

## China's Workforce Dynamics: A Conceptual Framework for Assessing Employee Work Attitudes in Shanghai

Wang Zhe\*,

Graduate School of Business,  
SEGi University, Malaysia,  
[wangzhe7648@163.com](mailto:wangzhe7648@163.com)

Geetha Subramaniam

Faculty of Education, Language and Psychology,  
SEGi University, Malaysia,  
[geethasubramaniam@segi.edu.my](mailto:geethasubramaniam@segi.edu.my)

Corresponding author: [wangzhe7648@163.com](mailto:wangzhe7648@163.com)

### Abstract

*China has witnessed the emergence of significant labour-related phenomena, exemplified by the “Nei Juan” and “Tang Ping” movements, alongside the widespread adoption of the “996” overtime working schedule. These developments have had far-reaching consequences, manifesting in heightened job dissatisfaction and adverse health effects among Chinese employees. Consequently, these shifts in working conditions have disrupted perceptions of traditional Chinese work ethics, precipitating a transformation in Chinese work attitudes. While prior research on Chinese work attitudes has predominantly revolved around Confucian values, it has become increasingly evident that employees in China are evolving expectations in the workplace. The conventional norms may no longer encapsulate the entirety of their work attitudes. In light of these transformations, this study aims to shed light on the dynamic landscape of contemporary Chinese work attitudes, seeking to cultivate a more nuanced understanding of this evolution. The study's findings are expected to contribute substantively to developing a comprehensive conceptual framework, delving into the intricate interplay of generational differences, personality traits, and organizational culture in moulding the work attitudes of employees in Shanghai. By integrating pertinent theories encompassing Person-Organization fit and generational cohorts, we have devised a robust conceptual model to facilitate comprehension of these evolving work attitudes.*

**Keywords:** Work Attitudes; Work Values; Chinese Employees.

### 1 Introduction

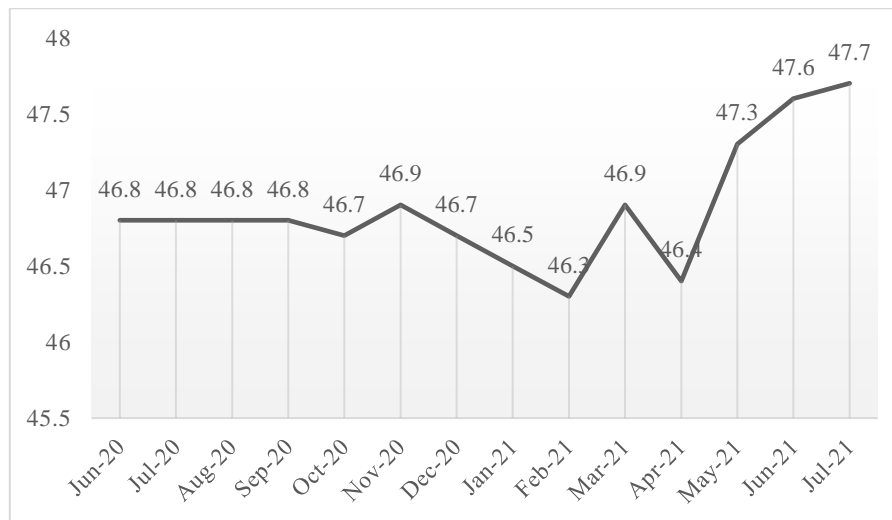
In recent times, the Chinese social media sphere has been abuzz with the terms “Involution (Nei Juan)” and “Lying flat (Tang Ping),” sparking widespread and fervent discussions. These movements are stark reflections of the immense work-related pressures experienced by the fierce competition within the Chinese service market (Wang, 2021). “Nei Juan” draws its inspiration from Geertz's theory of involution (1974) and illustrates a scenario where there is an unequal relationship between the process of input and output, resulting in a perpetual internal repetition without yielding ultimate external rewards. This phenomenon disrupts the equilibrium of the system. On the contrary, the term “Tang Ping” was introduced by Luo Huazhong, who presented his manifesto titled “Lying flat is justice” on the online platform. The “Tang Ping” phenomenon is characterized by a lack of desire and inaction, and it has garnered significant attention and sparked discussions and criticisms across social media and ethical debates (Chen, 2021).

Before the 1980s, the prevailing belief among most of Generation X in China was that success was synonymous with hard work, marriage, and raising a family. They adhered to Collectivist cultural norms and often suppressed individuality (Yan, 2020). This period was characterized by shared hardships that tempered personal egos, with individual accomplishments seen as communal assets. The driving forces were the collective pursuit of higher goals and the elevation of family honor. However, this dynamic began to shift with the advent of market-oriented reforms and the opening-up policies of the 1980s, which revitalized the Chinese economy and allowed individuals to work hard and pursue legitimate wealth (Nie et al., 2017). The moral ethos of self-sacrifice gradually led to the ascendance of government officials and successful individuals wielding political power or economic wealth as societal role models.

