

Employee Motivation in the Tourism Sector: A Study of Alappuzha District, Kerala

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the major motivational factors influencing employee engagement and service commitment among tourism employees in the Alappuzha district, Kerala. It also explores the relative importance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational variables in shaping employee attitudes and performance. It also explores the relative importance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational variables in shaping employee attitudes and performance.

Methodology: A descriptive research design was adopted. Primary data were collected from 120 employees working in hotels, resorts, travel agencies, and houseboat services using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. Reliability of the instrument was confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha. Percentage analysis, mean ranking, and correlation analysis were used to interpret the data.

Results: Communication, employee participation, and organisational culture also positively influenced employee engagement. Although important, monetary rewards ranked lower than psychological and developmental factors. Monetary rewards were important but ranked lower than psychological and developmental factors. Correlation analysis indicated that supportive leadership and skill development have a strong positive relationship with employee engagement.

Conclusion: Such an approach can improve employee engagement, service commitment, and long-term organisational performance, thereby supporting sustainable tourism development in the Alappuzha district. Such an approach can improve employee engagement, service commitment, and long-term organisational performance, thereby supporting sustainable tourism development in Alappuzha District.

Future Research: Future studies may focus on comparative analyses across different tourism destinations, longitudinal examinations of motivation and engagement, and the role of digitalisation and organisational innovation in enhancing employee motivation in the tourism sector.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Tourism Workforce, Job Security, Organisational Support, Alappuzha District, and Kerala.

Introduction

Tourism is considered one of the most rapidly developing service sectors and is regarded as a significant contributor to employment and regional development. The tourism economy in places such as Kerala is mostly receptive to human contact and personalised service delivery. Employees working in hotels, resorts, travel businesses, houseboat operations, and travel service support directly impact customer experience and destination reputation. Consequently,

employee motivation and involvement are strategic issues for organisations in this sector. Tourism service workers engage in emotional labour compared to manufacturing, where processes are standardised; they are flexible and responsive to customer requirements. Employees are subjected to demanding working conditions, such as irregular shift timings, seasonal demand, and performance pressure (Robbins, 1993). Such working conditions can cause stress and burnout unless organisations engage in effective motivational strategies. Employee engagement has become significant in tourism research in recent years. Engagement determines the degree of emotional dedication that employees have to their organisations as well as their readiness to produce high-quality services (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Motivation is a key factor in creating engagement because it matches personal goals with those of the organisation (Baum, 2015; Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). The Alappuzha District, a backwater district with houseboats and heritage tourism, provides an adequate setting to observe motivation in tourism. The intensive growth of the tourism industry has provided varied job opportunities and has resulted in competition among the skilled labour force. This study examines the motivation practices that have been embraced in this region and how they influence employee involvement and service focus (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977 and Shipley & Kiely, 1986).

Studies on employee motivation in the tourism industry have mainly focused on job satisfaction, financial rewards, and turnover intentions, particularly in developed nations. Nevertheless, little research has been conducted on the multidimensionality of motivation, which brings out psychological and developmental issues of motivation, such as job security, leadership support, and skill development, in new tourism destinations. In India, particularly in Kerala, there is a paucity of empirical research on tourism workers, even though it is one of the largest service-based tourist destinations (Aworemi *et al.*, 2011). Moreover, little research has been conducted to address the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors and employee engagement in backwater tourism. Thus, this study attempts to fill this gap by examining the relative significance of

financial and non-financial motivational variables on employee engagement and service commitment within the tourism industry in the Alappuzha district.

Statement of the Problem

Even though the tourism sector in Kerala, especially in tourist destinations such as Alappuzha, is growing rapidly, organisations still experience difficulties with employee motivation and engagement due to seasonal, work-related, and high employee turnover. Although job satisfaction and monetary benefits have been the main subjects of past research, there has been a dearth of research on the relative role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in employee engagement and service commitment in emerging tourism destinations (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999). In addition, there is no empirical evidence on the combined effects of psychological, developmental, and organisational factors on the motivation of tourism employees in India. The research questions to be answered in this background are as follows: What are the key motivational factors that affect tourism workers in the Alappuzha District? What is the contribution of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to employee engagement and service commitment? Which motivational variables are most related to employee engagement? Through these questions, the research is expected to provide an in-depth insight into motivation practices and their implications for the development of sustainable tourism.

