Assessing the Impact of Tourist Incivility, Job Satisfaction and Job Satisfaction on Trekking Guides Vocational Commitment

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Abstract

In the dynamic hospitality industry, employees engage deeply with customers, often becoming the organization's face. This study investigates the influence of tourist incivility, job stress, and job satisfaction on the vocational commitment of trekking guides. Using a quantitative research approach with a descriptive and correlational design, the study explores these relationships through hypotheses derived from existing literature. Out of 384 Participants, primarily male (96.67%) and aged 26-35 years (57%), were recruited via convenience sampling from diverse geographical locations. The results reveal significant positive correlations between job satisfaction factors (JSF) and vocational commitment (VC) (r = .267, p < .01), job stress (JS) and VC (r = .243, p < .01), and tourist incivility (TI) and VC (r = .490, p < .01). The coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.374) indicates that 37.4% of the variation in vocational commitment is explained by these predictors. ANOVA results (F = 58.966, p = 0.000) confirm the significance of the model. Regression analysis demonstrates that job

satisfaction (β = 0.121, t = 3.347, p < .01), positively and job stress (β = -0.065, t = -4.550, p < .01), and tourist incivility (β = -0.300, t = -6.617, p < .01) negatively and significantly affect vocational commitment. The results show how tourist behavior, job worries, job satisfaction and commitment to the profession interact in trekking guides' lives. This study points out that taking care of these issues will help employees feel better and more committed which benefits both the industry and its workers.

Keywords: *Job Satisfaction, Job Stress, Tourist Incivility, Vocational Commitment, Trekking Guides*

Introduction

In the dynamic and vibrant hospitality industry, employees engage with customers at a very personal level, becoming the face and soul of their respective firms. The engagement is more than just nice words or delivery of service; it is an art done in subtleties of emotions. Employees must project positive emotions right away to ensure that customers are satisfied, and repress negative ones to make sure that there is a perfect and pleasant guest experience. This necessary practice, particularly among those in direct customer contact, was termed "emotional labor" by Hochschild (1979), describing how staff work with and manage feelings to achieve the emotional demands of their job roles. Subsequent work by Celestin & Vanitha (2023) has expanded on this theory, studying its application within contemporary workplace settings. Emotional labor refers to the attempts to align emotional expressions with organizational norms to provide a smooth and friendly atmosphere for the customers.

In the tourism industry, emotional labor is the most important in securing a service culture. Employees, especially tourist guides, are at the forefront and speak for the spirit and values of the companies. Duarte Alonso et al., (2025) states that these employees try to convey their emotional reactions in a way that is appropriate to organizational goals. Tour guides, being the only representatives of their firms on tours, need to deal with varied customer attitudes, such as rudeness or uncivility, without allowing their emotions ruin the experience for the other tourists.

But with constant calls for emotional regulation and high customers' interaction, tourist guides go through a lot of workplace stress. Hwang et al., (2020) note that stress levels for this line of work are overwhelmingly higher than in quite a number of other professions. The tourism sector with its hardworking atmosphere poses unique challenges such as uneven working hours, heavy workloads, employee conflicts, low wages, and job instability (O'Neill & Davis, 2011; Wang & Sim (2025). These individual factors cumulatively contribute to enhance job stress, which can decrease job satisfaction and decrease vocational commitment.

Tourist guides also carry other burdens like long and unpredictable work hours, employment insecurity, conflict between work and family life, limited personal time, and exposure to physical and psychological violence (Göker, & Ayar, 2020; Akkuş & Arslan, 2023). Despite all these, travel agencies have thrived in the past decades, making an important contribution to the tourism industry by generating foreign currency and accelerating the economy (Burnard et al., 2016). Tourist guides, typically certified by appropriate authorities (Catenazzo, 2023), play a pivotal role in shaping tourists' experiences and ensuring their satisfaction (Holloway, 1981; Ayad, 2023).

In Turkey, there are over 10,419 tourist guides (Eibeck et al., 2022), yet research focusing on their unique challenges and experiences remains limited. High turnover rates and the inclination to leave the profession pose significant issues, with the underlying causes not fully understood. Baum et al. (2016) categorize labor force challenges in the tourism sector into three levels: macro (labor mobility, supply and demand, legal regulations, and global trends), micro (employee behavior and attitude, organizational performance), and meso (HR applications). The interaction between tourists and tourist guides falls at the intersection of the micro and meso categories.

