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Investigation of The Effect of Quality of Work Life on Occupational Commitment and Career Satisfaction: A Study on Tourist Guides

İş Yaşam Kalitesinin Mesleki Bağlılık ve Kariyer Memnuniyeti Üzerindeki Etkisinin İncelenmesi: Turist Rehberleri Üzerine Bir Çalışma

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Abstract: This research explores the impact of the quality of work life on occupational commitment and career satisfaction of tourist guides. Given the working conditions of tourist guides, understanding the relationships among these variables is critical. A quantitative research method was adopted, and data were collected from 338 tourist guides using an online survey technique and convenience sampling. Relationships among variables were analyzed through SEM in AMOS. The analyses indicated that the quality of work life has a significant and positive effect on occupational commitment (emotional, motivational, and normative commitment). Similarly, it was found that as tourist guides' perceptions of the quality of work life increased, their career satisfaction also increased significantly. Finally, recommendations have been developed for tourist guides, travel agencies, tour operators, professional associations, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

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Keywords: Tourist Guides, Quality of Work Life, Occupational Commitment, Career Satisfaction.

Öz: Bu araştırma, iş yaşam kalitesinin turist rehberlerinin mesleki bağlılığı ve kariyer memnuniyeti üzerindeki etkisini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Turist rehberlerinin çalışma koşullarının kendine has doğası göz önüne alındığında, bu değişkenler arasındaki ilişkinin ortaya konulması sektördeki insan kaynağının sürdürülebilirliği açısından kritik önem taşımaktadır. Araştırmada nicel araştırma yöntemi benimsenmiştir. Veriler, 338 turist rehberinden çevrimiçi anket tekniği ve kolay örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiler, AMOS'ta Yapısal Eşitlik Modeli (YEM) kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Analiz sonuçları, iş yaşam kalitesinin mesleki bağlılık (duygusal, motivasyonel ve normatif bağlılık) üzerinde anlamlı ve olumlu bir etkisi olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, turist rehberlerinin iş yaşam kalitesine ilişkin algılarının artmasıyla kariyer memnuniyetlerinin de önemli ölçüde arttığı bulunmuştur. Son olarak, turist rehberleri, seyahat acenteleri, tur operatörleri, meslek örgütleri, politika yapıcılar ve bu alanda çalışan diğer paydaşlar için öneriler geliştirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Turist Rehberleri, İş Yaşam Kalitesi, Mesleki Bağlılık, Kariyer Memnuniyeti.

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1. Introduction

Concepts such as career satisfaction, occupational commitment, and quality of work life are strategically relevant to today's tourism industry to ensure sustainable corporate development, minimize employee turnover, and improve employee loyalty (Heimerl et al., 2020a; Heimerl et al., 2020b). Indeed, these ideas

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are directly related to tourist guides, who play a significant role in the tourism industry and are a part of the human-centered aspect of the labor-intensive structure. They work at a fast pace that is quite distinct from the concept of set working hours, and they face job insecurity due to seasonal factors and high levels of responsibility (Yumuk & Koçoğlu, 2020; Boz et al., 2021; Alhussami, 2024). Approximately 10% of the global GDP and millions of employments are supported by the tourism industry, which is regarded as a major engine of economic growth (Ben Jebli et al., 2019; Siswahto & Muryani, 2020). Analysis reveals that the global job turnover rate in the tourism industry is 50%. Research on tourist guides in Turkey indicates that although they have a high level of emotional commitment, problems with their work and family relationships may jeopardize their job commitment (Heimerl et al., 2020a; Yumuk & Koçoğlu, 2020; Stamolampros et al., 2019). Naturally, ignoring the quality of one's work life leads to more burnout, less professional satisfaction, and a stronger desire among guides to quit their job, thus posing a serious risk of declining the quality of tourism services (Yumuk & Koçoğlu, 2020; Kong et al., 2018; Heimerl et al., 2020b; Gupta et al., 2025; Yoopetch et al., 2021).

There are several problems faced by tourist guides regarding their quality of work life. Some of them can be listed as income insecurity due to seasonality, lack of social security, work-life imbalance due to the concept of working hours, high responsibility, and the resulting stress (Yumuk & Koçoğlu, 2020; Boz et al., 2021; Arslantürk, 2016; Kan Sönmez, 2021). Although the tourist guide profession in Turkey has been allocated a legal basis with the Tourist Guide Profession Law No. 6326, which came into force in 2012, many chronic problems could not be resolved, and the targeted positive impact on the guides' occupational commitment and career satisfaction could not be fully achieved (Arslantürk, 2016). Although there are studies in the academic literature that generally attempt to establish a relationship between work-life quality and job commitment, and career satisfaction, it is observed that there are a limited number of studies that go over these variables with a holistic approach in the sample of tourist guides (Yumuk & Koçoğlu, 2020; Arslantürk, 2016).

This research examines the effects of the quality of work life on occupational commitment and career satisfaction, specifically among tourist guides. The relationships among the variables examined in the study were analyzed within the frameworks of Walton's (1973) theory, Meyer et al.'s (1993) theory, and Spillover theory. Research shows that a high quality of work life not only strengthens emotional and normative commitment to the profession but also directly increases career satisfaction through opportunities for professional advancement (Çavuş et al., 2025; Alhussami, 2024). A satisfied guide is more likely to participate in professional development and contribute to the community in which they live, which promotes a sustainable tourism environment (Güzel et al., 2021). Indeed, the originality of this study lies in its focus on tourist guides, an area often neglected and whose perspectives are only partially examined in tourism literature. Occupational commitment and career satisfaction are examined jointly, and the quality of work life is not only discussed in terms of physical circumstances but also as a complex idea that includes social interactions and personal growth. Finally, the goal of this study is to contribute to the literature on tourism in a novel way and to offer a scientific understanding for actions and policies that enhance the working circumstances of tourist guides. Accordingly, the study seeks answers to the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: Does the quality of work life have a significant effect on the occupational commitment (emotional, motivational, and normative commitment) of tourist guides?

RQ2: Does the quality of work life have a significant effect on the career satisfaction of tourist guides?

RQ3: Which dimensions of occupational commitment are affected most strongly by the quality of work life?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Quality of Work Life

In recent years, the idea of "quality of work life," which refers to the mental and physical health of workers in a company or occupation, has become of greater importance in the literature on organizational behavior.

Quality of work life is a multifaceted concept that includes social integration, work stability, and development chances in addition to pay and physical circumstances. A high Quality of Work Life rating is crucial for both personal fulfillment and the long-term viability of the profession for individuals whose work environment is ever-changing, like tourist guides (Albar et al., 2025). Similar to the description by Albar et al. (2025), the QWL concept refers to employees' reactions to their jobs, their psychological state while working, and their job satisfaction (Tokmak, 2021).

