Factors Influencing the Enhancement of Work Motivation among Tour Guides: A Study in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

To improve the motivation of tour guides in Ho Chi Minh City, this study will identify the elements that affect their motivation at work and offer potential solutions. A mixed-method strategy that included quantitative questionnaire surveys and qualitative expert interviews was used to accomplish this goal. Using SPSS 26 software, data from 487 tour guides actively working in Ho Chi Minh City were gathered and examined using linear regression, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and Cronbach's Alpha reliability assessment. According to the results, domestic tour guides' motivation at work is greatly influenced by four major factors: (1) pay, (2) workplace culture, (3) prospects for advancement, and (4) corporate policies. The study suggests several workable ways to enhance these influencing elements in light of these findings, boosting tour guides' motivation and productivity on the job. Government officials and travel agencies may use the study's practical implications to create strategies to effectively cultivate a workforce of skilled tourists who can satisfy the demands of global integration.

Keywords: Work Motivation, Influencing Factors, Motivation Enhancement, Tour Guides, Ho Chi Minh City
JEL Classifications: J28, J24, L83, M12, L83

1. INTRODUCTION

With millions of jobs created statewide and a substantial GDP contribution, tourism is regarded as one of Vietnam's most important economic sectors. As per the most recent data by the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (2024), the nation received over 100 million domestic traveller visits and 17.6 million foreign visitors in 2024, 97.6% of the pre-COVID-19 level. These numbers show that the tourist industry has recovered from a difficult time. This quick expansion also raises expectations for service quality, particularly for tour guides, who provide visitors with satisfying experiences, encourage cross-cultural interaction, and improve the site's reputation. One of Vietnam's biggest tourist destinations, Ho Chi Minh City is expected to draw approximately 38 million domestic and 6 million foreign tourists in 2024, generating an estimated 190 trillion VND (~7.5 billion USD) in total tourism income (Ho Chi Minh City,

Department of Tourism, 2025). As of March 2025, the city has awarded 8,959 tour guide licenses, comprising 3,286 domestic tour guide licenses, 76 site-specific tour guide licenses, and 5,597 foreign tour guide licenses, to satisfy the industry's development demands (Ho Chi Minh City Department of Tourism, 2025). The tour guiding industry still confronts several issues that can harm employee motivation. These issues include inconsistent pay, high job pressure, erratic schedules, frequent travel, unfavourable working conditions, and few prospects for career progression. The reputation and competitiveness of travel agencies are impacted by these variables, which also worsen service quality and increase turnover rates.

In this regard, looking at the elements affecting tour guides' motivation for their jobs in Ho Chi Minh City is crucial to give enterprises, government agencies, and tourist associations a solid scientific foundation to build practical plans. There is still a dearth

of comprehensive studies on tour guides in Vietnam, even though many studies have examined job motivation in the industrial and service sectors. International research has shown that a variety of factors, including pay, working conditions, opportunities for advancement, company policies, and job characteristics, have a significant impact on employee motivation in the service industry, especially in the tourism and hospitality sector (Lew, 2007a, Sabiroh et al. (2019), and Le et al. (2020). Thus, it is both necessary and practically significant to determine how these elements influence job motivation in the particular context of tour guides in Ho Chi Minh City.

This study is the first to concentrate on improving tour guides' motivation for their jobs in Ho Chi Minh City. Beyond the broad methodologies of earlier research, it provides in-depth insights into a specialised labour group within the tourist business.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Work Motivation

Work motivation is one of the most critical factors influencing employee performance and devotion to their work. Robbins and Judge (2019) describe work motivation as the collection of psychological processes that stimulate, guide, and maintain individual behaviour to reach specific objectives. According to Herzberg's (1959) theory, motivating variables influence employee motivation, including responsibility, growth prospects, acknowledgement, and the nature of the work itself. Through the Expectancy Theory, Vroom (1964) made the case that a person's motivation is based on their expectations for results, their value on those results, and their conviction that hard work would result in the performance they want. Ryan and Deci (2000) divided motivation into two categories: extrinsic (affected by pay, bonuses, and working circumstances) and intrinsic (motivated by interest in the task and the desire for self-development).

In conclusion, an individual's willingness and effort to carry out duties intended to accomplish both personal and organisational goals can be interpreted as work motivation. Internal (such as passion and job happiness) and external (such as pay, working conditions, and prospects for advancement) elements may impact this drive.