Subsequently, in China, the ethic of hard work emerged as a potent driver for attaining higher social status. Nonetheless, contemporary developments, including national development reforms and policies, have reshaped opportunities for the younger generation, triggering shifts in their work attitudes and values (Li, 2020). Present-

day youth exhibit resistance to traditional Confucian work ethics and reluctance to sacrifice their well-being for economic development, which signals the nascent stages of a transformation in modern Chinese work attitudes.

Additionally, the strenuous work culture epitomized by the “996” overtime working culture has significantly affected millions of Chinese employees (Chen, 2021). Notably, a substantial portion of the workforce in China faces prolonged working hours, escalating housing costs, and an extended retirement age, leading to heightened challenges (ManpowerGroup, 2020). To put this into perspective, the average workweek in China spans approximately 47 hours (Figure 1). If we make a rough calculation, accounting for 52 weeks in a year and deducting 11 statutory holidays, this translates to an annual average of 2,433 working hours. Remarkably, this figure is nearly three-quarters of the 1,779 working hours recorded in the United States and twice the 1,644 working hours observed in Japan.



**Figure 1.** Average Working Hours in China  
(Source: CEIC, 2023)

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2021), employees working 55 hours per week or more face a 35% higher risk of stroke and a 17% higher likelihood of heart disease compared to those working 35-40 hours weekly. Despite the “996” phenomenon being officially recognized as a severe violation of Chinese labour laws, individual employees find it challenging to defend their rights and resist excessive overtime work. The prevailing social culture of intense competition, coupled with the prevalent “996” work schedule, necessitates a re-evaluation of Chinese employees’ work attitudes.

Concurrently, the issues highlighted above prompt questions regarding the alignment of organizational culture and working environments with the perceived values of millennial employees. Factors such as generational differences, personality traits, and organizational culture come into play in shaping their work attitudes. On the one hand, Chinese employees must actively position themselves and proactively seek suitable career paths in this evolving landscape. On the other hand, to ensure sustainable development, companies are responsible for meeting their current employees’ reasonable demands.

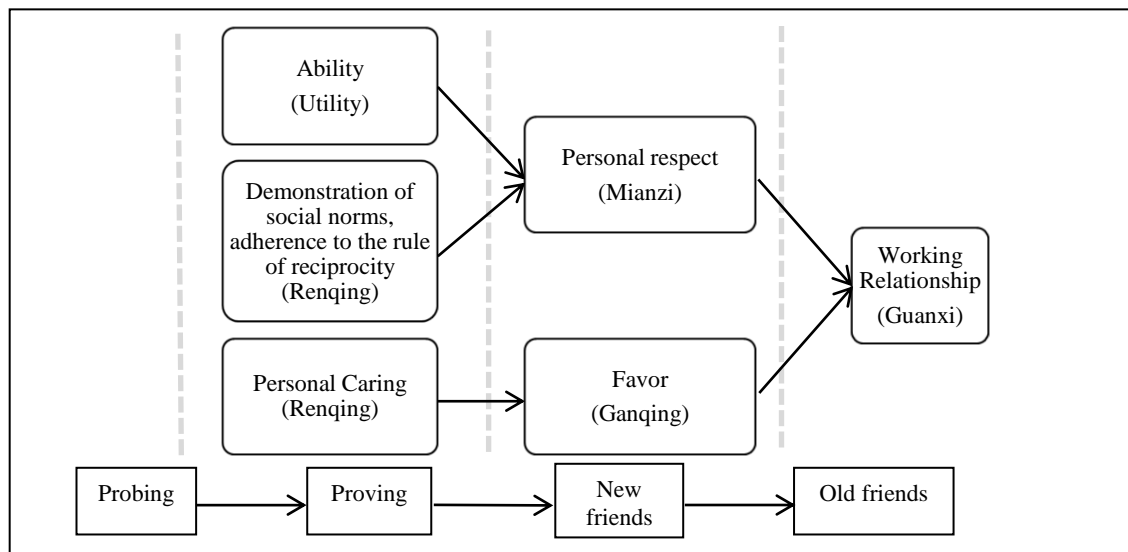
In the academic domain of work-related concepts, many researchers have concentrated on discerning attitude variances within the multigenerational workforce (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Despite this area’s growing body of studies, a unified framework for understanding these concepts still needs to be discovered. Furthermore, contemporary research on work-related concepts, encompassing work attitudes, values, and job satisfaction, needs more consistency (Kraaykamp et al., 2019). Investigating the intricate association between work values and attitudes remains imperative.

