



Relationship emotional intelligence and personality traits with organizational commitment among Iranian nurses

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Introduction

In the past three decades, organizational commitment has been of interest to researchers as one of the organizational attitudes. The organizational commitment refers to a psychological state that binds the individual to the organization (i.e. makes turnover less likely). Organizational commitment includes three commitments: affective (emotional attachment and devotion to work and desire to stay), continuance (perceived costs of leaving the organization and probability of not leaving), and normative (providing services and working as a duty, obligation and personal

Abstract

In the past three decades, organizational commitment has been of interest to researchers as one of the organizational attitudes. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship of emotional intelligence and personality traits with organizational commitment among Iranian nurses. A total of 280 nurses were selected by multistage random sampling. Study tools included emotional intelligence inventory, Neo personality inventory and organizational commitment inventory. Results showed the positive and significant relationship of emotional intelligence and its dimensions (self-expression, self-regard, independence, social responsibility, problem solving, stress tolerance, impulse control, and optimism) with organizational commitment. Also, organizational commitment showed a positive and significant relationship with extroversion and conscientiousness. Moreover, components of self-expression, problem solving and stress tolerance in emotional intelligence are able to predict organizational commitment. Thus, these results indicate the importance of emotional intelligence and personality traits in organizational commitment.

Keywords: Commitment, Emotional Intelligence, Personality

responsibility) [1].

Committed and loyal workforce that is compatible with organizational goals and values beyond responsibilities stated in the job description is considered a major factor in organizational efficacy. Not only such a workforce enhances performance and lowers rate of absenteeism, delay, and resignation, it but also elevates organizational social credibility. On the contrary, a workforce with a poor sense of loyalty, obligation and commitment, not only is not compatible with organizational goals, but also undermines

spirit of cooperation by creating a culture of indifference toward organizational problems, and ultimately delay organizational success. Thus, in recent years, many researchers have sought to understand factors affecting employees' organizational commitment [2].

This issue has greater importance in the national health system and organization because nurses are among people that shoulder the responsibility of people's health and life, and sometimes are faced with incurable diseases and patients. Thus, they have to constantly deal with severe mental and physical pressures, which may lead to their dissatisfaction, resignation, and consequently, reduced organizational commitment [3]. Therefore, identifying factors affecting organizational commitment in nurses can help enhance quality of patient care. Accordingly, this study investigates two important factors affecting nurses' organizational commitment including emotional intelligence and personality traits.

Emotional intelligence is a subset of capabilities and skills that equip the person for effective compatibility with the environment and achievement of success in life [4], and includes the following components: emotional self-awareness (knowledge of oneself, emotions and what causes them), assertiveness (ability to openly express emotions, beliefs, and thoughts), self-regard (accepting oneself as a worthwhile person, respecting and loving oneself), self-actualization (attempt to realize one's own potentials), independence (attachment to others, without depending on them), empathy (ability to understand other people's feelings, and not being indifferent to them), social responsibility (asserting oneself as a cooperative and constructive person) interpersonal relationships (ability to establish and maintain relationships with others and influence them), reality-testing (understanding current situation, effort to maintain the right conditions and experience events), flexibility (ability to make emotions, thoughts and behaviors compatible with situations), problem-solving (ability to identify problems and create solutions), stress tolerance (resilience against

stressful events and situations), impulse control (self-reservation and ability to control emotions and postpone success), optimism (positive attitude toward life), and happiness (ability to enjoy one's life and others, and satisfaction with life) [5].

The main five personality traits or factors include: neuroticism, extroversion, and openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness [6]. Neuroticism is experiencing such states as depression, anxiety, anger, insecurity and worry. Agreeableness involves having a polite, trustworthy, flexible, good-natured, cooperative, forgiving, compassionate and patient personality. Extroversion is to have a sociable, daring, team-playing, talkative, and ambitious personality [7]. Openness to experience is to have an imaginative, tradition-breaking (against conventions), inquisitive, and open-minded personality [8]. Conscientiousness implies discipline, making effort to succeed, self-discipline, far-sightedness, and contemplation [9].

