

Attraction–Selection–Attrition Theory in the Public Organization: The Effects of Personality Traits on Psychological Ownership with Regard to the Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence

Hassan Danaeefard^{*1}, Hamid Reza Boustani¹, Ahmadali Khaefelahi¹, Jalil Delkhah²

1. Department of Public Administration, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

2. Faculty Member at Management Studies and Technology Development Center of Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

(Received: July 19, 2017; Revised: March 27, 2018; Accepted: April 28, 2018)

Abstract

Personality traits and their relation with emotional intelligence and psychological ownership (PO) have to be considered in public-sector organizations, because employees who work in the public sector may have fewer mechanisms to increase their feelings of PO toward their organization. Thus, with regard to conditions of public organizations, more attention should be paid to structural and organizational contexts while investigating the relations between personality traits, emotional intelligence and PO. The aim of the research is to probe the effect of personality traits on PO in a public organization with regard to the mediating role of emotional intelligence. SPSS and Smart PLS software applications were used to test the research hypotheses. Data were collected from 384 participants, engaged in a public organization administrative department. The results revealed that traits, including extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness and neuroticism influence emotional intelligence; emotional intelligence, in turn, is positively associated with PO; these personality traits are directly associated with PO and influence PO indirectly through emotional intelligence.

Keywords

Personality traits, emotional intelligence, psychological ownership, public Administration.

* Corresponding Author, Email: hdanaee@modares.ac.ir

Introduction

As one of the positive organizational behaviors, Psychological Ownership (PO) will be the main factor which contributes to competitiveness of organizations during the twenty first century (Brown, 1989). Employees' PO to the organization is receiving an increasing attention of managers and researchers, because this concept is the main antecedent of positive attitudes, behaviors and performance of employees thorough commitment, satisfaction, accountability, extra-role behaviors, citizenship behavior, self-esteem, performance, and intent to stay (Avey et al., 2009; Brown, 1989; Pierce et al., 2001; Pierce et al., 2009). Although PO has been the focus of many researches (for example, Pierce et al., 2001, 2003; Pierce et al., 2004; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004), only a few researches have concentrated on the relationships between the PO experience of employees and other related organizational behaviors and attitudes in public organizations.

Previous researches examining the factors influencing PO have focused typically on group and organizational-level antecedents, with little attention being paid to the effect of personality characteristics and other important individual and personal difference factors (Dawkins et al., 2015). Pierce et al. (2003) asserted that personal difference factors such as personality characteristics may influence how a person goes about pursuing relationships with possession objects and the kinds of objects deemed appropriate, building on primary empirical evidence (McIntyre et al., 2009; Kaur et al., 2013). Further, characteristics affect behavior only in some situations (Kenrick & Funder, 1988), and types of organizations such as public and private can be the most important factor in this regard. Also, differences between the context and structural properties of organizations, such as public and private, tend to attract people with differences in personality and individual characteristics (Perry & Wise, 1990).

Researchers have indicated that behaviors of employees in public-sector and for-profit organizations can differ substantially because

behaviors of employees are derived by initiatives of organizations, and these two various organizational environments often have different work and vision climates and conditions (Goulet & Frank 2002). On the other hand, the modern public bureaucratic system requires employees to use their emotional intelligence to communicate with people and citizens effectively (Lee, 2013). Employees of public service who are able to manage their feelings and emotions and perceive other people's emotions may enhance the performance of organizations and promote people's and citizens' satisfaction (Lee, 2013). At the organizational level of analysis, the Attraction–Selection–Attrition (ASA) theory explains that similar people are selected and attracted by organizations, while dissimilar people are likely to leave these organizations due to attrition. In consequence, the ASA model leads to an increase in homogeneity in emotional intelligence and personality traits of people within one organization. Also, one of the main identified predictors of PO is emotional intelligence (Dawkins et al., 2015). Kaur et al. (2013) concluded that emotional intelligence of employees positively predicted individuals' PO, and finally their caring behavior. As a result, congruence between the person and organization with regard to the ASA theory can lead to an increase in the emotional intelligence and PO.