QWL is one of the most important variables determining employees' experiences, well-being, and satisfaction levels in the work environment. The degree of QWL is critical to operational performance in labor-intensive, human-centered industries like tourism. Because of its irregular work schedule, seasonality, and high emotional labor demands, the tourist guide profession in particular is a professional field that is strongly impacted by QWL issues. According to the literature, improving QWL is essential for influencing important factors like lowering employee turnover rates, cutting absenteeism, and managing stress and burnout. Because it guarantees job stability and job happiness, a high QWL perception in the guiding profession specifically promotes professional sustainability. According to Tür (2022), employees who have a positive work-life balance are more likely to be creative. This results in creative descriptions of tour packages, adaptable problem-solving in unexpected situations, and strong motivation to carry out their responsibilities. However, according to Esen & Atay (2023), low QWL perception has negative impacts on employees, including burnout, dissatisfaction, and organizational alienation. This alienation can result in indifference to the institution, guests, and professional ethical values when the QWL issue is viewed through the lens of tour guiding. Consequently, it may be argued that a low QWL level triggers turnover intentions among guides, while a high QWL level ensures a sustainable increase in overall service quality.

Employees in the tourism sector experience mental and physical exhaustion when their credentials and skill set surpass their physical and mental capabilities. Employee motivation and work efficiency suffer as a result (Güler, 1997). Employees in the tourism industry also face significant physical and mental stress, according to Shahbazi (2025). Long hours, unstable shift patterns, seasonal employment, and poor pay practices can also make workers less satisfied with their positions and less likely to stick with the industry over the long run.

At the core of the human-interaction-based service industry, tourist guides are crucial to establishing a destination's reputation, promoting cultural exchange, fostering guest satisfaction, and influencing visitors' intentions for future trips (Çetinkaya & Öter, 2016). A complicated travel schedule, seasonality, and variable working hours are among the particular challenges of being a tourist guide (Ababneh, 2017). These challenging working conditions for tourist guides have dynamics that can directly affect their perspectives on both their quality of work life and their overall careers.

Walton (1973) defined QWL as the interplay between a person's personal and professional lives. This dimension takes into account the possible harm to general quality of life that could result from extended workdays, the need for business travel, and intense career-focused pursuits. Therefore, the quality of work life (QWL) variable has been addressed using Walton's model, considering conditions for a tourist guide, such as general well-being, control at work, job/career satisfaction, the home-work interface, and work-related stress.

2.2. Occupational Commitment

According to Yousaf et al. (2015), employee attitudes and actions are greatly impacted by QWL. Among these effects, occupational dedication is one of the most significant. Higher occupational commitment has been found to be associated with good feelings and strong identification with one's line of work (Blau, 1985). On the basis of this result, guides may be motivated to continue practicing their profession despite difficult working conditions by occupational commitment, which is described as an individual's acceptance of their job and desire to remain in it. To Baysal & Paksoy (1999), occupational commitment, which arises

from an individual's attempts to gain knowledge and proficiency in a particular sector, is the extent to which they regard their career as a major aspect of their lives.

A key factor in guaranteeing people's professional growth and raising service standards is the concept of occupational commitment (Kaya, 2012, p. 53). Fırat et al. (2016) emphasized that an individual's attachment to the knowledge acquired through hard work constitutes occupational commitment. They identify with their career and respond emotionally to it. Additionally, it is proposed that those who are dedicated to their work do more study to progress in their careers and encounter more work-family conflict (Balay, 2000). High emotional commitment motivates people to put in more time and effort at work and to be more inventive and creative (Azmy, 2023). The organization's overall performance and competitiveness are subsequently enhanced.

Ateş and Pelit (2022) put forward that occupational commitment also describes a person's relationship with their career. Because highly committed individuals typically perform better, have higher morale, and are more motivated, it is crucial for both workers and enterprises. Consequently, this makes it possible for people to work in the organization more effectively, which helps the business reach its objectives. Likewise, Kuok (2022) asserts that people adapt to professional values through the emotional connection they develop with their career and subsequently behave accordingly. The individual's professional development is positively impacted by this process, which also raises their level of satisfaction with their work. Consequently, the individual's degree of professional dedication rises, resulting in a decreased desire to leave and aiding the business in keeping experienced professionals.

According to Özoğul (2018), individuals with a strong commitment to the demanding field of tour guiding are more likely to experience work-family conflict. The absence of regular working hours in this field is cited as the main cause. After visiting archaeological sites, tourist guides who show a higher level of dedication to their work might invest more time and effort in enhancing the tour experience by interacting with participants on a variety of topics, such as local village life, diverse culinary cultures, weddings, entertainment venues, etc., rather than just taking a break. On the other hand, Demirelli & Sargın (2025) underscore that research on occupational commitment has been conducted on various occupational groups. However, the scarcity of studies including the tourism industry and its stakeholders is noteworthy.

Ulusoy Mutlu & Balıkoğlu (2025) found that by lowering turnover intentions and enhancing occupational loyalty, occupational commitment has a favorable impact on tourist guide retention, especially in the face of difficulties like busy scheduling and emotional labor. Thus, Meyer et al.'s (1993) theory has been applied in this study since occupational commitment for tourist guides is a measure of their emotional commitment, sense of duty, and perceived costs of quitting the guiding profession. Meyer et al.'s (1993) three-dimensional (affective, normative, continuance) scale is frequently used to measure occupational commitment.

2.3. Career Satisfaction

The QWL is also likely to have an impact on another significant outcome: career satisfaction, which is a notion related to an individual's overall evaluation of characteristics such as income earned, improved abilities, and success in their profession (Erdogan et al., 2012). Career satisfaction involves a variety of complex emotional responses and is a highly subjective evaluation that is impacted by both personal and contextual factors (Güneş & Ataç, 2022).

Due to fierce competition and unpredictability, people must organize their professional networks, knowledge, and skills in a flexible and adaptive manner. People must use their career adaptability to actively shape their careers, which emphasizes how crucial it is to manage one's own development (Gerni & Denizli, 2021). An inability to balance one's career, family, and self can lead to a condition of discord known as work-family conflict. In the end, this can reduce overall pleasure levels by adversely affecting both professional and personal satisfaction (Güneş & Özan, 2022). In addition to being more passionate about their work, those who are very satisfied with their careers also defend the organization's interests

(Er Ülker, 2020). Moreover, it is believed that people may feel satisfied with their careers if their goals and present stage of development coincide (Vatansever, 2008).

Avşaroğlu et al. (2005) explain that career satisfaction is the sum of positive and negative sentiments toward the job and the company, the pleasure an employee derives from their work, and the satisfaction that comes from evaluating their overall work and work life. According to this definition, a person's job happiness is the sense of fulfillment they get from accomplishing their professional objectives. In this respect, career satisfaction refers to a person's positive feelings toward their profession (Shawer & Alkahtani, 2012).

The Spillover Theory, which holds that stressors like irregular hours create negative spillover, lowering satisfaction, and that positive job experiences (like autonomy in tours and client interactions) spill over into overall life satisfaction, has been used to study the career satisfaction variable (Demirdelen Alrawadieh & Alrawadieh, 2022). Therefore, this study considers Spillover Theory the best fit for tourist guides, given their high emotional labor and unpredictable schedules, in which work directly impacts personal well-being.

2.4. The Relationship Between the Quality of Work Life and Occupational Commitment

From the perspective of Meyer et al.'s (1993) three-component model of commitment—affective, normative, and continuance—this link becomes particularly relevant for tourist guides, whose work requires a high level of emotional engagement and adaptability. Along with meeting fundamental necessities, a good work environment fosters a psychological state in which guides feel emotionally invested in their positions and are compelled to uphold high service standards.

