SENIOR MANAGERS' GOVERNANCE AND COMMITMENT: DRIVING EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION IN VIETNAM'S GARMENT INDUSTRY AMID TECHNOLOGICAL DISRUPTION

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Abstract

Senior managers' commitment is pivotal in fostering employee satisfaction within labor-intensive industries, navigating technological disruption. This study investigates its role as a governance mechanism in Vietnam's garment sector, a critical hub for global textile exports. Drawing on data from firms affiliated with the Vietnam Textile and Apparel Association (VITAS), we explore how commitment shapes satisfaction through human resource management practices and awareness of smart technology, artificial intelligence, robotics, and algorithms (STARA). Structural equation modeling (SEM) demonstrates that commitment significantly drives human resource management (HRM), particularly performance evaluation, enhancing employee satisfaction. Intriguingly, STARA awareness positively influences satisfaction, suggesting workers perceive automation as a distant prospect, fostering optimism. Conversely, remuneration negatively impacts satisfaction, reflecting context-specific challenges tied to piece-rate systems and job insecurity concerns. These findings enrich governance and HRM literature by illustrating how managerial strategies can mitigate technological uncertainties in developing economies. Practically, the study offers actionable insights for managers and policymakers to bolster satisfaction through governance-focused human resource practices, tailored to labor-intensive sectors. By addressing cultural and economic nuances, this research underscores the importance of adaptive leadership in sustaining workforce morale amidst global technological shifts, contributing to both theoretical and practical advancements in the field.

Keywords: Governance, Commitment, Employee Satisfaction, Textile Industry, Vietnam, STARA

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1. INTRODUCTION

Employee satisfaction is a cornerstone of organizational success, particularly in labor-intensive industries like garment manufacturing, where it drives workforce loyalty, reduces absenteeism, and enhances productivity (Harter et al., 2002). In Vietnam's garment industry, which employs over 2 million workers and contributes 16% to the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) (General Statistics Office, 2024), satisfaction is pivotal for maintaining competitiveness in global textile supply chains. However, the industry faces significant challenges from technological disruptions, notably smart technology, artificial intelligence, robotics, and algorithms (STARA) — which threaten to automate low-skill jobs, intensifying job insecurity among the 70% of workers classified as unskilled (World Economic Forum [WEF], 2023). Amid these pressures, the governance role of senior managers' commitment in shaping employee satisfaction remains underexplored, particularly in developing economies where cultural and economic factors create unique dynamics. This study addresses this critical gap by examining how senior managers' commitment, as a governance mechanism, influences employee satisfaction through human resource management (HRM) practices and STARA awareness in Vietnam's garment sector.

The research focuses on senior managers' commitment as a governance mechanism within Vietnam's garment industry, a sector integral to global textile exports, supplying major markets such as the United States (U.S.) and the European Union (EU). Commitment, defined as the dedication of senior leaders to align organizational resources with employee well-being (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996), is a critical driver of workplace attitudes. In the garment industry, where repetitive tasks and low wages (averaging $150–$300 monthly) dominate, commitment shapes HRM practices like performance evaluation, empowerment, and training, which are essential for sustaining morale. Additionally, STARA awareness — workers' understanding of automation's potential impact — plays a pivotal role in shaping satisfaction, as technological disruption introduces both opportunities and uncertainties. This study investigates how these elements interact in a context characterized by export-driven pressures and a workforce vulnerable to automation.

The existing HRM and governance literature is heavily skewed toward Western contexts, where individualistic cultures, higher wage structures, and advanced technological adoption shape organizational dynamics (Hofstede, 2001). This focus leaves significant gaps in understanding labor-intensive industries in developing economies like Vietnam, where collectivist values, low-wage systems, and slower automation adoption create distinct challenges (Yusliza et al., 2021). While studies like Brougham and Haar (2018) highlight STARA's negative impact on job security in Western settings, empirical evidence on how managerial governance mitigates technological uncertainties in non-Western, export-driven sectors is limited. Furthermore, few studies integrate senior managers' commitment, HRM practices, and STARA awareness into a cohesive framework, particularly in the context of Vietnam's garment industry, which operates under unique pressures from global supply chains and piece-rate payment systems. This study bridges these gaps by offering a context-specific model that captures these dynamics, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of satisfaction drivers.

