



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Multi-factors Affecting the Work Efficiency of Guides in Southern Thailand

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## ABSTRACT

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This study had the objective to analyze the multi-factors affecting the work efficiency of guides in the southern region of Thailand. This was quantitative research. The population included guides working in tour companies in 14 southern provinces, totaling 11,880 people. Simple random sampling was employed to obtain 400 people. Data were collected by questionnaires with guides in the southern region of Thailand. The data were analyzed using the Smart PLS program. The results of the data analysis indicated that SRMR of 0.075, dULS of 1.171, dG of 0.776, a Chi-square of 2257.589, and an NFI of 0.764. All indexes were consistent with the empirical data. Moreover, the weights of all components were greater than 0.70, indicating that the observed variables could measure the latent variables at a good level. The relationship of factors affecting the efficiency of guides in the southern region of Thailand was consistent with the empirical data, with SRMR of 0.075 and NFI of 0.764. For the causal factors, (1) employee satisfaction directly affected the work efficiency of guides. (2) Work discipline directly affected the work efficiency of guides. (3) The modern leadership style did not directly affect the work efficiency of guides but had an indirect effect through employee satisfaction and work discipline. (4) Work motivation directly affected the work efficiency of guides, but did not have an indirect effect through work satisfaction. (5) Employee engagement directly affected the work efficiency of guides, and (6) organizational type directly affected the work efficiency of guides, but did not have indirect effect through work discipline.

## INTRODUCTION

In Thailand, the importance of tourism is recognized as a key mechanism to drive the country's economy. In 2017, Thailand's tourism yielded over 2.75 trillion baht in revenue through its tourism competitiveness (Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index), ranked 34<sup>th</sup> out of 136 countries. Later in 2019, before the outbreak of COVID-19, tourism generated revenue for the country worth up to 3 trillion baht, or approximately 20% of Thailand's GDP. One-third of the revenue was from tourism by Thai tourists through domestic trips while two-thirds of the revenue was from foreign tourists, approximately 40 million people. Accordingly, Thailand was ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of revenue from foreign tourists. Moreover, it has been ranked higher in the 2019 Tourism Competitiveness Index by the World Economic Forum, ranking 31<sup>st</sup> out of 140 countries and 3<sup>rd</sup> in ASEAN after Singapore and Malaysia, reflecting the importance of tourism in its role and potential in driving Thailand's economy (Suravatanon, 2022). In 2022, after the COVID-19 outbreak started to lessen and the global population was vaccinated in all countries, more foreign tourists traveled to Thailand, and Thai tourists also traveled more. Based on the government's economic stimulus policy with more holidays from the Travel Together project in January 2022, domestic tourism in Thailand grew by 113.31 percent until October 2021, generating 47.8 billion baht in revenue (Economics Tourism and Sports Division, 2022).

In the southern region, both Thai and foreign tourists traveled to the 14 southern provinces with about more than 1 million people. Phuket was the province with the most tourists each year, with more than 10 million people each year and 75% of them were foreign tourists, followed by Songkhla and Surat Thani with approximately 5 million tourists per year. In Krabi, there were approximately 3 million tourists. Nakhon Si Thammarat and Trang provinces were ranked 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> with approximately 2 million tourists per year. The increasing number of tourists indicate the importance and growth of tourism businesses in each area. Accordingly, it is necessary to develop guides to respond to the needs of tourists and tourism businesses since guides are essential in the direction of tourism. If they can work effectively, a positive effect on tourism at the national, regional, and community levels will be achieved (Piyaratana wong et al., 2020). In the past, the work efficiency of some guides was not satisfactory to tourists since the guides still lacked knowledge, skills, and experience in leading tours, made mistakes in their work, causing the tour proceeding not as expected, and lacked techniques for human relations building and speaking skills. They also lacked language skills, and some still lacked professional ethics, leading to ineffective work according to their roles, duties, and responsibilities (Jankingthong, 2020).

