

Impact of Organisational Management Practices on Employee Performance and Tourist Satisfaction: A Study into Travel Establishments

Yalçın ARSLANTÜRK  ^a

^a Ankara Hacı Bayram University, Tourism Faculty, Department of Tour Guiding, Ankara, Türkiye. yalcin.arslanturk@hby.edu.tr

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Employee Performance Tourist Guiding Travel Agencies Tourist Satisfaction	Purpose – This paper sets out to develop and confirm a research model in a quantitative setting which tests the relationships between the organisational management practices, tour guiding services, and tourist satisfaction in the context of Turkish tourism business cycle. Specifically, this paper aims to shed light on the data obtained from tourist guides and tourists and then seeks to reveal the organisational factor that will pave the way for enhance tourist guide performance and tourist satisfaction alike. Design/methodology/approach – This study employs a quantitative and explanatory research design. In order to test the proposed relationships between hidden factors, a survey-based, cross-sectional research design was used. The model was chosen as the main analytical method because it allows for the simultaneous estimation of multiple relationships between variables. This approach provides strong tests for how well the model fits the data and how well it predicts outcomes. Results – The positive relationship between Organisational Management Practices and Tour Guide Performance suggests that guides who perceive greater support and opportunities for development reciprocate through higher engagement and service quality. Tour Guide Performance enhances Tourist Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions, which supports the tour guide's role in shaping tourists' evaluations. The direct effect of Organisational Management Practices on Tourist Satisfaction reveals that organisational structures indirectly shape tourist perceptions. Discussion – The findings underscore that tourist satisfaction is not only a reflection of individual performance but also of the organizational environment that enables such performance. Travel agencies, therefore, play a crucial role in designing and maintaining management systems that motivate and empower tour guides. This study reinforces the notion that organisational excellence begins with people, and in package tours, tourist guides stand at the very heart of the visitor experience.
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1. Introduction

It is no surprising that world tourism industry has become an indispensable part of present-day service economy with nearly 700 million international tourists, some 33 million more compared to 2024. Plus, despite the limited data for the first six months of 2025, it is estimated that receipts for the international arrivals is likely to reach more than 2 trillion USD, the figure of 2024 (UNWTO, 2025). Hence, the economic contribution of the industry to GDP is of great significance in terms of overall wealth of a given country. In this lucrative industry, owing to its competitive and labour-sensitive nature, establishing high standards in service delivery is not only operationally but also strategically vital. One of the significant pillars of having loyal customers, repeat customer behaviour and hence organization achievement lies in the concepts of quality-of-service delivery and tourist satisfaction, directly related to human dimension of the industry under consideration (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000).

One of the key factors at the heart of the human dimension factor is without any doubt tour guides. They are strategically inevitable in Turkish tourism context in that they hold a legal position in any tours and as such it will not be wrong to draw an analogy between a key and a door, for they are the key to the customer satisfaction due to the high interactive nature of tour guiding Hsu, Chan, and Huang (2009). The extent of the abilities of a tourist guide is the major factor with the capacity to turn an ordinary tourist experience into a memorable experience leaving at least a smirk on the face of tourist. On the other hand, the opposite

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situation, where poor guiding service encounter is likely to be the main culprit in the creating “non-satisfied” tourists.

If we are to address the position of tour guiding in legal contexts, as of 2012 in accordance with the law numbered 6326, tourist guides have become a must for any given tour in Türkiye, contrary to the implementation in many foreign countries, where tour guiding services are optional. The situation in Türkiye is so strict that the law stipulates that no tour bus can start its itinerary without a tourist guide. Thus, considering the well-established position of tour guides in tourism, it will not be wrong to assert that they are an integral part of tourism industry, unlike many foreign countries. Given their indispensable position in the process of tour business, their performance could alter the route of businesses in a negative or positive manner. In order to expand the tourism market and become much more competitive, it is of great importance to know the critical point that will emerge: what might be the aspects that steer the performance of a tourist guide?

In spite of the fundamental role of tour guides’ in modelling the experiences of tourists, there is hardly any empirical evidence that backs up organisational practices to tour guides and tourist satisfaction. This being the case, the feedback travel operators have depended solely on the word-of-mouth outcomes rather than first-hand empirical confirmation for the operators to improve service quality.