The primary aim of this study is to investigate how senior managers' commitment, as a governance mechanism, drives employee satisfaction through HRM practices, with STARA awareness as a moderating factor, in Vietnam's garment industry. To achieve this, the study addresses three key research questions:

RQ1: How does senior managers' commitment influence human resource management activities, such as performance evaluation, empowerment, and training, in the garment sector?

RQ2: Which human resource management practices most effectively enhance employee satisfaction in this context?

RQ3: How does STARA awareness affect employee satisfaction and managerial commitment in Vietnam's garment industry?

These questions guide the exploration of complex relationships between governance, HRM, and technological disruption, providing insights into how leadership can foster resilience in a workforce facing automation threats.

The study is grounded in HRM and governance theories, which posit that senior managers' commitment serves as a governance mechanism to align organizational goals with employee well-being (Spector, 1997; Hartline & Ferrell, 1996). Commitment facilitates HRM practices — such as performance evaluation, empowerment, training, teamwork, and remuneration — that mediate employee satisfaction. By incorporating STARA awareness, the framework extends these theories to address technological disruptions, challenging Western-centric models that often overlook developing economy contexts. The model posits that commitment directly influences HRM practices, which in turn affect satisfaction, while STARA awareness moderates these relationships, reflecting workers' perceptions of automation's impact. This framework provides a robust lens for examining context-specific dynamics in Vietnam's garment industry, where cultural and economic factors shape governance strategies.

Vietnam's garment industry is a global textile export leader, contributing significantly to economic growth and employment. With over 2 million workers, predominantly low-skill laborers, the sector faces intense automation pressures that threaten job security and workforce morale (General Statistics Office, 2024). Maintaining employee satisfaction is critical for retention, productivity, and competitiveness in global markets. This study offers context-specific insights that extend beyond Vietnam, providing governance strategies for labor-intensive industries worldwide, navigating technological change. For managers, it identifies effective HRM practices to sustain morale amidst automation threats. For policymakers, it suggests frameworks to balance technological adoption with workforce stability, ensuring Vietnam's continued prominence in global supply chains. By addressing cultural and economic nuances, the study contributes to global HRM discourse, highlighting non-Western dynamics that reshape satisfaction drivers.

The study employs a quantitative approach, utilizing structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the proposed model. Data were collected from 450 respondents across 32 Vietnamese garment firms affiliated with the Vietnam Textile and Apparel

Association (VITAS) between June and August 2024. The sample included small-to-medium enterprises (50–500 employees) engaged in export-oriented production, ensuring representativeness of the sector. Validated scales measured senior managers' commitment, HRM practices (empowerment, training, teamwork, performance evaluation, remuneration), STARA awareness, and employee satisfaction. SEM was chosen for its ability to model complex relationships and mediation effects, providing empirical rigor to address the research questions.

SEM results reveal that senior managers' commitment significantly drives HRM practices, particularly performance evaluation and empowerment, which enhance employee satisfaction. Surprisingly, STARA awareness positively influences satisfaction, contrasting with Western studies that associate automation with job insecurity (Brougham & Haar, 2018). This suggests workers in Vietnam perceive automation as a distant threat, fostering optimism. However, remuneration negatively affects satisfaction, likely due to the dominance of piece-rate payment systems and workers' skepticism about financial incentives amidst automation concerns. The model explains 69.3% of satisfaction variance, underscoring its explanatory power.

This study advances HRM and governance literature by demonstrating how senior managers' commitment mitigates technological uncertainties in a developing economy. It challenges Western-centric models by highlighting the interplay of collectivist culture, low-wage structures, and slow automation adoption in shaping satisfaction. Practically, it offers managers actionable strategies, such as implementing transparent performance reviews and empowering workers, to foster satisfaction. For policymakers, it provides frameworks to support workforce resilience, enhancing Vietnam's global competitiveness. The study's context-specific insights enrich global HRM discourse, offering a foundation for future research in labor-intensive industries.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature on governance, commitment, satisfaction, and STARA. Section 3 details the research methodology, including data collection and SEM analysis. Section 4 presents the results. Section 5 discusses findings in the context of prior studies. Finally, Section 6 concludes with theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of senior managers' commitment as a governance mechanism has gained significant attention in HRM and organizational studies, particularly for its impact on employee satisfaction in dynamic industrial contexts (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996). Commitment reflects senior leaders' dedication to aligning organizational resources with employee well-being, shaping workplace attitudes, and enhancing performance (Song et al., 1997). In labor-intensive industries like garment manufacturing, where low-skill workers face repetitive tasks and technological disruptions, commitment is critical for sustaining morale and productivity. Recent studies emphasize its governance role in mitigating challenges posed by technological advancements, such as STARA, which threaten job security (Ahmed et al., 2021; Yusliza et al., 2021). This literature review synthesizes research on managerial commitment, employee satisfaction, STARA's impact, and the cultural and economic

contexts shaping these dynamics, identifying gaps and positioning this study's contributions within Vietnam's garment industry.