The findings of this study will be invaluable for practitioners. By understanding the relationships between customer incivility, job stress, and vocational commitment, travel agency managers can develop strategies to reduce stress and improve job satisfaction among tourist guides. Additionally, recommendations will be provided to help tourist guides manage customer incivility, ensuring they can maintain a positive and professional demeanor even in challenging situations. This research not only contributes to the theoretical understanding of emotional labor in the tourism sector but also offers practical

insights to enhance the well-being and vocational commitment of tourist guides, ultimately leading to better customer experiences and organizational success.

This study aims to bridge the gap in the literature by exploring the impact of tourist incivility on vocational commitment among tourist guides. It seeks to understand how job satisfaction and job stress interrelate and influence vocational commitment.

Literature review and hypothesis development

Trekking guides' job satisfaction and vocational commitment

Joy in the job of a trekking guide in Nepal is a measure of how content the guides are with what they do, what is expected of them and where and how they do it. If anyone have vocational commitment, they strongly relate to their profession, no matter where they work. Because of things like tourist bad behavior, unstable income and poverty, trekking guides still work despite hardships and risk. This research uses definition of vocational commitment which centers on how involved a person is with their occupation. It is a good approach when a person's job entails freelance or brief contracts, as is common with roles like this.

Research earlier has indicated that enjoying your job is crucial for keeping career commitment. If employees are content at work, they usually remain in their profession and feel a strong sense of who they are at work. Job satisfaction and positive client contacts are proven) to support tourism professionals' commitment. Han et al. (2016) in their paper demonstrate that employees' satisfaction and their commitment are reduced by unpleasant work experiences like job stress and customer rudeness. Because stressors are common in trekking tourism, being satisfied with the job becomes very important for people build a strong career.

Theories explain the connection between these two fields. According to JD-R theory, negative job demands such as stress and incivility cause employees to feel strained, but satisfaction at work as a positive resource motivates them. Social Exchange Theory holds that tourists who are friendly will make guides glad to give their best in tourism. Affective Events Theory stresses that our feelings about daily events affect more lasting attitudes like our satisfaction and devotion to work.

While there is a lot written about it, few studies have focused on how committed trekking guides are to their line of work in Nepal's informal tourism sector. Besides, although job satisfaction often goes along with strong vocational commitment, there are those who keep their job only for its financial rewards, even when they are unhappy. The lack of studies using tourist incivility as a predictor and the conflicting ideas about tourist incivility make this investigation necessary. Thus, following hypothesis was proposed:

H1: There is a significant impact of Trekking guides' job satisfaction on vocational commitment.

Trekking guides' job stress and vocational commitment

Trekking guide job stress happens because of the constant pressures and emotional demands their job brings. This study refers to stress as tiredness from trotting great distances, worries due to risks pale into consideration, strange changes in weather and the requirements of dealing with people from many backgrounds. Being a trekking guide means facing pressure alone in remote sites that are also unsafe without much reliable help from any organization. In this study, job stress which sees it as a result of the person-environment relationship being viewed as challenging to their resources and threatening to their well-being. It describes both the environmental problems and the personal sense of stress experienced by trekking guides.

In this case, vocational commitment means the guide has a psychological bond to their job over a long period. It means that the guide values guiding, intends to keep working and is motivated by challenges outside their profession.

Experts have already explored several different understandings of job stress. Role ambiguity and workload play key roles in job stress but instead point out that organizational factors are more important. It explains how personal perception combined with outside pressures influence behavior, just as trekking guides must do each day. Some studies look at vocational commitment as long-lasting involvement with a job, while others see it as consisting of several broad aspects (Blau, 1985; Meyer et al., 1993). Job stress and vocational commitment both affect each other. Trying to deal with continual stress can cause a person to lose their enthusiasm for their job. Studies including those by researcher demonstrates that increased stress lowers commitment and encourages front-line staff to consider

leaving. In trekking, when guides are alone and challenged, stress can cause them to lose their passion for their job. However, good management or other things like happy job experiences can help lessen the difficulties that startups bring.