In order to serve this purpose, this paper sets out to develop and confirm a research model in a quantitative setting which tests the relationships between the organisational management practices, tour guiding services, and tourist satisfaction in the context of Turkish tourism business cycle. Specifically, this paper aims to shed light on the data obtained from tourist guides and tourists and then seeks to reveal the organisational factor that will pave the way for enhance tourist guide performance and tourist satisfaction alike. The outcome of the paper is thought to contribute to human resources literature in tourism context thanks to the empirical evidence obtained from the study results.

2. Theoretical Background

This paper draws on two seminal concepts: namely, Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Service-Profit Chain (SPC) model. These two conceptual frameworks have been set as the premises of how organizational practices are correlated with employee behaviour and customer satisfaction. Social Exchange Theory holds that (Blau, 1964) any social relations and reciprocal exchanges are interdependent. In other words, when employees feel they are valued by their organisations, their contributions are admired, this in exchange will result in further organizational commitment and performance (Eisenberger et al., 1986). In other words, the more the organization values its employees, the greater the benefits for each party, the mutual win-win cycle will definitely give a boost not only for the organization but also the performance of the employees along with their earned loyalty.

Heskett et al. (1994) offers a framework called Service-profit chain, which underscores the links between customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, service quality and finally profitability. Based on the given framework, the casual links run among tourist guide, tourist satisfaction and loyalty. To be more precise, upon receiving adequate training and administrative support, tourist guides are likely to offer top-notch service, which will eventually lead to higher degree of tourist satisfaction and loyalty, alike. Hence, the units of analyses for this paper within this framework are established as organizational management practices (OMP) boosting tour guide performance (TGP) and then tourist satisfaction (TS) and behavioural intentions.

2.1. Tourist Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions

To start with, it will not be wrong to hold that tourist satisfaction is one of the concepts that is dwelled upon most and if we are to make a definition of the concepts, tourist satisfaction is the function of pre-visit expectation and the performed services within the mind of the tourists (Oliver, 1999; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). It is the combination of cognitive and effective response. To illustrate cognitive ones, service quality issues and value for money take the lead. On the other hand, as for affective responses, the points in case are such concepts like enjoyment and emotional connection. For this reason, the correlation between satisfaction and behaviour intentions, which are basically repeat visit intention, recommendation and positive word of mouth, is strong (Petrick, 2004; Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

In guided tours, not only destination attributes count in terms of satisfaction, but also the “human” interface, the tour guide. The professionalism, knowledge and attitude of a guide highly affect tourists’ emotional reactions, perception of authenticity and their intentions of recommending the service (Hsu et al., 2009). Consequently, tourist satisfaction is the result of performance or success for tourism industry companies, and it represents the overall impact of employee performance and organisational service quality.

2.2. Tour Guide Performance and Its Role in Tourist Experiences

The quality of the performance of tour guides is a keystone in the congeniality of tours and affecting directly value for tourists’ appreciation (Zhang & Chow, 2004; Wang, Hsieh, & Tsai, 2015). Tour guide performance (TGP) covers a series of multi-faceted skills and behaviours, not just in terms of interpretation but rather also in terms of communication, group leadership, safety and being flexible. A high-achieving guide is not only a source of information but also a cultural representative generating involvement and emotional connection with the destination (Black & Weiler, 2005).

Empirical evidence indicates that TGP has a strong impact in predicting satisfaction and behavioural intentions. For instance, Zhang and Chow (2004) regard guide’s communication skill and empathy as the most important predictors for tourist satisfaction in Hong Kong, whereas Hsu et al. (2009) also report such patterns among short holiday-takers in Shanghai. Especially in a cultural and heritage tourism orientated country as Türkiye, the interpretive performance of the guide is key to increase perceived authenticity and emotional involvement. Therefore, TGP fulfils the roles as both an antecedent and outcome of tourist experience.

2.3. Organisational Management Practices and Employee Performance

Organisational Management Practices (OMP) are the human resources interventions that have been formally or informally implemented by firms to enhance employee training, motivation and commitment. Review of the literature suggests several dimensions, including training and development; remuneration and rewards systems; empowerment; and supervisory support as being core determinants of employee performance (Guest, 1997; Boxall & Macky, 2009). As OMP are critical in bridging the gap between the organization and its customers, especially within service settings (Nguyen & Newby, 2018; Noe, 2017), they play an important role in building a systematic service quality and generating customer satisfaction.

