The role of personality traits in promoting customer citizenship behaviour: special reference to the homestay tourism context in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to explore customer personality traits as an antecedent of customer citizenship behaviour which positively facilitates service providers.

Design/methodology/approach – This study follows the positivism research paradigm. Hence, primary data were collected from 250 homestay visitors who stayed at five selected homestays located at Mirissa homestay zone, Sri Lanka.

Findings – The present study's findings reveal that “agreeableness,” “extraversion” and “conscientiousness” personality traits promote customer citizenship behaviour. Furthermore, the openness to “experience” trait identified to have a statistically insignificant relationship with CCB and neuroticism recorded a positive impact on the relationship between CCB and personality, contrary to the existing literature.

Practical implications – This study comprehensively explains how service providers should arrange their service facilities to increase customer willingness to perform citizenship behaviour, which helps develop their services.

Originality/value – Previous research has investigated that customer personality in terms of prosocial and proactive nature impacts CCBs. In contrast, the effect of Big Five personality traits on CCB is highlighted in this study.

Keywords Big five personality traits, Customer citizenship behaviour, Homestay tourism

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Tourism is a unique industry that has received many scholars' attention worldwide (Yung and Khoo-Lattimore, 2019; Stamboulis and Skayannis, 2003; Ying, 2008). Especially studying customer or traveller behaviour is one of the foremost concerns among marketing and tourism scholars. Under the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), the tourism industry defines as an industry that consists of five main sectors, namely transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, recreation and entertainment, and travel services (Knowles and Westcott, 2019). Among these five sectors, the accommodation sector plays a vital role, as it is one of the most critical decisions made by travellers (Rompf *et al.*, 2005) due to the availability of different accommodation options such as hotels and Airbnb (Guttentag, 2015) and other alternatives like community-based homestays.

As one of the major accommodation options available, independent homestay businesses can be identified, and it is a form of accommodation where tourists stay with local families in their homes. Primarily, these are characterized as affordable, informal and experiential lodgings available even in the most remote destination (Dube and Sharma, 2018) and are becoming increasingly popular among travellers as the best way to experience different cultures as a local (Forno and Garibaldi, 2015). Compared to travellers who select well-established hotels, travellers who choose homestays are unique (Jamal *et al.*, 2011; Yang *et al.*, 2019) as they have particular needs (Yang *et al.*, 2019). Such as expectations of being in a home over a hotel, willingness to ask the host for advice, and preference for other facilities such as access to practical residential amenities such as a full kitchen, a washing machine and a dryer (Guttentag, 2015). Furthermore, Guttentag (2015) has mentioned that living in residence also offers guests the chance to have a more “local” experience by living more like a local, interacting with the host or neighbours, and possibly staying in a non-touristy location. Here guests are expected to contribute to gain the homestay experience (Forno and Garibaldi, 2015; Kontogeorgopoulos *et al.*, 2015; Beverland and Farrelly, 2009). Highlighting this sector’s specialty, studies carried out from homestay suppliers’ perspective found that hosts want to establish a relationship that extends beyond a monetary exchange and wants guests to be surrogate companions rather than solely remunerating strangers (Domenico and Lynch, 2007). This expectation can theoretically be identified as the concept of customer citizenship behaviour (CCB) (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). In theory, CCB recognizes voluntary consumer behaviour beyond the conduct required to perform service delivery and promotes the service organization’s effective functioning (Curth *et al.*, 2014).

Even though CCB has drawn many researchers’ attention in the marketing and tourism disciplines, it is overlooked in the homestay tourism context. It is appropriate to study the behaviour mentioned above because CCB is a customer-centred, relationally based action. Moreover, studies conducted in broad marketing and tourism contexts discovered that CCB leads to many organizations’ benefits. Such as reducing customer turnover intention and increasing ‘customers’ intention to continue relationships and their satisfaction level (Choi and Hwang, 2019), which is very important for organizations’ survival.

Furthermore, other than such customer-related outcomes, employee performance and commitment positively impact CCB (Yi *et al.*, 2011). Even though the homestay context is considered a neglected context in testing or studying customer citizenship behaviour, some studies implicitly discuss the existence of citizenship behaviour. Notably, its benefits for hosts, such as the indirect promotion of the homestay (Dube and Sharma, 2018), treating visitors as family members, results in a more reciprocal relationship between hosts and visitors (Yasami *et al.*, 2017).

Since CCB identify as a crucial concept, many authors have investigated the antecedents of CCB in many different contexts. Covering the broader services industry, experienced customers (Tsai *et al.*, 2017), service provider’s commitment (Curth *et al.*, 2014), ‘employees’ psychological capital (Hsiao *et al.*, 2015), relationship quality (Balaji, 2014), and consumers’ affective commitment (Choi *et al.*, 2014) have been identified as some of such antecedents. In the tourism and hospitality context, a few specific antecedents, such as tour leader attachment (Cheng *et al.*, 2016), employee responsiveness and organizational reassurance (Tung *et al.*, 2017), the CSR activities of tour guides (Tuan, 2018), value co-creation and traveller satisfaction with the service offered by hospitality organizations (Assiouras *et al.*, 2019), have been studied.

