 124) = 1.38, p > .05$ , domains.

Table 1  
 ANOVA Results for the Five Domains

Domain	Teachers	Counselors	School Psychs	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
N	44.83 <sup>a,b</sup> (10.1)	56.71 (10.4)	52.65 (9.5)	17.61	.000**
E	48.78 (9.6)	52.37 (13.7)	49.10 (10.9)	1.29	.278
O	46.68 (8.5)	47.34 (11.58)	445.95 (11.3)	0.13	.878
A	55.28 <sup>a</sup> (9.9)	50.49 (10.9)	47.00 <sup>a</sup> (12.1)	5.82	.044*
C	53.51 (9.3)	51.11 (10.5)	50.10 (8.4)	1.38	.254

Total *N* = 127; Teachers *n* = 72; School Counselors *n* = 35; School Psychologists *n* = 20  
 \*\*= significant at .01 level or less; \*= significant at .05 level or less. Standard deviations are in parentheses

Note: Mean scores with same superscripts are significantly different at .01 level using Scheffe post-hoc tests. N = Neuroticism; E = Extraversion; O = Openness; A = Agreeableness; C = Conscientiousness

Following statistically significant post-hoc tests on the Neuroticism and Agreeableness domains, ANOVA tests were used to discover any differences at the facet level for the Neuroticism and Agreeableness domains. As noted earlier, each domain is comprised of six facets which, like the domains scores, are provided in the form of *T*-scores. Significant differences among the three groups at the facet level were followed up with post-hoc Scheffe tests to discover any pair-wise differences. Like the domain comparisons, Levene's tests for homogeneity of variance were insignificant and the .01 level of significance was employed.

Under the Neuroticism domain, statistically significant differences were found among the three groups on five of the six facets (e.g., Anxiety,  $F(2, 124) = 9.27, p < .01$ ; Angry/Hostility,  $F(2, 124) = 12.43, p < .01$ ; Depression,  $F(2, 124) = 15.72, p < .01$ ; Impulsiveness,  $F(2, 124) = 5.86, p < .01$ ; and Vulnerability,  $F(2, 124) = 18.18, p < .01$ ). The .01 level of significance was employed for the facet comparisons in order to control for alpha slippage. Results are described in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Post-hoc Scheffe Results for the Six Neuroticism Facets*

Facet	Teachers	Counselors	School Psychs	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Anxiety	48.81 <sup>a</sup> (10.6)	56.63 <sup>a</sup> (9.7)	53.40 (10.1)	9.27	.000**
Ang/Host.	44.13 <sup>a,b</sup> (9.8)	54.11 <sup>a</sup> (9.8)	52.3 <sup>b</sup> (13.9)	12.43	.000**
Depression	44.60 <sup>a,b</sup> (10.2)	55.43 <sup>a</sup> (9.6)	52.75 <sup>b</sup> (9.9)	15.72	.000**
Self-Consc.	49.64 (11.1)	54.60 (10.8)	53.00 (10.6)	2.65	.075
Impulsive	45.49 <sup>a</sup> (9.3)	52.10 <sup>a</sup> (9.2)	50.85 (9.7)	5.86	.008**
Vulnerab	43.11 <sup>a</sup> (10.3)	55.46 <sup>a</sup> (9.9)	49.90 (9.9)	18.18	.000**

Total *N* = 127; Teachers *n* = 72; School Counselors *n* = 35; School Psychologists *n* = 20  
 \*\*= significant at .01 level or less; \*= significant at .05 level or less. Standard deviations are in parentheses

Note: Mean scores with same superscripts are significantly different at .01 level using Scheffe post-hoc tests

Under the Agreeableness domain, statistically significant differences were found on three of the six facets: Trust,  $F(2, 124) = 4.70, p = .011$ ; Altruism,  $F(2, 124) = 4.83, p = .010$ ; and Compliance,  $F(2, 124) = 4.67, p = .011$ . These results are provided in Table 3.

