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The effect of proactive personality on professional commitment through career mindfulness in tour guidance students

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the mediating role of career mindfulness (CM) in the relationship between proactive personality (PP) and professional commitment (PC) among Turkish undergraduate students aiming for a career in tour guiding. Despite the importance of PP and mindfulness in career success, previous studies have not tested this relationship using the CM scale. Data collected from 592 students via online and face-to-face surveys between 1 November and 20 December 2023 were analyzed using structural equation modelling within the mediation framework. The findings revealed that PP did not have a direct significant effect on PC; however, PP positively predicted CM, and CM significantly increased PC. The results indicate that the effect of personality tendencies on professional attitudes can be mediated by career-focused self-regulation processes, such as CM, in the context of tour guiding. By integrating CM into the career development literature, the study contributes to personality–attitude relationships in a mechanism-based manner and generates implications for education and industry practice.

Keywords: Proactive personality, Career mindfulness, Professional commitment, Tour guidance students

ETHICS & CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS (CREDIT)

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1. Introduction

Personality traits are key factors that affect hospitality and tourism students' (HTS) career success and employability (Tsai et al., 2024). These traits may shape their career interests and intentions (Harb et al., 2024). PP, in particular, enhances experiential learning and self-efficacy (Yang, Wong, & Destech Publicat, 2018) and fosters innovative behavior (Su & Zhang, 2020). PP also positively impacts job preparation by boosting self-efficacy (Kusumo, Jasfar, & Warsindah, 2022) and strengthening career exploration through adaptability (Lu et al., 2024).

In the hospitality and tourism industry (HTI), studies examining the PP of food and beverage employees (Tekeli, 2021), accommodation staff (Liu et al., 2024), and tour leaders (Teng & Chen, 2019) have been observed. Additionally, Tsai et al. (2024) conducted research on the PP of HTS. Apart from HTS, the relationship between students' PP and PC (Yousaf, Sanders, & Shipton, 2013) and career awareness (Lambert, 2003) was explored.

Career awareness refers to an individual's ability to manage their career decision-making processes and personal goals consciously (Hirschi, 2012). Individuals with higher career awareness make more informed choices, which in turn increases their PC (Kim & Jeong, 2018). Moreover, while the relationship between career awareness (Wu & Zhao, 2022), academic career awareness (Dağyar, Kasalak, & Uğurlu, 2020), and certain professional attitudes has been explored, no research has been conducted on HTS.

Since CM is a newly introduced concept in the literature by Başoda (2023), it has not yet been researched. However, specific topics that theoretically underpin this concept have been explored. For example, studies on mindfulness in HTS remain quite limited (Başoda & Gümüş Dönmez, 2022). While some scholars emphasize the importance of career awareness for HTS (Liu et al., 2023), it remains an underexplored concept. Unlike concepts and scales such as career awareness, occupational awareness, career consciousness, etc., a scale specifically addressing CM for students has been developed (Başoda, 2023), along with the conceptualization of career adaptation mindfulness (Başoda, 2020). Most other concepts are defined along a predominantly cognitive awareness line, centered on the student's capacity for knowledge and understanding of the career world (resources, opportunities, requirements, options). CM, however, builds awareness of the ability/state to pay deliberate attention to the present moment without judgment and to actively process the information that comes in at that moment, emphasizing "how that information is processed and used in the current experience" rather than "knowing the information". Therefore, CM approaches the student's career awareness not only as content (occupation/job/career information), but also as an experiential and process-based structure that unfolds within the flow of purpose–input (perceiving current requirements)–processing (effort to translate into action)–output (specialization/competence). Consequently, CM offers a distinction that is more "action and self-regulation focused" than classical definitions of awareness, by making visible what the student can do at the current stage, the level of competence they have achieved with this, and the cognitive-emotional-behavioral integrity within which they sustain it.

Furthermore, research has examined the impact of tour guiding students' mindfulness on their PC (Başoda & Gümüş Dönmez, 2022) and industrial commitment (Gül & Gül, 2022), as well as the effects of experiential vocational mindfulness on attitudinal learning outcomes (Başoda & Acar, 2022). Additionally, the influence of tour guidance students' mindfulness on academic self-efficacy and career stress has been investigated (Akşit Aşık, 2019). A study on occupational awareness among tourism employees was also conducted by Zopiatis, Theocharous, and Constanti (2016).

Apart from HTS, the relationships between students' mindfulness and professional thoughts (Galles et al., 2019), professional identity, and career adaptability (De Abreu, 2020) have been examined. Moreover, research has been conducted on the relationships between students' occupational awareness and career decision-making processes (Kalat, 1977), career development (Hashish, 2019), career interests (Dağyar et al., 2020), job search self-efficacy (Wu & Zhao, 2022), and career readiness (Van, 2022). However, no study has investigated the relationship between HTS' PP, CM, and PC. PC is an individual's emotional and attitudinal attachment to their profession (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). The seasonal variability, challenging working conditions, and professional uncertainties in the HTI may negatively affect tour guides' PCs. Therefore, strategies to enhance PC should be developed during HTS education.

Finally, no studies have investigated the mediating role of CM in the relationship between PP and PC. Therefore, this study distinguishes itself from prior work and addresses significant gaps in the literature regarding the relationship among PP, CM, and PC. It also uses CM, a newly developed concept and measure that integrates mindfulness with the career process, and PC is tailored explicitly to HTS.

2. Literature

Proactive Personality

PP encompasses the motivation and behavioral tendency to actively create and adapt to environmental changes, marked by the ability to identify opportunities, take initiative, and persist in overcoming obstacles (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Kim et al., 2005). These individuals adopt a solution-oriented approach, using positive attitudes to expand their influence and focusing on decision outcomes rather than existing circumstances (Iloke et al., 2021). They anticipate and resolve potential problems before they arise, correct perceived flaws, and act decisively based on acquired knowledge (Erdoğan & Bauer, 2005). Proactivity also fosters resilience, enabling individuals to develop positive resources and leverage stressors for growth (Bakker, 2011). In professional contexts, proactive individuals dynamically improve their environments through collaboration and support systems, enhancing career adaptability, achievement, and early employment outcomes (Valls et al., 2020). PP is also associated with self-improvement, motivation to learn, and innovative behavior, contributing to effective and sustainable success in both personal and professional spheres (Fuller & Marler, 2009).

