

## **Incentives and motivations of Chinese destination management organization officers**

### **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose** - This research aims to divide expectations into three time-scales based on expectancy theory, namely, short-term, medium-term and long-term expectations. Based on that, this research identify the incentive-motivation structures of tourism officers by time-scales, and the effect of incentives on job engagement, performance, and satisfaction is investigated.

**Design/methodology/approach** - A survey was conducted in 31 provinces of China, and a total of 650 responses were used for further analysis after removing invalid surveys. The statistical analysis techniques used were confirmatory factor analysis, correlation analysis, and structural equation modeling.

**Findings** - The results showed that: (1) realistic motivations, career prospects, and 'macro-vision' were the motivational factors in the short-, medium-, and long-term respectively; (2) incentives positively predicted tourism officers' job engagement, performance, and satisfaction; and (3) job engagement and performance partially mediated the influence of incentives on job satisfaction.

**Research limitations/implications** - The main limitation was that the questionnaires were collected with the same measurement system within a certain period of time (cross-sectional design). Moreover, the respondents were from 31 provinces in China, and there may be diverse conclusions based on the investigation of different regions due to the varied and complex geographical and social condition as well as the regional economic development

levels and administrative systems.

**Practical implications** – Destination government departments must recognize tourism officer needs and motivations in the short-, medium-, and long-terms, and develop tailored incentive programs. Moreover, government departments should emphasize the key role of tourism officers' job engagement.

**Originality/value** – Based on expectancy theory across different time-scales, this research identified the incentive-motivation structure and its effect of Chinese destination management organizations officers, and potentially provides a theoretical basis for the optimization of this administrative incentive system.

**Keywords:** Incentives; public-sector motivation (PSM); expectancy theory; destination management organizations (DMOs); Chinese tourism officers

## 1. Introduction

The increasingly complex administrative tasks in government departments have exacerbated the need to structure and enhance the incentives for public-sector officers so as to more effectively achieve organizational goals (Behn, 1995). Government tourism officers are critical participants in promoting destination development (Yang *et al.*, 2008; Akama, 2002; Fong *et al.*, 2020). Specifically, the functions of government tourism officers include not only maintaining the order of the destination tourism market and providing public services in a normal situation, but also developing emergency management and facilitating the rapid recovery of destinations in an abnormal situation. Thus, the incentive management of DMOs tourism officers has become a determinant factor to promote their higher performance

behavior and better serve the public, as well as the important premise for promoting the prosperity of destination.

Currently, the research of tourism officers incentive is an important but less concerned topic. However, as an important stakeholder in destinations, the intervention effect of government departments and tourism officers in the destination development has been well discussed in the context of tourism planning (such as red tourism, ethnic tourism) (Yang *et al.*, 2008; Zuo *et al.*, 2017), tourism sustainable (such as resource management) (Connell *et al.*, 2009), tourism public services (such as market regulation) (Li *et al.*, 2016; Wen *et al.*, 2019), safety management and crisis response (such as COVID-19 pandemic) (Fong *et al.*, 2020). In terms of incentive and motivation, previous research argued that the motivation of government officers is important, as well as being hierarchical and diversified (Khoshnevis and Tahmasebi, 2016; Perry and Porter, 1982). Similar to government officers, tourism officers have the basic needs such as survival, development, respect, and social interaction, which motivate them in performance (Wen, *et al.*, 2019; Ciobanu and Androniceanu, 2015; Chen *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, based upon public-service motivation (PSM) theory, government officers should possess the inner traits of altruism and support of public interests, which represent intrinsic motivations to pursue long-term societal development (Meyer-Sahling *et al.*, 2019; Ward, 2019; Broekema *et al.*, 2019). For example, based on Herzberg's two-factor theory, Khoshnevis and Tahmasebi (2016) proposed that the motivation system in a governmental organization can be classified as hygiene factors (such as salary, position, job security, reward, and relationship with colleagues) and motivational factors (such as autonomous, sense of belonging, on-the-job training, discretion and authorities' moral

support and encouragement), and their effects on officers' job satisfaction are different. Since tourism officers play an important role in promoting the destination development as well as have a complex and hierarchical demands, the exploration of multi-level incentives and their effects for tourism officers should become an important topic in tourism research.