In the uncertain tourism sector, QWL acts as a safeguard against high employee turnover. Ren and Wong (2021) discovered that the most powerful element keeping tourist guides from quitting their jobs, particularly in times of crisis like the pandemic, is affective commitment—the emotional tie to the work. Akgunduz & Eser (2022) discovered that job stress, a negative indicator of QWL, considerably lowers both the affective and normative commitment of tourist guides, demonstrating the fragility of this emotional link. This suggests that guides' emotional commitment and sense of professional obligation quickly deteriorate when they believe their working conditions (such as job security and social support) are poor.

Furthermore, retention is significantly impacted by the "work context" aspect of QWL. Employee commitment mediates the influence of a favorable work environment, which Agus & Selvaraj (2020) showed to be the greatest QWL construct influencing the intention to stay. According to Ulusoy Mutlu & Balıkoğlu (2025), there is a noteworthy inverse relationship between tourist guides' intention to leave and their professional commitment. In that research, a strong occupational commitment—supported by a positive work environment—ensures that guides stay loyal to their profession rather than move to other industries, even in the face of difficulties that necessitate presenteeism.

In conclusion, enhancing the well-being of tourist guides is not the only way to improve their QWL. Developing a dedicated staff that can provide exceptional tourism experiences is also a strategic necessity for the tourism sector. Guides' connection to the profession grows when they believe their work-life is of high quality, which directly contributes to the sustainability of the tourism services they offer. As a result, the following theory has been developed in light of the previously mentioned literature:

H1: Quality of Work-life (QWL) has a significant effect on Occupational Commitment (OC)

2.5. The Relationship Between the Quality of Work Life and Career Satisfaction

Due to the high labor intensity and emotional demands of the tourist business, QWL becomes a crucial factor in determining a person's overall career path. According to general management literature, people who are satisfied in their employment are more successful and productive (Büyüktepe, 2022). However, because of the particulars of their line of work, the relationship between job satisfaction and success is

especially complicated for guided tours. Through the lens of spillover theory, the relationship between QWL and career satisfaction in the tourism industry can be best understood. Demirdelen Alrawadieh & Alrawadieh (2022) have observed that positive work experiences, such as having autonomy during tours and having meaningful customer interactions, have a positive effect on overall life satisfaction. However, for guides, the distinction between work and family life is sometimes confused by the lack of set working hours, seasonality, and extreme physical mobility. Deficits in QWL, such as unstable income or work-family conflict, therefore immediately reduce the career's perceived worth.

This consistent relationship is supported by empirical research in the field of tourism. According to Wang (2017), excessive work intensity, the lack of labor contracts or social insurance, and the lack of training opportunities are important factors influencing tourist guides' job satisfaction. Career satisfaction decreases due to these structural weaknesses in QWL, which discourage guides from considering their line of work as a long-term career path. Similar findings were reported by Akgunduz & Eser (2022), who discovered that job stress—adverse aspects of QWL—significantly reduces vocational commitment among tourist guides. Meanwhile, career satisfaction largely depends on career development opportunities, which are an essential part of QWL. According to Eser Gürsoy & Dağyaran (2025), guides' involvement in the career increases when they see chances for commitment and professional development. Conversely, neglecting QWL issues might threaten the sustainability of this sector. Based on the theoretical framework and empirical evidence discussed above, the second hypothesis of the research is proposed as follows:

H2: Quality of Work Life (QWL) has a significant effect on Career Satisfaction (CS).

3. Methodology

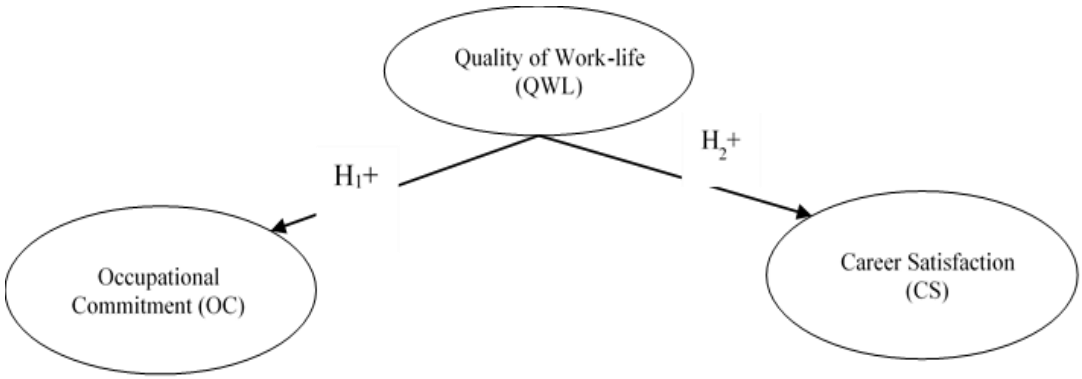
The research questions set forth in the introduction examine the simultaneous direction and magnitude of the relationships between a single latent construct (QWL) and multiple target constructs, namely career satisfaction and the distinct dimensions of occupational commitment. A cross-sectional, survey-based quantitative design is therefore appropriate: standardized scales make it possible to measure these constructs in a large and mobile professional group, and structural equation modeling (SEM) allows the measurement error of the latent constructs to be taken into account while all hypothesized paths are estimated simultaneously (Hair et al., 2010). Accordingly, RQ1 and RQ2 are tested via the structural paths from QWL to the dimensions of occupational commitment (H1) and career satisfaction (H2), respectively, and RQ3 is addressed by comparing the standardized path coefficients across the different commitment dimensions.

This study uses a quantitative research design and tests hypothesized cause-and-effect relationships, enabling the acquisition of generalizable information from a sample to the population. Its goal is to investigate the effects of the quality of work life on occupational commitment and career satisfaction among tourist guides (Altıparmak & Nakiboğlu, 2005). Permission was obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board at Afyon Kocatepe University, with decision number 47 dated 19.02.2025. Using a non-probability convenience sampling method, the study's data were gathered from the tourist guides between 01.03.2025 and 01.08.2025. The questionnaire consists of four parts, starting with some demographic variables (gender, age, educational status, tenure in guiding, foreign language, the groups, and so on). As for the QWL variable, the original scale was developed by Easton & Van Laar (2013). The scale was adopted by Aydın (2021), who explores QWL and tendencies toward work alienation among tourist guides. It includes 22 expressions and six subdimensions (Stress at Work (SAW) -two items, Working Conditions (WCS) -three items, Control at Work (CAW)- three items, Job and Career Satisfaction (JCS) -six items, Home–Work Interface (HWI) -three items, and General Well-Being (GWB) -six items). In this study, Meyer, Allen, & Smith's (1993) three-dimensional professional commitment scale was used to measure the occupational commitment of tourist guides. This scale was adopted by Yetgin (2017) to measure the effects of burnout and economic anxiety on tourist guides' occupational commitment. The items in the scale were adapted to the settings of tourist guides. This scale consists of 18 items across 3 dimensions. Aydoğdu & Aşıkgil (2011) describe affective commitment as the sense of belonging and commitment to the profession, continuance commitment as the perceived cost of leaving the profession,

and normative commitment as the employee's feeling of obligation to remain in the profession. Items containing negative statements were reverse-scored. It should be noted that this study divided the affective commitment variable into two separate dimensions, as emotional commitment and motivational commitment; the conceptual grounds of this decision are explained below. In the last stage, to assess employees' career satisfaction, a five-item scale developed by Greenhaus et al. (1990) was used. Based on the aforementioned study, Çalhan & Küçük (2024) used this scale to determine the career management practices of hotels and the career satisfaction of their employees. In this study, the scale has been adapted for use with tourist guides. Due to factor loadings, some items were extracted from the questionnaire. Across all scales, a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" was used to measure responses in the final version of the questionnaire. In the data analysis process, the data were coded in SPSS to analyze demographics and to create a dataset for the AMOS program, which was used to estimate the structural equation model. In SPSS, EFA was performed for validity, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to test reliability, and the descriptive results about participants were analyzed. Then, CFA was performed to measure the validity of the data. Path analyses followed CFA to test the research model given below.

