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## NGHIÊN CỨU VỀ ĐẶC ĐIỂM TÍNH CÁCH CỦA CÁC QUẢN LÝ KHÁCH SẠN CẤP TRUNG TẠI VIỆT NAM

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### **Tóm tắt**

Nghiên cứu được thực hiện nhằm nâng cao kiến thức về tầm quan trọng của các đặc điểm tính cách đối với các nhà quản lý khách sạn cấp trung tại Việt Nam. Mặc dù ngày càng có nhiều tài liệu về các nhà quản lý và các yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến sự nghiệp của họ, nhưng tài liệu này tập trung vào việc xem xét tác động của năm yếu tố tính cách, đó là hòa đồng (Agreeableness), tự chủ (Conscientiousness), bất ổn cảm xúc (Neuroticism), hướng ngoại (Extraversion), cởi mở (Openness). Bài viết sử dụng phương pháp nghiên cứu định lượng và tiến hành khảo sát dựa trên bảng câu hỏi với các mục đo lường tính cách. Kết quả được rút ra từ 245 câu trả lời. Theo kết quả nghiên cứu, phần lớn các nhà quản lý cấp trung trong lĩnh vực khách sạn có chung đặc điểm tính cách. Những đặc điểm này được liên kết chặt chẽ với hành vi và hoạt động hàng ngày của họ. Do sự tăng trưởng và hiệu suất của ngành khách sạn Việt Nam, cũng như mong muốn gia tăng giá trị trong ngành này, các nhà quản lý trong lĩnh vực này được dự đoán sẽ phải đối mặt với áp lực đáng kể để thực hiện tốt và thăng tiến sự nghiệp. Vì vậy, những phát hiện của nghiên cứu được thảo luận nhằm tạo điều kiện thuận lợi cho các chương trình đào tạo của các tổ chức, giúp cải thiện thành công trong công việc của nhân viên và đóng góp vào sự phát triển kinh tế chung của quốc gia nói chung và ngành nói riêng.

**Từ khóa:** đặc điểm tính cách, quản lý khách sạn cấp trung

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# A STUDY OF PERSONALITY FOR MIDDLE LEVEL HOTEL MANAGERS IN VIETNAM

## Abstract

This research advances knowledge of the significance of personality traits for middle managers in the Vietnamese hotel sector. Despite the fact that there is a growing body of literature on managers and the factors influencing their careers, this literature concentrates on examining the impact of five personality factors, namely extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, on middle-level managers' operational skills. Using a quantitative approach as the study methodology, questionnaires with personality measurement items were created. The outcomes were derived from 245 answers. According to study findings, the majority of middle managers in the hospitality sector share similar personality characteristics. These characteristics are closely linked to their behavior and day-to-day activities. Due to the growth and performance of Vietnam's hotel industry, as well as Vietnam's desire to add value to this industry, managers in this sector are anticipated to face significant pressure to perform well and advance their careers. As a result, the study's findings are discussed in terms of facilitating organizations' training programs, which improve employees' job success and contribute to the overall economic development of the nation in general and the industry in particular.

**Keywords:** personality traits, middle-level hotel managers

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## 1. Introduction

The post-Covid-19 hospitality industry is touted as a massive revenue generator because it helps revitalize the economies of nations with abundant natural resources like Vietnam. In reality, however, the legacy of the decline shows no sign of disappearing, continuing to weigh heavily on an economic sector that depends on the ability of people to pay and enjoy services. Vietnam's hotel industry, which is defined as an industry with long working hours, unstable work schedules, and high job demand, is currently experiencing an oversupply and a shortage of demand, as it seeks to serve industries but lacks customers. The dynamics of economic transformations in the world produce a remarkable influence on various components of contemporary business including its driving power which is the managerial staff.

Therefore, employees in the hospitality industry always prioritize career advancement and avoid replacement, particularly at the management level. In China, those who remain in the hotel industry must adhere to a restricted path that typically requires seven to fifteen years to advance beyond middle management. This is similar to the situation in the majority of countries in the region, especially developing nations such as Vietnam, where middle-level managers face numerous obstacles when attempting to increase their competitiveness and career advancement. Personality traits that distinguish individuals from others in the social structure (Smith et al., 2015) are an effective factor in the success of employees within an organization (Murray &

Mount, 1991). Organizational identification, which is viewed as the degree of similarity between an individual's personality traits and organizational values (Dutton et al., 1994), ensures that employees are successful in assisting organizations with managerial matters, advancing the organizational hierarchy, valuing their work, and enhancing service quality.