However, within that field of research, three key gaps can be identified. First, the incentive-motivation structures and demands of tourism officers have not been systematically identified. Academics have widely believed that government departments and tourism officers are important stakeholders in destination development, and the complex and diverse demand structure of public-sector officers have received extensive attention (Khoshnevis and Tahmasebi, 2016; Chen *et al.*, 2017; Anderfuhrenbiget *et al.*, 2010). However, the incentive-motivation structure of destination tourism officers lacks systematic investigation. In addition, expectancy theory is often adopted to explore individual motivations and behaviors in tourism field (Kiatkawsin and Han, 2017; Suttikun *et al.*, 2018), but individuals' expectations across different time-scales (i.e., short-term, medium-term and long-term expectations) and their effect are diverse, which is ignored by previous researches. Thus, this research aims to identify destination tourism officers' incentive-motivation structure based on the different expectation time-scales. Second, previous researches lack empirical investigation on the incentives effectiveness for tourism officers. The constructs, such as job engagement, job performance, and job satisfaction, have received great attentions in the field of human resources management (HRM), organizational behavior (OB), public management as well as tourism management (Apriantoro and Luthfiyah, 2016; Saks, 2006; Hsieh, 2016). However, relevant empirical researches on these constructs rarely target destination

government tourism officials. Due to data access and acquisition difficulties, previous researches targeting tourism officers mainly adopted qualitative interviews, for example, Luo and Lam (2016) investigated the determinant factors of urbanization on hotel development through qualitative semi-structured interviews with government officers and city planners. However, to the best of our knowledge, no previous research identify the multi-level motivational factors (i.e., realistic motivation, career prospects, macro-vision) of destination tourism officers, as well as empirically investigate the effect of motivational factors on their job engagement, performance, and satisfaction through a large-scale survey. Third, there is no empirical investigation on the motivation factors of Chinese destination tourism officers. Since different countries have different social system, government administration systems, and governance culture (Caijia, 2000; Hwang and Akdede, 2011; Marti and Kasperskaya, 2015), empirical research on the incentive effects of tourism officers with background of different cultures and counties have theoretical cumulative value and important theoretical implication. Moreover, the intervention of government departments and tourism officer in destination development is perhaps most visible in developing economies where tourism planning and promotion tend to be controlled directly by governments (Yang *et al.*, 2008). Currently, China is the largest developing country in the world, has a large and growing domestic tourism market and the Chinese lead the world in terms of outbound international tourism expenditures (UNWTO, 2018). And the rapid development of China's tourism sector is plagued by administrative issues, some of which are industry regulatory and control challenges, lack of standardization, frequent safety and security problems, and inadequate policy implementation (Wu *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to the incentive-

motivation structure of Chinese tourism officers, so as to promote destination development.

Therefore, this research was initiated to analyze the structure of motivations and incentives for Chinese DMO officers. The specific goals were to: (1) identify the incentive-motivation structures of tourism officers by time-scales based on expectancy theory; and (2) investigate the impacts of incentives on job engagement, performance, and satisfaction based on the Porter-Lawler model.

## **2. Literature review and research hypotheses**

### *2.1. Expectancy theory of motivation*

Expectancy theory holds that when individuals have higher expectations in terms of outcomes, they are more motivated to accomplish tasks and achieve performance targets or goals (Kiatkawsin and Han, 2017; Suttikun *et al.*, 2018). Expectancy is a psychological state wherein people hope to complete tasks or achieve goals to meet their needs within certain timeframes. In this context, delayed gratification represents a set of motivations and cognitive processes in which individuals are willing to abandon or delay expected rewards in the short term in favor of focusing on perceived more valuable long-term goals (Underwood, 1974). Thus, people have short- and long-term expectations for their work performance and set personal goals accordingly. In the short term, individuals may expect and be satisfied with short-term (extrinsic) rewards such as salary, other payments and bonuses, enhanced working conditions, task realignment, and promotions (Chien *et al.*, 2010; Danish and Usman, 2010; Jung and Yoon, 2015). Factors such as career prospects and organizational strategies are medium-term expectations that also affect work motivation (Wan *et al.*, 2014). Longer-term

expectations tend to be more self-selected and intrinsic and subject to self-control including professional and career enhancement, performance improvement, and social development. In China, the government has developed a *Yuan Jing* (Chinese pinyin) for the tourism sector, which can be thought of as a long-term or ‘macro-vision’ for this sector of the economy. The macro-vision is a broad strategic direction or blueprint for tourism that motivates officers and sustains their long-term effort (Li, 2018). Thus, short-, medium-, and long-term expectations together trigger motivations to perform and achieve goals at work.