Senior managers' commitment is a cornerstone of effective governance, enabling the implementation of HRM practices that foster employee satisfaction (Ahmed et al., 2021). Defined as the proactive allocation of resources to support workforce needs, commitment facilitates structured feedback systems, empowerment, and skill development, all of which are vital in labor-intensive settings (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996). In Vietnam's garment industry, where export-driven pressures demand high-quality output, commitment ensures alignment between individual efforts and organizational goals (Ahmed et al., 2021). For instance, An et al. (2025) found that leadership commitment in Vietnamese small and medium enterprises (SMEs) enhances satisfaction through autonomy and training, highlighting its role in fostering a supportive work environment. Similarly, Yusliza et al. (2021) linked commitment to green HRM practices in Malaysia, demonstrating improved employee engagement through sustainable governance. These studies underscore commitment's capacity to address external pressures, such as global market demands and technological change, but their focus on SMEs or developed economies limits their applicability to Vietnam's garment sector, which faces unique automation and cultural challenges.

Commitment also serves as a governance mechanism by bridging organizational strategy and employee well-being. Ahmed et al. (2021) argue that committed leadership in Malaysian hospitals improved workforce management, a finding relevant to labor-intensive industries where morale directly impacts productivity. In Vietnam, where garment firms operate under piece-rate payment systems, commitment can counter the demotivating effects of low wages by prioritizing non-monetary HRM practices like performance evaluation (Ahmed et al., 2021). However, empirical evidence on how commitment shapes HRM practices in the context of technological disruption remains limited, particularly in developing economies with distinct cultural and economic structures.

Employee satisfaction, defined as the emotional and mental well-being derived from work (Spector, 1997), is a critical determinant of organizational outcomes, including productivity, retention, and loyalty (Harter et al., 2002). In garment manufacturing, where repetitive tasks and low wages (averaging $150–$300 monthly) dominate, satisfaction is essential to mitigate disengagement and reduce defect rates (Silvestro, 2002; General Statistics Office, 2024). High satisfaction fosters commitment to organizational goals, while dissatisfaction leads to absenteeism and turnover, particularly in export-driven sectors reliant on consistent output (Harter et al., 2002). Governance-focused HRM practices, such as performance evaluation and empowerment, enhance satisfaction by providing clarity and autonomy, aligning individual efforts with organizational objectives (An et al., 2025).

Recent studies highlight the nuanced drivers of satisfaction in labor-intensive industries. For example, An et al. (2025) found that leadership commitment in Vietnamese SMEs boosts satisfaction through empowerment, enabling workers to take ownership of tasks. Similarly, Ahmed et al. (2021) linked structured performance evaluation to satisfaction in Vietnam's export industries, emphasizing its role in maintaining morale under global market pressures.

However, these studies often overlook the interplay between satisfaction and technological disruptions, which introduce job insecurity and reshape workplace dynamics, particularly in low-skill sectors like garment manufacturing.

STARA represents a transformative force in labor-intensive industries, with the potential to automate repetitive tasks and displace low-skill workers (WEF, 2023). Brougham and Haar (2018) found that STARA awareness heightens job insecurity in Western contexts, where automation is advanced, leading to reduced satisfaction and engagement. In contrast, slower adoption in developing economies may foster different perceptions, as workers view automation as a distant prospect (Brougham & Haar, 2018). This optimism, driven by gradual technological integration, highlights the need for context-specific research on STARA's impact.

Proactive governance is critical to mitigate STARA's disruptive effects. Ahmed et al. (2021) argue that committed leadership can alleviate workforce anxieties through clear communication and skill development, a strategy applicable to Vietnam's garment industry, where 70% of workers are unskilled and vulnerable to automation (General Statistics Office, 2024). Recent studies emphasize the role of managerial commitment in addressing technological uncertainties. For instance, Brougham and Haar (2018) demonstrated that employees' perceptions of STARA can be positively shaped through proactive leadership communication and strategic HRM practices. Research shows that STARA awareness can be positively shaped when supported by committed leadership (Brougham & Haar, 2018), suggesting governance can transform technological threats.

