A Case Study: How Does Teacher’s Personality Influence Classroom Teaching and Psychopathic Students’ Interaction

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Abstract: Recognizing the pivotal role of teacher personality in educational processes, this study aims at investigating the influence of teacher personality on classroom teaching and interaction with psychopathic students, using the 16 Personality Factors (16PF) model. Through an embedded case study method with purposive sampling, eight teachers representing four personality types were observed and interviewed to understand their instructional preferences and interactions with students, particularly those with psychological disorders. The findings indicate that teacher personality significantly shapes teachers as spotlight (i.e., focus on “myself” or “surroundings”), the different vital roles by adopting extraverted feeling (Fe) in their teaching and psychopathic students’ interaction, and last shapes teachers as the fabulist through their deep insights of intuitions in work. This study underscores the need for teacher training in mental health awareness and the significance of a multi-disciplinary approach involving collaboration between teachers, school administrators, counselors, and parents to support students with psychological issues effectively.

Keywords: teacher personality; 16 personality factors (16PF) model; psychopathic students; Classroom Teaching

1. Introduction of the study objectives

The role of teacher personality is considered a key component of classroom teaching and professional development (Lajos, 2017[32]), playing a crucial and complex variable role in the educational process, a point that has long been a broad consensus (Evans, 1959[19]; Getzels & Jackson, 1963[24]). Currently, research on teacher personality in related fields is diverse. Studies have suggested that people with different clusters of traits tend to choose different professions (Rubinstein & Strul, 2007[44]). This indicates that teachers may have a unique personality profile. Applying new insights from personality psychology to explain the role of different patterns of teacher personality traits in educational efforts belongs to a unique research area (De Raad & Schouwenburg, 1998). Two opposing professional roles of teachers’ personality traits were taken on in previous studies as: lecturers and researchers(Rushton et al.,1983[45]). From the perspectives of students, students from social science major at universities in Andalusia have claimed that they expected their teachers to treat them with respect and understanding and to be willing to cooperate( Sánchez et.al.,2011[21]). Accordingly, it is evident that teacher personality traits have an important impact on the educational process and are significant for optimizing teacher selection, training, and development. However, there was little to know about how teacher’s personality traits will impact their teaching and interactions to students. This study aims to explore the different personality traits of teachers based on the theory of the 16 Personality Factors (16PF) model, which will help to further understand the role of teachers’ personality characteristics in the educational process.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Teacher’s Personality

Personality types represent a psychological categorization of individuals into distinct groups. These types are often differentiated from personality traits, which encompass a narrower range of behavioral tendencies. Personality types are described to reflect qualitative differences among people, whereas traits can be seen as quantitative differences. For instance, type theories posit that introverts and extraverts
belong to fundamentally different categories. In contrast, trait theories view introversion and extraversion as part of a continuous spectrum, with many individuals falling somewhere in the middle. Although the investigation of personality traits is primarily the domain of psychology, it is surprising to note that in the psychological sciences, there are no clearly defined research fields dedicated specifically to the study of teaching. This is despite the longstanding consensus among experts that a teacher's personality is the most significant and intricate variable in the educational process (Evans, 1959[19]; Getzels & Jackson, 1963[24]; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). In the field of education, De Raad et al (2008[17]) has first comprehensively explain the role of diverse patterns of teachers' personality traits, which applying new insights from personality psychology to educational endeavors. The integration of personality traits to teacher was initially introduced in the mid-twentieth century (Lamke, 1951[34]) and has since been pursued gradually (Mount & Barrick, 1998[37]; Rushton, Murray, & Paunonen, 1983[46]). In recent years, the field of teacher personality has even witnessed a surge in popularity (Aidla & Vadi, 2010; Genc, Pekić, & Genc, 2014[23]; Göncz, Góncz, & Pekić, 2014[25]; Rushton, Morgan, & Richard, 2007[47]), indicating a growing interest in understanding the influence of teachers' personality traits on educational outcomes.[1] There is evidence that individuals with distinct clusters of personality traits often gravitate towards specific professions (Rubinstein & Strul, 2007[44]). This observation has been validated in the field of teachers (Harris, Vernon, Johnson, & Jang, 2006[27]), indicating a unique personality profile for this professional group.

Previous studies have proposed that teacher personality are associated with these exist distinct research areas. Within the field of pedagogy, researches specifically addresses the responsibilities and rights that teachers possess towards their students. Conversely, other studies concerns teacher personality with the characteristics of teachers that are shaped by their respective roles (Rosić, 2011[43]). Research on teacher personality within educational psychology and related fields varies widely in terms of methodology, assumptions, and objectives. Studies have employed a range of observational methods, from casual to experimental, and have relied on various sources of data, such as teacher self-evaluations, assessments by middle school students, university students, other teachers, and experts in the field. Additionally, data has been gathered from essays, evaluation scales, checklists, sociometric methods, and tests of personality and ability. Classifying these studies according to a single, well-defined criterion, as demanded by formal logic, is not feasible due to overlapping categories (Göncz, 2017[26]). According to these different aspects of studies, Göncz (2017[26]) has contributed to group research into several categories based on their objectives, with further subdivisions within each category: (1) theoretical studies focusing on describing personality types or behavior patterns suitable or unsuitable for teachers; (2) field research aimed at identifying desirable and undesirable traits of actual teachers; (3) empirical studies examining the professional behaviors of teachers and their impact on student personality or behavior; (4) research concerning the professional identity of teachers; and (5) studies considering teachers' personalities within the context of personality theories.