## *2.2. Porter-Lawler model*

Combined with the hierarchy of needs theory, and the expectation and equity theories, the Porter-Lawler model is a comprehensive motivation framework (Porter and Lawler, 1968). According to this model, motivation and incentive leads to a person’s effort, and job performance depends on the effort, ability, and understanding of tasks. Also, rewards are based upon performance and, when received, lead to job satisfaction. Thereafter, job satisfaction tends to spur further effort. Thus, the Porter-Lawler model proposed that incentive management should constitutes a positive spiral oriented to job performance and job satisfaction, which incorporates a variety of incentives such as rewards, promotions, organizational support, task deployments, goal setting, and individual expectations. The current research attempts to identify the short-, medium-, and long-term incentives of tourism officers based on expectancy theory and using the Porter-Lawler model to investigate incentive effectiveness, which provides empirical evidence for the combination of these two theories.

### 2.3. *Incentives and motivations for government officers*

Officers are individuals who exercise governmental power and perform governmental duties in accordance with the laws of administrative agencies at all levels (e.g., national, state, and local). Generally, the roles, duties and functions of officers can be termed administrative affairs. Based on expectancy theory across different time-scales, it can be determined that short-, medium-, and long-term expectations constitute the working incentive-motivation structure of tourism officers. Among these, short-term expectations are the drivers to realize short-term self-interests, aiming at satisfying tourism officers' compensation targets (institutional motivation) (Jung and Yoon, 2015). For the medium-term, tourism officers' interests are more focused on overall career development (career prospects) (Duignan and Iaquinto, 2005; Wan *et al.*, 2014). Longer-term motivations are influenced by the collective pursuit of desirable strategic policies, visions or goals for the sector and society in general (macro-vision) (Colakoglu, 2012; Li, 2018).

Realistic motivation is the current incentive-motivation structure implemented by a government department. Realistic motives are based on people's present needs at work. They sustain enthusiasm for tasks through specific incentives and other means. They guide and drive individuals to more reliable and higher performance levels (Eisenhardt, 1988; Jung and Yoon, 2015). Realistic incentives are extrinsic tools for enhancing the performance of government administrators. They satisfy short-term expectations for survival, development, and respect through compensation, promotion, and recognition. Therefore, realistic motivation reflects the requirement for short-term rewards including salary, bonuses, respect, and social interaction within an organization.



Career prospects are formed through people's medium-term perceptions of their jobs (Scott, 2008; Rasheed *et al.*, 2020). These perceptions are influenced by several factors including rewards and recognitions, promotions, training, and professional development opportunities (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2010; Wan *et al.*, 2014). Career prospects are key instigators for personal career development. Moreover, with more positive perceptions of career prospects and greater career expectations, people's commitment to the tourism sector increases (Wan *et al.*, 2014; Rasheed *et al.*, 2020). Job dissatisfaction, burnout, and stress might be experienced in the short term; however, individuals may compensate for these negative circumstances through greater self-expression, self-development, and even self-contribution (Steers *et al.*, 1981; Wan *et al.*, 2014). Thus, career prospects not only reflect positive beliefs about future career development, social status and self-improvement, but they also reflect rational choices for personal future career development.

Vision is an idealized, future oriented blueprint, and shared vision refers to the collective understanding of an organization's vision, mission, and core values among members of a group, which presents the unique purpose, overall direction, and practices of organizations (Colakoglu, 2012; James and Lahti, 2011; Liao and Huang, 2016). For public-sector organizations, when an government organization crafts a vision this generally specifies the shared values, goals, and culture that all involved will adopt. Moreover, visions are strategic expectations that require many years to realize. They can be expressed as slogans or 'word pictures' that create motivational images and ideas for government staff regarding future economic, social-cultural, and environmental development. Within China, the *Yuan Jing* (or macro-vision) for the tourism sector is defined by the Central Government's Ministry of

Culture and Tourism. It guides tourism officers at all geographic levels to consciously and consistently work toward the achievement of the vision. The former national tourism administration unit (CNTA, China National Tourism Administration) created the “515 strategy” in 2015, consisting of the five components of “civilization, order, safety, convenience, and growth” (Li, 2018). This strategy envisaged building tourism into a strategic pillar industry for China. It served to encourage tourism officers to act in accordance with the long-term vision for tourism.

#### *2.4. Effects of realistic motivation on job engagement, performance and satisfaction*

Job engagement represents active working experiences in which employees fully integrate with their work roles and freely express themselves during work (Kahn, 1990). This engagement is composed of three factors: vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). Job performance is an individual’s behavior to fulfill the organization’s expectations, position, and formal role (Hsieh, 2016). And job satisfaction is a positive and pleasant emotional state generated by employees after evaluating the job characteristics (Locke, 1969), as well as the comparison result between employees’ expected job and the real job they engaged in (Apriantoro and Luthfiyah, 2016). Previous researches have shown that shows that incentives and rewards, job resources, positive emotions, and organizational support are important factors for predicting job engagement, performance, and satisfaction (Saks, 2006; Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2009; Ouweneel *et al.*, 2012).