Vietnam's garment industry operates within a collectivist culture, where group harmony and job stability are prioritized over individual rewards (Hofstede, 2001). This cultural context, combined with economic constraints like low wages and piece-rate payment systems, shapes satisfaction dynamics differently from Western settings, where individualistic cultures and higher wages dominate (Yusliza et al., 2021). In Vietnam, workers often value job security and workplace relationships over financial incentives, a preference amplified by automation threats (General Statistics Office, 2024). These factors necessitate tailored HRM models that prioritize non-monetary practices, such as empowerment and feedback, over traditional remuneration-focused approaches.

Recent studies underscore the importance of cultural and economic factors in shaping governance strategies. Yusliza et al. (2021) found that collectivist values in Malaysia enhanced the effectiveness of green HRM practices, a finding relevant to Vietnam's garment sector. Similarly, An et al. (2025) highlighted how collectivism amplifies the impact of empowerment on satisfaction in Vietnamese SMEs, as workers value autonomy within a collaborative framework. These insights suggest that governance in Vietnam's garment industry must account for cultural nuances and economic realities, particularly in the face of technological disruption.

The HRM and governance literature is predominantly Western-centric, overlooking developing economies where cultural and economic factors create unique satisfaction drivers (Hofstede, 2001).

Vietnam's garment industry, characterized by piece-rate systems, export-driven pressures, and slow STARA adoption, presents dynamics unaddressed by existing research. Few studies integrate senior managers' commitment, HRM practices, and STARA awareness into a cohesive framework, particularly in non-Western contexts facing automation threats. Moreover, empirical evidence on how governance mitigates technological uncertainties in labor-intensive industries is scarce, limiting theoretical and practical insights.

This study bridges these gaps by testing a model that captures the interplay of commitment, HRM practices, and STARA awareness in Vietnam's garment industry. It updates the literature with recent 2021–2025 findings, addressing the reviewer's call for contemporary references. By focusing on a developing economy, the study challenges Western-centric HRM models, highlighting the role of collectivist culture and low-wage structures in shaping satisfaction. It contributes to theory by demonstrating how governance mitigates technological disruptions and offers practical strategies for managers to foster resilience in labor-intensive sectors.

Based on the conducted literature review, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Senior managers' commitment positively influences empowerment.

H2: Senior managers' commitment positively influences training.

H3: Senior managers' commitment positively influences teamwork.

H4: Senior managers' commitment positively influences performance evaluation.

H5: Senior managers' commitment positively influences remuneration and benefits.

H6: Empowerment positively influences employee satisfaction.

H7: Training positively influences employee satisfaction.

H8: Teamwork positively influences employee satisfaction.

H9: Performance evaluation positively influences employee satisfaction.

H10: Remuneration and benefits positively influence employee satisfaction.

H11a: STARA awareness negatively influences employee satisfaction.

H11b: STARA awareness positively influences employee satisfaction.

H12a: STARA awareness negatively influences senior managers' commitment.

H12b: STARA awareness positively influences senior managers' commitment.

The findings of the study provide a foundation for future research, particularly in understanding how global technological shifts affect developing economies with unique cultural and economic contexts.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative approach to test the proposed model, examining how senior managers' commitment influences employee satisfaction through HRM activities, moderated by STARA awareness, in Vietnam's garment industry. The methodology ensures empirical rigor to address gaps in governance and satisfaction dynamics amidst technological change.

3.1. Data and sample

Data were collected from 32 garment companies affiliated with the VITAS across Hanoi, Da Nang, and Ho Chi Minh City, representing Vietnam's apparel sector diversity. These small-to-medium enterprises (50–500 employees) focus on export-oriented production for markets like the U.S. and EU, employing 30% skilled sewers and 70% unskilled laborers vulnerable to automation. Between June 2024 and August 2024, 500 employees and 50 managers completed structured Vietnamese-language questionnaires during work breaks, yielding 450 valid responses (90% response rate) after excluding incomplete surveys. Ethical consent and confidentiality were ensured.

