

RESEARCH ON JOB SATISFACTION OF TOUR GUIDE IN MEKONG DELTA REGION

NGHIÊN CỨU SỰ HÀI LÒNG CÔNG VIỆC CỦA HƯỚNG DẪN VIÊN DU LỊCH
KHU VỰC ĐỒNG BẰNG SÔNG CỬU LONG

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.57001/huih5804.2023.129>

ABSTRACT

This study used a JDI 5-factor scale (Job Descriptive Index), reliability analysis method based on Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), linear regression analysis, T-test and one-way analysis of variance (One-way ANOVA) to achieve the research objectives. The research's findings indicates that 5 factors affecting the job satisfaction of tour guides is the nature of work, welfare and salary, superior support, training and promotion and work environment. In addition, the findings of the research determines that the factor that has the strongest impact on job satisfaction of tour guides is the factor of superior support. The research also recommends solutions to increase the job satisfaction of tour guides in the Mekong Delta region based on the research findings.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, tour guide, Mekong Delta.

TÓM TẮT

Nghiên cứu này đã sử dụng thang đo 5 yếu tố JDI (Job Descriptive Index) cùng các phương pháp phân tích độ tin cậy bằng hệ số Cronbach's Alpha, phân tích nhân tố khám phá (EFA), phân tích hồi quy tuyến tính, kiểm định thống kê T-test và phân tích phương sai một chiều (One-way ANOVA) để giải quyết các mục tiêu nghiên cứu. Kết quả nghiên cứu đã chỉ ra có 5 nhân tố ảnh hưởng đến sự hài lòng công việc của hướng dẫn viên du lịch là bản chất công việc, chế độ phúc lợi và tiền lương, hỗ trợ cấp trên, đào tạo và thăng tiến, môi trường làm việc. Bên cạnh đó, kết quả của nghiên cứu đã xác định được nhân tố có tác động mạnh nhất đến sự hài lòng công việc của hướng dẫn viên du lịch là nhân tố hỗ trợ của cấp trên. Nghiên cứu cũng khuyến nghị các giải pháp nhằm gia tăng sự hài lòng công việc của hướng dẫn viên du lịch tại khu vực đồng bằng sông Cửu Long dựa trên kết quả nghiên cứu.

Từ khóa: Hài lòng công việc, hướng dẫn viên, đồng bằng sông Cửu Long.

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Received: 20/3/2023

Revised: 05/5/2023

Accepted: 15/6/2023

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee is a person who works for an employer based on employment contract and is paid salary, is managed,

directed and monitored by the employer [1]. However, if enterprises do not comply with the employment contract or do not have unsuitable attitudes and behaviors, employees will be dissatisfied with their job, leading to the intention to quit job. [2] said that satisfaction is a received value that must be greater than an expected value. The level of employee's job satisfaction will affect different aspects in job [3]. Therefore, businesses need to regularly research and survey employee's job satisfaction to understand situation and promptly solve problems that employees are facing in order to improve the turnover rate as well as enhance management efficiency and develop capacity of human resources. A tour guide is a person who is granted to practice tour guide services [4]. In travel businesses, tour guides play a very important role in determining success, as well as building reputation and developing brand image for these businesses. Therefore, the job of tour guides is regarded as an essential job and represents travel businesses on strategic fronts. If tour guides already have the intention to quit job, they will not focus on implementing work tasks, lack enthusiasm in work and even have a negative attitude towards tourists to deliberately reduce revenue of travel business.

The scale of satisfaction with job components - Job Descriptive Index (JDI) of [3] has been used in many different fields with 5 aspects: The nature of work, training opportunity and promotion, leadership, co-worker and salary. Then, [5] added two more components: welfare and work environment. These two scales have been used by many authors when studying employee needs, satisfaction and organizational commitment in Vietnam. In particular, [6] measured the level of job satisfaction in Vietnamese context. [7] has measured the job satisfaction level of production employees at Tan Hiep Phat Trading and Service Co., Ltd. [8] studied the factors affecting the job satisfaction of employees at Tien Giang University. Based on the work components of JDI, the authors have adjusted and added other work components when researching so that they ensure that their scales are suitable to features in each region at different stages.