Realistic motivation is created through monetary and non-monetary incentives. Social exchange theory argues that when people provide resources, support, and assistance to others,

they will anticipate being paid back, thus achieving the goal of mutual benefit (Homans, 1958). When organizations meet employees' needs through short-term incentives, staff have the obligation to engage and perform to satisfy the requirements of their jobs. The purpose of an institutional incentive system is to allocate organizational resources through designing a series of norms and to meet the monetary, promotion, and respect needs of employees, thereby motivating them to produce more reliable and predictable performance behaviors (Eisenhardt, 1988; Jung and Yoon, 2015). In addition, realistic motivation generates positive emotional experiences, which help employees to maintain enthusiasm, and enhance job engagement and satisfaction. For example, Jung and Yoon (2015) proposed that hotel employees' benefit, pay level, and pay structure had a significant and positive effect on their job engagement, as well as had a significant and negative effect on their job withdrawal; and Apriantoro and Luthfiah (2016) indicated that corporation incentives and rewards positively predicted employees' job satisfaction, and employees' performance served as a mediation variable in the above relationships. Thus, it was hypothesized that:

- *H1a: Realistic motivation has a positive impact on the job engagement of tourism officers.*
- *H1b: Realistic motivation has a positive impact on the job performance of tourism officers.*
- *H1c: Realistic motivation has a positive impact on the job satisfaction of tourism officers.*

## *2.5. Effects of career prospects on job engagement, performance and satisfaction*

Compared with realistic motivation, career prospects depend on people's perceptions and expectations about medium-term career development based on current experiences (Rasheed *et al.*, 2020; Duignan and Iaquinto, 2005; Scott, 2008). According to prospect theory, the decision-making behavior of employees is largely determined by whether decision-makers frame decision choice as gains or losses in an uncertain environment (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). Frames of reference form the standards against which individuals evaluate their options or current status (Wan *et al.*, 2014). In other words, people evaluate their jobs based on reference points concerning what they consider to be appropriate levels of salary, promotion, development, or career prospects, and accordingly adjust their job engagement, performance, and satisfaction.

From the psychological perspective, job engagement is a state of motivation experience. Sense of meaning, sense of security, and availability are prerequisites for job engagement (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006), and also important prediction factors of employee job performance (Feng *et al.*, 2008). Kuslivan and Kuslivan (2010) believe that tourism practitioners usually evaluate career prospects according to compensation, promotion, and career development. When employees have positive perceptions of career prospects, they will be positive about their future job compensation, promotion, and development, thus reducing their uncertainty and insecurity. And Wan *et al.* (2014) confirmed that hospitality and tourism students perceived career prospect determined their industry commitment, and then promote their job performance and satisfaction. In addition, the assessment of job satisfaction is a complex psychological process and is influenced by a variety of factors (Munir and Rahman, 2016). Salary, promotion, resource support, and career development are important factors that affect

employees' job satisfaction evaluations (Arian *et al.*, 2018). For example, Rasheed *et al.* (2020) proposed that hotel employees' perceived career opportunity was determined to be an important boundary condition in the formation of their happiness and turnover intention. Thus, it was hypothesized that:

- *H2a: Career prospects have a positive impact on the job engagement of tourism officers.*
- *H2b: Career prospects have a positive impact on the job performance of tourism officers.*
- *H2c: Career prospects have a positive impact on the job satisfaction of tourism officers.*

## *2.6. Effects of macro-vision on job engagement, performance and satisfaction*

Visions act like a bright light leading organizations toward the achievement of their missions (Colakoglu, 2012; James and Lahti, 2011; Liao and Huang, 2016). They create common expectations and shared goals of organizations and employees. The impact of visions on job engagement, performance, and satisfaction conforms to goal-setting theory (Locke and Latham, 1990), which assumes that an appropriate goal is the driving force triggering employees' positive work behavior, which improves job performance, and job satisfaction results from the realization of the goal.

