

Relationships of personality traits and work values with the intention to stay of employees in the food and beverage service industry

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Abstract

This study seeks to investigate the mediating effect of work values on the relationship between employees' personality traits and their intention to stay. Through purposive sampling, restaurants and beverage establishments in Tainan and Kaohsiung were selected as the research subjects. Questionnaires were distributed to staff including waiters, kitchen staff, supervisors, managers, and part-time workers via electronic means. A total of 213 valid responses were analyzed. The results indicate: 1. affective and instrumental fully mediate between neuroticism, openness to experience and individual-organization fit. 2. affective and instrumental fully mediate between openness to experience and value-emotion congruence. 3. Cognitive fully mediate between openness to experience and long-term retention.

Subject Classification: 62H15, 62P25.

Keywords: *Personality traits, Work values, Intention to stay.*

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I. Introduction

“Plans can never keep up with changes” is a proverb well-known in the practice of business management. The global COVID-19 pandemic, which has persisted for three years, has indeed tested companies’ ability to respond to unpredictable risks. Amid the rapid spread of this pandemic, various industries resorted to measures such as layoffs and unpaid leave as essential means of survival, especially in the labor-intensive food and beverage industry [1]. Facing this relentless pandemic, restaurants and beverage shops strived to survive against the odds by transforming them in-store service operations to delivery or take-out. They strategically redefined their business models through digital transformation [2], enhancing services such as online ordering and mobile payments [3].

They have indeed employed numerous strategies to cope with the sudden disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Companies that implemented measures such as layoffs and unpaid leave have managed to avoid closure after the pandemic receded. However, they now face challenges such as former employees being unwilling to return, or difficulties in recruiting new staff to fill positions. It leads us to reflect deeply that this pandemic may have also altered employees’ perspectives on work values. Previous literature reveals that factors influencing employees’ work values primarily include intergenerational influence from parents [4], as well as work motivation and personality traits [5], [6]. Moreover, research by [7] indicates that work values are crucial for enhancing employees’ willingness to stay with a company. Therefore, some studies suggest that companies should focus on retaining current positions for employees and providing a quality workplace environment. Additionally, they should enhance employees’ professional and psychological capital and create a supportive organizational culture [8].

However, from the literature review, it is also evident that previous studies have solely focused on the influence of personality traits on intention to stay [7], [8], work values on intention to stay [7], or personality traits on work values. This study posits that there may be mediating effects between individual pairs of variables, specifically that different personality traits may influence intention to stay through work values. Based on this research background and motivation, this study focuses on the restaurants and beverage shops in Tainan and Kaohsiung. Data were collected from the frontline employees below the deputy manager level using purposive sampling and an online questionnaire survey to analyze.

II. Literature Review

Study of between Personality Traits and Intention to Stay

Factors influencing employees' intention to stay include relationships with colleagues, company policies, incentive systems, and promotion opportunities [6]. Other factors are job burnout and job satisfaction, as well as personality traits [8]. [9] proposed the five-factor model of personality traits. First, personality traits refer to the distinctive characteristic patterns or features of an individual's personality that consistently manifest in different situations, highlighting both commonalities and differences with others [9]. Personality traits can influence behavioral outcomes [10], [11].

Second, intention to stay is defined as an employee's willingness to remain with their current organization and sustain a stable employment relationship [12], [13]. Prior research on the influence of personality traits on intention to stay indicates that different personality traits exert varying degrees of impact on employees' retention decisions. Empirical studies have demonstrated that employees exhibiting high levels of conscientiousness, neuroticism, and agreeableness are more likely to have a stronger intention to remain in the workplace [7], [8]. However, some studies contend that the fit between personality traits and organizational culture jointly influences intention to stay; furthermore, personality traits can influence turnover intention through job satisfaction [6].

Hypothesis 1: Personality traits significantly influence intention to stay.

Study of between Personality Traits and the Work Values

Research indicates that personality traits positively influence work values. In the field of organizational behavior, work values are a focal point of scholarly research [14]. Values constitute the fundamental element of an individual's personality structure and reflect current social sentiments, thereby encompassing affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions that shape personal choices regarding various matters or goals in daily life. In the process of forming work values, perspectives from personality traits and interaction views suggest that personality traits and work values are inseparable [15]. Work values are usually divided into two or three different categories [16], [17], [18], [19] further classified work values into three types, namely, instrumental outcomes. Most compatibility studies used needs and values as attributes for comparing individuals and organizations [20]. Some studies also suggest

that work values constitute a distinct personality typology that significantly shapes individuals' career decisions [21].

