

# From Traits to Tenure: Unpacking the Role of Meaningful Work in Hospitality Turnover Intentions

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## Abstract

This conceptual study investigates the impact of personality traits on employee turnover intention within the hospitality industry, emphasizing the mediating role of meaningful work and the moderating role of transformational leadership. Grounded in the Theory of Purposeful Work Behaviour (TPWB), the study integrates insights from personality psychology and transformational leadership theory to propose a comprehensive framework. It explores how transformational leadership enhances employees' perceptions of meaningful work, thereby influencing the relationship between individual personality dimensions and their intention to leave. The proposed model suggests that transformational leadership fosters a stronger sense of purpose, particularly among employees with traits such as conscientiousness and agreeableness, ultimately reducing turnover intention. Meaningful work acts as a crucial mediating mechanism, enabling personality traits to translate into greater job attachment when employees find alignment between their personal values and job roles. This framework offers novel insights into the interplay between personality, leadership, and meaningful work, with practical implications for leadership development and employee retention strategies in high-turnover sectors like hospitality.

**Keywords:** Personality Traits, Transformational Leadership, Meaningful Work, Employee Turnover Intention, TPWB, Hospitality Industry

## 1. The Introduction

Employee turnover has been a critical challenge to organizational sustainability, particularly in service-driven industries (Park & Min, 2020).

Recent studies underscore that personality traits, particularly those in the Big Five model (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism), play a pivotal role in shaping employee attitudes, job satisfaction, and turnover decisions (Zimmerman, 2008; Miao et al., 2020). For example, employees high in conscientiousness tend to exhibit stronger organizational commitment, while those high in neuroticism are more susceptible to stress and burnout, increasing the likelihood of attrition (Liu, Wang, & Liao, 2023). However, personality alone may not explain turnover intentions without accounting for contextual variables such as leadership and job meaning.

The hospitality industry, being a service industry, is especially vulnerable to high turnover rates due to its demanding nature and intensive customer orientation. The hospitality industry

is characterized by long and irregular working hours, high stress, low pay, and limited opportunities for career advancement. The sector consistently reports higher attrition rates compared to other service industries (Deery & Jago, 2015; Kang & Park, 2023). These factors contribute to job dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and ultimately, decisions to leave (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016; Liu et al., 2022). Given the industry's reliance on frontline employees to deliver consistent service quality, persistent turnover poses risks not only to operational efficiency but also to customer satisfaction and brand reputation.

Within this context, researchers have found that transformational leadership is an emerging and key organizational factor that can mitigate turnover intention. (Lee, Hom, Eberly, & Li, 2022; Buil, Martínez, & Matute, 2019). Leaders who inspire, intellectually stimulate, and show individualized consideration for employees have been shown to enhance motivation, engagement, and retention (Hoch et al., 2018; Buil, Martínez, & Matute, 2019). Moreover, transformational leaders can create a more meaningful work environment by connecting employees' roles to a greater purpose—an aspect shown to reduce turnover intention and increase job satisfaction (Lysova et al., 2019; Allan, Batz-Barbarich, Sterling, & Tay, 2019). This is particularly relevant in hospitality, where roles are often repetitive and emotionally demanding.

