

THE PROFILE OF STROKES AND THE DRIVER STYLE OF EMPLOYEES

Naser RAMADANI^{1*}, Ibrahim NEZIRI¹

¹ Department of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Tetova
*Corresponding author e-mail: naser.ramadani@unite.edu.mk

Abstract

This study aims to verify the relationship between the stroke profile and driving style of employees at work, respectively Albanian teachers in higher education. The results of this study represent a significant contribution to the field of transaction analysis and organizational psychology, which can serve high education institutions and teachers themselves. The methodology used in the study is quantitative, including 144 randomly selected Albanian teachers of higher education, with an average age of 41 years. The correlative analysis has shown significant positive relationships between the positive profile of strokes with the driver Be Perfect, Please Others, and Try Hard, while statistically significant negative relationships with the driver Hurry Up and Be Strong, the negative profile of strokes showed a significant positive relationship with the driver Hurry Up and Be Strong, while a negative relationship with the driver Be Perfect, Please Others and Try Hard, while the regression analysis showed a significant result for predicting the positive profile of strokes and the driver Please Others and the negative profile of strokes for the driver Try Hard.

Keywords: positive profile of strokes, positive profile of strokes, driver style

1. Introduction

The variables of this study belong to the field of the theory of personality (transaction analysis) and organizational psychology, which concretely answers the question: what is the relationship between the profile of strokes and the driver's style of employees at work, namely Albanian teachers of higher education?

Most of us carry an array of unconscious patterns that we use pretty often. Since strokes are fundamentally involved (directly or indirectly) in everything we do, it is more than necessary to become aware of our stroke profile so we can think about the categories we want to change (Criss M, 2014).

The stroke profile can help people understand their patterns. A person may not have understood why they receive so many negative strokes, the profile can help them to realize that they've been constantly asking for these negative strokes. That may happen because these kinds of strokes are familiar to them and they know how to react, whereas receiving positive strokes makes them feel extremely uncomfortable (Jim Mc Kenna, July 1976). Whereas the stroke profile helps us identify or measure to what extent a person gives or receives strokes in the four categories: stroke-giver (positive-negative), stroke-receiver (positive-negative), stroke seeker (positive-negative), and stroke refuser (positive-negative). The stroke profile helps people understand their pattern (Jim Mc Kenna, July 1976).

From the work of Eric Berne, the clinical psychologist of Transactional Analysis Taibi Kahler discovered that individuals consistently manifest certain categories of behaviour before they become anxious. Kahler was writing down every word, intonation, gesture, position, and facial expression of his patients. He and his collaborators have written down, second by second, five of these behavioural sequences. They called them drivers (Kahler and Capers, 1974; cited by: Ciucur. D, 2011) dividing them into five categories: Be Perfect, Be Strong, Hurry Up, Please Others, and Try Hard.

Joines & Stewart (2002) emphasized that this (recognition and detection of the driver) will allow you to gain quick and reliable insight into typical modes of social relating, approach to problem-solving, communication style, initial and ongoing contact areas, life patterns, principal issues during personal change, and how to work with them (Cited by Hay. J., 2013).

This study will be of great interest to all institutional heads of higher education (universities, faculties, and study programs), deans of faculties, heads of study programs, and teachers themselves, providing them with an overview of the profile of strokes, and the style of drivers that are present or operate in the workplace and the social circle. It is the first research in the Republic of North Macedonia and the region that presents statistical results of this nature, examining the relationship and prediction of the stroke profile and the driver style of teachers.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. The stroke profile: The concept of “stroke” may be used as a general term for direct physical contact; in practice, it can take different forms. Some people stroke a baby literally; others hug or caress it, while some people playfully nip or pinch it with their fingertips. All these actions have their analogies during contact. In short, the concept of “stroke” can be used collectively to indicate any action that implies the recognition of the presence of another. Therefore, a stroke can be used as a fundamental unit of social action (Berne. E; 1964).