Furthermore, most researches on PO variables have been done in for-profit organizations (Van Dyne & Pierce 2004; Avey et al., 2009) and information about employees of public-sector is inconsistent and scarce. Personality traits and their relations with emotional intelligence and PO should be considered in public-sector organizations because in comparison with people who are active in the for-profit sector, those in the public sector organizations may have fewer methods and mechanisms to increase their emotions and feelings of PO toward their work and organization (Park et al., 2013). However, most researches that have investigated these concepts are limited to the organizations of private sector, and fewer studies have been done on the public sector jobs and organizations. Thus, with regard to the special cultural characteristics of the Iranian people such as collectivism and high levels of power distance and special

conditions of public organizations such as formality, hierarchy and bureaucracy, greater attention is needed in considering cultural, structural and organizational context for investigating relations between personality traits, emotional intelligence and PO.

Personality Traits and Emotional Intelligence

Based on the ASA model, organizations emphasizing a certain type of values select and attract people who agree with the norms and values or people whose traits are congruent with the organization values (Li et al., 2008). Also, people with high emotional intelligence are likely to be selected by and attracted to organizations whose individuals have high emotional intelligence and very strong power of emotion management (Menges & Bruch, 2009). In consequence, the ASA model leads to an increase in homogeneity in personality traits and emotional intelligence of employees within one job and organization (Menges & Bruch, 2009). Theory suggests that where people do not fit the core goals and values of the organization, they will tend to leave their organization (Aishah Hassan & Shabani, 2013). Thus, it can be concluded that the congruence between traits and organizational values and conditions with regard to ASA model can lead to positive and significant effects on emotional intelligence.

Agreeableness is related to behaviors favoring collaboration and investing on a common good, which is closely associated with the desire to serve both the public and citizens' interests (Witteloostuijn et al., 2016). Among dimensions of the Big Five model of personality (McCrae & Costa, 1997), Agreeableness trait was most likely to be highly associated with an employee's propensity toward work in the public service. In addition, conscientious employees are more likely to appreciate bureaucratic rules and structures, therefore, they are also expected to be predisposed to higher levels of satisfaction in the job (Judge et al., 2002), particularly in the public sector organizations (Cooper et al., 2014). It was showed that the extroversion trait was indirectly associated with the attraction to policy making in public sector organizations (Ain et al., 2015). Briefly, personality traits of the Big Five have a positive and significant relationship with public

service motivation (Ain et al., 2015). Consequently and with regard to the ASA framework, it can be concluded that there is a compatibility between values of public organizations and personality traits such as conscientiousness, extroversion and agreeableness.

The evidence for a correlation between emotional intelligence and personality variables is very significant and strong (Van der Zee et al., 2002; Saklofske & Zeidner, 1995). Emotional intelligence can have an indirect, positive and significant relationship with the conscientiousness, openness, extroversion, agreeableness traits and a negative relationship with the neuroticism trait (Perez-Gonzalez & Sanchez-Ruiz, 2014; Petrides et al., 2010).

There is a negative and significant correlation between impulsivity as the negative axis of conscientiousness trait and intelligence of employees (Vigil-Colet & Morales-Vives, 2005; Lozano et al., 2014). Conscientiousness trait has been related to a focus on complying with rules, principles and, moral and spiritual standards (Costa & McCrae, 1992). With regard to the particular philosophy of public organizations such as attention to citizen's interests and social responsibility, conscientiousness can be related to employees' emotional intelligence in public organizations. Also, agreeable individuals are likely to help, and are motivated to maintain positive relationships with other people. Bracket and Mayer (2003) showed a significant and positive relationship between employees' emotional intelligence and agreeableness trait. Specificity of the organizations of public sector stems from their preparation for meeting public order and public needs (Aykaç & Metin, 2012). With regard to the particular philosophy of public organizations such as attention to citizens' interests, it can be argued that agreeableness in public organizations can be related to the employees' emotional intelligence. In addition, extroverted people are open to other people and tend to be informal and unreserved in their communications with others. Various researches have detected a relationship between employees' emotional intelligence and their extroversion (Van der Zee et al., 2002; Roger & Najarian, 1989). In consequence, the extroversion trait can be linked to employees' emotional intelligence. Also, negative feelings and

emotions will be most strongly linked to the neuroticism trait (Costa & McCrae, 1992). By contrast, people with high neuroticism, seem to have unhappy memories and report less happiness (Ruiz-Caballero & Bermudez, 1995) that can illustrate much lower emotional intelligence. This trait is sometimes referred to as negative feelings and emotions (Watson & Clark, 1984) and finally neuroticism has been related negatively to employees' emotional intelligence. Finally, researches indicated that the strongest relationship observed between personality trait and cognitive ability is reported for the openness to experience trait (Blanco et al., 2016). According to openness to experience, it has been suggested that people who are high in openness to experience have an excellent motivation to commit intellectual activities, which makes them develop their intelligence (Brand, 1994). Thus, openness to experience has been related to employees' emotional intelligence.

