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TYPE A AND HARDINESS - AN ANALYSIS OF ITS COMPONENTS

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Abstract

The study aims to investigate the relationship between the two constructs , Type A behavior pattern and hardiness. The sample consisted of 324 Adults randomly selected, who were part of a larger survey on psychological risk for coronary artery Disease. The Discriminant function analysis and Analysis of Variance revealed a significant association between hardiness and Type A pattern of behaviour. The locus of control component is important variable relating the hardy and Type A personalities revealing a possible overlap. The role of gender and occupational status fostering these two personality disposition is highlighted.

Personality dispositions have been found to play a strong moderating or mediating effect on stress - illness relationship. Two most important constructs that have been studied are "Type A behavior pattern" and " Hardiness". In the broader look at psychosocial determinants of health or diseases in individuals, these two constructs are included additively or interactively with other conditions. Psychologists have attempted to fine-tune these two variables to identify the true "Pathogenic components of Type A"[Williams,1993] and the "Sallutogenic effect of hardiness"[Kobasa et al 1982].

Stress - coping model of Lazarus et al (1984) emphasizes on cognitive appraisal as an important mediating factor in either enhancing or reducing the harmful effects of stress situations. According to this model, perceived control over stressors positive evaluations of the situations as challenges or opportunities, are considered as "active coping strategies". Thus both Type A and Hardiness are conceptualized as active coping styles that develop in the process of interaction with the environmental demands.

The Type A behavior pattern is construed as maladaptive coping in the stress and illness relationship, where as hardiness is termed as "Stress Buffering" or "moderating" variable.

Type A behavior pattern is a construct related to issues of stress and controllability, implicated as a risk for CAD. The Type A is a behavior pattern characterized by ambitiousness, competitiveness, impatience, and irritation and increased potential for hostility. The hostility component, impatience and time urgency components are strongly implicated as a definite coronary risk. The cognitive and affective domains of Type A behavior have a consistent set of beliefs and attitudes about self, others and life in general.

The underlying concern for self esteem and the "need to control" (Glass 1977) are the two theories which have emphasized the mediating role of Type A personality in exacerbating the negative cognition's and emotions in the stressful situations leading to physical reactivity. According to "control theory" proposed by Glass, the "Type As strive to achieve, and takes every situations as opportunities, they are considered to be high on Internal Locus of Control and demonstrate a heightened tendency to see oneself as able to control events". These cognitive theories emphasize their need to "prove themselves" and "self-esteem worries" underlying the typical behaviors. Type As evaluate themselves as efficient, high achievers, tough, involved etc. This achievement- oriented approach to life , high ego centered and personal control is a philosophy of modern life. Type A is considered to be an acquired habit that is fostered in our modern socio cultural content.(Wright 1988).

"Hardiness" proposed by Kobasa (1983), is a constellation of personality characteristics that is stated to function as a resistance resource in stressful life situations. The components, of hardiness are Commitment, Control and Challenge. The commitment is expressed as a tendency to involve oneself in whatever one is doing (work, family, etc.). These people are supposed to be actively involved in whatever they are doing rather than being passive or avoiding. The control disposition is expressed as a tendency to feel and act as if one is influential in the face of varied contingencies of life. A sense of personal control

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is considered to be a positive coping. The challenge disposition is expressed as the belief that change rather than stability is normal in life. The anticipation of changes are interesting incentives to growth rather than threats to security.

Analyzing these characteristics, it becomes evident that both Type A s and hardy persons to be highly committed, involved and experience a sense of control or need for control.

There is a possibility of a similar cognitive orientation to life underlying the Type A s and hardiness.In addition studies have also implied socio-demographic variables influencing these constructs. Generally there is no conclusive evidence about type A as a toxic mediator or hardiness as buffering moderator. The context in which these behavior or attitudes emerges seems to be the most important factors influencing there effects.

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between these two constructs and find evidence for possible overlap

METHOD

The sample consisted of 324 subjects randomly selected, who were a part of larger survey on psychological risks for coronary conditions. The mean age of the sample was 52.17 years with a SD of 12.30. There were 215 males and 109 females. Among them 60% were graduates and 40% were professionally qualified. 60% of the sample were employed.

The subjects completed Blumenthal's Type A screening inventory (1985). This is a Self-report checklist consisting of self-evaluating statements, which are 38 in number. Some examples are: Being Argumentative, Quick, Cautious, Loud..Etc.The respondents rate themselves on a five-point scale as to how true they are with reference to these behaviors. This being a screening inventory can quickly classify people as Type As or Type Bs. The inventory has significant correlation with other Type A indicators. (Blumenthal et al 1985).

Hardiness scale (Padus 1992), a shorter version of this scale that has 12 items is used in this study. There are 4 items to each component i.e. Challenge, Commitment and Control. Here responses are obtained on a 4 point rating scale.

The data was collected under standard testing conditions on an individual basis. The data was analyzed using 6th version of SPSS software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The description obtained on the total sample showed (N=324) that the group were moderately Type A with a mean score of 95.81 with a SD of 13.81. They were also moderately hardy with a mean value of 5.56, SD being 4.65. The sample was classified as high hardy and less hardy based on the cut of score of 9. (Padus, E. 1992).