In the intricate field of personality psychology, the Five-Factor Model stands out as the leading theoretical framework among numerous researchers. The Five-Factor Model has a rich history that has been chronicled by various sources (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008[30]). It's crucial to underscore that the Five-Factor Model serves as a descriptive framework for personality (Srivastava, 2014[50]). This model is rooted in the consensus among researchers from two distinct research traditions: one that relies on personality questionnaires to investigate traits, and the other that examines personality traits as expressed in natural language. In terms of education field, the Five-Factor Model can be also applied to research on teacher personality, providing a framework to examine preferred or undesirable personality characteristics in light of contemporary school expectations and organizational behavior applications (McAdams, 1992[35]). For example, pronounced neuroticism is generally considered an undesirable trait for teachers, as it may hinder dynamic communication with students and require substantial time to improve social skills. In contrast, other dimensions, such as moderate extraversion, openness to novelty, creativity, developed vocabulary, receptiveness to unconventional ideas, and a high degree of agreeableness, are assumed to be more pronounced in good teachers than in the general population. A good teacher should also exhibit a reasonable level of conscientiousness, characterized by competence, orderliness, a sense of duty, planning, self-discipline, impulse control, and dedication in their work (Göncz, 2017[26]). Nevertheless, there have been both supportive (Digman, 1990[18]; McCrae & Costa, 1999[13]; McCrae & John, 1992[36]; Saucier & Goldberg, 1996[49]) and dissenting (Block, 2010[4]; McAdams, 1992[35]; Paunonen & Jackson, 2000[38]) arguments surrounding it.

According to these, this study attempt to adopt 16PF model which according to Jungian Eight Functions Theory to explore teachers’ personality, and explore their teaching behaviour and perspectives about teaching.
2.2 Jungian Eight Functions Theory

Jungian Eight Functions Theory is a psychological framework proposed by Swiss psychologist Carl Jung that describes the eight dimensions of human psychology. These dimensions encompass the individual's various psychological facets and characteristics, encompassing introversion-extraversion, sensation-intuition, thinking-feeling, judgment-perception, internal-external, rational-emotional, consciousness-unconsciousness, and leadership-subordination. Specifically, the eight functions are: (1) Extraverted Sensing (Se): Focuses on engaging with and experiencing the present moment, sensitive to external changes and opportunities, able to make immediate actions. (2) Introverted Sensing (Si): Deals with past experiences, seeking the causes of past events, emphasizing details and known information. (3) Extraverted Intuition (Ne): Understands the meanings and connections between things, attracted to possibilities, sensitive to situational cues, and enthusiastic about exploring new things. (4) Introverted Intuition (Ni): Predicts future developments and possibilities without external cues, abstracts concepts, and can change perspectives to view opinions and things. (5) Extraverted Thinking (Te): Organizes and systemizes thinking, excels in logical thinking and setting standards, focused on efficiency and results. (6) Introverted Thinking (Ti): Analyzes and classifies deeply, prefers framework thinking, evaluates problems based on conceptual models, and pursues precision. (7) Extraverted Feeling (Fe): Validates and affirms, coordinates relationships, focused on interpersonal harmony and social norms. (8) Introverted Feeling (Fi): Defends personal values, judges the meaning or worth of something based on its true value, loyal to oneself.

These eight functions are combined with the attitude types (introversion/extraversion) to form the eight cognitive types, providing a nuanced understanding of how individuals interact with the world and make decisions. Jungian Eight Functions Theory offers a framework for understanding the diversity of human psychology, facilitating self-awareness and the promotion of effective communication and cooperation.

2.3 The 16 Personality Factors (16PF) model of personality questionnaire

The 16PF as well as the MBTI assessment are popular personality assessment tool developed based on Carl Jung's psychological type theory and other psychological research. Carl Jung believed that human psychological activities could be described through four basic functions, including sensation, thinking, feeling, and intuition. These four functions can be expressed in an extroverted or introverted manner. Sensation informs people about the existence of something, thinking helps to understand what it is, feeling lets one know whether it is satisfactory, and intuition can predict its origins and where it's going. Furthermore, Jung described eight different personality types by combining two attitude types with the four psychological functions. For example, individuals with an extraverted thinking type rely on objective data to stimulate their thought processes and typically have a strong interest in science and technology. Building on Jung's theory, Raymond Cattell conducted more detailed quantitative research on personality traits to identify key dimensions that could describe differences in human character, categorizing these dimensions into fundamental personality traits. Consequently, Cattell's research ultimately identified sixteen primary personality factors, hence the 16PF (Cattell et.al., 1970[10]).

