

Personality Traits, Work Value on Business Performance of Homestay Tourism Sub-sector in Henan Province

Zhang Qian¹ and Rowena M. Libo-on²

School of Graduate Studies, Central Philippine University

Abstract

This study, which aimed to determine the personality traits and work values of homestay operators, and the business performance of homestays in Henan province, utilized the descriptive-correlational research design. The respondents of the study were the 239 randomly selected samples from a population of 592 homestay operators. The independent samples t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), Pearson's *r*, and multivariate regression were used to analyze the data, all set at .05 level of significance. Findings showed that the personality traits do not significantly vary with age and number of family members; homestay operators with 3 years or less working experience had the highest level of neuroticism, which diminishes as the work experience in years increases. No significant differences in work values were found among the homestay operators when they were classified by sex, age, educational level, or number of family members, but the business performance of the homestays significantly differs with the number of rooms, location and environment. Business performance also has a positive correlation with agreeableness, openness, profit-oriented values, and entrepreneurial and developmental values. Whereas there were no correlations between business performance and the rest of the personality traits, namely, conscientiousness, extroversion, neuroticism and lifestyle values.

Keywords: personality traits, work value, business performance, homestay, Henan Province

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Homestay as a new form of tourism accommodation industry has gradually attracted more and more tourists. Unlike the traditional hotels, homestays have personalized services, experiential accommodation and a more unique and humane way of lifestyle. Based on statistics, by the end of 2019, the total number of homestay inns and guesthouses in mainland China had reached 1698 million, and an operating income of 20.94 billion RMB, with up to 38.92% increase year-on-year (Pi, 2019). Henan province has an innate advantage of homestays. By the end of 2018, the direct operating income of homestays exceeding 2.200 million yuan ("China Mainland Home Accommodation Industry Development Data Report," 2019).

Although the practice of the homestay has increased in recent years, the investigation of the homestay and the operators are limited and required further research. Operators are a critical factor in the business performance of homestays (Pi, 2019). The significant difference between a homestay and a traditional hotel is the communication and interaction between the host and guests. Homestay operators' personality traits will impact the ways and methods of their communication (Zhao, 2021). Work values, also directly affect the growth of the

homestay industry to a large extent (Zhao, 2021). Several studies had been conducted on the association between personality traits and business performance (Gupta & Muita, 2013; Leutner et al., 2014), and between work value and business performance (Ren et al., 2014; Tan, 2012).

However, there are few studies on small tourism enterprises' personality characteristics, work values, and business performance, especially, among homestay operators in Henan province. Therefore, this study took personality traits and work values as independent variables to further explore their influence on business performance. This study tried to reveal the relationship of the personality traits, and work values of the homestay operators, and the business performance of the homestays in Henan Province.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study was to determine the personality traits and work values of homestay operators, and the business performance of the homestays in Henan Province.

Specifically, this study was conducted to:

1. determine the differences in the personality traits of the homestay operators when grouped according to sex, age, educational level, the number

of family members, work experience and entrepreneurship training experience;

2. determine the differences in the work values of the homestay operators when grouped according to sex, age, educational level, the number of family members, work experience and entrepreneurship training experience;

3. determine the differences in business performance of the homestays when the homestay operators were grouped according to sex, age, educational level, the number of family members, work experience and entrepreneurship training experience;

4. determine the differences in business performance of the homestays when grouped according to the number of rooms, location and environment;

5. determine the relationship between personality traits and business performance; and

6. determine the relationship between work values and business performance.

Theoretical Framework of the study

Personality traits theory is a theory that explores the structure, formation, development and dynamics of personality (Buss, 1989). Tupes and Christal (1961) believed that the 16 personality traits could be summarized into five personality factors, which could be used to explain work behavior, emotional change, interpersonal relationship, among others, which was later widely used as the Big Five personality theory. The Big Five theory of personality has been commonly used in the research of various subjects. The big five model refer to the scales of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism (Anusic et

al., 2009). Homestay operators with positive personality traits are able to have positive emotional interactions with guests that can result to satisfaction and appreciation of customers. (Pi, 2019) .

Meanwhile, the self-verification theory provides a conceptual foundation for understanding the relationship between values and conduct, which explains why individual values provide research perspectives on the motivational basis of work behavior. Swann believed that the motivation to enhance, predict, and control reality is the fundamental cause of self-verification (Hou et al., 2014). This theory provides a conceptual foundation for understanding the relationship between values and conduct. The theory holds that people are motivated to stick to their beliefs and to participate in proving, supporting and reinforcing self-beliefs and reconciling the differences in self-beliefs (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In self-verification theory, interpersonal behavior consistent with values not only creates cognitive conscientiousness but also provides opportunities to obtain verified self-evaluation (Shao et al., 2011).