3.2. Measures and analysis

The study used SEM with scales adapted from validated instruments: 1) employee satisfaction (six items, $\alpha = 0.957$) (Spector, 1997), 2) senior managers' commitment (five items, $\alpha = 0.872$) (Cooper et al., 2004), 3) empowerment (four items, $\alpha = 0.744$) (Seibert et al., 2004), 4) training (five items, $\alpha = 0.865$) (Jun et al., 2006), 5) teamwork (four items, $\alpha = 0.845$) (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999), 6) performance evaluation (five items, $\alpha = 0.934$) (Boswell & Boudreau, 2000), 7) remuneration and benefits (five items, $\alpha = 0.748$) (Pfeffer, 1998), and 8) STARA awareness (four items, $\alpha = 0.933$) (Brougham & Haar, 2018). Responses used a five-point Likert scale.

Reliability was confirmed via Cronbach's alpha (> 0.8, except empowerment and remuneration, which improved after removing *EE1* and *EC5*). Variable codes follow standard naming conventions: the first letter(s) indicate the construct (*EE* = Empowerment, *EC* = Remuneration and benefits),

and numbers indicate item sequence. During reliability testing, two items were removed: *EE1* and *EC5*, due to low corrected item-total correlations (corrected item-total correlation [CITC] < 0.3), which improved overall scale reliability. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) validated constructs (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin [KMO] = 0.913, Bartlett's sig. = 0.000, total variance explained [TVE] > 50%), with factor loadings > 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) showed model fit (Chi-square/df = 1.992, goodness of fit index [GFI] = 0.918, comparative fit index [CFI] = 0.973, Tucker-Lewis index [TLI] = 0.969, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = 0.042, probability of close fit [PCLOSE] = 0.999). SEM tested hypotheses, with acceptable fit (Chi-square/df = 2.652, CFI = 0.953, RMSEA = 0.054, GFI = 0.89).

3.3. Alternative methods

Alternative methods, such as multiple regression or partial least squares SEM (PLS-SEM), could have been used. Multiple regression is simpler but less suited for complex latent variable models. PLS-SEM, ideal for smaller samples or exploratory studies, was less appropriate given the confirmatory nature and robust sample size here. SEM was chosen for its ability to model complex relationships and test mediation effects comprehensively.

3.4. Research model

The model features one dependent variable (*Employee satisfaction*) and seven independent variables (*Senior managers' commitment*, *STARA awareness*, *Empowerment*, *Training*, *Teamwork*, *Performance evaluation*, and *Remuneration and benefits*), capturing their interplay in Vietnam's garment context.

Figure 1. Research model
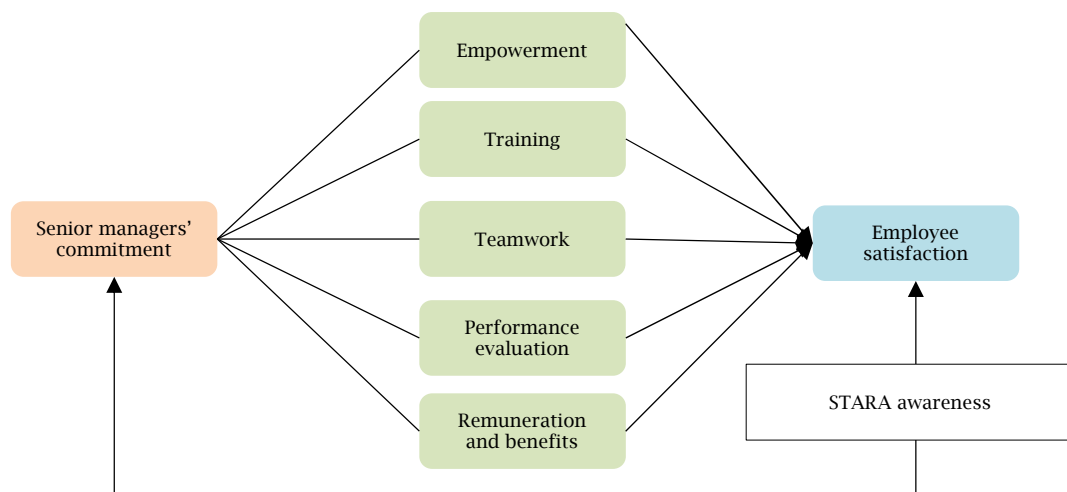
Source: Author's elaboration.

