

FACTORS AFFECTING WORKING HAPPINESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AT TOURISM ENTERPRISES IN THE CENTRAL REGION, VIETNAM

Le Tran Bao HAN^{ID}

Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, Faculty of Business Administration,
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, e-mail: letranbaohan@iuh.edu.vn

Nguyen Thanh LONG^{*}^{ID}

Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, Faculty of Business Administration,
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, e-mail: nguyenthanchlong@iuh.edu.vn

Pham Ngoc Kim KHANH^{ID}

Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, Faculty of Business Administration,
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, e-mail: phamngockimkhanh@iuh.edu.vn

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Abstract: This study aims to identify factors affecting working happiness and organizational commitment at tourism enterprises in the Central region, Vietnam. This study used combination method of qualitative and quantitative methods. A 703-tourism-employee survey was conducted at the tourism enterprises, destinations or organizations in the Central region, Vietnam. This research results showed that there were 5 factors affecting directly on working happiness and organizational commitment, including (1) Working environment, (2) Job characteristics, (3) Colleague relationship, (4) Work-life balance, and (5) Income and benefits. This study also examined and showed impact of the 4 factors on organizational commitment through working happiness as mediator factor, excluding working environment. From these results, the study proposed some managerial implications for tourism enterprises in the Central region, Vietnam improve human resource quality through working happiness and organizational commitment.

Key words: working happiness, organizational commitment, tourism enterprises, human resource, employees

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INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is highly regarded in economic development because it reduces unemployment, improves living standards for local communities, and promotes economic growth and social welfare, which is currently the most crucial service industry in the world (Brătucu et al., 2017). In addition, there were many empirical studies that illustrated tourism industry had brought benefits for country image, local image, and their competitiveness in the global business ecosystem (Tien et al., 2019). According to Qiu and Wu (2004), the tourism industry was one of industries having high turnover rate. Tourism employees had faced pressure related to job instability, negative impacts affecting working and psychological health (Medina-Garrido et al., 2023). He et al. (2019) stated that employees working in the tourism industry were less happy and more likely to fail than in other industries. However, the tourism industry was seemed as one of the most special industries while it requires employees always were professional, cheerful, happy and committed to develop and operate well (Ghaderi et al., 2023). On the other hand, happiness was considered be very important and was a key role for organization success, hence the organizations should be interested in the working happiness of employees, which it was a crucial thing for development (Al-Shami et al., 2023). Fisher (2010) also concluded in his research that happiness at work could be a factor to be retained, motivated, and encouraged professional employees in the future. From these reasons, human resource is one of the most important factors in the sustainable development of tourism enterprises. Baum et al. (2020) stated that the tourism human resource topic was to attract interests from society, scholars, experts, however this topic has been lacked studies discussing and pointed out solutions.

Nowadays, to manage highly skilled and specialized employees has become one of the most challenging issues, especially in the post-Covid-19 pandemic while the human resource is seemed a competitive advantage of tourism enterprises. According to Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (2022), the turnover rate of tourism industry in Vietnam was one of the highest turnover rated countries around the world during the post-Covid-19 pandemic. On the other hand, the World Tourism Organization (2023) stated Vietnam tourism would be the most attractive tourism in the Asia region. Hence, every year, Vietnam welcomes millions of tourists in both domestic and foreign aspects. In the first eight months in 2023, there were over 7.8 millions tourists coming to destinations along from South region to North region in Vietnam (Ministry of Culture, 2023). Vietnam tourism has been divided into 7 key areas, but one of the most important area is the Central region, Vietnam. There are 19 provinces located in the region, including Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, Quang Tri, Thua Thien Hue, Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Daklak, Daknong, Lam Dong, Da Nang, Quang Nam, Quang

* Corresponding author

Ngai, Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan with over 100 destinations. Hence, the number of tourists coming to the Central region, Vietnam is the majority rate of Vietnam tourism. According to Government News (2023), tourism in the Central region, Vietnam had been prospered rapidly among 19 provinces, especially Quang Nam, Da Nang, Thua Thien Hue or Khanh Hoa. Therefore, the Central region should plan and develop tourism industry as main industry for region sustainable economy. One of the solutions for this strategy is to take interests in human resource development by training, improving working environment, or improving policies for increasing organizational commitment and working happiness. Happiness at working relates to improve working effectiveness and efficiency. Organizational commitment is acceptance and trust in organization. In recent years, working happiness and organizational commitment has been taking interests of scholars and managers, especially service industries as tourism.