Because of this, job stress can either lessen a guide's dedication to the vocation or, at times, strengthen commitment by having guides see stress as a test to overcome. This model allows the study to look at how lessening job stress can lead to stronger job commitment if other good experiences are present. Yet, there's not a lot of research specifically on trekking guides in developing tourism economies such as Nepal. Normally, academics only focus on stresses felt by staff in formal hotels or neighborhood tourism areas. For example, some of these studies report stressful jobs alongside strong motivation to stay with the profession which could be related to their own motivation, cultural surroundings or restricted job opportunities. Thus, following hypothesis was proposed:

H2: There is a significant impact of Trekking guides' job stress on vocational commitment.

Tourist incivility behaviors and vocational commitment
Tourist incivility refers to low-intensity, disrespectful behaviors by tourists—such as rudeness, dismissiveness, or unreasonable demands—that violate norms of mutual respect (Sliter et al., 2010). In the trekking industry, such behaviors challenge guides who must maintain professionalism despite negative interactions. These incidents, though minor individually, can accumulate and affect guides' emotional well-being and long-term job attitudes (Grandey et al., 2004; Han et al., 2016).

Vocational commitment is the emotional attachment and dedication an individual has to their chosen profession, reflecting their intent to remain in that field (Blau, 1985). Unlike organizational commitment, it is rooted in personal identity and passion for the work itself. This often means for trekking guides that guiding is a special role for them, thanks to their cultural background and what motivates them personally.

The authors use Blau's (1985) terminology because this focus highlights identifying with one's occupation. This behavior is explored using Weiss and Cropanzano's Affective Events Theory which says unpleasant events at work change employees' emotions and influence their attitude towards the company in

the long run. Recurring rude behavior can make the job more stressful, lower an employee's satisfaction and weaken their loyalty to their career (Sliter et al., 2012; Meyer et al., 1993).

Even so, certain studies mention that people with a clear vocational identity are better equipped to deal with these risk factors, suggesting that what we learn from culture or how we cope could influence them. By examining Nepal's trekking guides, this research addresses a lack of similar studies and looks at how behaviors of tourists play a role in shaping commitment in this culturally distinct occupation. For this reason, the following hypothesis was developed:

H3: There is a significant impact of Tourist incivility behaviors on vocational commitment.

Research Methodology

It explores the relationship between tourist behaviors, job challenges and job contentment with the commitment of trekking guides to their work. Researchers applied a quantitative design that examined the relationships using both description and correlation techniques. Stories wrote the hypotheses based on the existing research, then used these ideas to direct data collection and review.

Only those who guide trekkers in many regions were included in the target population. The authors recruited participants using trekking agencies and guide associations. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, which included demographic questions and items measuring tourist incivility, job stress, job satisfaction, and vocational commitment. Responses were captured using Likert scales and other closed-ended formats.

In order to ensure good data, the study relied on both validity and reliability. Validity refers to the accuracy of the measurement, while reliability indicates the consistency of results. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess internal consistency, with values of 0.70 or above considered acceptable.

The final questionnaire contained 20 items across four constructs. Tourist incivility was measured with five items (e.g., tourists ignoring privacy or making unreasonable demands), adapted from Emmanuel & Das (2025). Job stress items (e.g., stress due to client expectations or weather) were adapted from Thomas (2002). Job satisfaction was assessed using statements related to support, skills use, and interpersonal experiences, based on Kusluvan (2003). Vocational commitment included items on passion for guiding, personal alignment, and career dedication, based on Tsesis (2021).

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation summarized the responses, while correlation analysis assessed the strength of relationships between variables. Researchers found that independent variables help predict vocational commitment levels. Overall, this research method showed a clear structure for studying the work life of trekking guides and why they stay committed.