Hypothesis 2: Personality traits significantly influence the work values.

Study of between the Work Values and Intention to Stay

Work values influence outcome variables such as work attitudes, job performance, turnover behavior, and work motivation. Early studies suggest that work values of individuals first influence their work attitude (e.g., work engagement), which then influences their behavioral intentions (e.g., turnover intention), and finally influences their actual behaviors such as absenteeism and job performance [22]. Other studies indicate that work values of individuals can influence their work goals, which in turn influence their effort and job performance [23]. Subsequent research frequently demonstrates that work values can influence work attitudes, and different dimensions of work values can respectively influence job satisfaction, work engagement, and turnover intention [24]. Additionally, further studies across various occupational types suggest that work values not only directly influence employees' intention to stay but also exhibit both positive and negative correlations [7].

Hypothesis 3: Work values significantly influence intention to stay.

Mediating Effect of the Work Values

Work values refer to an individual's degree of adaptation to the job they choose. Employees often have preconceived notions about the positions they apply for, and thus, personality traits reflect a person's characteristic tendencies in career and job choices [25], [26]. Besides interacting with the external environment, intrinsic factors of employees also lead to differences in their work values. Work values are important factors influencing an individual's career choices and development plans [27]. This means individuals tend to choose work environments that align with their personality traits, values, needs, and interests [20]. When entering an enterprise, employees bring with them their values and pre-formed personalities, which inherently shape their behaviors [28].

Hypothesis 4: Work values mediate between personality traits and the intention to stay.

III. Research Design and Implementation

Research Framework

Based on the research motivation, objectives, and hypotheses, the research framework has been formulated as depicted in Figure 1.

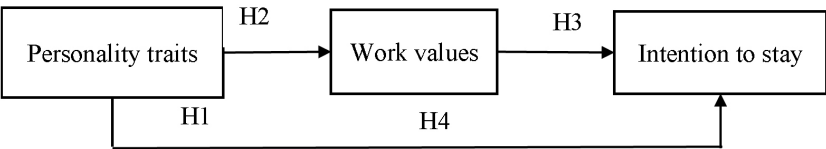


Figure 1
Research framework

Research Subjects and Sampling Method

This study purposively sampled restaurants and beverage shops in Tainan and Kaohsiung as its research subjects. Questionnaires were electronically distributed to staff members including waiters, kitchen staff, supervisors, managers, and part-time workers. A total of 213 valid responses were collected. Descriptive statistics of the valid samples are summarized in Table 1, which includes: gender (113 males, 53.1%; 100 females, 46.9%), marital status (90 married, 42.3%; 123 unmarried, 57.7%), age (21-29 years, 66 respondents, 31%, largest group; 30-39 years, 57 respondents, 26.8%, second largest group), highest education (university, 96 respondents, 45.1%, largest group; 2-year junior college, 96 respondents, 45.1%, second largest group), length of employment (1-3 years, 58 respondents, 27.2%, largest group; 2.4-6 years, 56 respondents, 26.3%, second largest group), job position (part-time workers, 54 respondents, 25.4%, largest group; waiters, 50 respondents, 23.5%, second largest group), average monthly salary (NT\$ 25,250 or less, 53 respondents, 24.9%, largest group; NT\$ 30,001-35,000, 48 respondents, 22.5%, second largest group), business type (restaurants (diners), 121 respondents, 56.8%, largest group; beverage shops, 92 respondents, 43.2%), and business location (other (county/city), 88 respondents, 41.3%, largest group; Kaohsiung, 84 respondents, 39.4%, second largest group).

Table 1
Descriptive statistics for samples

Category	Quantity	(%)	Category	Quantity	(%)
Gender			Marital status		
1. Male	113	53.1	1. Married	90	42.3
2. Female	100	46.9	2. Unmarried	123	57.7
Age			Highest education		
1. 20 years and below	34	16.0	1. Below senior high (vocational)	34	16.0
2. 21-29	66	31.0	2. 5-year junior college	29	13.6
3. 30-39	57	26.8	3. 2-year junior college	41	19.2
4. 40-49	43	20.2	4. University	96	45.1
5. 50 years and above	13	6.1	5. Graduate school	13	6.1
Length of employment			Job position		
1. Less than 3 (inclusive) years	58	27.2	1. Waiters	50	23.5
2. 4-6	56	26.3	2. Kitchen staff	45	21.1
3. 7-10	35	16.4	3. Supervisors	33	15.5
4. 11-15	49	23.0	4. Managers	31	14.6
5. More than 16 (inclusive) years	15	7.0	5. Part-time workers	54	25.4
Average monthly income (in NT\$)			Business location		
1.	53	24.9	1. Tainan	41	19.2
2.	27	12.7	2. Kaohsiung	84	39.4
3.	48	22.5	3. Other (county/city)	88	41.3
4.	45	21.1			
5.	40	18.8			
Business type					
1. Restaurants (dining locations)	121	56.8			
2. Beverage shops	92	43.2			