Moreover, a significant gap exists in the body of evidence concerning the work attitudes of current employees, particularly in the aftermath of the Coronavirus Pandemic. The ongoing epidemic prevention measures have compelled numerous individuals to shift their work and educational activities online (Xie, 2021), transforming traditional work environments into remote work setups. Consequently, this study contributes a conceptual discourse aimed at augmenting our current understanding of employees’ work attitudes in the evolving landscape of China.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Research Background

Traditional Chinese work attitudes have been profoundly influenced by Confucian virtues, particularly the principles of diligence, collectivism, and the cultivation of personal social networks, which have long shaped the behaviours of Chinese employees in the workplace. This collective mindset has ingrained the belief that dedicating oneself to the organization without question is unquestionably virtuous (Nie et al., 2017). Although these traditional work attitudes exert significant influence, modern work norms have evolved due to evolving career choices and personal judgments (Yang et al., 2018). Chinese employees prioritize ideals such as social harmony and self-realization as crucial work ethics alongside the pursuit of comprehensive development (Jiang & Yang, 2011). According to Chan (2006), these work ethics align with the distinct Chinese social framework characterized by collective values and group-oriented practices, exemplified by concepts like Guanxi, Mianzi, and Renqing. The intricate interplay among these connections gives rise to a structured working guanxi process, as depicted in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Illustration of Chinese Working Relationship  
(Source: Adapted from Bedford, 2011)

In 1980, the Chinese government dismantled the ‘Iron Rice Bowl’ policy, encouraging individuals to explore alternative career paths. Prior to this reform, specific positions within state-owned enterprises (SOEs) were limited and subject to state control, which marked a pivotal shift in employment opportunities in China, transitioning from centralized control to a more open and diverse range of career paths (Zhu & Dowling, 2002).

Compared to the preceding generation, known as Generation X, millennials, also referred to as ‘post-1985s’ or ‘post-1990s,’ represent the first cohort to experience financial independence. They came of age during rapid economic growth and enjoyed relatively prosperous living conditions. However, the subsequent generation, often termed ‘post-millennials’, exhibits heightened characteristics of idealism, self-assertion, and individualism, which are more pronounced than those observed in their predecessors (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Features of Chinese Generations  
(Source: Adapted from Yang et al., 2018)

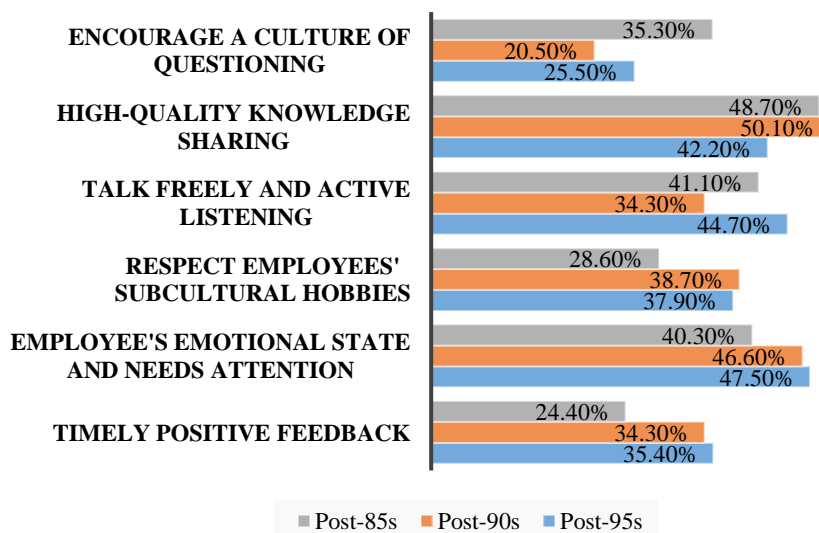
Generations	Years	Formative events	Characteristics	Job Preference
<b>Cultural Revolution</b>	Before 1965	Great Leap Forward, Cultural Revolution	Poor childhood, passionate	Being assigned jobs, many started their own business, seeing a misfit between employment and education.
<b>Generation X (Social Reform)</b>	1965 – 1980	Reform and opening policy	Realistic, better educated, hardworking, financial pressure	From being assigned jobs to choosing jobs by themselves

<b>Generation Y (Millennials)</b>	1981 – 1996	The one-child policy, Economic reform, technology boom	Self-centred materialists, individualistic, Well looked after and spoiled	More freedom, career choices depending on interests and personality rather than money, job-hopping
<b>Generation Z (Post-Millennials)</b>	After 1997	The financial crisis in 2008, the social media revolution, smartphones	Global generation, digital-centric, idealism, self-affirmation	Possess unique perspectives, preferences, and expectations related to work

According to statistics from the China Labour-force Dynamics Survey (CLDS), salary payments and related subsidies have now taken precedence as the primary consideration for labour market job preferences. In contrast to the allure of exciting job opportunities, a significant proportion of Chinese employees opt for well-paid and secure positions. This choice may lead to long-term workplace dissatisfaction (Zhang et al., 2019).

