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The Effects of Personality Traits on Subjective Well-being and Behavioral Intention Associated with Serious Leisure Experiences

Jang Heon HAN¹

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Abstract

The study examined how the personality traits, manifested during serious leisure experience, i.e., experiences that involve the acquisition of special knowledge or techniques and the participation required to achieve the expertise necessary to express them. This study also investigated how such subjective well-being affected behavioral intention, specifically, the intention to use the same leisure facilities again and to spread this information to acquaintances by positive word of mouth. A survey was administered to 727 research subjects selected from pre-registered panels enrolled by an online research organization. The main constructs examined in this study were measured on 5-point Likert scales using multiple items. A structural equation model was employed to verify the proposed conceptual model and the relationships among variables. The results revealed that, of the personality traits, participants high in extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness felt high levels of life satisfaction and positive affect, i.e. a sense of subjective well-being. Second, users who felt a high level of subjective well-being, specifically, high life satisfaction and positive affect, also indicated a high level of behavioral intention. Finally, the academic and practical implications and limitations of the study, as well as future research plans involving the personality traits underlying serious leisure experiences are discussed.

Keywords : Personality Traits, Subjective Well-being, Behavioral Intention, Serious Leisure Experience

JEL Classification Code : L83, M31, N35

1. Introduction

The leisure industry has undergone rapid growth since World War II and is forecast to continue growing based on social and industrial development (Unger & Kernan, 1983). The South Korean tourism and leisure industry, including hotels, ski resorts, golf courses, and theme parks, has grown significantly, by about 25% in five years, from a scale of w20 trillion in 2011 to w25 trillion in 2016 (Tourism & Leisure Industry Skill Council, 2018). People want to create more meaningful and happier memories rather than simply functional services. Positive feelings such as excitement and joy are the goal of consumer behavior, and customers who

experience positive affect by means of a positive experiences will continue to pursue the same positive experiences in the future (Richins, 2007).

People's interest in subjective well-being, as reflected in overall life satisfaction and happiness, continues to increase (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The relationship between experience and subjective well-being, specifically happiness, can be explained by a temporal stage model (Diener, Scollon, & Lucas, 2009). Pleasant and highly immersive experiences have an immediate effect and are stored in affective memory. People experience happiness by frequently drawing on this affective memory. By sensitively accepting pleasant stimuli, extroverted people easily experience positive affect (Larsen & Ketelaar, 1989; Rusting & Larsen, 1997; Uziel, 2006). Thus, people are predicted to achieve optimal experiences through serious leisure experiences such as skiing, and to reveal their happiness by experiencing a high level of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). In addition, each person experiences happiness differently, and these differences are affected by internal qualities such as personality and self-esteem. In particular, happiness is closely related to personality traits (Deneve & Cooper, 1998). Personality traits

¹ First Author and Corresponding Author. General Manager, AQ Marketing Team, Hanwha Hotels & Resorts, Korea.
[Postal Address: 50, 63-ro, Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul, 07345, Korea] Email: cooljhanghun@naver.com

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have been classified into five factors, namely agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience, neuroticism, and extraversion, referred to as the personality traits (McCrae & Costa, 1991).

Studies establishing causal relationships between personality traits and subjective well-being by applying personality traits as antecedents have taken a variety of forms (Anglim & Grant, 2016; Gutiérrez, Jiménez, Hernández, & Pen, 2005; Hayes & Joseph, 2003; Henning, Hansson, Berg, Lindwall, & Johansson, 2017; Meléndez, Satorres, Cujíño, & Reyes, 2019; Zhai, Willis, O'Shea, Zhai, & Yang, 2014). However, most of these studies have selected a particular age range or subject group, such as retired adults, workers, or elderly people. Studies that identify the mechanism underlying personality traits' roles in the formation of subjective well-being among people engaging in serious leisure activities have been absent. Studies that have disclosed the effects of personality traits on subjective well-being in situations involving serious leisure experiences are important because, unlike existing studies on general situations, situations involving serious leisure experiences involve different personality traits that have different effects on subjective well-being. Dispositional traits, such as extraversion, which helps in maintaining warm-heartedness and good interpersonal relationships, or neuroticism, seen in high levels of compulsion or inferiority, affect hedonic balance, which forms the basis for subjective well-being (Schimmack, Radhakrishnan, Oishi, Dzokoto, & Ahadi, 2002). Furthermore, previous research has shown a causal relationship between subjective well-being and behavioral intention for a variety of experiences, and a similar effect is predicted for the relationship between subjective well-being and behavioral intention related to serious leisure experiences.