Significance of the Study

This research is significant as it focuses on employee engagement, in addition to job satisfaction. Whereas satisfaction indicates contentment, engagement indicates involvement and excitement in work. Knowledge of the factors that promote interaction may assist organisations in retaining workers, enhancing the quality of services, and reinforcing customer loyalty. This research is applicable to tourism businesspersons, policymakers, and scholars. It gives an understanding of the motivational strategies that can be used to help decrease the turnover of the employees, improve their organisational commitment and sustainable development of a tourism (Berl *et al.*, 1984). Moreover, the study is relevant to the increasing body of literature on human resource management in tourism as it determines both monetary and psychological motivational factors within a region

(House & Wigdor 1967). The results can help tourism organisations tailor induction motivational programmes to the expectations of younger and experienced workers.

Theoretical Framework to Motivation

Motivation is a key concept in organizational behaviour and human resource management. It originates from the Latin word *movere*, meaning “to move,” and can also be defined as the inner and outer forces that trigger, guide, and maintain behaviour in relation to the attainment of goals (Luthans, 1989). Initial efforts to comprehend motivation had philosophical antecedents, such as hedonism, which stressed the seeking of pleasure and avoidance of pain as motivators of behaviour. Motivation as a science began to be studied systematically in work and organizational environments with the inception of psychology as a science discipline toward the end of the 19th century (Steers, Mowday, & Shapiro, 2004).

Various scholars have proposed various views concerning motivation. According to Atkinson (1964), motivation is a factor that has a direct impact on the course of action, degree, and continuation. Greenberg and Baron (2004) defined it as a combination of processes which excite and direct behaviour towards achievement of goals. Luthans (1989) considered motivation as a process that is activated by either physiological or psychological needs, and this process triggers behaviour that drives one to a particular goal. These schools of thought underscore the fact that motivation is dynamic and involves both internal forces and extrinsic factors (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Motivation is especially significant in the tourism industry segment because the quality of service relies mainly on employees’ attitudes, commitment, and emotional engagement. Employees in the tourism sector tend to work under extreme working conditions, such as irregular working hours, seasonal work, and customer pressure. Thus, it is necessary to learn motivational mechanisms to improve service commitment and organisational performance (Porter & Lawler, 1968).

Content Theories of Motivation and How they Apply to the Tourism Industry

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory

Maslow’s theory suggests that human needs are organised in a hierarchy, with physiological and safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs (Maslow, 1943; 1954). Based on this framework, people are driven to fulfil low-level needs before proceeding to high-level needs. In the tourism industry, physiological and safety needs are linked with a constant income, working conditions, and job security. Social needs are associated with teamwork and workplace belongingness. Esteem needs are prerequisites for recognition, appreciation, and career advancement, whereas self-actualisation is linked to the possibility of creativity and becoming a professional (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976).

The conclusions of the current research that place job security, leadership support, and skill development among the key motivators that should be used can be explained in the framework of Maslow. The seasonal quality of employment is a major reason why employees in the tourism industry value safety and stability, whereas an increase in growth and recognition advances long-term engagement.

Herzberg’s Two Factor Theory

Herzberg’s two-factor theory differentiates between hygiene factors and motivators (Herzberg & Snyderman, 1959). Hygiene factors include salary, working conditions, supervision, and job security, which exclude the possibility of dissatisfaction and may or may not be a motivating factor for employees. Achievement, recognition, responsibility, and advancement are some of the motivators involved in satisfaction and engagement.

This theory is highly relevant to tourism organisations. Hygiene factors include money and job security, whereas motivators include leadership support, training, and involvement, which contribute to employees’ commitment. The average correlation of financial rewards and engagement in this study proves Herzberg’s idea that intrinsic factors play a more significant role in determining motivation.

McClelland's Theory of Needs

McClelland developed three needs that drive behaviour: the need for achievement, the need for power, and the need for affiliation (McClelland, 1961). The affiliation need is high in tourism employees as it is in constant contact with customers and other employees. Some of the achievement needs include service excellence and performance, whereas the power needs are connected to leadership positions and professional growth (Chung, 1969).