2.2. Tourism

When individuals travel from their customary residence to another destination for pleasure, amusement, cultural discovery, sightseeing, or other non-profit-generating activities, this is referred to as tourism. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2008) defines tourism as the actions of people who go to and remain in locations outside of their everyday surroundings for a maximum of 1 year in a row for business, pleasure, or other reasons. According to Burkart and Medlik (1981), tourism is the culmination of all the interactions and occurrences resulting from individuals travelling and temporarily residing somewhere other than their usual residence, so long as there is no paid activity at the destination.

The National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (2017) states that tourism includes any activity involving persons travelling outside their usual abode for sightseeing, leisure, recreation, exploration, or other legal objectives.

2.3. Tour Guide

The person in charge of directing, explaining, and helping travellers throughout their trip is known as a tour guide. Tour guides are essential for promoting culture, history, and landscapes, providing information, and improving tourists' overall experiences. The National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (2017) defines a tour guide as a person employed by a travel agency or on their own who is responsible for guiding, introducing, and serving visitors by a prearranged schedule.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2005a), a tour guide is an experienced, certified person who helps and advises travellers. Similarly, Holloway (2002) defines a tour guide as someone who plans, coordinates, and provides information to ensure visitors have a positive and safe experience.

As a result, in addition to serving as interpreters, tour guides serve as cultural bridges, encourage travellers, and significantly improve the general standard of tourism services.

2.4. Enhancing Work Motivation among Tour Guides

Improving tour guides' work motivation ignites and sustains their passion, dedication, and effort in carrying out their responsibilities to support their increased productivity, commitment, and long-term involvement in the industry (Robbins and Judge, 2019).

Numerous strategies that affect motivational elements can help to facilitate this process, such as:

- Financial considerations include pay, benefits, bonuses, and packages of remuneration (Herzberg, 1959).
- Non-financial considerations include the workplace, chances for advancement, and client and corporate recognition and feedback (Ryan and Deci, 2000).
- Personal variables include the capacity to learn and acquire new abilities, pride in fostering culture, and a strong work ethic (Vroom, 1964).
- Organisational variables include business culture, human resource policy, and travel agency assistance (UNWTO, 2005b).

Therefore, enhancing tour guides' work motivation fosters their individual development and improves the quality of tourism services, attracts more tourists, and creates a competitive advantage for travel businesses.

3. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH MODEL

Research on motivation at work is widespread in many different fields. The service business has also been thoroughly researched to determine the elements affecting employee motivation in the manufacturing sector. In the travel and hospitality sector, employee motivation is essential to raising service standards and guaranteeing the long-term viability of enterprises.

Three major driving elements in the hotel business were found in the study by Lew (2007b) on employee commitment and job satisfaction in the hospitality sector in Sarawak, Malaysia: possibilities for advancement and development, job security, and exciting work. In their investigation on the elements that influence employee motivation in the hotel industry, Sabiroh et al. (2019) identified nine important factors divided into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Happiness, zeal for one's job, will and desire, and fresh information are examples of intrinsic motivation. Convenience, workplace relationships, coworkers, pay, and employer relations are all examples of extrinsic motivation.

In a study on the factors influencing labour turnover in upscale hotels in Nha Trang City, Vinh (2020) found five influencing factors: Job characteristics, social environment, occupational image, personal characteristics of employees, and working environment. The most significant factor was the working environment.

Six important elements were found by Le et al. (2020), who looked at the factors influencing the job performance of tourist workers in Can Tho City: personal competency, salary, work environment, corporate policies, training and promotion, and work motivation. Duc (2011) offered three elements based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs: the need for self-actualisation, encouragement, and safety assurance; and material and working circumstances. Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Loc and Nghi (2019) determined that five elements affect employee motivation: self-actualisation needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and physiological needs.

Based on research from both domestic and foreign literature, Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), Herzberg's two-factor theory (1959), Ryan and Deci's self-determination theory (2000), and other sources, this study suggests a model that includes five factors that affect tour guides' motivation for their jobs in Ho Chi Minh City. These elements include pay, working conditions, prospects for advancement, corporate regulations, and job attributes.

