



**JOURNAL OF TOURISM,
HOSPITALITY AND
ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT
(JTHER)**

www.gaexcellence.com/jthem



LEADER PERSONALITY AND JOB RETENTION IN THE MALAYSIAN RESTAURANT INDUSTRY: IS JOB SATISFACTION THE MISSING LINK?

Auni Nabilah Muhammad Fairuz¹, Zul Hazam Mohd Piah², Izhar Hafifi Zainal Abidin^{3*}

¹Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

 auninabihah1505@gmail.com

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-3276-0396>

²Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

 zulhazam@uitm.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-8019-3350>

³Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

 izharhafifi@uitm.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7585-0881>

*Corresponding Author

Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 16.07.2026

Revised date: 30.07.2026

Accepted date: 16.08.2026

Published date: 21.09.2026

To cite this document:

Fairuz, A. N. M., Piah, Z. H. M., & Abidin, I. H. Z. (2026). Leader Personality And Job Retention In The Malaysian Restaurant Industry: Is Job Satisfaction The Missing Link?. *Journal of Tourism Hospitality and Environment Management*, 11 (45), 694-708.

DOI:10.35631/JTHER.1145041

Abstract:

The restaurant business is a demanding, low-margin sector to operate in. Not only must businesses operate under thin profit margins, but they are now facing a continuous labor shortage that could hinder their operations. While various approaches have been taken to address such issues, the owners are unaware of the extent to which certain leader personality characteristics Grounded in Trait Activation Theory and the Five-Factor Model, affect an employee's decision to stay or leave. This research seeks to fill this gap by studying the effect of certain characteristics, including Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness of leaders, on restaurant workers. For this purpose, data were collected from 151 respondents working in restaurants in the Dungun district, Terengganu, through a structured online (Google Forms) survey. Based on the results, certain leadership traits have a direct effect on employee retention and satisfaction; while Hayes' PROCESS macro showed that job satisfaction is not a mediator in this context. These empirical discoveries offer actionable recruitment strategies for eateries seeking long-term organizational sustainability.

Keywords:

Hospitality Management, Job Retention, Job Satisfaction, Leadership Personality Traits, Restaurant Industry



© The authors (2026). This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY NC) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. For commercial re-use, please contact jthem@gaexcellence.com.

Introduction

Restaurant operations drive a significant share of global service economies, employment opportunities, and international tourism. They rely heavily on manual labor, but maintaining a stable workforce remains an uphill battle with annual turnover rate in this sector routinely exceeds the 70% threshold (Ghazali et al., 2023). It is no surprise that irregular hours, physical exhaustion, and limited career progression in the industry contribute to this issue. However, none of these can serve as justification, as it is obviously apparent and easily resolved. The issues that warrant concern include those that receive less attention, such as leaders' personality traits (Bajaba et al., 2021), which might directly affect employees yet are rarely attributed as the cause of problems.

Leadership is recognized as an essential determinant of employee attitudes and behaviors (Hoang et al., 2023). In some cases, leaders succeed in guiding their teams; in others, they fail. This gap has led researchers to examine personality-based explanations for these differences in leadership effectiveness. Leaders' personalities play a significant role in interactions between leaders and employees, which, in turn, influence workplace performance. While this connection is clear, there are still major gaps in the literature. For example, how leaders' internal personalities drive or undermine employee retention in busy restaurants remains poorly understood. Most academics are more interested in discussing the external factors that lead employees to stay, such as cash incentives and work-life balance (Park & Min, 2020). Comparatively fewer studies have examined internal, dispositional determinants such as leader personality (Ghani et al., 2022), leaving a critical gap in understanding how leadership itself shapes retention outcomes. This gap is particularly pronounced in the Malaysian restaurant landscape, as few studies have addressed this question.

Therefore, this study will attempt to address this gap by examining the direct impact of leader personality traits on job retention and examining job satisfaction as a potential mediator. By shifting the focus from external factors to more implicit internal personality determinants, this study aims to provide additional insights into stabilizing workforce issues in the hospitality sector.