Note: Average monthly salary (NT\$): 1. 25,250 or less; 2. 25,250-30,000; 3. 30,001-35,000; 4. 35,001-40,000; 5. 40,001 (inclusive) or above.

*Measurement of Variables and Questionnaire Design***1. Personality traits**

This study adopts the personality traits scale developed by [9], which consists of 24 items: 3 items for extraversion, 7 for agreeableness, 6 for conscientiousness, 5 for neuroticism, and 3 for openness. The original dimensions of the scale are retained in this study. The internal consistency for each dimension is as follows: extraversion: .548; agreeableness: .488; conscientiousness: .430; neuroticism: .614; and openness to experience: .265.

2. Work values

The questionnaire items on work values in this study aim to explore the perspectives, motivations, and attitudes employees hold toward the nature of their work [29]. This study adopts the structure proposed by [19]. The breakdown is as follows: cognitive value: 13 items; affective value: 5 items; and instrumental value: 5 items. The original dimensions of the scale are retained in this study. The internal consistency for each dimension is as follows: cognitive value: .820; affective value: .591; and instrumental value: .647.

3. Intention to stay

Regarding the measurement of intention to stay, many studies adopt the retention commitment dimension from the organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ) developed by [30], modifying it to suit their specific research contexts. The retention commitment dimension from the organizational commitment inventory (OCI) developed by [31] is primarily used as the questionnaire item [32]. The principal component analysis with varimax rotation yields a KMO value of 70760 for the scale, explaining 43.87% of the cumulative variance. Factor 1 (eigenvalue = 2.900), "individual-organization fit", includes question items 4, 5, 6, 11, and 12, with a reliability coefficient of 0.597; Factor 2 (eigenvalue = 1.270), "value-emotion congruence", includes question items 1, 2, 9, and 10, with a reliability coefficient of 0.507; and Factor 3 (eigenvalue = 1.094), "stable long-term retention", includes questions items 3, 7, and 8, with a reliability coefficient of 0.516.

Table 2
Pearson's Correlation Table

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Extraversion	3.70	.897	1										
2. Agreeableness	3.74	.572	.319**	1									
3. Conscientiousness	3.72	.618	.281**	.316**	1								
4. Neuroticism	3.53	.838	.317**	.110	.284**	1							
5. Openness to experience	3.43	.917	.232**	.302**	.312**	.264**	1						
6. Cognitive value	3.41	.741	.172*	.364**	.370**	.210**	.488**	1					
7. Affective value	3.72	.776	.169*	.257**	.211**	.241**	.416**	.523**	1				
8. Instrumental value	3.48	.856	.249**	.317**	.329**	.341**	.882**	.519**	.398**	1			
9. Individual-organization fit	3.47	.828	.001	.087	.091	.177**	.326**	.316**	.354**	.397**	1		
10. Value-emotion congruence	3.29	.826	.155*	.187**	.169*	.212**	.337**	.378**	.392**	.394**	.356**	1	
11. Stable long-term retention	3.37	.947	.075	.117	.169*	.208**	.275**	.358**	.235**	.300**	.408**	.251**	1

* $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$

Data Analysis

This study employs hierarchical regression analysis to investigate the mediating role of work values in the relationship between personality traits and intention to stay. Using the forced entry method, the study selects the most parsimonious regression model.

To ensure the suitability of hierarchical regression analysis, the study examines the significance of F-test and proportion of variance explained by the coefficient of determination (R^2), where a higher R^2 indicates a better model fit. Additionally, VIF value exceeding 10 signaling severe multicollinearity. The mediating effect is analyzed following the criteria proposed by [33]. If the β value becomes non-significant, it indicates full mediation. Even if the independent variable does not directly affect the dependent variable, a mediating mechanism may still exist [34], [35].