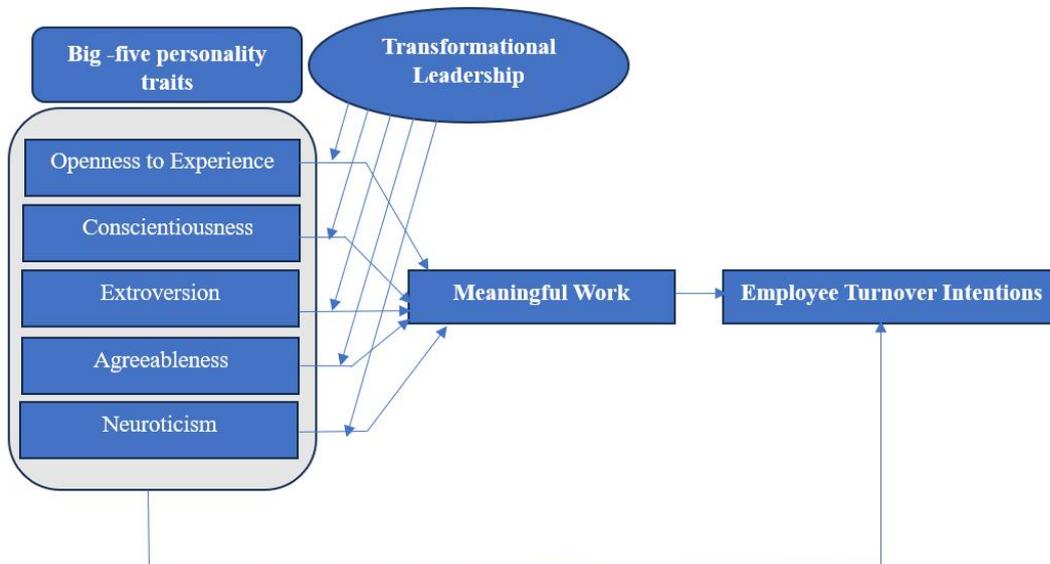
Despite growing recognition of the importance of leadership and personality in employee outcomes, few studies have explored how these elements interact within the hospitality sector. While prior research has examined the independent effects of personality traits, leadership, and meaningful work, there is a lack of integrated frameworks that assess their combined influence on turnover intentions in service-heavy environments. This gap is especially notable in empirical studies focusing on how transformational leadership might moderate the personality-turnover relationship, or how meaningful work might mediate it, within the hospitality context.

This study is therefore motivated by the need to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework that investigates the interplay between the Big Five personality traits and turnover intention, with meaningful work as a mediating variable and transformational leadership as a moderating variable. By addressing a significant gap in the existing literature, this research contributes to both theory and practice, offering actionable insights for improving employee retention in an industry that is vital yet perennially challenged by workforce instability.

## **2. Theoretical background and propositions**

The Theory of Purposeful Work Behavior (TPWB), Transformational Leadership Theory, and Personality Theory collectively serve as the theoretical foundation for this conceptual model. TPWB posits that individuals are driven by higher-order goals shaped by their personality traits, and that meaningful work emerges when job roles align with these intrinsic goals (Barrick et al., 2013). Personality Theory, particularly the Big Five model, explains how stable individual differences—such as conscientiousness, openness, or neuroticism— influence work attitudes and behaviors, including the propensity to stay with or leave an organization. Transformational Leadership Theory contributes a contextual lens by suggesting that leaders who inspire, intellectually stimulate, and show individualized consideration can shape how employees interpret their roles and the value they derive from them. Together, these theories help explain the complex interplay between personal dispositions, perceived meaningfulness of work, and leadership style, and how this interaction influences turnover intentions within the high-pressure, people-oriented environment of the hospitality industry.

Figure 1.  
 Proposed Conceptual  
 framework



## 2.1 Operating definition

### 2.1.1 The Big Five Personality Traits (BFT)

According to numerous studies, individual characteristics like personality significantly influence turnover (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, and Meglino, 1979; Kao and Liu, 2025). According to Colquitt et al. (2000), personality refers to the relatively constant traits individuals possess (apart from their skills) that impact their thoughts and actions. Consequently, a strong connection exists between a person's personality and identity, differentiating them from others, as reflected in the consistent ways they think, feel, and act.

#### *Openness to Experience*

Those who score high in Openness are typically curious, imaginative, and open to exploring novel concepts. In the workplace, individuals high in Openness are more likely to adapt to change, seek out new opportunities, and embrace innovative approaches to their work. These employees are more likely to find their roles fulfilling and engaging (McCrae & John, 1992). However, in some cases, high Openness might also lead to job dissatisfaction if the work environment is perceived as too routine or restrictive, potentially increasing turnover intention (Zimmerman, 2008).

#### *Conscientiousness*

Highly conscientious people are often disciplined, goal-oriented, and reliable. Conscientiousness is strongly associated with positive work behaviours, such as higher job performance, greater persistence, and a strong sense of duty. Employees who score high in conscientiousness are less likely to leave their jobs because they are more committed and responsible (Salgado, 2002). Their methodical approach to work and reliability makes them valuable to employers, reducing turnover intention (Barrick & Mount, 1991).

#### *Extroversion*

Sociability, assertiveness, and a high level of energy characterize extroversion. Extroverts are outgoing, enthusiastic, and enjoy being around others. Extraverted individuals often excel in roles that require social interaction, teamwork, and leadership. Their positive outlook and energy can enhance workplace morale and job satisfaction, making them less likely to

experience turnover intention (Judge & Bono, 2000). However, extroverts may feel disengaged in roles that are more solitary or lack social interaction, which could increase the likelihood of turnover (Zimmerman, 2008).