Literature Review

Trait Activation Theory (TAT) and the Five-Factor Model (FFM)

In the study of organizational behavior, Trait Activation Theory holds that latent personality traits become apparent only when specific environmental situations trigger them (Tett et al., 2021). In a high-pressure restaurant environment, these situational triggers are numerous. For example, rush hour, kitchen errors, and breakdowns in floor coordination. These situational

triggers constantly push managers to their psychological limits, and the chaotic cues force different leadership traits to emerge.

If managers handle the operational stress effectively, they create a very functional organizational atmosphere, which is crucial in providing the specific operational framework required by employees to undertake their frequently demanding work. Nevertheless, when situational stressors trigger maladaptive characteristics, chaos is bound to result. Emotional instability on the part of managers, for example, creates a dysfunctional organizational atmosphere that may cause demotivation among employees. The Five Factor Model is used to categorize such personality characteristics (Soto & John, 2017). The FFM offers a dependable classification of human personality. Although it does not elucidate the mechanics of the situation, it does provide a structural map and an architectural description. Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness are the five dimensions into which the FFM divides personality. The TAT subsequently develops directly from this framework to illustrate how these various characteristics operate under the demands of actual restaurant operations. The integration of the two models enabled this study to map employee engagement and retention precisely. TAT and FFM are combined here because FFM alone identifies stable trait dimensions but does not explain when or why those traits become behaviourally salient, while TAT alone does not specify which traits are activated; integrating the two therefore allows this study to link stable leader dispositions to the specific situational pressures of restaurant operations, an application that remains rare in hospitality personality research.

Extraversion

The emergence of leaders in a corporate environment is often predicted by extraversion, a trait that determines whether an individual is considered a natural leader by a group (Judge & Bono, 2000). Extraversion encompasses traits such as friendliness, assertiveness, and high physical energy. This trait is important in the context of restaurant management. The role of a leader requires constant verbal interaction with kitchen staff, servers, and hungry customers. Extraverted leaders help restaurant employees feel like they belong to the group by projecting contagious energy and fostering open communication. This, in turn, creates transparency that eliminates situational uncertainty, a contributing factor to employee turnover. However, excessive extroversion can be counterproductive. Leaders who are too assertive risk silencing their teams, cutting off employee voices, and undermining employee engagement (De Cremer, 2003).

Agreeableness

In restaurant operations, emotional demands are particularly high. In this situation, managers act as important social buffers, treating their teams with dignity and looking out for their well-being to reduce the stress that each employee may feel. This trait, categorized as agreeableness, reflects an individual's natural inclination towards cooperation, personal warmth, and deep empathy (Kiarie et al., 2017). The combination of these innate tendencies can build harmony in the workplace and prevent burnout from spreading, and empathy in particular, as indicated by Coronado-Maldonado and Benitez-Marquez (2023), is directly linked to reduced employee turnover rates.

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness refers to an individual's level of organization, reliability, and self-discipline. Across modern industries, it is widely considered the most consistent predictor of job performance (Li, 2023). In a fast-paced restaurant environment, for example, conscientious leadership is exemplified by accurate inventory management, fair shift scheduling, and strict safety enforcement. These managerial skills provide employees with operational assurance, enabling them to execute their jobs efficiently. In contrast, leadership characterized by low Conscientiousness generates role ambiguity, leaving employees unclear about their responsibilities, which creates unnecessary drama that research links directly to increased turnover intentions (Howard, 2024).

Emotional Stability

In situations of high demand, a leader needs to be able to manage them so that conditions remain manageable and calm at all times. In essence, the criterion of having an emotionally stable leader who will not panic emerges. It is noteworthy that this criterion is relevant, given Elpers and Westhuis's (2008) research, which found that emotional instability among leaders leads to poor management, thereby increasing employees' intention to resign. An emotionally stable leader, therefore, forms the cornerstone of an ideal working environment for staff members to excel.

Openness to Experience

In the context of this study, the need for leaders in the restaurant industry to have this trait has become highly significant due to the technology changes in the field, particularly the use of QR order technology and artificial intelligence services. Leaders with high Openness traits are more likely to accept this change and lead their workers through the process of change, which can be very difficult for some people. On the other hand, low Openness is related to resistance to change, which can result in organizational inertia and lack of motivation among employees (Daft, 2005).