Based on the literature review, the factors affecting the work efficiency of guides include employee satisfaction (Badrianto & Ekhsan, 2020), work discipline (Hameed et al., 2018), leadership styles (Rahmi et al., 2020), work motivation (Nguyen et al., 2020), employee engagement (Sungu et al., 2019), and organizational type (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). Guides play a significant role in leading tours offered by the firm. The work efficiency of guides depends on service provision to tourists. They must provide quality services to tourists with knowledge and skills in expressing information, build excitement for tourists, be ethical, and work based on the conditions and environment to meet tourists' needs (Van Sang, 2019). Therefore, guides must be responsible and creative in their work, prioritize their work, plan and organize their work to provide high quality, and consider the company's goals and performance standards, leading to work efficiency and organizational efficiency (Yoopetch et al., 2021). The work efficiency of guides can be achieved through job satisfaction. When guides are satisfied with their work, they will be loyal to the organization, feel proud of their work, work with fun and love working, and have good morale and motivation in their work (Hameed et al., 2018). Moreover, guides must be disciplined in their work as discipline would lead to better work outcomes. Discipline is a form of self-control and consistent practice, leading to responsibility for the assigned work, determination, intention, and willingness to comply with the firm's standards (Utin & Yosepha, 2019). Work discipline directly affected work performance with a significant positive relationship, including systematical working, good work practices, consistently responsible work behaviors, and strict rules and regulations compliance (Hameed et al., 2018). Additionally, the leadership style is a key factor affecting the efficiency of guides. Leaders are significant figures in determining the direction of guides' work. Modern leaders must be good listeners and supporters, embrace new ideas, do not have mental walls, and allow everyone to participate (Wichaiwong and Yuphas, 2019). The leadership style influencing work must be related to transformational leadership, leadership characteristics, good personality, the ability to create relationships and cooperation, and decision-making ability (Rahmi et al., 2020; Kundu, et al., 2019). Further, motivation is a factor that motivates guides to work better, including compensation and rewards, organizational justice, and relationships in the organization. Supervisors, coworkers, friendships, and relationships with people in the organization are also key motivators for work (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020; Hameed et al., 2018). Employee engagement affected work efficiency. It was found that employees with high engagement were more committed to their work with dedication to the organization, resulting in more heightened work efficiency as well (Sungu et al., 2019) through an effort to adapt to the organization, the ability to cope with unknown and unpredictable work situations, adjusting work goals, collaborating with the organization, participating in organizational activities both internal and external training, sharing useful information, adjusting work behavior to show respect for the values and traditions within the organization (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019; Yoopetch et al., 2021; Aşkun et al., 2021). Also, the organizational type is a key factor affecting the efficiency of guides due to a conducive working environment and the nature of the organization's operations with a fair, equal, and professional division of work, creating a balance between the quality of work and the quality of social life (Kundu et al., 2019).

Based on the background and origin above and the research findings on factors affecting the efficiency of guides, past research on guides in southern Thailand emphasized guides' competence, potential, and necessary skills, but did not mention the factors affecting the efficiency of guides in southern Thailand. Therefore, the researcher is interested in studying "multi-factors affecting the work efficiency of guides in southern Thailand" to achieve success in the work efficiency of guides, increase potential, and foster opportunities for active competition in the tourism industry at the national, regional, and global levels stably and sustainably, in line with Thailand's development according to the national strategic plan and the dynamic global context.

## **OBJECTIVE**

To analyze the multi-factors affecting the work performance of guides in southern Thailand.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Guide Efficiency**

Guides play a role in guiding responsible tourist behavior. Therefore, the efficiency of guides is measured by the ability to provide interpersonal and organizational services, namely the ability to effectively communicate with tourists, interpersonal skills, handling unexpected situations, cooperating with others, time management, and organizational skills, and interpersonal serviceability and professional competence, including education, professional qualifications, caring for tourists, passion for work, knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures and local people's lifestyles (Rania et al., 2020). Moreover, guides play a significant role in the tourism industry. The primary job of guides is to provide tour services as offered by tour company. How guides provide tour services directly affected the business success of the tour company. Tour guides must have general and in-depth knowledge of the tourist attractions in the tour program. They must have the skills to convey information to build excitement and trust in tourists along with ethics and the ability to work according to the conditions and environment. The role of guides depends on the objectives of the tour group or tourist group. The quality of guides' services can be accessed from 3 major components: 1) delivery of main services, 2) response to customer needs, and 3) communication effectiveness (Van Sang, 2019). Moreover, Khornjamnong (2017) suggested that the work efficiency of guides depended on their service. The performance of guides in providing services to tourists depends on the objectives of each group of tourists, which may vary depending on the objectives of the tour group or the purpose of the trip. The indicators of effective guide performance include compliance with professional ethics, organizing tourism activities, cooperation with other service personnel, satisfactory time management, delivery of services as set in the itinerary, knowledge of culture, language skills, problem-solving, love for work, and consideration of the benefits of tourists. Also, Al-Okaily (2021) studied the types of guide efficiency and determined the guide efficiency measurement form consisting of 3 indicators: 1) work efficiency, responsibility efficiency, and counterproductive work behavior. Work efficiency is related to professionalism, leadership, communication, and management, and this affected guide efficiency.