2.3.1. Training and Development

Training offers employees technical and interpersonal skills which are required to meet performance standards. Training is an integral part of tour guides for accurate and authentic information delivery and in-group communications. There are studies that emphasize the importance of life-long professional training for competence and similarly confidence (Zhang & Chow, 2004). Thanks to a well-designed training programs tourist guides will have the opportunity to handle challenging situations more and be able to deliver more engaging narratives, all of which will boost customer satisfaction.

2.3.2. Compensation and Reward Systems

When it comes to a just and accountable rewarding schemes offered by the management, the likely output of such schemes will no doubt be increased performance. Whether it is financial or not, appreciating good performance will enhance the sense of belonging to the organization (Milkovich & Newman, 2008). Employees’ perception of organizational support thanks to a transparent rewarding system will be indispensable elements in creating affective commitment, which will result in enhance service delivery. In a work environment, where seasonality is inevitable, the rewarding system with the attributes mentioned above is of great significance for motivational and quality purposes.

2.3.3. Employee Empowerment

According to Spreitzer (1995) and Bowen & Lawler (1992), empowerment is the process of giving employees the freedom to make decisions and manage customer interactions. Empowerment gives tour guides the freedom to alter itineraries, attend to the needs of visitors, and resolve problems as they arise. Tourist guide performance and visitor satisfaction are enhanced by empowered guides’ ability to adjust to changing tour conditions, offer customized experiences, and show initiative. For this reason, empowerment, can be considered as the link operating between organizational policies and service performance.

2.3.4. Supervisory Support

Supervisory support, which includes the guidance, feedback, and emotional backing that managers provide is another important factor in determining how well employees perform (Eisenberger et al., 2002). Supervisory support gives a sense of psychological comfort. For this reason, employees will have the chance to focus on customer service without thinking about facing consequences that could affect their performance in a negative manner. Supervisors offering positive comment and acknowledge the achievements of tour guides will help boost professional self-esteem, reduce their stress levels, and foster more stable performance.

3. Methodological Framework

The importance of tour guides in tourist satisfaction is extensively appreciated (Hsu et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2015); however, the empirical research combining organizational management practices with tour guide performance and tourist outcomes is scarce. Previous papers in majority focused on personal skills or tourist perceptions and this kind of approach is likely to neglect the managerial structures, which might either facilitate or inhibit guide's performance. This avoidance is both theoretically and practically gives out some challenges; that is to say, without empirical evidence the impact of managerial issues will be unknown to the managerial board, which lead the management to miss the opportunities to offer enhanced service delivery.

For this reason, this paper aims to offer a conceptual model that links the variables mentioned above. It is expected that the model will offer managerial practices to enhance tourist satisfaction, behavioural intentions and tourist guide performance. This paper postulates that organizational management practices affect tourist satisfaction by empowering tourist guides in managerial processes, thus increasing service quality.

3.1. Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

Based on the reviewed literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Organisational Management Practices affects positively Tour Guide Performance in a positive manner.

H2: Tour Guide Performance affects Tourist Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions in a positive manner.

H3: Organisational Management Practices affects Tourist Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions in a positive manner.

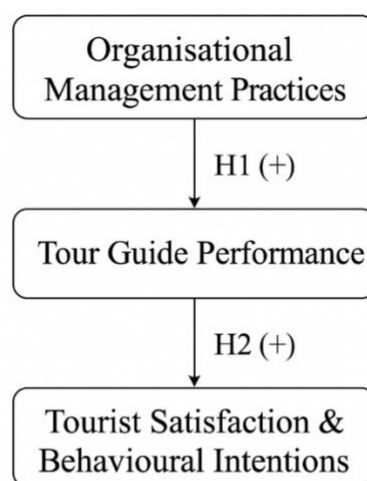


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

3.2. Research Design and Approach

In order to investigate the direct relationships between Organizational Management Practices (OMP), Tour Guide Performance (TGP), and Tourist Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions (TS & BI), this study uses a quantitative and explanatory research design. The research framework is based on Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964) and the Service-Profit Chain (SPC) (Heskett et al., 1994), both of which suggest that good

organizational practices promote positive employee attitudes and performance, which in turn improves customer satisfaction.

To test the proposed relationships between hidden factors, a survey-based, cross-sectional research design was used. A regression model was chosen as the main analytical method because it allows for the simultaneous estimation of multiple relationships between variables. This approach also provides strong tests for how well the model fits the data and how well it predicts outcomes. The research was conducted in two connected stages. First, data were collected from licensed tour guides to measure organizational and performance-related factors. Then, data were gathered from tourists to assess their satisfaction and the results of their behaviour.

