



Original Article

# Multidimensional Organisational Commitment of Public Servants in the Public Sector of Hanoi Capital

Nguyen Danh Nam<sup>1,\*</sup>, Uong Thi Ngoc Lan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Hanoi University of Natural Resources and Environment,  
No. 41A, Phu Dien Road, Bac Tu Liem District, Hanoi, Vietnam*

<sup>2</sup>*VNU University of Economics and Business,  
No. 144, Xuan Thuy Road, Cau Giay District, Hanoi, Vietnam*

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**Abstract:** The study aims to analyse the impact of personality traits on multidimensional organisational commitment of public servants working at the administrative units and in public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee in Vietnam. From the data provided by 587 public servants at the administrative units and public non-business units, the structural equation model was applied to evaluate the impact of personality traits on three components of organisational commitment. The results showed a positive relationship between conscientiousness, extroversion, and agreeableness with multidimensional organisational commitment. Besides, openness to new experiences and neuroticism are negatively correlated with multidimensional organisational commitment. The result of the study suggests significant implications for Administrative units and Public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee to increase organisational commitment of public servants in the future.

**Keywords:** Big Five personality traits, multidimensional organisational commitment, public servants, Hanoi.

## 1. Introduction

At present, in the context of economic integration and the rapid development of the 4.0 technology revolution, the public sector has been

in the process of moving at an increasing pace. The trend of 4.0 technology is leading to the formation of a smart government creating many changes in the organisational behaviour of public servants [1]. With the above pressures, the

\* Corresponding author  
E-mail address: [ndnam.dr.90@gmail.com](mailto:ndnam.dr.90@gmail.com)  
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public sector is deeply aware of, and considers human resources as an important factor, that leads good results in the organisation. Organisational commitment is an effective measure to assess the actual situation of human resources, predict behaviour, and identify factors affecting organisational commitment so that managers can forecast and control changes in human resources in the organisation, retain high-quality human resources and create sustainable development for the organisation. Hence, organisational commitment has a strong influence on organisational success [2].

The studies on organisational behaviour focus on analysing personality traits, gender, age, and experiences. León [3] stated that significant differences in various personality aspects were observed along with age, and between males and females and public sector experience only predicted greater openness. Women outperformed men in openness. In addition, the employees with experience in the public sector differ in personality aspects from those with less or no experience. Moreover, Allameh et al. [4], Delima [5] emphasised that personality traits have a direct impact on an employee's thoughts, behaviour, and social relationships. For this reason, personality traits are an important tool for assessing organisational commitment of employees, increasing the efficiency of human resource management, and contributing to the reasonable settling, arrangement, and rotation of jobs to meet job requirements.

The administrative units and public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee play an essential role in the development and growth of the economy by performing official duties. The operational ability of the administrative units and public non-business units' apparatus is significant for the maintenance of social order and the economy as well as the development of Hanoi city. And so, public human resources play an important role in promoting socio-economic development. Currently, the administrative units and public non-business units of the Hanoi People's

Committee are coping with the job displacement of highly qualified employees, which affects the level of service and the national interest [6].

The study of Tran [7] analysed the impact of personality trait factors on organisational commitment of employees at Nike footwear factories. Although the study was analysed based on the perspective of personality traits, it was not in the public sector. In contrast, Nguyen [8] analysed the factors affecting organisational commitment in the public sector, but it did not come from the perspective of personality traits. Especially, there have been no empirical investigation studies at the administrative units and public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee. With the above situation and the research gap, the article aims to confirm the relationship between personality traits and the multidimensional organisational commitment of public servants at the administrative units and public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee. Based on the analysis results, the study suggests managerial implications to enhance organisational commitment of public servants working at the administrative units and public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee in the future.

## 2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

### 2.1. Theoretical background

#### 2.1.1. Public sector employee differences

In the past 4 decades, public management scholars have considered whether public sector employees are described as having personality traits more similar or different than those of their counterparts in the private sector [9].