While the above empirical studies demonstrate an excellent beginning, many researchers concur that tourists, in terms of their citizenship behaviour, need further examination through various empirical studies (Tung *et al.*, 2017; Cheng *et al.*, 2016; Prebensen and Dahl, 2013). Most of the themes described above have neglected a critical component of tourist behaviour, namely personality, when performing citizenship behaviour. Like all other factors,

individual customer personalities play an important role when determining their citizenship behaviour (Choi and Hwang, 2019; Gong and Yi, 2021; Tung *et al.*, 2017; Anaza, 2014). However, in the literature, it has been identified as a neglected area, especially in the tourism contexts (Tung *et al.*, 2017). Mainly, Homestay tourism as a significant sub-context of tourism is still a neglected area in studying the concept of CCB, where some scholars identified that CCB is already happening in this context too (Jamaludin *et al.*, 2012).

In supporting the argument of the importance of personality on CCB, some of the studies conducted on organization based citizenship behaviour found that personality traits, especially Big Five traits of employees, play an essential role when performing organizational based citizenship behaviour (Connell *et al.*, 2001; Elanain, 2007; Mahdiun *et al.*, 2010). However, concerning the CCB, Anaza (2014) found that agreeableness and extraversion indirectly impact CCB through empathetic response. Furthermore, Choi and Hwang (2019) and Tung *et al.* (2017) provided future directions to study the impact of personality on CCB. In addition to the already available literature, Social Exchange Theory also motivates to explore the relationship mentioned above.

The theoretical explanation for the prescribed relationship between personality and CCB has been given in social exchange theory by emphasizing personal characteristics when performing citizenship behaviour. This theory has been used in many contexts (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Lester *et al.*, 2008; Balaji, 2014) to elucidate CCB. Social exchange theory's basic premise is that social behaviour represents an exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, that is more or less rewarding or costly between at least two persons (Gilde *et al.*, 2011). Another tenet of social exchange theory is that people would be willing to reciprocate when they feel the other party is committed to them. Social exchange theory applied several times when measuring organization-based citizenship behaviour (Bettencourt *et al.*, 2001). Further, researchers who have used social exchange theory argued that it refers to voluntary actions of an unspecified nature that extend beyond basic role obligations. Also, it suggests a personal commitment to the partner (Patterson *et al.*, 2014).

Moreover, the existing literature supports studying another application of this theory by investigating the role of an individual's personality on their CCB. Hence, through this study, researchers try to link the importance of a person's personality with citizenship behaviour. This study attempts to give a new explanation for social exchange theory from the individual's personality perspective.

Concerning personality, many models and theories can be seen. However, this study has employed the "Big Five" personality traits (Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism). The rationale for selecting the Big five model is justified with the direction provided by Choi and Hwang (2019), as this model covers the basic phenomenon for personality theories (McCrae and John, 1992).

Hence, along with the theoretical gap and benefits received by homestay suppliers, conducting a study in a scientific way to determine and identify specific personality characteristics of travellers who engage in homestay tourism is much contemporary. Therefore, unlike previous studies on homestay tourism, the present study examines homestay visitors' unique personality characteristics in promoting citizenship behaviour in Sri Lanka homestays. This study will facilitate homestay providers and relevant authorities with more fruitful insights to develop homestay facilities. Therefore, this study has two objectives.

- (1) To identify Big Five personality traits (Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness) of visitors who utilize informal homestays.
- (2) To examine each Big Five personality trait's impact on customer citizenship behaviour concerning visitors who utilize informal homestays.

Conceptual background and hypotheses development

Customer citizenship behaviour (CCB)

Customer citizenship behaviour (CCB) is defined as voluntary consumer behaviour that goes beyond the conduct that is required to perform the service delivery and promotes the effective functioning of the service organization (Curth *et al.*, 2014) by enhancing the production and development of the firm's offerings and services (Fowler, 2013). Further, Fowler (2013) identifies voluntary nature and the absence of direct reward for customers as common themes in depictions of CCB. Even though CCB does not lead to considerable benefits for customers, service providers have an immense interest in their citizenship behaviours. Because of the associated economic and social benefits compared to many other extra-role activities in which customers participate (as cited in Anaza and Zhao, 2013). To measure CCB, scholars have defined CCB through the feedback, advocacy, helping, and tolerance types of behaviour (Yi and Gong, 2013). The broader concept of CCB provides equal attention to the four components mentioned above. Many scholars have agreed that feedback, advocacy, helping and tolerance behaviours represent citizenship behaviour (Balaji, 2014; Yi and Gong, 2013; Curth *et al.*, 2014).

CCB has been explained in the literature in terms of its antecedents and consequences. Studies conducted to study the antecedents of CCB discovered that better-experienced customers are the most important antecedent of CCB, as they spread positive word of mouth about their experience or help others (Tsai *et al.*, 2017). To create such experienced customers, some argue that employees play a vital role. Specifically, service providers must improve their commitment to specific target markets (Curth *et al.*, 2014; Yi and Gong, 2006). To create such committed employees, ethical leadership skills (Garba *et al.*, 2018) of employer impact to a greater extent. Further scholars found that in creating CCB, employees' positive psychological capital mediates their willingness to support service-oriented organizational citizenship behaviour. This behaviour motivates them to provide better customer service to improve customer experience (Hsiao *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, from the employees' perspective, their citizenship behaviour (Yi and Gong, 2008), emotional intelligence and empathy (Delpechitre *et al.*, 2018) are important antecedents of CCB. Further, antecedents such as relationship quality (Balaji, 2014), consumers' affective commitment (Choi *et al.*, 2014), customer attitudes and desires towards green image (Hwang and Lyu, 2020), organizational CSR activities (Aljarah and Alrawashdeh, 2020; Tuan, 2018), organizational environmental marketing strategy (Aljarah, 2021) and perceived justice (Yi and Gong, 2006) have been identified. Studies covering online consumer behaviour also contribute some antecedents to the CCB, such as price, speed of service, the context of the service, and layout of the website (Groth, 2005).