### **Employee Satisfaction**

Human resources are a key factor affecting the success of an organization or business. To maintain efficient employees, the organization must consider "employee satisfaction" as a factor that allows employees to work with the organization heartily and in the long term. Furthermore, Employee satisfaction with the organization affects their intention to work to achieve the organization's goals, which is beneficial to creating opportunities and success for employees and the organization at the same time. Employee satisfaction depends on salary, promotion, benefits, coworkers, types of work, and internal communication. Satisfaction has a statistically significant positive relationship with work performance, such as satisfaction with the salary from work and satisfaction with colleagues (Hameed et al., 2018). In addition, employee satisfaction directly affected the efficiency of guides with a statistically significant positive relationship as a crucial motivation to improve the efficiency of employees (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Employee satisfaction can be estimated from various factors, including organizational competence, employee competence, knowledge sharing, work efficiency, and employee loyalty. It was found that satisfaction in terms of organizational loyalty, quality and quantity of work, and satisfaction with working with colleagues significantly affected employee performance (Swanson et al., 2020).

## Work Discipline

Work discipline is crucial for the company. All employees in the company must work with discipline as they foster the company's progress. Therefore, if employees are disciplined in their work, the company will be successful. Even though the overall work is not perfect, employees will deliver better outcomes in some periods when they work with discipline. Therefore, discipline is the awareness and willingness of individuals to comply with the company's regulations and all related social norms. It is a mental attitude reflected in the actions of individuals and groups as obedience and compliance with the rules to reinforce the organization's guidelines (Ekhsan et al., 2019). It was found that work discipline directly affected work performance with a statistically significant positive relationship, including systematic working, appropriate work practices, responsible work behaviors, and strict rules and regulations compliance in work (Utin & Yosepha, 2019). It was also found that the leadership style indirectly affected work efficiency through work discipline. The leadership style was positively related to work discipline. If the leader can persuade and actively participate with subordinates, work will be performed and achieved based on goals (Hameed et al., 2018).

## Modern Leadership Style

The modern leader is a transformational leader, consisting of 4 components: idealized influence, which is the degree to which followers recognize the leader's value, trust, belief, authority, and ethics or morality, and the willingness of employees to follow the leader; motivation to inspire in which the leader must have a clear vision to inspire and motivate subordinates to achieve the desired goals; intellectual stimulation, in which the leader challenges, promotes the status, and sets the basic assumptions of employees' conditions, and is open to creative solutions to problems; and individualized consideration, as a consultant or coach, in which the leader provides emotional support and consideration for the employee's performance, with a highly positive relationship with the employee performance in transformational leadership and the leader's personality traits (Utin & Yosepha, 2019). It was also found that transformational leadership, the leader's personality traits, and decision-making skills affected employee engagement with a statistical significance (Sungu et al., 2019).

## Work Motivation

Motivation was directly related to the organization. Motivation is not easily fostered since few people are interested in motivation. Highly motivated people have several characteristics: 1) realistic goals, 2) courage to take risks, 3) high responsibility, 4) looking for opportunities to implement the plan, and 5) a clear work plan. Therefore, motivation in the organization is the reward for the sacrifice or success given to the organization. Employees may have diverse expectations, such as a better position, job security, etc. If a person is not motivated to work, it will result in boredom and a desire to resign (Saputra, 2021). It was found that work motivation was related to work performance, which is a positive relationship. With good motivation to work, it would result in increased performance. Motivation is a factor that drives personal behavior in accomplishing certain activities (Nguyen et al., 2020). It was also found that employee rewards and recognition significantly and positively affected employee performance. Perceived organizational support was significant and mediated the relationship between employee rewards, recognition, work stress, and work performance, leading to employee performance. When employees were supported, rewarded, and recognized, they were satisfied and worked more efficiently (Abd El Kafy, 2019).