Furthermore, social income disparities exert considerable pressure on Chinese employees, with average annual wages varying significantly across different industries and regions. As per the most recent wage statistics released by the National Bureau of Statistics of China in 2023, the average annual wage in urban non-private sectors stood at approximately 97,379 yuan (equivalent to \$15,188). For the majority of ordinary employees in China, the average monthly salary amounts to roughly \$1,817, translating to an annual income of \$21,804 (KPMG, 2018). Moreover, the Job Demands Trends Report (Boss Zhipin, 2021), compiled by one of China's largest online recruitment platforms, highlights noteworthy distinctions in the work experience preferences of individuals from different generations, including the post-85s, post-90s, and post-95s cohorts. There is a shared interest in high-quality knowledge-sharing work experiences among these groups. However, the post-95s generation exhibits a stronger desire for emotional guidance. Interestingly, post-85 employees favor a work environment characterized by questioning and inquiry, as depicted in Figure 3.

Additionally, the report underscores a shift in workplace management practices across generations. Rather than solely focusing on work value propositions, there is a growing emphasis on providing emotional support. Notably, 36.7% of enterprises express concerns about the emotional stability and ability to handle pressure among the post-95 generation.



**Figure 3.** The Importance of Young People Placed on Work Experience  
(Source: Boss Zhipin Research Institute, 2021)

Employees increasingly prioritize companies that align with their work values, often opting against workplaces with differing cultures and objectives. In light of this, the most effective recruitment strategies in this century involve assessing employees' skills and capabilities for in-role behaviour and considering extra-role behaviour, which includes evaluating the compatibility between employees' knowledge, skills, abilities (KSAs), and the company's organizational culture, vocational norms (Rynes & Cable, 2003).

## 2.2 Person-Organization Fit Theory (P-O Fit)

Over the past few decades, extensive research in work-related studies (Alas et al., 2009) has explored attitudes and examined relationships among generational differences (Lyons & Kuron, 2014), personality traits (Wille et al., 2014), and organizational culture (Quinn & Kimberly, 1984). However, developing an integrated framework for understanding work attitudes has been relatively limited in previous research (George & Jones, 1997).

Drawing upon the theories of generational cohorts (Mannheim, 1952) and P-O Fit (Westerman & Cyr, 2004), the study introduces a novel conceptual framework. This framework aims to comprehensively investigate the collective impact of generational disparities, personality traits, and organizational culture on work attitudes. It seeks to identify which factors exhibit stronger correlations with work attitudes.

According to Orlikowski (2000), this theory serves as a foundational framework primarily utilized as an assessment and analytical tool designed to hone in on specific facets of a study. In the context of P-O Fit research, the focus shifts from merely satisfying qualifications based on KSA standards to a broader consideration of aligning individuals with suitable organizations. Chatman's (1989) interactional model further elucidates the dynamics in assessing value congruence, shedding light on the interplay between individual and organizational characteristics and highlighting similarities and differences. Additionally, the P-O Fit process is a mutual selection mechanism, and its outcome is the compatibility between individuals and organizations (Schneider et al., 2001).

While the P-O Fit theory bears relevance to intentions to leave, work attitudes, and work performance (Cable & DeRue, 2002), there remains ongoing debate concerning the content domain and measurement instruments. Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) conducted a meta-analysis and offered valuable insights into the P-O Fit theory, recommending two key constructs. The first construct involves the operationalization of P-O Fit through the process of value congruence. The second construct emphasizes the strong correlations between the P-O Fit and employees' satisfaction, highlighting its close association with retention/attrition decisions and employees' organizational commitment.

Westerman and Cyr (2004) conducted an examination of two distinct approaches, supplementary fit and needs-supplies fit, with the aim of assessing the impact of P-O Fit on employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee turnover intention. Employee work attitudes were assessed through organizational commitment and job satisfaction, with turnover intention serving as the outcome variable. Supplementary Fit evaluates the congruence between an individual's attributes, such as values, personality traits, and skills, and those valued or sought by the organization. In essence, it aims to determine how well an employee's job characteristics align with the organization's values. Needs-Supplies Fit assesses how an organization meets an individual's needs and expectations. It examines whether the organization provides the necessary resources and support for employees to perform well and thrive within the work environment.