Job Satisfaction as a Mediator

Job satisfaction is measured through a psychological evaluation of employees' work experience, which is mediated by variables such as workplace stability and perceptions of fairness, especially when the leader's personality is influential. In this scenario, job satisfaction serves as the intermediary between the personality of the leader and employees' intention to leave or stay within their jobs. This pattern is consistent with evidence that job dissatisfaction stemming from poor leadership functions as a proximal driver of turnover intention (Elpers & Westhuis, 2008). The leader's personality drives actions, which in turn affect the employee's job satisfaction.

Job Retention in the Hospitality Context

Job retention refers to firms' efforts to reduce turnover and increase employees' tenure. In an industry with constant labor turnover, high job retention is important to ensure service provision and minimize the costs of recruiting and training new staff. Prior research indicates that retention is shaped by a combination of organisational and personal factors, including

workplace relationships, perceived fairness, and career development opportunities (Kyndt et al., 2009), and that hospitality employers face particular difficulty sustaining retention given chronic industry-wide labour shortages (Ghani et al., 2022).

Conceptual Framework

The theory is based on the Five-Factor Model and the Trait Activation Theory that suggest that people exhibit certain traits when faced with situational triggers (Tett et al., 2021). In organizational contexts and particularly in management positions, those traits can be triggered by certain situations including job requirements, social interactions, and stress. Such reactions have a significant impact on how employees view their role in an organization and their job satisfaction.

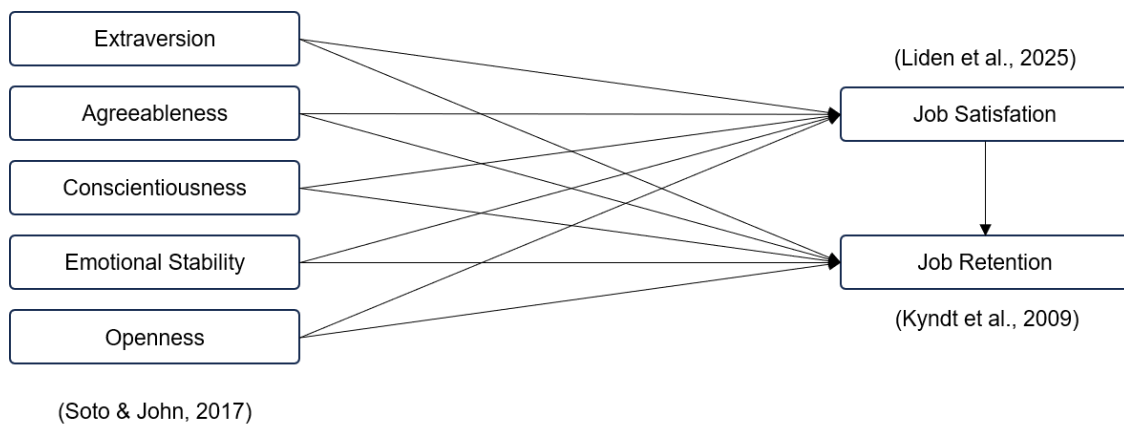


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Authors' Own Work

Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework and literature discussed, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- **H1a:** Leader Extraversion is positively related to employee job satisfaction.
- **H1b:** Leader Extraversion is positively related to employee job retention.
- **H2a:** Leader Agreeableness is positively related to employee job satisfaction.
- **H2b:** Leader Agreeableness is positively related to employee job retention.
- **H3a:** Leader Conscientiousness is positively related to employee job satisfaction.
- **H3b:** Leader Conscientiousness is positively related to employee job retention.
- **H4a:** Leader Emotional Stability is positively related to employee job satisfaction.
- **H4b:** Leader Emotional Stability is positively related to employee job retention.
- **H5a:** Leader Openness is positively related to employee job satisfaction.
- **H5b:** Leader Openness is positively related to employee job retention.
- **H6:** Job satisfaction is positively related to job retention.
- **H7–H11:** Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between [Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness] and job retention.

