

Emotional Intelligence, Self-Esteem, and Organizational Commitment: The Role of Extraversion Personality Trait in a Moderated Mediation Analysis

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Abstract. This study investigates whether self-esteem functions as a mediator influenced by the personality trait of extraversion in the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment within public sector organizations. A total of 196 employees from two local authorities in Peninsular Malaysia were selected through systematic random sampling. Validated instruments were used to measure emotional intelligence, self-esteem, extraversion, and organizational commitment. Data were analysed using hierarchical regression and bootstrapping to test for moderated mediation effects. The findings confirm that emotional intelligence significantly predicts organizational commitment, reinforcing its role as a vital psychological asset in the workplace. However, the interaction effects between emotional intelligence and extraversion, as well as between self-esteem and extraversion, were not statistically significant. This suggests that self-esteem operates as an independent mediator, unaffected by extraversion levels. These results challenge conventional assumptions that personality traits must moderate psychological pathways in organizational behavior. Instead, they highlight the autonomous influence of emotional intelligence and self-esteem in shaping employee attitudes. The study offers practical implications for human resource development, advocating for interventions that prioritize emotional and psychological growth over personality profiling. In emotionally demanding work environments, fostering emotional intelligence and self-worth may be key to sustaining employee commitment and organizational resilience.

1 Introduction

In today's increasingly complex and dynamic organizational landscape, emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical psychological competency shaping employee behavior and performance. EI encompasses the ability to identify, understand, and regulate

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one's own emotions and those of others across various social and professional contexts (Goleman, 2007). Previous studies have shown that EI is significantly associated with organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and interpersonal effectiveness (Kim et al., 2020). Organizational commitment is a key indicator of organizational sustainability and success. Committed employees tend to exhibit loyalty, high motivation, and a willingness to contribute consistently to organizational goals (Meyer & Allen, 1993). In this context, EI is seen as a catalyst for commitment, especially when combined with internal psychological factors such as self-esteem. Self-esteem, particularly organization-based self-esteem, refers to an individual's perception of their value and contribution within the organization. Individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to feel appreciated, competent, and perform better at work (Hassan et al., 2024).

2 Background of the Study

Emotional intelligence (EI) has increasingly been recognized as a vital factor in shaping employee behavior and performance in modern organizations. Earlier studies have linked EI to improved job performance, career satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Goleman, 2007), while recent studies highlight its role in strengthening affective commitment through transformational leadership and group dynamics (Pulido-Martos et al., 2024). At the same time, organizational commitment remains a critical indicator of organizational sustainability and success, as committed employees demonstrate loyalty, motivation, and consistent contributions to organizational goals (Meyer & Allen, 1993). In addition to EI, internal psychological resources such as self-esteem play a significant role in shaping workplace attitudes. Organization-based self-esteem reflects an individual's perceived value and contribution within the organization, and employees with higher self-esteem are more likely to feel competent and perform effectively (Dhir et al., 2024).

Recent studies also suggest that self-esteem can act as a mediator in the relationship between organizational factors and employee outcomes. However, it remains unclear whether the relationship between EI and organizational commitment is influenced by personality traits such as extraversion. Extraversion is often associated with sociability, confidence, and a tendency to engage actively with others. Therefore, this study aims to examine whether self-esteem mediates the relationship between EI and organizational commitment, depending on the moderating role of extraversion.

3 Problem Statement

In today's dynamic organizational environment, human capital is a strategic resource that determines long-term success. Employees are expected not only to master technical competencies but also to demonstrate strong psychological and emotional capabilities. Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been identified as a key factor influencing workplace outcomes, including job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Pulido-Martos et al., 2024). However, this relationship may be shaped by internal psychological resources such as self-esteem, which reflects an individual's sense of worth and contribution within the organization (Dhir et al., 2024). Self-esteem is often considered a potential mediator that explains how EI translates into positive work attitudes. Yet, the extent to which this mechanism operates may depend on personality traits. Extraversion, commonly associated with sociability and confidence, could interact with emotional and psychological factors in complex ways. Although some studies have linked personality traits to job performance (Sandeep & Singh, 2011), empirical evidence on the combined roles of EI, self-esteem, and extraversion within a moderated mediation framework remains limited.