PP is a personality-based disposition that refers to a relatively stable tendency to shape one's environment, rather than a specific work behavior (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Crant, 2000). In this respect, PP differs from situation-sensitive outputs such as proactive behaviors (e.g., speaking up, taking initiative, job crafting); PP can be considered a higher-order personality trait that increases the likelihood of these behaviors emerging (Parker & Collins, 2010). Furthermore, while PP may be related to broad personality dimensions such as extraversion or general achievement orientation, it is emphasized that it has a unique explanatory power, particularly with its components of "seeing opportunities–taking initiative–persistence" (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Fuller & Marler, 2009).

The effect of PP at a theoretical level is explained by the individual developing proactive goals and maintaining these goals: the proactive motivation approach bases proactive outcomes on the "can do–reason to–energized to" channels (Bindl & Parker, 2011; Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). Similarly, the trait activation perspective suggests that the effect of PP is enhanced by environmental cues and role demands; proactive orientation becomes more visible, particularly in contexts involving uncertainty, high interaction, and performance pressure (Tett & Burnett, 2003). This framework provides a suitable basis for explaining how PP, in practice-oriented vocational education where performance in the field is decisive, relates to career adaptability, early career outcomes, and sustainable development by mobilizing learning resources (Parker & Collins, 2010; Valls et al., 2020).

Career Mindfulness

The concepts developed based on general awareness are as follows: *career awareness* (Lian, 2023), *professional awareness* (Tang & Goh, 2023), *school-to-work awareness* (Jones & Womble, 1997), *world of work awareness* (Coetzee, 2023), and *career consciousness* (Mohácsi & Fényes, 2022). Students' career awareness is explored through psychological, sociological, and economic perspectives (Arterbury et al., 1976). Psychology focuses on abilities, preferences, and values; sociology is concerned with the influence of social environments, and economics is concerned with career-related knowledge. Despite their differences, all perspectives emphasize students' attitudes, values, and interests regarding work life (Enderlein, 1976). Additionally, career awareness encompasses the sum of knowledge, preferences, and values related to a career (Nasir & Lin, 2013).

Some researchers conceptualized career awareness as a component of analyzing psychological awareness (Carlson, 1972), career/vocational maturity (Patton et al., 2005), career adaptability (Rottinghaus et al., 2012), self-awareness (Xue, 2012), vocational development (Ndung'u, 2018), career opportunities (Mahir et al., 2019), career future (Park et al., 2019), professional competence (De Boever et al., 2021), career management (Fényes et al., 2021), and career readiness (Bedu-Addo et al., 2022). Considering the approaches mentioned above, career awareness primarily centers on understanding one's profession (Bjorklund et al., 2004). From this perspective, career awareness is a highly complex concept, encompassing all processes related to the profession (Jiang, 2017). However, the primary rationale for career awareness scales is to measure knowledge of career requirements (Babenko et al., 2012). Consequently, most existing scales were developed within this framework. These scales focused on assessing students' knowledge of career requirements, which shape their perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes about their careers (Başoda, 2023).

It is possible to categorize the components of knowledge capacity emphasized in previously developed scales into three main categories: *individual characteristics* (skills, beliefs, etc.), *social, psychological, physical, economic, and organizational characteristics of career* (opportunities, resources, roles, etc.), and *the harmony between the individual and social/work life* (career progression paths, strategies, planning, etc.). Therefore, most developed scales focus on technical details, each including only a limited number. This stems from the varying answers to the question "What knowledge is necessary for a career?" across conceptualizations of career awareness. The absence of technical details (such as employment trends, etc.) on one scale compared to others may lead to neglecting the measurement of students'

awareness within their capacities. A student's capacity for career-related knowledge can vary depending on their educational level and numerous other factors. Another point is that some scales are designed with a future-oriented focus. However, awareness is a psychological state that is closely related to the present moment. Therefore, it has been concluded that there is a need for a scale that can measure each student's overall career awareness (without delving into technical details) based on their capacity, taking into account cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors related to their career (Başoda, 2023).

On the other hand, the concepts developed based on mindfulness include *career adaptation mindfulness* (Başoda, 2020), *experiential vocational mindfulness* (Başoda & Acar, 2022), and *career mindfulness* (Başoda, 2023). Başoda (2020) conceptualized career adaptation mindfulness among tour guidance students using a mindfulness approach within personal resources and person-occupation fit theories. This concept is particularly significant for tour-guiding students, given the variability and competitive conditions in the HTI. Başoda and Acar (2022) also conceptualized experiential vocational mindfulness as grounded in mindful learning and mindfulness.

Recently, Başoda (2023) conceptualized CM into four domains: mindfulness (root), career development (goal), effort adequacy (input and process), and professional specialization (output). As a root domain, mindfulness is a cognitive state or skill in which an individual intentionally focuses their attention on the present moment without judgment and actively processes the information of that moment (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Mindfulness is also a psychological state in which a student focuses on the present moment and their experiences without judgment, being mentally alert and prepared (Stankov et al., 2020). The benefits of mindfulness for students can be listed as follows: focus (Bishop et al., 2004), resource evaluation (Voydanoff, 2005), increased motivation (Galles et al., 2019), reduced burnout (Li et al., 2017), opportunity evaluation (Zarotti et al., 2020), increased curiosity (Markič & Kordeš, 2016), staying current (Stankov et al., 2020), planning (Feldt et al., 2021), stress reduction (Akşit Aşık, 2019), development of qualities (Leland, 2015), enhanced learning (Öksüz & Yiğit, 2020), reduced rumination, increased PC (Başoda & Gümüş Dönmez, 2022), etc. According to Başoda's (2023) conceptualization, the student aims to build a professional career (goal). Effort adequacy or level refers to the student's ability to perceive (input) and fulfill (process) the current professional requirements necessary for their chosen career. Professional specialization refers to the degree of competence a student has gained through their efforts in their current professional stage (output). Therefore, he defined CM as "the student's level of notice regarding their efforts and abilities to fulfill current professional requirements and achieve specialization in their careers by keeping themselves mentally alert and present, focusing their attention on their current career-related experiences and developmental stage without judgment" (p.100).

The CM scale is distinguished from other scales because of its development based on mindfulness, being brief and concise due to its minimal number of items, measuring present perceptions, ensuring cognitive, emotional, and behavioral coherence, being process-oriented in terms of goal-input-process-output, applicability to students at all educational levels, and adopting a holistic approach without technical details. Moreover, current global developments make both professional requirements (external change) and the students' perceptions and needs regarding fulfilling these requirements (internal change) dynamic (Mohácsi & Fényes, 2022). Therefore, it is likely that the student may experience a conflict between external and internal changes due to getting caught up in past negative experiences and future anxieties (Başoda & Gümüş Dönmez, 2022). For this reason, the CM scale is a tool that measures the students' awareness by keeping them present and focused on the information and experiences they are gaining for their careers at that moment.