Hypothesis 1. In public organizations, extroversion (H1a), agreeableness (H1b), conscientiousness (H1c) and openness (H1d) positively and neuroticism (H1e) negatively influence emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Ownership

Kaur et al. (2013) concluded that an individual's emotional intelligence positively predicted employees' PO. There is a negative relationship between structural features of work environment such as participative decision making, autonomy, technology reutilization and PO for the organization and job (O'Driscoll et al., 2006; Pierce et al., 2004). Organizations with less structured conditions and environments are more likely to induce ownership feelings for the job and organization. On the other hand, flexible and organic organizational structures will increase in the organizations of the public sector (Ozer, 2005) and the formal structure of the public sector organizations which have adhocratic, centralized and resistant organizational structures will become more flexible (Eryilmaz, 2010). Furthermore, organizations with more flexible and less bureaucratic structures may create rules and norms for alternative models of emotion and feeling management

(Martin et al., 1998). Thus, organizational structure in public sector organizations can be effective on emotional intelligence and PO.

There are different relationships between emotional intelligence and decisional styles (Kenny et al., 2012). Also, empirical studies has confirmed a strong and significant relationship between participation of employees in decision-making and PO based on the organization (Han et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2012). On the other hand and from a cultural perspective, Iranian people illustrate high levels of collectivism (Canestrino et al., 2015) and collectivist traits can increase employees' participation in Iranian organizations. Thus, based on the special culture of Iran, emotional intelligence is related to PO with regard to variables such as participation.

Empirical studies and theoretical research have positively linked emotional intelligence to the internal locus of control (Singh, 2006). Additionally, control has been indicated to be an important antecedent of ownership feelings (Furby, 1978). PO of employees is like having an internal control locus because it provides an internally based drive to influence circumstances (Kaur et al., 2013). Also, jobs and duties with high autonomy imply a greater degree of control, and finally, they would be expected to increase the PO experience of employees (Pierce et al., 2001). Thus, control is an effective tie with regard to the relationship between emotional intelligence and PO.

Two key national culture dimensions include individualism and power distance (Hofstede, 1980). From a cultural perspective, Iran shows high levels of collectivism (Canestrino et al., 2015). Also, because of the administrative hierarchy and bureaucracy in public organizations, it can be argued that power distance in these organizations is high. Also, with regard to changes in the future of public organizations and despite the increase in flexibility, bureaucracy and bureaucratic structures will not diminish (Aykaç & Metin, 2012). Thus, it can be concluded that power distance in public organizations is very high. Also, power distance can be associated with a better control of feelings and emotions and thereby emotion suppression (Matsumoto et al., 2008). Thus, power distance is associated with positive regulation of emotions regarding the

relationship between collectivism and high distance of power (Hofstede, 1991), it can be argued that high power distance can lead to higher PO due to the collectivist culture and changes in future.

Finally, there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job insecurity (Kappagoda, 2013). Also, feeling of ownership or possession provides an individual with a sense of belongingness or place, which is necessary for presenting feelings of pleasure, comfort and security (Heidegger, 1967). Thus, emotional response and PO can be related to each other due to job security.

Hypothesis 2. Emotional intelligence of employees positively influences PO in public organizations.

Personality Traits and Psychological Ownership

Key personality traits have been extensively used to investigate differences in person and team behavior (Witteloostuijn et al., 2016). Research by Pierce, Kostova and Dirks (2003) showed that personal factors such as period of service, roles and statutes, age, gender and personality might affect the ownership feeling psychologically.

More research is needed to examine how and to what extent the main personal difference factors may influence PO. One of these key differences are personality characteristics (Dawkins et al., 2015). Previous researches have investigated the predictors of psychological ownership with little attention being paid to the effect of personality characteristics and other important personal difference factors (Dawkins et al., 2015). McIntyre et al. (2009) suggest that feelings of ownership can increase by having an appropriate type of personality characteristic that is compliant with different motivations.