This theory explains why communication, participation, and interpersonal relationships are crucial for improving employee engagement in tourism environments.

ERG Theory

According to ERG theory, Alderfer divides needs into existence, relatedness, and growth (Alderfer, 1972). It does not focus on the hierarchy as Maslow did; in contrast, it enables the coexistence of multiple needs. Employees in tourism organisations may simultaneously want to be financially secure, socially interact, and develop professionally. This versatility renders ERG theory an appropriate theory for understanding motivation in dynamic service settings.

Managerial and Behavioural Perspectives

Theory X and Theory Y of McGregor

McGregor (1960) identified the assumptions that managers have regarding employees. Theory X presupposes that employees do not enjoy working and need supervision, whereas Theory Y views employees as self-motivated and responsible. Tourism organisations with participative and supportive leadership styles, which are consistent with Theory Y, have a higher chance of achieving engagement and innovation.

Reinforcement Theory

Reinforcement theory focuses on the fact that the consequences of behaviour shape it (Skinner, 1953). Rewards and appreciation, such as recognition, are positive forms of reinforcement that encourage desirable behaviour. Reinforcers in tourism enhance service quality and customer satisfaction.

Process Theories and Process Theory Applications **Expectancy Theory**

According to expectancy theory, motivation is based on the perception that performance is the result of effort and that rewards are the results of performance (Vroom, 1964). Tourism employees are motivated when they believe that there is an observable relationship between performance, incentives, and career development.

Equity Theory

Equity theory emphasises equity in the distribution of rewards (Adams, 1965). Inequity in pay or recognition may be perceived and cause dissatisfaction and turnover in tourism organisations (Carrell & Dittrich, 1978; Yiu & Law, 2011).

Goal Setting Theory

According to goal-setting theory, specific and demanding goals increase motivation (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2004). Unused performance targets and feedback enhance worker involvement and output in the service sector.

Research Methodology

The current study design is a descriptive research design, which is suitable for investigating and describing the current state of motivation among employees in the tourism industry. With this method, the study is able to examine current motivational practices and detect the main factors affecting employee engagement and service commitment in the tourism sector under specific settings in the Alappuzha District, Kerala. The descriptive design is also beneficial for comprehending employees' perceptions and experiences of organisational support, leadership, training, and rewards.

This study uses both primary and secondary data. The primary data were gathered through direct interviews with employees of different organisations involved in tourism, such as hotels, resorts, travel agencies, and houseboat services, within the Alappuzha District. This firsthand data provides real and accurate insights into employee motivation and engagement in the region. Secondary data were accessed through tourism reports, government publications, academic journals, and past research studies. These sources provided a wider scope and

aided the understanding of the main findings in accordance with existing literature and industry practices.

The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire aimed to collect data on demographic factors and the most important dimensions of motivation as a form of job security, supportive leadership, communication, organisational culture, skill development, and monetary rewards. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure most of the statements, which made them uniform and easy to analyse. The questionnaire was well structured, which facilitated the achievement of credible and similar data from the respondents. The reliability of the measurement instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha to ensure the internal consistency of the scale. The overall reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.85, indicating a high level of reliability.

The sample size for the present study was determined based on both statistical and practical considerations. The tourism workforce in the Alappuzha district is characterised by seasonal employment and the absence of a comprehensive sampling frame, making it difficult to identify the exact population size. Consequently, a non-probability sampling approach was adopted. The adequacy of the sample (n=120) was justified using the rule-of-thumb approach recommended by Hair et al. (2010), which suggests a minimum ratio of five to ten observations per estimated parameter. Furthermore, in alignment with Sekaran and Bougie (2016), a sample size exceeding 100 is considered sufficient for the descriptive and correlational analyses employed in this study. This ensures an acceptable level of precision and reliability for generating meaningful insights into the Alappuzha tourism sector

The study sample comprised 120 respondents, which is deemed sufficient to offer a representative picture of motivational variables in the tourism industry in the Alappuzha district. The respondents represented various levels of employees and functional areas, which reflected the diversity of views and work experiences. Convenience sampling was used owing to time constraints and availability. Although this method has some limitations regarding

generalisability, it is appropriate for exploratory research and offers valuable information on the motivational practices used in the tourism sector.