A stroke is defined as any act implying recognition of another’s presence. A stroke can be verbal or non-verbal or both. A hello, waving the hand, a smile, or „I like you“ are examples of stroking. Everyone needs stroking; whether pleasant or unpleasant. A stroke that evokes the feelings of “I am OK, you are OK“, is a positive stroke (R.V. S. Rao, 2008).

Social recognition which Berne (1964) named Strokes, is an essential need of the individual for mutual confirmation (recognition-hunger), which can be expressed in various positive, negative, verbal, nonverbal, conditional, and unconditional forms of attention. Berne described this interpersonal activity as “a unit of recognition” Johnsson. R (2011).

The stroke profile helps us identify or measure to what extent a person gives or receives strokes in the four categories: stroke-giver (positive-negative), stroke-receiver (positive-negative), stroke seeker (positive-negative), and stroke refuser (positive-negative). The stroke profile helps people understand their pattern (Jim Mc Kenna, July 1976).



Fig 1. Stroking profile

A stroke profile is an illustrative way of demonstrating stroke patterns between individuals in specific communication episodes. Completing a personal stroke profile and discussing results in training situations facilitate insight into a person's successes and failures in communicating with others (Harris, 2004; cited by: Hollins Martin, C.J, 2011).

2.2. *The driver style:* Based on the work of Eric Berne, the clinical psychologist of Transactional Analysis Taibi Kahler, PhD, discovered that individuals consistently manifest certain categories of behaviour before they become anxious. Kahler was writing down every word, intonation, gesture, position, and facial expression of his patients. He and his collaborators have written down, second by second, five of these behavioural sequences. They called them drivers (Kahler and Capers, 1974; cited by: Ciucur. D, 2011)

1. Be Perfect
2. Be Strong
3. Hurry Up
4. Please Others
5. Try Hard

When adapted to the organizational field, these drivers were called working styles (Hay, 2006 Ciucur. D, 2011).

Individuals with the **Be perfect** driver estimate tasks, people, things, and statements in terms of "more" or "less good". They insist on making things as "perfect" as possible while "good" enough would be more appropriate. When their energy level drops from their tendency to make everything perfect, they have a hard time planning their activity.

Individuals with the **Hurry up** driver believe that their work is more valuable if they do everything in a short time and so it is possible for them to hurry, speak faster; interrupt and finish others' sentences; cope with crises and do things at the last minute. Negative aspects of this driver would be delays and time overruns; leaving others behind (literally and figuratively); poor time planning; inability to estimate time and energy in an activity; lack of attention to details. The quality of these people is that they work well under time pressure because their energy is high (Wadsworth and Divincenti, 2003). People with the **Please others** driver finds personal satisfaction in the fact that others appreciate them for doing something for them. They deal with "maintenance" activity: involve people, check, and summarize. They are sympathetic, empathetic, tolerant, and flexible. Features: often tend to make excuses; they don't disclose their own needs - they agree with others, try to avoid conflicts, they are concerned not to "offend" others. The negative consequences of this behaviour can be: they are good members of a team, but they are not good leaders; they bear off to ensure they please others (not always with the desired effect); when confronted about a lower quality of their work, they consider it criticism and can become depressed; they are too tolerant when it is not desirable; they expect others to know what they want without telling them, they make compromises (Steiner et al, 2003 Ciucur. D, 2011). The principle of people having the **Be strong** driver is that an activity is especially valuable as it is done with high energy cost, stress, worry, and effort. They can accommodate modest conditions that other people would consider unreasonable. Specific features: putting pressure on themselves, often speaking in a loud voice, completing their responsibilities, doing well under pressure, and not asking for help (they must manage on their own). The consequences of this type of behaviour are they show very little emotion, and they can sap others. People with the **Try Hard** driver put increasingly high energy into performing an activity and chooses the "hard way" in achieving a task. They are very useful in starting projects and in situations where their energy and efforts come and complete the project. Probable behaviour: they "puff" and "discord", have several projects in progress simultaneously, dissipate their energy and effort

in the task, and invite others to think and "do things" for them. The consequences of this behaviour are: will divert from the main task, will have problems in completing projects, start projects and then lose interest and energy, and may undermine the power of others (Steiner et al., 2003; Ciucur. D, 2011).