By lowering common method bias and allowing the analysis of relationships from both the supply (employee) and demand (customer) sides of the tourism experience, this dual-source design enhances the validity of findings.

3.3. Study Context and Population

The empirical investigation was conducted within the context of travel agencies and tour guides, a major segment of the national tourism industry characterised by its emphasis on cultural, historical, and heritage tours. Türkiye's rich archaeological and cultural assets attract millions of visitors annually, making professional tour guiding a key determinant of tourist satisfaction and destination reputation.

The target population consisted of two groups are licensed professional tour guides registered with the Association of Chambers of Tourist Guides (TUREB) and domestic and international tourists who participated in guided tours between January and July 2025.

These two respondent groups were selected because they represent complementary perspectives: tour guides as service providers and tourists as service recipients. Both perspectives were essential for testing the proposed structural relationships between OMP, TGP, and TS & BI.

3.4. Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

A purposive sampling technique was used to ensure that only participants with relevant experience were included. For tour guides, inclusion criteria required holding an official guiding license and having at least one year of professional experience. For tourists, participation required having completed a full guided tour.

Data collection was conducted through both online questionnaires (distributed via professional networks and travel agencies) and face-to-face questionnaires administered at key tourism destinations such as Istanbul, Cappadocia, Antalya, and İzmir.

In total, 400 questionnaires were distributed to tour guides and 600 questionnaires to tourists. After screening for missing data and response inconsistencies, 317 valid guide responses and 456 valid tourist responses were retained, resulting in an effective overall response rate of 64.1%. This sample size is adequate for SEM analysis, satisfying the recommended minimum of 10 responses per estimated parameter (Hair et al., 2019).

3.5. Measurement Instruments

All constructs were measured using established and validated scales from prior research, adapted to the tour guiding context to ensure relevance and clarity. The questionnaire consisted of three main parts:

Organisational Management Practices (OMP)

Measured from tour guides' perspectives, this construct was adapted from Eisenberger et al. (1986) and Guest (1997). It assesses perceived organisational support, training, empowerment, and supervision. Sample items include:

"My organisation provides adequate training opportunities for my professional development."

"My supervisor recognises and appreciates my contributions."

"I have sufficient autonomy to make decisions during tours."

Tour Guide Performance (TGP)

Adapted from Zhang and Chow (2004) and Hsu, Chan, and Huang (2009), this construct captures guides' self-assessed performance. It includes six dimensions: communication, knowledge, professionalism, adaptability, safety management, and interpretation. Sample items include:

"I communicate effectively and clearly with tourists."

"I ensure the safety and comfort of my group throughout the tour."

"I adapt my explanations to suit different types of audiences."

Tourist Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions

Measured from tourists' responses, this construct was adapted from Sezgin and Düz (2018), Kozak and Rimmington (2000), and Petrick (2004). It evaluates satisfaction with the guide's performance and intentions to revisit or recommend. Sample items include:

"The tour guide was knowledgeable and professional."

"I am satisfied with the overall guided tour experience."

"I would recommend this guide and tour company to others."

All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaires were prepared in both English and Turkish, using the back-translation method (Brislin, 1980) to ensure semantic and cultural equivalence.

3.6. Reliability and Validity Procedures

Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted with 30 tour guides and 40 tourists to assess the clarity and reliability of the instruments. Minor wording adjustments were made based on feedback.

Reliability was evaluated through Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), with thresholds of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Construct validity was tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Convergent validity was confirmed if factor loadings exceeded 0.50 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were above 0.50, while discriminant validity was assessed by comparing AVE square roots with inter-construct correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

These procedures ensured that the constructs were internally consistent, empirically distinct, and conceptually valid for analysis.

3.7. Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analysed using SPSS (Version 29) for descriptive statistics and preliminary analyses, and AMOS (Version 28) for confirmatory and structural modelling.

The analytical process followed four key steps:

Descriptive Statistics: Frequency, mean, and standard deviation analyses were conducted to profile respondents.

Measurement Model Testing: CFA was performed to validate the dimensionality and reliability of constructs.