The Sixteen Personality (16PF) has been developed as a psychometric self-report personality questionnaire, which originates from the five primary traits. The Sixteen Personality types are based on five independent spectrums, with all letters in the type code (e.g. INFJ-A) referring to one of the two sides of the corresponding spectrum. According to these independent spectrums, five personality type included mind(i.e., Introverted and Extraverted individuals), energy(i.e., obServant and iNtuitive individuals), nature(i.e., Thinking and Feeling individuals), tactics(i.e., Judging and Prospecting individual) and identity (i.e., Assertive (-A) and Turbulent (-T) individuals) were defined in each of these aspects, which have been seen as a two-sided continuum. This is the additional dimension that distinguishes the 16PF from the traditional Big Five. It characterizes individuals based on their interpersonal style. Assertive individuals are confident, task-oriented, and often seek leadership roles, while Turbulent individuals may be more hesitant, sensitive to criticism, and avoid confrontation.

A wealth of evidence suggests that the ‘16PF Questionnaire’ can be widely applied across various fields. For instance, in career development planning, counseling helps clients understand their strengths it helps clients understand their strengths and limitations, and plan self-development goals and effective career paths. (Carson, 1998[8]; Cattell&Schuerger, 2003[9]; Conn &Rieke, 1994[12]; Watterson, 2002[53]). In the field of clinical treatment, although the 16PF Questionnaire cannot be used to diagnose mental disorders (e.g., Lally,
2003[33]), it can predict various behaviors of interest to clinicians. For example, effects of group therapy (Wang and Li, 2003[11]), war related stress (Poikolainen, 1993[39]), alienation (Yi-Hui et al., 2004[54]), types of substance abuse (Carey et al., 1995[7]), suicidal tendencies (Ferrero et al., 1997[22]), delinquency, law-breaking tendencies (Low et al., 2004[52]), and excessive Internet use. Currently, the Sixteen Personality Traits (16PF) has been translated into over 35 languages and boasts an impressive empirical research history. A summary of reliability studies indicates that the questionnaire provides dependable information. However, there’s little use of 16PF in education field. The present study aimed at adopting 16PF assessment to investigate teachers’ personality and its impact on their teaching practice.

3. Research methods

3.1 Participants

The method of an embedded case study was used in this study. By using purposive sampling strategy, four different types of personalities teachers hold were selected as cases to participate in this study. Two teachers in each type case were selected randomly to participate in classroom observations and interviews after class. Table 1 shows the background information of the participants. They were selected due to their representation of the predominant personality type, and the inclusion of instructors boasting notable expertise, including members affiliated with the Master Teacher Studio, leaders within the field of subject education, and novice educators. In total, 8 teachers from 4 personality type cases were involved in this study. Table 1 shows the background information of the participants.

### Table 1: Background information of the participants in the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher No.</th>
<th>Name (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Teaching Years</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Teachers’ personality type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1*</td>
<td>Venus</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>ENTJ-T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>Julie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>ENFJ-A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>ISFP-A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>ISTJ-A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5</td>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>ISFJ-A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6</td>
<td>Ricky</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>NFJ-A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S7</td>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>NFJ-A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S8</td>
<td>Gloria</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Instruments

According to the Sixteen Personality (16PF) model, a psychometric self-report personality questionnaire was developed to assess teachers’ personality in this study. To be specific, the five spectrums and their corresponding polar opposites are: (1) Extraversion (e.g., You regularly make new friends) vs. Introversion (e.g., You cannot easily make new friends). This spectrum describes whether a person tends to be outgoing and energetic (Extraverted) or reserved and introspective (Introverted). (2) Sensing (e.g., You are not too interested in discussions about various interpretations of creative works) vs. Intuition. This dimension reflects how individuals process information. Those who are Sensing focus on facts, details, and concrete data, whereas those who are Intuitive prefer abstract concepts and patterns. (3) Thinking (e.g., You prioritize facts over people’s feelings when determining a course of action) vs. Feeling. This spectrum refers to the decision-making style. Thinkers make decisions based on logic and objective analysis, while feelers consider the interpersonal impact and emotional consequences. (4) Judging (e.g., You like to use organizing tools like schedules and lists) vs. Perceiving (e.g., You cannot prioritize and plan tasks effectively). This dimension relates to one’s approach to life. Judgers tend to be organized, decisive, and prefer planned activities, whereas Perceivers are more flexible, open-ended, and spontaneous. (5) Assertiveness (-A) vs. Turbulence (-T).

3.3 Procedure

Multiple sources of data were included in this study such as in-depth interview, field observation, and documents (i.e., teachers’ self-reflection journals, chat records). Two rounds of semi-structural interviews with different foci were conducted in Chinese. The interviews were conducted with a scheduled list of open-ended questions that encourage participants to provide their personal stories/teaching preferences.
and strategies in classroom. The interview schedule was conducted to explore teachers’ different personality characteristics, teaching styles as well as the attitudes and strategies to unusual phenomenons in teacher-student interactions. All interviews were carried out face-to-face in a location (mainly the schools or cafés near school) that was convenient and comfortable for the participants, and each interview lasted 30 to 60 minutes. With the permission of the participants, each interview was audio-recorded and further transcribed.