However, there is no study which examines both working happiness and organizational commitment. The previous studies were conducted to identify only factors affecting working happiness or organizational commitment, such as Januwarsono's (2015), Chaiprasit and Santidhiraku (2011), Atan et al. (2021). In addition, tourism topic in Vietnam has attracted and conducted at other regions in Vietnam such as the Southeast region, the Highland Central in many aspects relating tourism competitiveness or tourism marketing (Khanh and Long, 2023; Long et al., 2023a; Long et al., 2023b). However, there is no study relating to tourism human resources especially working happiness or organizational commitment conducting in the Central region, Vietnam. Therefore, this study aims to identify factors affecting on working happiness and organizational commitment at tourism destinations in the Central region, Vietnam. Moreover, managerial implications would be proposed so that the enterprises improve human resource for sustainable development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Working happiness

Working happiness is becoming increasingly important in human resource management research. Working happiness was not a static or fixed state but a continuous process over time (Fisher, 2010). According to Fisher (2010), some previous studies underestimated the importance of happiness at work, however, working happiness was a key goal that everyone and every organization was looking for, relating to both the environment and the individual. Employees could feel happy while working at a particular time, but sometimes they may feel unhappy (Simmons, 2013). According to Gavin and Mason (2004), employee happiness and positivity at work would contribute to organizational success and commitment. Happiness at work was a general concept, not only a specific motivating factor for high productivity and efficiency (Salas-Vallina et al., 2020), but also the most critical factor in encouraging employees to be ready or willing to face new challenges (Galván Vela et al., 2022). On the other hand, working happiness played an essential role because employees had to take time for working and activity or event complexity related to work (Basinska and Rozkwitalska, 2022). Kun and Gadanez (2022) stated experience of employees feeling energized and enthusiastic, finding meaning and purpose in their work, having good working relationships, and feeling committed to the organizations.

2. Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment had the following three characteristics: an acceptance and trust in the organization's goals and values, a willingness to make significant efforts to support the organization, and a belief to continue engaging with organizations (Gyensare et al., 2017). Organizational commitment occurred when employees committed with an organization where they could achieve company goals, demonstrate better performance than others, and would be willing to stay (Herhausen et al., 2020). Organizational commitment was the relative level of employee involvement and awareness in an enterprise. The previous researches showed that organizational commitment was predicted by personal factors, experience, work, context and organization (Lo et al., 2024; Nazir et al., 2018).

3. Hypotheses and research model

Based on theoretical approaches, referring to existing foreign research on aspects related to happiness at work and organizational commitment by Chaiprasit and Santidhiraku (2011), Januwarsono's (2015), Baba Rahim et al. (2020), Atan et al. (2021), Karim (2023), and Al-shami et al. (2023), authors found that factors such as: Working environment, Job characteristics, Colleague relationship, Work-life balance, Income and benefits would affect on happiness at work and organizational commitment. Therefore, this research examines factors affecting happiness at work and organizational commitment at tourism enterprises in the Central region of Vietnam.

Working environment

According to Tandler et al. (2020), working environment included the primary working conditions and organization (e.g., assets, procedures, and rules of organization) as well as daily experiences, or short-term, and social interactions could promote a happy life. A good work environment in the service industry could be clean, attractive, inspiring, and supportive workplace that would have positively impacts on organizational commitment (AlBattat and MatSom, 2014). According to Şahin et al. (2019), working environment was happy when employees regularly experienced positive emotions, because employees's bodies, minds, and spirits were related to the physical environment, a good working environment would make them feel happier, which led them to be more productive work (Abouelela, 2022). Therefore, the hypotheses were proposed as following:

H1: Working environment has a positive influence on working happiness.

H2: Working environment has a positive influence on organizational commitment.

H3: Working environment has a positive influence on organizational commitment through working happiness as mediator factor.

Job characteristics

According to Katz et al. (2023) an employee's positive status changed significantly as job characteristics changed with opportunity. However, a lack of understanding of job characteristics at the job level and activity level could affect their happiness (Bakker, 2015). Junça-Silva and Menino (2022) pointed out, factors such as autonomy, feedback, job variety, identity, and work meaning would be job characteristics that would generate motivate, affect internally, and make employees feel happier. Job characteristics was stated to affect on motivation, satisfaction, and performance (Karim, 2023). Zaman et al. (2020) stated that the job characteristics affected enjoyment of work. Therefore, the hypotheses were proposed as following:

H4: Job characteristics has a positive influence on working happiness.