#### *Agreeableness*

Highly agreeable people are typically warm, kind, and considerate. Employees high in Agreeableness are often better at maintaining harmonious workplace relationships, which can lead to greater job satisfaction and lower turnover intention. Their cooperative nature helps in fostering a positive work environment, reducing conflicts, and enhancing team cohesion (Salgado, 2002). However, their aversion to conflict may also lead them to avoid necessary confrontations, potentially contributing to job dissatisfaction if workplace issues are not addressed (Mount, Ilies, & Johnson, 2006).

#### *Neuroticism*

Neuroticism is associated with emotional instability, anxiety, and a propensity for negative emotions. Individuals high in Neuroticism may struggle with stress and may be more prone to experience feelings of insecurity or dissatisfaction. According to Judge, Heller, and Mount (2002), employees with high neuroticism are more likely to feel stressed and emotionally exhausted, which may make them want to leave the company. Particularly in high-pressure settings, their propensity to concentrate on the drawbacks of their work may raise the risk of turnover (Salgado, 2002).

Personality traits serve as fundamental predictors of various work-related behaviors, including employee retention (Judge et al., 2002). Each of these traits can significantly influence an individual's work experiences and their likelihood of considering leaving an organization. For instance, because of the tendency toward stress and emotional instability, high neuroticism has been consistently associated with increased turnover intention (Salgado, 2002). Conversely, since conscientious people are more dependable and dedicated, and agreeable people are more cooperative and harmonic in their professional relationships, these traits are frequently linked to lower turnover intention (Zimmerman, 2008).

#### *2.1.2 Employee Turnover Intentions (ETI)*

When an employee voluntarily decides to leave their company or career, this is referred to as employee turnover intention. Voluntary turnover is acknowledged as an intricate, multifaceted, and multidisciplinary notion. According to Udechukwu and Mujtaba (2007), the problem of voluntary turnover involves a variety of social, economic, and psychological elements in addition to the employee and organization. Additionally, studies reveal that voluntary turnover happens when workers decide to leave the company on their own initiative (Lambert, 2001). This intention to quit thereafter drives actual quitting behaviour.

An employee's natural disposition includes their turnover intention (TOI) (Berndt, 1981). High turnover intention can result in major organizational losses and impede the accomplishment of key corporate objectives (Kumar et al., 2021). An organization's reputation, profitability, performance, dedication, and overall vision are all adversely affected when a highly competent individual leaves (Muzaffar & Javed, 2021; Kakar et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2021). Retaining skilled workers is essential for corporate success or failure in the quickly evolving and fiercely competitive global market of today (Sepahvand&Khodashahri, 2021).

The association between turnover intention and its determinants may be mediated by a variety of features that researchers have uncovered (Kakar et al., 2019; Kakar et al., 2022). The desire to leave a company in pursuit of greater chances is known as turnover intention (Lestari &Margarethaa, 2021). Since it contributes to a lack of skilled personnel, impedes

economic progress, and raises employee turnover, staff retention has emerged as one of the most important issues facing company executives today (Sepahvand&Khodashahri, 2021).

### *2.1.3 Meaningful Work (MW)*

When workers have a strong sense of belonging to their company, they are more likely to perform well (Fry, 2003; Malik et al., 2011). "The value of a work goal or purpose, assessed against an individual's personal ideals or standards" is the definition of meaningful work (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009). Interest in meaningful employment has significantly increased over time. More and more scholars agree that labour is essential to human existence and frequently provides the main source of meaning, purpose, and individual identity (Michaelson, 2019). By highlighting the fact that people are active agents who judge the significance of their work according to their perspectives and experiences within a larger sociocultural context, this paper takes a normative approach to meaningful work (Autin & Allan, 2020; Barrett & Dailey, 2018; Rosso et al., 2010). When work satisfies the desire for personal agency through self-expression, development, creativity, and mastery, it is deemed meaningful. Additionally, it becomes significant when it fulfills the need to build relationships and meaningful connections with other people (Coetzee, 2021; Steger et al., 2012; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003).

Additionally, a key component of employee retention is meaningful work. Employees who see their work as more than simply a source of income become an integral part of who they are and a source of pride. As a result, they are less likely to leave the company, which lowers turnover rates (Allan, Autin, & Duffy, 2016). Furthermore, meaningful work frequently leads to increased loyalty and organizational dedication, which improves employee retention even more.