In this study, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory can explain the varying work values developed by the homestay operators based on the differences in their level of needs. Additionally, the needs of these homestay operators are influenced by their demographic profile like sex, age, number of family members, educational level, and entrepreneurship training experience, which consequently impact business performance.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the theories discussed above, the author proposed the conceptual framework as follows:

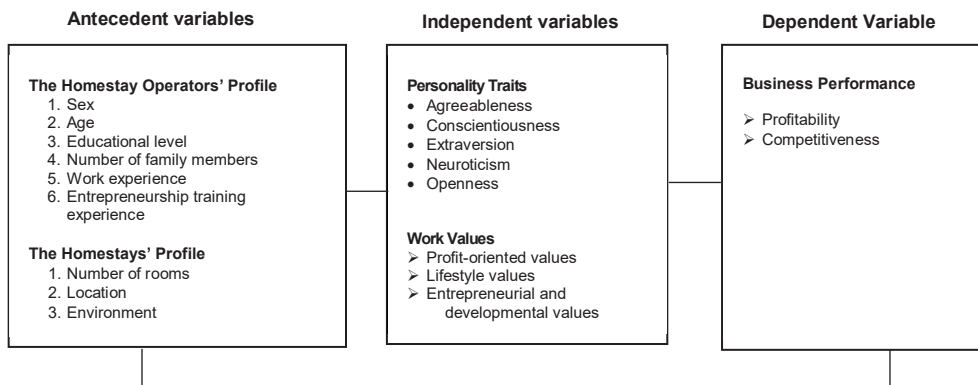


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

Definition of Terms

The main definitions are hereby given in the study. Business performance refers to the efficiency and effectiveness of a homestay's business

management activities over a certain period of time. It was measured in terms of competitiveness and profitability. Personality traits refers to the patterns of regular behavior of the homestay operators

categorized into five traits: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism (McCrae & Costa, 1987). Work value refers to work needs, work motivation and work beliefs that homestay operators hold in the work, which reflect their internal needs and preferences, and guide their work attitude and behavior. It is an independent variable with three dimensions, namely, profit-oriented values, lifestyle values, and entrepreneurial and developmental values.

Significance of the Study

This study can contribute knowledge for effective and efficient management of the homestays. The findings of this study are expected to benefit the homestay operators, customers, homestay management department, other provinces

and cities, the academe, business management consultant, the researcher and other researchers.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted in Henan province with the primary data collected from October to November 2022 using the duly validated and pilot-tested researcher-made rating scales for work values and business performance. A modified big five personality traits rating scale was also validated and pilot-tested to measure the personality traits of the homestay operators. Due to time limitations, the researcher only focused on studying personality traits, work values, and business performance in Henan Province. This study did not conduct a comparative study with the other elements affecting the province's business success.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive correlational research design with 239 randomly selected homestay operators as respondents from a total population of 592 homestay operators in the province. The researcher used the SPSS to process all of the gathered data using descriptive analysis of

frequency, percentage, t-test, ANOVA, Pearson's r, and multivariate regression at .05 level of significance. All ethical standards in research as required were complied, such as the use of the standard informed consent form, conduct of ethics review and plagiarism test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Differences in Personality Traits according to the Respondents' Profile

Personality traits did not vary with age and number of family members. However, with the post hoc analysis, the male (mean=4.05) homestays showed significantly higher level of agreeableness than the females (mean=3.84). Also, as their level of education increases, they tend to have lower level of agreeableness, however, those with training experience showed more agreeableness than the ones without training experience (figure 1). It was

also found that the homestays with 3 years or less work experience showed the highest level of neuroticism that decreases as their work experience in years increases (Figure 2).

This finding is in line with what Marija et al. (2016) claimed. They highlighted that personality traits and abilities may be to some extent inherited, but with education and continuous learning, it is possible to develop the necessary competencies of a true leader.