## Employee Engagement

Employee engagement was related to various positive organizational outcomes, such as increased customer loyalty, productivity, and profitability, and reduced employee turnover. Engagement is subjective and determines how engaged employees are in their organization based on criteria set by the company. In addition, engagement was related to employees' positive attitudes toward the achievement of organizational goals, which are related to the organization's human resource management, setting rules, practices, and participation in organizational activities. Therefore, employee engagement is considered a mediating effect between human resource management practices and employee work performance (Tashtoush et al., 2022). It was found that employee engagement was significant and positively affected the organizational performance. It had a positive relationship and a direct effect on organizational loyalty and improved effort in working, cooperation

with the organization, and adaptation to the changing situations of the organization (Ahmed et al., 2020). It was also discovered that employee engagement was significantly related to employee performance in working with high career commitment. It had a positive relationship. High career engagement led to higher work efficiency (Sungu et al., 2019).

### Organizational Type

The organizational type was related to the work environment. Since the work environment is related to employees who do their daily activities, the environment conducive to working helps employees work optimally. The environment affected employees' mood at work. They can feel comfortable working, and do various activities to make their work time worthwhile. The productivity will be higher, which will increase the efficiency of the organization or company. Therefore, many organizations prioritize the work environment (Badrianto & Exhsan2020). It was found that the organizational type affects employee performance, including organizational atmosphere, work environment, and management support. These factors negatively affected employee performance when the organization lacked good management support for employees, and employees lacked skills, were underperformed, not enthusiastic about work without care, and ignored the work situation (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). It was also discovered that the organizational atmosphere significantly and positively affected employee performance. Working in a comfortable and independent organizational atmosphere fostered employee satisfaction and affected employee performance (Paaais & Pattiruhu, 2020).

### Research Framework

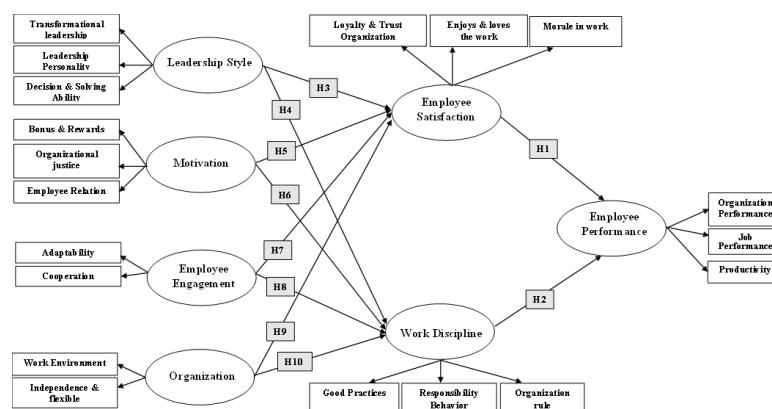


Figure 1. Research Model

### Hypothesis

H1: Employee satisfaction directly affects the work efficiency of guides.

H2: Work discipline directly affects the work efficiency of guides.

H3: Modern leadership style indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction.

H4: Modern leadership style indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction.

H5 Work motivation indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction.

H6: Work motivation indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through work discipline.

H7: Employee engagement indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction.

H8: Employee engagement indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through work discipline.

H9: Organizational type indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction.

H10: Organizational type indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through work discipline.

## METHODOLOGY

This was quantitative research. The sample was determined using the criteria for the variables studied by Hair, Balck, Babin, and Anderson (2010), which is the ratio between the sample group and the number of parameters or variables. For appropriate measurement, it should be at least 20 or 50 samples per 1 variable. This research has 18 variables. With a ratio of 18: 1, a sample size of 400 people was obtained. Then, guides working in tour companies in southern Thailand were selected to represent the sample group in data collection using questionnaires. Probability sampling and simple random sampling were employed by drawing the names of provinces from each area group by 50 percent. Then, the sample of guides from all 8 provinces was obtained using proportional stratified random sampling to obtain a sample of 400 people. The data was collected for 3 months (from September to November 2023). The research instrument was a questionnaire. The quality was checked for content validity by 3 experts to evaluate the test. Then, the evaluation results from the experts were used to find the IOC of between 0.60 - 1.00. The reliability of the questionnaire was checked by Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of 0.988. The data were analyzed using SPSS and Smart PLS.