### *2.1.4 Transformational Leadership (TL)*

In this concept, transformational leadership plays a crucial moderating role through motivating, encouraging, and cultivating a positive work atmosphere. By fostering a more upbeat and stimulating work environment, leaders who demonstrate transformational behaviours might mitigate the detrimental influence of specific personality traits on turnover intention (Avolio & Bass, 2004). For example, if they work under a transformational leader who offers emotional support and inspires confidence, even individuals with high neuroticism—who might normally have a greater turnover intention—may be less likely to leave (Wang et al., 2011). Similarly, transformational leaders can strengthen the positive influence of Conscientiousness and Agreeableness, reinforcing commitment and reducing turnover intention. Transformational leadership enhances job performance through work engagement, with leaders' managerial skills strengthening this relationship in the Italian hospitality industry. This highlights the importance of hiring and training transformational leaders to boost employee engagement and overall performance (Junaid et al., 2022).

### *Inspirational Motivation (IM)*

The ability of a leader to present an engaging future vision that appeals to followers is known as inspirational motivation. Transformational leaders motivate and inspire their staff by setting high standards and demonstrating optimism about reaching objectives. Inspirational motivation can raise staff morale and engagement by providing people with a clear sense of purpose. Employees are more inclined to align their objectives with the

organization's when motivated by their leaders, which lowers the likelihood of turnover and increases job satisfaction (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

#### *Intellectual Stimulation (IS)*

It involves inspiring followers to analyse issues critically, rethink conventional approaches, and explore new and creative solutions to problems. Transformational leaders cultivate a culture that nurtures innovation and values independent thought. Transformational leaders foster a deeper grasp of their work and problem-solving abilities in their staff members by encouraging intellectual stimulation. Because they believe their work is interesting and significant, employees who are intellectually stimulated are more inclined to stick with the company (Bass, 1985). Leaders with this trait are deeply embedded in the social sector, as followers or employees are generally aware of the consequences that directly influence their abilities and task achievement capabilities (Khalil et al., 2018).

#### *Individualized Consideration*

Personal consideration entails identifying and meeting each employee's particular requirements, goals, and strengths. Serving as mentors or coaches, transformational leaders offer customized guidance and inspiration to aid staff members in reaching their greatest potential. When leaders provide individualized consideration, employees feel valued and understood, which can enhance their loyalty and reduce turnover intention. These leaders foster self-confidence and self-respect among their followers by recognizing and appreciating their efforts toward task achievement (Sharma & Singh, 2017).

#### *Individualized Influence*

It relates to a leader's capacity to set an example by acting with integrity, exhibiting high moral standards, and fostering trust and respect between people. Followers admire leaders who exhibit individualized influence, often drawing inspiration from them. They lead by example, aligning their actions with values that followers respect, which encourages followers to emulate the leader's behaviour. This form of leadership can reduce turnover intention by creating a sense of respect and alignment with organizational values (Wang et al., 2011). Similarly, employees high in agreeableness may respond positively to a leader who exhibits individualized influence, feeling emotionally connected and less likely to leave the organization (Costa & McCrae, 1992). On the other hand, neurotic employees, who often experience anxiety and insecurity, may benefit from the stability and support provided by leaders with individualized influence, reducing their desire to leave (Wang et al., 2011). Thus, individualized influence may buffer the negative effects of neuroticism on turnover intention by providing emotional security and stability within the organization (Huang et al., 2016). 3.

## *2.2 Propositions*

### *2.2.1 Direct Influence of Big Five Personality Traits on Turnover Intention and Meaningful Work*

**Personality Theory:** Employees with high neuroticism may display worry and emotional instability, increasing the chance of turnover, while conscientious employees are typically more responsible and less likely to quit (Judge et al., 2002).

Because of their well-organized, dependable, and goal-oriented behaviour, employees with high conscientiousness are less likely to show intentions to leave their jobs (Zimmerman, 2008). Additionally, their sense of accountability and dependability leads to increased job satisfaction and commitment (Carter & Mossholder, 2019). Highly conscientious employees are more likely to find meaning in their jobs, as their goal-oriented and disciplined nature boosts their involvement in purposeful tasks. (Tims, Derks, & Bakker, 2021). Conscientious individuals are typically diligent and goal-oriented, and they find meaning in work that aligns

with their values and achievements. When they perceive their tasks as contributing to their goals and receiving recognition, they experience higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intention (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012; Salgado, 2002). They are less likely to quit their occupations and tend to be more dedicated to them (Salgado, 2002). In the hospitality industry, which often requires attention to detail and a strong work ethic, Conscientious individuals may exhibit lower turnover intention as they align well with the demands of the job.