Previous studies have primarily focused on leadership positions, leaving mid-level employees underexplored, even though they play a critical role in organizational sustainability (Wong & Law, 2002; Carmeli, 2003). Furthermore, research in the Malaysian public sector context is scarce, creating a gap in understanding how these psychological constructs interact in this setting. Addressing this gap is essential for developing evidence-based strategies that strengthen organizational commitment in public organizations.

4 Research Objective

This study aims to determine whether self-esteem functions as a mediator that is influenced by personality trait of extraversion in the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and organizational commitment. It also focuses on the public sector in Malaysia, a context that remains underexplored in international literature. While the research question is there an effect of self-esteem as a mediator influenced by the personality trait of extraversion in the relationship between EI and organizational commitment to the organization? This research examines the following hypothesis as well: self-esteem functions as a mediator influenced by the personality trait of extraversion in the relationship between EI and organizational commitment.

5 Research Methodology

Drawing on the moderated mediation framework proposed by Muller et al. (2005), the study investigates whether self-esteem mediates the effect of emotional intelligence (EI) on organizational commitment, depending on the moderating role of extraversion. The analysis focuses on understanding how these psychological constructs interact within the context of public sector employees, offering insights into the emotional and personality-based dynamics that shape organizational commitment.

5.1 Research Design

This study employed a non-experimental, field-based research design incorporating descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Field studies were deemed appropriate due to their high reliability and relatively low implementation cost. The study was both descriptive and inferential in nature, aiming to test hypotheses involving the interaction of multiple variables under specific conditions (McIntyre, 2005). Regression analysis was used to examine the effects and relationships among the variables, particularly focusing on the presence of moderated mediation effects.

5.2 Research Location

The study was conducted at two local authority (LA) agencies, specifically city councils located in the southern region of Peninsular Malaysia. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no prior studies have been conducted at these specific locations. The scope of the study was limited to city councils only, thereby excluding city halls, municipal councils, and district councils from the sample frame.

5.3 Research Sample

The study sample consisted of 403 employees, with the minimum required sample size determined to be 196 based on the Sample Size Determination Table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Respondents were selected from two city councils in Malaysia, specifically from the

employee category within grade levels 22 to 44. These employees were drawn from various units and departments. A systematic random sampling technique was employed to ensure representativeness. The sampling error was set at 5%, with a 95% confidence level as per the Krejcie and Morgan formula.

5.4 Research Instrument

The Emotional Intelligence Self-Description Inventory (EISDI) developed by Groves et al. (2006) was used to measure emotional intelligence (EI), with a reliability coefficient of .915. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) by Rosenberg (1965) was used to assess self-esteem, with a reliability of .794. To measure organizational commitment, the Organizational commitment Survey-Revised Version (ECS) by Meyer et al. (1993) was employed, yielding a reliability of .817. All three instruments demonstrated high internal consistency and were deemed suitable for use in this study. Additionally, the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire – Revised Short Form (EPQR-S) by Eysenck et al. (1985) was used to measure the personality trait of extraversion, with a reliability coefficient of .734. Similar instruments were used to assess neuroticism and psychoticism traits. All instruments were administered using a Likert-scale format and had undergone prior validation and reliability testing.

6 Analysis of Findings

Is there an effect of self-esteem as a mediator depending on the influence of extraversion as a moderator in the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and organizational commitment to the organization? This study tested the hypothesis that self-esteem acts as a mediator influenced by the personality trait of extraversion in the relationship between EI and organizational commitment. Hierarchical regression analysis was employed to assess the moderated mediation effect, following the framework proposed by Muller et al. (2005).