Table 1
Differences in Personality Traits according to Respondents' Profile

		Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Neuroticism	Openness
Sex	p-value	0.680	0.141	0.704	0.209	0.048*
	t-value	-0.412	1.478	0.380	-1.261	1.989
Age	p-value	0.526	0.059	0.983	0.743	0.544
	F-value	0.800	0.705	0.097	0.489	0.773
Educational Level	p-value	0.021*	0.828	0.121	0.991	0.676
	F-value	3.305	0.296	1.956	0.036	0.510
Number of Family Members	p-value	0.830	0.378	0.472	0.365	0.275
	F-value	0.186	0.977	0.752	1.012	1.296
Work experience	p-value	0.091	0.31	0.07	0.004**	0.15
	F-value	2.181	1.202	2.383	4.627	1.788
Entrepreneurship Training experience	p-value	0.003**	0.492	0.655	0.584	0.375
	t-value	3.077	-0.688	0.447	0.548	0.890

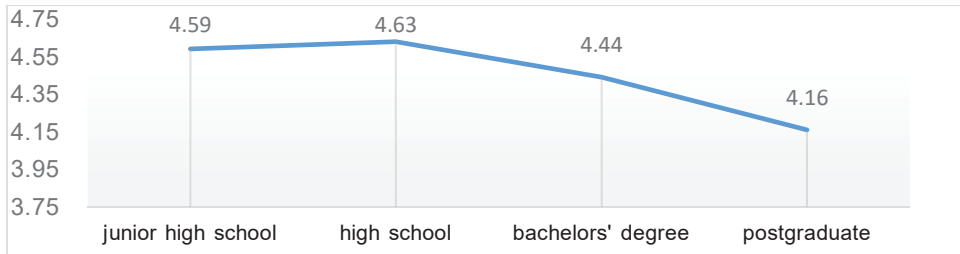


Figure 1. Educational Level and Agreeableness of Homestay Operators

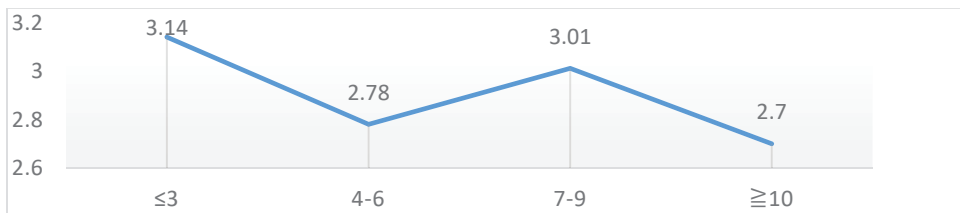


Figure 2. Work Experience and Neuroticism of Homestay Operators

Differences in Work Value according to Respondents' Profile

Homestay operators' work value do not vary according to sex, age, educational level, or number of family members.

Post hoc results shows that the homestay operators showed a strong entrepreneurial and developmental values as their work experience increased. Homestay operators with more than 10 years of experience (Mean=4.28) are higher than those with three or less years of experience

(Mean=3.99). Those with entrepreneurship training experience (mean=4.24) also showed higher level of entrepreneurial and developmental values than those with no training experience (mean=3.83).

This finding implies that the richer the homestay operators' training and work experience, the stronger is their entrepreneurial and developmental values. The lessons they learned from their training and work experience have strengthened the importance they give on entrepreneurship and development.

Table 2

Differences in Work Value according to Respondents' Profile

		Profit oriented values	Lifestyle values	Entrepreneurial and developmental values
Sex	p-value	0.7	0.093	0.483
	t-value	-0.386	-1.688	-0.702
Age	p-value	0.655	0.749	0.173
	F-value	0.611	0.482	1.607
Educational Level	p-value	0.227	0.766	0.843
	F-value	1.457	0.382	0.275
Number of Family Members	p-value	0.061	0.397	0.147
	F-value	0.126	0.237	0.318
Work experience	p-value	0.927	0.118	0.047*
	F-value	0.154	1.976	2.683
Entrepreneurship Training experience	p-value	0.906	0.369	0.000**
	t-value	0.118	-0.900	3.948

*p<0.05 **p<0.01

Difference in Business Performance according to Respondents' Profile

The overall business performance of the homestays showed no significant differences when the operators were grouped according to sex, age,

and educational level, but varied significantly with the number of family members, work experience and the entrepreneurship training experience. Significant differences between groups were also found in terms of profitability and competitiveness

across number of family members, work experience, entrepreneurship training experience, and sex. The post hoc results further show strong support (Figure 3 and Figure 4).

Post hoc results shows that the male homestay operators (mean=4.43) showed a significantly higher

mean than women (mean=4.24) in terms of homestay profitability. This indicates that men are more focused on profitability than women. In China, men are primarily responsible for the financial burden in a family such that they pay more attention to profitability than women.