In order to achieve the basic and safety requirements listed in Maslow's hierarchy (1943), income is a crucial component. Salary was categorised by Herzberg (1959) as a hygiene factor, crucial for avoiding discontent. Income was also shown to be an external motivating element that considerably impacts employee performance in the hotel industry in the study conducted by Sabiroh et al. (2019).

H_1: Income has a positive influence on the work motivation of tour guides in Ho Chi Minh City.

The physical surroundings and the assistance of coworkers and managers make up the working environment, directly affecting employees' opinions and productivity. According to Vinh (2020), one of the main factors influencing employee retention in the travel and hospitality sector is the workplace. Similarly, a favourable work atmosphere increases employees' intrinsic motivation, according to Ryan and Deci (2000).

H_2: The working environment has a positive influence on the work motivation of tour guides in Ho Chi Minh City.

Opportunities for development and promotion are categorised as motivational variables by Herzberg (1959). According to Lew (2007a), when workers in the service sector are given a clear route for professional growth, they are more likely to stay dedicated. This is especially crucial in fields like tour guiding that are competitive and need professional skills.

H_3: Career advancement opportunities have a positive influence on the work motivation of tour guides in Ho Chi Minh City.

Employees feel valued and gain faith in the company when internal policies are suitable, fair, and transparent. Company rules are key in maintaining job performance among Can Tho tourist personnel, claim Le et al. (2020). Additionally, Robbins and Judge (2017) stressed that fairness and transparency in organisational regulations improve commitment and work satisfaction.

H_4: Company policies have a positive influence on the work motivation of tour guides in Ho Chi Minh City.

Job qualities are the level of interest, difficulty, flexibility, and significance that a job offers. Hackman and Oldham (1980) state that pleasant work can foster creativity and intrinsic drive. Frequent social contacts, travel, and exploration possibilities may all boost motivation at work in the tour guiding industry, particularly when they complement a person's hobbies and skills.

H_5: Job characteristics have a positive influence on the work motivation of tour guides in Ho Chi Minh City.

Based on the above hypotheses, this study proposes a research model of five factors influencing the enhancement of work motivation among tour guides in Ho Chi Minh City (Figure 1).

4. RESEARCH DATA AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. Data Collection
The investigation was conducted at eight popular tourist spots in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City. Travel agencies, hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions were among the places surveyed. A five-point Likert scale was employed to gauge the impact of elements

Figure 1: Research model
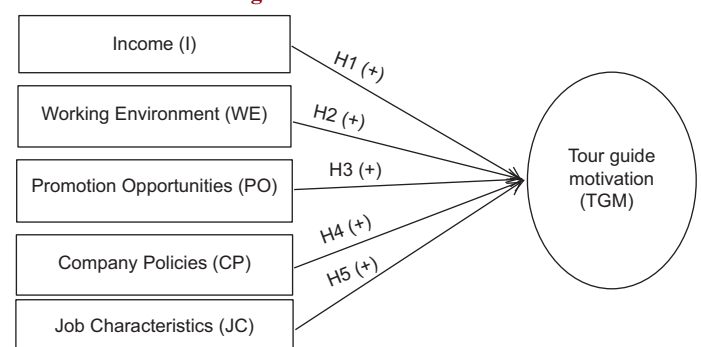
influencing tour guides' motivation for their jobs. The responses ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

According to Hair et al. (1998), the minimum required sample size for factor analysis is n ≥ m × 5, where m is the number of observed variables. With 26 observed variables in this study, the minimum sample size required is 130. However, the study surveyed 505 tour guides from January to April 2024 to ensure greater reliability and generalizability. The collected data were coded and processed using SPSS version 26.

According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), the observed variables are considered reliable when the item-total correlation coefficient is more than 0.3 and the scale's Cronbach's Alpha is >0.6.

The 505 responses collected yielded a 92.9% response rate. During data screening, 18 surveys were removed due to missing or incomplete responses. Consequently, 487 valid questionnaires were included in the final analysis, meeting the sample size requirement for additional statistical analyses.

4.2. Research Methods

The author used SPSS version 26.0 to encode and analyse the data after gathering 487 valid replies. To identify the contributing elements and assess their influence, the methodology comprised linear regression analysis, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha.

5. RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

There were 487 valid replies in all. Men comprised 75.3% of the respondents, while women comprised 24.7%. Most of them (69.7%) were younger than 25. 71.4% of those surveyed had a college or university degree. 50.5% of respondents had fewer than 3 years of work experience, but lesser percentages of respondents belonged to the other groups. Regarding income, 64.5% reported making less than VND 16 million/month, while 35.5% reported making VND 16 million or more. Regarding job type, a sizable percentage (70%) worked as independent tour guides.

The nature of the tour guiding job, which frequently entails frequent travel, being away from family, and unstable income, is reflected in this demographic distribution. Because of this, very few women are still employed in the sector. The high proportion of tour guides with <3 years of experience and the prevalence of freelance work in the sample can be explained by the fact that most freelance tour guides are young people without family obligations (Table 1).

5.2. Results of Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Analysis

All measurement scales in the study met the necessary level of reliability, according to the reliability analysis results using Cronbach's Alpha (Table 1), with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.700 to 0.772, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.7 as advised by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). With item-total correlations ranging from 0.412 to 0.589 and an Alpha value of 0.731, the "Income" scale demonstrated high internal consistency

Table 1: Demographic characteristics

Details	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	367	75.3
	Female	120	24.7
Age	Under 25 years old	340	69.7
	25 years old and above	147	30.3
Educational level	College or University	348	71.4
	Others	139	28.6
Work experience	<3 years	246	50.5
	3 years and above	241	49.5
Monthly income	Under VND 16 million	314	64.5
	VND 16 million and above	173	35.5
Type of employment	Freelance tour guide	341	70.0
	Company-employed tour guide	146	30.0
Total		487	100.0

among the examined variables. Likewise, the "Working Environment," "Promotion Opportunities," "Company Policies," and "Job Characteristics" scales all had item-total correlations >0.3, the bare minimum that guarantees the observed variables make a significant contribution to their respective scales, and all of them received Alpha values of 0.700 or higher. Interestingly, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.772, the "Work Motivation of Tour Guides" measure showed the best reliability. Consequently, every scale satisfies the reliability standards and may be used in the ensuing Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) (Table 2).

5.3. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Table 3 presents the results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for both independent and dependent variables.

The KMO coefficients for all factors are >0.5. This means the data is suitable for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Additionally, the significance values from Bartlett's test are all below 0.05. This shows there are correlations among the variables. The total variance explained by the extracted factors is over 50%. This indicates a good ability to account for data variability.

Furthermore, all factor loadings are above 0.5. This means the observed variables contribute generously to their corresponding factors. Therefore, both independent and dependent variables meet the requirements to continue with further analyses.

The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) results for the independent variables show that the KMO values for all factors are above 0.7, ranging from 0.768 to 0.812. This confirms that the data is suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity produces Sig. Values <0.001 for all factors. This indicates significant correlations among the observed variables within each factor group. The total variance explained by the extracted factors is over 50%. This suggests that the factors explain a large part of the data variation. Therefore, we can conclude that the measurement scales used in the study meet the reliability and convergent validity requirements and are suitable for further analyses.

Building on the overall EFA diagnostics in Table 3 which show adequate sampling (KMO > 0.70), significant sphericity (p < 0.05), factor loadings > 0.50, and total variance explained above 50%—Table 4 reports these indices by construct. Specifically, it details the KMO, Bartlett's test, and total variance explained for the

Table 2: Results of Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Corrected item-total correlation	Conclusion
Income (I)	4	0.731	0.412 – 0.589	Eligible for EFA
Working environment (WE)	5	0.762	0.451 – 0.621	Eligible for EFA
Promotion opportunities (PO)	4	0.700	0.375 – 0.542	Eligible for EFA
Company policies (CP)	4	0.710	0.398 – 0.578	Eligible for EFA
Job characteristics (JC)	5	0.745	0.432 – 0.603	Eligible for EFA
Tour guide motivation (TGM)	4	0.772	0.467 – 0.618	Eligible for EFA

Table 3: Results of exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Factor	KMO coefficient	Sig. (Bartlett's test)	Total variance explained (%)	Factor loadings
Income (I)	0.801	0.000	58.42	0.612-0.785
Working environment (WE)	0.812	0.000	60.31	0.634-0.792
Promotion opportunities (PO)	0.768	0.000	55.87	0.598-0.764
Company policies (CP)	0.790	0.000	57.46	0.610-0.778
Job characteristics (JC)	0.805	0.000	59.92	0.628-0.799
Tour guide motivation (TGM)	0.788	0.000	56.83	0.621-0.781