The P-O Fit theory asserts that a substantial alignment between an individual and the organization across these dimensions can result in favourable outcomes, including increased job satisfaction, heightened organizational commitment, and diminished turnover intention. Conversely, a lack of fit may result in dissatisfaction, reduced commitment, and a greater likelihood of employees considering leaving the organization.

In summary, the P-O Fit theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how the congruence between individual attributes and organizational characteristics can influence various work-related outcomes and employee attitudes. This theory provides theoretical support for the investigation of work attitudes between values, personality, and the intention to remain/leave the company.

## 2.3 Generational Cohort Theory

The concept of generational cohorts defined as "The Problem of Generations," emphasizes the impact of shared historical experiences on the formation of values and behaviours. Mannheim posited that individuals from the same birth cohort, shaped by similar growth environments, tend to develop comparable values and behaviours (Mannheim, 1952). In line with this perspective, Twenge (2010) argued that values and beliefs established during youth often exhibit relative stability as individuals transition into adulthood. Conversely, researchers suggest that generational cohorts have a complex influence on work values, with this impact being contingent on age profiles (Locmele-Lunova & Cirjevskis, 2017). In summary, the generational cohort theory offers valuable insights and a framework for understanding the overarching characteristics exhibited by various generations in the workplace (Yang et al., 2018).

#### 2.4 Work Attitudes

The concept of work attitudes encapsulates the complex array of perceptions and emotional responses that individuals encounter within their workplace, serving as a barometer for the delicate balance between their innate needs and the level of satisfaction derived from their professional endeavours (Ben-Shem & Avi-Itzhak, 1991). The nuanced landscape of work attitudes is pivotal in explaining the variations observed in employee job satisfaction and the depth of their organizational commitment. George and Jones (1997) have aptly characterized work attitudes as a foundational knowledge structure and an essential methodological framework that enables employees to articulate and navigate their distinct emotional and cognitive responses to the multifaceted realm of work experiences.

Job satisfaction is defined as an individual's overall sense of contentment or discontent with their work and workplace (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Employees who experience a sense of accomplishment in their work and are willing to engage in their tasks and demonstrate greater commitment to their organization (Nelson, 2006). According to Judge and Klinger (2007), previous studies have identified three key aspects of work attitudes. Firstly, they relate to personal characteristics, with work attitudes evolving with personality traits (Wille et al., 2014). Secondly, they are influenced by organizational factors, including work conditions (Rashid et al., 2004). Lastly, they are associated with job characteristics, such as job autonomy.

Organizational commitment, as articulated by Robbins and Judge (2013), represents the profound connection that an employee forges with their organization—a tapestry woven from beliefs, a sense of belonging, and a steadfast resolve to continue their journey within the organization or contemplate other paths. In essence, it embodies the employee's emotional investment in the organizational mission and values, epitomizing a commitment that transcends mere employment. Employees who exhibit a high degree of organizational commitment emerge as invaluable assets, as do their unwavering dedication and alignment with the company's objectives, making them exceptionally appealing candidates who contribute not just to the present but also to the organization's future prosperity.

#### 2.5 Generational Differences in Work Attitudes

Within generational studies, a spirited debate unfolds, with scholars offering diverse perspectives on the relationship between historical events, shared circumstances, and individual work preferences (Twenge, 2010). Some researchers contend that individuals who have traversed the same historical epochs tend to exhibit congruent work-related inclinations. Conversely, an opposing viewpoint posits that different generational cohorts often manifest distinct levels of commitment, obligation, and responsibility. This complexity is exemplified in the case of Millennials, who, despite displaying a propensity for voluntary turnover behaviour, concurrently exhibit lower intentions to leave their current roles. Rood (2010) accentuates the pivotal role of age and cumulative working experiences in shaping the work attitudes of millennial employees. It is postulated that seasoned employees may tend to favour less conflict, fewer absences from work, and a heightened level of professionalism, contrasting with the inclinations of their newly arrived counterparts.