Figure I Conceptual Framework
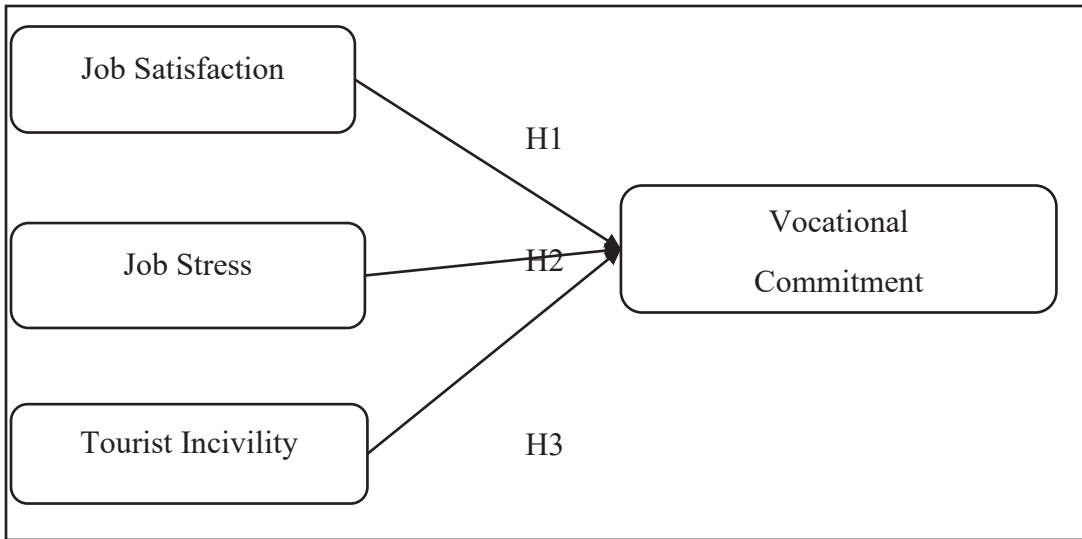
Analysis and Results

Table 1: Correlation Relationship between Dependent and Independent Variables

		JSF	JS	TI	VC
JSF	Pearson Correlation	1			.
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
JS	Pearson Correlation	.371**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00			
TI	Pearson Correlation	.308**	.199**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.00		
VC	Pearson Correlation	.267**	.243**	.490**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.00	0.00	

Based on Table 1, A positive significant correlation was found between Job Satisfaction (JSF) and Vocational Commitment (VC), Pearson correlation coefficient of .267** (p < .01). This implies that increased job satisfaction for trekking guides is related to more vocational commitment. Those workers who are more satisfied with various aspects of work are likely to have more vocational commitment.

Likewise, Job Stress (JS) is positively correlated with Vocational Commitment (VC), and there is a correlation coefficient of .243** (p < .01). This indicates that higher levels of job stress are associated with higher levels of vocational commitment among trekking guides. In spite of the tribulations and pressures involved in their jobs, guides might evidence greater dedication and commitment to their vocational role.

Tourist Incivility (TI) has a strong moderate to strong positive correlation with Vocational Commitment (VC), as shown by the correlation coefficient of .490** (p < .01). This indicates that higher levels of perceived tourist incivility experienced by trekking guides correspond to increased vocational commitment. Guides confronted by higher degrees of rudeness or disrespect from tourists may paradoxically reaffirm their commitment to their professional position, perhaps in an attempt to adapt or feeling a sense of responsibility to uphold professional standards.

Table 2: Regression Co-efficient of Dependent and Independent Variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.326	.197		6.742	.000
	Job Satisfaction	.121	.035	.119	3.347	.002
	Job Stress	-.150	.033	.065	-4.55	.000
	Tourist Incivility	-.302	.046	.300	-6.617	.000

a. *Dependent Variable: Vocational Commitment*

Table 2 shows the results of the model predicting vocational commitment using the variables of job satisfaction, job stress, and tourist incivility. The different dimensions have different impacts on vocational commitment. Job Satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on vocational commitment ($\beta = 0.121$, t = -3.347, p

= 0.002 < 0.01). Job Stress has a negative and significant effect on vocational commitment (β =- 0.065, t = -4.550, p = 0.000 < 0.01). Tourist Incivility has a negative and significant effect on vocational commitment (β = -0.300, t = -6.617, p = 0.000 < 0.01).

Discussion and Conclusion

The current research examined the relationship of the incivility of visitors, occupational stress, the level of workplace satisfaction, and the work dedication of trekking guides. The findings reveal important insights in relation to the psychological and occupational factors that affect the dedication of the people who work as representatives in the profession, especially in often difficult circumstances.

The analysis revealed a negative relationship between the incivility of tourists and vocational commitment of professionals, thus supporting the hypothesis that frequent exposure to rude tourist behaviors negatively influences guides' professional engagement. This result aligns with existing evidence indicating that frontline service workers, particularly in the tourism industry, often experience emotional exhaustion and reduced commitment when confronted with incivility or mistreatment (Wang, 2019; Bigembe, 2020). Tourist behaviors, such as disregard for safety instructions, disrespect for local norms, or entitlement, could trigger emotional dissonance, thus undermining the purpose and pride associated with the guiding profession.

