

Personality Traits and Human Values as Predictors of Attitudes Toward Refugees and Visa Holders

Dr. Rodlyn Remina Hines CFCS-HDFS, MHCC¹

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Child and Family Studies, College of Health and Human Services, SUNY Empire State University, New York

Correspondence: Dr. Rodlyn Remina Hines CFCS-HDFS, MHCC, Assistant Professor, Department of Child and Family Studies, College of Health and Human Services, SUNY Empire State University, New York.

Received: March 7, 2026

Accepted: April 17, 2026

Available online: May 11, 2026

doi:10.11114/ijsss.v14i2.8815

URL: <https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v14i2.8815>

Abstract

This study examined the relationships between personality traits, personal values, and attitudes toward two groups of legally admitted immigrants: refugees and visa holders. A sample of college students (N = 283; M age = 19.8 years) completed measures based on the Big Five personality framework and Schwartz's Theory of Basic Human Values. Three hypotheses were tested: (1) extraverted host nationals would exhibit more positive attitudes toward refugees and visa holders, (2) individuals high in openness to change would demonstrate more positive attitudes, and (3) introverted host nationals would endorse more conservative values associated with more negative attitudes. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses indicated that conservation values were associated with more negative attitudes toward both refugees and visa holders, while introversion was associated with more negative attitudes toward refugees specifically. Extraversion and openness to change were not significant predictors of attitudes toward either group. Overall, the findings provide evidence that personality traits and value orientations are meaningfully associated with host nationals' perceptions of immigrants, particularly in relation to conservation values and attitudes toward refugees. At the same time, results should be interpreted with appropriate caution given variability in measurement reliability and the exploratory nature of the analyses.

Keywords: personality traits, human values, attitudes toward immigrants, refugees, visa holders, host nationals

1. Introduction

Global human migration continues to shape societies around the world, presenting both opportunities and challenges for host nations. According to the United Nations, over 280 million people now reside outside their country of origin, a number that has steadily increased due to economic globalization, political instability, and humanitarian crises (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014; Esses, Hamilton, & Gaucher, 2017). These migration flows include a diverse array of individuals, ranging from those who migrate voluntarily for work or education to those forced to flee their countries as refugees. Understanding host nationals' attitudes toward these different immigrant groups is critical, as perceptions influence social cohesion, integration policies, and the well-being of both migrants and receiving communities.

Literature Review and Theoretical Background

Research has consistently demonstrated that host nationals' attitudes toward immigrants are shaped by a combination of psychological, social, and cultural factors. Immigration is not only a political or economic issue but also a deeply social and psychological phenomenon that influences how individuals perceive group membership, identity, and belonging within a society. Scholars have long argued that attitudes toward immigrants are influenced by both structural factors, such as economic competition and labor market conditions, and individual-level characteristics, including personality traits, ideological orientations, and value systems (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014; Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010). Within this broader context, psychological dispositions play an important role in shaping how individuals interpret social change and respond to the presence of culturally diverse groups.

Personality traits, as conceptualized in the Big Five framework, and personal values, as outlined in Schwartz's theory of basic human values (2012), have emerged as important predictors of intergroup attitudes. The Big Five personality model identifies five broad dimensions that describe stable patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior across individuals. These traits influence how people interpret social environments and interact with others, including members

of different cultural or ethnic groups. Research examining the relationship between personality and prejudice has found that certain personality traits are associated with greater openness toward diversity, while others may contribute to more cautious or defensive attitudes toward unfamiliar groups.

Extant studies suggest that individuals high in openness to experience tend to express more favorable attitudes toward outgroup members, whereas those valuing tradition and conservation may perceive immigrants as threatening to established social norms (Davidov, Schmidt, & Schwartz, 2018; Czymara & Schmidt-Catran, 2017). Openness to experience is often associated with intellectual curiosity, tolerance for ambiguity, and a willingness to engage with unfamiliar perspectives. These characteristics may promote greater acceptance of cultural diversity and encourage individuals to view immigration as an opportunity for social enrichment rather than a threat to existing social structures. In contrast, individuals who prioritize values related to stability, security, and tradition may view immigration through a lens of cultural preservation, emphasizing the importance of maintaining established norms and social order.