## RESULT

The measurement model of the research consists of the latent variable measurement model. The first step of the PLS-SEM analysis was to test the model by measuring the reliability and discriminant validity by considering the statistical weights, namely Outer Loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, CR, and AVE. The test results of the validity of each variable obtained an external component weight test value of more than 0.7 (Hair, Anderson, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). The AVE and Cronbach Alpha were more than 0.5 (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2017, 2018) as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Measurement Model**

Variable	Question	Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Employee Performance (EP)	Organization Performance (OP)	0.958	0.946	0.948	0.902
	Job Performance (JP)	0.927			
	Productivity (PR)	0.963			
Employee Satisfaction (ES)	Loyalty & Trust Organization (LO)	0.979	0.975	0.975	0.952
	Enjoys & loves the work (EL)	0.973			
	Morale in work (MO)	0.975			
Work Discipline (WD)	Good Practices (GP)	0.974	0.978	0.978	0.958
	Responsibility Behavior (RB)	0.984			
	Organization rule (OR)	0.979			
Leadership Style (LS)	Transformational leadership (TL)	0.956	0.969	0.969	0.942
	Leadership Personality )PL)	0.981			
	Decision & Solving Ability (DS)	0.974			
Motivation (MT)	Bonus & Rewards (BR)	0.962	0.968	0.968	0.940

	Organizational justice (OR)	0.967			
	Employee Relation (ER)	0.979			
Employee Engagement (EE)	Adeptibility (AD)	0.919	0.840	0.849	0.861
	Cooperation (CO)	0.937			
Organization	Work Environment (WE)	0.981	0.962	0.962	0.963
	Independence & flexible (IF)	0.982			

**Table 2. Discriminant Validity of Latent Variable Measured using the Fornell - Larcker Criterion**

	Employee Engagement	Employee Satisfaction	Work Discipline	Employee Performance	Leadership Style	Organization	Motivation
<b>Employee Engagement</b>	0.928						
<b>Employee Satisfaction</b>	0.714	0.976					
<b>Work Discipline</b>	0.704	0.925	0.979				
<b>Employee Performance</b>	0.656	0.885	0.895	0.950			
<b>Leadership Style</b>	0.693	0.919	0.940	0.933	0.970		
<b>Organization</b>	0.715	0.958	0.909	0.872	0.907	0.982	
<b>Motivation</b>	0.698	0.911	0.934	0.898	0.947	0.895	0.969

Based on Table 2, the latent variable scores must not be highly correlated. The discriminant validity was considered using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The Fornell-Larcker Criterion had a value between 0.656-0.982. It was found that the discriminant validity was less than 1 (Hair et al, 2017, 2018), indicating that all latent variables had sufficient discriminant validity (Lowry & Gaskin, 2016).

**Table 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

IOC	Value	Criterion
<b>SRMR</b>	0.026	Should be less than 0.08
<b>The Unweighted Least Squares Discrepancy (dULS)</b>	1.128	Less than P95
<b>The Geodesic Discrepancy (dG)</b>	0.435	Less than P95
<b>Chi-square</b>	1075.637	-
<b>Normed Fit Index (NFI)</b>	0.924	Between 0 and 1

Research Hypothesis Testing Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)

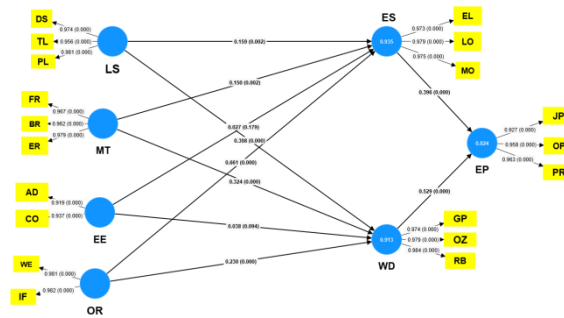


Figure 2. Research Framework from Analysis Using Smart PLS

Table 4. SEM Results for Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Beta	t-values	P values
H1	ES→EP	0.396	7.070	0.000***
H2	WD→EP	0.529	9.510	0.000***
H3	LS→ES→EP	0.159	3.156	0.002**
H4	LS→WD→EP	0.398	7.065	0.000***
H5	MT→ES→EP	0.150	3.107	0.002**
H6	MT→WD→EP	0.324	5.348	0.000***
H7	EE→ES→EP	0.027	1.345	0.179
H8	EE→WD→EP	0.038	1.675	0.094
H9	OR →ES→EP	0.661	16.723	0.000***
H10	OR →WD→EP	0.230	5.646	0.000***