Personality traits of the Big Five, such as extroversion trait (Watson & Clark, 1992), can be positively or negatively related to positive emotions and also positive emotions can be consistent with the routes of the PO (Haase et al., 2012; Krupic & Corr, 2014; Novovic et al., 2012). Also, characteristics influence behavior only in related situations (Kenrick & Funder, 1988). With regard to the protection of long-term legal commitment to and powerful psychological contacts with organizations, people in public organizations may view ownership

differently from people in private organizations, with limited employee stock ownership plan. Furthermore, because people's ownership in public sector organizations differs from employees' ownership in private sector organizations due to the comparative defect of formal ownership, the effect of PO on attitudes and behaviors of employees may be relatively important in public sector organizations as a result (Park, 2013).

Hypothesis 3. Personality traits of employees including extroversion (H3a), agreeableness (H3b), conscientiousness (H3c) and openness (H3d) positively and neuroticism (H3e) negatively influence PO in public organizations.

Emotional intelligence can also be investigated as a mediating variable as it has already been done in many studies (for example, Marks et al., 2016; Wischerth et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2016). The ASA model indicates that employees choose job roles and stay with their organizations based upon highly relevant levels of congruence between values of individuals and those of the organization (Cable & Judge, 1997). On the one hand, empirical evidences suggest that organizations emphasizing a certain type of values select and attract individuals who agree with the values or individuals whose traits are congruent with the values of the organization (Li et al, 2008) and organizational emotional intelligence of employees is likely to be comparatively homogeneous within organizations with regard to ASA model and socialization processes. On the other hand, emotional intelligence can lead to positive emotions and these positive emotions increase positive psychological states such as PO.

Hypothesis 4. Personality traits including extroversion (H4a), agreeableness (H4b), conscientiousness (H4c), openness (H4d) and neuroticism (H4e) influence PO indirectly and through emotional intelligence.

Method

Sample

The used instrument in this research is standardized questionnaire.

Also, selecting people has been done through random sampling. To test research hypotheses, 384 full-time employees were recruited from a large public organization in the city of Tehran, Iran. Employees of public sector organizations are suitable participants for this research for several reasons. Their average age was 33.35 years, the average of organizational tenure was 4.17 years, and 54.9% of the participants were male. The population under analysis includes employees of the Taxation Affairs Organization in the city of Tehran which consisted of 211 men and 173 women, all of whom were administrative employees. All employees provided their informed consent before completing the research questionnaire. All scales were subjected to reliability and validity analyses.

Procedure

A quantitative analysis was conducted in order to investigate the relationship between personality traits, emotional intelligence and PO in a public organization. All questions were completed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). With regard to the aim of the study, the present research is descriptive and developmental based on the data collection method. Also, according to the classification, the present research is correlational.

The Scale of Variables

The independent variable is personality traits. The questionnaire of Big Five personality traits (John & Srivastava, 1999) was used to evaluate personality of the sample. This model has been selected because these traits (agreeableness, extroversion, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism) have been empirically shown to be capable of describing the personality dimensions. A 44-item scale was designed to assess the five domains of personality: Agreeableness (1-9 items), extroversion (10-17 items), conscientiousness (18-26 items), neuroticism (27-34 items) and openness (35-44 items). Also, the 16-item questionnaire developed by Wong and Law (2002) was used to evaluate the employees' emotional intelligence. Four dimensions of emotional intelligence have been measured in this study. The dimensions are self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion. The scale

includes 16 items (4 items for each dimension). Finally, the scale of PO was measured with a 12-item questionnaire (Avey et al., 2009), which covered four dimensions of belongingness, self-efficacy, self-identity, and accountability, each with three items.

Statistical Analyses

SPSS and SmartPLS software programs were used to test the hypotheses of the present study and to evaluate the appropriateness of the proposed theoretical framework. In relation to SEM analysis of full latent variable models, it was necessary to verify the validity of the measurement portion of research model (Byrne, 2006).

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Cronbach's alpha: Alpha values greater than 0.7 indicate high internal consistency whereas 0.5–0.6 alpha values indicate adequate and lower limit of acceptability.

Composite reliability (CR): Additionally, Bagozzi and Yi (1988) confirmed that an instrument is reliable if composite reliability is 0.7 or over. Hence, our instrument meets the criterion for reliability.

Construct reliability: factor loadings have been used in order to confirm the reliability. Factor loadings values greater than 0.4 indicate high construct reliability whereas 0.2 or 0.3 factor loadings indicate inadequate and lower limit of acceptability.

Validity

Content validity: Content validity is established through an iterative process of reviewing and revising the indicator items by a group of potential respondents and experts. In order to evaluate the validity of the achieved data through the instrument, it has been used opinions of the readers, advisors, and experts.