Similarly, personality traits such as extraversion and agreeableness have been linked to increased prosociality and tolerance, whereas introversion and neuroticism may be associated with social caution or negative attitudes toward outsiders (Hodson & Costello, 2007; Chan, Pillay, & Swing, 2013). Extraversion is generally characterized by sociability, assertiveness, and a tendency to seek interpersonal interaction. Individuals who score high on extraversion often report greater comfort in social situations and may be more likely to engage with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Agreeableness, another dimension of the Big Five framework, reflects tendencies toward compassion, empathy, and cooperation, which have been associated with lower levels of prejudice and greater support for inclusive social policies. In contrast, individuals who are more introverted may prefer familiar social environments and smaller social networks, which may limit exposure to diverse groups and potentially contribute to more cautious attitudes toward newcomers.

The present study focuses on two legally admitted immigrant groups: refugees and visa holders. While both groups enter host countries with authorization, they differ in the circumstances prompting their migration and the public narratives surrounding their arrival. Visa holders are foreign nationals who receive temporary or long-term permission to reside in a country, often for employment, education, or family reunification purposes. These individuals may include international students, skilled workers, or family members joining relatives who already reside in the host country. Their presence is frequently framed in economic or educational terms, emphasizing the contributions they may make to the labor market, research institutions, or cultural exchange.

Refugees, in contrast, are forced to leave their countries due to persecution, conflict, or violence, and their legal status is granted under international protection frameworks (Hein, 1993; Esses et al., 2017). International agreements, including the 1951 Refugee Convention, recognize the rights of individuals who are unable to safely return to their home countries due to threats to their lives or freedoms. As a result, refugees are often resettled in host countries through humanitarian programs designed to provide safety and long-term protection. Despite the legal and moral foundations of refugee protection, public attitudes toward refugees can be complex and sometimes contradictory. In some cases, refugees are viewed with compassion and empathy due to the hardships they have experienced. In other cases, they may be perceived as posing economic, cultural, or security concerns.

Prior research has shown that host nationals may respond differently to these groups, perceiving refugees as posing greater economic or cultural threat than voluntary migrants, and responding with either support or skepticism depending on individual personality and value orientations (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014; Czymara & Schmidt-Catran, 2017). Some studies suggest that refugees may evoke stronger emotional reactions because their migration is associated with humanitarian crises, media coverage of conflict, and political debates surrounding asylum policies. In contrast, visa holders may be perceived as individuals who migrate for professional or educational opportunities, which may reduce perceptions of economic burden but still raise concerns related to labor competition or cultural change.

Personality and personal values influence attitudes toward immigrants both directly and indirectly. Personality traits shape how individuals interpret social information and respond to unfamiliar situations, while personal values provide a framework for evaluating social change and determining what outcomes are desirable or threatening. Openness to change and liberal values are generally associated with acceptance and empathy toward outgroups, whereas a preference for conservation and tradition may heighten concerns about cultural disruption (Davidov et al., 2018; Kilburn, 2009). These value orientations influence how individuals interpret immigration in relation to broader societal goals such as cultural preservation, economic development, and social stability.

Extraverted individuals may be more socially engaged and accepting of diversity, while introverted individuals may prioritize familiarity and stability, potentially fostering cautious or negative attitudes toward newcomers. At the same time, the relationship between personality and immigration attitudes is not always straightforward. Personality traits may influence how individuals process information about immigrants, but these effects may be moderated by other

factors such as political ideology, social identity, or exposure to diverse communities. For example, individuals who live in multicultural environments may develop more positive attitudes toward immigrants regardless of their personality traits, while individuals with limited intergroup contact may rely more heavily on stereotypes or media narratives when forming their opinions.

However, few studies have examined how the combination of personality traits and personal values together shape host nationals' attitudes toward specific immigrant categories, creating a gap this study aims to address. Much of the existing literature examines either personality traits or value orientations independently, rather than considering how these psychological factors interact to influence attitudes toward different types of immigrants. Examining these factors together may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how individuals evaluate immigrant groups and how underlying psychological dispositions shape perceptions of social change.

The study employs the Big Five Personality framework and Schwartz's Theory of Basic Human Values as the primary theoretical lenses. The Big Five framework provides a widely accepted model for understanding individual differences in personality, while Schwartz's theory offers a systematic approach to examining the motivational goals underlying human values. By integrating personality and values, the study examines whether certain combinations, such as extraversion with openness to change, predict positive attitudes, while introversion paired with conservation may predict negative attitudes. Additionally, demographic variables, such as gender and family migration experience, are considered as potential covariates influencing host nationals' perceptions. Previous research has suggested that individuals who have personal connections to immigrants or who come from immigrant families themselves may exhibit more favorable attitudes toward immigration due to increased empathy and familiarity with migration experiences.