Thus, the following propositions (P) are formulated:

**P1a:** Conscientiousness significantly influences turnover intentions.

**P2a:** Conscientiousness significantly influences meaningful work.

Employees high in Openness to Experience may exhibit variable turnover intentions, as their desire for new experiences can lead to either enhanced job satisfaction or a higher likelihood of seeking new opportunities elsewhere (Matzler et al., 2011) and as their desire for new experiences can lead them to seek novel job opportunities if their current roles do not provide sufficient stimulation (Chan & Ao, 2022). Employees high in Openness to Experience are more likely to perceive their work as meaningful because they are open to new experiences and creative engagement with tasks (Harju & Hakanen, 2019). Jobs that offer creative challenges and align with their values are likely to be perceived as meaningful, leading to greater job satisfaction and reduced turnover intention (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012; Grant, 2008). People with high Openness levels have a great thirst for intellectual stimulation, creativity, and novelty. They may grow unsatisfied if their demand for novelty is not realized in the hospitality industry, where roles can be routine or standardized, and this could result in a higher intention to leave (Zimmerman, 2008). Nonetheless, positions that foster innovation and problem-solving skills could please these workers and lessen the chance that they will quit.

Thus:

**P1b:** Openness to Experience significantly influences turnover intentions.

**P2b:** Openness to Experience significantly influences meaningful work.

Employees with high levels of extroversion are less likely to express plans to quit because their gregariousness and good relationships with colleagues boost their commitment to the firm and job happiness, which in turn leads to higher interpersonal success and fulfilment at work. (Judge et al., 1999). (Wang, Yang, & Liu, 2021). Social interaction energizes extroverts, and they engage more in roles that involve teamwork and influence. When their work environment provides such opportunities, they find the work more meaningful, resulting in lower turnover intention (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Social environments help extroverts thrive, and interaction with others energizes them. In the hospitality sector, where customer interaction is frequent, extroverts may find their work rewarding and be less likely to leave (Barrick & Mount, 1991). However, if the social aspect of the job is lacking, even Extraverts might consider leaving for more stimulating environments. Thus:

**P1c:** Extroversion significantly influences turnover intention.

**P2c:** Extroversion significantly influences meaningful work.

Employees high in Agreeableness are less likely to show signs of wanting to leave because of their cooperative nature and ability to maintain harmonious relationships (Mount et al., 1998) as their cooperative and harmonious nature leads to better workplace relationships and a supportive work environment (Bui & Zeng, 2023). Employees high in Agreeableness tend to find their work meaningful because of their cooperative nature and empathy, which aligns

with roles that contribute to others' well-being (Allan & Duffy, 2018). Agreeable workers value positive relationships and teamwork. They find their work more fulfilling in cooperative and supportive settings, which increases job satisfaction and reduces their likelihood of leaving. (Mount, Ilies, & Johnson, 2006). Agreeable individuals are cooperative, warm, and friendly. They tend to avoid conflict and seek harmonious relationships in the workplace. In the hospitality sector, where teamwork and customer service are paramount, Agreeable employees may experience lower turnover intention because of their alignment with the industry's relational aspects (Mount, Ilies, & Johnson, 2006).

Thus:

**P1d:** Agreeableness significantly influences turnover intention.

**P2d:** Agreeableness significantly influences meaningful work.

Neurotic employees are more likely to feel bad and dissatisfied with their jobs, which increases their desire to leave. Workers who exhibit high levels of neuroticism are less likely to find a purpose in their work. due to their tendency toward negative emotions and stress, which overshadow positive work experiences (Van Wingerden and Poell, 2019). Neurotic individuals are prone to stress and negative emotions, which can impair their perception of work meaning and lead to higher turnover intention if the work environment exacerbates their emotional instability (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). Individuals high in Neuroticism are prone to anxiety, stress, and emotional instability. These traits are often associated with higher turnover intention due to the difficulties these individuals face in coping with job-related stress, especially in high-pressure environments like hospitality (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). Neurotic employees may be more likely to leave if the job exacerbates their stress or emotional challenges.