The decision to divide affective commitment into emotional commitment (EC) and motivational commitment (MC) rests on both conceptual and empirical grounds. Conceptually, affective commitment is not a single feeling. The Meyer and Allen framework covers emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the target of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Similarly, occupational commitment may be described as the degree of identification, emotional connection, and internal drive that a person develops for their line of work, and highly committed individuals are reported to invest more effort in learning and career progress (Balay, 2000). These accounts point to two related but separable components of the affective bond. That is to say, it is an emotional connection to the profession (EC) and an internal drive to invest effort in it and to develop within it (MC).

Figure 1: Research Model



4. Findings

An examination of the participants' overall profile reveals that the majority of the group consists of men (61.54%) and single individuals (54.14%). In terms of age distribution, the sample is dynamic, with individuals aged 25-44 accounting for 58.58% of the total, indicating a dominant representation. These data indicate that the study group is predominantly composed of young to middle-aged individuals, representing a more mobile demographic in terms of marital status (see Table 1).

Table 1: Demographics

Group	Variable	n	%	Group	Variable	n	%
Gender	Female	130	38,46	Education	Associate's Degree	41	12,13
	Male	208	61,54		Bachelor's Degree	174	51,48
	Single	183	54,14		Post Grad. Degree	117	34,62

Marital status	Married	155	45,86		Other	6	1,78
Age Groups	Under 25	25	7,40	Tenure	At least 1 year	86	25,44
	From 25 to 34 years old	95	28,11		2-7 years	109	32,25
	From 35 to 44 years old	103	30,47		8-13 years	38	11,24
	From 45 to 54 years old	67	19,82		14-19 years	38	11,24
	55 and over ages	48	14,20		20-25 years	21	6,21
					26 years and more	46	13,61

In terms of education and professional experience, it is noteworthy that the participants have a highly qualified background. 51.48% of the sample are bachelor's degree holders, and 34.62% hold master's degrees. Professional seniority data shows a balanced distribution between those new to the sector and those with experience. 32.25% of participants have moderate experience of 2-7 years, while 13.61% have 26 years or more of experience. Finally, this demonstrates that the group presents a heterogeneous structure encompassing both innovative and experienced perspectives.

Table 1: Continued

Group	Variable	n	%	Group	Variable	n	%
Authorization	National	186	55,03	**Guiding language**	English	198	58,58
	Regional	152	44,97		German	10	2,96
Guiding Groups	Domestics	44	13,02		Russian	11	3,25
	Foreigners	133	39,35		Chinese	4	1,18
	Both of them	161	47,63		Spanish	4	1,18
Single Job	Yes	247	73,08		French	3	0,89
	No	91	26,92		Italian	1	0,30
Dual-Career	Yes	121	35,80		Others*	34	10,06
	No	217	64,20		English, German, Others	1	0,30
Occupation Style	Freelance-fulltime	176	52,07		English, German, Russian	1	0,30
	Freelance-seasonal	114	33,73		English, German	11	3,25
	Staffed-fulltime	33	9,76		English, Spanish	5	1,48
	Staffed-seasonal	15	4,44		Russian, Others	1	0,30
					English, Others	14	4,14
					Spanish, French, Others	1	0,30
					Spanish, Italian	2	0,59
					English, French	11	3,25
					English, Russian	7	2,07
					Spanish, Others	1	0,30
					Spanish, Italian, English, French	2	0,59
					Spanish, English, French	1	0,30
					English, Spanish, Others	3	0,89
					English, Italian	2	0,59
					Russian, Others	1	0,30
					English, Russian, Spanish	1	0,30
					English, Chinese	2	0,59
					German, Spanish	1	0,30
					Spanish, French	2	0,59
					English, Russian, Others	1	0,30
					French, English, Russian	2	0,59

An examination of participants' professional qualifications and work arrangements reveals that a large majority (55.03%) hold national-level qualifications, while only 44.97% hold regional qualifications. The composition of the guided groups indicates that 47.63% of participants cater to a wide audience, serving both domestic and foreign tourists. Furthermore, the percentage of those working exclusively with

foreigners is 39.35%. Furthermore, regarding work style, it is evident that freelance work is dominant; 52.07% of participants work full-time as freelancers, and 33.73% work seasonally as freelancers. This proves that more than 85% of the workforce in the sector has adopted flexible work models.

When considering language proficiency and career structure, it is noteworthy that 73.08% of participants work as tourist guides as their sole occupation, while 35.80% have a dual career. Regarding guiding languages, English is undeniably the most widely used language, with 58.58%. However, the group's language portfolio is not limited to English; it also includes a multilingual structure using languages such as German, Russian, and Spanish, as well as various combinations of these languages (e.g., English-German or English-French). This diversity demonstrates the sector's strong capacity to meet global tourism demand.

4.1. Validity and Reliability of the Scales

The validity and reliability of the data were assessed with EFA, CFA, and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. Table 2, EFA results, shows the factor structure and sample adequacy of the data. To test the suitability of the dataset for factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sample adequacy test and Bartlett's test of Sphericity were applied. As shown in Table 2, the KMO values were 0.906, 0.794, and 0.833, well above the 0.70 threshold and indicating that the sample size is 'excellent' for the analysis. The Bartlett test results were also statistically significant ($p<0.000$), indicating a high correlation between the variables and that the data are suitable for factor analysis. When the factor loadings of the scales were examined, it was observed that the items clustered strongly with their respective factors. The cumulative variance explained for the quality of work-life (QWL) sub-dimensions (GWB, WCS, JCS, SAW) was 66,208, while it was 66,776 for occupational commitment sub-dimensions (NC, MC, and EC) and 78,191 for career satisfaction. These rates are well above the acceptable limit for social science research and demonstrate that the scale's structural validity has been established.

