

The Role of Personality in Occupational Commitment: A Correlation Study among Mental Health Professionals

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ABSTRACT

Background: The occupational commitment, a positive feeling toward the occupation, is a most important criterion for professional success. The mental health professionals succeed when they strongly identify themselves and have a positive feeling toward the profession. However personality often plays an important role in the success of the individual's personal and professional life. Is personality has something to do with the level of occupational commitment and is there any predominant personality trait is prevalent among the mental health professional? **Aim:** To determine the influence of personality on occupational commitment and predominant personality trait in mental health professionals. **Method:** The sample (n = 33) consisted mental health professionals, Psychiatrists, Psychologists and Psychiatric Social Workers, practicing in and around Coimbatore. The mean age of the sample was 38. After obtaining the consent and personal data, they were administered with Occupational Commitment Questionnaire and Big Five Personality Inventory to assess their level of occupational commitment and predominant personality trait respectively. **Results and Discussion:** The majority of (93. 93%) the mental health professionals found to have an affective occupational commitment toward their profession. It was evident that the personality ($r = 0. 67^{**}$) has a strong influence on, especially the "Agreeableness" trait ($r = 0. 62^{**}$), occupational commitment in mental health professionals. The results indicated that the predominant personality trait in the mental health professional was Agreeableness (48. 5%) followed by Openness to experience (30. 3%). **Conclusion:** There is a strong relationship between the personality and occupational commitment. The Agreeableness and Openness to experience are predominant personality traits in mental health professionals.

Key Words: Personality, Occupational Commitment, Mental health professionals.

Introduction:

A mental health professional is a person who offers services for the purpose of improving an individual's mental health or to treat mental illness. This is achieved through counselling, medical and psychological services, vocational training and other individualized services. These professionals include psychiatrist, clinical psychologists, psychiatric social workers, psychiatric nurses, occupational therapists etc. The mental health professionals often deal with same kind of illnesses, disorders, conditions, and issues; however their scope of practice often differs.

The occupational commitment is defined as the "psychological link between an individual and his / her occupation that is based on an affective reaction to that occupation" (Lee, Carswell & Allen, 2000). Thus someone with higher occupational commitment strongly identifies with and has positive feelings about their occupation (Blau, 1985). The occupational commitment is an important factor for any given job especially it is more crucial in mental health professionals, where monetary measures do not readily apply. There are many factors contributing to the level of occupational commitment such as personality trait, job satisfaction, job autonomy, quality of life and so on.

Personality can be defined as an individual's unique, relatively consistent pattern of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. People often succeed or fail because they have personality characteristics that make them to do so. They may experience severe stress at work, become emotionally disturbed and be unable to function effectively. However the mental health work is stress-provoking. The mental health professionals often encounters with empathy fatigue which is the emotional secondary stress and grief reactions that occur during helping interactions. Hence, the individual's personality plays an important role in committed to the same occupation which has lot of stress. Identifying the predominant personality trait which contributing to the occupational commitment will help determine ways and means to maintain and improve it.

Aim:

To determine the influence of personality traits on occupational commitment among mental health professionals

Methodology

The sample (N = 33) for the present study was randomly selected from various mental health institutes in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. The sample group included three different mental health professionals namely Psychiatrists, Psychologists and Psychiatric Social Workers

age ranging from 23 to 55 years with the mean age of 34 years. The informed consent was obtained and the personal data was collected. Then the subjects were administered with the Occupational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Blau, 2000).

The OCQ assessed their level of occupational commitment in three dimensions namely

1. Affective Commitment (emotional attachment to occupation)
2. Normative Commitment (sense of obligation to remain in their occupation)
3. Continuance Commitment (to avoid giving up economic and social costs)

Then the Big Five Personality Inventory (BFPI) (John and Srivastava, 1999) was administered to the subjects. The BFPI assessed core five personality traits namely

1. Extraversion (sociable, outgoing, talkative, assertive and gregarious)
2. Agreeableness (cooperative, warm, caring, good-natured, courteous and trusting)
3. Conscientiousness (dependable, hardworking, organized, self-disciplined, persistent and responsible)
4. Neuroticism (calm, secure, happy and unworried) and
5. Openness to experience (curious, intellectual, creative, cultured, artistically sensitive, flexible, and imaginative)

Results and Discussion

The data was analysed by using mean, standard deviation, percentage analysis and correlation co-efficient.

Table I: The level of Occupational Commitment in Mental Health Professionals

Level of Occupational Commitment	Mental Health Professionals (N = 33)			
	High		Low	
	N	%	N	%
a. Affective	31	93.93	2	6.06
b. Normative	18	54.5	15	45.45
c. Continuance	13	39.39	20	60.6

There was a high Affective Commitment (93. 93%) has been seen in mental health professionals which shows that they have a positive emotional attachment to their occupation. And also it reveals that they identify themselves strongly with their profession and seems to have a strong desire to remain a part of it.

Table II: The Predominant Personality Trait of Mental Health Professionals

Big Five Personality Trait	Mental Health Professionals (MHP) (N = 33)	
	No. of MHP	Percentage of MHP %
a. Extraversion	1	3%
b. Agreeableness	16	48. 5%
c. Conscientiousness	5	15. 2%
d. Neuroticism	1	3%
e. Openness to Experience	10	30. 3%

The personality pattern of the overall sample of mental health professionals presented in the above table indicates that the “Agreeableness” trait has the greatest percentage (48. 5%) followed by the “Openness to experience” trait (30. 3%). The Agreeableness trait reveals that the mental health professionals has more cooperative, warm, caring, good-natured, courteous and trusting personality. Further they seem to show Openness to experience trait which indicates that they are curious, intellectual, creative, cultured, artistically sensitive, flexible and imaginative.

The Conscientiousness trait (15. 2%) was third predominant personality trait in mental health professionals which shows that they are dependable, hardworking, organized, self-disciplined, persistent and responsible in their profession. Finally the Extraversion (3%) and Neuroticism (3%) personality trait were found to be the least common in mental health professionals.

Table III: Relationship between Occupational Commitment and Personality Trait

Variable	Mean (SD)	r
Personality	149. 79 (14. 07)	0. 67**
a. Extraversion	27. 48 (4. 89)	0. 44**
b. Agreeableness	35. 21 (5. 65)	0. 62**
c. Conscientiousness	32. 45 (4. 67)	0. 40**
d. Neuroticism	20. 94 (5. 04)	-0. 23
e. Openness to experience	33. 69 (5. 59)	0. 57**

** Significant at 0. 01 level

The results indicate that there is a significant relationship between personality and occupational commitment. While considering the Big Five Personality dimensions, the personality trait “Agreeableness” was found to have high influence on occupational commitment followed by “Openness to experience” trait in the mental health professionals. Among the dimensions of personality, “Extraversion” and “Conscientiousness” trait were moderately correlated to occupational commitment and the “Neuroticism” trait was not correlated to occupational commitment among the mental health professionals.

Conclusion

There is a strong relationship between the personality traits of the mental health professionals and their commitment towards their profession. The “Agreeableness” is the most predominant personality trait among the mental health professionals which is highly related to occupational commitment.

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