On the other hand, the tourism industry has been severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak and its lasting impacts. In early 2020, the number of tourists visiting the Mekong Delta region significantly dropped to just over 28 million, and in 2021, it only welcomed over 23 million visitors. The number of tourists visiting the western provinces in 2021 compared to 2019 also dropped to only one-third. The industry's revenue also decreased accordingly, reaching 22 trillion Vietnamese Dong in 2019, decreasing by about 8 trillion Dong, and in 2020 and 2021, the revenue was less than 10 trillion Dong. As a result, thousands of tourism businesses had to suspend operations, and many tour guides lost their jobs and had to switch to other jobs to make a living. Although the number of tourists has increased after the pandemic, it is still not high, and there are still psychological barriers to travel, such as safety concerns when traveling under pandemic conditions or economic barriers due to the general economic downturn, causing people to cut back on spending, including travel expenses. At the conference "Recovery and development of tourism in the Mekong Delta in the new normal state," representatives from 13 Departments of Culture, Sports, and Tourism in the Mekong Delta region signed an agreement to cooperate in the recovery and development of tourism in the Mekong Delta [17]. This shows that the re-engagement of tour guides after the pandemic has a significant impact on the recovery of the tourism industry. However, the management of tour guides is still not strict enough, and many cases do not have a contract, leading to tour guides not receiving some of the benefits of labor according to the law. In addition, some tour guides operate on their own, leading to negative impacts on the tourism industry [18]. Moreover, the quality of tour guides is also a matter of concern because currently, the quality of tour guides still has many shortcomings in terms of language skills and problem-solving skills in guiding [19]. Therefore, the authors have chosen and studied "Factors affecting job satisfaction of tour guides in the Mekong Delta region" to assess the current situation and have a new perspective on the tour guide profession in the context of the new normal state. From there, solutions can be proposed to improve the job satisfaction of tour guides, serve tourists better, and contribute to the recovery of the tourism industry in this context.

2. LITERATURE

Employee satisfaction depends on the extent to which they achieve the standards they set for themselves. If the achievement of goals is deemed important and accomplished, job satisfaction will be high [20]. There are two important factors in employee satisfaction such as motivational factors (what makes employees satisfied with their work) and satellite factors (factors that are necessary to ensure employees are not dissatisfied with their work) [21, 22]. According to [23], an individual's satisfaction depends on the degree to which they meet the standards they set for themselves. If the achieved goal is important and achieved,

satisfaction will be high. In addition, satisfaction also depends on employees receiving appropriate feedback for their efforts. If employees feel they are being treated fairly, they will feel satisfied [24]. An individual's satisfaction also depends on the match between their expectations and what they receive. If what they receive exceeds their expectations, they will feel satisfied. If what they receive does not meet their expectations, they will be dissatisfied [25].

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Data collection method

Secondary data is collected from previous studies of domestic and foreign authors and thus this study can inherit the achieved results as well as draw the limitations of the previous studies to have a basis for proposing factors that are suitable to research model. Primary data of the study conducted a survey of tour guides (domestic and international tour guides) working in areas of the Mekong Delta region based on a pre-designed questionnaire.

3.2. Sampling method and sample size

The sampling method that was used in the study was a convenient sampling method. The research team conducted a survey of tour guides in the Mekong Delta region until the required number of observations was achieved.

The author used factor analysis method to explore, so the minimum sample size required to meet the reliability will be in a ratio of 5:1 or 10:1 [9]. In this study, the total observed variables of independent variables were 30, and the author chose a ratio of 5:1. Therefore, the minimum sample size is 150 observations. The total number of survey forms issued and collected was 215 forms. After eliminating incomplete survey forms, the data used for quantitative analysis was 200 observations (93.02%).

3.3. Data analysis method

The data analysis methods that are used in the model are Cronbach's Alpha coefficient analysis, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis. The regression model has the following form:

$$JS = B_0 + B_1NW + B_2WS + B_3SS + B_4CS + B_5TP + B_6WE + \varepsilon$$

The dependent variable is job satisfaction (JS) of tour guide, estimate coefficients (regression coefficients) are $\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_6$, and the independent variables include nature of work (NW), welfare and salary (WS), superior support (SS), colleague support (CS), training and promotion (TP) and work environment (WE).