Conceptualization of Key Constructs

For the purposes of this study, three primary constructs are examined: personality traits, personal values, and attitudes toward refugees and visa holders. Personality refers to enduring characteristics that distinguish individuals from one another and influence how they perceive social situations (Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 2003). Personality traits are generally considered stable across time and situations, shaping patterns of behavior, emotional responses, and interpersonal interactions. These traits influence how individuals interpret social information and respond to the presence of unfamiliar groups within their social environment.

In the present study, personality traits are examined through the dimensions of introversion and extraversion (Jung, 1971). Introverted individuals tend to focus more on internal experiences and may prefer solitary or small group interactions, while extraverted individuals draw energy from social engagement and external interactions. Introversion is often associated with reflection, introspection, and a preference for social connections. Extraversion, on the other hand, is typically characterized by sociability, assertiveness, and enthusiasm in social settings. These differences in social orientation may influence perceptions of and responses to immigrant groups. Individuals who enjoy social interaction may be more likely to engage with diverse populations and develop positive attitudes toward immigrants, while those who prefer familiar environments may be more cautious in their responses to newcomers.

Personal values are defined as fundamental beliefs that guide behavior and influence evaluations of people, events, and social issues (Schwartz, 2012). Values serve as guiding principles that shape how individuals prioritize goals and evaluate social changes. Schwartz's theory proposes that values are organized within a motivational continuum in which certain value orientations emphasize openness and change, while others emphasize stability and preservation. These values influence not only personal behavior but also attitudes toward broader societal issues such as immigration, cultural diversity, and social integration.

This study focuses on two value dimensions: openness to change and conservation. Individuals who endorse openness to change values tend to value independence, curiosity, and new experiences, potentially fostering receptivity to cultural diversity and interactions with immigrants. Such individuals may view immigration as an opportunity for cultural exchange and social learning. In contrast, individuals who prioritize conservation values emphasize tradition, security, and social stability, which may lead to greater concern about perceived threats posed by immigrant groups. These individuals may view immigration as a potential challenge to established cultural norms or societal cohesion.

Attitudes toward refugees and visa holders refer to the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that individuals express toward members of these groups. Attitudes are multidimensional and may include cognitive evaluations, emotional responses, and behavioral intentions (Perloff, 2016). Cognitive components involve beliefs about the characteristics or impact of immigrant groups, while emotional components reflect feelings such as empathy, fear, or concern. Behavioral components may include support for policies affecting immigration or willingness to interact with immigrants in social settings.

In the present study, attitudes are examined in terms of both positive and negative orientations toward these groups. Positive attitudes may include perceptions that immigrants contribute to cultural diversity, economic growth, or social vitality. Negative attitudes may involve concerns about economic competition, cultural change, or perceived threats to social cohesion. Examining both positive and negative dimensions provides a more comprehensive understanding of how individuals evaluate immigrant groups.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on the literature reviewed and the theoretical frameworks, the present study seeks to address the following research questions.

1. What is the relationship between personality traits and attitudes toward refugees and visa holders?
Hypothesis 1: Host national extraverts will show more positive attitudes toward refugees and visa holders.
2. What is the relationship between personal values and attitudes toward refugees and visa holders?
Hypothesis 2: Host nationals who are open to change will show more positive attitudes toward refugees and visa holders.
3. What is the relationship between personality traits and personal values?
Hypothesis 3: Introverts will have more stringent personal values, which will contribute to more negative attitudes toward refugees and visa holders, whereas extraverts will be more open to change.

By addressing these questions, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how individual differences shape host nationals' attitudes toward two distinct groups of authorized immigrants. Understanding the psychological and value-based factors underlying immigration attitudes is important for both theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to research on personality, values, and intergroup relations. From a practical perspective, the findings may inform policies and educational initiatives designed to foster greater understanding and cooperation in increasingly multicultural societies.

2. Methods

Research Design and Sampling Procedures

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationship between personality traits, personal values, and attitudes toward refugees and visa holders. Participants were recruited from the undergraduate student population at a university in upstate New York. Students were enrolled in introductory and upper-level courses in Child and Family Studies and Public Health.

A convenience sampling strategy was used. Faculty members teaching the selected courses were contacted and granted permission for the study to be introduced in their classes. Researchers visited eight classes to provide information about the study and invite student participation. Data were collected using an online survey administered through Qualtrics. The survey was available for two weeks from March 27, 2017, to April 11, 2017. Participants accessed the survey through a web link and completed it electronically.

The survey began with an informed consent form describing the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and procedures used to maintain confidentiality. Participants were required to confirm that they were at least 18 years of age and indicate their consent before accessing the questionnaire. Students received extra course credit for participation. After completing the survey, participants entered their names and course information on a separate Qualtrics page to claim credit. This procedure ensured that identifying information was stored separately from survey responses, maintaining participant anonymity.