In summary, the purpose of the present study was to determine how the personality traits affect the subjective well-being of skiers during serious leisure activities at ski resorts. Second, the study examined how skiers' subjective well-being affects behavioral intention. The results will have implications for the field of tourism and leisure studies and practical implications for relevant work in the field.

2. Review of Literature and Hypothesis

2.1. Personality Traits and Subjective Well-being

The present study attempted to reveal which of the personality traits directly affect subjective well-being during serious leisure experiences and to identify the underlying causal mechanism so as to understand why such a consumer behavior occurs. Serious leisure experiences are those that involve the acquisition of special knowledge or skills and the participation required to achieve the expertise to express

them (Stebbins, 1992). These are the activities systematically performed by hobbyists, amateurs, and volunteers who pursue them with the aim of achieving sufficient expertise (Stebbins, 1982, 1992). Comprehensive research is underway in the field of leisure sports and tourism, with research undergoing further segmentation as the field expands to incorporate adventure tourism, including paragliding, hang gliding, surfing, and other outdoor recreation activities that place importance on building expertise.

Furthermore, personality has been defined by scholars in different ways depending on their perspectives. Hodgetts and Fountain (1987) referred to personality as the stable characteristics or tendencies used to distinguish similarities and differences among people. Judge and Bono (2000) referred to personality as the characteristics distinguishing one person from another in various situations, as well as patterns of behavior, including emotions. Dirks and Ferrin (2002) refer to personality as a fixed part of an individual that allows them to behave in a consistent pattern. Personality is said to be affected by genetic factors, such as DNA, as well as by cultural customs. The model of personality traits, one of the theories that most clearly defines personality traits, was developed by joint factor analysis (Costa & McCrae, 1991). Agreeableness is expressed through of trust, straightforwardness, and altruism, among other traits. Extraversion comprises warmth, sociability, activity, and related traits. Openness to experience is manifested in imagination, aesthetics, openness to feelings, and openness to actions, among other qualities. Conscientiousness entails competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, and deliberation, along with related qualities. Neuroticism is reflected in anxiety, hostility, depression, vulnerability, and related traits (John, 1990). According to instrumental theory, personality traits have direct effects on actions or circumstances, which in turn affect subjective well-being (Heller, Watson, & Ilies, 2004). In addition, according to temperament theory, personality traits affect subjective well-being as a result of emotional reactivity and the effect of cognitive processing over emotional information (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003).

Kahneman and Krueger (2006) argued that leisure activities have great effects on subjective well-being and that daily life activities, such as shopping, fail to affect subjective well-being. Costa and McCrae (1992) introduced the personality traits and examined their correlation with affective variables. Extraversion is positively correlated with positive affect, whereas neuroticism is correlated with negative affect. DeNeve and Cooper (1998) showed that extraversion was positively correlated and neuroticism was negatively correlated with life satisfaction. In their study on workers in five Chinese cities, Zhai et al. (2014) reported that extraversion and conscientiousness had a positive effect on subjective well-being, whereas neuroticism had a

negative effect. Meléndez et al. (2019) suggested in their research on elderly people in Columbia that extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness had positive effects on subjective well-being, while extraversion and conscientiousness had positive effects on life satisfaction. In contrast, neuroticism appears to have a negative effect on life satisfaction. Based on this prior work, the present study predicted that the personality traits would affect subjective well-being during serious leisure experiences. The specific hypotheses of this study were:

H1: Personality traits have a significant effect on subjective well-being.