The CM scale is also designed to assess awareness and the active engagement and evaluation of this awareness in the present moment regarding career-related goals and processes. It focuses on developing specific skills and abilities for career advancement. It encompasses various dimensions, from accessing information to management, seeking support, learning, motivation, staying updated, improving qualifications, and seizing career opportunities. This multidimensional perspective comprehensively addresses professional and personal growth (Başoda, 2023).

Professional Commitment

PC is a significant phenomenon that determines how individuals establish specific norms of attachment to their work (Lee et al., 2000). According to Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), PC represents the driving force that compels individuals to exhibit goal-oriented behaviors. In the career-related literature, PC is one of the most frequently examined concepts, defined as the sum of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral tendencies or resources that individuals possess regarding their intention to work or their commitment to different aspects of the HTI (Başoda & Gümüş Dönmez, 2022). Emotional PC begins when an individual chooses a profession and is shaped by their professional experiences (Weng & McElroy, 2012). This type of PC reflects individuals' emotional bond with their profession, leading them to voluntarily continue their careers, join related associations, and actively engage in professional development (Bagraim, 2003).

PC positively influences prosocial motivation (Can & Aykaç, 2020) and has meaningful relationships with competence and turnover intentions (Numminen et al., 2016). Emotional PC also impacts the intention and action to enhance

professional skills (Chang et al., 2021) and directly affects career motivation (Najib & Aljanabi, 2020). Among students, higher PC is associated with lower academic burnout (Zhuang, Chen, & Li, 2020), reduced learning burnout (Yu et al., 2023a), and a stronger professional identity (Jue & Ha, 2018). Tur guides' personality traits significantly influence PC (Özoğul, 2017), and their PC diminishes turnover intentions (Yumuk & Koçoğlu, 2020). These findings highlight PC's significant influence on various factors related to one's profession, suggesting its potential to shape attitudes toward work.

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

This study proposes a model based on the relationships among PP, CM, and PC (Figure 1). Studies exploring the relationship between PP and PC are notably limited. Many studies provide significant evidence regarding the relationship between PP and career-related factors. Previous research has shown that students' PP is linked to career decision-making self-efficacy (Hsieh & Huang, 2014), career maturity (Park, 2015), career adaptability (Wu, Chen, & Liu, 2020), and subjective career success during the career exploration phase (Yu et al., 2023b). Although some studies examine the relationship between PP and PC among employees (Jiang, 2017; Morgan et al., 2012; Yousaf et al., 2013; Vandenberghe & Basak Ok, 2013), research on this relationship among students is limited (Messara & Dagher, 2010).

CAPS (Mischel & Shoda, 1995) emphasizes that PP operates not as a fixed trait in isolation, but through cognitive-emotional processes triggered by situational cues. Within this framework, field applications and learning experiences involving intensive interaction in tour guiding training can lay the groundwork for increased psychological investment in the profession by activating "cognitive-emotional units" such as opportunity recognition, self-efficacy, and positive emotional states in students with PP. The conditions under which this process translates into behavior are explained by the Trait Activation Theory (TAT; Tett & Burnett, 2003): the highly interactive, uncertain, and performance-demanding structure of tour guide training provides powerful triggers that reveal proactive tendencies such as initiative-taking, leadership attempts, and responsibility-taking. Thus, the cognitive-emotional functioning of PP, as defined in CAPS, is more easily activated in the context of guide training and transforms into behavioral patterns that nurture the student's attitude and commitment towards the profession.

Finally, the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR; Hobfoll, 2002) explains why these proactive processes can produce more lasting and empowering outcomes: Students with PP use their education, internships, and field experience to accumulate new resources (skills, social support, self-efficacy, psychological capital, etc.); resource accumulation can also contribute to perceiving the profession as more meaningful and sustainable, thereby strengthening PC. Therefore, when CAPS's process logic (how it works), TAT's context logic (when it activates), and COR's resource logic (why it creates lasting effects) are considered together, it is predicted that PP works through a holistic mechanism that increases PC in tour guide students.

Students' competence and control experience in tour guiding is shaped more by role performance in the field (cultural narration, group management, and emotional labor) than by classroom knowledge accumulation (İrigüler & Güler, 2016; Ön Esen & Gülmez, 2018). In this context, PP contributes to students' ability to frame challenges as "manageable tasks" and strengthen their "I can do it" attitude by triggering their tendency to take initiative and actively seek application/feedback during performance episodes; the same process can strengthen identification with the guidance role and PC by supporting the accumulation of resources such as skills and self-efficacy. However, since PC in tour guiding education is strongly influenced by early sector exposure and structural uncertainties regarding employment/working conditions, the effect of PP on PC may not be directly apparent in some cases and may instead manifest more prominently indirectly through career-focused self-regulation processes such as CM; therefore, the absence of a direct effect is theoretically possible. Nevertheless, it is expected that PP will increase PC. In this regard, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H1: Proactive personality positively and significantly influences professional commitment.

Lambert (2003) demonstrated a positive relationship between PP and professional awareness among employees; PP also influences career attitudes (Lochab & Nath, 2020). This relationship is particularly meaningful for tour guide students, as guide training requires students to constantly review their career goals, strengths, weaknesses, and development needs "in the moment" through field applications, intensive interaction, and performance-based tasks. In this context, the mechanism by which PP increases CM can be explained through three complementary perspectives: According to CAPS, proactive students frame field cues as opportunities, activating career-related cognitive-emotional processes (e.g., self-efficacy, focus of attention, emotion regulation), which in turn prepares the ground for more conscious monitoring of their current career perception TAT indicates that these processes are more easily translated into behavior under contextual triggers such as application opportunities and role-performance demands in tourism education. COR, on the other hand, suggests that proactive students can sustainably strengthen this awareness by accumulating resources such as skills/self-efficacy through seeking feedback, active application, and utilizing social support networks. Particularly during performance episodes such as presentation rehearsals, group management, and instant problem-solving in guidance

training, proactive students who engage in more trial-feedback-correction cycles can make the purpose-action-outcome connection more visible, thereby strengthening CM in the present moment (Ön Esen & Gülmez, 2018; Thomson, Tanaka & Morikoshi, 2021). However, since the development of CM may depend not only on individual proactive tendencies but also on the quality of the program's application opportunities and the reflective feedback climate, the effect of PP on CM may weaken in different contexts. Therefore, the following hypothesis has been developed in line with relevant empirical findings and theoretical frameworks:

H2: Proactive personality positively influences career mindfulness.