Convergent validity: To assess the convergent validity, we computed the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct. An instrument has convergent validity if AVE is 0.5 or higher (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

Results

Assessment of the Outer Model

Composite reliability and the Cronbach's alpha of all the constructs were higher than 0.70, indicating reliable measurements. Also, convergent validity was measured by investigating the average variance extracted (AVE) from the constructs. The recommended value has been more than 0.50 percent, indicating high convergent validity. Table 1 describes the results of the outer model.

Table 1. Inter-Construct Correlations and the Square-Root of the AVE

Construct	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α	R ²
extroversion	0.687	0.945983	0.934079	0.000
agreeableness	0.727	0.959769	0.952049	0.000
conscientiousness	0.682	0.950873	0.941805	0.000
openness	0.601	0.936879	0.924270	0.000
Neuroticism	0.532	0.900428	0.873524	0.000
Emotional Intelligence	0.531	0.946659	0.939413	0.786
PO	0.647	0.956326	0.949879	0.897

Factor loadings values greater than 0.4 indicate high construct reliability. All related factor loadings were equal to or higher than 0.5. This is a conservative cut-off level indicating reliability of the questions. Thus, construct reliability is acceptable.

Table 2. Factor Loadings Values

Q	FL	Q	FL	Q	FL	Q	FL	Q	FL	Q	FL
1	0.66	13	0.77	25	0.69	37	0.63	49	0.74	61	0.66
2	0.58	14	0.71	26	0.54	38	0.80	50	0.74	62	0.83
3	0.45	15	0.83	27	0.58	39	0.70	51	0.67	63	0.85
4	0.74	16	0.88	28	0.70	40	0.75	52	0.84	64	0.87
5	0.47	17	0.93	29	0.65	41	0.63	53	0.69	65	0.83
6	0.66	18	0.91	30	0.45	42	0.80	54	0.45	66	0.80
7	0.55	19	0.91	31	0.49	43	0.70	55	0.74	67	0.76
8	0.70	20	0.67	32	0.51	44	0.75	56	0.67	68	0.80
9	0.75	21	0.53	33	0.69	45	0.78	57	0.84	69	0.80
10	0.68	22	0.58	34	0.65	46	0.81	58	0.69	70	0.81
11	0.78	23	0.64	35	0.73	47	0.79	59	0.45	71	0.74
12	0.88	24	0.71	36	0.53	48	0.78	60	0.74	72	0.81

Inner Model Assessment

The path relationships were measured by the endogenous constructs variance and on the basis of the path coefficients sign, significance and magnitude. The predictive power of the research structural model is measured by the R² amounts. Explained variance for the inner constructs, both first and second order, is more than 0.1. In this research, the PO (final dependent construct) has an R² value of 0.897, which can be investigated taking into account the model complexity. Emotional Intelligence variable has an R² value of 0.786, which indicates the strong and significant predictive power of extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness on PO.

After calculating the path estimates in the structural model of research, to investigate the statistical significance of the path coefficients, bootstrapping has been conducted in Smart PLS. The path coefficients have been measured by using the one-tailed t-test. The values are significant at the 5% level if the investigating values are higher than 1.648 and they are significant at the 1% level if the t-values are higher than 1.96.

Table 3. Relations between Variables

Relationship	t-statistic	Path coefficient	Statistical significance	Result
Extroversion and EI	6.605	0.330879	Sig.	confirmed
agreeableness and EI	5.614	0.330995	Sig.	confirmed
conscientiousness and EI	3.234	0.165666	Sig.	confirmed
openness and EI	2.502	0.130049	Sig.	confirmed
Neuroticism and EI	1.037	-0.031	Not sig.	Rejected
EI and PO	7.728	0.293802	Sig.	confirmed

The t-statistics and path coefficient of the structural relationships of research model are shown in Table 3. The results show that extroversion has a significant and positive impact on emotional intelligence ($\beta=0.33$, $t=6.6$) and, therefore, H1a is supported. Agreeableness has a positive and significant impact on emotional

intelligence ($\beta=.33$, $t= 5.61$). Thus, H1b is supported, too. Additionally, conscientiousness has a positive and significant impact on emotional intelligence ($\beta=0.16$, $t=3.23$) supporting H1c. Furthermore, openness has a positive and significant impact on emotional intelligence ($\beta=0.13$, $t=2.502$). Thus, H1d is supported. Finally, Neuroticism does not have a significant and positive effect on emotional intelligence ($\beta=-0.03$, $t=1.03$). Thus, H1e is not supported. In addition, PO is influenced significantly by emotional intelligence ($\beta=0.29$, $t=7.72$). Thus, H2 is supported.