Despite the abundance of research on the correlation between career success and personality traits, no research has been conducted on Vietnam's middle-level hotel managers. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the importance of personality traits to the success of middle-level management teams at four- to five-star hotels in Vietnam, a country with abundant tourism resources where competition for management positions in the hospitality industry is fiercer than ever after the pandemic. This research will serve as a resource for enhancing the development skills of hotel managers in the Vietnamese market and throughout Southeast Asia. In addition, contributing to the knowledge base facilitates the development of a more comprehensive method for evaluating, rewarding, and promoting hotel employees.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Personality traits**

The way that personalities have been defined up until now has been broad, in regard to various researchers. According to Allport's (1937) research, the most common definition of personality is that personality is a collection of the ways we communicate with and respond to others around us, and it's frequently explicable through a list of quantifiable traits that we exhibit (Allport, 1961).

An early study on the structure of personality attempted to discover and classify persistent qualities that describe an individual's behavior, such as shyness, aggression, submissiveness, laziness, ambition, loyalty, and timidity. Even among psychologists, there is no consensus on how to characterize personality in terms of typical 'traits'. Several common personality traits may be categorized and explained using various psychological perspectives. The two most common and widely used models to identify and classify traits are Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Big Five Model. The MBTI can be a useful tool for enhancing self-awareness and career counseling but the results are often unrelated to work performance, so it's hard to evaluate career success. Although the MBTI lacks solid valid findings, an impressive volume of research supports the Big Five Model's thesis—that five basic characteristics underpin all others and account for the majority of significant variance in human personality (Oh et al., 2011 & Barrick, 2005). The Big Five factors are as follows (Robbins & Judge, 2007, 137):

(1) Extraversion is an indicator of a person's level of comfort in interpersonal relationships. In general, extroverts are more likely to be outgoing, confident, and friendly, whereas introverts are more likely to be reserved, shy, and silent.

(2) Agreeableness is a trait that identifies an individual's tendency to defer to other people. Those with high agreeableness are warm, trustworthy, and cooperative, whereas people with low agreeableness are cold, disagreeable, and antagonistic.

(3) Openness to experience: is characterized by a wide variety of interests held by the individual as well as a fascination with new things. Those that fall on the more closed end of the openness spectrum tend to be conventional and seek solace in the things they are accustomed to, in contrast to those who are more creative, inquisitive, and aesthetically sensitive.

(4) Conscientiousness is a measure of reliability, and a person who possesses a high level of this trait is responsible, organized, trustworthy, and persistent. Those that have a low score on this dimension are easily distracted, unorganized, and unreliable.

(5) Neuroticism: This dimension, which evaluates a person's capacity to handle stress, is also frequently referred to as emotional stability. Those who have good emotional stability are more likely to be calm, self-confident, and secure, whereas people who have high negative scores are more likely to be tense, worried, sad, and insecure.

### **3. Methodology**

A convenience sample of 33 resort hotels (12 five-star and 21 four-star), which were operated by both international and local chains in Vietnam were purposely selected to achieve the aim of the study. The survey hotels are either luxury resort hotels or luxury business hotels, each with a staff force of more than 250 employees and over 200 rooms.

Data were obtained via self-administered questionnaires with middle hotel managers from various departments such as front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, maintenance, accounting and purchase, public relations, and sales. The data collection process was conducted over three months during the moderate summer season in 2021.

The questionnaire included questions containing lists of precoded items for each of the constructs, which were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

To measure the personality of middle hotel managers, the Big Five Personality Traits model was used. It is considered one of the most popular and hailed foundations of other personality models (Nicholson et al., 2005). This big five model is applicable across various cultures, as a result of which numerous researches in this regard have been conducted that confirm its validity.

As for the scale development, the Big Five Traits were operationalized using the mini-IPIP, a 20-item short form of the 50-item International Personality Item Pool—Five-Factor Model measure (Goldberg, 1999), which was developed by Verma, Kumar, and Chandra (2017).

### **4. Findings**

#### **4.1 Profile of Respondents**

The demographics of respondents in the research are presented in Table 1. The sample size of the survey is 245.

Female and male participants accounted for 41.6% and 58.4% of the sample, respectively. The average respondent age was 32 years, mainly 36 years and over (50.2%), and well educated,

more than 84.5% had bachelor's and post-education. The distribution of the department type of middle-level manager was rather even: 29.8% Front Office, 26.5% Housekeeping, 18.8% Food and beverage, 8.6% Maintenance, 9.8% Public Relations and Sales, and 6.9% other departments. Additionally, 80.2% of the surveyed middle-level managers had been with their current organizations for three or more years and more than 65.9% had worked in the hospitality sector for six or more years.

**Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Profiles**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Number (N=245)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Female	102	41.6
	Male	143	58.4
<b>Age</b>	25 and less	27	11.02
	26 to 35	95	38.8
	36 and over	123	50.2
<b>Educational level</b>	College degree	38	15.1
	Bachelor degree	168	68.6
	Postgraduate	39	15.9
<b>Type of middle level managers</b>	Front Office	73	29.8
	Housekeeping	64	26.5
	Food and beverage	46	18.8
	Maintenance	21	8.6
	Public relations and sales	24	9.8
	Others	17	6.9
<b>Length of time in the organization</b>	2 and/or less year	73	19.8
	3 to 5 years	135	55.1
	6 and/or over years	37	25.1
<b>Length of time in the hospitality sector</b>	5 and/or fewer years	81	33.6
	6 to 8 years	42	17.1
	9 and or years	122	48.8

**Source:** Data processing result by authors

#### **4.2 Descriptive analysis of the Personality Dimensions**

The personality test result of Middle-level Hotel Manager is calculated to take the mean score, which is shown in the 5 following Tables, respectively with 5 dimensions in the Big Five

Traits: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Openness, and Agreeableness. The bigger the mean score is, the more clearly tendency in the personality of the middle manager in the hospitality industry.

The neuroticism trait of middle-level hotel managers is presented in Table 2 below, which indicates their susceptibility to psychological stress.

**Table 2: Descriptive Analysis for Neuroticism**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
NEU1	245	1	5	3.09	.073	1.138
NEU2	245	1	5	3.29	.072	1.120
NEU3	245	1	5	3.15	.069	1.080
NEU4	245	1	5	3.31	.069	1.083
Valid (listwise)	N 245					

**Source:** Data processing result by authors

According to Table 2, the mean score for four (4) Neuroticism items varies from 3.09 to 3.31, indicating moderate scores for two (2) items and lower mean scores for two (2) items. “I seldom feel blue” had the highest mean value (M=3.31, SD=1.083) of all the items. The item “ I have frequent mood swings” had the lowest mean value of M=3.09, SD=1.138. Although the hospitality industry is typically stressful due to long working hours or unpredictable situations from the guest, it seems that the managers can control well their emotional stability. This is an essential trait for middle-level hotel managers because their job scope is much broader and more complex.

Aside from Neuroticism, the level of Extraversion is also calculated in Table 3 to determine if one individual is the best fit for the role of manager and the hospitality industry.

**Table 3: Descriptive Analysis for Extraversion**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
EX1	245	2	5	3.29	.046	.725
EX2	245	1	5	3.27	.049	.765
EX3	245	2	5	3.25	.044	.695
EX4	245	1	5	3.28	.047	.733

Valid (listwise)	N	245				
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**Source:** Data processing result by authors

Table 3 shows the mean value of all items in the Extraversion dimension of Personality. “I am the life of the party” (M=3.29, SD=.725) had the best mean score of the four (4) items. In contrast, the lowest score was for “I talk to a lot of different individuals at parties” (M=3.25, SD=.695). The four (4) items had a moderate mean value, according to the Extraversion score. The likely reason for the high score is that the actual work environment in the Hospitality industry requires employees to interact, so it is uncommon to see quiet people in the department because they are unsuitable for the manager position.

Table 4 exhibits the findings of Openness, which is defined as the level of curiosity or creativity in a constrained setting such as hospitality.

**Table 4: Descriptive analysis for Openness**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
OPE1	245	2	5	3.66	.048	.750
OPE2	245	2	5	3.74	.047	.732
OPE3	245	2	5	3.70	.046	.716
OPE4	245	2	5	3.70	.053	.823
Valid (listwise)	N	245				

**Source:** Data processing result by authors

According to the analyzed data in Table 4, the mean score of the four (4) items in the Openness category varies from 3.66 to 3.74, which indicates a moderate score. The item OPE2 “I am not interested in the abstract ideas” has the highest mean score M = 3.74, SD = .732. On the other hand, item OPE1 “I have a vivid imagination” gained the lowest score with M = 3.66, SD = .750. The low score could be explained by limitations in the hospitality sector, in which middle-level hotel managers are compelled to stick to a predetermined standardization process that discourages creativity.

Table 5 will demonstrate the most significant tendency in the managers' agreeableness trait, which measures one's trustworthy, advantageous, and compassionate nature.