When comparing values and motivations of public sector employees and those of employees in the private sector, Houston [10] stated that public sector employees have been shown to be more charitable and have higher levels of social capital [11], and are more likely to engage in a host of prosocial behaviours. Public sector employees have also been shown to have unique

values, and these values become more distinct the longer they remain in their job and stay with the organisation [12]. Moreover, Bogg & Cooper [13] provided evidence that public sector employees have higher markers of occupational stress, leading to poorer physical and mental health than in the private sector employees. These are all important findings that point to potential deep-seated differences between public employees and employees in the private sector. These differences could be a result of differences in core personality traits that structure employees' behaviours and many other life choices.

### *2.1.2. Personality traits*

Colquit et al. [14] argued that personal character is the stable psychological state of an individual and affects their behaviour and cognition. Personality is a chain of human emotions, thoughts, and behaviours [15], and it is the difference that exists between every human being, characterised by a distinct set of characteristics [16].

The studies found Big Five personality traits in an individual [17],[18]. Goldberg concluded that personality traits are composed of five factors, and named the "Big Five personality traits" model. However, depending on the approach, the names for each factor in the Big Five model are not consistent. Although the names are different, they have the same purpose to describe the personality. Among the names given to the Big Five model, the names designated by McCrae & Costa [18] are the most widely used in personality studies both in the public and private sectors, and are also known as the OCEAN model with the NEO PI-R questionnaire [19], [20]. The OCEAN model includes openness to new experiences, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Pham [19] translated to Vietnamese from the NEO-PI-R questionnaire to be consistent with the conditions and personality traits of Vietnamese people. The content of the OCEAN model is explained as follows:

Openness to new experiences is related to the desire to explore, learn, experience everything, think, be open-minded, and have new ideas, to easily accept new things, and like a colorful life [19].

Conscientiousness is associated with a fundamental, disciplined, and trying your best to accomplish the set goals [19].

Extroversion is related to the characteristics of having many relationships, being enthusiastic in everything such as teamwork, to be full of energy, and having positive emotions [19].

Agreeableness is related to traits of friendliness, sociability, willingness to cooperate, and always upholding harmony in relationships [19].

Neuroticism is related to the characteristics of sudden changes in mental state, uncontrolled emotions, anxiety, stress, feeling unsafe and easily moved by factors happening around [19].

### *2.1.3. Multidimensional organisational commitment*

Organisational commitment is a multi-directional association relationship [21] and focuses on the relationship between employees' emotions towards the organization, which is constituted by three components. These include affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment [22]. With affective commitment is the psychological connection between employees and the organisation. Continuance commitment is motivated by the likelihood that employees will lose financially if they leave the organisation. And normative commitment is characterized by employees always feeling a sense of responsibility towards the organisation. The concept and scale of Meyer & Allen [22] is widely used in organisational commitment studies [23],[24]. After all, if employees have a high degree of organisational commitment, they will tend to be productive and contribute to the success of the organisation. And so, motivating employees to be more committed to the organisation is an important and necessary thing in an organization both in the public and private sectors.

## 2.2. Hypotheses

### 2.2.1. *The impact of openness to new experiences on multidimensional organisational commitment*

Employees with high scores in their openness to new experiences will choose to work outside the organisation. To put it differently, employees will leave the organisation for a better job because they want work with variety and they hope to gain new experiences at work [25], and that they can be independent in their work or create a career [26]. In fact, employees who are open to new experiences will not want to stay in a less attractive work environment where they do not see opportunities for growth at work. The studies investigated the link between openness to new experiences with multidimensional organisational commitment, but they are not united. Asif et al. [27] denied the relationship between openness to new experiences and organisational commitment. Kappagoda [28] found an inverse relationship between openness to new experiences and organisational commitment (little impact). Likewise, Kuldeep & Bakhshi [29] demonstrated that openness to new experiences has a negative impact on continuance commitment and normative commitment but did not appear to affect affective commitment. On the contrary, Choi et al. [30] showed that openness to new experiences has an inverse impact on continuance commitment, but any relationship between affective commitment and normative commitment did not exist. Therefore, the first hypothesis group proposed in the study is:

H1a: Openness to new experiences has an inverse impact on affective commitment.

H1b: Openness to new experiences has an inverse impact on continuance commitment.

H1c: Openness to new experiences has an inverse impact on normative commitment.