According to Kalat (1977), students' awareness of their professional interests is more closely connected to career decision-making. Hashish (2019) found that students' professional awareness positively impacts their careers and self-efficacy in skill development. The researcher emphasized that professional awareness influences students' career choices and helps them manage career barriers. Dağyar et al. (2020) found that students' awareness of their academic careers positively affects their career interests. Wu and Zhao (2022) discovered a positive link between students' professional awareness and their job search self-efficacy and career planning skills. Van (2022) also identified a positive relationship between students' professional awareness and career readiness. Some studies have specifically been conducted with tour guide students. For example, Başoda and Gümüş Dönmez (2022) found a significant and positive effect of mindfulness on PC. Başoda and Acar (2022) discovered that experiential vocational mindfulness enhances students' attitudinal learning outcomes toward the profession. Gül and Gül (2022) identified a positive connection between students' mindfulness and their commitment to the HTI.

At a theoretical level, this relationship can be explained holistically through complementary perspectives: CAPS suggests that awareness strengthens commitment by activating the cognitive-emotional processing related to the profession (e.g., meaning-making, evaluation, emotion regulation). COR emphasizes that awareness increases psychological investment in the profession by enabling more targeted use of resources such as knowledge and skills. Vocational Development Theory (VDT) positions awareness as a component of professional identity and satisfaction (Super, 1953), while Human Capital Theory (HCT) suggests that students viewing their education and skill accumulation as valuable investments for the future may support attachment to the profession (Schultz, 1961). This general framework points to a more concrete psychological mechanism in the context of tour guiding: CM enhances the internalization of professional identity and role commitment by reinforcing the understanding of the guiding role not merely as a set of technical tasks, but within the framework of a higher purpose such as cultural mediation and service responsibility (Cohen, 1985; Yu, Weiler & Ham, 2002); while also contributing to maintaining a positive attitude towards the profession by reducing the debilitating effects of stress through directing attention to the current task and regulating responses in situations requiring intense interaction and emotional labor in the field (Grossman et al., 2004; Guendelman et al., 2017). However, as PC may also be affected by employment conditions and industrial structural uncertainties in the context of tour guiding, CM reflected in PC may weaken accordingly. Therefore, the following hypothesis has been developed in line with relevant empirical findings and theoretical frameworks:

H3: Career mindfulness positively and significantly affects professional commitment.

Previous empirical findings and theoretical approaches indicate that PP significantly influences various career-related variables (Hsieh & Huang, 2014; Vandenberghe & Basak Ok, 2013). Indeed, one study found that a mindfulness-based structure can mediate the effect of PP on project innovation (Iqbal, 2022). Furthermore, research on tour-guiding students provides strong evidence that mindfulness-based structures are positively associated with indicators of attitude and commitment (Başoda & Gümüş Dönmez, 2022; Dağyar et al., 2020; Gül & Gül, 2022). In line with this accumulation, it is predicted that PP can indirectly strengthen PC through CM rather than directly affecting it. Furthermore, the positioning of CM as a relatively surface trait (Başoda, 2023), the fact that PP is a core personality trait (Hough, 2003), and the fact that PC is an attitudinal outcome (Kuşluvan & Kuşluvan, 2000) are consistent with the view that, within the framework of the personality hierarchy approach, fundamental traits shape superficial traits, and superficial traits can shape attitudes.

For tour guiding students, the mediating mechanism materializes as follows: role-performance episodes such as narration and group management in field applications enable students with PP to engage in more trial–feedback–correction cycles and reframe challenges as manageable tasks; this process strengthens CM by triggering the cognitive-emotional processing of situational cues and their transformation into behavior (CAPS/TAT). As CM strengthens, the student uses and accumulates resources such as skills and self-efficacy arising from performance experiences in a more targeted manner (COR); internalizes their professional identity by viewing the guidance role as more meaningful within the framework of cultural mediation and service responsibility (VDT), and the tendency to evaluate educational/skill accumulation as an investment for the future is reinforced (HCT). These complementary processes together suggest that the effect of PP on PC will largely manifest itself through CM in students. However, because the effect of PP on PC can also be mediated by other self-regulation resources, such as self-efficacy, career congruence, or psychological capital, the

magnitude of CM mediation may vary across contexts. In light of these findings and theoretical justifications, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

H4: *Career mindfulness mediates the relationship between proactive personality and professional commitment.*

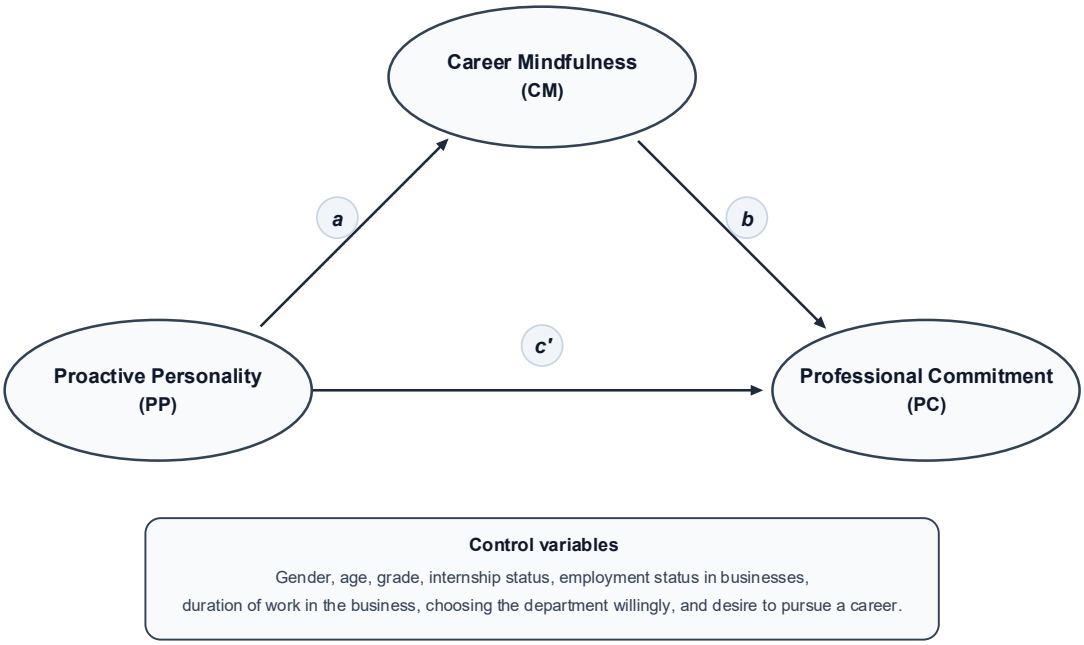

Figure 1. The mediation role of career mindfulness

Source: Elaborated by Authors

3. Methodology

Measures

The 6-item "Short Proactive Personality Scale," developed by Seibert et al. (1999) and later translated into Turkish by various researchers (e.g., Akın and Özcan, 2015), was used to measure PP. It was measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Career mindfulness was measured using the 8-item "Career Mindfulness Scale (CMS)" developed by Başoda (2023). It was measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