Table 3  
*Post-hoc Scheffe Results for the Six Agreeableness Facets*

Domain	Teachers	Counselors	School Psychs	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Trust	51.85 <sup>a</sup> (10.7)	47.14 (11.5)	44.20 <sup>a</sup> (11.5)	4.70	.011*
Straightfor	52.89 (9.2)	51.00 (10.3)	48.10 (7.2)	2.22	.113
Altruism	55.82 <sup>a</sup> (9.1)	53.10 (11.5)	48.15 <sup>a</sup> (9.8)	4.83	.010*
Compliance	54.72 <sup>a</sup> (10.0)	49.10 <sup>a</sup> (11.6)	48.35 (12.2)	4.67	.011*
Modesty	52.70 (9.9)	53.57 (11.2)	51.10 (10.9)	.357	.700
Tender-Mind	52.17 (8.0)	50.63 (9.7)	47.9 (11.2)	1.80	.170

Total *N* = 127; Teachers *n* = 72; School Counselors *n* = 35; School Psychologists *n* = 20

\*\*= significant at .01 level or less; \*= significant at .05 level or less. Standard deviations are in parentheses

Note: Mean scores with same superscripts are significantly different at .01 level using Scheffe post-hoc tests

### Discussion

First, it was hypothesized SPs would score higher in the Extraversion domain than SCs and teachers-in-training as they often facilitate consultation through a leadership role. However, results did not support this hypothesis as there was no statistical difference among the groups. Second, it was hypothesized that teachers-in-training would score higher than SPs and SCs in the Openness to Experience domain. This hypothesis was not supported by the results of this study. Third, it was hypothesized that SPs, SCs, and school teachers would score high in the Agreeableness domain compared to the normative sample provided in the NEO PI-R scoring materials. This hypothesis was not supported by the results of the study; however, results revealed teachers-in-training scored significantly higher than SPs in this domain. This finding is consistent with previous research supporting that new teachers are typically enthusiastic and open-minded (Martines, 2008).

Overall, results revealed SCs and SPs scored higher in the Neuroticism domain which did not support any of the hypotheses. These results indicate SCs and SPs tend to experience more negative effects, such as fear, sadness, embarrassment, guilt, and disgust than teachers-in-training. At the facet level, SCs and SPs scored higher than teachers-in-training in the Anger/Hostility and Depression facets. These results suggest that SCs and SPs tend to be more anxious, irritable, impatient, and mercurial than teachers-in-training, probably due to being in the field for several years.

SCs scored higher on the Impulsiveness and Vulnerability facets than teachers-in-training. Thus, SCs may have more difficulty controlling their urges and may make more irrational decisions than teachers-in-training. This result was surprising as many of these traits are associated with failed consultation and teacher resistance to consultation. Gonzalez and colleagues (2004) found factors such as anxiety, discomfort over interpersonal processes, losing control of the problem, and fears associated with confidentiality are related to teacher consultation resistance.

Results also indicated teachers-in-training scored higher than SPs in the Agreeableness domain. From the findings, it could be posited that teachers-in-training tend to be more altruistic, sympathetic to others, and eager to help others. Specifically, teachers-in-training scored higher than SPs in the Trust and Altruism facets; indicating that, from the sample, teachers-in-training were more trustful, forgiving, warm, generous, patient, and tolerant than SPs. This outcome was unexpected as consultation tends to be more effective if the consultant possesses traits, such as warmth, empathy, and trustworthiness (McGivern et al., 2010).

Teachers-in-training also scored higher than SCs and SPs on the Compliance facet. The Compliance facet is related to the response to interpersonal conflict. Individuals with higher scores in this area defer to others and are less aggressive during interpersonal conflict. These results may be due to the fact that the teachers-in-training are younger and still in school. However, novice teachers who are willing to engage the consultant could help facilitate the consultation process.