In addition to the above literature, tourism and hospitality scholars also discover the antecedents and consequences of CCB. These existing studies found tour leader attachment (Cheng *et al.*, 2016) as another direct antecedent of CCB. Tung *et al.* (2017) identified employee responsiveness and organizational reassurance as key moderators of satisfaction, loyalty and perceived value towards CCB in the context of hotels. Furthermore, Prebensen and Dahl (2013) studied the importance of tourist resource-based involvement (Chathoth *et al.*, 2016), time and effort in overall experience in broader customer value co-creation, which covers CCB. As an essential component of CCB, customer feedback has received special attention from some scholars. For instance, the importance of customer feedback was identified by Chathoth *et al.* (2016) as sporadic customer behaviour, which describes as being predominately firm-driven and more sporadic; this explains that hospitality firms may seek out customer feedback on their new services or the quality of current services. With this solid theoretical background, scholars in the tourism and hospitality domain agreed that CCB is particularly relevant and vital, especially when today's customers want a context-related, authentic experience (Chathoth *et al.*, 2016). Despite the focus on the antecedents of CCB, little

attention has been given to psychological concepts such as personality, attitude, and culture. Hence, this study is designed to bridge the gap of neglecting the importance of personality (Tung *et al.*, 2017) in general and particularly in the tourism context as another CCB antecedent.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the homestay tourism context has been selected as it is an ideal context for the study, as Chathoth *et al.* (2016) suggested. The literature on personality traits to show its importance as another antecedent to CCB explain in the next section.

The big five personality trait model

Two individuals cannot be alike. Everyone has unique physical and mental characteristics that are different from others. In psychology, these various physical and mental characteristics represent “personality”. Among available definitions of personality, the most common definition is “the inner psychological characteristics that both determine and reflect how a person responds to his or her environment” (Schiffman *et al.*, 2015, p. 120). They reflect “who we are and in aggregate determine our affective, behavioural, and cognitive style” (Mount *et al.*, 2005, pp. 448–449). Understanding such personality differences is relevant for service providers continually striving to obtain more space in a customer’s heart and mind through their product and service offerings (Mishra and Vaithianathan, 2015).

In psychology, there are a variety of personality trait classifications based on different models and theories. A few such theories are Freudian theory (Freud, 1920), Allport’s Trait Theory (1937), Eysenck’s Personality Trait Theory (1952) and Cattell’s 16PF Trait Theory (1965) (McLeod, 2014). In addition to these general trait theories, Plog (1974) and Jackson *et al.* (2001) have developed personality models to precisely measure tourist personalities. However, these researchers have not further pursued their research, and as a result, these instruments have not been extensively validated by others (Pezenka *et al.*, 2017).

With the introduction and rapid application of the five-factor model of personality traits, those mentioned above general and tourism-specific personality trait theories have become outdated, even though they are intriguing (McCrae, 2011). The five-factor model has gained the attention of many researchers, as it resolved two long-lasting problems. First, it specified the number of essential factors. Second, it showed the similar identities of a host of ostensibly distinct individuals, which had been proposed as different variables by other researchers (McCrae, 2011). Furthermore, some scholars strongly agreed that this model had made the most significant contribution to studies by defining common language to describe personality aspects (Boekaerts, 1996). Hence, with this theoretical background, the present study utilizes the Big Five personality trait model to identify and determine travellers’ personalities who engage in the informal homestay context in Sri Lanka.

The Big Five is composed of fundamental human characteristics that are recognizable across cultural borders, gender groups, research methods, and rating participants (McCrae and John, 1992). The Big Five model has been studied for years and is a favoured method among researchers when assessing typical human traits within various contexts (Anaza, 2014; Jani, 2014). Some researchers identified this as the Five-Factor Model of personality (FFM) (Costa and McCrae, 1990; McCrae and John, 1992; Goldberg, 1990). According to McCrae and John (1992), these personality traits could provide a basic phenomenon for personality theorists to explain, a natural framework for organizing research, and a guide to individuals’ comprehensive assessment. These Big Five traits consist of Extraversion, Neuroticism, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness (Goldberg, 1990). Next subsection of the literature review demonstrates already discovered knowledge on the relationship between personality and citizenship behaviours.

Personality and citizenship behaviours

Despite increasing awareness of the importance of customer personality in various contexts, understanding its effects in relation to citizenship behaviour receives little attention. In line with CCB, [Choi and Hwang \(2019\)](#) argued that one of the most important factors that affect CCB is customer personality. Social exchange theory also provides the theoretical foundation for the aforesaid relationship between personality and citizenship behaviour ([Bettencourt et al., 2001](#); [Gilde et al., 2011](#); [Patterson et al., 2014](#)) by emphasizing the fact that people would be willing to reciprocate when they feel that the other party is committed to them. As such, personality characteristics have been identified as crucial factors that play an important role in CCBs.