The 12-item "Tour Guiding Commitment Scale (TGCS)," developed by Kuşluvan and Kuşluvan (2000) and adapted for the profession of tour guiding by Başoda and Gümüş Dönmez (2022), was used to measure PC. The scale was measured using a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 4 = Strongly Agree). Each scale is unidimensional.

Sampling, Data Collection, and Analysis

Students enrolled in undergraduate tour-guiding departments at Tourism Faculties in Türkiye were included in the field study, which employed purposive sampling. The reasons for selecting these students are that undergraduate education in this field offers the most comprehensive training for tour guiding, the students' qualifications are broad in academic and professional terms, and they provide more educational and professional knowledge and experience. Initially, universities and faculties in Türkiye were identified on the Student Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM) (ÖSYM, 2023). According to this data, Tour Guiding departments are in 33 Tourism Faculties. Data was collected via online and face-to-face surveys from November 1 to December 20, 2023. A total of 605 students responded; no imputation was applied as there were no missing observations in the dataset. After outlier analysis based on Mahalanobis distance, analyses were conducted with 592 valid questionnaires.

The measurement and structural models were tested using AMOS. Furthermore, bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples was applied in the structural model to estimate path coefficients using 95% confidence intervals (CIs) (Hair et al., 2014). The control variables, including gender, degree, age, internship status, employment status in the tourism industry, duration of work in the tourism industry, willingness to choose the department, and desire to pursue a career, were added to the

structural model. The effects of the variables on the mediator and dependent variables are controlled for (adjusted), allowing the relationships in the research model to be revealed more realistically and purely (Pedhazur, 1997).

Participant's Profile

Of the participants (n=592), 61.3% were female, 27.0% were first-year students, 73.1% had not completed an internship, 57.7% had not worked in any tourism business, 80.1% had chosen the tourism guiding department voluntarily, and 77.2% intended to pursue a career in tourism guiding. Additionally, the participants' average age was 20.91 years, and their average work experience in any tourism business was 2.95 months.

4. Findings

Testing the Measurement Model

As shown in Table 1, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) revealed that the measurement model fits the data well (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). The model fit statistics were obtained as follows: $\chi 2_{(df)} = 924{,}16_{(84)}$ $p < 0.001$; $\chi 2$ /df = 3,15; PNFI = 0.82; SRMR = 0.03; RMSEA [90% CI] = 0.06; TLI = 0.93; CFI = 0.94. The fit indices were evaluated as satisfactory based on the following criteria: χ^2/df (cut-off: 2-5) (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985), TLI, CFI (cut-off: >0.90), PNFI (cut-off: values close to 1), SRMR, and RMSEA (cut-off: <0.08) (Hair et al., 2014).

All standardized loadings (SL) (cut-off: > 0.50 and p < 0.01) and average variance extracted (AVE) values (cut-off: > 0.50) confirmed convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). All composite reliability (CR) values (cut-off: > 0.70 and > AVE) and alpha (α) scores (cut-off: > 0.70) indicated that the measurements were reliable (Table 1) (Hair et al., 2014). The square roots of all AVE values (cut-off: √AVE values greater than the correlations between the latent variables), HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio; cut-off: < 0.85) (Table 2), maximum shared variance (MSV; cut-of: < AVE), and average shared variance (ASV; cut-off: < AVE) values demonstrated discriminant validity (Table 1) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Overall, these findings validated the measurement's structural validity. Thus, within the sample of tour-guiding students, all scales maintained their original factor structures and demonstrated satisfactory levels of validity and reliability.

Table 1. The results of the measurement model

Variables	SL	t*	AVE	√AVE	MSV	ASV	CR	Alpha	Mean	S.D.	SKW	KRT
Proactive Personality (PP)			0.53	0.73	0.24	0.15	0.87	0.87	3.98	0.58	-0.31	0.11
PP1	0.70	Fix							4.08	0.72	-0.28	-0.52
PP2	0.63	13.93							4.21	0.72	-0.50	-0.38
PP3	0.76	16.70							3.73	0.77	0.17	-0.74
PP4	0.78	17.02							4.12	0.75	-0.46	-0.36
PP5	0.75	16.40							3.98	0.80	-0.20	-0.87
PP6	0.75	16.42							3.75	0.75	0.05	-0.60
Career Mindfulness (CM)			0.62	0.79	0.27	0.26	0.93	0.93	3.64	0.73	-0.36	0.39
CM1	0.77	Fix							3.71	0.83	-0.49	0.14
CM2	0.78	20.46							3.52	0.88	-0.33	0.02
CM3	0.78	20.26							3.67	0.88	-0.51	0.11
CM4	0.74	19.21							3.59	0.95	-0.49	-0.11
CM5	0.79	20.53							3.61	0.93	-0.39	-0.22
CM6	0.84	22.25							3.71	0.87	-0.50	0.20
CM7	0.81	21.38							3.69	0.91	-0.53	0.04
CM8	0.79	20.75							3.61	0.92	-0.45	-0.05
Professional Commitment (PC)			0.56	0.75	0.27	0.16	0.94	0.94	3.09	0.73	0.28	0.28
PC1	0.60	Fix							3.46	0.89	-0.54	0.73
PC2	0.85	15.87							3.21	0.90	-0.18	0,14
PC3	0.66	13.34							2.78	0.99	0.19	-0.22
PC4	0.79	15.09							3.30	0.97	-0.33	-0.09
PC5	0.74	14.52							3.18	0.98	-0.17	-0.29
PC6	0.81	15.38							3.01	0.99	-0.04	-0.42
PC7	0.72	14.14							3.19	0.91	-0.05	-0.02
PC8	0.73	14.35							2.85	0.97	0.23	-0.43
PC9	0.82	15.49							2.98	0.96	0.00	-0.39
PC10	0.69	13.81							3.07	0.90	-0.08	-0.01
PC11	0.82	15.54							3.18	0.93	-0.15	-0.09
PC12	0.68	13.62							2.84	0.96	0.21	-0.25