Table 3
 Difference in Business Performance according to Respondents' Profile

		Profitability	Competitiveness	Business Performance
Sex	p-value	0.033*	0.892	0.244
	t-value	2.142	-0.136	1.167
Age	p-value	0.356	0.989	0.805
	F-value	1.103	0.080	0.404
Educational Level	p-value	0.587	0.932	0.930
	F-value	0.644	0.146	0.149
Number of Family Members	p-value	0.022*	0.004*	0.023*
	F-value	3.883	5.623	3.843
Work experience	p-value	0.031*	0.031*	0.029*
	F-value	3.003	3.001	3.068
Entrepreneurship Training experience	p-value	0.021*	0.001**	0.001**
	t-value	2.132	3.259	3.265

*p<0.05 **p<0.01

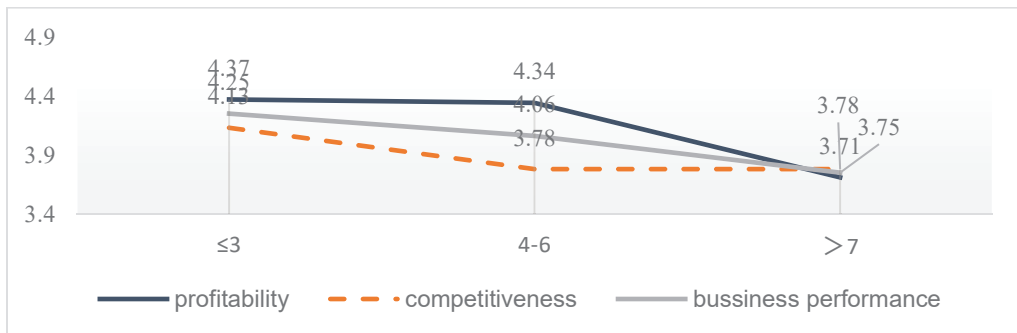


Figure 3. Number of Family Members of Homestay Operators and Business Performance of Homestays

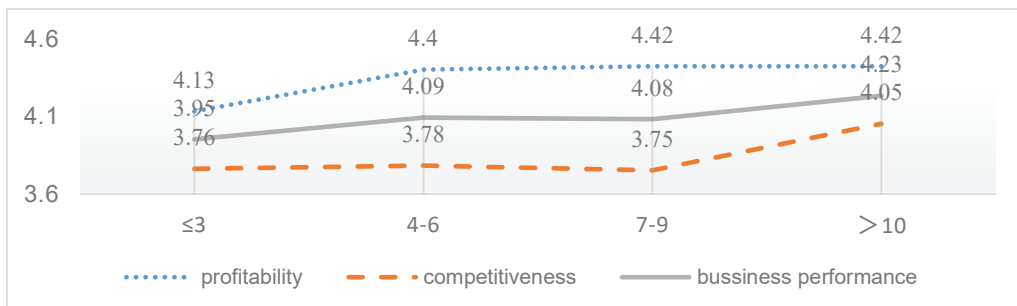


Figure 4. Business Performance of Homestays and Work Experience of Homestay Operators

Differences in Business Performance according to Homestays' Profile

The profitability, competitiveness, and overall business performance of the homestays significantly differ in terms of number of rooms, location and environment. The post hoc test results revealed that the more rooms a homestay has, and the closer it is to city, the higher is the profitability, competitiveness, and business performance. Moreover, homestays that are within the tourist attractions also have significantly higher profitability, competitiveness,

and business performance. There is a natural flow of customers and a stable market for homestays located near the city and inside the tourist attractions; and overnight travelers are more likely to choose the homestays located inside scenic spots because they can enjoy the scenery around the homestay, experience the local culture and taste the local cuisine. Since they do not have to leave the scenic area, they have more time to enjoy the homestay services and the sceneries.

Table 4
Difference in Business Performance according to Homestays' Profile

		Profitability	Competitiveness	Business Performance
Number of Rooms	p-value	0.020*	0.000**	0.000**
Location	p-value	0.000**	0.003**	0.000**
Environment	p-value	0.003**	0.001**	0.000**

*p<0.05 **p<0.01

Relationship between Personality Traits and Business Performance

The homestay operators' agreeableness and openness have significant positive relationship to profitability, competitiveness, and business performance. The correlation coefficients for profitability and agreeableness and openness are 0.359, and 0.375, the homestay operators' agreeableness and openness were also found to have significant positive relationship. The correlation coefficients of 0.232, and 0.339, the homestay operators' agreeableness and openness were also found to have significant positive relationship. The correlation coefficients of 0.232, and 0.339.

