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Evaluation of the Job Performance of the Tour Guide

¹Le Quang Trung, ²Le Trung Thanh, ³Pham Ngoc Yen
^{1, 2, 3} University of Labour and Social Affairs, Hanoi, Vietnam

Corresponding Author: **Le Trung Thanh**

Abstract

Notably, since fully opening on March 15, 2022, this search index of Vietnam has continuously maintained the highest growth rate in the world, showing a very strong recovery speed of the country's tourism industry (Phuong Loan, 2023) ^[15]. The main objective of this study was to identify, evaluate, and measure the attributes of the job performance of the tour guide in tourism firms in Hanoi and neighboring provinces through qualitative and quantitative research methods. The study was based on a field survey using a semi-structured questionnaire on a sample of 300 tour guides who worked for tourism firms, but there were only 205 valid surveys included in the analysis. The period was

from December 2022 to May 2023. By using statistical analytical tools, i.e., descriptive statistics, ANOVA analysis, and an independent t-test, the study has identified and measured four attributes of the job performance of the tour guide in tourism firms in Hanoi and neighboring provinces. There is not, statistically, a significant difference in the level of job performance of the tour guide in tourism firms in Hanoi and neighboring provinces of these different marital statuses and ages. Based on the findings, some recommendations are given for tour guides and tourism firms to improve the job performance of the tour guides and the quality of their human resources.

Keywords: Job Performance, Tour Guide, Tourism Firms, Labor, Human Resource Management

JEL Codes: F66, J01, O15

1. Introduction

In a tourism firm, tour guides play a very important role in determining the entire operation of the firm. They have roles and tasks, such as being representatives to introduce foreign tourists to the cultural and natural beauty of the country. In particular, tour guides are also people who grasp customers' tastes, needs, and feedback to help travel firms build the best business strategies.

After the end of the restriction period due to the COVID-19 epidemic, international visitors to Vietnam continued to recover with a high growth rate. The number of searches for Vietnam tourism has skyrocketed after 1 month of opening international tourism. Notably, since fully opening on March 15, 2022, this search index of Vietnam has continuously maintained the highest growth rate in the world, showing a very strong recovery speed of the country's tourism industry (Phuong Loan, 2023) ^[15].

In Vietnam, along with the development and integration of the economy after the COVID-19 pandemic, people in the country and the world are more interested in traveling, and many tourism firms have returned to operations. Besides the birth of many new tourism firms and the need to recruit a large number of tourism staff to introduce tours and tourist destinations called tour guides for marketing and expansion, there is also a tourist pick-up and drop-off network for tourism firms. Because tourism is a service with many unique characteristics, tour guides must have expertise in tourist destinations, history, traffic, etc. to act as a bridge between tourism firms and tourists. However, this industry is fiercely competitive, so in addition to professional knowledge of tourism, tour guides need to have the skills of a salesperson. Therefore, increasing work pressure will lead to a decline in the level of positive job involvement and low job performance among tour guides. Certain factors, such as an individual's characteristics such as hope, resilience, optimism, and self-confidence, can reduce the incidence of job stress (Fredrickson *et al.*, 2003) ^[6]. Furthermore, the totality of the four elements of hope, resilience, optimism, and confidence combined together is psychological capital, which has been shown to exist as a psychological state and can change and develop (Carver & Scheier, 2005) ^[3], so it can improve the positive job involvement and enhance the job performance of tour guides.

2. Literature Review

Job performance refers to the effectiveness of individual behavior in contributing to organizational goals (Motowidlo, 2003) [14].

Job performance refers to the quantity of tasks, the ability to complete tasks before deadlines with a low error rate, receive recognition and satisfaction from supervisors and co-workers, and meet the goals set by the organization (Lee *et al.*, 1999) [13].

Work from home (WFH) increases the level of focus on work (Frolick *et al.*, 1993) [5] and also leads to increased work flexibility, so employees can optimize their time; thus, WFH significantly increases employee job performance (Cascio, 1986) [2]. Besides, a suitable and interesting environment at WFH will help them have a better working status, improving the quality and quantity of employees' work (Susilo, 2020) [16].

According to Jackson & Fransman (2018) [12], work-life balance is positively related to job performance.

According to Hoornweg *et al.* (2016) [11], the increase in employee job performance is directly caused by their work motivation. Cholis & Andayani (2021) [4] affirm that motivation contributes to controlling employee behavior in a more positive direction, making them more attached to their work and organization. People with high work motivation will always try to get promotion opportunities, and achieving that requires them to put in more effort and do their tasks better than required, thereby improving their performance. Improve individual job performance as well as the overall work of the organization (Azar & Shafiqhi, 2013) [1].

Ganster & Schaubroeck (1991) [7] assert that employees' job performance decreases when faced with stress because they cannot maintain a reasonable balance between family and work life.