H5: Job characteristics has a positive influence on organizational commitment.

H6: Job characteristics has a positive influence on organizational commitment through working happiness as mediator factor.

Colleague relationship

According to Haitao (2022), colleague was an individual or a group of people working in the same company or organization, interacting with each other, and expressing their reactions to colleagues in the organization, and the relationship with colleagues related to job satisfaction. Coworker supported positive emotion increasing, which it made employees to feel be accepted as part of the organization (Watson et al., 1992). In addition, relationships with colleagues at work could create positive emotions such as joy, gratitude, and satisfaction, which were pleasant feelings that every individual desired (Diener et al., 2017). Therefore, the hypotheses were proposed as following:

H7: Colleague relationship has a positive influence on working happiness.

H8: Colleague relationship has a positive influence on organizational commitment.

H9: Colleague relationship has a positive influence on organizational commitment through working happiness as mediator factor.

Income and benefits

Chen and Hsu (2024) stated working happiness increased with income. Hwang (2019) also found working happiness levels depending on salary levels. Income or other proxy indicators, such as assets and financial status were examined a positive relationship with happiness (Journal et al., 2016; Lim et al., 2020). Employee awareness could increase when they would feel respected and recognized from organizations throughout the increased income, which it could affect the organizational commitment (Li et al., 2021). Moreover, (Jaworski et al., 2018) stated that both part-time and full-time employees would commit with organizations when they would receive benefits or welfare such as health insurance, annual leave, or health care. Therefore, the hypotheses were proposed as following:

H10: Income and benefits has a positive influence on working happiness.

H11: Income and benefits has a positive influence on organizational commitment.

H12: Income and benefits has a positive influence on organizational commitment through working happiness as mediator factor.

Work-life balance

Baba Rahim et al. (2020) stated that maintaining a balance between work and personal life significantly enhanced working happiness, and the research also illustrated a positive impact of work-life balance work on woking happiness. Zheng et al. (2015) stated establishing organizational policies relating work-life balance could rise employee satisfaction. Additionally, high employee satisfaction would lead them to commit closely and limit their turnover intention (Karatepe and Karadas, 2015). According to Dhingra and Dhingra (2021), job flexibility would help employees could be work-life balance such as good family obligation, be lower rate of family conflicts and other relationships. Therefore, the hypotheses were proposed as following:

H13: Work-life balance has a positive influence on working happiness.

H14: Work-life balance has a positive influence on organizational commitment.

H15: Work-life balance has a positive influence on organizational commitment through working happiness as mediator factor.

Working happiness

Working happiness has a positive influence on organizational commitment in the tourism industry, which it was illustrated through the previous studies. Those findings showed when employees felt to satisfy and be happy with their jobs, they tended to be more committed with organization where they was working for (Atan et al., 2021; Field and Buitendach, 2011). When employees would feel happy with current job, which it would help motivate, encourage them to be more committed with organizations, also increase innovation and creation during working (Al-shami et al., 2023). Therefore, the hypothesis was proposed as following:

H16: Working happiness has a positive influence on organizational commitment.

From these hypothesis, authors decided to propose a research model with 16 hypothesis (Figure 1).

RESEARCH METHOD

The research was conducted in the following order of steps:

Step 1, qualitative method was used via expert interview with 10 managers working at tourism enterprises to complete research model and scale, modify slightly items of factors to appropriate with the study context scale. The scale was adopted

from the previous studies, including Dhyan Parashakti et al. (2017), Hanaysha (2016), Abdulaziz et al. (2022), Abou-Moghli (2018), Azmy (2022), Limpanitgul et al. (2014), Klaus et al. (2014). Liker 5 with 1 – strongly disagree, 5 – strongly agree was used in this study. According to Bentler and Chou (1987), sample size must be greater or equal 5 times of the number of variables.