**p < 0.001.*
Source: Elaborated by Authors

Table 1 also shows that all skewness and kurtosis values are below 1.00, well below the thresholds recommended by Kline (2016). The measurement model was estimated using ML in AMOS. Given the multivariate non-normality indicator (Mardia's multivariate skewness: z = 54.34, p < 0.001, Mardia, 1985), a bootstrap procedure with 5,000 samples was applied to obtain a robust inference, and model fit was also assessed using Bollen–Stine bootstrap (p < 0.001). As the Bollen–Stine test is a strict full-fit test, model fit was interpreted according to the general model of the fit indices. Common Method Variance (CMV) was controlled through specific procedures, including confidentiality and anonymity (Podsakoff et al., 2003). As mentioned above, semantic differences between scales were validated. Then, Harman's single-factor test revealed four factors, with the first factor explaining 38% of the total variance (cut-off: < 50%) (Fuller et al., 2016). Additionally, the Common Latent Factor (CLF) approach was applied to assess CMV. Within this scope, a model including CLF was estimated, and the standardized regression weights obtained from this model were compared with those of the corresponding model without CLF. The results showed that the structural path coefficients remained generally similar between the two models, with differences below 0.20 (max. $|\Delta\beta| = 0.183$). This finding suggests that CMV is unlikely to materially/significantly affect the main conclusions of the study.

Table 2. Intercorrelations and discriminant validity

	Gender	Degree	IS	Age	ESB	DWB	CDW	DPC	PP	CM	PC
Gender	--										
Degree	-0.06	--									
IS	-0.01	0.59**	--								
Age	-0.07	0.39**	0.40**	--							
ESB	-0.08*	0.43**	0.56**	0.28**	--						
DWB	-0.13**	0.21**	0.30**	0.51**	0.40**	--					
CDW	-0.02	0.00	-0.00	0.08*	0.16**	0.09*	--				
DPC	0.06	-0.14**	-0.08	-0.02	0.09*	0.05	0.41**	--			
PP	-0.05	0.12**	0.08	0.13**	0.11**	0.12**	0.15**	0.10*	√AVE = 0.73		
CM	0.01	0.11**	0.09*	0.17**	0.22**	0.19**	0.40**	0.34**	0.44** (0.49)	√AVE =0.79	
PC	0.06	0.02	0.10*	0.10*	0.14**	0.14**	0.36**	0.52**	0.22** (0.25)	0.47** (0.50)	√AVE =0.75

Note: **p < 0.05, **p < 0.01. The values in parentheses are the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratios. IS: Internship status, ESB: Employment status in businesses, DWB: Duration of work in businesses, CDW: Choosing the department willingly, DPC: Desire to pursue a career, PP: Proactive personality, CM: Career mindfulness, PC: Professional commitment.*

Source: Elaborated by Authors

Testing the Measurement Model

A positive and significant correlation was found between PP and CM (r = 0.44, p < 0.05) and between PP and PC (r = 0.22, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, a positive and significant relationship was identified between CM and PP. Furthermore, the structural model demonstrated a good fit with the data based on the aforementioned fit indices: $\chi^2_{(df)} = 1242.66_{(477)}$, $p < 0.001$; $\chi^2/df = 2.60$, PNFI = 0.82, SRMR = 0.03, $RMSEA_{[90\% CI]} = 0.05$, TLI = 0.92, and CFI = 0.93. Model fit was assessed using multiple criteria. CFI = 0.93 and TLI = 0.92 values are consistent with the acceptable fit ranges suggested by Marsh and Hocevar (1985) and Hair et al. (2014); however, they fall below the ≥0.95 threshold recommended for 'good fit' in some guidelines. Considering that CFI/TLI may be more sensitive to chi-square in multi-indicator measurement models, fit improvements were limited by theoretical justification, and only limited error covariances were released (MB17–MB26, MB21–MB24, MB18–MB19); otherwise, cross-loadings or additional error covariances were not included in the model. The results in Table 3 indicate that PP explained 42% of CM (direct) and 46% of PC (indirect).

Path analysis revealed that PP does not significantly affect PC directly ($\beta = 0.01$, t = 0.24, $p > 0.05$, 95% CI = -0.06 to 0.07). However, PP has a positive and significant effect on CM ($\beta = 0.42$, t = 9.75, p < 0.001, 95% CI = 0.38-0.57). CM positively and significantly affects PC ($\beta = 0.32$, t = 6.29, $p < 0.001$, CIs-95% = 0.18-0.33). Additionally, PP has a positive and significant effect on PC through CM ($\beta = 0.13$, p < 0.001, 95% CI = 0.08-0.17). Thus, hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 were accepted, while hypothesis 1 was rejected.

Table 3. The results of the structural model

Model			R^2						
		CM	0.42						
		PC	0.46						
	Path		B	*β*	*SE*	t	*p*	CIs-95%	
H_1	PP → PC		0.00	0.01	0.04	0.24	0.810	-0.06	0.07
H_2	PP → CM		0.48	0.42	0.05	9.75	0.000	0.38	0.57
H_3	CM → PC		0.26	0.32	0.04	6.29	0.000	0.18	0.33
H_4	PP → CM → PC		0.12	0.13			0.001	0.08	0.17
Control Variables	*Gender → CM*		*0.06*	*0.04*	*0.05*	*1.31*	*0.191*	*-0.02*	*0.13*
	Degree → CM		*-0.09*	*-0.06*	*0.06*	*-1.54*	*0.125*	*-0.19*	*0.01*
	IS → CM		*0.01*	*0.01*	*0.07*	*0.21*	*0.836*	*-0.08*	*0.11*
	Age → CM		*0.01*	*0.06*	*0.01*	*1.40*	*0.162*	*0.00*	*0.03*
	ESB→ CM		*0.13*	*0.10*	*0.06*	*2.36*	*0.018*	*0.04*	*0.23*
	DWB → CM		*0.00*	*0.05*	*0.00*	*1.23*	*0.218*	*-0.00*	*0.01*
	CDW → CM		*0.39*	*0.24*	*0.06*	*6.22*	*0.000*	*0.27*	*0.51*
	DPC → CM		*0.29*	*0.19*	*0.06*	*4.88*	*0.000*	*0.17*	*0.39*
	Gender → PC		*0.02*	*0.02*	*0.04*	*0.54*	*0.589*	*-0.03*	*0.07*
	Degree → PC		*0.09*	*0.07*	*0.05*	*1.84*	*0.066*	*0.00*	*0.17*
	IS → PC		*0.09*	*0.08*	*0.05*	*1.74*	*0.083*	*0.00*	*0.18*
	Age → PC		*-0.00*	*-0.04*	*0.00*	*-0.88*	*0.380*	*-0.01*	*0.00*
	ESB → PC		*-0.06*	*-0.06*	*0.05*	*-1.36*	*0.173*	*-0.13*	*0.00*
	DWB → PC		*0.00*	*0.07*	*0.00*	*1.68*	*0.093*	*0.00*	*0.00*
	CDW → PC		*0.12*	*0.09*	*0.05*	*2.47*	*0.014*	*0.03*	*0.20*
	DPC → PC		*0.54*	*0.43*	*0.06*	*9.74*	*0.000*	*0.45*	*0.63*
			B	*β*	*p*	CIs-95%			
	PP → PC (Total effect)		0.13	0.14	0.001	0.07	0.20		
	PP → PC (Direct effect)		0.00	0.01	0.865	-0.06	0.07		
	PP → PC (Indirect effect)		0.12	0.13	0.001	0.08	0.17		