The existing literature has few studies covering the effect of different personality traits on different citizenship behaviours such as organization-based citizenship behaviour, academic citizenship behaviour and CCB. Concerning organizational citizenship behaviour, [Bourdage et al. \(2012\)](#) have applied the HEXACO model of personality to test the correlation of personality traits and organization-based citizenship behaviour. They found that those who are low in honesty reported being driven to engage in organization-based citizenship behaviour to get ahead and appear positively to others in the workplace. They would likely engage in counterproductive workplace behaviours.

Particularly, the relationship between Big Five personality traits and citizenship behaviour has been studied by scholars in both the services and tourism contexts ([Choi and Hwang, 2019](#); [Kiffin-Petersen et al., 2011](#); [Anaza, 2014](#)). Many scholars, specifically with regards to organizational citizenship behaviour, found that employees who record high characteristics of conscientiousness ([Connell et al., 2001](#); [Elanain, 2007](#); [Mahdiuon et al., 2010](#)), agreeableness ([Mahdiuon et al., 2010](#)) and extraversion engage in deeper acting and have a positive association with self-reported citizenship behaviour in organizational contexts ([Kiffin-Petersen et al., 2011](#)). Furthermore, in the organizational setting, [Krishnan et al. \(2017\)](#) have identified that agreeableness moderates the relationship between autonomy and organization citizenship behaviour and the relationship between perceived social support and organization citizenship behaviour. Moreover, in certain studies, openness to experience was specifically identified as a trait which affects one dimension of citizenship, helping behaviour ([Terrier et al., 2016](#)), whereas [Elanain \(2007\)](#) and [Mahdiuon et al. \(2010\)](#) found that it is a crucial personality characteristic for all dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviour. In line with the general characteristics of the neurotic personality, [Mahdiuon et al. \(2010\)](#) found that this trait negatively affects organizational citizenship behaviour.

The concept of citizenship behaviour has been further examined in academic settings to analyse academic citizenship behaviour among students. The study discovered that neuroticism is negatively and positively associated with academic citizenship behaviour (according to the two studies conducted by [Gore et al. \(2012\)](#)). Further, in academic settings, conscientiousness has been reported as the best predictor of academic citizenship behaviour ([Gore et al., 2012](#)).

Unlike organization-based citizenship behaviour, customer citizenship behaviour is the newest addition to the academic debate. In marketing and tourism literature, much remains to be explained about customer citizenship behaviour. In the existing literature, [Choi and Hwang \(2019\)](#) found that prosocial and proactive personality traits have a positive impact on CCB. Particularly, relating to the CCB and big five personality traits, only a few studies implicitly discuss the relationship between personality and citizenship behaviour. For instance, [Tang and Lam \(2017\)](#) found that of the various personality traits, extraversion and agreeableness have the closest association to helping others, which is one of main aspects of CCB. Along with agreeableness and extraversion, high level of openness to experience and conscientiousness also demonstrate a high level of customer-oriented behaviours ([Hee and Johari, 2014](#)). Furthermore, [Hee and Johari \(2014\)](#) discovered that individuals who possess a

high level of neuroticism will demonstrate no or low level of customer-oriented behaviour in the organizational context. The same finding was obtained by [Kumar et al. \(2009\)](#). The personality traits of agreeableness and extraversion were identified as two traits that affect empathy and, consequently, act as the basis for explaining the increasing level of customer satisfaction and citizenship behaviours in online consumption ([Anaza, 2014](#)).

Even though the available literature on CCB discusses different indirect impacts of Big Five personalities on CCB, there is much more to explore. Hence, the present study is designed to bridge the theoretical gap of the overlooking importance of personality traits as the main antecedent of CCB.

Hypotheses development

“Extraversion refers to the personal characteristics of warmth, sociability, assertiveness, activity, excitement-seeking, and positive emotions” ([McCrae and Costa, 1997](#), p. 513). It distinguishes venture-seeking, affiliation, positive affectivity, energy, ascendance, ambition ([Matzler et al., 2006](#)) and talkativeness ([Barrick and Mount, 1991](#)). Furthermore, extroverted people can be characterized as outgoing and enjoying human interaction ([Pezenka et al., 2017](#)).

This trait has received considerable empirical support as an essential antecedent to organization-based citizenship behaviour ([Kiffin-Petersen et al., 2011](#); [Tang and Lam, 2017](#); [Hee and Johari, 2014](#)). Therefore, this leads to the first hypothesis of the current study.

H1. Personality trait of extraversion has a positive impact on CCB among informal homestay travellers.

The third Big Five trait, openness to experience, indicates a person's tendency towards fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, values, and novel experiences ([McCrae and Costa, 1997](#), p. 513), curiosity, imaginativeness, need for variety, and willingness to discover and be creative ([Mechinda and Patterson, 2011](#)). This trait is also immensely tested in many contexts. For instance, as the trait represents one's predisposition to appreciate unusual or new ideas, such individuals tend to accept many new technologies.

This trait has also been studied a lot and is positively related to organization-based citizenship behaviour ([Hee and Johari, 2014](#)) and other customer behaviour types ([Pezenka et al., 2017](#); [Lin, 2010](#)). This pattern of behaviour leads to the second hypothesis of the proposed study.

H2. Personality trait of Openness to experience has a positive impact on CCB among informal homestay travellers.