Inheriting the results of the above studies and based on the results of expert interviews, we propose a scale of job performance variables, including JP1-JP4 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Observed variables of the job performance of tour guides in tourism firms in Hanoi and neighboring provinces

Code	Description
JP1	I have faith that I am productive.
JP2	I have always been satisfied with the quality of the work I have done.
JP3	I always receive the trust of my superiors in my work performance.
JP4	I am highly appreciated by my colleagues as a performance worker.

3. Research Methods

Research design: Using the theoretical basis, we conducted practical research by interviewing experts in the human resources (HR) area, especially the HR manager of tourism firms, to supplement and analyze theoretical issues in the context of tourism firms partaking in international integration.

The data collection and processing method: This research synthesizes the dimensions composing the job performance of employees. This research also makes the best use of the research results on job performance that have been publicized domestically and internationally and clearly defines things to inherit and develop.

The qualitative research method: we collect previous related research and regulations on labor and job performance and interview experts in order to assess the relevance of measurement scales related to job performance.

The quantitative research method: In order to collect primary data, we conducted a survey of tour guides at tourism firms. We built a questionnaire to conduct the survey and applied statistical methods to analyze it with the aid of SPSS 23 software, consisting of descriptive statistics, ANOVA analysis, and testing an independent sample t-test. The survey subjects are tour guides for tourism firms: They are people working in the field of tourism services, using language to present, introduce, and explain the most accurate information about the places in the tourism industry and the nature of an area related to the tourist's travel purpose (see Table 2).

Table 2: Respondents by marital status and ages

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Marital status			
Married	152	74.1	74.1
Single	53	25.9	100.0
Ages			
From 22 to 30 years old	61	29.8	29.8
From 30 to 35 years old	53	25.9	55.6
From 35 to 45 years old	47	22.9	78.5
45 years old or older	44	21.5	100.0
Total	205	100.0	

Information on the data collected is shown in Table 2. It shows that among the respondents, 74.1% were married and 25.9% were single. Of these, 61 participants are from 22 to 30 years old, accounting for 29.8%; 53 participants are from 30 to 35 years old, accounting for 25.9%; 47 participants are from 35 to 45 years old, accounting for 22.9%; and the remaining respondents are 45 years old or older, accounting for 21.5%.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 indicates that the respondents agree with the variables of "the job performance of the tour guide in tourism firms in Hanoi and neighboring provinces," where four attributes were quite high with an average of 3.76 compared with the highest of the Likert 5-point scale. All four attributes were rated at an average of 3.64 or higher.

Table 3: Descriptive analysis of attributes

Code	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job performance (JP)					
JP1	205	2	5	3.80	0.611
JP2	205	2	5	3.64	0.631
JP3	205	2	5	3.79	0.700
JP4	205	2	5	3.82	0.680
Valid N (listwise)	205			3.76	

4.2 Independent T-Test: Marital Status

A comparison of the results of the evaluation of the differences in the job performance of the tour guide in tourism firms in Hanoi and neighboring provinces with participants of different marital statuses (married and single) can be seen in Table 4. According to the results shown in Table 4, sig Levene's test is 0.694, which is more than 0.05.

The variance between married and single is not different. Moreover, the sig value t-test is 0.756, which is more than 0.05, which means that there is no statistically significant difference in the job performance of the tour guide in

tourism firms in Hanoi and neighboring provinces between these different marital statuses (Hoang & Chu, 2008; Hair *et al.*, 2009; Hair *et al.*, 2014) [10, 8, 9].

Table 4: Differences in job performance of the tour guide in tourism firms in Hanoi and neighboring provinces with participants of different marital statuses (Independent Test)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
JP	Equal variances assumed	0.156	0.694	0.312	203	0.756	0.02644	0.08481	-0.14077	0.19365
	Equal variances not assumed			0.320	95.475	0.749	0.02644	0.08253	-0.13740	0.19027

4.3 ANOVA-ages

An ANOVA test was needed to make a comparison of the results of the evaluation of the differences in the job performance of the tour guide in tourism firms in Hanoi and neighboring provinces between the four subjects, including participants who are from 22 to 30 years old, participants who are from 30 to 35 years old, participants who are from 35 to 45 years old, and participants who are 45 years old or older. Table 5 shows that the sig Levene statistic of 0.480 is greater than 0.05, which means that the hypothesis of homogeneity of variance among the variable value groups (different ages) has not been violated. Table 6 shows that sig. is 0.283, which is more than 0.05, which indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the job performance of the tour guide in tourism firms in Hanoi and neighboring provinces between the mentioned four groups of ages (Hoang & Chu, 2008; Hair *et al.*, 2009; Hair *et al.*, 2014) [10, 8, 9].