The following domestic and foreign studies have confirmed the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment: Ostovar and Amirzadeh Khatouni [10], Rezaian and Keshtegar [2], Aminbeidokhti and Kargar [11], Keshavarz [12], Moradi and Tohid Ardahaey [13], Sarboland [14], Ghorbani and Bagheri Sani [15], Adey mos [16], Salami [17], Guleryuz, et al. [18], Gahan [19], and Rathi and Rastogi [20]. The following studies have shown that emotional intelligence is a predictor of organizational commitment: Kazemi et al. [21], Keshavarz [12], and Othman and Anugerah [22] because having a high level of emotional intelligence causes awareness and positive feeling for thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of oneself and others, identifying and managing one's feelings, and proper understanding and conveying them to others, leading to elevated organizational commitment [10].

Domestic and foreign studies have confirmed the relationship between personality traits

and organizational commitment. For instance, openness to experience and conscientiousness are related to acceptance of work and professional problems [23], and organizational goals and values respectively [24]. High level of neuroticism leads to excessive attention to the inner world and lack of attention to environmental and organizational expectations such as commitment and loyalty [25].

For instance, a study on simple and multiple relationships between personality traits and professional commitment among nurses working in hospitals in Ahwaz showed the highest correlation coefficient between personality traits and emotional and normative types of commitment, and also stepwise regression analysis showed that extroversion, openness to experience and agreeableness play the biggest role in explaining the triple areas of organizational commitment [23]. According to a study by Parvin [26] on teachers, significant relationships were observed between neuroticism and emotional commitment, extroversion and emotional and normative commitments, openness to experience and emotional, continuance, and normative commitments, agreeableness and emotional commitment, and conscientiousness and emotional and normative commitments. In their study, Sharifi, et al [27] found significant relationships between neuroticism, extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness with emotional commitment, and neuroticism and conscientiousness with continuance commitment, and conscientiousness with normative commitment. Results obtained by Darbanian [7] showed that conscientiousness and openness to experience positively predict emotional commitment, openness to experience negatively predicts continuance commitment, conscientiousness and extroversion positively predict emotional commitment, and neuroticism negatively predicts emotional commitment. Kumar and Bakhshi [28] showed that openness to experience negatively predicts continuance and normative commitments. Extroversion was found the most valid and significant predictor of all three organizational

commitment components. Conscientiousness positively predicts emotional and normative commitments. Agreeableness positively predicts normative commitment. Neuroticism is negatively related to emotional commitment, and positively to continuance and normative commitments. Erdheim et al. study [29] in a car manufacturing company in America showed significant relationships between extroversion and emotional and continuance commitments, and between agreeableness and normative commitment. Some studies have demonstrated the relationship of personality traits such as introversion and extroversion with organizational commitment (Cammileri [30], Jahangiri et al. [31]). For instance, results obtained by Bahrami, et al [32], Gelade [33], and Khdabakhshi [34] showed that extrovert people have greater organizational commitment compared to introvert people because extroverts are able to establish social relationships with others, and receive various rewards at work, which leads to their increased organizational and professional attachment and commitment [23].

Although many foreign and Iranian authors have emphasized the important role of emotional intelligence and personality traits in organizational workforce commitment, including nurses, the effects of dimensions of personality traits and especially dimensions of emotional intelligence on organizational commitment have been overlooked. Thus, this study aims firstly to investigate the relationships between organizational commitment with emotional intelligence and personality traits, and then investigate power of personality traits and emotional intelligence in predicting organizational commitment.

Method

This study was conducted on a population of all nurses working in private and public hospitals in Isfahan of Iran, 2013. Study participants were selected using a multistage random sampling. First, 4 hospitals were selected from private and public hospitals in Isfahan, and then 280 nurses was selected from different

departments in these hospitals. Tabachnick and Fidell equation (based on number of predicting variables) was used ($N > 50 + 8m$) to determine sample size. Accordingly, in the present study, there are 20 predicting variables (15 components of emotional intelligence, and 5 personality traits). Thus minimum sample size required was 210 participants, but 280 were selected, which exceeds the recommended sample size [35]. According to the study objectives, three questionnaires were used as follows:

1) Bar-On emotional intelligence inventory: This questionnaire contains 133 items with 5 composite scales and 15 subscales or components (emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, independence, empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relationships, reality testing, flexibility, problem solving, stress tolerance, impulse control, optimism, and happiness). Scoring is based on Likert method (never, rarely, occasionally, often, and always) from 1 to 5 marks. Some items are scored positively and some negatively. Bar-On reported mean reliability as 0.85 after one month and 0.75 after 4 months at test-retest of emotional intelligence. In Iran, psychometric characteristics of this questionnaire were also assessed. In a study by researchers, 8 factors out of 13 tested in a North American sample were found valid in Iran using exploratory factor analysis [5]. For the 90-item version of this questionnaire, researchers found Cronbach's alpha, Spearman-Brown, Gattman, and retest coefficients 0.93, 0.90, 0.90, and 0.85, respectively [36].

2) Costa and McCrae 5-factor Neo personality inventory: This questionnaire contains 60 items, with 5 dimensions of extroversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness (flexibility) and conscientiousness. Five-point answers range from totally disagree, disagree, no comment, agree, to totally agree, scoring from 0 to 4 marks. Some items are scored in reverse from 4 to 0 [5].

3) Allen and Meyer Organizational commitment inventory: This questionnaire contains 24 items, assessing 3 dimensions of organizational commitment: emotional,

continuance, and normative. There are 7 options from totally agree (7 marks) to totally disagree (1 mark). Scoring is reversed in some items. Higher scores indicate greater organizational commitment [37-38]. Validity [37] and reliability [38] of this questionnaire have been confirmed domestically.

At descriptive level, mean and standard deviation, and at inferential level, Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine emotional intelligence and personality traits relationship with organizational commitment, and multivariate regression to decide prediction of organizational commitment by emotional intelligence and personality traits. Analyses were performed in SPSS-18 software.

Results

Table 1 presents demographic details of participants, including sex, age, education, recruitment status, work experience and marital status. Accordingly, most of the participants were younger than 30 years old, female, with bachelor's degree education, with contract employment, with less than 10 years of work history, and married.

Descriptive results (mean and standard deviation), organizational commitment, emotional intelligence and personality traits are presented in Table 2.

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess the first study goal, the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment, which showed a positive and significant relationship between organizational commitment and dimensions of emotional intelligence: assertiveness, self-regard, independence, social responsibility, problem-solving, stress tolerance, impulse control, and optimism (Table 3). However, no significant relationship was found between organizational commitment and other dimensions of emotional intelligence such as self-awareness, reality testing, interpersonal relationships, flexibility, empathy, and happiness.

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to

Table 1 Demographic characteristic for sample group

Demographic variables	f	Percent	
Educational status	Under Diploma	1	0.4
	Diploma	6	2.1
	Associate of Science	9	3.2
	Bachelor of Science	227	81.1
	Master of Science	16	5.7
Recruitment status	No response	21	7.5
	Official	34	12.1
	Contractual	231	82.5
Work experience	No response	15	5.4
	Under 10	207	73.9
	11-20	38	13.6
	21-30	14	5
Marital status	No response	21	7.5
	Married	91	32.5
	Single	178	63.6
Age	No response	11	3.9
	Under 30	149	53.2
	31-40	86	30.7
	41-50	28	10
Gender	No response	17	6.1
	Female	235	83.9
	Male	31	11.1
No response	14	5	

Table 2 Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD) for organizational commitment, emotional intelligence and personality traits

Variable	M	SD	
Total	322.364	30.478	
Emotional intelligence	Emotional self-awareness	21.464	3.112
	Reality-testing	20.564	3.898
	Interpersonal relationship	23.429	2.860
	Flexibility	19.139	3.426
	Self-expression	19.289	3.417
	Self-regard	22.704	3.205
	Self-actualization	21.943	3.577
	Independence	20.971	3.642
	Empathy	23.714	2.753
	Social responsibility	23.946	2.715
	Problem-solving	22.768	2.716
	Stress tolerance	19.643	3.409
	Impulse control	18.325	4.749
	Optimism	22.325	3.149
Happiness	22.139	3.469	
Organizational commitment	4.044	0.702	
Personality traits	Neuroticism	21.493	6.384
	Extraversion	28.971	5.340
	Openness to experience	24.543	4.280
	Agreeableness	30.389	5.435
	Conscientiousness	33.614	5.871

assess the second study goal, the relationship between personality traits and organizational commitment. According to Table 3, there was a positive and significant relationship between organizational commitment and extroversion and conscientiousness. But, no

significant relationship was found between organizational commitment and other dimensions of personality traits such as neuroticism, openness to experience, or agreeableness.