Table 1: EFA Results

Item	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Cumulative variance	Item	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Cumulative variance
GWB1	0,533	3,949	20,784	NC1	0,667	2,615	23,772
GWB3	0,659			NC2	0,821		
GWB4	0,721			NC3	0,831		
GWB5	0,528			NC4	0,835		
GWB6	0,688			MC1	0,807	2,393	45,525
GWB7	0,541			MC2	0,832		
GWB8	0,826			MC3	0,822		
GWB9	0,674			EC1	0,775	2,338	66,776
WCS1	0,599	3,416	38,766	EC2	0,699		
WCS2	0,638			EC3	0,727		
WCS4	0,588			EC4	0,769		
WCS5	0,802			KMO Coefficient	,794	df	55
WCS6	0,810			x2	1485,906	Sig.	,000
JCS1	0,814	2,795	53,478	CS1	,899	3,910	78,191
JCS2	0,854			CS2	,921		
JCS3	0,864			CS3	,819		
SAW1	0,815	2,385	66,028	CS4	,924		
SAW2	0,746			CS5	,854		
SAW3	0,863			KMO Coefficient	,833	df	10
KMO Coefficient	,906	df	171	x2	1498,376	Sig.	,000
x2	3389,743	Sig.	,000				
Reliability coefficients				**Reliability coefficients**			
GWB		0,889	0,910	NC		0,821	0,794

WCS	0,824	MC	0,838	
JCS	0,876	EC	0,754	
SAW	0,795	CS	0,928	0,928

As seen in Table 2, KMO coefficients (QWL: 0,906, OC: 0,794, CS: 0,833) and significance levels (0.000<0,05) provide the critical values. Additionally, the cumulative variances of both QWL and OC scales are above 0,60, whereas the factor loadings of the items are equal to or greater than 0.50. Therefore, the measurement scales of the study are valid in terms of EFA, and they are also reliable since Cronbach's Alpha coefficients are greater than 0,70, which indicates good reliability for studies in the social sciences.

Table 3 presents the results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), which was applied to test the reliability and validity of the scales. At this point, CFA enables assessment of each scale item's contribution and improved measurement of the scale's reliability (Hair et al., 2010). For the CFA, some measurement values should be demonstrated to determine validity and reliability. Fornell & Larcker (1981, pp. 45-46) propose using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to assess convergent validity by stating that construct validity is doubtful if AVE is less than 0.50. Moreover, Hair et al. (2022, p. 307) suggest using composite reliability (CR) to assess internal consistency, which should be greater than 0,70. In this study, AVE was calculated as the mean of the squared standardized factor loadings of each construct. Hu & Bentler (1999) place additional emphasis on evaluating model fit using various fit indices. According to researchers, Tucker & Lewis' (TLI) and comparative fit index (CFI) values must be at least 0.90 to accept the model. Additionally, RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) and SRMR (root mean square discrepancy between the observed and model-implied correlations) values are other criteria in CFA (Hair et al., 2010, pp. 323-324). According to Browne & Cudeck (1992, p. 239), a 0.08 value of RMSEA indicates a reasonable error of approximation, while Hu & Bentler (1999, p. 27) accept an SRMR cutoff value that is close to .08 for SEM modeling.

Table 3: Validity and Reliability

Item	**SFLλ**	**AVE**	**CR**	**Item**	**SFLλ**	**AVE**	**CR**
GWB1	0,587			NC1	0,631		
GWB3	0,741			NC2	0,708	0,542	0,824
GWB4	0,812			NC3	0,780		
GWB5	0,724	0,524	0,895	NC4	0,812		
GWB6	0,804			MC1	0,749		
GWB7	0,447			MC2	0,847	0,645	0,845
GWB8	0,810			MC3	0,810		
GWB9	0,783			EC1	0,975		
WCS1	0,718			EC2	0,769	0,482	0,768
WCS2	0,605			EC3	0,423		
WCS4	0,568	0,505	0,833	EC4	0,453		
WCS5	0,812			CS1	0,838		
WCS6	0,813			CS2	0,869		
JCS1	0,782			CS3	0,756	0,698	0,920
JCS2	0,870	0,711	0,881	CS4	0,877		
JCS3	0,874			CS5	0,832		
SAW1	0,767			Indices		Ob. Val.	Cr. Val.
SAW2	0,739	0,567	0,797	χ2/df		2,030	≤ 5
SAW3	0,753			RMSEA		0,056	≤ 0.08
				TLI		0,912	≥0.90
				CFI		0,922	≥0.90
				SRMR		0,064	≤ 0.08
				χ2: 1069,934. df: 527 p<0.000			

SFLλ: standardized factor loading; AVE: average variance extracted (mean of the squared standardized factor loadings); CR: composite reliability; Ob. Val.: observed value; Cr. Val.: critical value. Abbreviations: QWL: Quality of work life; WCS: Working Conditions; JCS: Job and Career Satisfaction; GWB: General Well-Being; SAW: Stress at Work;

NC: Normative Commitment; MC: Motivational Commitment; EC: Emotional Commitment; CS: Career Satisfaction. The AVE of EC (0.482) is slightly below the 0.50 criterion.

According to Table 3, the Composite Reliability (CR) values for all variables are above the threshold of 0.70 (between 0.768 and 0.920), indicating high internal consistency of the scales. The AVE values, calculated from the standardized factor loadings, range from 0.482 to 0.711. Seven of the eight constructs meet the 0.50 criterion (GWB = 0.524, WCS = 0.505, JCS = 0.711, SAW = 0.567, NC = 0.542, MC = 0.645, CS = 0.698), although the margin is narrow for WCS. The AVE of EC (0.482) is slightly below the threshold because of the low standardized loadings of EC3 (0.423) and EC4 (0.453). Fornell and Larcker (1981, pp. 45-46) note that, on the basis of composite reliability alone, the convergent validity of a construct may still be considered adequate even when its AVE is below 0.50; the CR of EC (0.768) is above the 0.70 criterion. Convergent validity is therefore considered adequate for all constructs, but only marginally so for EC, and the results concerning EC are interpreted with caution in the following sections. Examining the goodness-of-fit indices of the model, the $\chi 2/df$ ratio is 2.030, remaining within the limits of excellent fit (≤3). Furthermore, RMSEA (0.056) and SRMR (0.064) values are below 0.08, while CFI (0.922) and TLI (0.912) values are above 0.90. These findings indicate that the measurement model fits the data adequately and that structural model testing can proceed.

Subsequently, the data were verified for validity and reliability using CFA, and the discriminant validity of the research variables was assessed using the square root of the AVE and the HTMT. Means and standard deviations were reported (see Table 4). As shown in Table 4, the independent (QWL sub-dimensions) and dependent (OC and CS sub-dimensions) variables have relatively high mean scores, indicating positive outcomes for these variables. Accordingly, mean scores range from 3,473 to 4,656.