Table 5: Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Descriptions	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
JP				
Based on Mean	0.828	3	201	0.480
Based on Median	0.452	3	201	0.716
Based on Median and with adjusted df	0.452	3	177.473	0.716
Based on trimmed mean	0.716	3	201	0.543

Table 6: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
JP					
Between Groups	1.073	3	0.358	1.277	0.283
Within Groups	56.327	201	0.280		
Total	57.401	204			

4.4 The Relationship between the Job Performance of the Tour Guide in Tourism Firms in Hanoi and Neighboring Provinces-Ages

Next, the line graph shows the relationship between the job performance of the tour guide in tourism firms in Hanoi and neighboring provinces and each respondent's age (Fig 1). Fig 1 shows that this line tends to go down when the respondents' ages are 45 years old or older. But this line tends to slope up when the respondents' ages range from 22 to 45 year sold.

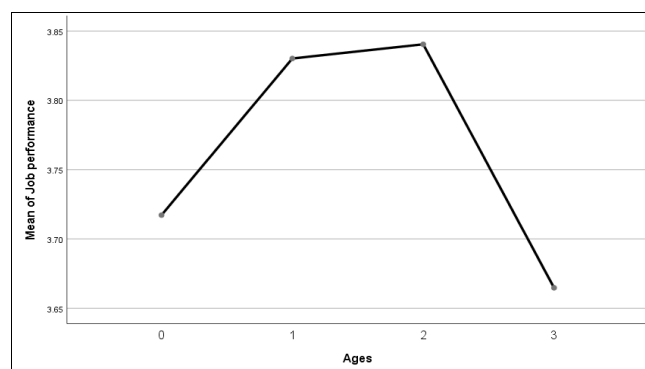


Fig 1: The line graph shows the relationship between the job performance of the tour guide in tourism firms in Hanoi and neighboring provinces and each respondent's ages

5. Discussion and Implications

In addition to a positive working attitude, employees should know how to "shine" at the right time, in the right place, proving their ability, role, and indispensable importance; flexibility in work, work, and personal relationships; manage time effectively; and take good care of themselves. Besides professional factors, tour guides should continue to improve soft skills, such as:
 Organizational skills: Tours in tourism firms are often planned specifically in terms of location, time, etc. to demonstrate the professionalism of tourism workers and make them more convenient for the instructor. But tour guides should be ready and flexible to change schedules and improvise quickly so as not to let tourists wait too long because their tour guide is confused about what to do next.
 Foreign language skills: In the current integration period, most young people, teenagers in general and especially tour guides, should keep their foreign language skills to become a civilized modern person. With the current period of integration and development, Vietnamese tourism has been developing. Foreign tourists know more about our country, which has many attractive tourist destinations, so to become a professional tour guide Tour guide professionals should improve their English and other foreign languages, depending on the number of tourists coming to Vietnam. Foreign languages are one of the most basic skills in the tour guide industry.
 Situation handling skills: During tours or actual journeys, unexpected situations may arise. Therefore, situation-handling skills will help tour guides always control the situation when unexpected risks occur. Tour guides who are

quick to handle arising situations will leave a good impression and gain trust in the hearts of tourists.

Skills in using media: Currently, the whole society is digitally transforming and applying the achievements of the 4.0 revolution. Professional tour guides, in addition to leading tours, being good at foreign languages, etc., should also be equipped with additional skills such as social networking, television, filming, photography, photo editing, etc. to contribute to the success of tours and thereby create sympathy with customers.

The job performance of tour guides is considered a factor that reflects the quality of tour services that tour guides provide to customers.

The working environment is a broad concept that includes everything related to, directly affecting the activities and development, and improving the work efficiency of each individual in the organization. Feeling secure and comfortable when working with superiors and colleagues is a necessary factor to enhance the confidence of tour guides. Tour guides will lose confidence and even want to find a new business when faced with unpleasant relationships at work. On the other hand, a healthy working environment not only helps increase confidence, but in some special cases, it also increases the development ability of tour guides.

Vietnam currently has about 132 hotels and resorts under the brands of operating corporations. Over the next three-year period, the market is expected to record about 80 more hotels and resorts coming into operation (Phuong Loan, 2023) ^[15].

The year 2023 will be a mix of advantages and disadvantages for Vietnamese tourism. This goal can only be realized on the basis of taking advantage of opportunities and overcoming challenges so that Vietnamese tourism can recover and develop effectively and sustainably. The focus is to continue to maintain the growth rate of domestic tourism, which is truly the "pillar" and main driving force of the entire industry. We need to improve service quality, diversify tourism products, develop technical infrastructure to serve tourists, expand training and attract tourism human resources, promote tourism promotion, etc. At the same time, increase attraction for international tourists through implementing solutions to improve and enhance the competitiveness of Vietnamese tourism; create favorable travel conditions for international tourists to Vietnam; and, thereby, help Vietnamese tourism gradually recover and develop comprehensively (Vu Linh, 2023) ^[17].

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