\*\*\* a statistical significance of 0.001, \*\* a statistical significance of 0.01, \* a statistical significance of 0.05

H1 indicates that employee satisfaction directly affects the work efficiency of guides with a statistical significance of 0.001 and a coefficient of 0.396. Therefore, H1 was accepted, meaning that employee satisfaction directly affected the work efficiency of guides.

H2 indicates that work discipline directly affects the work efficiency of guides with a statistical significance of 0.05 and a coefficient of 0.529. Therefore, H2 was accepted, meaning that work discipline directly affected the work efficiency of guides.

H3 indicates that the modern leadership style indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction with a statistical significance of 0.01 and a coefficient of 0.159. Therefore, H3 was accepted, meaning that the modern leadership style indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction.

H4 indicates that modern leadership style indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through work discipline with a statistical significance of 0.001 and a coefficient of 0.398. Therefore, H4 was accepted, meaning that the modern leadership style indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through work discipline.

H5 indicates that work motivation indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction with a statistical significance of 0.01 and a coefficient of 0.150. Therefore, H5 was



accepted, meaning that work motivation indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction.

H6 indicates that work motivation indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through work discipline with a statistical significance of 0.001 and a coefficient of 0.324. Thus, H6 was accepted, meaning that work motivation indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through work discipline.

H7 indicates that employee engagement indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction with a statistical significance level of 0.179 and a coefficient of 0.027. Therefore, H7 was rejected, meaning that work motivation indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through work discipline.

H8 indicates that employee engagement indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through work discipline with a statistical significance of 0.094 and a coefficient of 0.038. Therefore, H8 was rejected, meaning that work motivation indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through work discipline.

H9 indicates that organizational type indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction with a statistical significance of 0.001 and a coefficient of 0.661. Therefore, H9 was accepted, meaning that organizational type indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction.

H10 indicates that organizational type indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through work discipline with a statistical significance of 0.001 and a coefficient of 0.230. Therefore, H9 was accepted, meaning that organizational type indirectly affects the work efficiency of guides through work discipline.

## DISCUSSION

Based on research results, as an analysis of the relationship of multi-factors affecting the work efficiency of guides in southern Thailand, interesting findings that lead to discussion of the results in 2 issues are as follows:

### 1. Factors directly affecting the work efficiency of guides in southern Thailand

1.1 Employee satisfaction directly affected the work efficiency of guides since when guides were loyal to the organization, they worked with honesty, confidence, and readiness based on the tour company's policies. Love and enjoyment of work made tour guides enthusiastic about daily working, happy at work, love working, and have morale and encouragement in working, causing guides to constantly develop themselves, skills, and professional knowledge, and participate in training to improve their skills. This is consistent with the employee satisfaction theory indicating that employee satisfaction is a good feeling towards factors resulting from work, leading to affection, happiness, willingness, and motivation for efficient work (Mongkhonkaeha, 2020). This is also in line with the idea that satisfaction is an attitude, opinion, and perception of one's work. It is a feeling about one's work. Employee feelings about their work reflect their attitudes and behaviors in working (Mugira, 2022). This is also consistent with the results of the study by Paais and Pattiruhu (2020) showing that employee satisfaction consisted of 3 factors. 1) The first one was organizational loyalty, meaning that guides should work with loyalty to the tour company, feel part of the company, be happy to work for the tour company and defend the company when the company is talked about in a bad way or a negative impact on the company. 2) The second is fun and love for work, meaning that guides must be happy with the nature of the work they do, be enthusiastic about working every day, and the nature of the work they do must be very challenging and interesting. Guides must have fun and be excited every time they do a tour. 3) The third is morale and motivation at work, meaning that guides must regularly develop their skills and professional knowledge, and attend training courses to sharpen more skills, such as language skills, and technology skills, and supervisors must trust tour guides in their work. Employee satisfaction from these three factors directly affected the the work efficiency of guides. In addition, from the study of Hameed et al. (2018) who studied employee satisfaction among teachers in public schools and teachers in private schools in Pakistan, employee satisfaction directly affected employee performance in terms of organizational loyalty, pride in work,

fun and love for work, commitment to work, quality and quantity of work, boredom and stress at work, satisfaction in working with friends, and work morale.