Table 4: Results of exploratory factor analysis of independent variables

Factor	KMO	Bartlett's test sig.	Total variance explained (%)
Income (I)	0.801	0.000	58.42
Working Environment (WE)	0.812	0.000	60.31
Promotion Opportunities (PO)	0.768	0.000	55.87
Company Policies (CP)	0.790	0.000	57.46
Job Characteristics (JC)	0.805	0.000	59.92
Tour Guide Motivation (TGM)	0.788	0.000	56.83

Table 5: Results of exploratory factor analysis of dependent variables

Factor	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	Bartlett's test (Sig.)	Eigenvalues	% of total variance explained
Tour Guide Motivation (TGM)	0.788	0.000	2.273	56.83%

independent variables (Income, Working Environment, Promotion Opportunities, Company Policies, and Job Characteristics); for completeness, the dependent construct (Tour Guide Motivation) shows comparable adequacy. Table 4 breaks down the EFA diagnostics by construct; all KMOs are 0.768–0.812, Bartlett's test is significant (p < 0.001), and total variance explained exceeds 50% for every factor, confirming adequacy for subsequent analyses.

In Table 5, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) results for the dependent variable Tour Guide Motivation (TGM) show that the KMO coefficient is 0.788, which is above the acceptable limit of 0.5. The significance value of Bartlett's test is 0.000, which is below 0.05. This confirms that the data is appropriate for factor analysis. The total variance explained is 56.83%, which exceeds 50%. This suggests that the TGM factor effectively captures the variability in the data. The eigenvalue of 2.273 is >1, meeting the requirements for keeping factors in EFA. The factor loadings range from 0.621 to 0.781, all above the cutoff of 0.5. This shows that the observed variables strongly contribute to the underlying factor. Therefore, the dependent variable TGM meets the reliability

and convergent validity standards, making it suitable for further analyses.

5.4. Multivariate Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

In Table 6, the results of the Pearson correlation test show the relationships between the independent variables (Income, Working Environment, Promotion Opportunities, Company Policies) and the dependent variable (Tour Guide Motivation). All independent variables are positively and strongly correlated with Tour Guide Motivation at the 1% significance level (P < 0.01). This means that improvements in these areas are linked to greater motivation among tour guides.

The variable Job Characteristics is also positively correlated with Tour Guide Motivation. However, this correlation is weak (r = 0.123) and is only statistically significant at the 5% level (P = 0.012).

Additionally, the correlation coefficients among the independent variables are all below 0.85. This suggests no serious multicollinearity, making the data suitable for further multiple regression analysis.

In summary, all independent variables show significant relationships with the dependent variable. This supports the decision to proceed with linear regression analysis in the next step.

Tour Guide Motivation (TGM), the dependent and independent variables, have a moderate relationship, as indicated by Table 7, where the multiple correlation coefficient (R) reaches a value of 0.605. The regression model accounts for 36.6% of the variance in the dependent variable, according to the coefficient of determination (R^2), which is 0.366. This degree of explanatory power is regarded as appropriate for social science research. The model is stable and suitable for extrapolation to the larger population, as evidenced by the corrected R^2 of 0.359, which does not differ considerably from R^2.

The ANOVA test results are shown in Table 8, where the linear regression model is appropriate and statistically significant with a

Table 6: Correlation test between independent and dependent factors

Correlations	I	WE	PO	CP	JC	TGM
I						
Pearson CORRELATION	1	0.312**	0.354**	0.298**	0.188**	0.412**
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
WE						
Pearson correlation	0.312**	1	0.387**	0.355**	0.265**	0.437**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
PO						
Pearson correlation	0.354**	0.387**	1	0.362**	0.248**	0.426**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000
CP						
Pearson correlation	0.298**	0.355**	0.362**	1	0.242**	0.413**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000
JC						
Pearson correlation	0.188**	0.265**	0.248**	0.242**	1	0.123*
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.012
TGM						
Pearson correlation	0.412**	0.437**	0.426**	0.413**	0.123*	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.012	

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Listwise N=487

Table 7: Testing the Model's level of explanation

Model	R^2	Adjusted R^2
1	0.366	0.359

Table 8: ANOVA test results

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	47.958	5	9.592	40.487	0.000
Residual	83.024	481	0.173		
Total	130.982	486			

Sig. value of $0.000 < 0.05$. This implies that Tour Guide Motivation (TGM), the dependent variable, is influenced by at least one of the independent variables. The model's ability to explain a significant amount of the variation in the dependent variable is confirmed by the F-value of 40.487 and its high significance level.