The statistical tools used in the analysis of the collected data included percentage analysis, mean ranking, and correlation analysis. These methods were applied to determine the significance of various motivational variables and to analyse the correlation between motivation and employee engagement. The analysis assisted in making significant conclusions and offering effective implications for tourism organisations.

Data Analysis and Findings

Given that motivation in the tourism industry requires analysis, it is vital to understand the demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds of employees. The motivational factors that affect employees in most cases are age, sex, education level, and work experience. These attributes assist in establishing workforce diversity, skills, and career expectations, which in this case influence the performance of organisations and service quality. The hospitality industry and tourism business in the Alappuzha district, characterised by backwaters, provide jobs to diverse people. Thus, the analysis of the profile of employees in the tourism sector can serve as a starting point of the motivational aspects interpretation and the elaboration of appropriate human resource policies.

The current research gathered primary information among tourism workers who work in various segments like Hotel, house boats and travel agents as well as other service based units in Alappuzha district. The age, gender, education, and experience of the respondents were analysed. These variables are significant because they determine job satisfaction, commitment, and future career promotion. Table 1 presents the specifics of the sample respondents.

Table 1 Profile of Tourism Employees in Alappuzha District

Category	Sub-category	Frequency	Percent
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Age	Below 25	28	23.3
	25–35	49	40.8
	36–45	21	17.5
	Above 45	22	18.4
Gender	Male	68	56.7
	Female	52	43.3
Education	School	19	15.8
	Diploma	37	30.8
	UG	46	38.3
	PG	18	15.0
Experience	Less than 5 years	54	45.0
	5–10 years	36	30.0
	Above 10 years	30	25.0

The information provided in Table 1 shows that most of the respondents (40.8 percent) are aged between 25 and 35 years, followed by employees aged less than 25 years (23.3 percent). This indicates that the tourism industry in Alappuzha is dominated by young and energetic people. The presence of younger employees shows the growth of tourism and the availability of jobs for early career workers. Meanwhile, the groups of employees aged 36–45 and over 45 years share a large number of employees, which guarantees a balance between experience and innovation in service delivery.

Regarding gender, the workforce comprised male employees (56.7 percent) than female employees (43.3 percent). Nevertheless, women are participating in large numbers, which shows that there is gradual inclusiveness of women in the tourism sector. This tendency can be explained by the development of hospitality, customer service, and travel jobs, which promote female workers more and more.

The educational profile demonstrates that the percentage of respondents with graduates is the highest (38.3%), followed by those with diplomas (30.8%). The percentages of postgraduates and school-level employees are 15.0% and 15.8%, respectively. This distribution highlights the increasing professionalisation of the tourism industry. Increased training in education allows employees to gain improved communication, service orientation, and problem-solving skills, which are vital in a competitive tourism environment.

Regarding work experience, 45.0% of the respondents had no more than five years of work experience, which is a new workforce. The experience of employees with 5–10 years of experience was 30.0%, and that of those with over ten years of experience was 25.0%. Employees with shorter tenure were dominant because tourism activities are growing at a high rate and new professionals are joining. Simultaneously, the existence of experienced employees helps in the stability of the organisation and uniformity of services.

In general, the demographic characteristics show that the workforce in the tourism sector of the Alappuzha district is young, moderately educated, and becoming more professional. The increasing involvement of graduates and diploma holders is an indicator of an increase in the levels of skills and standards of services. The workforce has multiple motivational needs, such as career growth, skill enhancement, job security, and work-life balance. These traits offer a significant foundation for the subsequent study of employee motivation in the tourism industry.

It is important to identify the major factors that drive employees in the tourism industry, especially in areas such as the Alappuzha District, Kerala, where employment is usually dependent on the season, change in tourist flow, and economic instability. Human resources are crucial for tourism organisations to offer quality service, customer satisfaction, and positive destination experiences. Consequently, understanding the factors that affect employee motivation assists management in developing suitable human resource plans, improving retention, and enhancing service delivery.