Agreeableness “refers to characteristics such as trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty and tender-mindedness” ([McCrae and Costa, 1997](#), p. 513). They are further characterized by kindness, being good-natured, cooperative ([Mechinda and Patterson, 2011](#)), trusting, forgiving, tolerant, courteous and soft-hearted ([Barrick and Mount, 1991](#)).

Agreeableness also received considerable empirical support as an essential antecedent to organization-based citizenship behaviour ([Hee and Johari, 2014](#); [Tang and Lam, 2017](#); [Kiffin-Petersen et al., 2011](#)). This literature leads to the study's third hypothesis:

H3. Personality trait of agreeableness has a positive impact on CCB among informal homestay travellers.

As the fourth dimension of the Big Five personality traits, conscientiousness indicates personal characteristics such as competence, order, dutifulness, striving for achievement, self-discipline, deliberation ([McCrae and Costa, 1997](#), p. 513), hardworking, responsibility and dependability ([Kermani, 2011](#)). Conscientious individuals are more likely to perform work

tasks thoroughly and correctly, remain committed to work performance and comply with policies (Mechinda and Patterson, 2011). They tend to be more risk-averse and prefer to form long-term relationships (Kermani, 2011). This trait has also gained the attention of some marketing and tourism scholars.

Previous studies have found that this trait positively impacts organization-based citizenship behaviour (Hee and Johari, 2014). Hence, the following hypothesis has been developed:

- H4.* The personality trait of conscientiousness has a positive impact on CCB among informal homestay travellers.

The last personality dimension in the Big Five, neuroticism, characterizes anxiety, anger, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness and vulnerability (McCrae and Costa, 1997, p. 513), dependability, hard work and perseverance (Kermani, 2011). In many circumstances, this trait recorded a negative impact on different customer behaviours. For instance, in the consumption-related study, neuroticism was found to predict negative consumption-based emotions (Matzle *et al.*, 2005) (see Figure 1).

This trait has a negative impact on many behaviours. For instance, a person with more neurotic characteristics has a negative or very low impact on organization-based relationship behaviour (Hee and Johari, 2014). Therefore, as the fifth hypothesis of this study, the following has been suggested:

- H5.* The personality trait of neuroticism has a negative impact on CCB among informal homestay travellers.

Research method

The present research design follows positivism philosophy, believing that the nature of reality is objective, external and independent from social actors. This study considers that tourists' personality towards their customer citizenship behaviour has an objective reality. Based on those two assumptions, the quantitative methodology has been identified as ideal for this study. Hence, a questionnaire-based survey research strategy is used to collect data to facilitate the study's generalizability. Based on the characteristics of the present research, a deductive research approach is utilized. The population of the study comprises foreign travellers who select informal homestays as their accommodation option in Sri Lanka, especially the Mirissa area in the South Coast region. However, due to unavailability of extract statistics about travellers who visit these homestays non-random sampling

Figure 1.
Conceptual framework
of the study

method and convenient sampling technique has been selected for data collection purpose. Therefore, the sample of this study is foreign travellers who stay at five selected informal homestays located at Mirissa, which belongs to the south coast area in the country. The reason for selecting the South Coast area for this study is that SLTDA (2017, 2019) statistics mentioned that the South Coast area in the country recorded increased room capacity continuously for a few years. The reason for selecting the Mirissa area is that it is a famous tourist destination (Buultjens *et al.*, 2016). Even though many informal homestays operate in the Mirissa area, only five homestay owners agreed to support data collection as they were impacted by COVID 19 pandemic. Due to this health issue, many travellers cancelled bookings. Therefore, with this practical difficulty researcher has collected data over three months.

A questionnaire was developed to measure personality traits and customer citizenship behaviour. The items used to measure customer personality adapted from Yoo and Gretzel (2011). The items used to measure CCB adapted from Yi and Gong (2013). The questionnaire was organized into three sections: respondents' profile, personality dimension, and CCB dimension. The personality construct was tested using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree. CCB was tested using a seven-point Likert scale. However, when analysing data, seven-point scale responses converted to five-point manually.

The questionnaire was self-administered and distributed while travellers stay at homestays. Selected homestay owners handled the data collection process with the proper monitoring of the researcher. 256 of the 300 questionnaires delivered to the homestays were returned.

Data analysis

Data analysis has started with the data screening process. Elimination of incomplete responses resulted in a sample size of 250. Following the check for accuracy and completeness of data, the parametric assumption of normality was measured. To check the assumption of normality, skewness and kurtosis tests were performed. Based on results normality of the data set established as values generated are in the range of -2 to 2 . The researcher conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to confirm the measurement validity of the constructs using SPSS 22.0. According to the factor analysis of Big Five personality traits, it removed one statement from Openness's personality trait to experience. Concerning the other four personality traits, no statements were removed. Factor analysis for customer citizenship behaviour explains that no statements were removed from the construct. This ensures the unidimensionality of the factors considered for further analysis. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) method used to test the convergent validity and discriminant validities. All AVE values are greater than 0.5, ranging between 0.727 and 0.940 for all constructs, which confirmed the convergent validity. As AVE for each construct was higher than the squared correlation estimates between pairs of the variables, discriminant validity was also confirmed (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The Cronbach's alpha of all constructs ranged from 0.612 to 0.803, ensuring each construct's reliability.