The research results of the previous authors are the basis and foundation for the research to include variables in the following research model:

The nature of work: this factor is related to the challenges of work, the opportunity to use personal abilities and the feeling in work implementation. The nature of work will positively affect job satisfaction [6, 7]. Researchers indicated that job enrichment has brought positive outcomes,

including improvements in employee attitudes and behaviors [10, 11]. For nearly four decades, Job Characteristic Model (JCM) of [11] has been regarded as the most successful model in explaining the nature of a job and helping to explain relationships between the job and employee satisfaction with that job [12]. [11] confirmed that every job can have five features, including skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. The level of control that employees have over their work, opportunities for career development, opportunities to self-realize, and receive recognition for their achievements, all play an important role in employee satisfaction [22].

H1: The interesting nature of work will positively affect job satisfaction of tour guides.

Welfare and salary: according to [3] the level of job satisfaction of employees is affected by welfare and salary. The welfare and salary factor has an impact on job satisfaction [7]. When lacking these factors, it will affect employee satisfaction including factors such as career advancement, learning opportunities, autonomy, and job control [22].

H2: Good welfare and salary will positively affect job satisfaction of tour guides.

Superior support: this factor is related to the relationships between employees and a superior, especially a direct supervisor. Support is an important activity in the relationship between employees and the workplace [13]. The support of superior, as well as the superior capacity and leadership style, will affect the implementation of organizational goals [6, 7]. If employees do not receive good support and supervision from their superiors, they may feel undervalued and ignored, which can have a negative impact on their job satisfaction [22].

H3: Superior support will positively affect job satisfaction of tour guides.

Colleague support: this factor is related to behaviors and colleague relationship at the workplace, and the support of colleagues has a positive impact on employee's job satisfaction [6]. A study by [26] has shown that support from colleagues is strongly related to employee satisfaction with their job and the organization. Another study by [27] has revealed that support from colleagues is related to job satisfaction and a sense of contribution to the organization by employees.

H4: Colleague support will positively affect job satisfaction of tour guides.

Training and promotion: promotion opportunity also has an impact on employee's job satisfaction [3, 28, 29]. Training will help employees to develop their personal capacity in the present and in the future so that these employees focus on accomplishing overall goals of their organization [6]. Training and development has a positive effect on employee job satisfaction [30].

Work environment: this factor is occupational safety and health conditions, and job pressure at the workplace. The

work environment also has an impact on job satisfaction. The more the work environment meets employees' needs, value and personality, the higher the job satisfaction is [6]. A positive work environment is strongly correlated with employee job satisfaction and organizational satisfaction. This research also indicates that a positive work environment can improve productivity and reduce staff turnover in a company [31].

H5: Good work environment will positively affect job satisfaction of tour guides.

Job satisfaction: "job satisfaction is a comfortable or positive emotional state resulting from job evaluation or based on individual work experience" [14]. There are 14 common aspects to assess job satisfaction: evaluation, welfare, work condition, communication, co-workers, the nature of work, organization, personal development, recognition, policy and procedure, promotion opportunity, assurance and supervision [14]. "Job satisfaction is an employee's satisfaction level with eight aspects of work: the nature of work, level of responsibility, opportunity for growth and recognition, supervision, relationship between individuals, work condition, salary level and company policy [15].

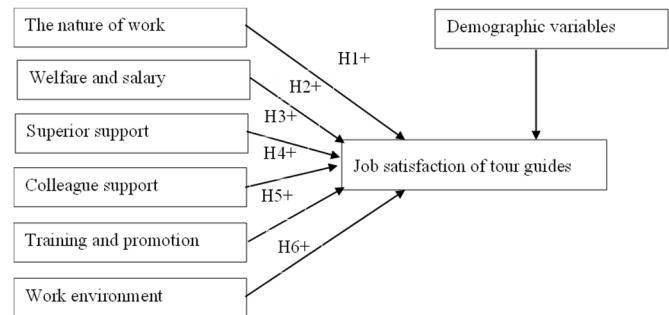


Figure 1. Proposed research model

Table 1. Summarize the scale of independent and dependent variables

No.	Variable group	Sources
1	The nature of work	[6],[7],[10],[11],[12],[22]
2	Welfare and salary	[3],[7],[22]
3	Superior support	[6],[7],[13],[22]
4	Colleague support	[6],[26],[27]
5	Training and promotion	[3],[6],[28],[29],[30]
6	Work environment	[6],[31]
7	Job satisfaction	[14],[15]