Job engagement is an individual's positive, lasting, and satisfying behavior in a work situation (Kahn, 1990). The macro-vision, as a comprehensive incentive to enhance employee self-efficacy, behavioral beliefs, and work objectives, can motivate people to consciously and

actively engage in their work. It also can promote high-energy job engagement experiences and produce the performance behaviors expected by organizations. Job satisfaction reflects people's positive responses to job content or job experiences (Locke, 1969), which show the assessment of whether job characteristics meet their needs, values, and expectations (Wen, *et al.*, 2019). The macro-vision indicates the common goals, culture, and values shared by organizations and their employees (Colakoglu, 2012), and may better cement the fit between individual work characteristics and job satisfaction. Previous research confirms that visions (e.g., personal vision, organizational vision, and shared vision) have a positive impact on individuals' job engagement, performance, and satisfaction. For example, Buse and Bilimoria (2014) indicated that employee personal vision positively predicted their job engagement and loyalty; and James and Lahti (2011) confirmed that organizational vision were significantly related to levels of employee inspiration and organizational performance. Thus, it was hypothesized that:

- *H3a: Macro-vision has a positive impact on the job engagement of tourism officers.*
- *H3b: Macro-vision has a positive impact on the job performance of tourism officers.*
- *H3c: Macro-vision has a positive impact on the job satisfaction of tourism officers.*

## *2.7. Relationships among job engagement, performance and satisfaction*

Job engagement results from positive and satisfying psychological events, which are embodied in highly stimulating physical, cognitive, and emotional experiences in workplaces. Thus, job performance and satisfaction are the common direct outcome of job engagement. For example, Kahn (1990) argued that job engagement improves job performance when he

proposed the concept of job engagement. In tourism and hospitality context, Li *et al.* (2012) and Li *et al.* (2016) proposed that employees' job engagement had a positive impact on their performance. In addition, job engagement has a positive role in promoting the job performance of employees in different work situations (Hakanen *et al.*, 2006). For example, Yeh (2013) confirmed that hotel employees' job engagement positively predicted their job satisfaction. Thus, it was hypothesized that:

- *H4a: Chinese tourism officers' job engagement has a positive impact on their job performance.*
- *H4b: Chinese tourism officers' job engagement has a positive impact on their job satisfaction.*

The relationship between job performance and job satisfaction is a controversial theoretical proposition. Some scholars assert that job satisfaction has a positive impact on job performance, for example, Karatepe and Vatankhah (2015) confirmed the positive effect of career satisfaction on service recovery performance. Others argue that job performance is an important predictor of job satisfaction, for example, Apriantoro and Luthfiah (2016) indicated that employee job performance had a positive impact on their job satisfaction. Additionally, Hsieh (2016) proposed and confirmed the simultaneity and their interaction between job performance and job satisfaction, and the differences and similarities of the public, private, and nonprofit sector employees were investigated. Based upon the Porter-Lawler model, this research posits that job satisfaction is a positive experience after employees achieve expected goals. In other words, when employees achieve higher job

performance, they receive internal and external rewards, and feel job satisfaction. Thus, it was hypothesized that:

- *H4c: Chinese tourism officers' job performance has a positive impact on their job satisfaction*

## 2.8. Multi-mediation effect between incentive structures and job satisfaction

According to the Porter-Lawler model, incentive management should form a positive spiral oriented to job performance and job satisfaction. Specifically, incentive leads to a person's effort, and the resulting job performance; rewards are based upon performance and, when received, lead to job satisfaction. Thereafter, job satisfaction tends to spur further effort (Porter and Lawler, 1968). In this research, realistic motivation, career prospects, and macro-vision were assumed to be the perceived incentives for respondents in the short-, medium-, and long-term, and job engagement indicates individual effort. Therefore, it was proposed that there is a mediating effect of incentives (i.e., realistic motivation, career prospects, and macro-vision) as independent variable, engagement and performance as mediation variables, and satisfaction as dependent variable. Based on the above hypothesis, realistic motivation, career prospects, and macro-vision has a positive impact on employees job engagement, performance, and satisfaction (Jung and Yoon, 2015; Wan *et al.*, 2014; Buse and Bilimoria, 2014). And job engagement was confirmed to be a determinant variable for promoting performance and satisfaction (Li *et al.*, 2012; Li *et al.*, 2016), and job performance positively predicted satisfaction (Apriantoro and Luthfiyah, 2016). Thus, based on Porter-Lawler model as well as previous results, it was hypothesized that:



- *H5: There are multiple mediating effects among the incentive perception and job satisfaction of tourism officers.*

Based upon the literature review and the stated hypotheses, the proposed research model is shown in Figure 1.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

### **3. Research design**

#### *3.1. Survey instrument*

All the variables were measured with validated scales that have been widely employed in related research. The variables were measured on 7-point Likert scales, and some items were slightly revised due to the research context. By using the back-translation method, the English scales were converted into Chinese versions and then translated back into English with a research team that consisted of one English professor and one Chinese professor to ensure content validity.