5.5. Linear Regression Analysis Results

Based on the findings of the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), which measures the dependent variable, Tour Guide Motivation (TGM), using four observable variables, the research model was created. The average scores of the observed variables within each factor that satisfied the convergent validity and reliability criteria were used to identify the independent variables.

Based on the findings of the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), which measures the dependent variable, Tour Guide Motivation (TGM), using four observable variables, the research model was created. The average scores of the observed variables within each factor that satisfied the convergent validity and reliability criteria were used to identify the independent variables. With Sig. values <0.01, the Pearson correlation matrix results show that the dependent variable TGM positively correlates with most of the independent variables in the model. Job Characteristics (JC) is the sole exception, since it does not exhibit a statistically significant link with TGM (Sig. > 0.05). The requirement for discriminant validity among the constructs is also met because the correlation coefficients between the independent and dependent variables are <0.85 but more than 0. As a result, the

multiple linear regression analysis can include the independent variables.

Four factors have a favorable impact on Tour Guide Motivation (TGM) in Ho Chi Minh City, according to Table 9: Income ($\beta = 0.198$), Working Environment ($\beta = 0.301$), Promotion Opportunities ($\beta = 0.253$), and Company Policies ($\beta = 0.182$). On the other hand, TGM is not significantly impacted by the factor Job Characteristics (Sig. = 0.217 > 0.05).

The following is the standardized regression equation based on the findings of the linear regression analysis:

$$TGM = 0.198*I + 0.301*WE + 0.253*PO + 0.182*CP$$

According to the linear regression analysis findings, the model excellently matches the study data. Tour Guide Motivation (TGM) is positively and statistically significantly impacted by four of the independent variables: Income (I), Working Environment (WE), Promotion Opportunities (PO), and Company Policies (CP) (Sig. < 0.05). Working Environment (WE) is the most significant effect on TGM, according to the standardized beta coefficients, which are as follows: WE = 0.301, PO = 0.253, I = 0.198, and CP = 0.182.

Conversely, a Sig. value of 0.217 (> 0.05) suggests that the variable Job Characteristics (JC) has no discernible impact on TGM. Additionally, all Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) are <10, and all Tolerance values are >0.1, suggesting that multicollinearity among the independent variables is not an issue.

Consequently, the linear regression model is suitable and helpful in determining the main elements impacting tour guides' motivation for their jobs in Ho Chi Minh City.

6. DISCUSSION

According to the findings of the linear regression analysis, five independent variables—income (I), working environment (WE),

Table 9: Results of the linear regression analysis

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity statistics	
	B	Std. error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1							
Constant	1.025	0.154	-	6.658	0.000	-	-
I	0.215	0.062	0.198	3.412	0.001	0.803	1.245
WE	0.342	0.071	0.301	4.789	0.000	0.734	1.362
PO	0.278	0.069	0.253	3.995	0.000	0.777	1.287
CP	0.193	0.065	0.182	2.951	0.004	0.835	1.198
JC	0.058	0.067	0.052	1.243	0.217	0.852	1.174

promotion opportunities (PO), company policies (CP), and job characteristics (JC)—explain Tour Guide Motivation (TGM) among tour guides in Ho Chi Minh City. Four of these variables—WE, PO, I, and CP—considerably impact work motivation and are statistically significant. The lack of statistical significance for the variable JC indicates that more research is necessary in subsequent studies.

The most significant determinant of tour guide motivation is the working environment (WE) (β = 0.301; Sig. = 0.000). This study emphasizes the value of a supportive workplace culture, encompassing a welcoming atmosphere, sufficient amenities, and assistance from coworkers and managers. This outcome aligns with research by Vinh (2020), which discovered that the workplace is the most crucial element influencing employee motivation and engagement in the travel and hospitality industry. Additionally, Ryan and Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory [8] highlights that a psychologically supportive workplace is a prerequisite for encouraging employees' intrinsic drive.