Source: Summary results of the author, 2022

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Reliability test of scale

The results of test of reliability of the scale are based on Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for each independent variable and dependent variable. The results are presented in Table 2.

The test results show that the coefficients of Cronbach's Alpha of all the variables are higher than 0.7, which proves that the variables are well measured [16]. On the other hand,

all the variables (NW, WE, SS, TP, CS, and JS) have "item - total correlation" coefficients that are higher than 0.3 and "Cronbach's Alpha If Item Deleted" coefficients are smaller than Cronbach's Alpha. Thus all the variables are accepted. However, the variable - WS06 has "Cronbach's Alpha If Item Deleted" is 0.886 that is higher than Cronbach's Alpha. Therefore, this variable is excluded before implementing exploratory factor analysis.

Table 2. Test of reliability of scale based on Cronbach's Alpha

No.	Variable group	Observed variables	Coefficient
1	The nature of work	NW01, NW02, NW03, NW04	0.795
2	Welfare and salary	WS05, WS07, WS08	0.886
3	Superior support	SS09, SS10, SS11, SS12	0.881
4	Colleague support	CS13, CS14, CS15, CS16	0.819
5	Training and promotion	TP17, TP18, TP19, TP20, TP21	0.847
6	Work environment	WE22, WE23, WE24, WE25, WE26	0.814
7	Job satisfaction	JS27, JS28, JS29, JS30	0.841

Source: Analysis results of the author, 2022

4.2. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) results

The study uses Principal Component Analysis method with Varimax rotation and Eigenvalue needs to be greater than 1. Before implementing the factor analysis method, the author tests KMO and Bartlett of independent variables and dependent variable. For the independent variables, KMO coefficient is 0.862 and the dependent variable's KMO coefficient is 0.848. Thus the study concludes that the factor analysis is appropriate. Bartlett coefficient = 0.000 (sig. < 0.05) shows that observed variables are correlated with each other in the overall aspect. The results of the exploratory factor analysis are presented in Table 3.

The results of exploratory factor analysis of independent variables with 25 observed variables (for the first time) shows that six groups of factors are created. However, the study eliminates observed variables (WE22 and WE23) because these two variables appear in many factor groups and have different factor scores that are lower than 0.3. The results of exploratory factor analysis of the independent variables with the remaining 23 observed variables (for the second time) (Table 2) shows that the KMO coefficient in the

Table 3. Exploratory factor analysis results of independent variables

Independent variables	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	Component 5	Component 6
TP17	0.872					
TP19	0.811					
TP18	0.769					
TP20	0.739					
TP21	0.737					
SS12		0.859				
SS10		0.845				
SS11		0.823				
SS09		0.814				
CS16			0.825			
CS15			0.814			
CS14			0.791			
CS13			0.737			
NW04				0.832		
NW03				0.797		
NW02				0.743		
NW01				0.688		
WS07					0.901	
WS08					0.889	
WS05					0.871	
WE25						0.822
WE24						0.770
WE26						0.674
Eigenvalues	4.767	3.291	2.466	2.165	1.992	1.295
Total extracted variance	20.724	35.033	45.755	55.166	63.829	69.462
Sig. (Bartlett's)						0.000
KMO						0.780

Source: Analysis results of the author, 2022

analysis is 0.780 (in the range [0.5 - 1.0]), which proves that the research data is appropriate to exploratory factor analysis. Sig value. of Bartlett's test is $0.000 < 0.05$ and this shows that the second exploratory factor analysis is appropriate and the observed variables in the second exploratory factor analysis (EFA) are correlated with each other in the overall aspect. At Eigenvalue = 1.295, six groups of factors are extracted. The total extracted variance is $69.462\% > 50\%$. Therefore, the analysis criteria are met and the results of the factor analysis are meaningful.