H1-1: Extraversion has a positive effect on life satisfaction

H1-2: Openness to experience has a positive effect on life satisfaction

H1-3: Conscientiousness has a positive effect on life satisfaction

H1-4: Agreeableness has a positive effect on life satisfaction

H1-5: Neuroticism has a negative effect on life satisfaction

H1-6: Extraversion has a positive effect on positive affect

H1-7: Openness to experience has a positive effect on positive affect

H1-8: Conscientiousness has a positive effect on positive affect

H1-9: Agreeableness has a positive effect on positive affect

H1-10: Neuroticism has a negative effect on positive affect

2.2. Subjective Well-being and Behavioral Intention

Subjective well-being is the subjective sense of happiness experienced by an individual (An & Zhang, 2019). Such happiness is remembered and experienced differently depending on how people accept the things that have happened to them during their lifetime (Lyubomirsky & Ross, 1997; Lyubomirsky & Tucker, 1998). For instance, happy people accept and recall their experiences in a more positive way than do unhappy people. Thus, happiness is said to be closely related to optimism (Lyubomirsky, Tkach, & DiMatteo, 2006). Happy people expect more positive results from life than do unhappy people, and such expectations are said to have an overall positive effect on life. Diener (1984) suggested that happiness and unhappiness are based on inherently different underlying mechanisms, with different moderating effects. Diener (1984) replaced the notion of happiness with a new concept, subjective well-being, and differentiated between its cognitive components and affective components. Cognitive components refer to the degree of life satisfaction experienced, while affective components

include positive affect among others. Such subjective well-being is closely related to behavioral intention. Chiu, Cheng, Huang, and Chen (2013) showed that satisfaction achieved via online social media use has positive effects on subjective well-being, on the intention to reuse the media platform, and on loyalty to it. Jamaludin, Sam, Sandal, and Adam (2016) reported that the perceived universalism of Norwegian international students had a positive effect on subjective well-being and that subjective well-being had a positive effect on the destination loyalty of international students. This finding shows that international students who are relatively stable and happy respond positively toward maintaining destination loyalty. Wang, Lin, and Liao (2010) stated that extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness had positive effects on users' perceived pleasure with weblogs and that such perceived pleasure ultimately had a positive effect on behavioral intention. Based on these theoretical grounds, the present study predicted that subjective well-being evoked by serious leisure experiences would affect behavioral intention. The specific hypotheses of this study were:

H2: Subjective well-being has a significant effect on behavioral intention.

H2-1: Life satisfaction has a positive effect on behavioral intention

H2-2: Positive affect has a positive effect on behavioral intention

3. Research Method

3.1. Participants and Procedure

The present study employed the online research organization Macromill Embrain located in South Korea to conduct a survey. This study extracted samples from online panels by targeting users who had experience skiing at ski resorts. The online survey asked subjects whether they had skied during the previous ski season to extract an adequate number of responses. Only respondents who responded 'yes' were surveyed; those responding 'no' were excluded from the survey. These respondents underwent a scenario technique to arouse their memories of skiing. Respondents received a ski lesson at the ski area in the morning. Then, in the afternoon, they read a scenario instructing them to ski freely on the slopes. Next, they projected a shadow of themselves into a past skiing situation for one minute before participating in the survey. A final panel of 727 subjects participated in the survey. Respondents took the online survey, which covered the respondents' personality traits, subjective well-being, behavioral intentions, and demographic variables such as gender, age, and the frequency of skiing during a season. Respondents received a small financial reward in return for participating in the survey. The gender makeup

of the respondents was 425 males (58.5%) and 302 females (41.5%). The ages included people in their 20s ($n = 213$; 29.3%), 30s (289; 39.8%), 40s (155; 21.3%), and 50s (70; 9.6%). With regard to the frequency of skiing in a season, 480 (66.0%) respondents reported skiing 1–2 times, 173 (23.8%) skied 3–4 times, 42 (5.8%) skied 5–6 times, and 32 (4.4%) respondents skied 7 or more times per season.

3.2. Measures

The main constructs examined in this study were measured on 5-point Likert scales using multiple items (except respondents' sex, age, and skiing frequency). Measures for all constructs are shown in Table 1.