In the quest to unravel the intricate tapestry of individual work ethics and their generational variations, Cherrington (1980) embarked on a comprehensive inquiry. His pursuit culminated in the development of a multifaceted framework comprising three primary scales meticulously crafted to gauge disparities in work attitudes across generations:

1. *Desirability of Work Outcomes*: This scale delves into the perceived desirability of work-related outcomes that individuals anticipate within their professional journey. It casts a discerning eye on attitudes encompassing earnings, the drive for upward mobility, and the embodiment of the 'organization man' ethic (Wollack et al., 1971).
2. *Pride in Craftsmanship*: Nestled within this scale is the profound sense of satisfaction and fulfilment that individuals derive from their craft and the work they engage in. It unveils the emotional intricacies associated with pride in one's craftsmanship (Wollack et al., 1971).
3. *Moral Importance of Work*: This scale ventures into the ethical domain, probing an individual's recognition of the moral imperative to take responsibility for their own labour and sustenance rather than depending on external support. This concept echoes the seminal work of Blood (1969) and underscores the moral underpinnings that underscore an individual's relationship with their work.

Thus, the first hypothesis is:

*H1: Generational differences exhibit a positive relationship with work attitudes.*

## 2.6 Personality Traits in Work Attitudes

Personality traits encompass a comprehensive summation of individual variations in how individuals engage and interact within their social milieu (Robbins & Judge, 2013). These traits are deeply rooted in an individual's unique character and tend to have a relatively limited association with shared environmental factors (Bouchard, 2004). Within the realm of personality assessment, there exists a consensus on the pervasive utility of the Big Five Personality (BFP) model, which is considered a preeminent framework for understanding the most prominent individual traits (Schmitt, 2013).

As elucidated by Goldberg (1993), the BFP model posits that an individual's personality can be distilled into five overarching dimensions, namely Openness (O), Conscientiousness (C), Extraversion (E), Agreeableness (A), and Neuroticism (N). Each of these dimensions encompasses a spectrum used to gauge an individual's score. For instance, individuals with higher levels of openness tend to exhibit traits such as curiosity and independence, while those scoring lower on openness often gravitate toward routines and conventional approaches (Leutner et al., 2014).

The facet of conscientiousness within an individual's personality encapsulates a predisposition toward diligent, methodical approaches to task completion. Those who score high in conscientiousness tend to exhibit strong organizational skills and an unwavering commitment to their work. In contrast, individuals with lower conscientiousness scores may lean toward impulsivity and disorganization, displaying a penchant for spontaneity (Leutner et al., 2014). Extraverts, within the domain of personality, are characterized by their inherent proclivity for exuberance, sociability, and a propensity to be talkative. These individuals thrive in dynamic, social settings, often exuding energy and enthusiasm. Conversely, introverts tend to possess a more introspective disposition, gravitate toward solitude, and are often perceived as reserved in their expressions of emotions (Bazkiaei et al., 2020).

The attribute of agreeableness serves as a key identifier of an individual's inclination toward cooperation and empathy. Those with high agreeableness scores are predisposed to offer assistance willingly and exhibit a heightened sensitivity to the emotions and needs of others. They often foster harmonious interpersonal relationships and contribute positively to group dynamics. Lastly, Neuroticism delves into an individual's susceptibility to negative emotions, encompassing feelings of anxiety, despair, and helplessness. Individuals with higher scores on the Neuroticism spectrum are more prone to experiencing these adverse emotional states, potentially rendering them more emotionally vulnerable (Leutner et al., 2014; Bazkiaei et al., 2020). These facets of personality collectively contribute to the rich tapestry of individual differences, shaping how individuals perceive and interact with the world around them.

Despite its expansive definition, personality traits can impact the evaluative process of employees' work attitudes. Individuals with higher extraversion scores tend to be more optimistic and exhibit better performance. Similarly, agreeable employees are often trustworthy, cooperative, and tolerant, displaying forgiveness and mildness in their work evaluations. Additionally, personality traits can influence attitudes toward work identification (Wille, 2014). Employees with higher Neuroticism scores, due to low self-esteem and pessimism, are less likely to be ambitious and may feel pessimistic about job performance (Judge & Ilies, 2002).

Thus, the second hypothesis is:

*H2: Personality traits exhibit a positive relationship with work attitudes.*

## 2.7 Organizational Culture in Work Attitudes

Organizational culture, widely acknowledged as a cornerstone of any company, plays an instrumental role in facilitating the seamless functioning of daily operations within an organization. It serves as the bedrock upon which the company's identity and values are constructed, providing the guiding principles and norms that shape the behaviours and interactions of its staff (Momos & Tsuma, 2020). The intrinsic importance of organizational culture in attracting and retaining talent is underscored by a survey conducted by Glassdoor in 2019. The findings revealed that a staggering 75 percent of adults place a premium on thoroughly understanding a prospective employer's workplace culture before making the decision to join the company. This illuminates the pivotal role of culture in not only attracting potential employees but also in ensuring that they align with the organization's ethos and values, fostering a harmonious and productive work environment.