The results of the Rotated Component Matrix shows that all the observed variables have factor loading > 0.5 and that six groups of factors are created to explain 69.462% of the variation of surveyed data. Because the variables do not have disturbance in the inner factor groups, the names of the factor groups do not change.

When the exploratory factor analysis of the dependent variable (Table 4), we see that there is not group separation, KMO coefficient is 0.829, Cumulative value is 66.127% that is appropriate to be included in regression analysis in the next step.

Table 4. Exploratory factor analysis result of dependent variable

Dependent variable	Factor/Component
JS29	0.855
JS27	0.832
JS28	0.831
JS30	0.787
Eigenvalue: 2.733 - Total extracted variance: 68,333 - KMO: 0.689 - Sig. (Bartlett's): 0.000	

Source: Analysis results of the author, 2022

The analysis results in Table 4 show that KMO coefficient is 0.689 (in the range [0.5 - 1.0]) and Sig value. of Bartlett's test is $0.000 < 0.05$. This proves that the results of the

exploratory factor analysis (EFA) are appropriate and the observed variables in the EFA are correlated with each other in the overall aspect. Initial Eigenvalues is extracted at a factor with a value of $2.733 > 1$ and the total extracted variance is $68.333\% > 50\%$. Therefore, the analysis criteria are met. Moreover, all observed variables have factor loading > 0.5 .

4.3. Regression analysis

To ensure the reliability of the research model, the author conducts a Pearson correlation matrix analysis between the independent variables in the model and job satisfaction of tour guides. The results show that colleague support factor (CS) has a Sig. of $0.737 > 0.05$. Therefore, the factor of CS is not statistically significant with the dependent variable of job satisfaction (JS). The remaining pairs of variables in the model have correlation coefficients < 0.8 and Sig. < 0.05 . This shows that in the remaining 5 factors, there is not multicollinearity with the dependent variable.

The estimated results show that the independent variables included in the regression model have an impact on the job satisfaction of tour guides. The standardized regression equation is presented as follows:

$$JS = 0.351SS + 0.254WS + 0.248TP + 0.243WE + 0.206NW + \varepsilon$$

4.4. Discussions of study findings

Impacts of demographic variable group

The author analyzes the impact of the group of demographic variables on job satisfaction through One - way Anova analysis for each variable in the demographic group. The average difference test results show that variables of age, sex and income have Sig. (T-test) > 0.05 and Sig. (Anova) is also greater than 0.05. However, two variables of education and marital status have Sig. (T-test) < 0.05 . The author continues performing Welch test but these two variables have Sig. (Welch) > 0.05 . Thus it can be concluded that there is not

Table 5. Results of regression analysis

Independent variable	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.	Statistics VIF	Interval
	β	Std. Error					
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Constant	-0.161	0.268		0.548			
SS	0.247	0.038	0.351	0.813	0.000	1.230	1
WS	0.170	0.034	0.254	0.919	0.000	1.089	2
TP	0.258	0.051	0.248	0.985	0.000	1.015	3
WE	0.154	0.036	0.243	0.755	0.000	1.324	4
NW	0.205	0.053	0.206	0.850	0.000	1.176	5
N: 200 - Adjusted R Square: 52.4% - Durbin Watson: 2.090 - Sig. (F): 0.000							

Source: Analysis results of the author, 2022

statistically significant difference of demographic variables for the job satisfaction of tour guides.

Impacts of independent variables on dependent variable

When considering other factors that are unchanged, at the 5% statistical significance level, all the independent variables have positive impacts on the dependent variable. In particular, superior support variable has the strongest impact on job satisfaction of tour guides.

The superior support variable has a standardized coefficient $\beta = 0.351 > 0$. When a tour guide perceives that there is a positive support from a superior, the tour guide's job satisfaction will increase. In fact, in organizations, if superiors are nonchalant to employees, especially lack of help/support for employees, it will lead to a break in the relationship between the superiors and the employees (subordinates). On the contrary, support from superiors such as financial assistance, providing remote working equipment, or implementing flexible policies to adapt to the current circumstances, will help improve job satisfaction and retain employees in the company.