Thus:

**P1e:**Neuroticism significantly influences turnover intention.

**P2e:**Neuroticism significantly influences meaningful work.

### *2.2.2 Meaningful Work as a Mediator Between Personality Traits and Turnover Intention*

According to the TPWB, people are motivated to accomplish meaningful work that fits with their long-term objectives and fundamental self-evaluations (Barrick et al., 2013). Workers are more engaged and less inclined to quit when they feel that their work has meaning. Transformational leaders foster environments where employees perceive their work as more meaningful, which in turn reduces turnover intention (Rosso et al., 2010). Conscientious employees with high perceptions of meaningful work will have lower turnover intention also employees who find their work meaningful are likely to experience greater job satisfaction and engagement, which decreases their turnover intention (Steger et al., 2012). Employees with high Openness are motivated by meaningful and stimulating work, which enhances their job satisfaction and reduces turnover intention (Grant, 2008). Extraverts who experience meaningful work through social interactions and leadership opportunities are likely to be more satisfied and less inclined to leave the organization (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Agreeable individuals who find meaning in cooperative and harmonious work environments are less likely to leave the organization (Mount et al., 2006). While Neurotic employees may struggle with finding meaning, those who do perceive their work as meaningful are likely to experience reduced stress and lower turnover intention (Rosso, Dekas, &Wrzesniewski, 2010).

**Conscientiousness and Meaningful Work:** A sense of duty and a desire to achieve drive conscientious employees. They are likely to perceive their work as meaningful when it aligns with their personal goals and values, particularly if their efforts lead to tangible results or recognition (Wrzesniewski, 2003). This heightened perception of meaningful work can reduce their turnover intention, as they feel that their work is valuable and impactful (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012).

**P3a:** Meaningful work mediates the relationship between Conscientiousness and turnover intention

**Openness to Experience and Meaningful Work:** Employees high in Openness are drawn to roles that offer variety, creativity, and intellectual challenges. When such individuals find their work stimulating and meaningful, their job satisfaction increases, which in turn lowers their turnover intention (Steger et al., 2012). The sense of purpose derived from meaningful work fulfils their need for growth and exploration, making them more likely to stay with the organization.

**P3b:** Meaningful work mediates the relationship between Openness to Experience and turnover intention.

**Extraversion and Meaningful Work:** Extraverts may find work more meaningful when it involves social interaction, teamwork, and the opportunity to influence others. In such environments, they are likely to experience higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intention because the social aspects of the job align with their personality traits (Grant, 2008).

**P3c:** Meaningful work mediates the relationship between Extraversion and turnover intention.

**Agreeableness and Meaningful Work:** Employees with high agreeableness combined with a sense of meaningful work can significantly reduce turnover intention. Employees who believe their employment has meaning and is consistent with their personal beliefs are more inclined to stick with a company. Since agreeable individuals are motivated by social harmony and a desire to contribute, they are less likely to leave organizations that foster meaningful work environments (Steger et al., 2012).

**P3d:** Meaningful work mediates the relationship between Agreeableness and turnover intention.

**Neuroticism and Meaningful Work:** Neurotic employees might initially struggle with finding meaning in their work due to their tendency to focus on negative aspects of their environment. However, when these individuals perceive their work as meaningful, perhaps through supportive leadership or meaningful tasks, they may experience reduced stress and anxiety, which can lower their turnover intention (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010).

**P3e:** Meaningful work mediates the relationship between Neuroticism and turnover intention.

### *2.2.3 Transformational Leadership as a Moderator Between Personality Traits, Meaningful Work*

**Transformational Leadership Theory:** Transformational leadership enhances employee engagement by inspiring and motivating employees through vision, support, and recognition (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders can increase the beneficial benefits of qualities like conscientiousness and agreeableness and lessen the negative effects of traits like neuroticism by fostering an inspiring and empowering work environment (Wang et al., 2011). Conscientious workers' sense of their work as meaningful can be improved by transformational leaders who acknowledge and encourage their efforts, which further lowers the intention to leave (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Open employees' sense of purpose in their job can be increased by transformational leaders who create an inventive and intellectually

engaging work environment, which lowers the intention to leave (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Extraverted workers will find their employment more important and be less likely to leave if transformational leaders give them opportunities for leadership and social interaction (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Agreeable employees' impression of meaningful work can be improved by transformational leaders who create a collaborative and encouraging work environment, which lowers their desire to leave (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Neurotic workers can manage their stress and emotional instability with the help of transformational leaders who offer support and foster a meaningful work environment. This will lessen their intention to leave (Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011). So:

Transformational leadership has the potential to moderate the impact of personality traits on meaningful work. Leaders who exhibit transformational qualities—such as providing inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—can either amplify or mitigate the effects of personality traits on employee outcomes.