IV. Research Results and Analysis

Pearson's Correlation Analysis

This study examines the correlations among the variables “personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness to experience),” the mediating variables “work values (cognitive, affective, and instrumental),” and the dependent variables “intention to stay (individual-organization fit, value-emotion congruence, stable long-term retention).” Table 2 indicate that extraversion in the personality traits is positively correlated with agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience; extraversion is also positively correlated with cognitive value, affective value, and instrumental value in work values. However, in intention to stay, extraversion is not correlated with individual-organization fit and stable long-term retention, but is positively correlated with value-emotion congruence.

Mediating Effects of Work Values

1. The mediating effect of work values on the relationship between personality traits and turnover intention (individual-organization fit)

The analysis results in Table 3 indicate that in Model 1: $R^2 = 0.123$ ($F = 5.766^{***}$); and in Model 2, which incorporates work values (cognitive, affective, and instrumental): $R^2 = 0.231$ ($F = 9.418^{***}$). The VIF values are all less than 10, indicating a good model fit. Further analysis from Model 1 reveals that personality traits (neuroticism ($\beta = 0.141$, $t = 1.964^*$), openness

to experience ($\beta = 0.309$, $t = 4.294^{***}$) exhibits a significant influential relationship. In Model 2, after incorporating work values (affective ($\beta = 0.238$, $t = 3.158^{***}$) and instrumental ($\beta = 0.420$, $t = 3.058^{***}$)), personality traits also significantly influence turnover intention. This indicates that work values (affective and instrumental) fully mediate between neuroticism and openness to experience and turnover intention (individual-organization fit).

Table 3

The mediating effect of work values between personality traits and intention

Dependent variable Independent variable	individual-organization fit				
	Model one		Model two		VIF
	β	t-statistics	β	t-statistics	
(Constant term)		5.506		4.605	
Personality traits					
Extraversion	-.113	-1.551	-.108	-1.568	1.252
Agreeableness	.015	.202	-.056	-.801	1.302
Conscientiousness	-.025	-.348	-.061	-.860	1.308
Neuroticism	.141	1.964*	.060	.850	1.291
Openness to experience	.309	4.294***	-.155	-1.172	4.609
Work values:					
(Cognitive value)			.095	1.149	1.779
(Affective value)			.238	3.158***	1.492
(Instrumental value)			.420	3.058***	4.952
F	5.766***		9.418***		
R ²	0.123		0.231		
Adjusted R ²	0.102		0.200		

* P < 0.05, **P < 0.01, *** P < 0.001

2. The mediating effect of work values between personality traits and value-emotion congruence

The analysis results in Table 4 indicate that in Model 1, $R^2 = 0.139$ ($F = 6.607^{***}$); and in Model 2, which incorporates work values (cognitive, affective, and instrumental): $R^2 = 0.240$ ($F = 8.956^{***}$). The VIF values are all less than 10, indicating a good model fit. Further analysis from Model 1 reveals that openness to experience ($\beta = .271$, $t = 3.803^{***}$) significantly influences turnover intention. In Model 2, after incorporating work values

(affective ($\beta = .225$, $t = 3.003^{***}$) and instrumental ($\beta = .321$, $t = 2.352^*$)), personality traits also significantly influence intention to stay. This indicates that work values (affective and instrumental) fully mediate between personality trait (openness to experience) and turnover intention (value-emotion congruence).

Table 4

The mediating effect of work values between personality traits and value-emotion congruence

Dependent variable Independent variable	Intention to stay (value-emotion congruence)				
	Model one		Model two		
	β	t-statistics	β	t-statistics	VIF
(Constant term)		3.191		2.210	
Personality traits					
Extraversion	.024	.326	.031	.453	1.252
Agreeableness	.081	1.120	.006	.079	1.302
Conscientiousness	.021	.291	-.021	-.304	1.308
Neuroticism	.116	1.620	.044	.638	1.291
Openness to experience	.271	3.803***	-.125	-.948	4.609
Work values:					
(Cognitive value)			.144	1.764	1.779
(Affective value)			.225	3.003***	1.492
(Instrumental value)			.321	2.352*	4.952
F	6.607***		8.956***		
R ²	0.139		0.240		
Adjusted R ²	0.118		0.210		

* P < 0.05, **P < 0.01, *** P < 0.001

3. The mediating effect of work values between personality traits and intention to stay (stable long-term retention)

The analysis results in Table 5 indicate that in Model 1: $R^2 = 0.101$ ($F = 4.628^{***}$); and in Model 2, which incorporates work values (cognitive, affective, and instrumental): $R^2 = 0.160$ ($F = 4.680^{***}$). The VIF values are all less than 10, indicating a good model fit. Further analysis from Model 1 reveals that openness to experience ($\beta = 0.220$, $t = 3.012^{***}$) exhibits a significant influence. In Model 2, after incorporating cognitive ($\beta = 0.267$, $t = 3.099^{***}$), personality traits also exhibit a significant influence. This

indicates that cognitive fully mediate between openness to experience and stable long-term retention.