The data were transcribed by the author and then analyzed through a qualitative inductive process. Three main steps were conducted in data analysis. First, to gain insight into each participant's overall impression, the author meticulously examined the complete transcripts and formed initial impressions regarding the teachers’ personality. Second, thematic analysis was used to code each transcript with the assistance of Nvivo. With exploring the potential connections between codes and themes, several main personality patterns emerged from teachers’ interview data in relation to their instructional preference, teacher-student interaction, and the procedures of handling with psychopathic students. Third, the author reread the transcripts carefully to identify whether some detailed and complex data was lost, until all emerging themes which reflected teachers’ personality characteristics in the teaching processes was coded and sorted appropriately. For example, a number of in-depth descriptions in this study related to teachers’ personalities, such as “high-organized”, “prospecting judgement after feedback of students’ achievement” were derived from the participants’ indirect description, which were wealthy to further examine in accordance with the theoretical framework of “16PF” theory of personality. All qualitative data of this study were analyzed and coded by the first author, then discussed together in the research group to validate the interpretations and ensure reliability.

4. Preliminary results

Teacher with different personalities were observed from this study differ in their approaches to teaching and student interaction. The main reason of the differences lies in the unique blend of characteristics, values, and attitudes that each teacher possesses. The results of this study indicated that a teacher's personality shapes their teaching behavioral tendencies, communication style, and emotional responses. This, in turn, influences how they design and conduct classroom activities, how they respond to students' questions and feedback, and how they build relationships with their students.

On the other hand, we have noticed that the prevalence of psychological disorders among primary and secondary school students is a significant concern worldwide. With the increasing academic pressure, social demands, and the complexity of modern life, many children and adolescents are facing various psychological challenges (Hassall, 2015[28]). Some common psychological issues among primary and secondary school students include: Anxiety disorders, Depression, Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and so on. The impact of these psychological disorders can be profound, affecting students' academic performance, social relationships, and overall well-being. It is crucial for all kinds of teachers and school counselors to be aware of these issues and provide the necessary support and resources. In the present study, teachers with different personalities handle psychological issues among students differently according to their various communication style, sensitivity to emotions, problem-solving approach, tolerance for uncertainty, and personal values and beliefs. These factors collectively determine how teachers handle psychological issues among their students, leading to different approaches and outcomes.

4.1 Spotlight: Concentrate on “myself” v.s. “surroundings”

The personality with “E”type represented “Extraverted teachers”, who tend to be more enthusiastic and more easily excited in class teaching. Especially, they have the ability to influence and change their students/others. While the personality with “I”type represented “Introverted teachers”, who tend to be quite sensitive to external stimulation including students. They prefer teacher lecturing instead of classroom social interaction with students. “I”type teachers in this study are inclined to teach in their own space, while “E”type teachers were prefer to pay attention to the whole class students than themselves.

4.1.1 Instructional preferences between “E” type and “I” type teachers

In the present study, “E”type teacher with an outgoing and energetic personality might prefer interactive and hands-on teaching methods that engage students actively.

During class, I strongly emphasize that teachers should manage class well, requiring every student to be fully engaged and focused on my lecture. I absolutely do not tolerate any student's distraction or
inattention, and if I notice it, I will immediately stop to criticize and rectify the situation. My teaching style typically involves focusing on the key points and difficulties to achieve a breakthrough, guiding students to fully understand the content. At the same time, I also strive to make a lasting impression on students through various methods, such as using humor, to ensure that the material I teach leaves a profound impression on them. (Venus-Maths-ENTJ-A)

“E”type teacher may also be more inclined to encourage students to share their ideas and opinions. Conversely, a teacher with a more introverted and reserved personality might opt for a more structured and traditional teaching style, focusing on delivering clear instructions and facilitating independent learning.

When I need to focus on breaking through the difficult points in teaching, I usually turn to AI tools or adopt alternative teaching methods to traditional approaches. I also like give discussion time to students with their classmates, because in this way they can achieve more opinions, maybe it will lead them find a breakthrough to solve this problem. In addition, discussion with classmates can prevent daydreaming. Sometimes when I’m talking all the time, some of students will miss the important point of a sudden. However, when two classmates are discussing or checking answers for each other, they can't be distracted. Moreover, they all have a preparatory idea when discussing, it will help to understand my later lecture more. (Ben-Maths-ISFP-A)

Most of “I”type teachers’ teaching style tends to be more reserved, thoughtful, and focused on depth rather than breadth. They may prefer to deliver lectures in a calm and controlled manner, emphasizing clarity and precision. They may also encourage students to delve deeper into topics, fostering independent thought and analysis. Additionally, introverted teachers may value quiet discussion and reflection, creating a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to thoughtful learning.