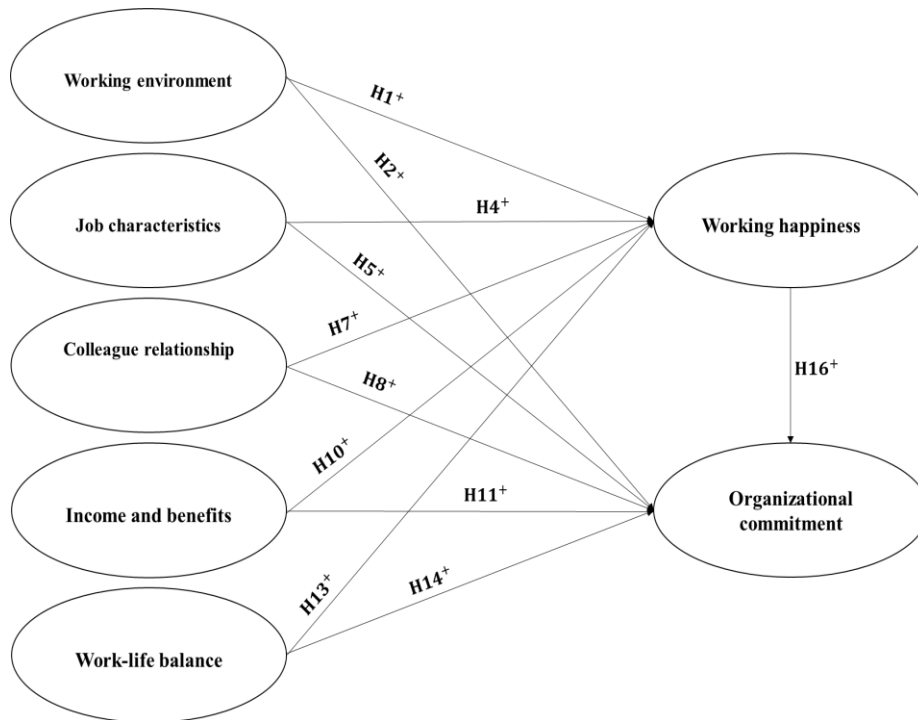


Figure 1. Research model

However, because of the Central region size with over 100 tourism destination and hundreds tourism enterprises, authors decided the larger sample size in order to increase representative level. Authors delivered a 1200-questionnaires for employees working at tourism enterprises in the Central region, Vietnam via online and offline.

Step 2, the quantitative method was used to analyze the data for examining reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, test hypotheses and examine model fit through the bootstrapping results with P-Value ≤ 0.05 . This step was conducted via SmartPLS software.

RESEARCH RESULT

1. Respondent Demographic Profile

This study distributed 1200 questionnaires, but authors collected back only 834 questionnaires. However, among them, only 703 questionnaires were valid. Among 703 valid answers, there were 334 men and 369 women. Regarding to age, 18-30 years old was 259 respondents, from 31-45 years old was 186 people, 153 people was in 46-60 years old and the remainder for over 60 years old. Regarding income, there were 167 people – income under 10 million VND, 280 respondents – income from 10 million VND to 15 million VND, the income greater than 15 million VND to 20 million VND with 140 answers, and the remainder for group of income 20 million VND.

2. Scale Reliability Tests

Cronbach's alpha coefficients are all greater than 0.7, the highest being $\alpha = 0.898$ (colleague relationship) (Table 1). In addition, the composite reliability coefficient (CR) must be greater than 0.7, and table 1 illustrated no CR coefficient less than 0.7, hence the structure is highly reliable.

Table 1. Reliability and the result of CFA (Note: WE: working environment; JC: Job characteristics; CL: Colleague relationship; WB: Work-life balance; IB: Income and benefits; WH: Working happiness; OC: Organizational commitment; Others are variables of each factor)

Factor	Variables	Outer Loading	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Working environment (WE)	WE1	0.801	0.823	0.883	0.654
	WE2	0.779			
	WE3	0.816			
	WE4	0.837			
Job characteristics (JC)	JC1	0.810	0.809	0.875	0.636
	JC2	0.780			
	JC3	0.794			
	JC4	0.805			
Colleague relationship (CL)	CL1	0.878	0.898	0.929	0.767
	CL2	0.887			
	CL3	0.870			
	CL4	0.868			
Work-life balance (WB)	WB1	0.799	0.825	0.878	0.642
	WB2	0.772			
	WB3	0.818			
	WB4	0.815			
Income and benefits (IB)	IB1	0.801	0.814	0.877	0.589
	IB2	0.733			
	IB3	0.734			
	IB4	0.762			
	IB5	0.803			
Working happiness (WH)	WH1	0.837	0.861	0.900	0.642
	WH2	0.780			
	WH3	0.781			
	WH4	0.790			
	WH5	0.818			
Organizational commitment (OC)	OC1	0.828	0.866	0.908	0.713
	OC2	0.837			
	OC3	0.874			
	OC4	0.837			

The results in Table 1 also show the factors that ensure convergence when the AVE indexes are all higher than 0.5. Table 2 shows that the criteria for discriminant validity have also been met when the square root of the variance between the construct and its indicators represented on the main diagonal is larger than the rest of the matrix.