Personality Traits: We measured personality traits by adopting a scale consisting of 17 items from Yoo and Gretzel (2011). Participants were asked to rate themselves in terms of the constructs of extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and neuroticism.

Subjective Well-being: This study developed and measured a scale of subjective well-being by modifying and supplementing scales used in previous studies (Diener, 1984). The scale involved assessing life satisfaction and positive affect in relation to leisure activities.

Behavioral Intention: This study used five items to assess behavioral intention (Kim & Shim, 2017; Kim & Shim, 2019; Chiu et al., 2013; Cho, 2019; Jamaludin et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2010): the extent to which the participant felt loyal to this ski resort, the intention to use this resort again, intention to offer positive word-of-mouth support for this resort, and intention to spend additional money to ski at this resort.

3.3. Data Analysis

We evaluated descriptive features and tested the reliability of the measurements using IBM SPSS statistic 23.0 software (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA) and tested hypotheses using Amos 23.0. As a first analysis, we estimated the measurement validity of the model by conducting a confirmatory factor analysis. In the second analysis, we utilized structural equation modeling to test the hypothesized relationships.

4. Results

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and correlations among the variables. According to the analysis, we conducted confirmatory procedures to investigate the discriminant validity of measures. The reliability of the variables was investigated using Cronbach's alpha, and discriminant and convergent validity were tested based on average variance (AVE), composite reliability (CR), and correlation coefficients among the variables (Tables 2 and 3). The analysis of the relationship between positive

Table 1: Items Used to Measure Constructs

Construct	Measurement Items
Personality Trait	EXT I always treat people warmly.
	I am good with people.
	I try to think of everything.
	I tend to lead others well.
	OE I am always thinking of something new
	I enjoy cultural life and leisure.
	I like new experiences.
	COS I think I am competent.
	I think I am good at dealing with people.
	I am sure I can handle my duties.
	AGR I am honest about everything.
	I think of others before I think of myself.
	I respect others and do not elevate myself.
	NEU I am always anxious.
Subjective Well-being	I have a feeling of inferiority or compulsion.
	I am sensitive to small slights.
	LS I am satisfied with my current leisure life.
	Life through leisure seems to be very good.
	My leisure life has been the life I have wanted so far.
	I think my leisure life has developed ideally.
	PA I am interested in leisure.
	I enjoy leisure.
Behavioral Intention	I have had good experiences with leisure activities.
	I have positive memories of leisure activities.
	I feel happy when I am involved in leisure activities.
	BI I am willing to visit ski resort again.
	I will use ski resort again, even if it costs extra money.
	I will talk about ski resort positively to others.
	I will recommend ski resort to a friend or acquaintance.
	I will use ski resort first in the future.

Note. EXT = extraversion, OE = openness to experience, COS = conscientiousness, AGR = agreeableness, NEU = neuroticism. LS = life satisfaction, PA = positive affect, BI = behavioral intention

Table 2: Scale Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Variables

Variables	Correlations							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 =EXT	1							
2 = OE	.67	1						
3 =COS	.74	.69	1					
4 = AGR	.46	.27	.39	1				
5 = NEU	-.50	-.41	-.49	-.39	.1			
6 = LS	.30	.28	.22	.25	-.14	1		
7 = PA	.33	.31	.22	.23	-.10	.75	.1	
8 = BI	.35	.33	.26	.30	-.15	.72	.77	1
M	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.5	2.9	3.5	3.8	3.6
SD	.60	.65	.59	.62	.68	.71	.64	.69

Note. EXT = extraversion, OE = openness to experience, COS = conscientiousness, AGR = agreeableness, NEU = neuroticism. LS = life satisfaction, PA = positive affect, BI = behavioral intention