The motivation of tour guides is considerably influenced by Promotion Opportunities (PO) (β = 0.253; Sig. = 0.000). Opportunities for growth and progress are categorized as motivators, which help to increase employee engagement and loyalty, according to Herzberg (1959). Similarly, workers with a clear career development focus tend to sustain higher levels of work motivation, according to a study conducted in the hospitality industry by Lew (2007b).

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), income (I) also has a positive impact on TGM (β = 0.198; Sig. = 0.001), indicating the importance of financial incentives in satisfying basic and safety needs. Additionally, this outcome aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), which categorizes money as a hygiene factor—a prerequisite for avoiding job discontent. This is corroborated by Sabiroh et al. (2019), who found that income is one of the primary extrinsic factors affecting job motivation in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Workplace motivation is positively impacted by company policies (CP) (β = 0.182; Sig. = 0.004). Fair, open, and transparent policies can make workers feel valued and safe at work. Company policies are one of the fundamental elements affecting employee performance in the tourism sector, according to a study conducted in Can Tho City by Le et al. (2020). Similarly, Robbins and Judge (2017) highlighted how organizational rules promote commitment and employee happiness.

In contrast, the suggested model shows that Job Characteristics (JC) have no significant effect on work motivation (β = 0.052; Sig. = 0.217). This finding contradicts the original hypothesis and theoretical underpinnings, including Hackman and Oldham's (1980) Job Characteristics Model, which emphasizes the value of task variety, relevance, and challenge in promoting intrinsic motivation. One reason could be that tour guides in Ho Chi Minh City are less motivated by their employment because they are already used to mobile devices and interacting with customers. Furthermore, the current model might not have considered unobserved mediating factors like person-job fit or personal characteristics.

In conclusion, tour guides' job motivation in Ho Chi Minh City is favorably influenced by four factors: the working environment, opportunities for advancement, income, and company policies. These results align with earlier research in the service industry and support fundamental ideas, including Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory (2000), Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959). Therefore, to retain and improve the motivation of tour guides—essential staff in enhancing service quality and fostering sustainable tourism development—travel agencies should place a high priority on developing a positive work environment, providing clear career advancement pathways, offering fair compensation, and putting in place transparent and equitable policies.

7. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Conclusions
This study investigates the variables that affect tour guides' increased motivation for their jobs in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Four factors—income (I), working environment (WE), promotion opportunities (PO), and company policies (CP)—have a positive and statistically significant impact on tour guide motivation (TGM), according to the results of a linear regression analysis conducted on survey data gathered from 487 tour guides. Enhancing job motivation is not significantly impacted by the Job Characteristics (JC) component.

The most significant impact on motivation is exerted by the working environment (β = 0.301), followed by company policies (β = 0.182), income (β = 0.198), and promotion opportunities (β = 0.253). These results highlight the crucial role that the workplace and working conditions play in promoting performance and occupational commitment, and they are in line with earlier research in the field of human resource management in the service and tourism sectors.

7.2. Implications

The author makes several managerial recommendations based on the research findings to improve the job motivation of tour guides in Ho Chi Minh City, which will raise the caliber of visitors' experiences and improve the city's reputation for travel agencies:

- *First*, the most crucial element influencing tour guides' motivation is their workplace. As a result, travel agencies ought to actively foster a happy, encouraging, and expert workplace. Specifically: Encourage a welcoming and open work environment where tour guides are supported, encouraged to share their experiences, and given prompt assistance from the appropriate departments. Make sure that human resource management is transparent and equitable, avoiding discrimination or favoritism toward senior guides in choices about tour assignments, performance reviews, and rewards. Create manageable work schedules, especially for lengthy tours, and be sure to include enough downtime to avoid burnout or overload, which directly affects the caliber of services and visitor happiness. To improve team spirit and fortify the relationship between tour guides and the company, plan internal events regularly, such as team-building exercises, monthly meetings, and recognition schemes. Utilize technology in tour management by offering digital platforms that make it simple for tour guides to access client data, itineraries, business news, and reviews. Provide efficient internal routes for tour guides to express their thoughts on rules, working circumstances, or difficulties they have faced. Prompt replies and policy changes based on honest feedback will enhance tour guides' job satisfaction and long-term motivation.