### 2.2.2. *The impact of conscientiousness on multidimensional organisational commitment*

Organ & Lingl [31] indicated that conscientiousness denotes job involvement or

finding a passion at work leading to good results such as achievement of rewards physically as well as mentally, therefore increasing job satisfaction. And so, Barrick & Mount [32] said that thanks to rewards, employees will have a strong affective commitment to the organisation and a precondition for organisational commitment. By the same token, Duong [33] showed that conscientiousness is positively related to organisational commitment. Besides, conscientiousness has a positive impact on affective commitment [27] and continuance commitment [34]. Thus, the second hypothesis group proposed in the study is:

H2a: Conscientiousness has a positive impact on affective commitment.

H2b: Conscientiousness has a positive impact on continuance commitment.

H2c: Conscientiousness has a positive impact on normative commitment.

### 2.2.3. *The impact of extroversion on multidimensional organisational commitment*

At work, extroverts often experience positive emotions, and relying on positive emotions makes it easier for them to achieve job satisfaction [35]. The study of Duong [33] found extroversion has a positive impact on organisational commitment. At the same time, Kuldeep & Bakhshi [29] emphasised that extroversion is a significant predictor, and it most positively affects the three components of organisational commitment. Choi et al. [30] pointed out that extroversion has a positive relationship with affective commitment and a negative link with continuance commitment. Furthermore, extroversion is strongly linked to affective commitment [36] and continuance commitment [34]. Therefore, the third hypothesis group proposed in the study is:

H3a: Extroversion has a positive impact on affective commitment.

H3b: Extroversion has a positive impact on continuance commitment.

H3c: Extroversion has a positive impact on normative commitment.

#### 2.2.4. *The impact of agreeableness on multidimensional organisational commitment*

Employees with agreeableness will simply establish and maintain positive, harmonious relationships with members of the organisation. Those relationships increasingly strengthen and create a comfortable working environment to promote affective commitment to the organisation. The study of Choi et al. [30] indicated that the trust, loyalty, and compliance level that exists among employees whose agreeableness tends to translate into organisational commitment, emphasises that agreeableness has an impact on affective and normative commitment. Duong [33] found a positive relationship between agreeableness and organisational commitment. In addition, agreeableness has a strong impact on affective commitment [27], followed by normative commitment [29], and continuance commitment [34]. The fourth hypothesis group proposed in the study is:

H4a: Agreeableness has a positive impact on affective commitment.

H4b: Agreeableness has a positive impact on continuance commitment.

H4c: Agreeableness has a positive impact on normative commitment.

#### 2.2.5. *The impact of neuroticism on multidimensional organisational commitment*

Meyer & Allen [22] commented that unstable employees would lead to the formation of negative attitudes and behaviours at work, and neuroticism is the focus of the emotional element [35]. The study of Kuldeep & Bakhshi [29] showed a negative relationship (low impact) between neuroticism with affective commitment. At the same time, they emphasise that neuroticism has a strong impact on continuance commitment and a weak impact on normative commitment. Farrukh et al. [37] showed that neuroticism has an inverse impact on organisational commitment. In contrast, Duong [33] concluded that emotional stability has a positive impact on organisational commitment. The fifth hypothesis group proposed in the study is:

H5a: Neuroticism has an inverse impact on affective commitment.

H5b: Neuroticism has an inverse impact on continuance commitment.

H5c: Neuroticism has an inverse impact on normative commitment.

### 3. Research design

#### 3.1. *Measures of study*

A preliminary scale was built based on the factors in the study framework and inherited from domestic and foreign studies, in which, the scale of the Big Five personality traits model use the NEO-PI-R scale of McCrae & Costa [18] include thirty observed variables. The scale of organisational commitment inherited by Meyer & Allen [22], is used in which affective commitment includes seven observed variables, continuance commitment includes six observed variables, and normative commitment includes six observed variables.

To be relevant to the field of study, the authors had discussions with twenty department-level managers with long-term experience working at the administrative units and public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee to carefully review the content related to factors in the preliminary scale and to add or remove inappropriate observed variables. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with five experts on human resource management to understand the relationships between factors, adjust the study framework and solve problems arising during the discussion. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors conducted group discussions and in-depth interviews using Skype.

The qualitative research results pointed out that the managers involved in the discussions, and the interviewed experts agreed with factors in the proposed research model. The observed variables in the preliminary scale received support and were suitable to carry out the research. In addition, the authors adjusted words to be consistent for the public sector and the education level of survey participants.