In this respect, the current study investigated the comparative significance of various motivational variables among workers in any given tourism-related organisation, such as hotels, resorts, houseboats, travel agencies, and allied services in Alappuzha. The respondents were asked to evaluate their degree of agreement with each motivational factor using a grading scale. The average scores obtained were used to find the importance of each factor, and the factors were ranked. These findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Mean Ranking of Motivation Factors

Factor	Mean Score	Rank
Job Security	4.28	I
Supportive Leadership	4.12	II
Skill Development	4.05	III
Communication	3.96	IV
Monetary Rewards	3.88	V
Organisational Culture	3.84	VI

Table 2 clearly depicts that job security is the most powerful motivational factor for employees in the tourism sector in the Alappuzha district. Such findings demonstrate the role of stability in employment within an industry where exogenous forces, such as seasonality, international travel patterns, natural calamities, and economic cycles, tend to influence employment in a specific industry. Stable and continuous employment is one of the main concerns of employees in tourism organisations because it provides them with financial security and reduces anxiety and commitment to work.

Supportive leadership is the second most influential factor, as it demonstrates the necessity to receive guidance, encouragement, and fair treatment from supervisors and managers. The role of leadership is very decisive in service-based industries, where it determines the attitude of employees, morale, and positive working environment. Employees are motivated and feel treated well when leaders empathise, acknowledge them, and communicate freely with them.

The third place was given to skill development and training, which means that employees attach importance to constant learning and professional growth. The tourism business is dynamic and needs to be equipped with updated knowledge of customer service, use of technology, cultural sensitivity, and communication. The training programmes not only contribute to the competence of the employees but also boost their confidence and job satisfaction, which consequently leads to the improvement of the performance of the organisation.

Communication was ranked as the fourth factor and emphasises the significance of open and efficient information flow in tourism organisations. Effective communication eliminates misinterpretations,

enhances synchronisation, and boosts teamwork. It also informs employees of organisational goals, policies, and expectations, which increases their participation and engagement.

Interestingly, money was ranked fifth in the list of motivators, implying that even though money is a major source of motivation in this industry, it is not the main factor driving power. This could be attributed to the characteristics of tourism employment, where non-financial aspects, such as job stability, recognition, and workplace environment, tend to have a greater role in employee attitudes and performance.

Finally, organisational culture came sixth, although it is significant. A positive organisational culture encourages teamwork, respect, and values, which lead to employee commitment and satisfaction in the long run. Although it had the lowest mean score of the listed factors, it is an important ingredient in maintaining motivation and enhancing service quality.

In conclusion, the analysis shows that workers in the tourism industry value more psychological and security-related issues than financial motives. These results indicate that tourism organisations located in the Alappuzha District should emphasise providing employment security, conducive leadership, and training and communication systems. This will assist in boosting employee motivation, decreasing employee turnover, and making the tourism industry in the area competitive.

Correlation analysis was conducted to define the connection between various dimensions of motivation and employee engagement in the tourism industry. Correlation analysis is useful for determining the level and direction of the relationship between variables. Employee engagement is also significant in service-based industries, such as the tourism industry, as it determines the quality of provided services, customer satisfaction, and the performance of the organisation. Thus, it is necessary to investigate the role of different motivational factors in engagement levels in tourism employees.

The current study considered the connection between major motivation variables, such as supportive leadership, skill development, communication, and monetary rewards, and employee engagement.

These aspects were chosen according to theoretical principles and previous studies in the field of tourism and hospitality. The analysis of responses based on a structured questionnaire was conducted using the Pearson correlation method. Significant values of correlation coefficients were computed to determine whether the relationships between motivation factors and engagement were significant. Table 3 presents the findings of the correlation analysis.

Table 3 Correlation between Motivation Factors and Employee Engagement

Variable	r value	Significance
Supportive leadership	0.62	0.01
Skill development	0.58	0.01
Communication	0.54	0.05
Monetary rewards	0.39	0.05

Table 3 shows that all the chosen motivational variables are positively correlated with employee engagement in the Alappuzha district tourism industry. Supportive leadership has the most positive correlation with employee engagement, with an r value of 0.62, which is statistically significant at the 1% level. This finding indicates the significance of leadership behaviour in affecting employees' attitudes and commitment. Participative and supportive leadership builds trust, reduces stress, and motivates employees to perform well in service delivery. This result is in alignment with theoretical views that highlight the influence of managerial support on increasing intrinsic motivation and engagement.