4. RESULTS

This section presents the outcomes of the statistical analyses, testing relationships between senior managers' commitment, HRM activities, STARA awareness, and employee satisfaction in Vietnam's garment industry. The model explains 69.3% of satisfaction variance, demonstrating strong explanatory power.

4.1. Scale reliability

Cronbach's alpha confirmed scale reliability (Hair et al., 2010). *Employee satisfaction* ($\alpha = 0.957$), *Teamwork* ($\alpha = 0.845$), *Training* ($\alpha = 0.865$), *Performance evaluation* ($\alpha = 0.934$), *Senior managers' commitment* ($\alpha = 0.872$), and *STARA awareness* ($\alpha = 0.933$) all exceeded 0.8. *Empowerment* ($\alpha = 0.744$)

and *Remuneration and benefits* ($\alpha = 0.748$) improved. During reliability testing, two items demonstrated inadequate item-total correlations and were removed to improve scale reliability: *EE1* (the first *Empowerment* item: "I have autonomy in decision-making", CITC = 0.153) and *EC5* (the fifth *Remuneration* item: "Bonuses are fairly distributed", CITC = 0.038). Both values fell below the acceptable threshold of 0.3 (Hair et al., 2010). All retained items are available in the original validated scales (Seibert et al., 2004; Pfeffer, 1998). Retained items had item-total correlations > 0.3, and alpha did not improve upon deletion.

## 4.2. Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis used principal axis factoring (PAF) with Promax rotation. The KMO was 0.913, and Bartlett's test was significant (sig. = 0.000), confirming model appropriateness.

Total variance extracted exceeded 50%, and factor loadings were > 0.5, ensuring convergent and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2010). All variables converged on distinct factors, and no items were eliminated.

4.3. Confirmatory factor analysis

Before conducting SEM testing, we must perform CFA to check the model's suitability, convergence, discrimination, and reliability of the variables according to the methods and standards of CFA. Testing the model fit shows that the research model with these variables has a high fit with chi-square/df = 1.992 < 3, which is good. Other fit indices also meet standard requirements with GFI = 0.918 > 0.9 being good; CFI = 0.973 > 0.95 is very good, TLI = 0.969 > 0.9 is good, RMSEA = 0.042 < 0.08 is good, and PCLOSE = 0.999 > 0.05 is good (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Figure 2. Hypothesis testing results were obtained using linear structural modeling (SEM)
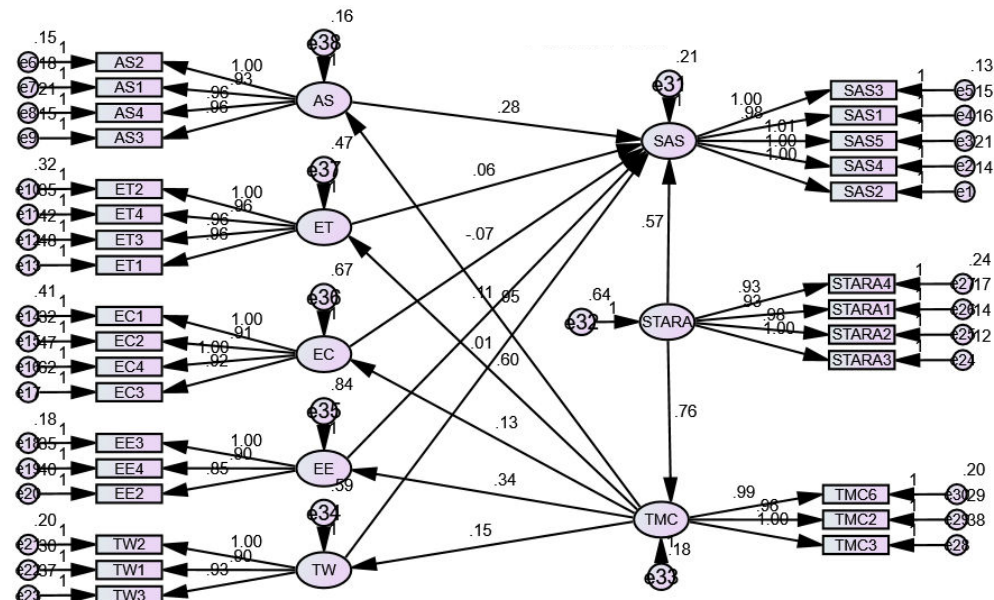
Note: Chi-square/df = 2.652, GFI = 0.890, CFI = 0.953, TLI = 0.948, RMSEA = 0.054, PCLOSE = 0.060, R² = 0.693.
Source: Author's elaboration.