My teaching style is generally traditional lecturing. I tend to give them less time for questions as I have to complete two chemistry textbooks in one year, including revision time, which is quite tight. Therefore, there is hardly any free time in class for them. I aim to deliver the content efficiently and then provide some practice exercises. This is usually the process, and I rarely ask students questions. Additionally, I follow the examination syllabus closely, focusing on what is required. There may be some additional content for exceptional classes, but it will be relatively limited. For example, in the elite class, I may occasionally mention some additional topics, but I won't expand too much on them because excessive expansion is not conducive to their examination performance. (Yellow-Chemistry-ISTJ-A)

Moreover, a teacher's values and beliefs impacted by their personality also play a crucial role in determining their teaching approach. A teacher who values creativity and critical thinking may design projects and assignments that foster these skills, while a teacher who believes in discipline and compliance may emphasize rules and regulations in the classroom.

4.1.2 Interaction with psychopathic students between “E”type and “I”type teachers

Teachers with varying personalities tend to have different communication styles. An extroverted teacher (“E”type), for example, may be more inclined to engage students openly and directly, providing immediate feedback and support. Conversely, an introverted teacher may prefer a more subtle and indirect approach, offering guidance through observation and quiet encouragement. In terms of the interaction with psychopathic students, which was claimed as “tricky issues” cannot be avoided in any class, “E”type and “I”type teachers focus on different aspects. “I”type teachers are inclined to deal with a situation to the best of their ability based on their own experience and individual efforts.

Generally, I have to list the early warning list of students in our psychological work now, that is, they are divided into level one, level two, and level three. If there is level three, depression may be diagnosed. I spend a lot of time paying attention to it, and have to conduct regular interviews to make his personal files, which is even more difficult. Students we observed have some common characteristics. The first must be high sensitivity, and the parent-child relationship in the family, as well as the relationship between husband and wife may not be so harmonious. The third kind is family with excessive knowledge, that is, his parents may study very well, graduated from some famous universities, but the children are very mediocre. Parents can't accept the mediocrity of their children, so they give him a big stress. I tend to observe the psychopathic patterns and then find ways to solve them on my own. (Emily-Psychology-INFJ-T)

While “E”type teachers are inclined to deal with psychopathic students by operations with their colleges and parents, even they will have a strong desire to change others to conform to their own ideas when they encounter colleagues with differing opinions.
In the fourth grade, I took over strange boy. He often said some very negative things, such as he wanted to stand on the washing machine at home and jump down from a building to suicide. Or he likes to stand up and look down, and these are risky remarks. As a psychology teacher, I often call him over, and then chat with parents and head teachers. But the head teacher does not support my judgement. She thinks it's not a big deal. But we still have to tell the parents about this risk according to the process.

After that, I just happened to attend a training organized by the Education Bureau. After this training, I told the moral education director of our school that I want to train the head teachers in our school how to operate with psychology teachers, so I arranged such a training. After this training, I actually think it is effective, that is, when the head teacher finds that there are students in the class who are at risk, they will be the first come and contact me first. Then I will tell these colleges what I am doing first, under what circumstances do you need me, and under what circumstances do I need you, I just hope to be able to unite. I think there has been a change in this matter. (Julie -Psychology-ENFJ-A)

Accordingly, we can found that different personalities lead to different approaches to problem-solving. Some teachers may be more direct and assertive, quickly identifying a problem and providing solutions. Others may take a more consultative or collaborative approach, seeking input from students and involving them in the decision-making process.

4.2 Extraverted Feeling (Fe): The vital role of teacher-student interaction

Extraverted Feeling (Fe) is one of the sixteen personality types within the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) framework, characterized by a preference for external focus, feeling judgment, and an emphasis on harmony and people-oriented values. When teachers employ extraverted feeling (Fe) to empathize with students, they are demonstrating a natural ability to connect with others' emotions and feelings. The present study has indicated that teachers are highly adept at using empathy to interact with students. To achieve the holistic educational goals, teachers nowadays are emphasized to understand and attend to students' inner worlds, which is where empathy comes into play. Through empathy, teachers can gain deeper insights into students' needs and challenges, enabling them to provide more effective teaching and support (Ronen, 2020[42]; Costantini, 2019[14]).

4.2.1 Interaction with students in classroom learning

Teachers with NFJ (Nurturing, Feeling, Judging) personality types in this study are found to interact with students using empathy, they are able to create a supportive and understanding learning environment. NFJ teachers' ability to understand students' individual needs and challenges allows them to adopt a personalized approach to teaching. They tailor their lessons and strategies to meet the specific needs of each student, ensuring that all students are able to learn and grow in a way that is meaningful and relevant to them.

For example, our psychological classes usually conduct a theme class or activity in class. Usually, we will extract some contents from the lives of students, such as a perspective of self-appreciation. We will find out some theoretical models, such as 24 collective personality traits. We first introduce these personality traits to students. In fact, we are running through some positive psychology concepts. I recognize that for middle school students, even if you ask them to talk about their own strengths, they may not be very willing to do so. However, if you give them 24 options to choose from, they will definitely be willing to select. After making these choices, I ask their friends to guess what they have chosen. Regardless, I use the curriculum as a medium to facilitate interaction between classmates, allowing them to recognize their own strengths through self-evaluation and peer-evaluation activities. (Emily-Psychology-INFJ-T)

Moreover, NFJ teachers are naturally inclined to nurture and care for others. This tendency drives them to approach students with a deep sense of compassion and understanding. They are quick to recognize students' emotional needs and strive to provide necessary supports.