The third study objective, assessing the

Table 3 Correlation coefficient result between emotional intelligence and personality traits with organizational commitment

Variable	Organizational commitment			
	r ²	Sig.		
Emotional intelligence	Emotional self-awareness	0.053	0.003	0.375
	Reality-testing	0.106	0.011	0.077
	Interpersonal relationship	0.081	0.006	0.175
	Flexibility	0.091	0.008	0.128
	Self-expression	0.140*	0.020	0.019
	Self-regard	0.153*	0.023	0.010
	Self-actualization	0.058	0.003	0.334
	Independence	0.127*	0.016	0.033
	Empathy	0.038	0.001	0.524
	Social responsibility	0.135*	0.018	0.024
	Problem-solving	0.238**	0.057	0.001
	Stress tolerance	0.229**	0.052	0.001
	Impulse control	0.132*	0.017	0.027
	Optimism	0.156**	0.024	0.009
	Happiness	0.106	0.011	0.076
Personality traits	Neuroticism	-0.105	0.011	0.079
	Extroversion	0.163**	0.026	0.006
	Openness to experience	-0.049	0.002	0.417
	Agreeableness	0.017	0	0.772
	Conscientiousness	0.122*	0.015	0.041

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

power of emotional intelligence in predicting organizational commitment, was determined using concurrent regression analysis.

According to Table 4, given statistic t and significance level, of the 15 components, only self-awareness (p<0.05, t=-2.32), problem-solving (p<0.05, t=2.197), and stress tolerance (p<0.05, t=2.353) showed significant relationships with organizational commitment. Power of personality traits in predicting organizational commitment (the final study objective) was assessed using concurrent regression analysis.

According to Table 4, given statistic t and significance level, the five personality traits, not showed significant relationships with organizational commitment. But, given

standard β coefficients, extroversion had the highest predicting power and openness to experience had the lowest.

Discussion

The first study finding showed a positive and significant relationship between organizational commitment and dimensions of emotional intelligence: assertiveness, self-regard, independence, social responsibility, problem-solving, stress tolerance, impulse control, and optimism, which agrees with domestic studies by Ostovar and Amirzadeh Khatouni [10], Rezaian and Keshtegar [2], Aminbeidokhti and Kargar [11], Keshavarz [12], Moradi and Tohid Ardahaey [13], Sarboland [14], Ghorbani and Bagheri Sani

Table 4 Multiple regression (simultaneous) results to predict organizational commitment through components of emotional intelligence and personality traits

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted (R ²)	SE	F	Sig.	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		t	Sig.
							B	SE	Beta	Beta		
(Constant)							2.041	0.544	-	-	3.755	0.001
Emotional self-awareness							-0.044	0.019	-0.194	-0.194	-2.320*	0.021
Reality-testing:							-0.004	0.018	-0.022	-0.022	-0.229	0.819
Interpersonal relationship							0.003	0.018	0.011	0.011	0.152	0.879
Flexibility							-0.010	0.016	-0.049	-0.049	-0.652	0.515
Self-expression							0.012	0.014	0.060	0.060	0.864	0.388
Self-regard							0.021	0.017	0.094	0.094	2.218	0.224
Self-actualization	0.347	0.120	0.070	0.677	2.403**	0.003	-0.023	0.018	-0.116	-0.116	-1.263	0.208
Independence							0.004	0.017	0.018	0.018	0.212	0.832
Empathy							0.005	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.256	0.798
Social responsibility							0.025	0.018	0.098	0.098	1.395	0.164
Problem-solving							0.040	0.018	0.157	0.157	2.197*	0.029
Stress tolerance							0.047	0.020	0.229	0.229	2.253*	0.019
Impulse control							0.013	0.012	0.089	0.089	1.087	0.278
Optimism							0.007	0.017	0.029	0.029	0.374	0.709
Happiness							-0.004	0.016	-0.018	-0.018	-0.225	0.822
(Constant)							3.895	0.511	-	-	7.624	0.001
Neuroticism							-0.008	0.008	-0.068	-0.068	-0.966	0.335
Extraversion	0.204	0.041	0.024	0.693	3.370*	0.040	0.017	0.009	0.129	0.129	1.842	0.067
Openness to experience							-0.007	0.010	-0.043	-0.043	-0.725	0.469
Agreeableness							-0.014	0.010	-0.111	-0.111	-1.479	0.140