Table 1. Effect of moderator mediator on the relationship between EI and organizational commitment

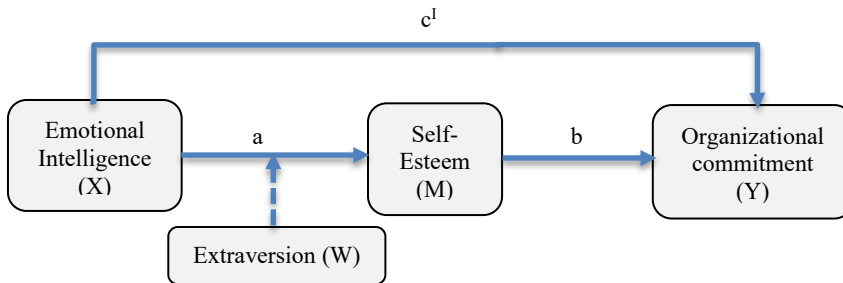
Variables	Equation 1		Equation 2		Equation 3	
	(Dependent Variable) = Commitment		(Mediator Variable) = Self-Esteem		(Dependent Variable) = Commitment	
	β	t	β	t	β	t
X: EI	.744	3.010**	.783	3.942**	.863	2.817**
Z: Extraversion	.855	.681	2.206	2.187**	.559	.440
XZ: EI x Extraversion	-.201	-.614	-.498	-1.887	-.455	-1.105
M: Self-Esteem					-.223	-.786
MZ: Self-Esteem x Extraversion					.544	1.268

Note: X= Independent Variable, Z= Moderator, XZ= Independent Variable x Moderator, M= Mediator, MZ= Mediator x Moderator, **p-value < .05

In the first regression equation (refer Table 1), EI was found to have a significant effect on organizational commitment ($\beta_1 = .744, p < .05$), indicating that individuals with higher EI tend to be more committed to their organizations. However, the interaction between EI and extraversion was not significant ($\beta_3 = -.201, p > .05$), suggesting that extraversion does not alter the strength of this relationship. The second equation confirmed that EI significantly influenced self-esteem ($\beta_4 = .783, p < .05$), yet the interaction with extraversion remained non-significant ($\beta_6 = -.498, p > .05$). In the third equation, the interaction between self-esteem and extraversion on organizational commitment was also not significant ($\beta_{11} = .544, p > .05$), leading to the rejection of the moderated mediation hypothesis. These

findings align with recent studies indicating that while extraversion is positively associated with emotional expression, the mediating role of self-esteem is only significant when moderated by EI, not extraversion. The results also support the notion that EI is a dominant factor in shaping organizational commitment (Kim et al., 2020). Overall, only 18.2% (-.498) of the total effect was attributed to the indirect pathway (mediation), while 81.8% (.408**) was due to the direct effect of EI on commitment (Refer Figure 1). This suggests that although self-esteem plays a role, it does not depend on extraversion as a moderator. Instead, EI operates independently and more powerfully in influencing organizational commitment within organizational settings.

Figure 1. Conceptual model of EI, self-esteem, and organizational commitment with extraversion as moderator



Note: X= EI; M= self-esteem; Y= organizational commitment; W= extraversion.
Dashed lines indicate hypothesized moderation paths

7 Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that personality trait (extraversion) did not serve as significant moderator in this relationship. Likewise, self-esteem did not function as a mediator that depended on personality trait. However, emotional intelligence (EI) demonstrated a partial effect on organizational commitment through self-esteem. These results indicate that the personality trait of employees in the two local authorities studied were not significantly associated with dimensions of EI or organizational commitment. This supports earlier findings by Labatmediene et al. (2007) and Soo (2010), who reported no significant relationship between personality trait and organizational commitment. In contrast, the findings diverge from Mohd. Razin (2009), who found a significant correlation and effect between personality traits and commitment, although with relatively low beta values. The current study also does not support the findings of Anton et al. (2007), who proposed that self-esteem could act as a mediator influenced by personality traits as moderator. Their research identified a strong correlation between neuroticism and self-esteem, consistent with Helle and Juri (2000), who highlighted the influence of personality traits on various psychological outcomes.