A total of 341 students completed the survey. Fifty-eight cases were removed because participants did not agree to the consent form or did not complete a substantial portion of the questionnaire. The final analytic sample consisted of 283 participants.

Sample Characteristics

The final sample included 283 undergraduate students. Of these participants, 42 identified as male (14.8%) and 241 identified as female (85.2%). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 25 years, with a mean age of 19.8 years ($SD = 1.47$).

The racial and ethnic composition of the sample was 65.4% White or Caucasian, 13.1% Black or African American, 7.8% Hispanic or Latino, 8.8% Asian or Pacific Islander, 3.2% Multiracial or Other, and 1.8% Native American or Alaska Native. Participants represented multiple academic levels, including 84 freshmen (29.7%), 101 sophomores (35.7%), 61 juniors (21.6%), and 37 seniors (13.1%). Most respondents were full-time students (97.5%).

Regarding immigration status, 89.8% identified as United States citizens, 6% were international students, and 2.1% reported being legal permanent residents. Most participants indicated that they did not have a family member immigrate

to the United States on a valid visa within the past five years (88.7%), while 9.2% reported that they had. A small number indicated a family member entered the United States as a refugee (2.5%). Table 1 presents a summary of participant characteristics.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics (N = 283)

Variable	Categories / Descriptive Statistics	n (%) / Mean (SD)
Gender	Male	42 (14.8)
	Female	241 (85.2)
Age (years)	—	19.8 (1.47)
Race/Ethnicity	White / Caucasian	185 (65.4)
	Black / African American	37 (13.1)
	Hispanic / Latino	22 (7.8)
	Asian / Pacific Islander	25 (8.8)
	Multiracial / Other	9 (3.2)
	Native American / Alaska Native	5 (1.8)
Academic Year	Freshman	84 (29.7)
	Sophomore	101 (35.7)
	Junior	61 (21.6)
	Senior	37 (13.1)
Enrollment Status	Full-time	276 (97.5)
	Part-time	7 (2.5)
Immigration Status	U.S. Citizen	254 (89.8)
	International Student	17 (6.0)
	Legal Permanent Resident	6 (2.1)
	Other / Unreported	6 (2.1)
Family Immigration History	Family member on valid visa (past 5 yrs)	26 (9.2)
	Family member refugee	7 (2.5)

Note. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding or missing responses.

Measures

All constructs were assessed using self-report items rated on a five-point Likert scale. Personality traits were measured via extraversion and introversion, each assessed with nine items adapted from established Big Five measures. Personal values were assessed using Schwartz's theory, focusing on openness to change and conservation values, each measured with five items. Attitudes toward immigrants were measured across four dimensions: positive and negative attitudes toward refugees, and positive and negative attitudes toward visa holders, each with five items.

Reliability analyses indicated substantial variability across measures. While some scales demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, others produced low or unusually high Cronbach's alpha values. These inconsistencies may reflect issues related to scale construction, item functioning, or response patterns, and therefore warrant cautious interpretation of the findings.

As the data were collected several years prior using an institutional data collection system, the original dataset was not accessible for re-analysis at the time of manuscript preparation. All reported statistics reflect the original analyses conducted at the time of data collection. Accordingly, findings, particularly those related to measurement reliability, should be interpreted with caution.

Personality Traits

Personality traits were assessed using constructs reflecting extraversion and introversion. Extraversion was measured with nine items assessing sociability, comfort in group settings, and openness to social interaction. Example items included "I enjoy social gatherings where I can meet new people" and "People say I am easy to get to know." Introversion was measured with nine items assessing preferences for solitary activities and lower levels of social engagement, with examples including "At parties I tend to listen more than talk" and "I prefer to read during travel rather than talk to others." Exploratory factor analysis using principal component analysis was conducted to assess dimensionality. Sampling adequacy was evaluated using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic and Bartlett's test of sphericity.

Personal Values

Personal values were measured using two constructs derived from Schwartz's theory of basic human values: openness to change and conservation. Openness to change was assessed with five items measuring curiosity, willingness to take risks, and openness to interacting with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Example items included "I adapt easily to new environments" and "I am trusting of people from different cultures or ethnic backgrounds." Conservation values were measured with five items assessing preferences for stability, familiarity, and personal security.