*p<0.05

**p<0.01

[15], Adeyimos [16], Salami [17], Guleryuz, et al. [18], Gahan [19], and Rathi and Rastogi [20]. The agreement between results can be attributed to common tools used in most studies (in emotional intelligence and organizational commitment). Moreover, one of the components of emotional intelligence was self-awareness. Increased self-awareness of people may help organizational continuous success and lead to greater commitment.

The second finding showed the positive and significant relationship of organizational commitment with extroversion and conscientiousness. This result agrees with some studies, but disagrees with others. For instance, the present study result agrees with a study by Parvin [26] showing a negative relationship between emotional commitment and neuroticism, with a study by Darbanian [7] showing a negative relationship between continuance commitment and neuroticism, and with Cammileri [30], Jahangir, et al [31], Bahrami, et al [32], Gelade [33], and Khodabakhsh [34] showing a positive relationship between organizational commitment and extroversion. However, it disagrees with results of studies by Kumar and Bakhshi [38] showing a negative relationship between openness to experience and continuance and normative commitments, and with Sharifi and Salami [27] showing a relationship between conscientiousness and emotional commitment. The disagreement may be attributed to differences in the study population. Although explaining the relationship between personality traits and organizational commitment requires further studies, to explain the positive relationship of extroversion with emotional and normative commitments, it can be asserted that since extroverts are able to establish social relationships, they receive wide variety of rewards at work, and this leads to increased attachment and commitment toward the job and organization, and organizational commitment and therefore, productivity is increased [23].

The third study finding showed that components of emotional intelligence are

able to predict organizational commitment, which concurs with previous studies in this area, including Keshavarz [12], Kazemi et al. [21], Othman and Angerach [22] confirming power of emotional intelligence in predicting organizational commitment. To explain, it should be noted that high level of emotional intelligence increases awareness and positive feeling toward thoughts, feelings and behaviors of oneself and others, recognition and management of one's feelings and understanding and conveyance of these feeling to others, leading to higher organizational commitment [10].

The fourth study result not confirmed power of personality traits in predicting organizational commitment, which disagrees with results found by Kumar and Bakhshi [28] showing prediction of organizational commitment by personality traits. According to researcher's search, no other study has been conducted in this area. Thus, further studies are required for explaining this relationship. However, the relationship with openness to experience can be explained by the fact that people with high scores in openness to experience have greater power in accepting various professional problems at work [23]. Similarly, since conscientious people have the tendency to get involved in their work, they can be expected to have greater acceptance of organizational goals and values [24]. Regarding neuroticism, people with negative emotions such as anger, anxiety and stress are inadequately stable, and are so involved in their own mental problems that neglect events in the workplace, which makes them unable to meet environmental and organizational expectations [25].

Conclusion

Generally, the present study correlation results showed a positive and significant relationship between organizational commitment and dimensions of emotional intelligence, including assertiveness, self-respect, independence, social responsibility, problem-solving, stress tolerance, impulse control, and optimism. Furthermore, there is

a positive and significant relationship between organizational commitment and extroversion and conscientiousness. Regression analysis results confirmed power of emotional intelligence in predicting organizational commitment.

Study limitations included conducting the study in nurses in Isfahan city. It is therefore recommended that in similar studies be conducted in other provinces and other organizations. In the present study, the relationship of emotional intelligence and personality traits with organizational commitment was assessed. It is recommended that future studies examine this relationship together with demographic parameters. In addition, given the relationship between organizational commitment and emotional intelligence and personality traits, it is recommended that emotional intelligence and personality traits be assessed using employment tests in selecting the participants.

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Study design: ZT, MS Kh

Data collection and analysis: ZT, SAA, RA, MSKh

Manuscript preparation: ZT, MSKh

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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