### **Implications**

Researchers suggest that verbal and nonverbal communication is paramount in building effective consultative relationships (Kratochwill, 2010; McGivern et al., 2010; Stenger et al., 1992). If the consultant possesses ineffective verbal and/or nonverbal communication skills then consultation will likely be less successful. This study found SCs and SPs may have the tendency to possess personality traits related to unsuccessful consultation although their scores generally remained in the average range. Aspects of the Neuroticism domain have been associated with unsuccessful consultation, and could likely impact the SC and SP's ability to engage in effective verbal and non-verbal communication. Thus, SPs and SCs may exhibit behaviors that make establishing and maintaining consultative relationships with new teachers difficult. For example, SCs and SP are more likely to be irritable and pessimistic than new teachers.

Neurotic personality traits and behaviors have several implications in establishing consultative relationships and for the consultation process. The possibility exists that these behaviors could make SCs and SPs appear impatient which could impact the new teacher's desire to engage in long-term consultation. Additionally, teachers may be less receptive to feedback from SCs and SPs who are perceived as impatient or irritable, effectively damaging rapport, which could likely influence teachers to not implement suggested interventions with fidelity and integrity, and/or have an adverse impact on the consultant and consultee's ability to work effectively as a team.

Despite the potential of a guarded relationship between teachers and SCs/SPs, the authors of this article found that newly trained teachers are more likely to possess personality traits

conducive to successful consultation. For instance, teachers-in-training are more likely than SCs and SPs to be forgiving, trusting, warm, generous, and kind. This supports the notion that teachers entering the profession are more likely to be responsive to suggestions made by SCs and SPs. Thus, SCs and SPs should note that new teachers' tendency to be warm and generous is likely to result in a strong, consultative relationship from the onset; as such, the consultant-consultee relationship should be nurtured so as to promote, teamwork and intervention fidelity.

In terms of developing the skills to establish and foster a consultative alliance, graduate training programs that prepare SPs and SCs should emphasize the importance of interpersonal relationships and the personality traits one must possess to engage in successful consultation. SPs and SCs are expected to possess consultation skills by the end of their graduate training, and considering the results of this study, it would be beneficial for them to understand that teachers may perceive them as being tense, anxious, and irritable. Such knowledge could have a profound impact in strengthening relationship-enhancing dispositions during their formative training.

Additionally, research supports individuals scoring high in the Neuroticism domain are more likely to experience burnout in their profession (Kokkinos, 2007). The current study implies that SCs and SPs possess neurotic personality traits; thus, they may be more likely to experience feelings of burnout and empathy fatigue. New teachers would be able to perceive these traits and therefore avoid consultation. This potential consequence is important because research has shown that new teachers are more likely than experienced teachers to take advantage of consultation (Martines, 2008). If consultants (i.e., SCs and/or SPs) are seasoned, there is a potential that these individuals become more neurotic over time. This implication would be especially significant because scores on the NEO-PI-R tend to stay stable over time (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

### **Limitations**

This study had limitations that could impact the results and limit generalizability. First, the participants were predominantly female (79.5%). As such, the results may not generalize to male practitioners. Secondly, the teachers-in-training participants were still in school (albeit at the very end of their training) while the SC and SP participants were practitioners. Teachers-in-training were also significantly younger on average than SCs and SPs. The findings, therefore, may not apply to experienced teachers.

### **Future Research**

A future iteration of this study could be conducted with SCs, SPs, and school teachers with similar years of experience in their respective fields. Such a study would help to determine if the difference in personality was directly related to years of experience. There could also be benefit in conducting a longitudinal study with SCs-in-training, SPs-in-training, and teachers-in-training to determine if the respective professions affect personality over time. Another possible study could consider the impact SP and SC personality traits have on burnout. This type of study would be beneficial because neuroticism is related to burnout and these two groups scored significantly higher in neuroticism than teachers-in-training. Lastly, collecting data at the beginning of the academic year may generate different results from data collected at the end of the academic year. Doing so could help determine if neuroticism was a situational factor or a persisting personality trait.

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