**Amplifying Positive Traits:** Transformational leaders can enhance the positive effects of traits like Conscientiousness and Openness by creating an environment that aligns with these traits. For example, a leader who emphasizes goal achievement and recognizes individual contributions can make work more meaningful for Conscientious employees, thereby reducing their turnover intention (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

**Mitigating Negative Traits:** Transformational leadership can also mitigate the negative effects of Neuroticism by providing support and a sense of security. Leaders who offer individualized consideration can help Neurotic employees manage their stress and anxiety, making the work environment more tolerable and reducing turnover intention (Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011). By creating a supportive and understanding workplace, transformational leaders can help these employees find more meaning in their work, even if they struggle with emotional instability.

**Enhancing the sense of Meaningful Work:** By coordinating work activities with workers' values and objectives, transformational leaders can greatly enhance the sense of meaningful work for all personality types. A transformative leader might, for example, emphasize the work's wider significance, giving it greater significance for staff members.

**P4a:** Transformational leadership moderates the relationship between Conscientiousness and meaningful work.

**P4b:** Transformational leadership moderates the relationship between Openness to Experience and meaningful work.

**P4c:** Transformational leadership moderates the relationship between Extraversion and meaningful work.

**P4d:** Transformational leadership moderates the relationship between Agreeableness and meaningful work.

**P4e:** Transformational leadership moderates the relationship between Neuroticism and turnover intention

Through the TPWB lens, the combined impact of transformative leadership, meaningful work, and personality attributes may be comprehended. According to this notion, transformational leadership fosters meaningful work that lowers turnover by bringing employee goals into line with the organization's overarching mission. Workers with personality qualities that complement transformational leadership styles are more likely to find their work more fulfilling, which has a direct impact on whether they decide to stay with the company or quit.

### 3. Discussion

This study sought to examine how the Big Five personality traits influence turnover intentions in the hospitality industry, with meaningful work acting as a mediator and transformational leadership as a moderator. Drawing on the Theory of Purposeful Work Behavior (TPWB), the results underscore that personality traits are not only predictors of work-related attitudes but also shape how individuals perceive the meaningfulness of their work. Specifically, traits such as conscientiousness, openness, and agreeableness were negatively associated with turnover intentions, primarily through their positive effect on meaningful work. In contrast, neuroticism was positively linked to turnover intentions, likely due to its association with lower emotional stability and greater job dissatisfaction.

The findings reinforce recent research highlighting the role of meaningful work as a psychological mechanism through which personality traits influence organizational outcomes (Siddiqui et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2021). Employees who perceive their work as purposeful are more likely to experience intrinsic motivation and lower withdrawal behavior, consistent with the TPWB framework.

Moreover, transformational leadership significantly moderated the relationship between personality and meaningful work, suggesting that leadership style can enhance or weaken the expression of personality traits in the workplace. Leaders who demonstrate vision, inspiration, and individualized support can help employees, especially those predisposed to seeking purpose, to find deeper meaning in their roles (Jin et al., 2021). This not only amplifies the positive effects of favorable personality traits but also buffers against the negative influence of traits like neuroticism.

### Discussion

This conceptual exploration began with the persistent challenge of employee turnover in the hospitality industry, a sector marked by high service demands, emotional labour, and significant human capital volatility. At its core, this study sought to shift the conversation from purely structural explanations of turnover to a more nuanced understanding rooted in individual dispositions, psychological experiences, and leadership dynamics.

Drawing from the Theory of Purposeful Work Behaviour (TPWB), this paper underscored how personality traits shape not only behavioural tendencies but also how individuals perceive the meaningfulness of their work. Employees high in conscientiousness or agreeableness may find greater intrinsic value in tasks, relationships, and goals, whereas those higher in neuroticism may struggle to derive a sense of purpose, thus increasing their turnover intentions. In this light, **meaningful work** emerges as a critical psychological mechanism that connects who employees are with how they relate to their professional environment.