Sample description

The sample's statistical data revealed that 46% of surveyed were male, while 54% were female. Among respondents, 28.1% belong to the age category of 26–30, followed by 19.3% belonging to 41 to 45 age categories. Among respondents, 45.2% were single, and 40% were married. Of the respondents, 45.6% of respondents were European, 16.9% from Asia and the Pacific, and the same percentage from America, 10.5% were Middle Eastern, and 3.6% were African. Despite demographic information, when analysing respondents' travel-related

behaviour, the collected data showed that 42.4% of respondents travel with their spouse, 26% travel alone and 24% travel with friends. Table 1 describes the profile of respondents.

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the items used to measure personality traits. Based on the values shown in Table 2, the mean scores for each personality trait recorded mean score greater than 3. Personality traits of extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism were recorded mean values of 3.72, 3.92, 3.93, 3.78 and 3.15 respectively. Among them, many travellers having the agreeableness trait as it records the highest mean value. Based on the figures received, neuroticism personalities is the least recorded trait which records a 3.15 mean value.

Testing of hypothesized relationships

Multiple regression model has run to test the proposed hypothesized relationships. A significant regression equation was found ($F(5, 244) = 19.212, p < 0.000$), with R^2 of 0.282.

Demographic factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	115	46
	Female	135	54
Age	Less than 20	5	2
	21–25	19	7.6
	26–30	70	28.1
	31–35	35	14.1
	36–40	25	10
	41–45	46	19.3
	46–50	26	10.4
	Over 50	21	8.4
	High school graduate	45	18.2
Education	Bachelors' degree	68	27.5
	Masters and over	60	24.3
	Other	74	30
	Middle East	26	10.5
Region	America	42	16.9
	Africa	9	3.6
	Asia and Pacific	42	16.9
	Europe	113	45.6
	Other	16	6.5
	Single	113	45.2
Marital Status	Married	100	40
	Divorced	27	10.8
	Widowed	10	4

Table 1.
The profile of
respondents

Independent variable	Mean	Sd
Extraversion	3.72	0.9927
Openness to experience	3.92	0.9146
Agreeableness	3.93	0.8484
Conscientiousness	3.78	0.9221
Neuroticism	3.15	1.1348

Table 2.
Descriptive statistics of
independent variables

This study predicted that CCB is equal to $1.352 + 0.128 (\text{extraversion}) + 0.067 (\text{Openness to experience}) + 0.323 (\text{agreeableness}) + 0.113 (\text{conscientiousness}) + 0.107 (\text{neuroticism})$. Further, according to the coefficient output, all the variables except openness to experience are significant.

The regression results reported in Table 3 supported hypotheses 1, 3 and 4. Hypothesis 1 is that “extraversion personality trait has a positive impact on CCB”, is accepted. The beta value of 0.128 explains the individual impact of extraversion on CCB as 12.8%. It is statistically significant at 95% confidence level. Even though the personality trait of Openness to experience recorded a positive beta value of 0.067 as proposed by hypothesis 2, it becomes a statistically insignificant variable in the present study (sig, 0.213). Therefore, hypothesis 2 that there is a positive impact from Openness to experience on CCB is not supported.

Hypothesis 3 that the personality trait of agreeableness has a positive impact on CCB is supported. The corresponding beta value is 0.323. According to the regression results (significant at 99% confidence level), this is a highly significant personality trait. As proposed by hypothesis 4, the positive impact of the personality trait of conscientiousness on CCB is supported by regression analysis. The beta value of 0.113 shows the individual effect of it. It is also significant at a 95% confidence level.

Finally, hypothesis 5 shows a negative impact from a neuroticism personality trait, and regression results do not support CCB as it recorded a positive beta value of 0.107. That means there is a positive impact from neuroticism instead of a negative impact. However, it is significant at a 95% confidence level.

Table 3.
The results of
hypotheses testing

Independent variables	Dependent variable (CCB)		“t” value
	Unstandardized beta value	SE	
Extraversion	0.128*	0.054	2.384
Openness to experience	0.067	0.054	1.250
Agreeableness	0.323**	0.064	5.040
Conscientiousness	0.113*	0.054	2.096
Neuroticism	0.107 *	0.044	2.430
Note(s): *Significant at 0.05 level; **Significant at 0.01 level			

Discussion

This study contributes to the literature on CCB by empirically investigating its antecedent, namely personality, which was seldom examined in previous literature. To test the achievement of the first research objective of identifying the big five personality traits among informal homestay travellers, descriptive statistics for each personality trait have been obtained. According to the findings, all the traits except neuroticism have shown high mean values that depict four of these personality characteristics among the selected sample. More specifically, agreeableness has the highest mean value, followed by Openness to experience. Compared to all the mean values, neuroticism recorded the lowest mean value. This finding can be confirmed with the unique characteristic of traits and previous studies. In relation to agreeableness, some of its characteristics are trusting, forgiving, tolerant, and cooperative. These characteristics show that people who recorded high levels of agreeableness would select homestays by accepting their services. Even though there are studies to identify homestay travellers’ demographic profiles (Agyeiwaah and Akyeampong, 2013), these travellers’ psychological profiles have not been adequately studied. However, some studies conducted in similar tourism contexts found that this trait is common among religious travellers (Abbate and Di, 2013). These travellers would be willing to pay high amounts for

green hotels (Tang and Lam, 2017). And travellers who would influence the perception of all categories of travel-related information sources and feedback channels positively. Further, it is a better predictor than other traits for pre-trip and on-site tourism information sources (Tan and Tang, 2013) and those who prefer adventure (Scott and Mowen, 2007). Some scholars have interpreted concern for trust as a barrier to collaborative consumption (Pezenka *et al.*, 2017). In line with Pezenka *et al.* (2017), high agreeableness becomes a barrier to homestay suppliers in the current study as they have to provide better service without breaching travellers' trust.