The questionnaire comprised two parts with the first including the demographic information of respondents, including gender, marital status, age, education, position, and years of work. The second part included the scale items for six variables (Appendix 1). Five items based on Kankanhalli *et al.* (2005) were used to measure realistic motivation. Five items based on Wang *et al.* (2014) formed career prospects. The measurement of macro-vision combined the tourism development vision (Li, 2018) provided by CNTA and the shared vision scale drawn from Colakoglu (2012), with a total of five items. Nine items based on Schaufeli *et al.* (2016) measured job engagement (UWES-9). Four items based on Chen *et*

*al.* (2011) for job performance; and three items based on Smith *et al.* (1969) for job satisfaction, and it has been adopted in various context (Drydakis, 2017).

### 3.2. Data collection

To ensure the representativeness of the research sample, a survey was conducted in 31 provinces of China. The DMOs included three types: provincial, municipal, and county tourism departments. The research started with a pre-test in June 2017, and 205 valid questionnaires were collected to test the reliability of the six variables in the proposed research model. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for realistic motivation (0.901), career prospects (0.963), macro-vision (0.960), job engagement (0.976), job performance (0.919), and job satisfaction (0.910) were all over 0.8, and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the whole questionnaire was 0.974, showing that the questionnaire had reasonably good internal consistency.

The formal survey began from August to October 2017, and the questionnaire was distributed through convenience sampling. In addition, the survey was conducted online through a leading market research website in China ([www.wjx.cn](http://www.wjx.cn)), and the hyperlink to the survey, completion requirements, and research purposes were sent to supervisor of destination tourism department of each surveyed areas for checking, and then were forwarded to tourism officers at various positions with their assistance. The research team ensured anonymity of respondents, and highlighted that there is no absolute right or wrong answer for each item. A total of 713 responses was collected, and 650 valid responses were used for further analysis. The overall effective response rate was 91.2%. Since the survey was assisted

by the supervisors of tourism departments, and forwarded in the WeChat work group of tourism officers, it has a high effective response rate. The profile of respondents is shown in Table I.

[Insert Table I about here]

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Common method variance tests

Steps were taken to prevent common method bias, including varying the order and reversing the direction of items, and assuring respondents of anonymity. However, the survey was conducted with the same measurement system within a specific period of time. After the data were collected, the variation inflation factor (VIF) was tested and the VIFs of each independent variable were less than 3 in the regression model (Table IV), which indicates that multicollinearity was not a major concern of this research. In addition, controls for potential error were used to avoid negative effects on results. The original six-factor model was transformed into a seven-factor model by introducing a latent variable, the common method factor, into the structural model.

As Table II shows, the chi-square value changed significantly ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 258.363$ ,  $\Delta df = 31$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Moreover, the values of GFI, IFI, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and RMR changed slightly. Thus, there was no significant effect of common method biases among the measured variables, and the results of the model test were acceptable.

[Insert Table II about here]

#### 4.2. Reliability and validity tests

AMOS software was used to conduct the confirmatory factor analysis to establish the basis for the construction of the best model. The test results of the confirmatory factor analysis (Table III) were above the recommended level suggested by Hooper *et al.* (2008):  $\chi^2/df = 2.830$  ( $1 <, <3$ ), RMSRA = 0.053 ( $< 0.08$ ), RMR = 0.080 ( $< 0.08$ ), GFI = 0.900 ( $> 0.9$ ), NFI = 0.955 ( $> 0.9$ ), RFI = 0.946 ( $> 0.9$ ), TLI = 0.965 ( $> 0.9$ ), CFI = 0.970 ( $> 0.9$ ), PNFI = 0.799 ( $> 0.5$ ), demonstrating that the factor model fitted well with the data. The factor loadings of all items were greater than 0.7, and the average variances extracted (AVEs) were greater than 0.5, and the composite reliabilities (CRs) were greater than 0.7, indicating good construct validity.

[Insert Table III about here]

#### 4.3. Correlation analysis

There were strong correlations among the main variables (Table IV). The square roots of the AVEs for each factor were above 0.50 and much larger than the correlation of the specific factor with any of the other factors in the model.

[Insert Table IV about here]

#### 4.4. Structural model estimation and hypotheses testing

The structural equation modeling (SEM) function provided by AMOS 21.0 was applied. The number of bootstrap samples was 2,000 with a 95% confidence interval. The overall

model fit indices suggested that the data fit well (Hooper *et al.*, 2008) and could be used for hypothesis testing.