3. Research methodology

This study was executed through a non-experimental methodology by collecting data through appropriate instruments in a sample of 144 subjects, namely Albanian teachers of higher education in the Republic of North Macedonia. The application of the questionnaire was carried out online respecting all ethical norms for the anonymity of each subject and considering all factors such as rest and breaks during work, as well as the consideration of measures during the Covid 19 pandemic. First, every teacher was sent an e-mail introducing the purpose of the study and the application of the questionnaire aiming at finalizing the research, they were also informed that the maximum time to complete a questionnaire was up to 10 minutes. All teachers agreed and willingly accepted to help the study by contributing to the application of the questionnaire and commenting about their difficulties during the application, ambiguities regarding the statements/questions, or eventual concepts. The application procedure lasted from July 08, 2020 to August 08, 2020 when all subjects had access to the questionnaire through the online procedure with google forms so they can be included in the study.

4. Instruments

To measure the variable of the stroke profile in accordance with the cited theories, the original stroke profile instrument was used, which includes 32 items/questions and measures on a Likert scale: 0 ("Never"), 1 ("Not usually"), 2 ("Rarely"), 3 ("Sometimes"), 4 ("Often"), 5 ("Usually"), and 6 ("Always").

The adaptation of this instrument is done broadly and is used for numerous purposes since this concept was introduced for the first time (Jim Mc Kenna, 1976), a significant aspect is that the items of the stroke profile are changed throughout the years bearing in mind that things change considerably. Referring to the relevant changes according to the original author statement, in this research the instrument has also been changed by being filtered through factorial analysis, and after processing the data factorial analysis has brought out two important factors, contrasting Jim Mc Kenna, who presented 4 positive and 4 negative, 8 factors in total such as: positive stroke-giver profile, negative stroke-giver, positive stroke-receiver, negative stroke-receiver, positive stroke seeker, negative stroke seeker, positive stroke refuser and negative stroke refuser.

Referring to the factorial analysis, the statements that were not grouped into significant factors were excluded by filtering the instrument and a total of 16 statements were used, 9 of which measured the positive profile of strokes and 7 measured the negative profile of strokes.

The statements of the positive profile were oriented to obtain an assessment by the subject, respectively the higher education Albanian teacher, on how often they praise others, how often they complement others about the work accomplished, the display of preferences of others' features, readiness to criticize an unfinished job, asking for praise and compliments after a job is done, accepting and rejecting others' criticism, while negative profile statements have been oriented toward assessing the readiness to criticize, insult, offend and negative evaluations of teachers against colleagues, associates and students. All statements were measured by the Likert scale with; 1 ("Never"), 2 ("Sometimes"), 3 ("Often") to 4 ("Always"), changing the measurement categories as the appropriateness of the evaluation is determined in this form.

Through the Alpha Cronbach's reliability analysis, this instrument shows satisfactory internal consistency for the applied level to measure the positive profile of strokes with a value of .66, while for the negative profile of strokes the reliability is weak, with a value of .32.

To assess the driver style according to the cited theories, the original instrument of Cox (2001) is used, the driver style has 25 items/questions and measures with a Likert scale: 0 (“Yes”), 1 (“To a certain extent”) and 2 (“No”).

Regarding the validation of the questionnaire, a pilot was conducted before, to obtain an opinion about the statements from 37 respondents (clarity, meaning and what do questions associate with in particular). After processing the data obtained from the pilot testing of the questionnaire, it was concluded that 4 of the statements were not categorized in the significant groups of data by the factorial analysis, namely items 18, 19, 21 and 22. Therefore, the questionnaire was applied with a total of 21 statements/items which were grouped into the five significant factors.