According to the findings, the second most common personality trait is openness to experience. Persons high in openness to experience have the characteristics of fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, values, openness to novel experiences (McCrae and Costa, 1997, p. 513), curiosity, imaginativeness, need for variety, and willingness to discover and be creative (Mechinda and Patterson, 2011). Since respondents agreed that they have these characteristics, findings confirm the openness to experience as another important characteristic among homestay travellers.

Among these five personality traits, the least recorded personality trait among Sri Lankan homestay travellers is neuroticism. In general, this trait is characterized by anxiety, hostility, depression, dependability, impulsiveness, etc. (McCrae and Costa, 1997; Kermani, 2011). Most of these characteristics stated that high neuroticism tends to pay more attention to risks' adverse outcomes. One possible explanation is that, on average neurotic personality would be paying attention to the risk associated with selecting the homestay over established hotels. However, travellers have already taken the risk without any fear.

The present study's second objective is to examine each personality trait's impact on customer citizenship behaviour concerning visitors who visit informal homestays. According to the multiple regression analysis outputs, personality can predict customer citizenship behaviour in the homestay tourism context. According to model results, personality traits explain 28.2% of customer citizenship behaviour variance. Further results supported the first hypothesis that extraversion's personality trait has a positive impact on CCB. This finding is supported by the studies conducted by Kiffin-Petersen *et al.* (2011), through the result that there is a positive impact from the extraversion trait on self-reported citizenship behaviour in the organization context. Kumar *et al.* (2009) also found extraversion as the best predictor of organization-based citizenship behaviour.

Further, Anaza (2014) found that extraversion impacts customer satisfaction, which in turn impacts customer citizenship behaviour in the online consumption context. Jani (2014) found that extroverted travellers are more flexible travellers. This finding also confirms the present finding, as CCB requires a kind of flexibility of the performer.

The findings also support the third hypothesis. That means there is a positive impact from the agreeableness personality trait on CCB. Compared to all the other personality traits, this trait has a considerably large impact on CCB. Barrick and Mount (1991) identified the characteristics of highly agreeable individuals as trusting, forgiving, tolerant, courteous and soft-hearted, and this also ensures willingness to perform citizenship behaviour. In supporting the present findings, similar findings were obtained by Mahdiun *et al.* (2010) based on organization-based citizenship behaviour.

With conscientiousness, as hypothesized by H4, there is a positive impact of conscientiousness on CCB. This result can be confirmed with its characteristics and previous studies. In terms of characteristics, this trait includes responsibility and commitment, which are citizenship promoting traits. Similarly, previous studies conducted in organizational settings also found a positive impact of conscientiousness on organization-based citizenship behaviour (Comeau and Griffith, 2005; Hoon and Tan, 2008). Further, this personality trait was tested in an academic setting by Gore *et al.* (2012), and it was identified as the best predictor of academic citizenship behaviour.

Most surprisingly, contrary to all the many studies (e.g. Terrier *et al.*, 2016; Hee and Johari, 2014; Pezenka *et al.*, 2017), openness to experience was a statistically insignificant (p. 13) variable in the present study, though the beta value demonstrates a positive figure as suggested by H2. This trait is less studied in the tourism context. Among available studies, it was recorded as an insignificant variable (e.g. Kvasova, 2010; Judge and Bono, 2000; Kumar *et al.*, 2009; Arthaud-Day *et al.*, 2012). This finding implies that openness to experience does not impact citizenship behaviour. Another possible explanation for this finding would be travellers may not consider performing citizenship behaviour as a novel experience rather a voluntary behaviour.

The last hypothesis relates to the neuroticism trait. According to Yoo and Gretzel (2011), neuroticism is generally perceived as a structural barrier to specific behaviours; the result about neuroticism in this study is rather surprising. It found a positive impact from neuroticism on CCB, which is contrary to the H5. However, it is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This might be explained by the fact that when facing the unknown, neurotic people feel more stress (Hirsh and Inzlicht, 2008) since a homestay is an unknown place to travellers, and it became a form of a stressful situation. In this situation, they would be willing to perform this citizenship behaviour to balance their emotions. The result was further confirmed in a travel information need-related study by Tsiakali (2018). Jani (2014) derived a further similar finding as she found a significant positive impact of neuroticism on deprivation-type travel curiosity.

Furthermore, as the researcher found that the respondents have an average neuroticism trait, they would give feedback if they face an unpleasant experience. Therefore, it would be another possible explanation for the positive impact of neuroticism on CCB. Ng (2009) also found that high neurotic trait motivates individual to give feedback on unpleasant experiences than other traits.

As a summary, the second objective of the present study was achieved by finding that extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness have a positive impact on CCB. In contrast, contrary to hypothesis 5, neuroticism also recorded a positive effect on CCB. Further openness to experience trait become insignificant with the second research objective.

Theoretical implications

This study makes the following contributions to the literature. First, even though citizenship behaviour has been immensely studied in the organizational context from the employee perspective, the customer perspective has been given little attention. Therefore, the present study is an addition to the ongoing debate on customer citizenship behaviour. Further researcher identified common big five personality traits among informal homestay travellers. Hence, this is an extension of the Big Five model to the homestay tourism context.