Table 2. The reliability and validity Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	CL	IB	JC	OC	WB	WE	WH
CL	0.876						
IB	0.441	0.767					
JC	0.337	0.321	0.797				
OC	0.745	0.514	0.424	0.844			
WB	0.403	0.301	0.272	0.441	0.801		
WE	0.372	0.396	0.352	0.420	0.236	0.809	
WH	0.527	0.706	0.407	0.582	0.408	0.426	0.801

Note: WE: working environment; JC: Job characteristics; CL: Colleague relationship; WB: Work-life balance; IB: Income and benefits; WH: Working happiness; OC: Organizational commitment; Others are variables of each factor.

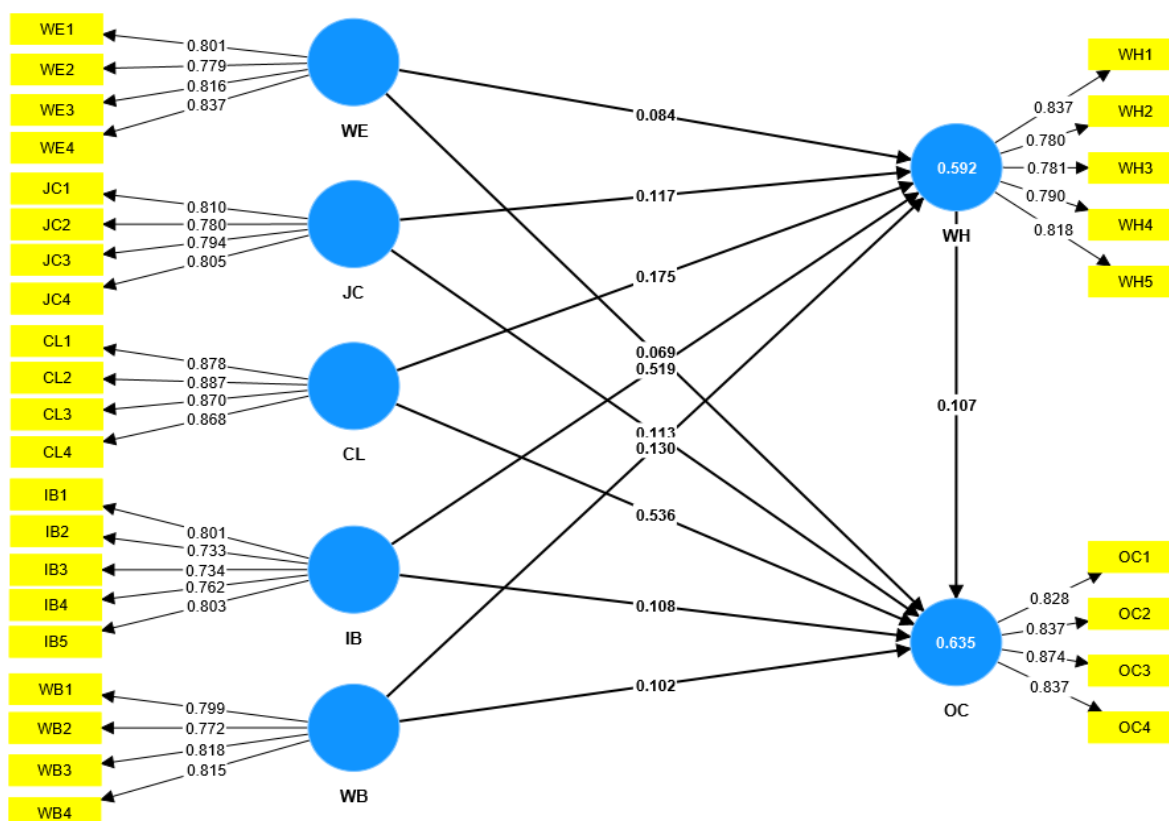


Figure 2. PLS-SEM (Note: WE: working environment; JC: Job characteristics; CL: Colleague relationship; WB: Work-life balance; IB: Income and benefits; WH: Working happiness; OC: Organizational commitment; Others are variables of each factor)