1.2 Work discipline directly affected the work efficiency of guides when guides had good work practices, followed the rules and regulations of the tour company, allocated working time appropriately, worked systematically, and had clear work procedures. Responsible behavior showed responsibility towards the company, tourists, and places, such as informing tourists about the guidelines for visiting tourist attractions, negative behaviors (gossiping about others or complaining), being ready to help tourists promptly, and following the organization's rules and regulations, such as proper dressing, working on time, participating in every organization's activity, and complying the organization's rules. This is consistent with the work discipline theory indicating that work discipline is crucial for the company. All employees must work with discipline since they make the company develop and progress. If employees work with discipline, the company's work will be successful (Ekhsan et al., 2019). This is also consistent with the results of the study by Hameed et al. (2018) who discovered that work discipline consisted of 3 factors. 1) Good work practices: guides must comply with the rules and regulations of the tour company, allocate working time appropriately, apply new knowledge to develop work styles, and have systematic and clear work practices. 2) Responsible behavior: guides must not show negative behaviors in their work, such as complaining or gossiping about others, or making loud noises that disturb tourists while on tour. They should inform tourists of the details of their visit to tourist attractions and how to behave every time as well as being ready to help in an emergency promptly. 3) Compliance with the organization's rules: guides must participate in all activities by the organization. Moreover, based on a study by Saputra (2021) on leadership, communication, and motivation in the assigned work, the success of the organization, and a work discipline measurement form, it was found that good practices, responsible behavior, compliance with organizational regulations, intention and effort to work actively, and dedication to work within the specified time affected employee performance.

## **2. Factors indirectly affecting the work efficiency of guides in southern Thailand**

2.1 The modern leadership style indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction and work discipline since leaders with transformational leadership could systematically set work guidelines, allow employees or guides to participate in expressing their opinions on the work they do regularly, provide trust in their work, enable guides to work to their full potential, appropriately distinguish between work and personal matters, treat everyone equally, consider the benefits of the company and employees, have a reliable personality, and have good human relations with all employees, supporting employees feel satisfied. In addition, the leader's ability to make decisions and solve problems helps support employees' work in the right direction, reduce mistakes and potential negative impacts on the company, and help employees' work to be faster and more flexible. This is consistent with the study of Nguyen et al. (2020) who studied the factors affecting employee performance, and leadership influence on the work efficiency of guides, it was found that if the leader had intelligence, respected subordinates, could motivate and work well with subordinates, it would lead to increased employee performance in terms of technical ability, conceptual ability, responsibility, initiative, and interpersonal skills. This is consistent with the study of Rahmi et al. (2020) who studied the effects of leadership, empowerment, and motivation styles on employee work discipline and performance; it was found that leadership styles significantly influenced employee performance since proper leadership style could improve employee work discipline and performance.

2.2 Motivation indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction and work discipline since compensation and rewards, such as wages and others received from the tour company, were fair and obtained when the work was achieved according to the company's goals, so the compensation and rewards became motivation to achieve good outcomes and meet the tour company's goals. Meanwhile, organizational justice includes fair and transparent performance evaluations, giving importance to salary increases and promotions of employees for career advancement, and fair rules for employees, which help the guides to have efficient work. Relationships in the organization, such as being treated well by colleagues and supervisors, an environment conducive to work, and internal cooperation were smooth. Everyone is sympathetic and ready to help each other. This is consistent with the work motivation theory, indicating that motivation is a condition or energy that drives employees to work to achieve the organization's goals.