Importantly, this study provides a new way of explaining social exchange theory with the impact of personality on customer citizenship behaviour. For instance, social exchange theory in relation to citizenship behaviour argued that citizenship behaviour refers to voluntary actions of an unspecified nature and they are beyond the basic role of obligations, and it suggests a personal commitment to the other party. The present study found that individual personality differences play a crucial role when performing citizenship behaviour. Therefore these personality differences can incorporate into the explanation of citizenship behaviour in social exchange theory.

Managerial implications

As this study designed to fill a performance gap identified in the homestay tourism context, the findings have important practical implications for homestay operators and policy makers. Particularly they are offered with useful insights on how to facilitate CCB through properly understanding their guests' personalities and importance of other travellers' interaction.

In achieving the first research objective of the study, the researcher identified the most common personality traits among homestay travellers. According to the findings, the most common personality trait is agreeableness. The main implication of this finding is that marketers, particularly homestay suppliers, have to identify their visitors' behavioural characteristics. As to previous researchers, agreeable people are straightforward, concerned about trust, altruistic, compliant, kind, good natured, cooperative, forgiving, tolerant, courteous and soft-hearted. Among these characteristics, altruism, kindness, and being good natured, forgiving, tolerant and courteous are the traits which directly address the CCB. Therefore, homestay providers may find it useful to monitor travellers who have such characteristics that exhibit CCB, and then make traveller selection and plan activities accordingly, such as asking for feedback directly and requesting the spread of WOM about their homestay. Further, some scholars have mentioned that personality is learned. Depending on this assumption, providers can plan to activate these characteristics by giving travellers proper service. For instance, to create trust, providers can display their contact details along with social media and website details, feedback received from others and various other facilities available at their homestay at the entrance of the homestay facility. The most important fact is that they are kind and tolerant, so the provider must be careful when delivering service to guests.

The next recorded trait was openness to experience. Here, the homestay provider's implication is that they have to show their homestay as the best place to get novel experience, which is the most commonly-identifiable characteristic from high openness to experience, as they look for novel experiences. Homestay providers can create virtual displays of their places to get the attention of these travellers.

According to the findings, similar to openness to experience, extraversion was also recorded. They are more sociable, energetic, outgoing and have positive emotions. If homestay providers want to target extroverts, they have to include more social activities in their services, which will result in positive emotions.

Furthermore, among the travellers, an average level of neuroticism trait was also observed. Therefore, homestay providers have to be careful when dealing with them as they get stressed easily. They need to ensure that their homestay is a risk-free area to balance their emotions.

The next implications are derived from the second research objective, where the researcher wanted to study the impact of each personality trait on CCB. According to the findings, agreeableness has a more positive effect on CCB, and all other traits except openness to experience also have a moderately positive impact on CCB. As the researcher identified the practical existence of CCB from preliminary interviews and implicit support received from the available literature, this study confirmed the presence of CCB in this setting. Hence, the homestay provider can arrange their homestay in a way that encourages CCB. For example, they can arrange breakfast in a manner that facilitates guest interaction among other guests. Further, they can distribute feedback forms among identified persons who have the characteristics described above.

Limitations and directions to future research

Limitations of the study

Although this research made a crucial contribution by investigating personality traits as antecedents of CCBs, some limitations could be identified. First, this study considered the Big Five personality traits to decide the most common personality traits among homestay travellers. Still, there may be some other personality traits that are more relevant to tourism-related studies.

The next limitation is the measurement items used to measure personality traits. In this study, the researcher used the measurement items developed in the international personality

item pool, but there are some historical personality measurement items which include ten measures to measure one variable which might demonstrate a more precise picture about personalities, where at present, within the measurement items, only five items are used to measure one variable. Even with such an understanding, the researcher decided to use the present measurement items to reduce respondents' unwillingness if the questionnaire becomes too lengthy.

Another limitation would be the sample selection of the study. The researcher contacted several homestay providers in the South Coast area before conducting the study. However, due to the COVID 19 pandemic, many operators face difficulties as many bookings were cancelled, hence with the agreement of homestay providers at the Mirissa area, data collection was conducted. However, there are some other homestay zones in the country. Therefore, the study's replication in some other homestay sites would provide a clearer picture of the relationship between personality traits and CCB in this context. Further, it will ensure the generalizability of the findings up to a greater extent.

Direction for future research

As this study was initiated with the performance gap identified in the practice and directions provided by previous researchers, the present research also has direction for future researchers.

First, through the present study's findings, it was confirmed that personality traits are predictors of CCB. Similarly, there can be a moderation or mediation impact from personality on CCB. Therefore, future researchers can test whether personality traits moderate the relationship between personality and other antecedents.

Second, future studies in similar relationships could design changing methodology. For instance, the qualitative method can be applied to understand the impact of personalities on CCB.

Third, to address one of the limitations of taking a sample only from the South Coast area due to time limitations and other practical reasons, future research is needed, with a broader sample of homestay zones in Sri Lanka.

Fourth, future researchers can replicate this study to fill the literature gap and get a more precise understanding of personality by applying more detailed personality measurement items discussed in the literature.

Finally, future researchers can consider customer satisfaction and length of relationship with a homestay provider as control variables in future studies as these two variables create an emotional bond with the homestay provider.

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