Attitudes Toward Refugees and Visa Holders

Attitudes toward immigrants were measured across four dimensions: positive attitudes toward refugees, negative attitudes toward refugees, positive attitudes toward visa holders, and negative attitudes toward visa holders. A refugee was defined as a foreign national who entered the United States with legally recognized refugee status, and a visa holder was defined as a foreign national who entered the United States on a valid visa. Positive attitudes toward refugees were measured with five items assessing supportive beliefs regarding contributions and humanitarian considerations. Negative attitudes toward refugees were measured with five items assessing concerns about cultural impact, economic competition, and national security. The same sets of items were adapted for visa holders. Reliability of all scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, and values are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 presents Cronbach's alpha values for each scale. Values below 0.70 indicate limited internal consistency, which is addressed in the discussion section.

Table 2. Reliability of Scales

Scale	Cronbach's α	Cronbach's α (Standardized)	N of Items
Personality Types	.147	.586	9
Personal Values	.232	.589	9
Openness to Change	.042	.417	5
Conservation	.998	.998	5
Positive Attitudes to Refugees	.806	.810	5
Negative Attitudes to Refugees	.345	.818	5
Positive Attitudes to Visa Holders	.997	.997	5
Negative Attitudes to Visa Holders	.862	.912	5

Note. Cronbach's alpha values below .70 suggest limited internal consistency and should be addressed in the discussion/limitations section.

Notably, several scales exhibited alpha values outside commonly accepted thresholds, which may indicate potential measurement limitations and should be considered when interpreting the results.

3. Analysis

Data were initially screened for missing values. Cases with incomplete responses were removed from the dataset prior to analysis. Frequency analyses were conducted to identify any patterns of missing data. Exploratory factor analysis was performed to assess the construct validity of the measures. Scale scores were then created, and reliability analyses were conducted to evaluate internal consistency. Tests of normality were also performed to confirm that the assumptions for regression analysis were met (Field, 2013).

To address Research Questions 1 and 2, which examined the relationship between personality traits, personal values, and attitudes toward refugees and visa holders, four hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted. Gender and the presence of a refugee or visa holder family member were entered as control variables in Block 1. Personality traits, including extraversion and introversion, were entered in Block 2. Personal value variables, including openness to change and conservation, were entered in Block 3.

Research Question 3 examined the relationship between personality traits and personal values. Two additional hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted. Gender was entered as a control variable in Block 1, and personality traits were entered in Block 2 (Schwartz, 2012; Hart et al., 2003).

4. Results

Research Questions 1 and 2

Positive attitudes toward refugees

A hierarchical regression examined predictors of positive attitudes toward refugees (see Table 3). Gender and family refugee status entered in Step 1 accounted for 3.7% of the variance. The addition of personality traits (Step 2) explained an additional 3.8% of variance, bringing the total to 7.5%. The inclusion of personal values (Step 3) contributed a further

1.1%, resulting in a final model explaining 8.6% of the variance, $F(6, 270) = 4.25$, $p < .001$.

At the final step, introversion emerged as a significant positive predictor ($\beta = .20$). Extraversion, openness to change, and conservation were not significant predictors.

Table 3. Hierarchical Regression Predicting Positive Attitudes Toward Refugees

Predictor	β	ΔR^2	p
Step 1: Controls (Gender, Family Refugee Status)	—	.037	—
Step 2: Extraversion	—	.038	> .05
Introversion	.20	—	*
Step 3: Openness to Change	—	.011	> .05
Conservation	—	—	> .05

Note. Only standardized beta coefficients (β) are reported. * $p < .05$.

Negative attitudes toward refugees

The hierarchical regression model predicting negative attitudes toward refugees showed that control variables accounted for 1.4% of variance. The addition of personality traits explained an additional 1.3%, and personal values contributed a further 0.5%, resulting in a total explained variance of 3.2%.

None of the predictors reached statistical significance in the final model.

Table 4. Hierarchical Regression Predicting Negative Attitudes Toward Refugees

Predictor	β	ΔR^2	p
Step 1: Controls	—	.014	—
Extraversion	—	.013	> .05
Introversion	—	—	> .05
Openness to Change	—	.005	> .05
Conservation	—	—	> .05

Note. Only standardized beta coefficients (β) reported. All predictors ns ($p > .05$).

Positive attitudes toward visa holders

Predictors of positive attitudes toward visa holders were evaluated using hierarchical regression (see Table 5). Control variables accounted for 3.3% of the variance. Personality traits contributed an additional 0.2%, and personal values contributed a further 0.1%, resulting in a total explained variance of 3.6%.

Neither the overall model nor any individual predictors reached statistical significance.