In Figure 2, in the model, there are two dependent variables: happiness at work and organizational commitment. From the results of PLS - SEM algorithm analysis, the result of the adjusted R-squared of working happiness was 0.592 ($R^2 = 59.2\%$). As a result, the independent variables (work environment, job characteristics, colleague relationship, work-life balance, and income and benefits) explain 59.6% the variation of the working happiness. The adjusted R-squared of organizational commitment equals to 0.635 ($R^2 = 63.5\%$). Consequently, the independent variables of work environment, job characteristics, colleague relationship, organizational justice, work-life balance, and income and benefits explain 65.1% of the variation in organizational commitment.

3. Hypothesis testing

Then, this study test hypotheses through bootstrapping 5000 samples to resample with replacement where the original sample acts as a crowd. Table 3 showed all hypotheses from H1 to H16 are accepted with P-values < 0.05. The importance of the six factors affecting organizational commitment in this study are arranged from high to low as follows: (1) Colleague relationship ($\beta = 0.499$), (2) Job characteristics ($\beta = 0.113$), (3) Income and benefits ($\beta = 0.108$), (4) Working happiness ($\beta = 0.107$), (5) Work-life balance ($\beta = 0.102$), (6) Working environment ($\beta = 0.069$). Besides, the importance of five factors affecting happiness at work in this study is arranged from high to low as follows: (1) Income and benefits ($\beta = 0.519$), (2) Colleague relationship ($\beta = 0.175$), (3) Work-life balance ($\beta = 0.13$), (4) Job characteristics ($\beta = 0.117$) and (5) Working environment ($\beta = 0.084$). Moreover, the study also examined mediating hypotheses H3, H6, H9, H12 and H15. All these

results are accepted with P-values < 0.05, excluding the impact of working environment on organizational commitment through mediating of working happiness – Hypothesis H3 (P-values is 0.109 > 0.05) (Table 4).

Table 3. Path coefficients

	Coefficients	SE	T-value	P-value	Note
WE->WH	0.084	0.083	0.032	0.009	Accepted H1
WE -> OC	0.069	0.068	0.03	0.023	Accepted H2
JC -> WH	0.117	0.116	0.028	0.000	Accepted H4
JC -> OC	0.113	0.113	0.028	0.000	Accepted H5
CL -> WH	0.175	0.174	0.035	0.000	Accepted H7
CL -> OC	0.536	0.538	0.039	0.000	Accepted H8
IB ->WH	0.519	0.521	0.043	0.000	Accepted H10
IB -> OC	0.108	0.107	0.042	0.01	Accepted H11
WB -> WH	0.13	0.13	0.029	0.000	Accepted H13
WB ->OC	0.102	0.102	0.025	0.000	Accepted H14
WH -> OC	0.107	0.106	0.042	0.011	Accepted H16

Note: WE: working environment; JC: Job characteristics; CL: Colleague relationship; WB: Work-life balance; IB: Income and benefits; WH: Working happiness; OC: Organizational commitment

Table 4. Mediating results

	Coefficients	SE	T-value	P-value	Note
WE->WH -> OC	0.009	0.009	1.601	0.109	Rejected H3
JC -> WH -> OC	0.012	0.012	2.143	0.032	Accepted H6
CL -> WH -> OC	0.019	0.018	2.296	0.022	Accepted H9
IB -> WH -> OC	0.056	0.055	2.530	0.011	Accepted H12
WB -> WH -> OC	0.014	0.014	2.188	0.029	Accepted H15

Note: WE: working environment; JC: Job characteristics; CL: Colleague relationship; WB: Work-life balance; IB: Income and benefits; WH: Working happiness; OC: Organizational commitment