**Table 5: Descriptive Analysis for Agreeableness**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
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	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
AGR1	245	2	5	3.66	.050	.776
AGR2	245	2	5	3.73	.048	.753
AGR3	245	2	5	3.65	.047	.729
AGR4	245	2	5	3.71	.049	.775
Valid N (listwise)	245					

**Source:** Data processing result by authors

Table 5 suggested that the four (4) items of Agreeableness have the mean score ranging from 3.66 to 3.73. Among the four (4) items, it can be seen that the highest mean score  $M = 3.73$ ,  $SD = .753$  is item AGR2 “I am not interested in other people’s problems”. Whereas, AGR1 and AGR3 are the two (2) items with the lower mean value. Item AGR3 item “I feel others’ emotion” has the lowest mean score among the two with  $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = .729$ . The below-average score could be attributed to the fact that middle-level hotel managers frequently interact directly with both customers and subordinates, requiring understanding and empathy to resolve urgent issues.

Finally, Conscientiousness refers to the inclination to be ordered or dependable. Table 6 computed the average value for each variable in the Conscientiousness trait to determine whether or not middle-level hotel managers organize.

**Table 6: Descriptive analysis for Conscientiousness**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
CON1	245	1	5	2.95	.049	.774
CON2	245	1	5	2.84	.055	.869
CON3	245	1	5	2.89	.056	.878
CON4	245	1	5	3.00	.052	.820
Valid N (listwise)	245					

**Source:** Data processing result by authors

According to the results shown in Table 6, the score ranges from 2.84 to 3.00 for four (4) items. The item with the highest mean score is CON4 “I make a mess of things” with  $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 0.820$ . In contrast, item CON2 has the lowest mean score  $M = 2.84$ ,  $SD = 0.869$  “I often forget to put things back in their proper place”. The probable reason for the low mean score can be that respondents are conscious that they must be skilled at self- and work management because chaotic behavior may be improper in the hotel work environment.



## 5. Discussion

The purpose of this investigation was to look into the personality traits of a middle-level hotel manager. There has been shown the findings that with five variables, the total mean score for personality measures was moderately high. In specific, Openness has the highest mean score (M = 3.7010, SD = .60408) while the three other factors, Agreeableness (M=3.6878, SD=.59965), Extraversion (M=3.2724, SD=.61363), and Neuroticism (M=3.2071, SD=.94180), all had moderately high mean scores. On the other hand, Conscientiousness held the lowest mean score ( M = 2.9204, SD = .71560). These scores are displayed in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: Overall Mean Score and Standard Deviation**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Openness (OPE)	245	2.00	5.00	3.7010	.03859	.60408
Agreeableness (AGR)	245	2.25	5.00	3.6878	.03831	.59965
Conscientiousness (CON)	245	1.00	4.75	2.9204	.04572	.71560
Extraversion (EX)	245	1.75	5.00	3.2724	.03920	.61363
Neuroticism (NEU)	245	1.50	5.00	3.2071	.06017	.94180
Valid N (listwise)	245					

**Source:** Data processing result by authors

The analyzed data shows that for middle-level management, the hotel needs Openness personalities - who have the advancement and initiative thoughts that can contribute more to the development of hotel management. Additionally, the hotel should also seek personnel that can engage with customers in a trustworthy and friendly way (part of the agreeableness & extraversion dimension). The personality test has demonstrated its critical role in human resource allocation, particularly in the hotel industry, where hiring people with these high mean scores can have a positive impact on the growth of the hotel business and take full advantage of the hotel budget. Therefore, human resource managers should pay careful attention to Openness as well as Extroversion & Agreeableness, which are often regarded as essential positive affectivity on professional behaviors, to identify ideal applicants for middle-level hotel manager positions.

## Conclusion

The results of this study provide new perspectives on both theory and practice. The study's findings contribute to the body of literature by giving specific illustrations of how personality types affect the hospitality industry. Managers will find ways to develop themselves to become people who can interact with guests professionally, solve problems quickly, be able to cover all the tasks to be implemented, and be good leaders for subordinates to listen to and respect. This will require an understanding of which personality groups affect hotel skills and operations. Although this study broadens our body of knowledge, there are still good reasons for conducting

more research. The participants in this research were middle-level managers who worked in one industry, one region, and one nation. This research will open up new avenues for investigation into the link between personality characteristics and professional achievement. In addition, to have a more comprehensive perspective of this issue, the combination of objective and subjective career success is expanded in later studies.

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