Note: *IS: Internship status, ESB: Employment status in businesses, DWB: Duration of work in businesses, CDW: Choosing the department willingly, DPC: Desire to pursue a career, PP: Proactive personality, CM: Career mindfulness, PC: Professional commitment, CIs = confidence intervals.*
Source: Elaborated by Authors

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This study examined the relationships among proactive personality (PP), career mindfulness (CM), and professional commitment (PC) among tour-guiding undergraduate students, as well as the mediating role of CM in these relationships. Given that CM is a new conceptualization and that similar models have been tested to a limited extent with a sample of tour-guiding students, the findings were evaluated in light of related literature and theoretical frameworks rather than through direct one-to-one comparisons. While the findings reveal a meaningful pattern among the variables, two outcomes of the model are particularly noteworthy: the lack of a significant direct effect of PP on PC (rejection of H1) and the high level of effects of choosing the department and desire to pursue a career, which appear to be stronger than proactivity. This pattern indicates that, in the context of tour guiding, PC is fueled not only by personality-based tendencies but rather by factors such as initial motivation, self-selection, and professional identity orientation. Descriptive findings indicate that students' PP, CM, and PC levels generally remain at an intermediate level. This situation may be attributed to tour guiding students, particularly in the early years, not having fully integrated their professional identity, role expectations, and industrial realities. The current levels are broadly consistent with previous findings on CM (Başoda, 2023) and PC (Başoda & Gümüş Dönmez, 2022).

Although correlation analyses indicate that PP is positively related to both CM and PC, the structural model found no significant direct effect of PP on PC. This result does not contradict the widespread expectation that PP can strengthen commitment (Messara & Dagher, 2010; Morgan et al., 2012; Vandenberghe & Basak Ok, 2013; Yousaf et al., 2013), but rather suggests that the effect may operate more indirectly and context-dependently among tour-guiding students. Indeed, the fact that both CDW and DPC positively and significantly predict both CM and PC indicates that PC is strongly grounded by motivational precursors such as voluntary choice/self-selection and career continuation intention, rather than proactivity. Moreover, the effects of CDW/DPC on CM suggest that this motivational foundation feeds into career monitoring and self-regulation processes in the present time, transferring commitment both directly and through CM. In this context, the insignificance of PP's direct effect on PC implies that the theoretical mechanism predicted in hypothesis development is not entirely excluded, but rather that the same theoretical logic emphasizes a mediated process in this context: PP's effect first materializes in CM, then combines with motivational precursors to reflect on PC. In tour-guiding education, commitment is based on competence, control, and meaning-making experiences shaped by the contextual demands of role performance rather than on classroom knowledge accumulation. Furthermore, constraints such as early industry exposure, employment conditions, and structural uncertainties can weaken the transformation of proactive effort into commitment, constituting possible boundary conditions that explain the attenuation of the direct effect. Therefore,

the rejection of H1 provides a contextual explanation, suggesting that PP's contribution to commitment is mediated through intermediate mechanisms that work alongside CM and motivational precursors in tour-guiding students.

Another finding of the model is that PP has a positive and significant effect on CM. This result is consistent with approaches suggesting that PP can enhance career-related awareness by framing environmental cues as opportunities and activating self-regulation processes (CAPS/COR/TAT). Furthermore, PP's explanation of CM as both a surface trait specific to the career domain and a central personality trait (Hough, 2003) fits the personality hierarchy perspective (Mowen & Spears, 1999). This finding supports the general line of studies (Lu et al., 2024; Su & Zhang, 2020; Yang et al., 2018) that emphasize PP as a significant personal resource in career processes; it extends the approach (Hsieh & Huang, 2014) suggesting that proactive tendencies can function as a personal resource in managing career decisions to the context of tour guiding students.

The finding that CM has a positive and meaningful effect on PC is consistent with findings showing that awareness-based structures are linked to career-related attitudes and outcomes (Dağyar et al., 2020; Wu & Zhao, 2022). On the other hand, this finding offers a new perspective on views that the connection between mindfulness and the profession has not yet been fully understood (Başoda & Gümüş Dönmez, 2022). In the context of tour guiding, when CM is considered as a holistic form of awareness that enhances the student's capacity to monitor and manage their career in the present moment and makes the purpose–action–outcome connection visible, it can function as a psychological process that supports PC. In this respect, the results offer a framework consistent with the predictions of perspectives such as CAPS/COR, which are based on self-regulation and resources, as well as those of vocational development (VDT) and human capital (HCT). It also supports Thomas's (2011) view that career-related personality traits better explain various other work-related constructs. Accordingly, since CM is a surface personality trait related to the profession, it effectively explains PC as a professional attitude.