Methodology

Research Design

The research used a quantitative correlation design. It allows for the examination of the relationship between a leader's personality traits and their employees' intention to stay with the organization. The focus of the research is not on determining definite causes and effects but on identifying core statistical patterns. Data were collected at a single point in time using a cross-sectional design.

Population and Sampling

Participants were employees working in different types of restaurants—specifically, full-service, casual, and fast food, in the Dungun district, Terengganu, Malaysia. Dungun was selected as the study site both for reasons of research access and because East Coast restaurant workforces of this kind remain comparatively understudied in the Malaysian hospitality literature. To ensure respondents could accurately assess their managers' personality traits, only those who reported to a particular leader were allowed to participate. Since no database of restaurant staff in Terengganu was available, a non-probability purposive sampling method was used to recruit respondents; this approach, while more commonly associated with qualitative work, is also an established non-probability technique in quantitative organisational research where respondents must meet a specific inclusion criterion (here, reporting to an identifiable leader). To calculate the sample size, the G*Power 3.1 power analysis tool was used, and the results indicated that at least 92 respondents should be included to obtain a valid multiple regression equation. However, to strengthen statistical robustness, the study targeted at least 150 respondents, approximately 63% above the minimum requirement, to allow for anticipated incomplete or unqualified responses.

Instrument Development and Measures

Data collection was done through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire included questions on demographics, leader personality, job satisfaction, and retention intention. The variables for leader personality were based on the Big Five Inventory-2 Short Form (BFI-2-S) questions (Soto & John, 2017). In light of pilot testing findings indicating low item reliability, the questions were revised to align with the Big Five Inventory-2 Extra-Short Form (BFI-2-XS). Questions on job satisfaction were adopted from Sobaih and Hasanein (2020), while those for job retention were adopted from Kyndt et al. (2009). Responses for all these variables were rated on a five-point Likert scale from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree).

Pilot Testing and Reliability

Before embarking on the actual data collection, it is advisable to conduct a pilot study with a small sample representative of the target population to determine whether the tool is feasible. As highlighted above, in the pilot test, one of the most notable problems was that several items on the BFI-2-S scored significantly lower than the expected Cronbach's alpha of 0.70. As a result, a change in strategy was considered through adoption of BFI-2-XS. This swap instantly improved the reliability metrics for the final data collection phase.

Data Collection and Ethical Procedures

The survey was administered via Google Forms. The use of this online platform ensured broad and quick coverage of the survey without requiring unnecessary physical contact. Respondents were informed of the purpose and extent of the survey before participating, and their consent was obtained before proceeding. Respondents were free to leave the survey at any time, and they did not have to provide any personally identifiable details that would put them at risk of later identification by the researchers. The collected data were then screened for quality: responses with incomplete sections, uniform straight-lined answers across all scale items, or completion times under three minutes were flagged and discarded prior to analysis, resulting in the exclusion of 9 responses from an initial 160 submissions.

Data Analysis Strategy

The data analysis used the SPSS software package (version 29). Descriptive statistics served as the initial step in the analysis process, in which the characteristics of the respondents were established before testing the reliability of the measuring instruments. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the impact of leaders' personality traits on employee job satisfaction and retention intent. To determine the indirect effects of the variables of interest via job satisfaction, the PROCESS macro (Model 4) developed by Hayes (2022) was used. Bootstrapping analysis was done with 5,000 re-samples, yielding robust confidence intervals for the examined mediation pathways.

Findings

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The final sample consisted of 151 respondents, with a demographic tilt toward female respondents (58.9%). The majority of the sample (54.3%) comprised individuals aged 24 or older, suggesting a mature perspective on leadership in the local industry.