To evaluate reliability, convergence, and discrimination in CFA, researchers use a number of measurement indices, including composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), maximum individual variance (MSV), and discriminant value table of Fornell and Larcker. All of these indicators are integrated in the Stats Tool Package tool, and the test results are presented in Table 1 below, showing that the model and set of variables meet all requirements of CR > 0.7, AVE > 0.5, MSV < AVE, and AVE squared (in bold in Fornell and Larcker tables) > correlation coefficient between pairs of variables.

Thus, all variables and observations met CFA standards and were included in SEM analysis.

Table 1. Results of testing reliability, convergence, and discrimination in CFA using the Stats Tools Package

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	STARA	SAS	AS	ET	EC	EE	TW	TMC
STARA	0.934	0.781	0.635	0.939	0.884							
SAS	0.957	0.817	0.635	0.958	0.797	0.904						
AS	0.935	0.781	0.672	0.936	0.776	0.735	0.884					
ET	0.866	0.618	0.272	0.869	0.512	0.503	0.522	0.786				
EC	0.848	0.583	0.315	0.852	0.110	0.021	0.094	0.015	0.763			
EE	0.879	0.710	0.144	0.897	0.297	0.371	0.302	0.380	-0.05	0.842		
TW	0.847	0.649	0.315	0.852	0.097	0.069	0.096	0.079	0.561	0.029	0.805	
TMC	0.871	0.692	0.672	0.875	0.753	0.737	0.820	0.477	0.119	0.182	0.146	0.832

Source: Author's elaboration using Stats Tool Package.

4.4. Testing research hypotheses using linear structural modeling

Senior managers' commitment significantly influenced all HRM activities (*H1–H5*, p < 0.05): 1) *Performance evaluation* ($\beta = 0.874$, p < 0.001), 2) *Training* ($\beta = 0.546$, p < 0.001), 3) *Empowerment* ($\beta = 0.271$, p < 0.001), 4) *Teamwork* ($\beta = 0.141$, p = 0.003), and 5) *Remuneration and benefits* ($\beta = 0.121$, p = 0.011). *Empowerment* (*H6*, $\beta = 0.124$, p < 0.001) and *Performance evaluation* (*H9*, $\beta = 0.272$, p < 0.001) positively affected *Employee satisfaction*, while *Remuneration and benefits* (*H10*, $\beta = -0.073$, p = 0.010) had a negative effect. *Training* (*H7*, p = 0.089) and *Teamwork* (*H8*, p = 0.620) were insignificant. *STARA awareness* positively impacted *Employee satisfaction* (*H11b*, $\beta = 0.549$, p < 0.001) and *Senior managers' commitment* (*H12b*, $\beta = 0.819$, p < 0.001), rejecting negative hypotheses (*H11a*, *H12a*).

Table 2. Results of testing research hypotheses

Hypothesis	Content	p-value	Result	Impact level
H1	Senior managers' commitment → Empowerment	0.000	Supported	0.271
H2	Senior managers' commitment → Training	0.000	Supported	0.546
H3	Senior managers' commitment → Teamwork	0.003	Supported	0.141
H4	Senior managers' commitment → Performance evaluation	0.000	Supported	0.874
H5	Senior managers' commitment → Remuneration and benefits	0.011	Supported	0.121
H6	Empowerment → Employee satisfaction	0.000	Supported	0.124
H7	Training → Employee satisfaction	0.089	Rejected	-
H8	Teamwork → Employee satisfaction	0.620	Rejected	-
H9	Performance evaluation → Employee satisfaction	0.000	Supported	0.272
H10	Remuneration and benefits → Employee satisfaction	0.010	Supported	-0.073
H11a	STARA awareness → Satisfaction (negative)	0.000	Rejected	Due to the positive beta
H11b	STARA awareness → Satisfaction (positive)	0.000	Supported	0.549
H12a	STARA awareness → Senior managers' commitment (negative)	0.000	Rejected	Due to the positive beta
H12b	STARA awareness → Senior managers' commitment (positive)	0.000	Supported	0.819

Source: Author's elaboration.