Table 3: Results of the Confirmatory Factor and Reliability Analyses

Variable	Factor loading	SE	Critical ratio	CR	AVE	α
EXT 1	1					
EXT 2	.910	.071	12.88	.824	.542	.741
EXT 3	1.046	.068	15.39			
EXT 4	.748	.064	11.73			
OE 1	1					
OE 2	.866	.070	12.67	.768	.524	.693
OE 3	.966	.074	13.10			
COS 1	1					
COS 2	1.918	.178	10.80	.799	.580	.675
COS 3	1.607	.151	10.65			
AGR 1	1					
AGR 2	1.498	.139	10.76	.756	.512	.624
AGR 3	1.178	.119	9.92			
NEU 1	1					
NEU 2	1.093	.072	15.11	.802	.576	.739
NEU 3	1.011	.074	13.63			
LS 1	1					
LS 2	1.126	.051	22.01	.915	.730	.880
LS 3	1.080	.049	21.90			
LS 4	1.123	.047	24.07			

PA 1	1					
PA 2	.978	.039	25.29	.943	.768	.905
PA 3	.992	.038	25.85			
PA 4	.992	.039	25.43			
PA 5	1.016	.043	23.71			
BI 1	1					
BI 2	1.085	.040	27.39	.940	.760	.910
BI 3	1.102	.040	27.27			
BI 4	1.095	.043	25.55			
BI 5	1.041	.016	22.58			

Note. EXT = extraversion, OE = openness to experience, COS = conscientiousness, AGR = agreeableness, NEU = neuroticism. LS = life satisfaction, PA = positive affect, BI = behavioral intention

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing Results

NO	Hypothesis	Estimate	SE	CR	P
1-1	EXT → LS	.416	.116	3.588	<.001
1-2	OE → LS	.319	.078	4.070	<.001
1-3	COS → LS	-.197	.122	-1.610	.107
1-4	AGR → LS	.308	.085	3.643	<.001
1-5	NEU → LS	.077	.052	1.469	.142
1-6	EXT → PA	.565	.130	4.338	<.001
1-7	OE → PA	.401	.084	4.758	<.001
1-8	COS → PA	-.259	.133	-1.944	.052
1-9	AGR → PA	.333	.091	3.678	<.001
1-10	NEU → PA	.159	.056	2.845	.004
2-1	LS → BI	.397	.045	8.747	<.001
2-2	PA → BI	.543	.041	13.138	<.001

Note. EXT = extraversion, OE = openness to experience, COS = conscientiousness, AGR = agreeableness, NEU = neuroticism. LS = life satisfaction, PA = positive affect, BI = behavioral intention

affect and behavioral intention variables is not shown, as there was no clear correlation between the two variables. A χ^2 difference analysis was performed using constrained and non-constrained models between the latent variables. The results of the analysis were statistically significant, ensuring discriminant validity. As shown in Table 3, the fit of the measurement model was satisfactory ($\chi^2 = 1307.64$, $df = 377$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 3.469$, CFI = .916, TLI = .903, RMR

= .030, and RMSEA = .058). The Cronbach's alpha values were $>.60$ for all constructs, which exceeded the threshold criterion of .60 for general acceptance of internal consistency reliability. A confirmatory factor analysis was carried out; the item factor loadings ranged from .70 to 2.0, and CR and AVE were above the threshold values of .70 and .50.

The goodness of fit of the analytical model was close to the standard value ($\chi^2 = 2,132.00$, $df = 388$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 5.495$, CFI = .842, TLI = .823, RMR = .104, and RMSEA = .079; see Figure 1 and Table 4). A robust maximum likelihood estimation approach was utilized to generate this model. The hypothesis test results were as follows. First, extraversion positively influenced life satisfaction ($\beta_{EXT \rightarrow LI} = .416$, $p < .001$), openness to experience positively influenced life satisfaction ($\beta_{OE \rightarrow LI} = .319$, $p < .001$), and agreeableness positively influenced life satisfaction ($\beta_{AGR \rightarrow LI} = .308$, $p < .001$). Thus, H1-1, H1-2, and H1-4 were supported. Extraversion positively influenced positive affect ($\beta_{EXT \rightarrow PA} = .565$, $p < .001$), openness to experience positively influenced positive affect ($\beta_{OE \rightarrow PA} = .401$, $p < .001$), and agreeableness positively influenced positive affect ($\beta_{AGR \rightarrow PA} = .333$, $p < .001$). Thus, H1-6, H1-7, and H1-9 were supported. In contrast to the established hypothesis, neuroticism enhanced positive affect ($\beta_{NEU \rightarrow PA} = .159$, $p < .05$). However, H1-3 (COS $\rightarrow$ LS), H1-5 (NEU $\rightarrow$ LS), and H1-8 (COS $\rightarrow$ PA) were not supported. Furthermore, life satisfaction positively influenced behavioral intention ($\beta_{LI \rightarrow BI} = .397$, $p < .001$) and positive affect positively