Test of the Mediating Effect

Hypotheses 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d and 4e were mediating hypotheses and required necessarily varied conditions to test. In order for the mediating effect to occur, Baron and Kenny (1986) propose that several conditions need to be met. First, the predictor variables (e.g., extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness) must be significantly related to the mediator variable, that is emotional intelligence, and the criterion variable, that is PO, and next the mediator variable, that is emotional intelligence, should be significantly related to the criterion variable. Finally, when the mediator variable is entered into the structural relationship, the relationship between predictor variable and criterion variable must be insignificant for full mediation or weak for partial mediation.

Hypothesis 4a indicates that the variable of emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between extroversion and PO. As seen in Figure 1, extroversion has a sig significant and positive effect on PO ($\beta=0.805$, $t=24.05$) in the absence of the mediator influence of emotional intelligence. Thus, H3a is supported. Then, extroversion has a significant and positive effect on the mediator variable of emotional intelligence ($\beta=0.81$, $t=23.37$). Next, emotional intelligence is significantly associated with PO ($\beta=0.69$, $t=8.49$). Baron and Kenny (1986) have used the Sobel test to test the influence of the mediating variable. When the variable of emotional intelligence was included in the present model, the predictive power of extroversion on PO significantly reduced from $\beta=0.805$ to $\beta=0.24$ and based on the Sobel

test calculation ($z=7.84$), which implies a significant and strong mediating influence. In total, these findings present support for Hypothesis H4a.

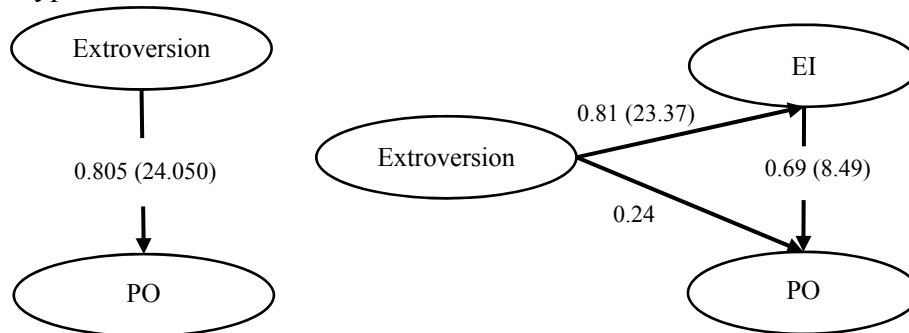


Figure 1. Role of emotional intelligence on relationship between extroversion and PO

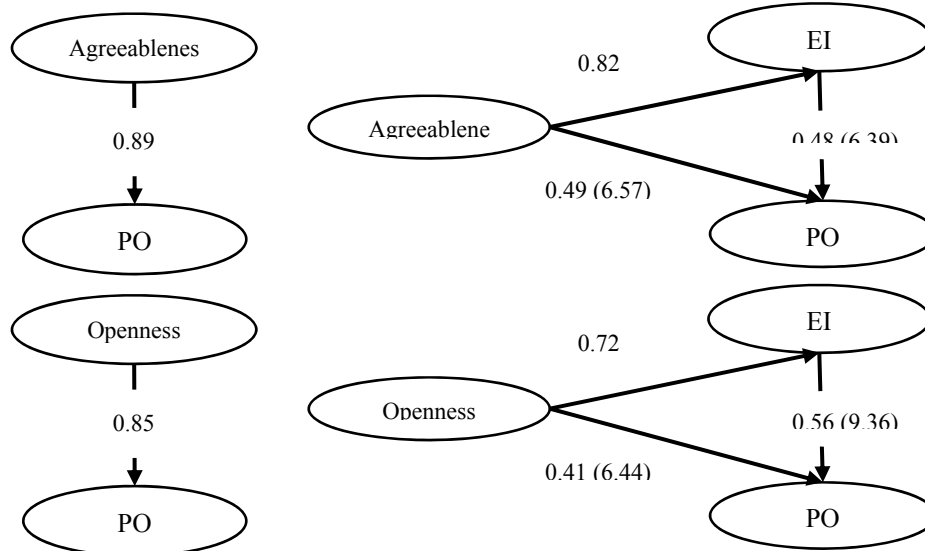


Figure 2. Results of Hypotheses 4b, 4c

Accordingly and based on Figures 2 and 3, Hypotheses 4b, 4c, 4d have been confirmed and Hypotheses 4e has been rejected.