Table 5. Hierarchical Regression Predicting Positive Attitudes Toward Visa Holders

Predictor	β	ΔR^2	p
Controls	—	.033	—
Extraversion	—	.002	> .05
Introversion	—	—	> .05
Openness to Change	—	.001	> .05
Conservation	—	—	> .05

Note. All predictors were non-significant ($p > .05$).

Negative attitudes toward visa holders

A hierarchical regression analysis tested predictors of negative attitudes toward visa holders (see Table 6). Control variables accounted for 1.7% of the variance. Personality traits explained an additional 0.3%, and the inclusion of personal values contributed a further 1.8%, resulting in a final model explaining 3.8% of the variance.

At the final step, conservation values emerged as a significant positive predictor ($\beta = .14$, $p < .05$), indicating that higher conservation values were associated with more negative attitudes toward visa holders. No other predictors were statistically significant.

Table 6. Hierarchical Regression Predicting Negative Attitudes Toward Visa Holders

Predictor	β	ΔR^2	p
Step 1: Controls	—	.017	—
Extraversion	—	.003	> .05
Introversion	—	—	> .05
Conservation	.14	.018	*
Openness to Change	—	—	> .05

Note. * $p < .05$ for conservation value.

Research Question 3

Personality and openness to change

The relationship between personality traits and openness to change was examined using regression analysis (see Table 7). Gender accounted for 1.4% of the variance in Step 1. The addition of personality traits explained an additional 0.3%, resulting in a total explained variance of 1.7%.

Neither extraversion nor introversion was a significant predictor of openness to change.

Table 7. Hierarchical Regression Predicting Openness to Change

Predictor	β	ΔR^2	p
Gender	—	.014	—
Extraversion	—	.003	> .05
Introversion	—	—	> .05

Personality and conservation values

Regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the association between personality traits and conservation values (see Table 8). Gender accounted for 0.6% of the variance in Step 1. The addition of personality traits in Step 2 explained an additional 9.7% of variance, resulting in a total explained variance of 10.3%.

Extraversion emerged as a significant positive predictor of conservation values ($\beta = .31, p < .05$), whereas introversion was not a significant predictor.

Table 8. Hierarchical Regression Predicting Conservation Values

Predictor	β	ΔR^2	p
Step 1: Gender	—	.006	—
Step 2: Extraversion	.31	.097	*
Introversion	—	—	> .05

Note. * $p < .05$.

5. Discussion

The present study examined the relationships between personality traits, personal values, and attitudes toward refugees and visa holders. The results provided limited support for the proposed hypotheses and offer preliminary insights into the psychological factors underlying host nationals' attitudes toward immigrant groups. By focusing on two legally admitted immigrant populations, this study contributes to understanding how individual differences influence perceptions of migrants who vary in their reasons for migration and perceived vulnerability.

Personality Traits

One unexpected finding was the positive association between introversion and attitudes toward refugees. This pattern suggests that introversion may be associated with distinct ways of engaging with socially and morally complex issues such as forced migration. However, the present study did not assess potential underlying mechanisms such as empathy, perspective-taking, or cognitive processing style. Therefore, interpretations regarding why this association emerged should be considered tentative and explored in future research.

The lack of a significant association between extraversion and attitudes toward immigrants was notable. While extraverts are typically socially engaged and responsive to social norms, this trait may not uniformly predict positive intergroup

attitudes. For some extraverts, social engagement may amplify adherence to peer-group norms or prevailing cultural narratives rather than fostering independent evaluation of immigrant contributions. In contexts where peer groups hold ambivalent or cautious views toward immigrants, extraverted individuals may adopt similar attitudes, potentially explaining the null findings (Chan, Pillay, & Swing, 2013). This points to the complexity of personality-attitude relationships and the importance of situational and social context in shaping behavioral expressions of personality traits.

Interestingly, extraversion was positively associated with conservation values, suggesting that individuals who are socially active may simultaneously prioritize stability, tradition, and social order. This duality illustrates the multifaceted nature of personality, as the same trait can promote social openness in some domains while reinforcing adherence to traditional values in others. Such findings underscore the need to consider multiple pathways through which personality influences intergroup attitudes and suggest that personality effects may vary depending on the specific immigrant group and perceived social threat (Hodson & Costello, 2007; Davidov et al., 2008).

Personal Values

Conservation values were significantly associated with negative attitudes toward visa holders, aligning with theoretical perspectives that link security, tradition, and conformity with resistance to social change and outgroup inclusion (Schwartz, 2012; Arikan & Bloom, 2012). Individuals who emphasize conservation may perceive immigrants as threatening existing social structures, traditions, or norms, thereby reducing support for integration policies or cross-cultural engagement. These findings are consistent with research indicating that cultural threat perceptions and value orientations play a critical role in shaping immigration attitudes (Davidov et al., 2018; Kilburn, 2009).