Table 4: Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, √AVE, and HTMT

	Mean	**JCS**	**GWB**	**WCS**	**SAW**	**MC**	**EC**	**NC**	**CS**
JCS	4,656	0,843	0,497						
GWB	3,476	0,426***	0,724	0,786					
WCS	3,931	0,495***	0,748***	0,711	0,327				
SAW	3,755	0,178***	0,560***	0,313***	0,753	0,193			
MC	4,408	0,669***	0,598***	0,570***	0,183***	0,803	0,532		
EC	4,453	0,346***	0,399***	0,262***	0,476***	0,529***	0,694	0,121	
NC	3,473	0,204***	0,204***	0,183***	-0,052	0,434***	0.120	0,736	0,364
CS	4,220	0,576***	0,650***	0,552***	0,236***	0,758***	0,427***	0,343***	0,836

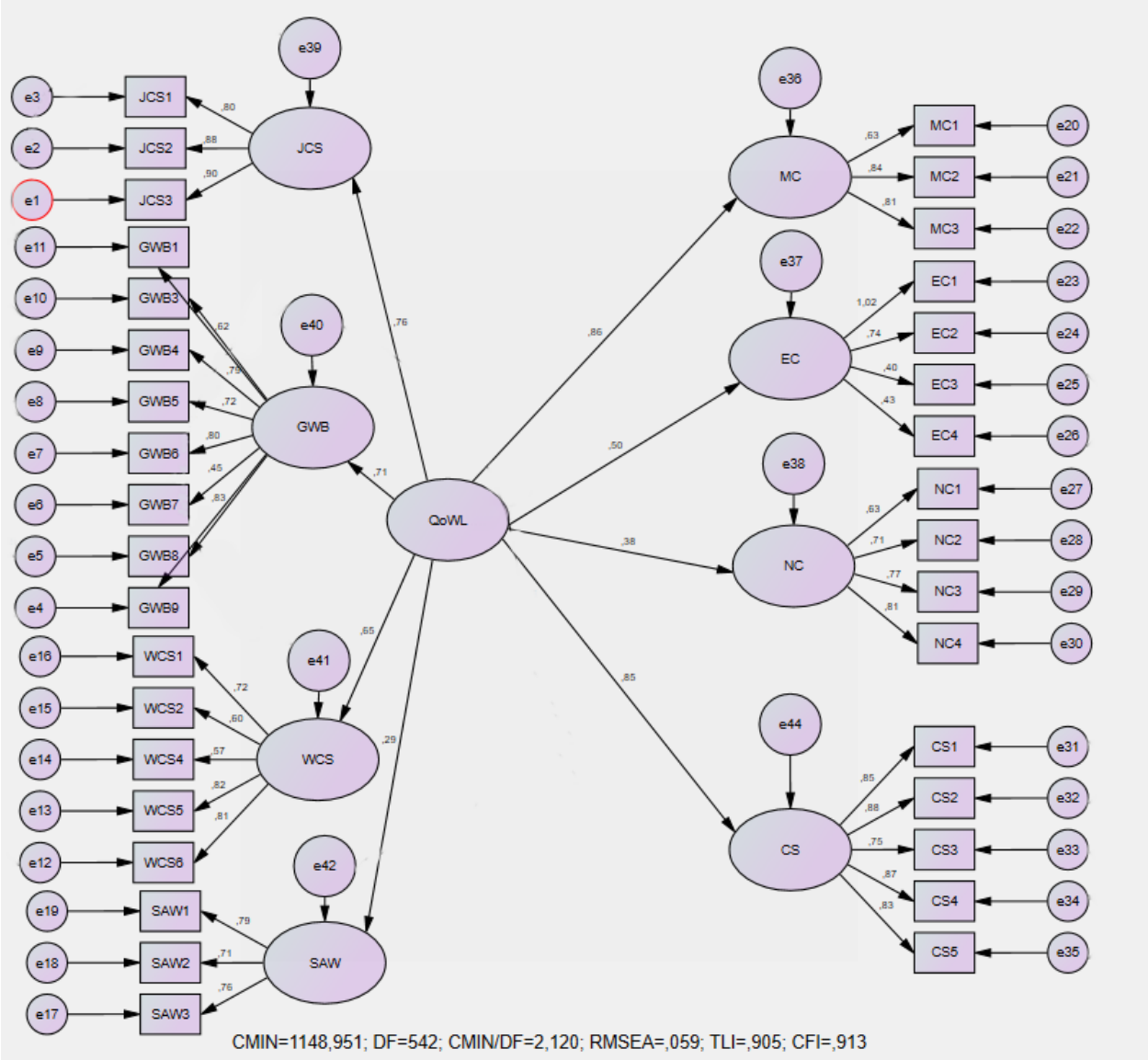
Notes: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.
The square root of the AVE values was shown in the dark grey shaded cells.
HTMT correlations were shown in the light blue shaded cells.

As shown in Table 4, the square roots of AVE exceed the correlations between the corresponding construct and the other constructs for all pairs. On the other hand, the correlation between GWB and WCS (r = 0.748) is higher than the √AVE of both constructs (0.724 and 0.711), so the Fornell–Larcker criterion is not fully met for this pair. According to Henseler et al. (2015, p. 121), the HTMT threshold is the average of the heterotrait-heteromethod correlations (i.e., the correlations of indicators across constructs measuring different phenomena), and they offer HTMT thresholds equal to or lower than 0,90 to assess sensitivity levels of 95% in terms of discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015, p. 124). In this context, all HTMT values reported in Table 4 are below 0.90 (range: 0.121–0.786; the highest value belongs to the GWB–WCS pair), which supports the discriminant validity of the model despite the marginal Fornell–Larcker result for this pair.

4.2. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

This study relies on structural equation modeling to test the research hypothesis. The AMOS program was used for the structural model in Figure 2. The results confirm that the structural model fits the data reasonably well (χ2:1148,951, df: 542, p:0.000, RMSEA: 0,059, TLI: 0,905, CFI: 0,913, SRMR: 0,077). The variance inflation factor (VIF) value was also calculated to diagnose multicollinearity. When the VIF, which is used to measure and quantify how much the variance is inflated, equals "1", there is no correlation. However, variances are highly correlated when the VIF exceeds 5. Hereby, it should be less than "5" or between "1 and 5", indicating a moderate correlation (Daoud, 2017, p. 4). The VIF values of the structural model are below 5; thus, the model does not exhibit multicollinearity. The research model is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Research Model



χ2: 1148,951, SRMR: 0,077, VIF: 1, *: p<0.000

Figure 2 summarizes the main findings of the model. Higher quality of work life is associated with stronger motivational (β = 0.86), emotional (β = 0.50), and normative (β = 0.38) commitment. What is more, higher quality of work life is also associated with higher career satisfaction (β = 0.85). Job and career satisfaction (λ = 0.76) and general well-being (λ = 0.71) are the strongest components of QWL.

The SEM, created in AMOS to test the research hypotheses, is presented in Figure 2. The fit indices of the structural model (CMIN=1148.951; DF=542; RMSEA=0.059; CFI=0.913) indicate that the model operates within acceptable limits.

The effect of Quality of Work Life on Occupational Commitment was investigated. Unlike the original scale, the affective commitment variable was divided into emotional commitment and motivational commitment in this study. Furthermore, continuance commitment was excluded from the final model because the path from QWL to continuance commitment was not statistically significant. The model examined the effects of QWL on the sub-dimensions of occupational commitment: emotional, motivational, and normative commitment. Examining the path coefficients in Figure 2, it is evident that QWL has a strong, positive effect on Emotional Commitment (β=0.50), Motivational Commitment (β=0.86), and Normative Commitment (β=0.38). In light of these findings, hypothesis H1, which predicts that QWL has a significant positive effect on occupational commitment, is supported.

Secondly, the effect of Quality of Work Life on Career Satisfaction was examined. Model outputs reveal that Quality of Work Life has a very strong and positive direct effect on Career Satisfaction at the β=0.85 level. As the tourist guides' perception of the quality of work life improves, their career satisfaction also increases significantly. Therefore, hypothesis H2 is also supported. In conclusion, improving working conditions and the physical and psychological well-being (QWL) of tourist guides is critical to increasing both their commitment to the profession and their career satisfaction.