Structural Model Testing: Hypothesised relationships among OMP, TGP, and TS & BI were tested using SEM. Model fit was assessed through indices including χ^2/df , CFI, GFI, TLI, and RMSEA, using conventional benchmarks (CFI and TLI > 0.90; RMSEA < 0.08).

Hypothesis Testing: Standardised path coefficients (β), critical ratios (t-values), and significance levels ($p < 0.05$) were used to evaluate H1–H3.

This methodological approach ensures a robust empirical test of the proposed conceptual model while maintaining consistency with prior HRM and tourism service quality studies.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed of the study's purpose, anonymity, and confidentiality. Participation was voluntary, and no personally identifying information was collected. The research design followed the ethical guidelines and ethical committee approval for the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University (Date: 12/25/2024, Number: E-11054618-302.08.01-317279). The ethics committee approval was granted with research code 2024/471 by unanimous vote and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before data collection.

4. Findings

This part will accommodate all the elements pertaining to findings with subheadings.

4.1. Respondent Profile

A total of 773 valid responses were analysed, comprising 317 licensed tour guides and 456 tourists. The guide sample consisted of 58.7% males and 41.3% females, with an average age of 36.4 years and a mean professional experience of 8.3 years. Most guides held at least a bachelor's degree (67.5%) and primarily involved in with cultural, heritage, and combined tours.

The tourist sample included 52.4% international and 47.6% domestic visitors, representing a balanced gender distribution (51% female, 49% male) and a mean age of 34.2 years. Most tourists (72%) held at least a bachelor's degree and had joined two or more organised tours in the past five years. These profiles suggest that both respondent groups were well qualified to assess the constructs under study, thereby ensuring data reliability and contextual validity.

4.2. Measurement Model Assessment

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to validate the measurement model. All constructs displayed satisfactory psychometric properties. Table 1 summarises the reliability and validity results.

Table 1. Reliability and Validity Results

Construct	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Organisational Management Practices (OMP)	0.901	0.923	0.613
Tour Guide Performance (TGP)	0.887	0.911	0.599
Tourist Satisfaction & Behavioural Intentions (TS & BI)	0.914	0.936	0.627

All Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) values exceeded the threshold of 0.70, indicating high internal consistency. The average variance extracted (AVE) values were above 0.50, confirming convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Furthermore, the square roots of AVE for each construct were greater than the corresponding inter-construct correlations, providing evidence of discriminant validity.

4.3. Model Fit Indices

The overall measurement model fit was assessed using multiple indices: $\chi^2/df = 2.36$, CFI = 0.954, GFI = 0.927, TLI = 0.943, and RMSEA = 0.056.

All indices fall within acceptable thresholds (Hu & Bentler, 1999), confirming that the proposed measurement model adequately represents the data.

Following CFA, the structural model was tested to examine hypothesised relationships among OMP, TGP, and TS & BI. The model also demonstrated a strong fit: $\chi^2/df = 2.41$, CFI = 0.951, GFI = 0.923, TLI = 0.942, RMSEA = 0.057.

These indices indicate that the proposed model fits the observed data well and is appropriate for hypothesis testing.

4.4. Hypothesis Testing

The results of the structural model are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Path	Standardised β	t-value	p-value	Supported
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Hypothesis	Path	Standardised β	t-value	p-value	Supported
H1	OMP \rightarrow TGP	0.64	9.27	< 0.001	Yes
H2	TGP \rightarrow TS & BI	0.53	8.11	< 0.001	Yes
H3	OMP \rightarrow TS & BI	0.28	4.02	< 0.001	Yes

All three hypotheses were supported. The results confirm that Organisational Management Practices exert a strong positive effect on Tour Guide Performance ($\beta = 0.64$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. Similarly, TGP has a significant positive influence on Tourist Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions ($\beta = 0.53$, $p < 0.001$), confirming H2. The direct path from OMP to TS & BI is also positive and significant ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$), providing support for H3.

Together, these findings indicate that OMP not only enhance TGP but also directly and indirectly contribute to higher levels of tourist satisfaction. The model explains 67% of the variance in TGP and 71% of the variance in TS & BI, demonstrating high explanatory power.

5. Discussion

The results strongly validate the theoretical assumptions of Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Service-Profit Chain (SPC) in the tourism guiding context. The significant positive relationship between Organisational Management Practices and Tour Guide Performance (H1) suggests that guides who perceive greater support, fair treatment, and opportunities for development reciprocate through higher engagement and service quality. This aligns with Eisenberger et al. (1986), who argued that perceived organisational support encourages employee commitment and effort.