In contrast, openness to change did not significantly predict positive attitudes toward either refugees or visa holders in this sample. This finding suggests that openness to change alone may not be sufficient to consistently predict more favorable attitudes toward immigrants in this sample. The influence of personal values on intergroup perceptions may be contingent on situational factors, such as media framing, exposure to immigrant communities, and perceived economic or social threats (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014). Thus, openness to change may be more likely to relate to positive attitudes when combined with supportive social contexts, empathy, or direct intergroup contact. This finding aligns with prior work emphasizing that values interact with situational and group-specific factors to shape host nationals' responses to immigrant groups (Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010).

Integration of Personality and Values

The interplay between personality traits and personal values provides an integrative framework for understanding attitudes toward immigrants. Personality traits influence how individuals process social information, while personal values shape the motivational standards used to evaluate social groups. In the present study, introversion was associated with more favorable attitudes toward refugees, whereas conservation values were associated with more negative attitudes toward visa holders. These findings indicate that dispositional and value-based factors are systematically related to intergroup attitudes and may jointly contribute to how individuals evaluate different immigrant groups.

The differential effects observed across refugee and visa-holder groups further highlight the context-dependent nature of personality and value influences. Refugees, as highly vulnerable immigrants, may elicit more empathetic consideration from individuals capable of reflective processing, whereas visa holders, perceived as voluntary migrants, may evoke judgments rooted in social norms, competition for resources, or adherence to traditional values. These distinctions underscore the need for theoretical models of intergroup attitudes to account for both the characteristics of host nationals and the unique profiles of different immigrant populations (Czymara & Schmidt-Catran, 2017).

Theoretical Implications

These findings contribute to the literature on intergroup attitudes by highlighting the nuanced pathways through which personality traits and values shape perceptions of immigrant groups. They extend prior work by demonstrating that introversion may facilitate empathy-driven attitudes, while extraversion does not uniformly promote positive perceptions. Similarly, they show that conservation values can reinforce negative attitudes in certain contexts, particularly toward visa holders. The results suggest that theoretical models of prejudice, social threat, and support for immigration should integrate personality and value orientations alongside group-specific characteristics and sociopolitical factors (Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010; Ward & Masgoret, 2008).

Practical Implications

Understanding that both personality traits and values influence attitudes toward immigrants may have implications for interventions and educational programs. Programs designed to reduce prejudice could leverage the reflective strengths of introverted individuals, providing opportunities for perspective-taking, storytelling, and empathy-building exercises. At the same time, programs can address value-driven concerns by emphasizing the societal contributions of immigrants, shared cultural norms, and benefits of diversity, which may resonate with individuals who prioritize conservation.

Universities and organizations seeking to foster inclusive environments may benefit from multifaceted strategies that target cognitive-emotional dispositions, value-based orientations, and contextual factors such as peer norms and exposure to immigrant communities. Interventions that integrate personality, values, and situational elements may be more effective in promoting understanding and reducing negative attitudes, as they address multiple psychological mechanisms that underlie intergroup evaluations.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the role of personality traits and personal values in shaping attitudes toward two legally admitted immigrant groups: refugees and visa holders. The findings indicate that individual differences in personality and value orientations are meaningfully associated with intergroup attitudes. Introversion was positively associated with attitudes toward refugees, suggesting that more reflective and inwardly oriented individuals may engage in distinct forms of social evaluation when considering vulnerable groups. In contrast, extraversion did not significantly predict attitudes toward either refugees or visa holders, indicating that sociability alone may not reliably translate into more favorable intergroup attitudes. Similarly, openness to change was not a significant predictor of positive attitudes, suggesting that its influence may depend on additional contextual or experiential factors.

Conservation values were significantly associated with more negative attitudes toward visa holders, consistent with the view that individuals who prioritize security, tradition, and social stability may perceive voluntary migration as a potential challenge to established social norms. These findings align with prior research linking value orientations to perceived threat and immigration attitudes (Schwartz, 2012; Arikan & Bloom, 2012), though interpretations should remain appropriately cautious given the student population sample used.

Overall, the findings suggest that personality traits and personal values are systematically related to attitudes toward immigrants, and that these relationships vary by immigrant category. The results support an integrative perspective in which dispositional and value-based factors jointly shape intergroup perceptions within broader sociocultural contexts. From a theoretical standpoint, the study contributes to ongoing work examining how stable individual differences relate to immigration attitudes. Practically, the findings suggest that interventions aimed at fostering inclusive attitudes may benefit from addressing both dispositional tendencies and value-based concerns in nuanced ways.