- *Second,* chances for advancement are a significant source of incentive for workers, especially in service industries like tourism, where many tour guides work on a contract basis and have no clear path for professional advancement. This frequently results in the employment being seen as a short-term fix, which lowers long-term loyalty to the company. To retain skilled employees and increase motivation, travel agencies should: Help tour guides create long-term career goals by creating clear career advancement pathways with specified professional levels (Trainee Tour Guide > Official Tour Guide → Team Leader → Tour Operator, for example). Declare the evaluation criteria and advancement requirements openly, including good customer feedback, task completion rate, problem-solving skills, initiative, and teamwork. Create a thorough and equitable performance evaluation system that considers input from various sources, such as coworkers, tour supervisors, customers, and work performance statistics. Evaluation data should be openly published to encourage continuous improvement, followed by prompt comments and direct conversations with tour guides. Offer possibilities for professional growth and training, such as funding courses for guides on soft skills, tour management, guiding techniques, or foreign languages, and recommending exceptional staff members for training at both domestic and foreign tourism establishments. Promote a sustainable career development perspective so that tour guides view their work as a long-term professional path with chances for recognition and skill progress rather than just a short-term revenue-generating position.

- *Third,* one of the main elements affecting tour guides' motivation for their jobs is salary and welfare programs. Remuneration plans need to be reasonably created to appropriately recognize their achievements because of the nature of their employment, extremely flexible scheduling, erratic work hours, and a great deal of pressure during tours. Travel agencies should do the following to promote parity and boost motivation: Provide transparent and fair compensation and bonus structures: Pay should be commensurate with effort and determined by several elements, including the number of tours performed, customer satisfaction scores, managerial assessments, and actual working hours. Tour guides should be compensated with performance-based bonuses and a set salary if they provide exceptional work, get good feedback, or do well on recurring tests. Establish fair stipends: These could include reimbursements for meals, lodging, and transportation for long-distance trips. This can ease individual financial strains and enhance tour guides' working conditions. Assure insurance entitlements: It is crucial for tour guides to be enrolled in all needed insurance programs, such as health, social, and accident insurance. This is particularly crucial in a high-risk industry where frequent travel and client interaction are necessary. Create incentive programs based on performance and seniority: Increased benefits, including holiday and seasonal incentives, increased insurance packages (such as premium health insurance or travel insurance), longer paid leave, or routine health examinations should be granted to tour guides who have been with the company longer or have performed well. In addition to improving job satisfaction and loyalty, a transparent, flexible, and equitable salary and benefits policy also boosts tour guides' general motivation for their jobs.

- *Fourth,* the job motivation of tour guides in Ho Chi Minh City is positively impacted by corporate policies in a statistically meaningful way. In addition to increasing workers' sense of security, transparent, open, and equitable policies promote respect and a closer bond with the company. Travel agencies could think about the following managerial strategies to increase tour guides' motivation: Establish transparent and unambiguous labor policies: Businesses must make sure that tour guides sign official employment contracts that spell out their rights, responsibilities, insurance plans, bonuses, and remuneration. This procedure reduces the possibility of labor issues while also reassuring tour guides. Create policies that safeguard workers' rights. Examples include establishing a risk support fund to help tour guides in the event of mishaps or unanticipated events at work and keeping a hotline open around the clock to offer prompt assistance in an emergency. Boost feedback systems and two-way communication: To get management and tour guides' opinions on policy, working conditions, and real-world problems, organizations should schedule frequent meetings. Employee loyalty and trust can be increased by paying attention to their opinions and modifying policies as necessary. Encourage a respectful and cooperative work environment: Travel agencies should encourage a culture of efficient coordination between tour guides and tour operations personnel, guaranteeing equitable task distribution and preventing internal disputes that may harm staff morale and productivity.

Implementing the aforementioned management implications gives enterprises in the tourism sector a competitive edge by boosting the quality of tourism services in Ho Chi Minh City and increasing tour guides' motivation for their jobs.

The study's conclusions apply to Vietnam's tourism industry, especially given the growing rivalry for talented workers. To sustain and improve tour guides' motivation, managers are urged to create a positive work atmosphere, guarantee openness in company regulations, increase opportunities for professional growth, and offer competitive pay.

This study does have some limitations, though. Its focus is limited to Ho Chi Minh City and ignores individual-level elements like personality traits, intrinsic motivation, and variations within tour guide segments. Future studies should broaden the geographic scope and include qualitative and quantitative characteristics to provide a more thorough understanding of work motivation in the tourism industry.

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