CONCLUSION AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Discussion

This study aims to identify which factors affecting working happiness and organizational commitment at tourism enterprises in the Central region, Vietnam. This study had proposed 10 direct hypotheses examining the influence of 5 factors on working happiness and organizational commitment, including working environment; work-life balance; job characteristics; colleague relationship; income and benefits; and another hypothesis for the impact of working happiness on organizational commitment. Finally, all direct results were appropriated with the previous studies of Şahin et al. (2019) and Abouelela (2022), AlBattat and MatSom (2014) for the impact of working environment on working happiness and organizational commitment; Zaman et al. (2020) and Karim (2023) stated that job characteristics had influences on working happiness and organizational commitment; Diener et al. (2017), Haitao (2022) for colleague relationship affecting on working happiness and organizational commitment; Chen and Hsu (2024), Hwang (2019), Journal et al. (2016) and Lim et al. (2020) for hypothesis 10 and 11 of income and benefits factor; Baba Rahim et al. (2020) and Karatepe and Karadas (2015) for hypothesis 13 and 14; and Atan et al. (2021); Field Buitendach (2011) for the influence of working happiness and organizational commitment. In addition, 5 indirect hypotheses were proposed to examine the influence of 5 factors on organizational commitment through working happiness as mediator factor, which no previous study mentioned or examined this mediator relationship between the factors. All indirect results were accepted excluding hypothesis of the impact of working environment on organizational commitment through working happiness.

2. Managerial implications

Firstly, colleague relationship was the most significant influence on organizational commitment. Tourism managers in the Central region, Vietnam need to create more opportunities to share information, projects, and new opportunities among organization members and need to pay attention to expressing the positive supports for colleagues such as knowledge, experience, and skills. In addition, it can simply be a word of encouragement day by day. Managers must respect employees’ opinions, job satisfaction or working happiness because the colleague relationship has the greatest effect on employee happiness at work. Secondly, job characteristics are the second most important factor in influencing organizational commitment and the fourth most important factor influencing happiness at work.

The characteristics of the tourism industry are very diverse in business types and activities. Tourism enterprises need to design jobs and manage employees well so that they can feel happier and commit to their work. Managers need to design according to job position, without boring repetition so that employees can develop their personal and creative abilities. In addition, managers or enterprises should allow the employees to develop themselves and think independently, learn many new things and face challenges at work. Employees will also feel more positive, happy and committed to the business when work is interactive, involves teamwork, and involves mutual support.

Thirdly, income and benefits factors ranked third in importance in influencing organizational commitment and first in influencing working happiness. It can be assessed that income and benefits play an important role in organizational

commitment and working happiness, so managers need to pay attention and propose some strategies to improve this aspect. First, since the service industry is very diverse and competitive, enterprises must ensure competitive salaries and attractive benefits to retain talented employees, which it is to ensure employee benefits such as health insurance, leave benefits, bonuses, holiday benefits, etc. They should build an effective compensation policy to find and motivate excellent employees. Managers must know how to praise, suggest, provide, and communicate opportunities for development and advancement into good job positions, enhancing each employee's happiness and ensuring their long-term commitment to the organization.

Fourthly, work-life balance influenced both organizational commitment and happiness at work. Tourism managers can propose some actions to improve balance in this work, such as setting flexible policies for employees while still ensuring time and efficiency of work, depending on the job position. They should also encourage employees to balance work and life, such as promoting rest, spending time with their family, etc. In addition, managers also need to pay attention and listen to their personal issues, thoughts, and aspirations to guide them in using their leave benefits for recharging their energy. In addition, providing some programs on time management skills and timetable design to ensure work-life balance is essential.

Finally, the working environment also affected working happiness and organizational commitment. Managers can enhance commitment by building a positive, mutually supportive, comfortable, safe working environment and stronger and happier employees in the tourism industry through small ways such as paying attention to amenities in rest areas, creative rooms, office rooms.

3. Conclusion

To help enterprises manage their human resources, create a positive working environment, and increase tourism working happiness and organizational commitment, the study aims to examine the impact of factors on working happiness and organizational commitment. After conducting qualitative and quantitative research, the results showed that there are five factors affecting working happiness and organizational commitment, including (1) Working environment; (2) Job characteristics, (3) Colleague relationship, (4) Income and benefits, (5) Work-life balance. The research results also illustrated the mediating influence of Job characteristics, Colleague relationship, Income and benefits, and Work-life balance on organizational commitment through working happiness. Based on these results, the author proposes some managerial implications to improve the working happiness and organizational commitment for tourism enterprises in the Central region, Vietnam.

4. Limitations and future research directions

Research on working happiness and organizational commitment is a broad topic with many different aspects. The data collected on service industry employees may limit the coverage of working happiness and organizational commitment of employees working in other industries. Next studies will not only focus on the tourism industry in the Central region, Vietnam but they will be expanded areas on other industries and other regions in Vietnam.

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