I will try my best to pay attention to every student, even though it's difficult to achieve, but I will do my utmost. Because the purpose of psychology class is to cater to those students who may not have the opportunity to express themselves or lack the ability to express themselves in other classes. Therefore, when I teach, I tend to pay more attention to those students who don't perform well academically or have difficulties in interpersonal relationships, giving them the opportunity to express themselves in this class. I also hope that they can have the chance to express themselves in class, which can help them enhance their confidence. (Julie-Psychology-ENFJ-A)

By using empathy, NFJ teachers are able to establish trust and connection with their students. They
create a safe space where students feel heard, understood, and valued. This trust fosters a positive learning environment that encourages students to take risks, ask questions, and grow.

On the contrary, the Non-NFJ teachers in this study have rarely been found to use Extraverted Feeling (Fe) in their teaching. Although teachers have similar educational ideologies evolve, the Non-NFJ teachers have seldom recognized the importance of empathy in their work.

I really don't like those students who don't listen to me. No matter how much you say, they still don't understand things rationally, and of course are disobedient. Isn't it very annoying? Sometimes they even disrupt the classroom discipline and don't perform well academically. I dislike those children who don't seem to learn no matter how much you tell them. Furthermore, I find it difficult to understand. These students don't study because they don't have their own goals. They just muddle through their days. No matter how much the teacher advises them, they can't seem to take it in. This makes me very upset. I encountered a student before, and after giving him numerous suggestions since the beginning of the semester, I found that he hadn't made any changes. Later, I might not say too much to him anymore. I'll just tell him not to disrupt the classroom, and I'll still answer his questions if he has any. But if you want me to go out of my way to guide him on what to do and which path to take, I won't. Because I've already given him many pieces of advice, but he hasn't made any changes. So it's a matter of his own character, and I won't keep repeating myself. (Yellow-Chemistry- ISTJ-A)

Compare with the data we collected from this study, NFJ rather than Non-NFJ teachers enable to better understand and apply empathy, thereby strengthening their bonds with students.

4.2.2 Interaction with psychopathic students

Different personality of psychology teachers in this study have applied the method of Extraverted Feeling (Fe) in both teaching and psychological counseling at the same time. Psychology teachers have strong sensitivity to students' emotional cues. Those with more emotionally perceptive personalities may be better at recognizing when a student is struggling emotionally and can offer timely support. If they are less emotionally perceptive teachers, they require more explicit cues or rely more on students initiating conversations about their feelings.

I came across a student who was born into a family of highly educated parents. His parents were probably top students in their time and they have great jobs now. However, the child is rather average. His parents cannot accept his mediocrity and put a lot of pressure on him, which may even lead to mental issues in the student. In this case, we need to help him find a suitable goal and rebuild his self-confidence. Take my student as an example, even though he is not particularly bad in class, he has been devastated by his parents' criticisms. In fact, he is among the top 50 in his grade, but he thinks he cannot get into high school. It's obviously impossible, but the child still thinks so. Therefore, we need to reshape his inner confidence. On the other hand, we need to work with the parents as well. Adjusting their expectations for their child is a significant factor in helping the child get out of this dilemma. (Emily-Psychology-INFJ-T)

On the other hand, other subject teacher can also use Extraverted Feeling (Fe) in their classroom teachings. In a classroom setting, conflicts or discrimination are inevitable. When conflicts arise, teachers need to utilize empathy to understand and address students' emotions and perspectives. With empathy, teachers can assess conflicts more fairly, taking appropriate measures to resolve them. This helps maintain a harmonious classroom atmosphere and fosters cooperation and unity among students.

For children who have been diagnosed with psychological problems, I will keep in close contact with them. Whenever they have doubts or are willing to talk to teachers, I will take some time to chat with them. Secondly, we ask the students in the class not to discriminate against him and try to make all students feel that he is just like a normal child. Because students with more serious psychological problems often have such behaviors as cutting wrists, which may leave scars on their skin. Other students may find these scars very scary and keep away from them. However, we will try to prevent students from using words or behaviors that are too stimulating or distant towards them. For those whose condition is not so serious, such as those who do not need long-term sick leave or medication, we will encourage them to come to school every day. I will ask his friends in the class to communicate with him more every day, try to spend more recess time with him, and let him feel the warmth of friendship and school life, so that he can participate in more collective activities. (Ricky-Physics-ISFJ-A)

Except for this, psychopathic students encounter various challenges and difficulties in their academic and personal lives, which can affect their emotional well-being. Through empathy, teachers can offer emotional support, helping students cope with challenges, reduce stress, and develop emotional resilience.
This support enables students to maintain a positive mindset and emotional state, which in turn promotes their learning and growth.