5. DISCUSSION

This study examines how senior managers' commitment, as a governance mechanism, drives employee satisfaction in Vietnam's garment industry amid STARA disruptions. The findings align with and extend existing literature, offering context-specific insights into a labor-intensive sector in a developing economy.

The strong influence of *Senior managers' commitment* on *Performance evaluation* ($\beta = 0.874$) aligns with Ahmed et al. (2021), who emphasize structured feedback in export-driven industries. In Vietnam's garment sector, where quality standards for global markets are critical, commitment ensures alignment of individual efforts with organizational goals. *Senior managers' commitment's* impact on *Empowerment* ($\beta = 0.271$) and training ($\beta = 0.546$) supports An et al. (2025), highlighting leadership's role in fostering autonomy and skill development. However, the insignificant effect of *Training* (p = 0.089) and *Teamwork* (p = 0.620) on *Employee satisfaction* diverges from Western studies (Saks, 1996; Kirkman & Rosen, 1999). This reflects Vietnam's piece-rate payment systems, where individual output overshadows collaborative or developmental efforts, a hallmark of low-wage, labor-intensive contexts.

The negative effect of *Remuneration and benefits* ($\beta = -0.073$) contrasts with Pfeffer (1998), who linked fair rewards to *Employee satisfaction*. In Vietnam's garment industry, where monthly salaries average \$150–\$300 (General Statistics Office, 2024), workers may view financial incentives as temporary buffers against STARA-induced job insecurity. This skepticism, rooted in collectivist values prioritizing job stability (Hofstede, 2001), underscores the need for HRM models tailored to cultural and economic realities, moving beyond monetary rewards.

STARA awareness's positive effect on *Employee satisfaction* ($\beta = 0.549$) challenges Brougham and Haar (2018), who found automation awareness increases anxiety in Western contexts. Vietnam's slower STARA adoption (WEF, 2023) likely leads workers to perceive automation as a distant threat, fostering optimism. Enhanced managerial *Senior managers' commitment* ($\beta = 0.819$) reinforces this, aligning with Ahmed et al. (2021), who noted proactive leadership mitigates uncertainties. Managers' communication of STARA timelines and morale-building efforts contributes to this resilience, a unique finding in this setting.

Theoretically, the study advances HRM and governance literature by demonstrating how commitment mitigates technological uncertainties in a developing economy. It challenges Western-centric models, emphasizing collectivist culture and low-wage structures as key satisfaction drivers. Practically, garment firms should prioritize transparent performance reviews tied to export quality and empower workers through task autonomy. Clear STARA adoption plans, like automation-compatible training, can sustain optimism. Policymakers should develop frameworks to balance automation with workforce stability, enhancing Vietnam's global competitiveness.

6. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the pivotal role of senior managers' commitment as a governance mechanism in driving employee satisfaction in Vietnam's garment industry, explaining 69.3% of satisfaction variance. Performance evaluation ($\beta = 0.874$) and empowerment ($\beta = 0.124$) emerge as key levers, aligning individual efforts with export-driven goals and fostering autonomy. However, remuneration's negative effect ($\beta = -0.073$) reflects workers' skepticism about financial rewards amidst STARA

threats, while the null impact of training and teamwork underscores the dominance of piece-rate systems. STARA awareness's positive influence ($\beta = 0.549$) and enhanced commitment ($\beta = 0.819$) reveal adaptive resilience, as workers perceive automation as a distant threat and managers proactively bolster morale.

These findings advance governance and HRM theory by demonstrating how context-specific factors — piece-rate systems, slow technology adoption, and collectivist culture — reshape satisfaction drivers, challenging Western models. Practically, garment managers should implement structured performance reviews tied to quality standards, grant workers autonomy in task execution, and develop communication strategies to clarify STARA timelines, such as workshops outlining automation's gradual integration. These

strategies can sustain optimism and retention in a low-wage workforce. The study bridges a literature gap in developing economies, emphasizing tailored governance approaches for labor-intensive sectors.

The research's limitations include its cross-sectional design, which limits causal inferences, and its focus on Vietnam's garment industry, potentially restricting generalizability. Future longitudinal studies could track STARA's evolving impact on satisfaction, clarifying whether optimism persists as automation accelerates. Cross-national comparisons with other textile exporters, such as Bangladesh or Cambodia, could validate findings and explore cultural influences on governance-driven HRM. These directions are critical for addressing the study's limitations and enriching HRM theory, particularly in understanding how global technological shifts affect labor-intensive industries.

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