Canonical discriminant function analysis was carried out keeping hardiness scores as dependent and Type A as independent along with other variables such as age, sex, occupational status. and education. Type A emerged as a single function significantly discriminating the hardy from less hardy. All other variables failed to predict the groups.Table 1 shows the significance of TypeA concept in discriminating the groups.

The results indicate a significant positive relation between Type A and Hardiness. Probability of both the constructs being identical in identifying individuals cognitive orientation can be considered. Further the association between components of hardiness to type A was analyzed using partial correlation. The effects of demographic variables were partialled out.

Table-1
Function 1

	Wilks Lambda	Probability	Canonical r	Chi square	sig
Type A	0.98757	0.04	0.11	4.02	0.04

Group 1		Group 2	
Less hardy	-0.58	High hardy	0.21

Table-2 Showing the correlation coefficient between Type A & Hardiness

Variables	Type A Correlation coefficient	Sig of r
Hardiness	0.13	0.02
Challenge	0.13	0.11
Commitment	0.06	0.45
Control	0.20	0.01

Total hardiness and control component of hardiness was significantly associated with the Type A behavior. The need to be in control of Type As and the personal sense of control of hardiness is found to be related. However the other two aspects i.e. challenge and commitments are not associated with the TypeA. The results indicate that internal locus of control is common to both the constructs.

GENDER, TYPE A AND HARDINESS

Both the Type A scores and Hardiness scores were analyzed separately in relation to the gender status of the sample.

The male samples of the study were found to be higher on Type A than the females. This is in line with the findings of Kaushik (1991) who reported male subjects scoring high on Jenkins Activity Survey (Form C) compared to females.

This confirms that this behavior being more prevalent among men, which may be fostered more strongly because of their occupation and cultural expectancies from men. The following evidence further supports this.

The occupied subjects were significantly higher on Type A behavior patterns than the unemployed group. This evidence implies and confirms that work status and nature of work can trigger and influence Type A mode of coping in various situations. These results confirm the findings of Ramamurthi et al (1984) Hema gopal (1994), Dharmaraja (1997) and Rupa (1998). Using the Blumenthal's TASRI,Dharmaraja found self-employed and executives to be more Type A prone with a mean score of 101.63 and 96.90 respectively.

Similarly Hemagopal(1994) also found executives and bank managers to be relatively high on Type A. Using Jenkins survey, Rupa (1998) demonstrated Reporters to be high on activity and Type A components than the Editors. In all the above studies there were no unemployed group to compare.

The mean Hardiness scores of both the sexes were compared on all the three components using one way ANOVA.

The personality disposition of hardiness that is observed in men seems to be different

Table-3 Showing the Type A scores in relation to Gender

Gender Status	N	Mean	SD	Mean Diff	t value	Sig
Males	215	98.19	14.23	7.24	4.5	0.03
Females	109	90.95	11.69			

Table-4 Showing the Type A scores in relation to Work status

Occupation	N	Mean	SD	Mean Diff	t value	Sig
Employed	214	97.25	13.57	4.48	2.76	0.01
Unemployed	110	92.77	13.95			

Table-5 Showing Mean Hardiness in relation to gender

Variables	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	F value	sig
Total Hardiness					
Males	4.23	3.95	1.86	6.99	.01
Females	2.37	4.29			
Challenge					
Males	1.06	2.15	0.77	4.17	.04
Females	0.29	2.22			
Commitment					
Males	2.28	2.12	0.39	1.15	.28
Females	1.88	2.16			
Control					
Males	0.77	1.95	0.52	2.06	.15
Females	0.24	2.35			

from that of women. Male subjects in this study are found to be slightly more hardier than women.This significance is observed in the challenge component of hardiness. Studies by Kobasa et al have focussed on white males in high profile jobs, and not on females. She could show men to be hardy. Ahuja et al (1992) also report the male executives to be hardier .

On the contrary Studies on working women are not able to demonstrate this (Schmied & Lawler 1986). In the latter study the authors postulated a different composition of hardiness among women,especially women in low profile jobs.The findings in the present study shows women to be less hardy and low on taking stressors as opportunities for growth.They are also found to be low on internal locus of control.This can be attributed to socio cultural context fostering a specific way of orienting to life.

The two personality dispositions Type A Behavior pattern and the Hardiness seems to represent the behavioral and the cognitive aspects of the coping strategies a person uses to deal with the life situations. The common characteristic for both the constructs is the locus of control. A high internal locus is viewed as need to control in Type A Analysis and personal control in Hardiness.

Hence to that extent there is an overlap in these two dispositions. Sex roles, occupational status and sociocultural factors are possible influences which can either augment or diminish the effects of TypeA and Hardiness.Whether former is Pathogenic mediator or the latter is Sallutogenic moderator in stress illness relation can be understood only when there is a conceptual and developmental clarity about these two constructs. Future studies can direct the efforts in clearly delineating the meaning of hardiness, resilence, sense of control, confidence etc. in different cultures, work groups, age and sex groups. Whether hardiness is really being tough, which is also a Characteristic of Type A must be clarified to know their contribution to health status.

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