The finding that Tour Guide Performance significantly enhances Tourist Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions (H2) supports prior research emphasising the tour guide's pivotal role in shaping tourists' emotional and cognitive evaluations (Hsu et al., 2009; Zhang & Chow, 2004). Effective communication, empathy, and professionalism create memorable experiences that encourage positive word-of-mouth and revisit intentions.

Finally, the direct effect of Organisational Management Practices on Tourist Satisfaction (H3) reveals that organisational structures indirectly shape tourist perceptions by fostering consistent service culture. This finding is consistent with the Service-Profit Chain model, which posits that internal service quality, rooted in training, empowerment, and supportive management, translates into external service excellence (Heskett et al., 1994).

Overall, these findings underscore that tourist satisfaction is not only a reflection of individual performance but also of the organisational environment that enables such performance. Tour operators and travel agencies, therefore, play a crucial role in designing and maintaining management systems that motivate and empower tour guides.

5.1. Managerial Implications

The study provides practical guidance for tourism enterprises and policy-makers:

Institutionalise Training Programs: Continuous education in communication, cultural interpretation, and group management should be integrated into professional development frameworks for guides.

Enhance Reward and Recognition Systems: Recognition of exceptional performance through financial and symbolic incentives can increase motivation and service consistency.

Promote Empowerment and Autonomy: Allowing guides discretion in managing tour dynamics enhances responsiveness and tourist satisfaction.

Foster Supportive Supervision: Supervisors should focus on mentorship rather than control, providing constructive feedback and emotional support to strengthen organisational trust.

By adopting these practices, tourism organisations can enhance not only employee performance but also the overall tourist experience, leading to stronger brand reputation and loyalty.

5.2. Theoretical Implications

This research extends the application of HRM and organisational behaviour theories to the tourism guiding context, an area traditionally dominated by qualitative case studies. It demonstrates that organisational mechanisms rather than individual competencies alone play a decisive role in shaping tourist outcomes. By empirically validating the direct model linking OMP, TGP, and TS & BI, the study provides a theoretical bridge between internal organisational systems and external service performance, offering a replicable framework for future research.

6. Conclusion and Implications

This study set out to examine how Organisational Management Practices (OMP) influence Tour Guide Performance (TGP) and, subsequently, Tourist Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions (TS & BI) in the context of tour guiding in Turkey. Drawing upon Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Service-Profit Chain (SPC), the research proposed that effective organisational support systems enhance employee performance, which in turn improves customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The results of the model analysis confirmed all three hypotheses. First, OMP exert a strong positive effect on TGP, demonstrating that guides who perceive higher organisational support perform more effectively in delivering services. Second, TGP has a significant impact on TS & BI, reaffirming the guide's central role as the "human interface" of the tourism experience. Finally, OMP also have a direct effect on TS & BI, indicating that tourists respond positively to the service culture shaped by internal management systems.

Collectively, these findings highlight that tourist satisfaction is not merely the product of individual skill or attitude but of an integrated organisational environment that nurtures employee motivation, competence, and autonomy.

The study contributes to the academic literature in several important ways:

Extending HRM Theory to Tourism: It empirically applies Human Resource Management (HRM) and organisational behaviour concepts, traditionally explored in corporate contexts, to the tourism guiding profession. This helps position tour guiding as a legitimate domain for management-focused research rather than purely vocational study.

Integrating SET and SPC Frameworks: By combining SET's focus on reciprocal employee–employer relations with SPC's emphasis on internal service quality, the research advances a unified theoretical model explaining how organisational inputs drive customer outcomes through human performance.

Providing Empirical Evidence for a Direct Model: While prior studies often examined mediation effects, this study offers a direct structural model linking OMP, TGP, and TS & BI, providing clearer managerial implications and a simplified yet powerful theoretical framework.

Contributing to Emerging Market Literature: Conducted in Turkey, a rapidly developing tourism destination, this study enriches understanding of HRM dynamics in emerging markets, where tour guiding plays a pivotal role in destination image and service quality.

The results carry meaningful insights for tour operators, travel agencies, and policy-makers seeking to enhance service quality through improved management of tour guides:

Structured Training and Development: Tourism organisations should institutionalise continuous learning programs focusing on communication, intercultural awareness, and safety management. Investment in human capital development directly translates into better tourist experiences.