[Insert Table V about here]

As presented in Table V, realistic motivation had a significant and positive effect on job engagement ( $\beta = 0.500$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.151$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), which supported hypotheses H1a and H1c (Figure 2). Career prospects had a significant and positive impact on job engagement ( $\beta = 0.198$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.210$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), supporting H2a and H2c. Macro-vision had a significant and positive influence on job engagement ( $\beta = 0.226$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and job performance ( $\beta = 0.184$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), supporting H3a and H3b. Job engagement had a significant and positive effect on job performance ( $\beta = 0.522$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.417$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), supporting H4a and H4b. Job engagement also had a significant and positive impact on job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.185$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), supporting H4c.

[Insert Figure 2 about here]

To investigate mediating effects, the bias-corrected bootstrapping method was employed. The results showed that there was a significant complete mediating effect between realistic motivation and job performance, with a mediating effect value of 0.261 ( $p = 0.001$ ), and a significant partial mediating effect between realistic motivation and job satisfaction, with a mediating effect value of 0.265 ( $p = 0.001$ ). There was a significant complete mediating effect between career prospects and job performance, with a mediating effect value of 0.103 ( $p = 0.001$ ), and a significant partial mediating effect between career prospects and job

satisfaction, with a mediating effect value of 0.107 ( $p = 0.001$ ). There was a significant partial mediating effect between macro-vision and job performance, with a mediating effect value of 0.118 ( $p = 0.001$ ), and a significant complete mediating effect between macro-vision and job satisfaction, with a mediating effect value of 0.150 ( $p = 0.001$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 5 was also supported.

Through comparing the direct, mediating, and total effects, it was found that the impacts of realistic motivation on job performance (H1b), career prospects on job performance (H2b), and macro-vision on job satisfaction (H3c) were supported through complete mediating effects. Thus, all hypotheses were confirmed.

## **5. Conclusion and discussion**

### *5.1. conclusions*

This research explored the incentive-motivation structures for Chinese government DMO officers by applying expectancy theory. The effect of realistic motivation, career prospects, and macro-vision on tourism officers job engagement, performance, and satisfaction was investigated, and the research hypothesis was all supported (Table VI). The main conclusions are as follows.

[Insert Table VI about here]

First, realistic motivation, career prospects, and macro-vision were reflected to be the working incentive-motivation structure for tourism officer in the short-, medium-, and long-term expectation. In the short-term, tourism officers have the instant needs and self-interests of salary promotion, reward, position development, and respect. In the medium-term, career

prospect and career development are the core expectation factor that motivates tourism officers. In the long-term, tourism macro-vision proposed by government served as the Longer-term expectations, which is macro-strategic goal and development blueprint of tourism industry that can motivate tourism officers' beliefs, behaviors and performances.

Second, based on Porter-Lawler model, this research uncovered the incentives effects of realistic motivation, career prospect, and macro-vision of tourism officers. Specifically, realistic motivation, career prospect, and macro-vision have a positive impact on tourism officers' job engagement, performance, and satisfaction. Also, job engagement and job performance mediated the influences of incentives (i.e., realistic motivation, career prospect, and macro-vision) on tourism officers' job satisfaction. These results were in line with the research findings of Jung and Yoon (2015), Wan *et al.* (2014), and Buse and Bilimoria (2014) logically, which indicated that it is highly predictive to examine the impact mechanism of tourism officers' incentives using Porter-Lawler model.

## *5.2. Theoretical implications*

First, based on expectancy theory, this research delineates three timeframes, namely short-, medium-, and long-term expectations, and structural motivational levels were introduced: realistic motivations, career prospects, and macro-visions. Currently, the critical role of government departments and tourism officers for destination received great attention (Yang *et al.*, 2008; Wen *et al.*, 2019; Fong *et al.*, 2020), and the complex and hierarchical needs and motivations of government officers was well discussed (Perry and Porter, 1982; Khoshnevis and Tahmasebi, 2016). However, the incentive-motivation structure of

destination tourism officer has not been investigated. This research proposed that destination tourism officers in China have diverse and hierarchical motivations, which not only have short-term motivations and incentives (e.g., salaries, bonuses, entertainment and leisure), but also medium-term including career development. Additionally, there are long-term expectations to pursue senior government visions and policies and promote economic and societal development. Therefore, the theoretical contribution of this research is to construct incentive-motivation framework of destination tourism officers from the perspective of expectancy theory across different time-scales. This research provided new insights for the investigation of HRM for destination tourism officers, as well as a new application and extension of expectancy theory.