Reliability Test Results

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Extraversion	3	0.609
Agreeableness	3	0.715
Conscientiousness	3	0.576
Emotional Stability	3	0.668
Openness	3	0.601
Job Satisfaction	3	0.600
Job Retention	2	0.757

Source: Authors' Own Work

Reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales. Several constructs scored below the standard 0.70 Cronbach's alpha threshold (refer to Table 1). The comparatively lower alpha values that persisted for certain variables in the final sample are interpreted not as an instrument deficiency. Rather, due to the measurement peculiarities of the population related to the inherently unstable nature of restaurant jobs. This conforms to the concept of Trait Activation Theory. Besides, it is completely acceptable, especially for short scales, since alpha values naturally drop when a construct uses fewer items. Even with lower alphas, short scales can still show powerful inter-item relationships. In the present study, all constructs with lower alpha values showed corrected item-total correlations exceeding 0.20, indicating that each item contributed meaningfully to its respective construct. Taken together, these results suggest that the constructs demonstrate acceptable internal consistency and are adequate for subsequent analysis.

Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Direct Effects of Personality Traits on Job Satisfaction

A multiple regression analysis was carried out to determine the effect of the five personality traits on job satisfaction among employees. The results indicated that the multiple regression analysis was significant, accounting for 27.3% of the variability of the dependent variable ($R^2 = 0.273$).

The analysis revealed that Conscientiousness had the strongest positive and significant effect on satisfaction ($\beta = 0.379$, $p < 0.001$), followed by Openness ($\beta = 0.229$, $p = 0.022$), supporting H3a and H5a. Conversely, Extraversion ($\beta = -0.190$, $p = 0.073$), Agreeableness ($\beta = 0.118$, $p = 0.266$), and Emotional Stability ($\beta = 0.000$, $p = 0.999$) did not yield significant positive impacts, leading to the rejection of H1a, H2a, and H4a.

Table 2: Hypotheses Testing of the Direct Effects of Personality Traits on Job Satisfaction

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	β	p -value	Decision
H1a	Extraversion	-0.190	0.073	Not Supported
H2a	Agreeableness	0.118	0.266	Not Supported
H3a	Conscientiousness	0.379	< 0.001	Supported
H4a	Emotional Stability	0.000	0.999	Not Supported
H5a	Openness	0.229	0.022	Supported

Significant level: $p < 0.05$

Source: Authors' Own Work

Direct Effects of Personality Traits on Job Retention

The second regression model focused on the direct effect of the leader's traits on job retention among the employees and explained 31.8% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.318$). As seen from the results, Openness turned out to be the strongest positive predictor of retention ($\beta = 0.518$, $p < 0.001$), which confirms Hypothesis H5b. Furthermore, the trait of the leader's Emotional

Stability had a positive effect on the dependent variable ($\beta = 0.267$, $p = 0.013$), thus validating Hypothesis H4b. In addition, Conscientiousness became an important predictor of retention but with a negative correlation ($\beta = -0.253$, $p = 0.015$). Thus, Hypothesis H3b could not be validated because high levels of Conscientiousness were found to lead to poor retention of the staff members. Hypotheses H1b and H2b cannot be confirmed since Extraversion and Agreeableness had no impact on the dependent variable.

Table 3: Hypotheses Testing of the Direct Effects of Personality Traits on Job Retention

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	β	p -value	Decision
H1b	Extraversion	-0.071	0.488	Not Supported
H2b	Agreeableness	0.040	0.694	Not Supported
H3b	Conscientiousness	-0.253	0.015	Not Supported
H4b	Emotional Stability	0.267	0.013	Supported
H5b	Openness	0.518	< 0.001	Supported

Significant level: $p < 0.05$

Source: Authors' Own Work

Direct Effects of Job Satisfaction on Job Retention

Simple linear regression confirmed that higher levels of job satisfaction are significantly associated with increased job retention ($\beta = 0.267$, $p < 0.001$). This model explained 7.1% of the variance in retention ($R^2 = 0.071$; $F = 11.425$). Consequently, H6 was supported.

Table 4: Hypotheses Testing of the Direct Effects of Job Satisfaction on Job Retention

Hypothesis	Predictor Variable	B	Std. Error	β	t -value	Sig.	Decision
	(Constant)	2.106	0.686	—	3.068	0.003	
H6	Job Satisfaction	0.502	0.149	0.267	3.380	< 0.001	Supported

Significant level: $p < 0.05$

Source: Authors' Own Work

Mediation Analysis Results

The mediation effect was tested using the PROCESS Macro (Model 4) by Hayes with 5,000 bootstrap samples. Indirect effects were assessed through bias-corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals. The analysis indicated that job satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between any personality trait and job retention. Specifically, all bootstrapped confidence intervals included zero, confirming that the indirect effects were not statistically significant. Therefore, hypotheses H7, H8, H9, H10, and H11 were not supported.