Alpha Cronbach's reliability analysis, presented in table 3, shows satisfactory internal consistency for the driver style level with a value of .63.

5. Findings

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the stroke profile variables and driver style of employees in the workplace. The data shows that the positive profile of strokes has reached a mean of $M=23.06$, a minimum value of 13 and a maximum of 31, and $SD=4.63$, where it is shown that the mean obtained is higher than expected ($M=22.5$) and which shows the presence of the positive profile of strokes in teachers of higher education in the Republic of North Macedonia, the same is shown by the value of Skewness, which explains that the extent of the variable skews to the right side of the chart (Chert1) and the value of kurtosis is within the permissible limits ($Skw=-0.10$, $kurtosis=-1.12$). The negative profile of strokes resulted in a mean of $M=12.19$, minimum value of 7 and maximum of 28, and $SD=3.61$, which shows that the mean obtained is lower than the expected one and this profile of strokes is not present among teachers of higher education, the distribution values according to Skewness show that the variable has an extension on the left side of the chart ($Skw=1.63$, $kurtosis=5.52$), the relevant data are also presented in Chart 2. In measuring the driver style of teachers in the workplace, the highest mean was obtained by the driver Be perfect, Please Others and Try Hard, these drivers showed a high presence in teachers, where the driver Be perfect resulted in a mean of $M=11.01$, a minimum value 5 and maximum 15 and $SD=2.89$ ($Skw=-0.21$, $kurtosis=-1.39$), the driver Please Others has achieved a mean of $M=10.70$, minimum value 5 and maximum 15, $SD=3.46$ ($Skw=-0.21$, $kurtosis=-1.39$) and the driver Try Hard achieved a mean of $M=7.82$, minimum value 3 and maximum 12, $SD=3.04$, ($Skw=-0.33$, $kurtosis=-1.13$), the Skewness values confirm the extension of the respective drivers on the right side of the graph, while the Kurtosis is within the permissible limits in all the mentioned cases, and the corresponding results are also presented graphically in Charts 4, 5 and 6. The drivers that have resulted in non-presence or with an obtained mean lower than the expected are the Hurry Up driver with a mean value of $M=6.48$, minimum 5 and maximum 14, $SD=1.98$ ($Skw=2.64$, $kurtosis=6.43$) and the driver Be strong has resulted with a mean of $M=5.28$, minimum value 3 and maximum 12, $SD=1.92$ ($Skw=0.40$, $kurtosis=-0.89$), skewness values show that the extent of the respective drivers is on the right side of the chart and kurtosis asserts that the distribution is within the permissible limits, the same data are graphically presented in Charts 3 and 7.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of stroke profiles and driver style of Albanian higher education teachers in North Macedonia.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Deviation	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Positive profile	145	13	31	23,06	4,63	-,096	,201	-1,118	,400
Negative profile	145	7	28	12,19	3,61	1,634	,201	5,524	,400
Hurry Up	145	5	14	6,48	1,98	2,641	,201	6,426	,400

Be Perfect	145	5	15	11,01	2,88	-,189	,201	-1,008	,400
Please Others	145	5	15	10,70	3,46	-,205	,201	-1,386	,400
Try Hard	145	3	12	7,82	3,04	-,332	,201	-1,132	,400
Be Strong	145	3	10	5,28	1,92	,404	,201	-,893	,400
Valid (listwise)	N145								