In summary, the answer to RQ1 is that QWL has a significant positive effect on emotional, motivational, and normative commitment. In addition, the answer to RQ2 is that QWL has a significant positive effect on career satisfaction. Finally, in response to RQ3, the strongest effect is on motivational commitment (β = 0.86), followed by emotional (β = 0.50) and normative commitment (β = 0.38).

5. Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This study was conducted to ascertain the impact of quality of work life (QWL) on tourist guides' occupational commitment (OC) and career satisfaction (CS). Results from structural equation modeling (SEM) showed that the relationships between the variables are statistically significant and that the model has acceptable fit indices.

The most striking result of the study is the very strong effect of QWL on career satisfaction (β = 0.85), which is almost as large as its effect on motivational commitment (β = 0.86). Three explanations may account for effects of this size in tourist guiding. First, in line with Spillover Theory, positive job experiences, such as autonomy during tours and meaningful interactions with guests, spill over into broader career evaluations (Demirdelen Alrawadieh & Alrawadieh, 2022). For freelance guides, who constitute more than 85% of this sample, income, schedule, and client relations are not buffered by an employing organization, so improvements or deteriorations in working life are likely to be experienced directly as improvements or deteriorations of the career itself. Second, the boundaries between job, career, and profession are blurred in tourist guiding (Eser Gürsoy & Dağyaran, 2025), and occupational embeddedness has been shown to contribute to guides' commitment and citizenship behavior (Ren et al., 2026). When a career is intertwined with identity in this way, conditions at work are likely to be translated into career-level rather than job-level judgments. Third, within Walton's (1973) multidimensional framework, the job and career satisfaction dimension (λ = 0.76) and general well-being (λ = 0.71) are the strongest components of QWL in the model, and the conceptual proximity between the JCS dimension and the career satisfaction outcome inevitably contributes to the size of the structural coefficient. This overlap, together with the shared-method effects discussed in the limitations, means that the coefficient should be read as a strong association within a single self-reported data set rather than as a precise estimate of causal strength.

The study's first major finding is that occupational commitment is positively impacted by the QWL (H1 is supported). Examining the results, it is clear that QWL significantly influences emotional commitment, a

sub-dimension of occupational commitment (β = 0.50). This outcome is in line with the findings of Ren & Wong's (2021) study on tourist guides, which found that the most important aspect of occupational commitment is emotional commitment. Similarly, research by Hasanein & Ayad (2024) & Agus & Selvaraj (2020) maintains that emotional commitment and performance are enhanced when employees are satisfied with their work-life balance. This study demonstrates that, in an emotionally demanding profession such as tourist guiding, improving working conditions directly strengthens a sense of professional belonging.

Nonetheless, it demonstrated that QWL had a greater impact on motivational commitment (β=0.86) than it did on emotional commitment (β=0.50) and normative commitment (β=0.38). This is consistent with Bakotic's (2021) finding that normative commitment levels are generally the lowest among employees. The independent nature of tourist guiding may subordinate obligation-based ties—such as normative and continuance commitment—while placing proactive professional investment (motivational commitment) and affective attachment (emotional commitment) at the center of the occupational experience.

Three further observations help to explain the differences among the commitment dimensions. First, the stronger effect on motivational commitment (β = 0.86) than on emotional commitment (β = 0.50) suggests that the internal drive to learn, to invest additional time in tours, and to progress in the profession (Balay, 2000; Özoğul, 2018) is more responsive to everyday working conditions than the emotional bond itself, which may be formed earlier and be shaped more by identification with the profession (Ren & Wong, 2021; Ren et al., 2026). The very high means for EC (4.453) and MC (4.408) in Table 4 also suggest a possible ceiling effect that may limit the variance QWL can explain, particularly for EC. Second, normative commitment showed the weakest effect (β = 0.38) and the lowest mean among the commitment dimensions (3.473). Due to the fact that freelance tourist guides lack a single employer to whom they feel indebted, normative commitment is more likely driven by professional values and occupational socialization than by immediate working conditions. Third, continuance commitment showed no significant relationship with QWL. This outcome aligns with established literature, where continuance commitment—reflecting the perceived costs associated with leaving—typically demonstrates non-significant or negative associations with favorable work experiences (Meyer et al., 2002), as it captures the necessity rather than the desire to remain. In the context of tourist guiding, Yetgin (2017) observed that economic anxiety uniquely impacted continuance commitment among all commitment facets, further indicating that this dimension is governed by economic factors rather than quality of work life.

The second finding is the effect of quality of work life on career satisfaction (H2 is supported). The strong effect of QWL on career satisfaction (β=0.85) indicates that satisfaction with the work environment directly shapes overall career perceptions. Demirdelen Alrawadieh & Alrawadieh (2022) highlighted that a supportive work environment improves the quality of work life and reduces burnout. These current findings support this view, as improving the physical and psychological well-being of tourist guides not only increases commitment to the profession but also leads to long-term career satisfaction.

In the literature, tourist guiding is described as a role characterized by high stress and frequent intentions to leave the job. Accordingly, Ulusoy Mutlu & Balıkoğlu (2025) found a negative relationship between professional commitment and intention to leave the job, whereas Türk & Yıldız (2015) found that the quality of work life negatively influences the intention to leave the job. Although turnover intention was not directly assessed in this study, the findings suggest that enhancing quality of work life could be a core strategy for retaining tourist guides in the field. This is because QWL demonstrates a strong relationship with occupational commitment, a construct consistently shown to be inversely related to turnover intention (Ulusoy Mutlu & Balıkoğlu, 2025). Additionally, it is believed that a high perception of quality of work life might reduce negative aspects such as workplace stress and career dissatisfaction (Akgunduz & Eser, 2022) and promote occupational commitment (Ren et al., 2026). Briefly, improving the working environment and promoting tourist guides' professional well-being increases their emotional investment in the field and the satisfaction they take from their careers.

However, the research's primary finding—that career satisfaction is positively affected by the quality of work life (QWL)—largely aligns with sectoral and general studies in the literature. This study's conclusion,

for instance, that personal development opportunities for tourist guides increase career satisfaction, aligns with the theoretical framework of Ramawickrama et al. (2017). The integration of individual goals with organizational goals, as the authors note, is reflected in the balance between the professional autonomy of tourist guides and the success of travel agencies. In addition, the study's findings support the work of Waworuntu et al. (2022), which particularly emphasizes the impact of career path openness and growth opportunities on satisfaction. In a dynamic profession like tourist guiding, meeting the need for continuous learning among the tourist guides may enhance their perceptions of QWL.

Moreover, the results of Rostami et al. (2021) on therapists and Nekouei et al. (2014) on government employees are comparable to the impact of QWL on tourist guides. In both examples, the conversion of improvements in working conditions (working hours, social support, etc.) into career satisfaction is a universal outcome coming from the profession's human-centered nature. Sari et al.'s (2019) research on hotel employees demonstrated that QWL impacts performance through career satisfaction. In this study, the relationship between guides' career satisfaction and their work is consistent with the mediator findings of the aforementioned study. However, Raduan et al. (2006) identified that the major indicator of QWL was organizational climate. The results of this study, however, demonstrated that job and career satisfaction were more important factors in career satisfaction than organizational climate, which is not unusual given that tourist guides frequently operate independently (as freelancers). Lastly, Lee et al. (2015) found that hotel employees prioritized health and safety over financial demands. However, the general well-being factor was found to have a greater influence on career satisfaction in this study. This is a sectoral difference stemming from the out-of-office and field-oriented nature of tourist guiding.