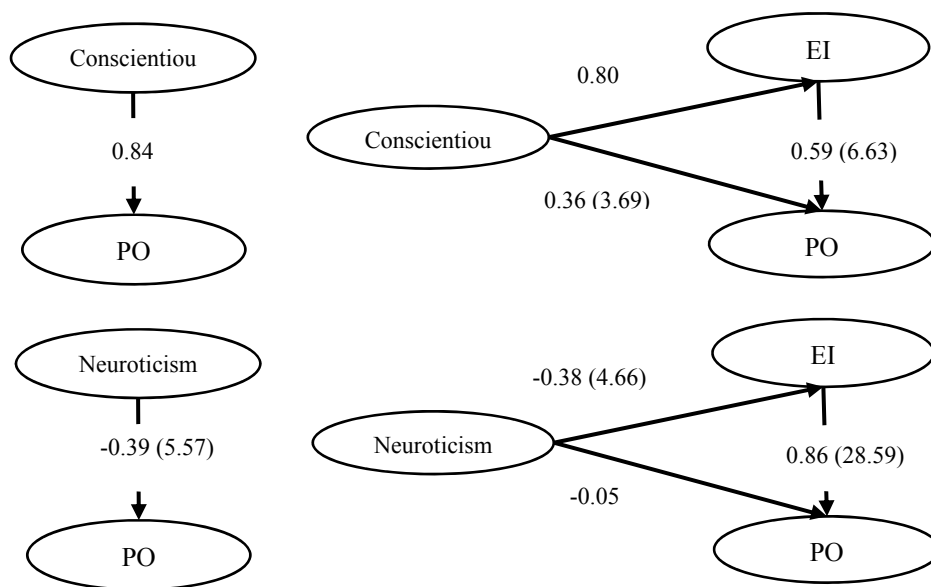


Figure 3. Results of Hypotheses 4d and 4e

Overall Conclusion and Discussion

Personality traits, including extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness, influence emotional intelligence and that relationship is stronger when compatibility between organization values and personality characteristics is higher. Also, emotional intelligence of employees will be positively associated with their PO in a public organization and that relationship is stronger when work environment has less structure, less job insecurity, collaborative decision-making styles and higher internal locus of control. In addition, personality traits of employees including extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness will be positively and directly associated with PO in a public organization. Additionally, personality traits including extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness influence PO indirectly and through emotional intelligence. In other words, emotional intelligence has a mediating role in the relationship with personality traits and PO in a public organization. Finally, emotional intelligence positively mediated the relationship between extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness, and neuroticism negatively mediated

the relationship between PO and emotional intelligence

In the first hypothesis, the results from the present research revealed that personality traits influence emotional intelligence. These results are consistent with the research literature (Pierce et al., 2003; McIntyre et al., 2009). Research on ASA framework presents further support for the expected effect of organizational culture on the requirement of work-related personality and demonstrates that the congruence between specific organizational culture of public organizations and individual's personality traits is very important in this respect. On the other hand, organizational culture plays a key role in the ASA framework because empirical evidence indicates that organizations emphasizing a certain type of values select and attract people who agree with the organization values or people whose traits are congruent with the organization values (Li et al., 2008). ASA model explains why similar people are selected by organizations, while inconsistent people are likely to leave these organizations due to attrition. As a result, the ASA process leads to an increase in homogeneity in emotional intelligence within one organization (Menges & Bruch, 2009).

Regarding the second hypothesis, the findings of the present research showed that emotional intelligence of employees will be positively associated with their PO. Research concluded that an individual's emotional intelligence positively predicted employees' PO (Kaur et al., 2013). For example, empirical studies and theoretical research have positively linked emotional intelligence to the internal locus of control (Singh, 2006). Additionally, control has been indicated to be an important antecedent of ownership feelings (Furby, 1978). Thus, control is an effective tie with regard to the relationship between emotional intelligence and PO.