Additionally, Sandeep and Singh (2011) found that extraversion significantly affected psychological variables such as stress and work attitudes, suggesting the potential of personality traits as moderators. However, the present findings do not align with these conclusions. Although Eysenck and Eysenck (1985) emphasized that success in the workplace is influenced by personality traits, and Furnham (2010) highlighted the negative impact of certain personality traits on workplace climate, the findings of this study suggest otherwise. Personality trait did not function as significant moderator, and self-esteem did not rely on personality trait to act as a mediator. Instead, employees with high self-esteem were better able to regulate and manage their emotions, thereby enhancing their commitment to the organization, particularly in terms of affective and normative commitment. This study also supports the findings of Masiron (2009), who reported no significant correlation between self-esteem and extraversion. This suggests that personality traits may not influence

psychological variables such as EI. Rather, self-esteem may operate autonomously within an individual's psychological system. Robins et al. (2001) similarly argued that self-esteem and personality share foundational psychological development, explaining how self-esteem can function independently in managing workplace stress. Recent studies further reinforce these findings. Joshanloo (2024) found that while traits such as emotional stability and conscientiousness influenced self-esteem levels, only some traits affected the stability of self-esteem, and not directly organizational commitment. Sandhya et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of EI and self-esteem in shaping workplace dynamics, without identifying personality traits as necessary moderators. In the educational context, Miezah et al. (2025) reported a positive relationship between EI and self-esteem but did not highlight the role of personality trait as moderator. Newar et al. (2025) demonstrated that self-esteem fully mediated the relationship between the imposter phenomenon and academic performance, with age acting as a moderator rather than personality traits.

Therefore, it is plausible that self-esteem does not need to depend on personality trait such as extraversion to influence EI and enhance organizational commitment. Self-esteem may play a crucial role in shaping individual personality, as employees' beliefs about themselves influence their behavior in specific situations (Robins et al., 2001). Positive emotions may be considered central to both extraversion and self-esteem, yet self-esteem appears to be more dominant in influencing both positive and negative traits. Low self-esteem among employees may lead to insecurity, negative behaviors, and disengagement from organizational and interpersonal relationships. Conversely, employees with high self-esteem are more likely to perceive themselves positively and function effectively within the organization. The discussion has been strengthened by incorporating situational strength theory to explain the non-significant moderating effect of extraversion. Public sector roles are typically governed by formal rules, standardized procedures, and emotional display norms, which create strong situational constraints that limit the behavioral expression of personality traits. These structural and normative conditions reduce the likelihood that extraversion alters the relationship between EI and organizational commitment. This interpretation enriches the theoretical understanding of the findings and highlights the importance of contextual factors in shaping psychological mechanisms at work. Together, context (situational strength and emotional labor/display rules) and design (power) provide a coherent explanation for the null moderation observed, without undermining the robust main effect of EI and the partial mediating role of self-esteem. In conclusion, the findings of this study clearly demonstrate that self-esteem does not act as a mediator dependent on personality trait (extraversion) in the relationship between EI and organizational commitment. Moreover, personality trait does not serve as significant moderator. Therefore, the hypothesis of this study must be rejected.

8 Limitations and Future Research

This study focused on two local authorities within a single region, which limits the generalizability of its findings. The reliance on self-reported data and a cross-sectional design further restricts causal interpretation. Future research should extend the sampling frame to include diverse public-sector organizations across different regions, adopt longitudinal approaches, and incorporate supervisor-rated or objective indicators. It would also be valuable to examine additional personality traits in order to build a more comprehensive framework explaining the links between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment.

9 Conclusion

This study examined the role of self-esteem as a mediator influenced by the personality trait of extraversion in the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and organizational

commitment. Using a moderated mediation approach, the findings revealed that EI significantly predicts organizational commitment, while self-esteem functions as an independent mediator, unaffected by extraversion levels. These results suggest that in public sector organizations, internal psychological factors such as EI and self-esteem play a more dominant role than personality traits in shaping organizational commitment. The study supports a human-centred approach to workforce development, where emotional and psychological capacities are prioritized in organizational strategies (Kim et al., 2020; Hassan et al., 2024). These results are consistent as well with the work of Watts & Blazek (2024), who emphasized that EI is the ability to regulate and use emotions positively in interpersonal interactions, and is not necessarily dependent on dominant personality structures.

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