Limitations and Future Research

A key limitation of this study concerns measurement reliability. Some demonstrated low internal consistency, while others showed high reliability estimates, suggesting potential issues related to scale construction or measurement functioning. These concerns warrant caution in interpreting the precision of specific estimates. Because the original dataset was not accessible for re-analysis, it was not possible to further examine measurement properties. As such, the findings should be interpreted as preliminary and exploratory.

First, the sample was drawn from undergraduate students at a single university in New York. This limits generalizability to broader populations, including individuals with different age ranges, educational backgrounds, and sociocultural contexts. In particular, the homogeneity of the sample may constrain variability in lived experience with immigration, which may shape intergroup attitudes. Future research should examine whether these patterns replicate in more diverse and representative populations.

Second, the study relied on self-report measures, which are subject to response biases such as social desirability and may not fully capture implicit or behavioral dimensions of intergroup attitudes. Future work would benefit from incorporating behavioral measures, experimental designs, or implicit association methods to complement self-report data and strengthen construct validity.

Third, the regression models explained relatively modest proportions of variance, suggesting that additional factors likely play an important role in shaping attitudes toward immigrants. Variables such as political ideology, intergroup contact, media exposure, and perceived threat are well-established predictors and should be integrated into future explanatory models.

Fourth, this study focused on a limited set of personality traits (extraversion and introversion) and two value dimensions. Broader personality constructs, including agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and multidimensional openness, may offer additional explanatory value. Future research should also explore potential interactions between personality traits, values, and contextual variables.

Finally, the cross-sectional design limits conclusions regarding directionality. While associations were observed, causal pathways cannot be inferred. Longitudinal or experimental approaches would be useful for clarifying temporal ordering and testing whether interventions targeting empathy, perspective-taking, or value-based concerns influence attitudes over time.

Overall, while these limitations warrant careful interpretation, the study provides a useful foundation for understanding how dispositional and value-based factors relate to attitudes toward different immigrant groups. Future research building on this work can strengthen explanatory power by incorporating broader samples, additional predictors, and more diverse methodological approaches.

Acknowledgments

The author gratefully acknowledges the undergraduate students who participated in this study. Sincere thanks are also extended to colleagues who provided valuable feedback and assistance in reviewing and revising this manuscript.

Author contributions

Not applicable

Funding

Not applicable

Competing interests

The author declares that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Redfame Publishing.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

Open access

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

References

- Arikan, G., & Bloom, P. (2012). Human values and attitudes toward immigrants: Evidence from a cross-cultural survey. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 43(5), 739-753. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022111430255>
- Ceobanu, A. M., & Escandell, X. (2010). Comparative analyses of public attitudes toward immigrants and immigration using multinational survey data: A review of theories and research. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36, 309-328. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102651>
- Davidov, E., Meuleman, B., Cieciuch, J., Schmidt, P., & Billiet, J. (2008). Value structures and attitudes toward immigrants: A cross-cultural comparison. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 49(6), 435-459. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020715208095902>
- Graziano, W. G., & Eisenberg, N. (1997). *Agreeableness: A dimension of personality*. In R. Hogan, J. Johnson, & S. Briggs (Eds.), *Handbook of personality psychology* (pp. 795-824). Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-012134645-4/50031-7>
- Hart, D., Atkins, R., & Ford, D. (2003). Personality, values, and attitudes toward outgroups. *Journal of Personality*, 71(6), 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6494.7106001>
- Hodson, G., & Costello, K. (2007). Interpersonal disgust and its relationship to attitudes toward immigrants. *Personality*

- and Individual Differences*, 43(6), 1293-1303. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2007.03.012>
- Jackson, L. M. (1993). Realistic group conflict theory and intergroup attitudes. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 19(3), 222-233. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167293193005>
- Jung, C. G. (1971). *Psychological types*. Princeton University Press.
- Murray, J., & Marx, D. (2013). Perceived threat and intergroup attitudes: Revisiting realistic and symbolic threat theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 76(2), 120-142. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0190272513481387>
- Perloff, R. M. (2016). *The dynamics of persuasion: Communication and attitudes in the 21st century* (6th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003290056-3>
- Schwartz, S. H. (2012). An overview of the Schwartz theory of basic values. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1116>
- Ward, C., & Masgoret, A. M. (2008). Attitudes toward immigrants, immigration, and multiculturalism in New Zealand. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32(2), 161-175. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2007.12.002>
- Whitley, B. E. (2010). *Principles of research in behavioral science* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315450087-1>