Second, using the Porter-Lawler model, this research confirmed the effectiveness of destination government incentive, and revealed the multiple-mediation mechanism between tourism officers perceived incentives and their job satisfaction, which provides a reference framework and theoretical basis for incentive management of destination tourism officers. Due to data access and acquisition difficulties, there are few empirical research with the target of tourism officers, as well as the effectiveness of destination government incentives. It is of great importance to uncover the effect of tourism officers' incentive-motivation for destination government incentive management as well as the prosperity of destination. Thus, Realistic motivation, career prospects, and macro-vision were used in this research as incentive-motivations of tourism officers, and the direct and indirect effects of incentives on tourism officers job engagement, performance, and satisfaction were confirmed. This research provided theoretical basis and evidence for the effect of tourism officers incentives,



and extended the Porter-Lawler model in field of destination government HRM (Porter and Lawler, 1968).

Third, rooted in the unique political system and government administration system, this research identified the incentive-motivation structure and its effect of Chinese tourism officers, which provided a theoretical basis and evidences for optimizing the incentive structures for Chinese government tourism officers. Different countries have diverse social system, government administration systems, and governance culture (Caijia, 2000; Hwang and Akdede, 2011; Marti and Kasperskaya, 2015), and the intervention of government departments and tourism officer in destination development is perhaps most visible in developing economies (Yang *et al.*, 2008). China has unique administration system and political background, and has a large and growing domestic and outbound tourism market (UNWTO, 2018). In the context of challenging tourism administrative system, such as industry regulatory and control challenges, safety and security problems, and inadequate policy implementation (Wu *et al.*, 2014), the tourism officers incentives of Chinese destination government have developed an incentive-motivation framework composing of short-term institutional incentives, medium-term career prospect incentives, and long-term macro-visions incentives in practice and experience. Based on that, focused on the individuals' motivations and behaviors of destination tourism officers, this research provided empirical evidence from the Chinese context for understanding the incentives of destination government department and their effects.

### *5.3. Managerial implications*

First, government departments must recognize officer needs and motivations in the short-, medium-, and long-terms, and match these with the most appropriate incentive programs. Specifically, government departments should develop tailored incentive schemes, and adapt these to local conditions to achieve the optimum motivational effects. For example, for individuals with a strong priority on immediate compensation such as salary and other monetary rewards, the incentive program should be built around quantitative indicators of performance with clear incremental levels as promotions are earned. Those with strong personal career development expectations should receive well-structured career planning advice, training, and other professional career development opportunities. For officers with a stronger sense of public-sector motivation and need for self-realization, the incentive programs should have a stronger emphasis on goal-setting and vision guidance.

Second, government departments should emphasize the critical role of job engagement. For greater vigor, skill training and communication abilities must be strengthened, and more relaxed and pleasant working atmospheres need to be created. Government departments can also adopt measures such as personalized tasks, flexible working hours, and simplified work procedures to increase work passion and enthusiasm. Government departments should take steps to strengthen officers' dedication, rewarding and commending those who exhibit selfless service for the benefit of tourism sector development and society. For absorption, governments should vest officers with appropriate job autonomy in the process of recruitment, training, task performance, and promotion. Also, excessive interference and supervision of officers should be avoided.

Third, this research also indicated that the scores of Chinese tourism officers on career

prospect was the lowest (Mean=4.818), followed by realistic motivation (Mean=4.967) and macro-vision (Mean=5.954). These results showed that destination tourism department in China should make a good career development plan and career development direction for tourism officer, and shape tourism officers' positive beliefs in the future prospect of their careers, social status, and self-improvement. In addition, destination tourism department in China should optimized of the institutional incentive system, and set appropriate performance targets, rewards, and punishments, so as to create a good organizational incentive atmosphere. The destination tourism department should also continue to portray and share the development vision and macro-vision of China tourism industry to tourism officers.

#### *5.4. Limitations and future research directions*

There are limitations to this research that need to be acknowledged. First, the questionnaire survey was conducted with the same measurement system within a certain period of time. Future research could employ a cross-sectional design or use the experimental method to test the conceptual model. Second, the respondents were from 31 provinces in China, at the provincial, city, and county levels. However, China has varied and complex geographic and social conditions, and regional economic development levels and administrative systems are also different. Future research can be designed for a specific area to better generalize the conclusions. Third, this research explored the incentive-motivation structures at the individual officer level, and future research should adopt an organizational-level perspective. Finally, other constructs should be introduced to deepen the understanding of the needs, motivations, and incentives for government tourism officers, such as include organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, performance management

systems, and social capital.

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