Collectively, these findings provide a threefold contribution to the existing literature. First, they demonstrate that Walton's (1973) multidimensional QWL framework—operationalized through job and career satisfaction, general well-being, working environment, and stress dimensions—remains robust even within a non-traditional organizational context. Second, this study reveals non-uniform QWL effects across commitment types by differentiating affective commitment into emotional and motivational dimensions. Namely, professional investment shows the strongest response, emotional attachment a moderate one, and felt obligation the weakest, while the cost-based dimension exhibits no relationship with QWL, aligning with the three-component model (Meyer et al., 1993; Meyer et al., 2002). Third, the findings support the positive spillover hypothesis of Spillover Theory, indicating that favorable work experiences are positively associated with broader career evaluations. However, given the cross-sectional design and the borderline convergent validity of EC, these insights should be viewed as initial evidence warranting replication via longitudinal and multi-source research.

5.1. Suggestions, Limitations, and Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this research reveal the current situation regarding tourist guides and shed light on areas for improvement in implementation processes. Based on the results, the following recommendations have been developed for tourist guides, travel agencies, and tour operators, as well as policymakers and professionals working in the field:

Based on these findings, three primary action areas emerge. First, given that QWL has the greatest impact on motivational commitment ($\beta = 0.86$), travel agencies and professional associations should prioritize motivational development initiatives, including ongoing learning programs, mentorship, and skill-development opportunities. Second, because QWL also strongly drives career satisfaction ($\beta = 0.85$), structured career-design mechanisms—such as defined progression routes, specialization options, and managerial pathways for seasoned guides—are essential to translate favorable work conditions into sustained career satisfaction. Third, stress management should be embedded in professional training and daily practice, as occupational stress has been documented to erode guides' commitment (Akgunduz & Eser, 2022) and represents a key QWL component in this investigation. The subsequent sections expand upon these recommendations and offer tailored strategies for specific stakeholder groups.

First and foremost, it is recommended that tourist guides schedule mental detoxification sessions in between tours and integrate stress-reduction strategies into their professional training. It would be advantageous for guides to support their career satisfaction within the QWL's development opportunities dimension by learning new-generation competencies, such as digital literacy and crisis management, rather than limiting themselves to historical/cultural knowledge. It would be useful for tourist guides to view themselves as destination designers as well as information providers, since occupational commitment is a component of identity. They may also maintain their career satisfaction by focusing on new areas of expertise (niche tourism). It is recommended that tourist guides actively develop their careers by focusing on specialized tourism or digital marketing rather than solely on operational skills.

Suggestions have also been produced for travel agencies and tour operators. For example, it is crucial that tour programs take into account rest periods for tourist guides, and that accommodations and transportation options meet the guides' QWL standards (such as guide room standards) to prevent excessive testing of the guides' physical and mental abilities. Successful tourist guides should also be assigned operational responsibilities during the off-season, or the sense of occupational commitment should be reinforced through long-term cooperation norms to lessen job security concerns arising from seasonality. According to Özoğul (2018), travel agencies could provide guides with more flexible, predictable tour-schedule planning to reduce work-family conflict and increase normative commitment, or the sense of loyalty. Beyond that, offering institutional support in areas such as museum cards, library access, and access to scholarly journals would help guides feel that their involvement in the organization and their careers are appreciated, which might support their research efforts (Balay, 2000). According to Akgunduz & Eser (2022), stress quickly weakens commitment. For that reason, agencies should supply operational support (such as the use of assistant guides and logistical conveniences) to reduce the work stress on guides, which may help improve their emotional commitment (affective commitment). In addition, because tourist guides with high career satisfaction protect the organization's interests more (Er Ülker, 2020), travel agencies may offer experienced tourist guides development opportunities, such as managerial roles, to prevent internal talent loss. Lastly, guidelines might be implemented for block leave or corporate events that are open to family participation during peak seasons, as work-family conflict reduces career satisfaction (Güneş & Özan, 2022).

In addition to those, professional mentoring networks and mental health services should be established within professional chambers to assist tourist guides in managing alienation and burnout. Tightening minimum-wage regulations and preventing unlawful guidance should preserve guides' sense of job security, as low-wage practices weaken commitment. To improve tourist guides' social standing and, in turn, their career satisfaction, it is critical to raise awareness that tourist guiding is a form of cultural ambassadorship. Furthermore, as Demirelli & Sargın (2025) emphasize, professional chambers should collaborate with academia to publish annual reports on occupational health, thereby improving the working conditions of tourist guides and addressing the lack of research in the tourism sector. Finally, to strengthen tourist guides' intention to remain in the profession, the focus should be not only on their current earnings but also on their long-term career plans. Professional associations (TUREB) should develop policies to secure the retirement, health, and social rights of guides, ensuring their continuance.

This study also delivers suggestions to the general public and decision-makers. As an example, by guaranteeing year-round employment for tourist guides, incentive programs that promote tourism throughout the year (health tourism, winter tourism, etc.) may minimize uncertainty, the largest threat to the quality of work life. To encourage the profession as a long-term career option, social security and retirement benefits for freelance guides should also be improved.

The study’s major limitation is that the sample consisted solely of tourist guides. It is challenging to generalize the findings to other tourism stakeholders, such as accommodation or agency employees, since the study is restricted to only tourist guides. To improve the generalizability of the findings, future studies should be conducted with larger, more diverse groups (e.g., travel agency or hotel employees). Additionally, a quantitative approach was taken in this investigation. However, utilizing qualitative techniques such as in-depth interviews could help close a gap in the literature on tourist guiding. Future

research may also examine the relationships between QWL and work overload, and between QWL and training and competence variables, in the tourism context, specifically among tourist guides.

A further constraint involves the reliance on a single-wave, self-reported cross-sectional design. This methodology leaves the findings susceptible to common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003), which may account for the high path coefficients observed between QWL and outcomes such as career satisfaction and motivational commitment. Because temporal ordering cannot be verified, the reported "effects" indicate theoretically expected associations rather than strict causal relationships. To enhance robustness, subsequent studies should adopt longitudinal methodologies and procedural safeguards (e.g., temporal separation of measures, alternative response formats, marker variables, and multi-source inputs).

Meanwhile, the sample's heterogeneity across demographic and professional dimensions—such as age, tenure, education, guiding languages, qualification type, and employment status—strengthens the study's external validity and captures a wider spectrum of viewpoints among Turkish certified guides. Even so, this merit should be weighed against the limitations of non-probability convenience sampling, which restricts broader statistical inference. Finally, the convergent validity of the emotional commitment dimension is marginal (AVE = 0.482), and the division of affective commitment into emotional and motivational components departs from the original three-component structure. For that reason, future research should test this structure in independent samples, refine the EC items, and examine measurement invariance across guide subgroups.

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