influenced behavioral intention ($\beta_{PA \rightarrow BI} = .543$, $p < .001$). Thus, H2-1 and H2-2 were supported.

5. Discussion

The present study examined how the personality traits were related to serious leisure experiences and how they affected subjective well-being, specifically overall life satisfaction and positive affect. In addition, the study investigated how subjective well-being affected the behavioral intention to use the same leisure facilities again and the will to spread this information to acquaintances by positive word of mouth.

The results of the study were as follows. First, the personality traits had significant effects on subjective well-being during serious leisure experiences. The personality traits, specifically, extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness, had significantly positive effects on life satisfaction. In addition, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and neuroticism had significantly positive effects on affect. These results support those of DeNeve and Cooper (1998), Zhai et al. (2014), and Meléndez et al. (2019). Interestingly, neuroticism appeared to have a significant positive effect on positive affect. This result suggests that people who are high in neuroticism experience greater fun, pleasure, and happiness than do those who are low in neuroticism. In the past, blogging studies in online environments have shown that neuroticism has a positive

Figure 1: Research Model Verification Result

effect on perceived enjoyment (Wang et al., 2010), and the same results have been found in serious leisure experiences in this study. Second, subjective well-being had a significant positive effect on behavioral intention. Both life satisfaction and positive affect had positive effects on behavioral intention. These results are in accord with the results of Chiu et al. (2013), Jamaludin et al. (2016), and Wang et al. (2010). In particular, positive affect had a greater effect on behavioral intention than on life satisfaction. This suggests that positive affect, an affective component, has a stronger expression in serious leisure experiences than does life satisfaction, a cognitive component.

The theoretical implications are numerous. First, previous studies of personality traits focused on the expression of personality traits in daily life leisure by targeting workers or elderly people (Anglim & Grant, 2016; Gutiérrez et al., 2005; Hayes & Joseph, 2003; Henning et al., 2017). However, the present study focused on the effects of the personality traits during serious leisure experiences. Unlike in previous studies, neuroticism was had a positive effect on well-being. Second, previous studies that established causal relationships between the personality traits and subjective well-being used regression analysis. To establish the effects of serious leisure experiences in more depth, the present study used a structural equation model to test these effects by targeting personality traits, subjective well-being, and behavioral intention.

The practical implications of our results are as follows. First, marketing managers at leisure companies could collect information revealing the personality traits of highly involved consumers of leisure products and services, such as frequent purchasers or seasonal pass holders, and use this information as the framework for building a customer relationship management (CRM) system for marketing. Furthermore, when using this marketing CRM, managers could take advantage of the fact that more neurotic, sensitive, and anxious users would likely feel greater stress relief because users higher in neuroticism are more likely to experience positive affect. Second, subjective well-being was established as significantly affecting behavioral intention. One-time users of leisure products or services must become regular users for the sustainable operation of a leisure business, making it necessary that users feel loyal to particular products. Operating regular offline meet-ups and encouraging communication activities through social media to increase the loyalty of these targeted customers are effective means for constantly reinforcing behavioral intention, as these methods are capable of maximizing extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness.

The limitations of this study and future research directions should be discussed. The present study was conducted with particular reference to skiing at a ski resort. Future research must establish the effects of personality traits for serious

leisure experiences that are enjoyed during the green season as well, such as trekking, hiking, paragliding, and hang gliding. In addition, this study selected a pre-registered panel of users from an online research organization, choosing participants who had skied during the previous ski season. Future research needs to expand, so that the subsequent real-life effects of serious leisure experiences can be evaluated.

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