With respect to the third hypothesis, personality traits of employees including extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness will be positively and directly associated with PO. In this regard, social exchange theory suggests one possible explanation. Blau (1964) believes that social exchanges are practices that are conditional on rewarding responses from other people. When the

process of social exchange is built based on beneficial and reciprocal transactions between the employees and employer, the outcome will be beneficial and positive attitudes or behaviors (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) such as PO (Park et al., 2013). Thus, with regard to social exchange theory, it can be argued that congruence between specific organizational culture of public organizations and people's personality traits can lead to positive behaviors or attitudes such as PO. In addition, the relationship between personality traits can be considered with regard to trait-activation theory (Dawkins et al., 2015). The key assumption of trait-activation theory is that conditions and personality characteristics are reasons of behavioral conflict and variance, and personality traits are expressed as answers to trait-relevant cues (Tett & Guterman, 2000). Therefore, rather than supposing that personality traits influence the reinforcement of PO in some recognizable manner, trait activation theory proposes that traits influence behavior of people just in relevant situations (Kenrick & Funder, 1988), and type of organization such as public and private can be the most important influential factor in this regard.

With reference to the fourth hypothesis, personality traits including extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness influence PO indirectly and through emotional intelligence. The relationship between employees' personality types and their perception of organizational culture and their impact on PO were examined. The results of the study presented a better perception of individuals' turnover intention in an organization due to explanations of PO (Giffen, 2015).

Results indicated that emotional intelligence positively mediated the relationship between extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness and negatively mediated the relationship between neuroticism and PO. The mediating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between dimensions of personality traits and PO is explainable with regard to two theories. First, ASA theory in public administration confirms that dimensions of personality traits such as extroversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness are consistent with goals, mission, values and

structure of public organizations and employees are congruent in their personality dimensions with the characteristics of the public agencies. Also, the results indicated that ASA can lead to an increase in the emotional intelligence. Second, with regard to the social cognitive theory, control of emotions is critical in development of self-efficacy (Gundlach et al., 2003), and perceptions of self-efficacy is one of the important dimensions of PO.

Managerial Implications

Authors believe that the study presented here have very important implications for public administration managers. Organizations' managers have to pay special consideration and attention toward the perception of psychological ownership of employees due to its effects on many organizational outcomes including employee's performance and their organizational citizenship behavior. Organizations' managers have to develop the attributes of the potential ownership targets by making them attractive, obvious, accessible, and malleable which can increase the potential in order to have psychological ownership. Also, managers can work on the psychological ownership routes. For example, they could organize the work in such a way that there would be increased opportunities for employees to exercise participation over different targets, to create control of the targets and collaborative decision-making to be in frequent and close association with the targets, and to be able to make significant investments of themselves into the targets because people who have a say in their decision making may develop a feeling of PO that makes them feel that the job and organization is theirs. Managers have to know that individuals who were not a good fit with an organization due to organizational culture or job tasks were likely to quit the organization and organizations choose individuals who fit their values and goals due to selection strategies because congruence between organization and person's characteristics in the public organization is very important in order to have effectiveness in these organizations. Also, managers of public organizations have to increase job security, collaborative decision-making styles, and higher internal locus of

control in their organizations. Finally, managers of public organizations have to consider employees participation, lower role ambiguity and self-efficiency because based on the special culture of Iran, emotional intelligence is related to PO with regard to variables such as participation, lower role ambiguity and self-efficiency.

Limitations and Future Directions

This research has some limitations. One of the limitations is the small size of sample that limiting the generalizability. Also, the research suffers from some limitations of survey method that uses self-reported measures that are exposed to bias of social desirability. The present research also has been conducted on a public organization, which consequently decreases generalizability of the research findings to other sector employees because every organization is incomparable and unique from organizations others based on the practices, policies, challenges etcetera. Thus, future studies have to investigate psychological ownership in various settings such as in private and non-public organizations. Furthermore, information collection on the research at one point of time may not give a detailed and accurate picture. Future studies have to investigate contract violation on longitudinal or experimental designs and present more convincing evidence on the investigated variable. This research has been conducted on the respective boundaries of professional and cultural factors. Researchers propose that future studies investigates psychological ownership in various settings, such as other public sectors, private sector organizations in different industries where dynamic contexts and different legal arrangements may influence ownership conceptualizations. Also, the construct reliability and validity in this research is another limitation. Future research may be essential to validate the findings and increase the accuracy of research results by obtaining data from employees of different organizations and sectors. Finally, based on the future theory research and construction, authors suggest consideration of whether or not there are some collective motives related to the emergence of psychological ownership collectively.

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