The homestays' profitability, competitiveness, and overall business performance were positively correlated with agreeableness, and openness of the homestay operators, but not with conscientiousness, extroversion, and neuroticism. This finding is largely consistent with the previous study of (Zhao, 2021). The agreeableness and openness of the homestay operators allowed them to provide a personalized, homely, and friendly accommodation service to guests who can enjoy not just the rooms and food but also the interactions with the operators. Thus, guests get to learn and appreciate the locals: their culture and way of life.

Table 5
Relationship between Personality Traits and Business Performance

	Profitability		Competitiveness		Business Performance	
	r	p-value	r	p-value	r	p-value
Agreeableness	0.359**	0.000	0.232**	0.000	0.345**	0.000
Conscientiousness	-0.026	0.694	-0.059	0.365	-0.049	0.45
Extraversion	-0.002	0.979	0.107	0.099	0.061	0.347
Neuroticism	-0.023	0.727	0.07	0.283	0.027	0.677
Openness	0.375**	0.000	0.339**	0.000	0.416**	0.000

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

The Relationship between Work Value and Business Performance

The results showed that the homestay's profitability, competitiveness, and business performance have significant, positive relationship with the profit-oriented values, and entrepreneurial and developmental values, while there is no significant correlation with lifestyle values. This finding ties well with the previous studies conducted

by Liu (Liu, 2022; Liu, 2021), where work values were found to have a direct and significant positive impact on business performance. This indicates that profit-oriented values, and entrepreneurial and developmental values tend to improve business performance. Employees born after 1990 focus on the achievement, pursue self-worth and career development, and have a positive impact on job performance (Liu, 2022).

Table 6

Relationship between Work Value and Business Performance

	Profitability		Competitiveness		Business performance	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Profit oriented values	0.360**	0.000	0.342**	0.000	0.409**	0.000
Lifestyle values	-0.063	0.333	-0.047	0.47	-0.064	0.325
Entrepreneurial and developmental values	0.509**	0.000	0.561**	0.000	0.624**	0.000

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

CONCLUSIONS

Young people with limited qualification can have better opportunities in the homestay industry. Even small families (4-6 family members) on small scale operations can get better business performance with appropriate training and work experience. In this industry, the homestay's size (in terms of number of rooms), location, and environment are significant determinants of profitability, competitiveness, and overall business performance. The closer the homestay is to the city and to the tourist attractions, the higher is its profitability and competitiveness, as well as business performance.

Homestay operators with agreeable and open personality traits can make significant difference in improving the homestay's business performance. These traits enabled the operators to run homestays

with a highly personalized, homely and friendly accommodation services that results to guest appreciation and satisfaction. Visitors or guests get to enjoy not only the rooms and food, but also the interactions with the operators, staff, and the local community, thereby, learning more about the local culture and way of life.

Business performance has a significant positive relationship with agreeableness, and openness, while it has no correlation with conscientiousness, extroversion, and neuroticism. And it also has a significant positive relationship with profit-oriented values and entrepreneurial and developmental values, while it is not significantly correlated with lifestyle values.

RECOMMENDATION

Homestay operators should reflect on their own personality traits and strengthen the positive traits such as agreeableness and openness to improve on customer relationship and satisfaction. They are encouraged to attend entrepreneurship trainings, gain more work experience, and find a balance between profit-oriented values and entrepreneurial and developmental values to improve business performance.

The government may review existing policies on homestay operations and design programs that would incentivize homestay operators and investors to help develop the industry. For other provinces and cities with emerging homestay industry, they can identify areas within the tourism attractions to establish homestays with more rooms to have better business prospects. The local government units of these provinces and cities may continue to provide assistance to homestay operators through

continuous education, trainings, subsidies, and other forms of assistance.

The universities and colleges need to pay attention to the work value education. Although values education in China runs through all stages of education, primary school, secondary school and university, there is relatively little education involving work values, especially work values for entrepreneurship and development. Currently, China is setting up innovation and entrepreneurship school in various universities to train students in entrepreneurial and development values, which is to some extent a large progress.

There are some limitations in this study which can be solved through further investigations of other researchers. They can further deepen the discussions on the relationship and internal mechanism among personality traits, work values and business performance in the homestay industry.

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