Table 4: Hypotheses Testing of the Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis	Path	Bootstrapped 95%CI	Decision
H7	Extraversion > Job Satisfaction > Job Retention	(-0.0025, 0.2629)	Not Supported
H8	Agreeableness > Job Satisfaction > Job Retention	(-0.0015, 0.2612)	Not Supported
H9	Conscientiousness > Job Satisfaction > Job Retention	(-0.0056, 0.3635)	Not Supported
H10	Emotional Stability > Job Satisfaction > Job Retention	(-0.0226, 0.2634)	Not Supported
H11	Openness > Job Satisfaction > Job Retention	(-0.0973, 0.1804)	Not Supported

Significant level: $p < 0.05$

Source: Authors' Own Work

Discussion

The Influence of Leader Personality Traits on Employee Job Satisfaction

Research has shown that leaders' personalities shape the organizational climate. Conscientiousness was the best predictor of employee job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.379$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that orderly leaders really do create some stability. This is consistent with prior evidence identifying conscientiousness as one of the most reliable predictors of workplace performance and stability across industries (Li, 2023). They arrange good schedules, stock up on supplies, and define operating rules. Such clarity helps prevent role ambiguity and work stress, which could provoke quitting.

Openness also positively affected employee satisfaction ($\beta = 0.229$, $p = 0.022$). Employees like changeable, innovative leaders who are open to new ideas and to customer criticism. This aligns with earlier work linking leader openness to employees' willingness to embrace organisational change (Daft, 2005). To our surprise, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Emotional Stability did not affect job satisfaction whatsoever. Perhaps the work in busy kitchens requires operational clarity rather than social traits. This departs from Judge and Bono's (2000) finding that extraversion is a consistent predictor of leadership emergence in general organisational settings, suggesting that the operational demands of restaurant work may weight structural over interpersonal leadership qualities more heavily than in other industries.

The Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Job Retention

Another key outcome of this research study is the statistically significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and job retention ($\beta = 0.267$, $p < 0.001$). In doing so, this proves that

Hypothesis 6 has been empirically validated. The above outcome confirms that the affective attitude towards the experience of working has a strong impact on reducing the intention of turning over. When employees view the work environment as supportive and feel good about it, they develop affective commitment that outweighs the temptation to explore external options.

Analysis of the Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

Despite the formulated hypotheses, hypotheses seven to eleven have been entirely dismissed. Job satisfaction cannot serve as a mediator in the association between a leader's personality and employee retention. Although personality characteristics affect satisfaction and retention independently, they do so independently. Therefore, job satisfaction does not guarantee long-term employee retention.

In accordance with Trait Activation Theory (TAT), situational triggers in the industry environment affect such relationships. This non-mediating pattern echoes Elpers and Westhuis's (2008) observation that structural and situational job conditions, rather than affective states alone, often drive turnover decisions in demanding service settings. Structural external influences often play the decisive role in whether a restaurant employee stays or leaves their job. Practical considerations like low pay, a challenging physical workload, and poor job prospects can easily overshadow the effect a leader's personality can have on an employee. Furthermore, there is a tendency toward rapid turnover in the industry; therefore, even a fully satisfied employee can leave for better monetary terms elsewhere.

Practical Implications

The empirical findings of this study offer several strategic pathways for hospitality management, particularly for restaurant operators, to enhance workforce stability and organizational performance.

Recruitment and Selection Strategies

This study provides substantial evidence for the need to implement formal personality tests in the recruitment process for leadership positions. Restaurant hiring managers are expected to use considerable strategic thinking during candidate interviews. Hiring highly conscientious leaders is an effective way to encourage continuous daily satisfaction among employees. On the other hand, the results have shown a direct negative correlation between the degree of Conscientiousness among leaders and job retention. Highly conscientious people tend to show their desire to micromanage, strictly follow rules, or overload others. In such a dynamic atmosphere in the kitchen or dining room, the resulting pressure will force employees to quit. On the contrary, leaders with high levels of such qualities already have an advantage in fostering psychological safety and workplace satisfaction.