### 3.2. Sample and data collection

Hair et al. [38] stated that the minimum sample size to use exploratory factor analysis is 50 observations, preferably 100 or more observations. The ratio of observations on an analytic variable of 5:1 or 10:1 provides the minimum sample size of the study to ensure reliability. In this study, the authors used the 10:1 rule. This study has 49 observed variables, so the number of samples needed is  $49 \times 10 = 490$ . To avoid the case of invalid answer sheets, the authors take the sample size of 595 respondents.

The study used a convenient sampling method for officers working at the administrative units and public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee. The survey period was from May 1<sup>st</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The survey forms were sent directly by email to public servants working at 17 the administrative units and public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee. The authors divided the survey questionnaires equally among the research sites as 595:17 units = 35 votes per unit.

After cleaning the data, the study collected 587 valid answer sheets with a return rate of 98.7%. Male respondents constituted 63.5% of the sample, with 93.4% of the respondents being middle-aged (more than 35 years old), 91.3% of respondents had an education level that was mainly university and post-graduate, and 95.4% respondents were married. The characteristics of the survey sample are consistent for the public sector in Vietnam. The employees in the public sector are mostly men. They are between the ages of 30 and 50 years, with high levels of education, and are married.

## 4. Findings and discussion

### 4.1. Reliability and validity test

The results of Cronbach's Alpha and EFA of the full measurement model showed that the latent variable "Extroversion" has the lowest Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.800, while the

latent variable "Conscientiousness" has the highest of 0.855. Compared with the standard 0.6, all observed items of the scale are internally consistent. The corrected item-total correlation coefficient is higher than 0.3. All scales achieve both reliability and discriminant validity. Hence, the scale is good and meets the reliability requirement for exploratory factor analysis [39]. The EFA obtained results with the coefficient  $KMO = 0.809$ , and the Bartlett Test is statistically significant with  $Sig. = 0.000 (< 0.05)$ , and eight factors were extracted with the Eigenvalue = 1.355. The Sums of Squared Loadings = 80.231% (higher than 50%). And the eight factors can explain about 80.231% of the variance of all the variables of the total variance explained [40]. Thus, eight factors in the research model with 49 observed items were extracted to meet the requirement of convergent validity and discriminant validity [41].

### 4.2. Structural equation model

The results of CFA showed that the model has 1,324 degrees of freedom, the test value  $CMIN = 421.452$  with the probability value = 0.000; the  $CMIN/df$  index = 2.423 is lower than 3.0 [42] and the GFI index = 0.912, the TLI index = 0.916, the CFI index = 0.920 and are higher than 0.9 [43], the RMSEA = 0.047 is lower than 0.08 [44]. Especially, the GIF index = 0.912 is higher than 0.9 confirmed that is a good sign [41]. So, the research model is consistent with the research data.

The scale was tested for reliability. The reliability test results indicated that the composite reliability value isn't lower than 0.7 and the variables achieve a discriminant value higher than 0.5. Hence, the analytical results showed that all the research model concepts meet the requirement of high reliability [45]. Therefore, the scale is suitable for the analysis of the structural equation modeling.

Based on the outcomes of the CFA of the overall model scale, the results of the structural equation modeling are consistent with the research data. That is shown by the  $CMIN/df = 2.563 < 3$  [42] and the  $GFI = 0.915$ ,  $TLI = 0.918$ ,

CFI = 0.922 and are higher than 0.9 [43]; RMSEA = 0.055 is lower than 0.08 [44].

At the same time, based on the analysis results, the probability value of the impact of relationships between the factors is lower than

0.05. Hence, the relationship between Big Five personality traits and multidimensional organisational commitment is statistically significant in the structural equation modeling (SEM). Table 1 summarises the model results.

Table 1: SEM the results test the relationship between the concepts in the research model

Variables	Affective Commitment			Continuance Commitment			Normative Commitment		
	Hypothesis	Hypothesised direction	Path coefficient	Hypothesis	Hypothesised direction	Path coefficient	Hypothesis	Hypothesised direction	Path coefficient
O	H1a	-	-0.113*	H1b	-	-0.117**	H1c	-	-0.116*
C	H2a	+	0.378**	H2b	+	0.362**	H2c	+	0.355**
E	H3a	+	0.266**	H3b	+	0.323*	H3c	+	0.241**
A	H4a	+	0.342*	H4b	+	0.338**	H4c	+	0.313*
N	H5a	-	-0.105*	H5b	-	-0.121*	H5c	-	-0.112**

\* Indicate that the path coefficient are significant at 0.1; \*\* Indicate that the path coefficient are significant at 0.05.