The research, however, did reveal a significant positive relationship between vocational commitment and work-related stress, thus contradicting the dominant view of the adverse effects of stress on work outcomes. Based on Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, this finding suggests that moderate-level or challenge-related stressors can increase vocational commitment as a result of creating a sense of purpose and accomplishment. This aligns with the positions of Ren et al. (2021), who posit that in physically demanding professions coupled with the need for social interactions, such as leadership positions, stress resulting from accountability and problem-solving might paradoxically increase vocational commitment. Chronic or persistent stress, however, still ranks as a major issue and can contribute to burnout, thus emphasizing the need for organizational monitoring as well as the reduction of harmful stressors.

In addition, the study supported the positive impact of vocational satisfaction on vocational commitment. Trek guides with high levels of satisfaction—resulting from autonomy, good leadership, and prospects for career development—reported a high level of occupational commitment. The findings are in line with literature on the role of vocational satisfaction in organizational and vocational commitment (Clark et al., 1998; Karin Andreassi et al., 2022). It is therefore important to have in place an organizational climate that values the work of guides, investing in their career development and the recognition of the problems they encounter, as this is essential to create enduring vocational commitment.

The findings of this study highlight the significant impact that the occupational stress, rates of work satisfaction, and experiences of client incivility have in shaping the work commitment of trekking guides. The findings indicate the complex interplay involved in the work of trekking guides and how the external pressures coupled with their personal views of their occupation collectively construct their work commitment.

The studies reveal that higher levels of occupational stress negatively affect the occupational commitment of trekking guides. The physical demands that are part of the work and the often-isolated nature of the work, coupled with the pressure of meeting the clients' expectations in challenging circumstances, result in a lot of stress. This heightened stress then negatively affects their attitude and commitment to their work. Thus, intervention to reduce work-related stress, such as better support systems, capacity-building programs, and proper management of resources, is needed to ensure vocational commitment in trekking guides.

On the other hand, job satisfaction is recognized as being a key determinant of work commitment. Guides who are fulfilled through their work—thanks to factors like recognition, personal achievement, and positive interactions with visitors—demonstrate notable degrees of commitment. This highlights the importance of creating a positive work environment, recognizing guides' achievements, and ensuring consistency between guides' tasks and their personal and professional objectives.

The study highlights the negative effects of rude behavior by tourists on employees' work commitment. Negative interactions with rude tourists not only increase the level of stress but also reduce job satisfaction, thus leading to low work

commitment. Addressing this problem requires both preventative and corrective interventions, such as educating tourists on how to behave, developing policies to deal with rudeness, and offering training to guides on how to handle difficult situations.

Implications

The analysis of the interdependence of tourist incivility, occupational stress, and work satisfaction with the level of commitment of trekking guides is of utmost significance.

Tour and trekking companies should focus on launching training programs aimed at enhancing cultural sensitivity among tourists. Educating tourists about local customs and acceptable behavior can help mitigate the negative impact of incivility on the professional commitment of guides.

The use of effective stress management strategies is important to help trekking guides cope with occupational stressors. The availability of stress-reducing interventions like mindfulness programs or counseling can help guides cope with pressure and maintain their passion for the work.

Recognizing the importance of job satisfaction in fostering vocational commitment, organizations should give priority to improving working conditions, offering opportunities for professional development, and developing a positive organizational culture. These factors contribute significantly to guides' general job satisfaction and commitment to their job.

Promoting respectful behaviors in tourism is not only beneficial to trekking guides but also to the propagation of sustainable tourism practices. Encouraging responsible tourist behavior and environmental conservation can enhance guides' job satisfaction and contribute significantly to the long-term sustainability of tourist destinations.

Policymakers in tourism destinations should consider integrating guidelines and regulations that promote respectful tourist behavior. Collaborating with local communities and stakeholders to develop and enforce policies can create a conducive environment for guides to thrive professionally.

Future research could explore the longitudinal effects of incivility, stress, and satisfaction on vocational commitment among guides. Qualitative studies could also delve deeper into guides' experiences and coping mechanisms, providing valuable insights for developing targeted interventions and support mechanisms.

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