Welfare and salary variable has a standardized coefficient $\beta = 0.254 > 0$. This means that when welfare and salary increase, job satisfaction of tour guides will increase. Welfare and salary are material and spiritual benefits that are provided for employees to improve the quality of life and work performance of the employees. Therefore, welfare and salary greatly determine employee loyalty as well as organizational commitment, and the welfare and salary factor positively affects the level of job satisfaction of the employees. In the current context, with the difficult economic situation due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the salary and welfare policies of tour guides may be seriously affected. Strengthening welfare policies and ensuring reasonable salaries are necessary to maintain job satisfaction and retain tour guides in tourism businesses.

The training and promotion variable has a standardized coefficient $\beta = 0.248 > 0$. This result implies that when a tour guide is trained and has good promotion opportunity, the job satisfaction of the tour guide will increase. Satisfaction on training program as well as promotion opportunity will stimulate employees to perform work tasks more effectively and try to achieve more achievements to gain recognition from their organization. In the current context, organizing training courses and promotions may be affected by the difficult economic situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, tourism companies need to have supportive and flexible policies to ensure that tour guides are still trained and have opportunities for advancement within the company. This also helps reduce employee burnout and increase work motivation, thereby reducing employee turnover in the company.

The working environment variable has a standardized coefficient $\beta = 0.243 > 0$. When the work environment is positive, tour guides will increase job satisfaction. Then employees will create as much value as possible and work in

positive energy and this will create the overall success of their organization. Besides that, improving the working environment, ensuring stability within the company, and creating a positive atmosphere for employees are necessary to maintain and enhance job satisfaction in the current context.

The variable of the nature of work has a standardized coefficient $\beta = 0.206 > 0$. When the nature of work is interesting, job satisfaction of tour guide will increase. Employees always need leader's respect and attention to their work as well as other aspects such as employees' health and mood. Thereby, they need spiritual support and contribution recognition from managers. When employees perceive that their managers are always willing to support them, they often have higher job satisfaction level and longer-term commitment to their organization.

Table 6. Comparison between results of the study and results of other studies

No.	Studies of authors	Smith (1969)	Hackman (1971)	Dung (2005)	Abu Elanain (2009)	Giao (2011)
1	Superior support			+		+
2	Welfare and salary	+				+
3	Training and promotion	+		+		
4	Work environment			+		+
5	The nature of work		+	+	+	+

Source: Analysis results of the author, 2022

With the results of this study, the author perceives that there are similarities of the study with other studies in Vietnam shown in Table 6. There are reasonable points of the study when the job of tour guides always needs the support and complete information from superiors. The welfare and salary factor is also the very important factor because it is a source of income to compensate employees for their personal efforts and the training and promotion factor is the factor influencing and stimulating tour guides' job satisfaction.

5. CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that 5 factors that positively affect job satisfaction of tour guides and the factors are superior support, welfare and salary, training and promotion, work environment and the nature of work. To enhance the job satisfaction of the tour guides, the research team proposes some recommendations as follows:

1. For the superior support, it is necessary to select and arrange a leader of a tour guide group who has the capacity and vision to listen to and share difficulties of group members.

2. In terms of welfare and salary, it is important to analyze salary costs of tour guides to understand their needs and then travel businesses can adjust to meet the tour guides' needs. In addition, the travel businesses also need to consider and adjust their welfare policy that is various and

suitable to the peculiarity of the tour guide profession (such as arranging compensatory time off plan being commensurate with the time tour guides worked) so that tour guides can regenerate their labour capacity. The travel businesses also need to pay attention to allocation of tools, working tools, and means of transportation to ensure safety and comfort for tour guides.

3. For the training and promotion, the travel businesses need to develop a training and development program for each tour guide so that tour guides have a comfortable working mentality and loyalty to the businesses. They also should encourage the tour guides to implement creativity in their work but this still ensures work performance.

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THÔNG TIN TÁC GIẢ

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