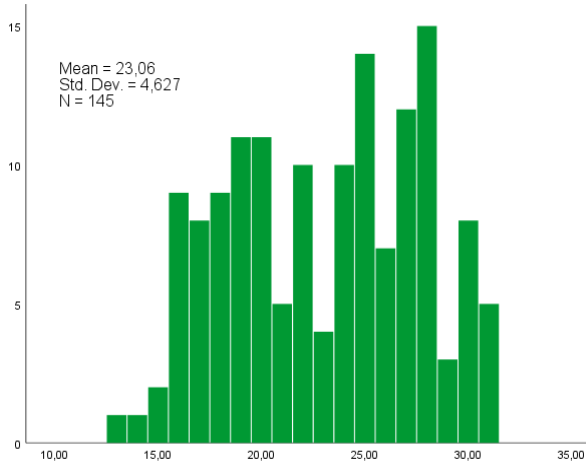


Chart 1. Positive profile of strokes

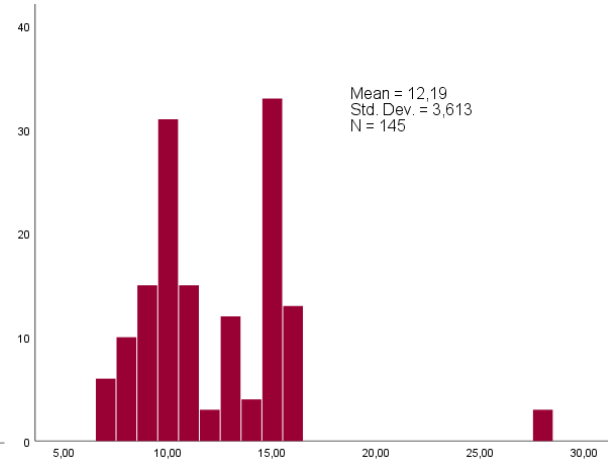


Chart 2. Negative profile of strokes

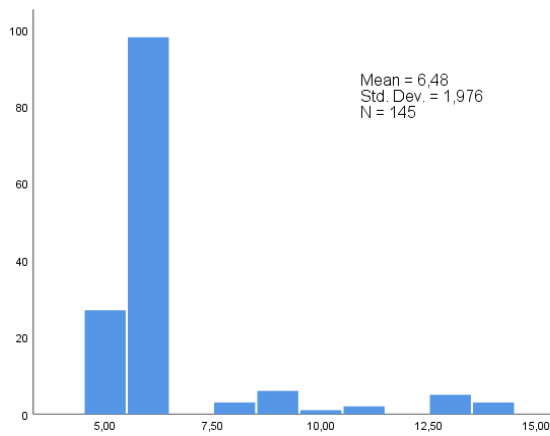


Chart 3. Hurry Up

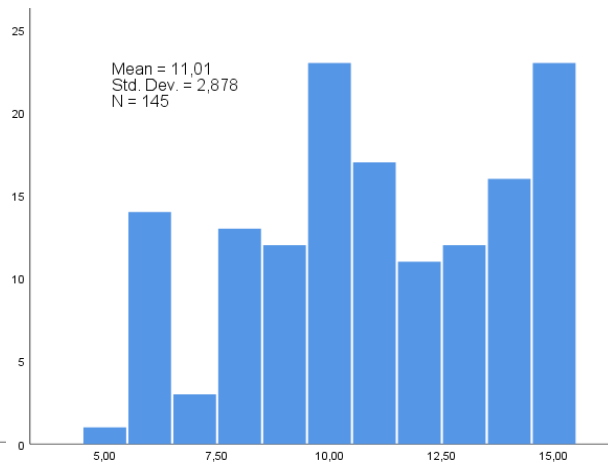


Chart 4. Be Perfect

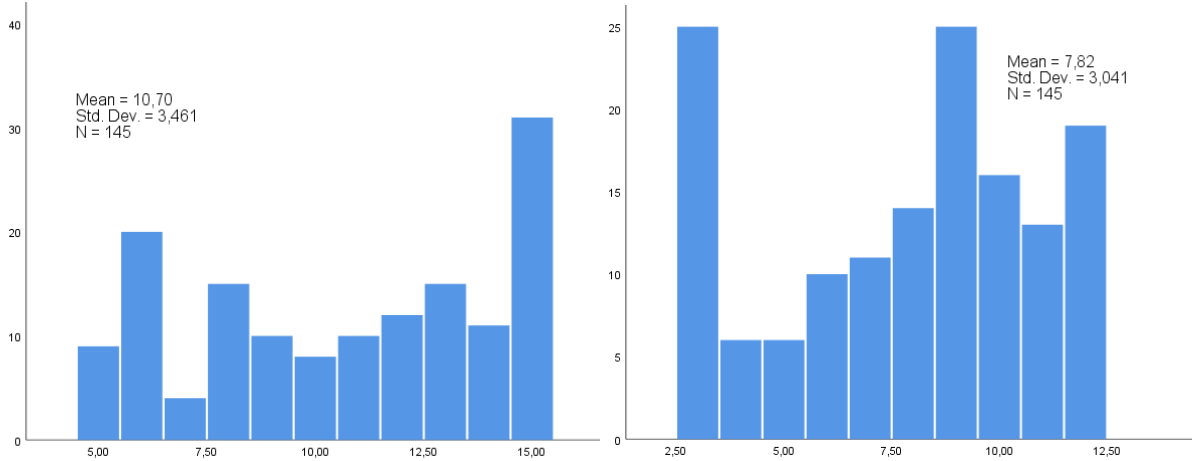


Chart 5. Please Others

Chart 6. Try Hard

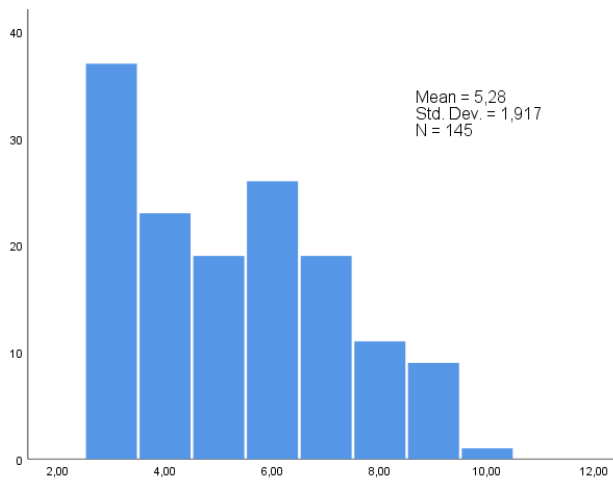


Chart 7. Be Strong

Table 2 shows the results of correlative analysis between the stroke profiles and driver styles of Albanian higher education teachers in the workplace, whereas the positive profile of strokes resulted in a strong and positive relationship with the Be Perfect driver with a value of $r=0.60$, with the Please Others driver with a value of $r=0.65$ and Try Hard with a value of $r=0.75$ and in all cases, this relationship was statistically significant at the $p<0.01$ level, while the positive profile of strokes resulted in a negative but significant relationship in statistical terms with the Hurry Up driver $r=-0.24$, $p<0.01$ and with the Be Strong driver $r=-0.58$, $p<0.01$. The negative profile resulted in a weak positive and statistically significant relationship with the Hurry Up driver with a value of $r=0.25$, $p<0.01$ and with the Be Strong driver there is a strong relationship with a positive direction $r=0.69$ and statistically significant at the level $p<0.01$, while a weak correlation with a negative direction, the negative stroke profile resulted with the driver Be Perfect with $r=-0.50$, $p<0.01$, with the driver Please Others $r=-0.38$, $p<0.01$, with the Try Hard driver $r=-0.47$, $p<0.01$, all correlations were statistically significant at $p<0.01$ level.

Table 2. Correlative analysis between the stroke profiles and driver styles of Albanian teachers in the workplace.

		Positive_profile of strokes	Negative profile of strokes
Hurry Up	Pearson Correlation	-,238**	,254**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,004	,002
	N	145	145
Be Perfect	Pearson Correlation	,601**	-,499**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
	N	145	145
Please Others	Pearson Correlation	,645**	-,384**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
	N	145	145
Try Hard	Pearson Correlation	,749**	-,474**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
	N	145	145
Be Strong	Pearson Correlation	-,575**	,686**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
	N	145	145

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Table 3 shows the regression analysis for the prediction of Please others driver from the negative profile of strokes, where the value of Durbin Watson shows that the autocorrelation condition is within the permissible limits DW=2.00, while the driver Please others is predicted from the positive profile of strokes 65% of variance R²=0.65, F = (102,11)718.46, p<0.01, the corresponding prediction is considered high (β= .65, p<.001).