The discussion also highlighted the role of **transformational leadership** as a contextual moderator, one that can amplify the motivational benefits of positive traits or buffer the adverse effects of maladaptive ones. By fostering an environment where employees feel inspired, intellectually stimulated, and individually considered, transformational leaders play a vital role in reinforcing the experience of meaningful work and potentially altering turnover trajectories.

By unpacking these interconnections, this paper not only offers a person-centric model of turnover but also bridges gaps in existing literature that often treat personality, work meaning, and leadership in isolation. This integrative perspective encourages future empirical research

to explore the dynamic interplay between internal dispositions and external influences, particularly in high-turnover service contexts.

The central challenge of talent retention in the hospitality sector is not by emphasizing external interventions alone, but by shedding light on the internal psychological dynamics that shape employees' intentions and sense of purpose. By placing meaningful work at the core of the relationship between personality traits and turnover intentions, this study encourages a more human-centered and forward-looking perspective, one that can guide both scholarly exploration and practical action in creating more fulfilling and sustainable workplaces.

## **4. Implications**

### *4.1 Theoretical Implications*

This study makes several significant theoretical contributions to the field of organizational behavior, particularly in the domains of personality psychology, leadership, and employee retention. First and foremost, this study conceptually extends the Theory of Purposeful Work Behavior (TPWB) by applying its key propositions to the hospitality industry—a dynamic, high-turnover context. By integrating personality traits, perceptions of meaningful work, and leadership dynamics, the framework illustrates how TPWB can be used to explain the motivational processes that influence employees' intentions to stay or leave within service-intensive environments. TPWB posits that personality traits influence work outcomes through the pursuit of higher-order goals, such as meaningfulness. By demonstrating that meaningful work mediates the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and turnover intentions, Second, the research makes a novel theoretical integration by linking TPWB with transformational leadership theory, thus broadening the explanatory power of both frameworks. While TPWB emphasizes the individual and dispositional roots of work motivation, transformational leadership theory underscores the social and contextual factors that influence employee behavior. By positioning transformational leadership as a moderator, the study introduces a person-situation interactionist perspective that acknowledges how leadership behaviors can either enhance or suppress the expression of personality-driven needs for purpose at work. This adds to the growing body of literature advocating for integrative models that combine individual differences with contextual variables in explaining employee outcomes.

Third, the use of a moderated mediation model provides methodological sophistication and contributes to theory development by unpacking how and when personality traits lead to turnover intentions. Traditional trait-based models often overlook the underlying processes and boundary conditions. In contrast, this study identifies meaningful work as a key psychological mechanism and transformational leadership as a critical boundary condition, offering a layered understanding of the turnover process. This approach responds to recent scholarly calls for more mechanistic and conditional explanations in organizational behavior research, moving beyond direct effect models to explore the pathways and contingencies that shape human behavior at work (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 2023).

### *4.2 Practical Implications*

For practitioners, the study highlights the importance of hiring and developing employees with personality traits aligned with meaningful work experiences, particularly those high in conscientiousness and openness. HR departments should consider incorporating personality assessments in recruitment and development programs. Additionally, fostering a culture of

transformational leadership can significantly enhance employees' sense of purpose, making them less likely to leave. Training programs for managers should emphasize transformational leadership behaviors such as inspiring a shared vision, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation to enhance employee retention.

### **5. Limitations and future research**

While the study offers valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The cross-sectional design limits causal inferences, and the reliance on self-reported data may introduce common method bias. The study was also conducted in a single industry, hospitality, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other sectors. Furthermore, cultural and organizational contexts were not examined, which may influence how personality and leadership interact to shape perceptions of meaningful work.

Future studies could adopt a longitudinal design to better capture causal relationships and examine changes over time. Expanding the research to other industries and cultural contexts would enhance the generalizability of the findings. Future research might also explore other potential moderators (e.g., organizational culture, job autonomy) or mediators (e.g., psychological empowerment, job satisfaction) to enrich the understanding of personality-turnover dynamics. Integrating additional theoretical lenses, such as Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) or Self-Determination Theory (SDT), may also offer complementary insights.

### **6. Conclusion**

The results of this study contribute to the growing body of literature linking personality, motivation, and leadership to employee retention outcomes. It demonstrates that meaningful work serves as a crucial conduit through which personality traits influence turnover intentions. Furthermore, the study confirms that transformational leadership enhances this relationship, making it a key organizational lever for retaining talent. These findings validate the application of TPWB in the hospitality context and emphasize the importance of matching personality traits with leadership and meaningful work experiences to reduce turnover.

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