In our class, I have been promoting the tutorial system for teacher-student communication. Each teacher is responsible for several students, becoming their mentors. We provide guidance in various aspects, including life direction, academic advice, or psychological counseling. Every week, they must schedule a time to meet and chat with their teacher, sharing any confusion they have encountered during the week, as well as their progress, shortcomings, and areas where they hope to receive guidance or blessings from the teacher. There was once a student named Yang who had psychological issues stemming from a conflict with his mother. He found it difficult to establish communication or trust with others. However, one time, he could no longer hold it in, and I saw how distressing it was for him. I abandoned my role as a teacher and embraced him like a mother. After that, he truly let go of his emotions. You could sense that the child had finally shed his hard outer shell, and from then on, he was more willing to talk to me and share his problems. After three years of interaction, the child became more outgoing, though not 100% accepting, but certainly a significant leap forward. (Angela-English-ISFJ-A)

By employing these strategies, teachers with extraverted feeling can create an environment where students feel safe, valued, and heard. This, in turn, fosters a more positive learning atmosphere and improves student engagement and well-being.

4.3 The fabulist: Teachers’ deep insights of intuitions

The ability of teachers to use intuition in problem-solving refers to their capacity to intuitively assess, analyze, and address issues in teaching by relying on instincts, past experience, and a deep understanding of their subject matter. This ability allows teachers to make quick yet informed decisions in real-time classroom situations, often without relying solely on formalized procedures or explicit rules. Different personality type teachers observed in this study have the insights of intuitions similarly.

4.3.1 The choice of being a subject-teacher

Teachers in this study are found to adopt NI (Introverted Intuition) strategy to intuitively choose the subjects they teach. Theoretically, NI (Introverted Intuition) users tend to have a profound inner understanding of the areas that interest and excite them. People who are passionate about becoming teachers tend to possess a strong intuitive ability, which lead their inner interest and enthusiasm to guide them towards teaching subjects that align with their passions, enabling them to deliver high-quality instruction.

Moreover, NI individuals possess an intuitive insight into future trends, which allows them to anticipate the potential and influence of certain subjects in the future. By choosing subjects with greater potential, they can contribute to shaping the educational landscape of the future.

I chose to teach English because my head teacher in the past was an English teacher and he was very strict with us. He always played some extra materials like BBC for us to listen when we were in school. Since we studied in a small town, we felt that it was very novel and interesting, as well as high-end and international. We were also very interested in it, so we learned it well. Therefore, I chose to major in this subject when I went to university. Later, when I was at university, as we all know, compared with some popular subjects like Chinese and math, learning English was considered more fashionable and trendy, so we felt more superior. (Angela-English-ISFJ-A)

Additionally, NI users have a deep comprehension of the essential nature and patterns within subjects. They select subjects that allow them to delve deeply into the core principles and reveal the underlying laws of the discipline. Their ability to rapidly integrate information from various sources enables them to make comprehensive and insightful decisions about which subjects to teach.

I actually love literature a lot and was once obsessed with it. However, in high school, my friends said that I was a very emotional person, even a bit sentimental. I intuitively thought that if I chose to teach liberal arts, I would be even more sentimental and my life might be affected. Therefore, I felt that I should choose a rational subject as my future area of study, which could balance my personality. Since
I have been good at math since I was young. I feel proud when I solve difficult math problems, so I think I can teach math well. In addition, I think I have the potential to be a unique math teacher. Unlike other math teachers, I am not rigid and I prefer a humorous, accessible teaching style for mathematics. (Venus-Maths-ENTJ-A)

Finally, the adaptability and flexibility of NI users enable them to adjust their selections based on school needs, student characteristics, and changing educational environments, ensuring that their choices are appropriate and feasible. Teachers either with "N" type which represented to be more imaginative, open-minded and curious, or "S" type which represented to be highly practical, pragmatic and down-to-earth, are all found to use NI (Introverted Intuition) in their career choices.

4.3.2 The way to handle students with psychological issues

The attitude of general school subject teachers towards students with psychological issues is a delicate and crucial aspect of education. It requires a combination of empathy, professionalism, and knowledge in basic mental health awareness. In this study, we found that almost all teachers with different personalities have similar attitudes as the following.

On one hand, recognition and empathy are enough to psychopathic students in this study. Teachers with a well-developed intuition often possess a heightened sense of empathy, allowing them to pick up on subtle cues or changes in a student's behavior, mood, or energy level. This sensitivity enables them to sense when a student might be struggling emotionally or psychologically. Teachers in this study demonstrate empathy by actively listening, validating feelings, and creating a sense of understanding without minimizing the student’s experience.

The special case of encountering students with psychological issues is something we have experienced and handled before. Basically, what we, as teachers, have done is to try our utmost to help them. For instance, we've arranged for a dedicated class teacher to pick up this child from school every day, meeting him or her at the school gate where the parents, usually the father or mother, drop them off. We then escort the child to the classroom. Similarly, at the end of the school day, we personally see the child off to the school gate, where their parents pick them up. In fact, more than being a safety measure, this is about making the child feel truly cared for and attended to by their teachers. It's about conveying to them that life is beautiful, that the world is full of warmth and love. Despite our busy schedules, our teachers have truly made time to do this, showing our concern and support for the child. (Angela-English-ISFJ-A)

On the other hand, professionalism and boundaries among teachers in ordinary schools are clear in dealing with students with psychological problems. Teachers with strong intuition understand the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive classroom community. They can use their instincts to identify ways to encourage peer support, normalize mental health discussions, and create an environment where students feel comfortable seeking help or talking about their feelings.