The Competing Values Framework (CVF), a widely embraced cultural taxonomy, was conceived by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) as a means to decode the multifaceted values that underlie various models of organizational effectiveness. Building upon this foundation, Quinn and Kimberly (1984) expanded the CVF's purview to encompass organizational culture and the representation of individuals' perceptions regarding an organization's

performance. Within this framework, they delineated four distinct archetypes of organizational culture, each wielding its unique characteristics and attributes:

1. *Clan Culture*: Rooted in internal orientation, the Clan Culture places a strong emphasis on fostering a sense of affiliation within the organization. As articulated by Hartnell et al. (2011), this culture thrives in an environment marked by flexibility, often influencing the organizational structure's adaptability. It dictates how the human resources department manages relationships among employees, promoting involvement, participation, and open communication.
2. *Adhocracy Culture*: Characterized by a relentless pursuit of change and external orientation, the Adhocracy Culture thrives on innovation through risk-taking and adaptability (Shortell et al., 1995). It embodies an entrepreneurial and idealistic ethos, often attributed to visionary managerial leaders (Denison & Spreitzer, 1991).
3. *Bureaucratic Culture*: Internally oriented and governed by stringent control mechanisms, the Hierarchical Culture thrives on regulatory precision. It prescribes distinct roles and expectations for individual behaviour, fostering conformity and predictability. Bureaucracy is a hallmark feature of this culture.
4. *Market Culture*: Externally oriented and driven by the pursuit of achievement, the Rational Culture is fuelled by the motivating force of competitive aggressiveness embedded in its organizational fabric. Leaders within this culture tend to be goal-oriented, continuously striving to enhance productivity and propel the organization toward its objectives.

Thus, the third hypothesis is:

*H3: Organizational culture exhibits a positive relationship with work attitudes.*

### 3 Methodology

All measurement tools employed in this study were sourced from established literature, as indicated by Table 2. In terms of generational differences, the dimensions were drawn from Blood's (1969) Pro-Protestant Ethics (PPE) scale, Wollack et al.'s (1971) Survey of Work Values (SWV), and Cherrington and England's (1979) desirability of work outcomes dimension. The Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) was selected for its reliability in assessing personality traits (Gosling et al., 2003). An 11-item questionnaire was employed to evaluate organizational culture (Shortell et al., 1995). Work attitudes were assessed using the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) (Hackman & Oldham, 1974), while organizational commitment was measured with the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Mowday et al., 1979). Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).

Self-administered questionnaires were distributed via the Wen Juan Xing online platform. The inclusion criteria were ensured through three filter questions, confirming the target respondents were of legal working age (16-55 years old) and currently employed in services sectors in Shanghai. Out of the 600 distributed questionnaires, 121 were deemed invalid due to reasons such as incomplete responses or not meeting the inclusion criteria. The final usable sample consisted of 479 questionnaires, resulting in an 80% response rate, facilitated by the paid function of the Wen Juan Xing platform. The study employed Smart-PLS software to explore the correlation between the proposed three hypotheses.

**Table 2.** Measurement Instruments

Constructs	Number of Items	Item Source	Cronbach Alpha (Previous literature)
<b>Generational Differences</b>	14 items	Blood (1969), Cherrington & England (1979), Wollack et al. (1971)	0.61-0.79
<b>Personality Traits</b>	10 items	Gosling et al. (2003)	0.72
<b>Organizational Culture</b>	11 items	Shortell et al. (1995)	0.77-0.84
<b>Work Attitudes</b>	10 items	Hackman & Oldham (1974), Mowday et al. (1979)	0.76-0.82

### 4 Discussion

While previous research on Chinese work attitudes has primarily centred on the Confucian context (Yan, 2020), recent developments such as the 'Involution (Nei Juan)' and 'Lying flat (Tang Ping)' movements have underscored a shifting landscape. These contemporary movements suggest that employees in China may harbour different



expectations from their workplaces, where traditional hardships and collectivism may no longer be the paramount norms governing their work attitudes. This transformation prompts a need to reevaluate the factors influencing Chinese work attitudes (Wang et al., 2023).

Hypothesis 1 posited a positive association between generational differences and work attitudes. This discovery aligns with the perspective presented by Becker et al. (2022), which suggests the emergence of evolving generational distinctions in work attitudes between senior and junior staff members. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2009) contends that these primary generational distinctions stem from variations in work values and play a significant role in workplace conflicts. Indeed, different generations showcase diverse orientations towards work outcomes, encompassing financial rewards, a sense of accomplishment, and job security (Sagituly & Guo, 2023). Individuals also exhibit varying levels of pride in their skills, expertise, and beliefs about their jobs. Those who prioritize attention to detail and strive for excellence in producing high-quality work tend to derive significant pride, contributing to job satisfaction and commitment (Kyrousi et al., 2022). Furthermore, some employees view their work as a means to make a positive contribution to society, considering it not only as a livelihood but also as a way to make a meaningful impact on the world (Singh et al., 2023).