Table 5

The mediating effect of work values between personality traits and stable long-term retention

Dependent variable Independent variable	Intention to stay (stable long-term retention)				
	Model one		Model two		
	β	t-statistics	β	t-statistics	VIF
(Constant term)		3.167		2.704	
Personality traits					
Extraversion	-.049	-.666	-.037	-.506	1.252
Agreeableness	.031	.428	-.031	-.423	1.302
Conscientiousness	.066	.888	.011	.153	1.308
Neuroticism	.142	1.950	.114	1.550	1.291
Openness to experience	.220	3.012***	.025	.180	4.609
Work values:					
(Cognitive value)			.267	3.099***	1.779
(Affective value)			.025	.315	1.492
(Instrumental value)			.107	.745	4.952
F	4.628***		4.680***		
R ²	0.101		0.160		
Adjusted R ²	0.080		0.127		

* $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$

V. Discussions and Conclusions

Hypotheses and Empirical Findings

Work values mediate the relationship between personality traits and intention to stay. The results supporting Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2, and Hypothesis 3 have been confirmed through the analysis of the mediating effects of work values. Previous studies have primarily concentrated on the influence of personality traits on intention to stay [7], [8], the impact of personality traits on work values, the effect of work values on intention to stay [32], and the combined influence of work values, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction on intention to stay [36]. Drawing from the mediation model developed by [33], this study infers that work values mediate between personality traits and intention to stay.

Managerial Implications

First, based on the empirical findings of this study, which demonstrate the full mediating effect of affective and instrumental factors between neuroticism, openness to experience, and individual-organization fit, several managerial implications can be derived. Individuals that are less prone to tension, loss of control, anger, and pessimism have emotional stability. Those with openness to experience exhibit innovation capabilities, such as willingness to engage in various activities and frequently generating new ideas. In terms of work values, individuals with these two types of personality traits prioritize affective values related to interactions with supervisors and colleagues, as well as the perceived respect for their work. They also value instrumental value concerning salary, benefits, job stability, flexibility in work hours, and the work environment. Given these characteristics and values, these individuals are likely to emphasize on how they fit in with the organization when considering in terms of intention to stay.

Second, work values (affective and instrumental) fully mediate between personality trait (openness to experience) and intention to stay (value-emotion congruence). Individuals characterized by openness to experience exhibit innovation capabilities, such as willingness to engage in various activities and frequently generating new ideas. Similarly, in terms of work values, individuals with this type of personality trait prioritize affective values related to interactions with supervisors and colleagues, as well as the perceived respect for their work. They also value instrumental value concerning salary, benefits, job stability, flexibility in work hours, and the work environment. Given these characteristics and values, individuals are likely to value the alignment between personal values and organizational values, a favorable work environment, and interpersonal relationships with colleagues when considering turnover intention.

Third, work value (cognitive) fully mediates between personality trait (openness to experience) and intention to stay (stable long-term retention). Individuals with openness to experience exhibit innovation capabilities, such as willingness to engage in various activities and frequently generating new ideas. They prioritize aspects in their work values such as leveraging personal strengths, opportunities for promotion, sense of accomplishment, interesting work tasks, personal growth, and autonomy. In terms of intention to stay, they emphasize job satisfaction and loyalty to the organization.

Practical Applications

Based on the above analyses, it is clear that employees with different personality traits develop unique work values, which subsequently influence their intention to stay. For owners of restaurants and beverage shops, regardless of whether their employees are kitchen staff or front-of-house service personnel, they may not be able to offer as many benefits and welfare plans as medium- or large-sized enterprises. However, they can proactively improve the work environment, workplace atmosphere, and compensation. Especially for small-scale restaurants and beverage shops, where employees often face high physical demands and frequent interpersonal interactions, it is beneficial to provide sufficient downtime for employees during off-peak hours. Additionally, creating a conducive environment for them to catch a break by reducing high temperatures and excessive noise can significantly alleviate employees' stress.

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