As teachers, we will use some psychological knowledge we have to make a basic judgment. If the problem can be solved by the psychologist, we will recommend the student to make an appointment with the psychologist. If the student's condition has exceeded the scope of the psychologist, we will directly communicate with the parents and suggest medical treatment and some intervention for the next step. We can conduct corresponding behavioral interventions for some students with relatively mild psychological diseases, but for some slightly serious or even more serious psychological behaviors, professional doctors and drug interventions or behavioral interventions in hospitals may be needed. In the classroom, the behavioral requirements for this student cannot be as high as those for normal children. At the same time, when the student with psychological problems is not around, I need to explain to other students the reason for this special care, so that the whole class can understand why the teacher treats him differently. (Ben-Maths-ISFP-A)

Teachers also be aware of their own limitations in terms of providing mental health services and refrain from diagnosing or offering unqualified advice. Instead, they will use their intuition to recognize the need for professional help. This might involve referring the student to a school counselor, psychologist, or even suggesting parental involvement and seeking external medical advice.

Among my students, there are several confirmed or suspected cases of psychological problems in every grade, but generally I follow the advice of the head teacher. If the head teacher says he has psychological problems, I usually won't intervene too much in the classroom. In class, I rarely ask him questions. But if the head teacher says he is sensitive or lacks confidence, I will occasionally ask him questions. I still consider the problem from the head teacher's perspective. But if he is the fragile type, I
generally avoid disturbing him. He can do whatever he wants in class, and I will be more tolerant. To be honest, I do very little for students with psychological problems. If a student laughs at a student with psychological problems in class, I won't allow it. I will strictly forbid it in class, but otherwise I try not to disturb him. He can come to me if he has a problem, but if he doesn't come to me, I won't interfere too much. (Yellow-Chemistry- ISTJ-A)

5. Conclusions and implications

The present study extends our understanding of how teachers’ personality type related to their teaching preferences, concerning the differences of handling with psychopathic students.

Previous studies have revealed that teachers’ personality play an important role in teaching practice (Kim et al., 2019[31]; Rickles et al., 2021[41]; Richardson et al., 2010[40]). This study has concerned about teachers’ personality especially in their teaching field, instructional preference, interactions with students and so on. Studies conducted in the United States have an analysis of a select cohort of exemplary educators have confirmed that ‘typical’ teachers often have predominantly ‘ESFJ’ personality (Rushton et al., 2007[47]). “E” type teachers tended to be more successful. Moreover, the ‘average’ teacher cohort was more likely to be governed by Sensing (S) rather than Intuition (N) attributes. Consistently, teachers with diverse personalities in this study have been exhibited as distinct strengths and limitations. For example, extraverted teachers (E) thrive in interactive environments and welcoming classroom atmosphere, engaging students through lively discussions and group activities, while introverted teachers (I) possess a deep understanding of subject matter and can provide nuanced, thoughtful explanations.

In addition to summarizing the personality characteristics of different teachers and classifying teachers based on their personalities, this study also delves into the common characteristics hidden in the professional characteristics of teachers, namely empathy and intuitive judgment (Fairbairn, 2000[20]; Sipman et al., 2021[49]). Furthermore, how teachers with different personalities mobilize and utilize their latent empathy and intuition were analyzes in this study, and then examines how these factors influence teachers’ decision-making in teaching behaviors.

On the other hand, the present study also contributed to highlight the changeability of teacher personality in related to the interaction with psychopathic students, in order to make use of teachers’ personality to some teacher training and teacher education programs. Consist with the previous study, the risk factors leading to poor academic outcomes may vary among antisocial children based on their level of psychopathic traits, underscoring the urgency to adapt current school-based interventions in order to foster academic involvement and prosocial behaviors within this vulnerable subgroup of antisocial youth (Allen et al., 2018; Stoppelbein et al., 2021[51]). This study also emphasized that teachers’ collaboration and communication with school administrators, counselors, and parents is vital. Teachers are required to share their observations and concerns about a student's psychological well-being with relevant staff members, respecting confidentiality guidelines (Bronchain et al., 2021[6]; Borges et al., 2024[5]). This multi-disciplinary approach ensures that the psychopathic student receives comprehensive support tailored to their needs (Borges et al., 2024[5]). Open communication with parents is also important, as it keeps them informed and engaged in their child's care (Crum et al., 2016[15]; Bégin et al., 2023[3]). Moreover, ongoing education and training for teachers in mental health awareness is crucial (Borges et al., 2024[5]). As educators, they are often the first line of defense in recognizing and supporting students with psychological issues. Regular workshops, seminars, and online resources can enhance their understanding of common mental health conditions, how to recognize warning signs, and how to effectively support students in need.

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