Source: Authors' analysis.

#### 4.4. Discussion

This study aims to better explain the direct relationship between the Big Five personality traits and multidimensional organisational commitment related to affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment of public servants at the Administrative units and Public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee.

The results of the study also show the research model in accordance with market data, as well as the acceptance of the hypotheses proposed in this research model, which has brought practical implications to many different subjects. Particularly, the subjects include (i) the administrative units and public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee, (ii) public servants working at the administrative units and public non-business units, (iii) academic researchers in the field of public human resource management.

The outcomes in Table 4 point out that the Big Five personality traits have a significant impact on multidimensional organisational commitment, in which, conscientiousness has the most positive impact on multidimensional organisational commitment with 95% confidence and the standardised estimate of 0.378, 0.362, 0.355. In contrast, openness to new

experiences and neuroticism have an inverse impact on multidimensional organisational commitment of public servants. Especially, neuroticism has the most negative impact on affective commitment of public servants working at the administrative units and public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee with a standardized estimate of -0.113. This means, if public servants have neuroticism, they will find it difficult to achieve organisational commitment. With the same token, the results are similar to the studies of Choi et al. [30], Duong [33], Thiruvavasi & Kamaraj [34], and Kuldeep & Bakhshi [29]. Hence, hypothesis group H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5 are accepted.

On the whole, the Big Five personality traits have a direct impact on the multidimensional organisational commitment of public servants. That is the highlight of the study and it provides a different outcome to the studies of Tran [7] and Nguyen [8] because the previous studies did not measure the three components of the organisational commitment of public servants in the public sector based on personality traits. Hence, the study could create a paradigm for future studies on confirming the relationship between personality traits with multidimensional organisational commitment in the public sector.

## 5. Managerial implications

This study provides some managerial implications for both academics and practice. For theoretical implication, by measuring the impact of the Big Five personality traits on multidimensional organisational commitment, this research contributes to the body of Big Five personality traits literature.

For managerial implication, this is the first study exploring the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and multidimensional organisational commitment of public servants in the case of administrative units and public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee. Therefore, this study contributes to providing some useful information for managers of the administrative units and public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee to improve organisational commitment of public servants as follows:

First of all, to improve the conscientiousness of public servants, managers need to manage people effectively. Managers need to make public servants understand the vision, common goals, and future directions of the agency. At the same time, the agency must make public servants understand their importance and contribution to the organisation or the value of the work they are doing.

Next, the results indicate that public servants who are extroverted tend to have more organisational commitment. Hence, to improve the extroversion of public servants, managers should organise training courses to develop professional qualifications, foreign languages, soft skills such as public speaking, teamwork skills, and by organising cultural activities, etc. These activities will help public servants build and develop openness and friendliness towards others and contribute to developing public servants' extroversion.

Then, to improve the neuroticism of public servants, the agency needs to create a working environment that is suitable for the job position and personality of the public servant. The agency should make officers feel safe at work, avoid stress and conflicts. Hence, public servants can

better control their emotions and experience less sadness. In addition, managers need to pay attention to public servants' psychological problems by actively listening to their ideas and thoughts.

Finally, to improve openness to new experiences, the agency needs to develop new skills-training policies for public servants. Besides, the agency should build reward policies for public servants with new ideas and creativity at work. Hence, they will encourage and improve the openness of public servants to experience.

## 6. Limitations and further research

There are still some limitations of the study, including: (i) the small limited sample size. The study was conducted only at the administrative units and public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee; (ii) the study tested the hypotheses by collecting data from public servants at the administrative units and public non-business units of the Hanoi People's Committee with a convenient sampling method.

Therefore, some implications for future research could include: (i) increase the sample size or extend the scope; (ii) future studies should consider the impact of personality traits on components of organisational commitment using the probability sampling method to increase the generalizability of the study.

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