Therefore, motivation directs the energy and potential of employees to work together willingly and effectively to achieve the set goals (Utin & Yosepha, 2019). Also, motivation is key for employees to work according to the company's operating standards. It is an encouragement that helps employees to work in a specific direction. Motivation is therefore fundamental within the organization (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). This is also consistent with the results of the study by Nguyen et al. (2020) who discovered that work motivation consisted of 3 factors. 1) Compensation and rewards: tour companies must provide fair and appropriate wages and rewards to tour guides who achieve their goals. The guides were satisfied with the rewards from the tour company. In addition, the company's rewards and special rewards must help motivate guides to achieve good outcomes and meet the company's goals. 2) Organizational justice: tour companies must provide an appropriate form for evaluating guides' work performance. The evaluation must be fair, transparent, and auditable. The company placed importance on salary increases and promotions for tour guides to promote their careers. In addition, the company must establish fair rules and practices for guides. 3) Internal organizational relationships: guides must be treated well by colleagues and supervisors with a working environment conducive to work. Coordination between individuals must be smooth. Guides and other employees exhibited understanding, and empathy and were always ready to assist each other. Moreover, based on the study of Abd El kady (2019) who studied the effects of employee recognition, rewards, and job stress on job performance: the mediating role of perceived organizational support. The work motivation scale was established, where employee rewards and recognition significantly and positively affected employee performance and work efficiency, while work stress significantly and negatively affected job performance.

2.3 Organizational type indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction and work discipline since the organizational atmosphere that was conducive to work, satisfaction with coworkers, intimacy, and friendliness made the work atmosphere livable as well as the nature of the organization's operations with a fair and equal division of work, happiness in working, meeting people, traveling to various places, facing situations that require adjustment and problem solving according to the situation. This is consistent with the organizational type theory indicating that with perceived organizational support, employees were well cared for, and had a good life, leading to organizational success since it created emotional and intellectual bonds, good relationships between employees and the organization, shared values with the organization, leading to work success and work efficiency (Abd El Kafy, 2020). This is also consistent with the results of the study by Diamantidis and Chatzoglou (2019) who discovered that the organizational type consisted of 2 factors. 1) Organizational atmosphere: guides are satisfied with the company's working environment and feel that the company's working environment is very conducive to their work. They are satisfied with their colleagues and the guide team in the company. They are ready to listen to suggestions and complaints from tourists, executives, staff, and guides' colleagues. Due to closeness, the organizational atmosphere is good. 2) Operational characteristics: tour company divides work fairly and equally with a working style that makes employees happy to meet people and travel to various places. The company always changes its operational characteristics and adapts to the situation. With simple and flexible rules and regulations, employees can deliver efficient work.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated multi-factors affecting the work efficiency of guides in southern Thailand. The results showed that employee satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.396$ ) and work discipline ( $\beta = 0.529$ ) directly affected the work efficiency of guides. The modern leadership style ( $\beta = 0.159$ ), work motivation ( $\beta = 0.150$ ), and organizational type ( $\beta = 0.661$ ) indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction. Modern leadership style ( $\beta = 0.398$ ), work motivation ( $\beta = 0.324$ ), and organizational type ( $\beta = 0.230$ ) indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through work discipline. Therefore, if tour companies or guides would like to improve their work efficiency, they should initially consider employee satisfaction and work discipline.

## Suggestion

1. A study on the relationship of factors affecting the work efficiency of guides in southern Thailand, other factors should be studied in addition to those studied in this study due to the changing context of tourism industry demands, work environment, duties, responsibilities, and tourist behaviors, or other related factors.

2. In this study, new findings were discovered as follows: (1) Employee satisfaction directly affected the work efficiency of guides. (2) Work discipline directly affected the work efficiency of guides. (3) The modern leadership style indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction. (4) The modern leadership style indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction. (5) Work motivation indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction. (6) Work motivation indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through work discipline. (7) Organizational type indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through employee satisfaction. (8) Organizational type indirectly affected the work efficiency of guides through work discipline. Therefore, in the next study, the results of this study should be employed to study further and make comparisons among other regions in Thailand to explore the differences or relationships between regions or at the national level.

3. In this study, the researcher studied the factors affecting the work efficiency of guides in southern Thailand, using a sample group of guides in the southern region, which still lacks factors from the perspectives of stakeholders, such as tourists, owners of tourist attractions, partner companies, or agencies that have signed MOUs.

4. In this study, the structural equation model (SEM) was studied according to the hypothesis. The research was tested only with the consistency of empirical data. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct mixed-method research by starting with qualitative research to obtain appropriate data and identify the real problem in the context of the sample area, followed by quantitative research.

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