Fair Compensation and Recognition: Reward systems should combine financial incentives with symbolic recognition such as performance awards and public appreciation. Recognition reinforces motivation and loyalty, especially in a profession with high emotional labour.

Empowerment in Service Delivery: Providing tour guides with discretion to manage diverse groups and dynamic situations fosters adaptability and creativity, leading to improved satisfaction outcomes.

Supportive Supervisory Climate: Supervisors should function as mentors who guide rather than control. Encouraging autonomy, providing constructive feedback, and ensuring emotional support can significantly strengthen organisational trust and employee engagement.

Implementing these practices can enable tourism organisations to achieve sustainable service quality and strengthen their competitive advantage through human capital excellence. In an increasingly competitive and experience-driven tourism market, human resources remain the most critical determinant of service excellence. The findings of this study reaffirm that effective organisational management practices are not peripheral administrative concerns but strategic levers of competitive advantage. By investing in their tour guides through training, empowerment, fair compensation, and supportive leadership, tourism organisations can not only improve employee performance but also create memorable experiences that foster tourist satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy.

Ultimately, this study reinforces the notion that organisational excellence begins with people, and in tourism, tour guides stand at the very heart of the visitor experience.

7. Limitations of the Study

Despite its strong empirical and theoretical contributions, the study has several limitations that open avenues for further research:

Cross-sectional Design: The study's cross-sectional nature limits its ability to infer causality. Future longitudinal studies could explore how organisational practices influence performance and satisfaction over time.

Contextual Constraints: The study focused on Turkey, where cultural and operational contexts may differ from other destinations. Comparative research across different countries or regions would enhance the generalisability of findings.

Self-Reported Data: While data were collected from both guides and tourists, the guide responses on OMP and performance are self-reported and may be subject to bias. Future research could integrate objective performance assessments or managerial evaluations.

Limited Construct Scope: Other variables such as emotional labour, work engagement, or job satisfaction may mediate the relationships studied. Future models could expand to include these psychological constructs for a deeper understanding of behavioural mechanisms.

8. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should aim to refine and extend the current model by exploring the mediating role of job satisfaction or emotional engagement between OMP and TGP as well as the moderating effect of cultural dimensions (e.g., individualism vs. collectivism) on the strength of relationships among constructs. Furthermore, the potential influence of technological support systems (e.g., digital tools for guide coordination or training) on performance and tourist satisfaction along with a longitudinal perspective that examines how changes in organisational policies over time affect employee and customer outcomes in the tourism sector would be an important contribution. It is believed that these extensions would further strengthen the theoretical integration of HRM and tourism studies and provide richer managerial implications for both academia and industry.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Section A: Demographics

1. Age:
2. Gender: Male / Female / Other
3. Education Level: High School / Bachelor / Master / Other
4. Years of Experience as a Tour Guide:
5. Employment Type: Freelance / Agency-employed / Other
6. Average Group Size Guided:

Section B: Organisational Management Practices

(Adapted from Eisenberger et al., 1986)

1. My organisation values my contribution to its success.
2. My organisation provides adequate training opportunities.
3. Supervisors provide constructive feedback on my performance.
4. I feel supported by my organisation when facing challenges at work.
5. My organisation recognises and rewards good performance.
6. Decisions made by management reflect concern for guides' wellbeing.

Section C: Tour Guide Performance (Self-Reported)

(Zhang & Chow, 2004)

1. I provide clear and accurate explanations during tours.
2. I adapt my guiding style to suit the needs of different groups.
3. I always ensure the safety and comfort of tourists.
4. I communicate effectively with tourists.
5. I manage time and logistics efficiently during tours.
6. I enhance tourists' experiences through storytelling and interpretation.

Tourist Questionnaire

Section A: Demographics

1. Age:
2. Gender: Male / Female
3. Education Level: High School / Bachelor / Master / Other
4. Nationality:

Section B: Tour Guide Performance & Satisfaction

(Adapted from Zhang & Chow, 2004; Sezgin & Düz, 2018)

1. The tour guide was knowledgeable and professional.
2. The guide communicated clearly and effectively.
3. The guide ensured the group's safety and comfort.
4. The guide adapted explanations to suit the group's needs.
5. Overall, I am satisfied with the tour experience.
6. I would recommend this guide to others.
7. I would like to join another tour with this guide in the future.