Finally, it has been observed that CM mediates the relationship between PP and PC in a meaningful and positive way. This finding shows that rather than PP's commitment being directly and unconditionally produced on its own, the proactive tendency first transforms into a career-oriented self-regulation capacity in tour guiding students; when this transformation occurs, it is reflected in commitment. In other words, the potential of PP is activated through CM, making the purpose–action–outcome connection more visible through present-time monitoring and structuring processes; thus, paving the way for the student to evaluate their field-based role-performance experiences more systematically and to strengthen their professional identity/belonging. Therefore, the weak direct effect of PP on PC indicates that proactive energy may not be channeled into commitment when it is not carried by an intermediary mechanism such as CM; when CM is included in the model, PP's effect can be meaningfully transferred to PC. The findings are significant in that they show a central personality tendency (PP) shaping an attitudinal outcome (PC) through a domain-specific surface structure (CM), consistent with the personality hierarchy approach (Brown & Ryan, 2003), and are also consistent with findings that awareness-based structures can carry the effect of proactive tendencies (Iqbal, 2022). Within this framework, mediation reveals that, in the context of tour guiding, commitment is a process that requires transformation rather than personality; when proactive potential is transformed into a meaningful career management practice through CM, it strengthens PC.

The key message of this study is that, rather than proactivity alone generating commitment, CM can support commitment by transforming proactive potential into a career practice that can be tracked and managed in the here and now along the purpose–action–outcome continuum. Within this framework, the findings suggest that the decisive factor may not be solely personality-level motivation; rather, the CM-centred transformation mechanism, which facilitates the transfer of this motivation to professional identity and self-regulation processes, may play a meaningful role in commitment formation.

Theoretical Implications

This study presents a proposed model grounded in robust theoretical foundations (including CAPS, COR, TAT, VDT, and HCT), serving as one of the first examples to test this set of variables—commonly addressed together in psychology, hospitality, and tourism education literature—within the context of tour guiding students. The research examines the concept of CM in relation to PP and professional attitude structures, offering a holistic perspective on the literature of career development, professional attitudes, tourism education, tour guiding, and individual differences. Although the existing literature has partially addressed the connections between PP, career, and professional attitudes, the mediating role of CM in this relationship has not been comprehensively investigated. The findings of this study show that although PP does not directly affect PC, it can indirectly influence it through CM. This point is particularly important because the transformation pathways that would allow proactive potential to be directly channeled into commitment may not always be strong in tour guiding education: Limited application–feedback loops, fragmented role-performance experiences, pedagogical gaps, or expectation–reality mismatch/loss of enthusiasm caused by early sector exposure may lead to the proactive tendency being dampened within the system without transforming into commitment. Therefore, the mediation

finding obtained advances theoretical understanding by suggesting that CM may be a key mechanism in this relationship; it also implies that PP's ability to generate commitment may be sensitive to context-specific transformative conditions. Furthermore, this research offers students, as future professionals, a new framework for monitoring developments in their field, understanding how to use their personal resources for professional development, and developing more distinct career paths. Similarly, it proposes a new research agenda for re-examining personality–CM–PC relationships in the rapidly changing field of tourism across different samples and contextual conditions.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer important practical implications for both educational institutions and tourism/hospitality organizations. Educational institutions can develop more targeted teaching strategies that take into account individual differences among students and treat PP and CM as building blocks of personal and professional development. In this regard, practical components such as field trips, simulations, and project-based learning can enable students to gain role-playing experience in real-world conditions, thereby supporting the translation of PP into action and the tracking and structuring of CM's goal–action–outcome connections in the present. However, merely providing opportunities for application may not be sufficient; complementing these activities with systematic feedback and reflection mechanisms (such as mentoring, structured assessment, and post-performance brief reflection sessions) can reduce the dissipation of proactive potential into pedagogical gaps and strengthen its transformation into PC. Furthermore, integrating modules focused on enhancing CM, such as career counselling, industry seminars, and mentoring programs, into the curriculum will help students clarify their professional goals, use their personal resources more strategically, and develop clearer career paths. Tourism and hospitality establishments can play a more effective role in developing qualified human resources by collaborating with educational institutions. In particular, designing internship programs that strengthen students' proactive tendencies and CM levels, and establishing mentoring, regular feedback, and observation/feedback cycles during the internship process, can make the reflection of personality traits on professional attitudes more functional. Consequently, the findings indicate that PP can indirectly influence CM by strengthening it, rather than directly affecting PC. This situation underscores the critical role of CM as an intermediary mechanism; it highlights the value of structured interventions grounded in feedback and mentoring to increase CM across educational institutions and businesses.

Limitations and Future Research

One of the main limitations of this study is that the data were collected solely from undergraduate students enrolled in the Tour Guiding program within the Faculty of Tourism. This may limit the generalizability of the findings to different educational levels and disciplines. Furthermore, as the data were collected from the same participants via self-report, the risk of common method variance cannot be entirely ruled out. It is recommended that future studies be conducted with larger, more heterogeneous samples, including students from vocational colleges (associate degree programs), four-year programs across different faculties, and master's and doctoral programs. Looking ahead, testing the moderating role of CM in the PP–PC relationship; examining whether the relationships between PP, CM and PC differ according to educational level (undergraduate/graduate/postgraduate), gender, country and other demographic characteristics; testing the relationships more comprehensively by including additional variables in the current model (e.g., career fit, psychological capital, self-efficacy, perceived sector constraints, program/implementation quality) will strengthen the theoretical accumulation in the literature and increase the explanatory power of the findings.

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Appendix: The Items of The Scales

Proactive Personality

- I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life.
- Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.
- I excel at identifying opportunities.
- I am always looking for better ways to do things.
- If I believe in an idea, then no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.
- I can spot a good opportunity long before others.

Career Mindfulness

- I am mindful of how I am able to access professional knowledge for my tour-guiding career.
- I am mindful of how I am able to manage my professional plans for my tour-guiding career.
- I am mindful of how I am able to learn my profession better for my tour-guiding career.
- I am mindful of how I am able to get support from my surroundings regarding professional matters for my tour-guiding career.
- I am mindful of how I am able to stay updated with recent professional developments for my tour-guiding career.
- I am mindful of how I am able to enhance the professional qualifications required for my tour-guiding career.
- I am mindful of how I am able to motivate myself to get closely acquainted with the profession for my tour-guiding career
- I am mindful of how I am able to seize opportunities related to my professional development for my tour-guiding career.

Professional Commitment

- In my opinion, the benefits of tour guiding are plentiful.
- I am very happy that I chose tour guiding.
- I would like my son/daughter to pursue a career in tour guiding.
- I want to be a tour guide after graduation.
- I could work as a tour guide anywhere after graduation.
- I will definitely work as a tour guide after graduation.
- I recommend tour guiding to those around me because it is a wonderful profession to be part of.
- I prefer tour guiding over any other profession
- I see my professional future in tour guiding.
- I would recommend that people around me study in the tourism guidance department.
- Choosing the tour guiding department was the right decision for me.
- I would like my son/daughter to study tour guiding.