Leadership Development and Operational Structure

When it comes to current management, training must include practices that align with behavior and support the structural consistency subordinates need. Conscientiousness is one of the main factors affecting employees' satisfaction; thus, an organization needs to prepare its leaders to perform operational tasks precisely. The leaders need to focus on predictability to provide

subordinates with psychological safety. The employment of the above practical methods helps to reduce role ambiguity and frustration. It is also important to develop empathy and conflict resolution skills. Despite the fact that many leaders do not have high scores on agreeableness by nature, they still can learn skills that will act as buffers against constant interpersonal conflicts in a service setting.

Enhancing Multidimensional Retention Strategies

The important implication that can be derived from the lack of mediation in the above research is that job satisfaction is just one of many aspects of retention. The hospitality industry needs to deal with retention in an integrated way. It is not sufficient anymore to see the job just as a transaction. Instead, it should involve support, fairness, and recognition, since the results have shown that mere job satisfaction alone does not suffice for preventing employees from leaving the job. The management should determine what the actual reasons behind the turnover are. The necessity of doing so includes, among other things, the use of simple strategies, like adjusting pay, scheduling, and workload.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings of the study, leadership in the restaurant setting is associated with a very individualized process where both leadership qualities and leadership behavior have an important bearing on outcomes. Conscientiousness and Openness are identified as important predictors of a favorable work environment and play a prominent role in affecting the job satisfaction of employees. On the contrary, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Emotional Stability of the leader do not affect job satisfaction in a statistically significant way currently. Notably, job satisfaction itself did not mediate the relationship between any of the five personality traits and job retention, indicating that the mechanism proposed in this study's central research question was not supported by the data. However, due to the complexity of these relationships, creating a good work environment is to be viewed as a strategy.

In the end, solving the prolonged turnover problem in restaurants requires determining qualities that will ensure stability, empathy, and responsibility of leadership. It would be desirable to conduct research using a longitudinal study to determine additional mediators such as organizational communication and organizational support. Qualitative follow-up work could also help explain why job satisfaction failed to mediate the personality-retention relationship in this setting, and replication across multiple regions and restaurant segments would help establish how far these findings generalise beyond Dungun, Terengganu.

It should be pointed out that there is one limitation inherent to the current study, which consists in the internal consistency of some measuring devices used. Personality was measured by means of the Big Five Inventory-Extra Short form (BFI-XS) – a valid tool for assessing personality among different populations. However, some variables showed low values of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This result does not cast doubt on the results of the study but points to the need for further work aimed at testing the reliability of personality measurement devices used among the general population in a stressful service industry. Beyond this measurement issue, the study is also limited by its cross-sectional design, which precludes causal inference; its reliance on a non-probability sample drawn from a single district, which constrains generalisability to other regions and restaurant types; and its use of self-reported survey data, which may be subject to common method bias.

-
- Acknowledgements:** The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, UiTM Terengganu, for providing the necessary resources and support throughout this research.
- Funding Statement:** No Funding
- Conflict of Interest Statement:** The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. All authors have contributed to this work and approved the final version of the manuscript for submission to the International Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management (JTHER).
- Ethics Statement:** This study was conducted in accordance with ethical research standards. All procedures involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The data collected were used solely for academic purposes.
- Author Contribution Statement:** All authors contributed significantly to the development of this manuscript. Author 1 was responsible for the conceptualization, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results. Author 2 contributed to the literature review, drafting, and critical revision of the manuscript. Author 3 handled methodology, and overall supervision of the study. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript before submission.
-