Hypothesis 2 suggests a positive correlation between personality traits and work attitudes. This result aligns with prior research indicating that the Big Five personality traits collectively exert discernible effects on various work-related attitudes (Farrukh et al., 2017). Scholars have delved into the connection between personality traits and work attitudes as an integral aspect of human resource practices within organisations. For instance, Steel et al. (2019) conducted a study revealing that the Big Five personality traits accounted for 10% of the variability in job satisfaction. Similarly, Fakhruddin et al. (2020) provided evidence of a positive impact of personality on employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Specifically, Harari et al. (2018) identified that employees with higher levels of extraversion tend to report greater job satisfaction. Notably, extraversion's major facets, including enthusiasm, exhibited a direct relationship with job satisfaction. The connection between assertiveness and job satisfaction was contingent on the attainment of higher-order workplace status. Assertive employees tended to be more satisfied with their jobs when their status was high but less satisfied when their status was low. Kang and Malvaso (2023) discovered that Neuroticism consistently exhibited a negative association with all aspects of job satisfaction, while Agreeableness and Conscientiousness displayed positive associations with job satisfaction. Extraversion had a weak negative association with satisfaction regarding total pay. Furthermore, according to Topino et al. (2021), there was a positive association between conscientiousness and job satisfaction. Individuals known for their diligent, well-organized, and self-disciplined approach to work were more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3 postulates a positive correlation between organizational culture and work attitudes. This finding aligns with research conducted by Soomro and Shah (2019), indicating that a positive and supportive organisational culture characterized by values such as respect, fairness, and teamwork can enhance employees' commitment to the organisation. When employees perceive their work experience as positive, it is highly likely that they will demonstrate a desire to remain in the organization and be more motivated to contribute to the organization's objectives (Chen & Francesco, 2003). Consequently, organizational culture fosters consistency among organizational members, ultimately enhancing group efficiency, commitment, and overall employee performance (Soomro & Shah, 2019).

Organizational culture has been the subject of numerous studies, all of which underscore its significant influence on job satisfaction (Ilham, 2018). According to Robbins and Judge (2018), employees form a subjective perception of their organization, influenced by objective factors like work structures, emphasis on outcomes, concern for individuals, team orientation, and competitiveness. These perceptions, whether positive or negative, subsequently impact job satisfaction, thereby shaping the strength and evolution of the organizational culture. It is imperative to acknowledge that prevailing bureaucratic practices in the Chinese service market have contributed to a decline in employees' trust in their organizations and a growing dissatisfaction with organizational culture. Looking ahead, organizations and service companies should recognize the pivotal role of organizational culture. Cultivating an environment that fosters consensus and rationality can prove instrumental in retaining valuable employees and enhancing overall organizational performance.

## 5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study holds significant implications for policymakers and contributes to the body of knowledge in the field of Chinese work attitudes. In practical terms, rather than quelling the negative work attitudes emerging among young Chinese workers to maintain the status quo, local governments should take proactive steps to enhance cultural management and address pressing issues related to excessive overtime practices. As Weissberg

(1976) noted, policy decisions are more likely to influence public opinion when they align with the prevailing sentiments. The evolving attitudes shaped by social and cultural shifts have led to growing scepticism regarding outdated regulations. Thus, an in-depth examination of labour force work attitudes serves as a valuable compass for policymakers, enabling them to alleviate workforce pressure and cultivate a more harmonious cultural environment.

From a theoretical perspective, this study offers fresh insights into the evolving landscape of Chinese work attitudes and values. It primarily focuses on individual factors, including generational differences, personality traits, and perceived organizational culture, and their influence on work attitudes. This understanding can be harnessed by managers to attract and retain talent effectively (Alas et al., 2009).

In light of the comprehensive discussion, it becomes evident that while numerous factors contribute to the current work attitudes of Chinese employees, the P-O Fit theory holds relevance in shedding light on the prevailing scenario. Therefore, it is recommended that an empirical study be conducted through a survey questionnaire to further explore the factors impacting the work attitudes of Chinese employees. This study should target a non-probability sample in Shanghai, with a particular focus on the services sector, which accounted for 54% of GDP in 2019 and provided 47.7% of employment opportunities in 2020. Although the '996' work culture originated in internet technology companies, the pervasive high-pressure work environment extends to other industries as well. Employing the P-O Fit theory, this research endeavour aims to ascertain the influence of three key factors: generational differences, personality traits, and organizational culture, on work attitudes.

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