Table 3. Regression analysis for predicting the Please Others driver from the positive profile of strokes.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-,432	1,123		-,385	,701
	Positive profile of strokes	,483	,048	,645	10,105	,000

Dependent Variable: Please Others (R²=0.65),
F=(102,11)718.46, p<0.01. DW=2.00

The regression analysis for predicting the Try hard driver from the stroke profile is presented in Table 4, which shows that the autocorrelation condition is within the permissible limits according to the Durbin Watson value (DW=2.25), while the Try hard driver is predicted from the negative profile of strokes 47% of the variance F=(127,108)249.13, p<0.01. DW=2.25, which is considered a high prediction (β= .67, p<.001).

Table 4. Regression analysis for predicting the Try Hard driver from the negative profile of strokes.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	,847	,410		2,063	,041
	Negative profile of strokes	,364	,032	,686	11,274	,000

Dependent Variable: Try Hard ($R^2=0.47$),
 $F = (127,108)249.13$, $p<0.01$. $DW=2.25$

6. Discussion

The theories on which this study is based are those of Eric Berne (1964), Claude M. Steiner (1998), and Jim Mc Kenna (1976). All these theories served as guidelines in creating the study objectives and hypotheses.

Based on the results obtained in this study, it was found that there is a positive correlation between the positive profile of strokes and the driver Be Perfect, Please Others and Try Hard, this finding refers to the theory of Hay (2006) and Ciucur. D (2011) that individuals with a Be perfect drive estimate tasks, people, things, and statements in terms of "more" or "less good". They insist on making things as "perfect" as possible while "good" enough would be more appropriate, also people with the Please others driver find personal satisfaction in the fact that others appreciate them for doing something for them. They deal with "maintenance" activity: involve people, check, and summarize. They are sympathetic, empathetic, tolerant, and flexible, in the principle of people having the Be strong driver is that an activity is especially valuable as it is done with high energy cost, stress, worry, and effort. They can accommodate modest conditions that other people would consider unreasonable, these drivers positively correlate with the positive profile of stroke referring to the common indicators of functioning with praise, positive support, compliments, and boost.

While the positive profile of strokes resulted in a negative relationship with the Hurry Up and Be Strong drivers, this finding theoretically supports the breakdown of the behaviours of people who have the Hurry Up driver who believe that their work is more valuable if they do everything in a short time and so it is possible for them to hurry, to speak faster; interrupt and finish others' sentences; cope with crises and do things at the last minute. Negative aspects of this driver would be delays and time overruns; leaving others behind (literally and figuratively); poor time planning; inability to estimate time and energy in an activity; lack of attention to details (Wadsworth and Divincenti, 2003). People with the Try Hard driver put increasingly high energy into performing an activity and chooses the "hard way" in achieving a task. They are very useful in starting projects and in situations where their energy and efforts come and complete the project. Probable behaviour: they "puff" and "discord", have several projects in progress simultaneously, dissipate their energy and effort in the task, and invite others to think and "do things" for them (Steiner et al., 2003; Ciucur. D, 2011). These behaviour features of the respective drivers have the opposite direction to the behaviour of the positive profile of strokes, therefore in this study also, there is no statistical contradiction between these theories, in the other case, the correlation of the negative profile of strokes with the opposite drivers proves the significance of results and preliminary theory even more.

This study found that the Please others driver is predicted by the positive stroke profile of 65%, $p<0.01$, and the Try hard driver is predicted by the negative stroke profile of 47%, $p<0.01$. This finding has not been found or processed in any previous study, therefore can be considered an important window for other studies treating the same variables.

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