References

- Austin, M. J. & Martin, M. (1996) Understanding Socially Inhibited Behaviors in Managers, *Administration in Social Work*, 20:2, 1-13, DOI: 10.1300/J147v20n02_01
- Bajaba, A., Bajaba, S., Algarni, M., Basahal, A., & Basahel, S. (2021). Adaptive Managers as Emerging Leaders During the COVID-19 Crisis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. frontiersin. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.661628>
- Coronado-Maldonado I, Benítez-Márquez MD. Emotional intelligence, leadership, and work teams: A hybrid literature review. *Heliyon*. 2023 Sep 20;9(10):e20356. doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e20356. PMID: 37790975; PMCID: PMC10543214
- Daft, R. L. (2005). *The Leadership Experience*, (3rd ed.). Mason, Ohio: South-Western, Thomson Corporation.
- De Cremer, D. (2003). Why inconsistent leadership is regarded as procedurally unfair: The importance of social self-esteem concerns. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 33(4), 535–550. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.162>
- Di Iorio, C. K. (2005). Measurement in health behavior: methods for research evaluation. Chapter 10. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, USA, pp. 176–210.
- Elpers, K., & Westhuis, D. (2008). Organizational Leadership and Its Impact on Social Workers' Job Satisfaction: A National Study. *Administration in Social Work*, 32, 26-43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03643100801922399>
- Ghani, B., Zada, M., Memon, K. R., Ullah, R., Khattak, A., Han, H., Montes, A. A., & Castillo, L. A. (2022). Challenges and strategies for employee retention in the hospitality industry: A review. *Sustainability*, 14(5), 1–26. Mdpi. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14052885>
- Ghazali, H., Zuraina Dato' Mansor, & Ishak, M. (2023). Turnover Intention among Employees in the Restaurant Industry: A Lesson Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Academic Research in Economics and Management Sciences*, 12(4). <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarems/v12-i4/19775>
- Hair, J.F., Hult, G.T.M., Ringle, C.M. and Sarstedt, M. (2017) *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)*. 2nd Edition, Sage Publications Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Hinton, P. R., McMurray, I., Brownlow, C., & Terry, P. C. (2023). SPSS explained. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429350863>
- Hoang, G., Yang, M., & Luu, T. T. (2023). Ethical Leadership in Tourism and Hospitality management: a Systematic Literature Review and Research Agenda. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 114(103563), 103563–103563. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2023.103563>
- Howard, Jason James, "The Relationships of Perceived Supervisor and Peer Support on Job Embeddedness and Turnover Intent in Special Operations Post COVID-19" (2024). Doctoral Dissertations and Projects. 5186. <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/5186>
- Judge, T. A., & Bono, J. E. (2000). Five-factor model of personality and transformational leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(5), 751–765. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.85.5.751>
- Kiarie, M. A. W., Maru, L. C., & Cheruiyot, T. K. (2017). Leader personality traits and employee job satisfaction in the media sector, Kenya. *The TQM Journal*, 29(1), 133–146. <https://doi.org/10.1108/tqm-09-2015-0117>

- Kyndt, E., Dochy, F., Michielsen, M., & Moeyaert, B. (2009). Employee Retention: Organizational and Personal Perspectives. *Vocations and Learning*, 2(3), 195–215. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12186-009-9024-7>
- Li, Y. (2023). The impact of personality traits on work performance. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 180, 03018. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202318003018>
- Park, J., & Min, H. (Kelly). (2020). Turnover intention in the hospitality industry: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 90(90), 102599. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102599>
- Saleem, A., Abrar, M., Bari, M. W., & Bashir, M. (2024). Leader's ethical behavior: A precursor to employees' well-being through emotions management. *Acta Psychologica*, 249, 104453–104453. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104453>
- Sobaih, A. E. E., & Hasanein, A. M. (2020). Herzberg's Theory of Motivation and Job satisfaction: Does It Work for Hotel Industry in Developing countries? *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 19(3), 1–25. Taylor & Francis Online. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332845.2020.1737768>
- Soto, C. J., & John, O. P. (2017). The next Big Five Inventory (BFI-2): Developing and assessing a hierarchical model with 15 facets to enhance bandwidth, fidelity, and predictive power. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 113(1), 117–143. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000096>
- Tett, R. P., Simonet, D. V., Walser, B., & Brown, C. (2021). Trait Activation Theory: A review of the literature and applications to five lines of personality dynamics research. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 8, 259–284. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012420-062228>