Employee engagement is also strongly and significantly positively related to skill development, with a correlation of 0.58. This implies that when staff are trained and provided with opportunities to improve professionally, they become more confident, competent, and devoted to their jobs. Development and constant learning increase job satisfaction and encourage long-term commitment to the organisation. Skill improvement in dynamic tourism businesses aids employees in adjusting to changing customer demands and technology, thus enhancing service quality.

Communication has a moderate but strong positive correlation with employee engagement

($r = 0.54$). Open communication lines between management and employees enhance transparency, decrease misunderstandings, and enhance teamwork. When employees are fully aware of organisational goals and policies, they form a sense of belongingness and participation. This confirms the perception that engagement in service-based organisations can only be achieved through participation and good communication.

Monetary rewards are also positively correlated with employee engagement; however, the relationship is relatively weak, with a value of r of 0.39. This means that money is a significant but insufficient factor in sustaining long-term interest. Non-financial aspects, including job security, leadership support, and career development, are more valuable to employees in the tourism sector. This finding confirms previous results indicating that intrinsic and psychological issues are more important in service industries.

Overall, the correlation analysis proves that employee motivation in the tourism industry is multidimensional and depends on financial and non-financial factors. Nevertheless, psychological and developmental factors, including leadership support, training, and communication, have a stronger effect on engagement than monetary rewards. These results indicate that tourism organisations in the Alappuzha district need to consider a holistic motivational approach that incorporates supportive leadership, constant training, open communication, and fair remuneration practices to improve employee engagement and commitment to services.

Discussion

The current study offers valuable information on the motivational concerns of employees in the tourism industry in the Alappuzha district, Kerala. The results indicate that motivation in tourism is multidimensional and is affected by both financial and psychological aspects. Nevertheless, the findings also show that non-financial aspects, such as job security, leadership support, skill development, communication, and organisational culture, have a stronger influence on employee engagement and service commitment.

Among the greatest discoveries of the research is the high value attached to job security. This represents the quality of employment in the tourism sector, which is habitually seasonal, uncertain of inflow and outflow of tourists, and subject to economic doubts. Workers in this industry also focus on stability, as this would guarantee a continuation of income and reduce job-related anxiety. The focus on job security is in line with the service-oriented nature of tourism, in which employees desire long-term affiliation with organisations to develop skills, relationships, and career development. The same result also proves previous studies that recognise employment stability as a major determinant of engagement in hospitality and tourism.

The second most influential motivational factor was supportive leadership. This highlights the importance of managers and supervisors in ensuring a positive work environment. Employees in the tourism industry are often in contact with customers and must grapple with emotional and operational difficulties. Guidance leaders, therefore, ensure that employees deal with stress and enhance performance through recognition and empathy. The positive relationship that exists between the topic of leadership and engagement in the study reaffirms that leadership behaviour has a direct impact on the attitude of employees and service orientation. This shows that transformational and participative leadership styles can be more useful in the tourism industry.

Third, skill development and training implied that employees considered learning and professional growth opportunities. Tourism is a dynamic sector that involves the constant improvement of service competencies, communication skills, and communication awareness. Trained employees feel better and more empowered, which will increase their independence and efforts. This observation also echoes the professionalisation of the tourism labour force in Alappuzha, as a significant percentage of workers have diplomas and graduate degrees. Companies investing in employee development have a high chance of attaining greater productivity and customer satisfaction.

The significance of communication and involvement in decision making also stresses the necessity of transparency and inclusiveness within tourism organisations. Employees develop a sense

of belonging and ownership when they are aware of the organisational policies and when they are consulted in key decisions about the operation of the organisation. This increases trust and minimises misunderstandings. The research established a strong association between participation and service commitment, which means that engaged employees will be more committed to providing high-quality service and innovating with ideas.

Although financial incentives are significant, they were not listed as the most significant. This implies that the tourism staff feels that financial rewards are insufficient, but are needed. Competitive and fair pay is still mandatory, although it must be coupled with a good working environment and growth prospects. The linear relationship between financial compensation and employee involvement supports the claim that intrinsic motivational encouragement is more vital in creating long-term dedication in the service sector.

Although organisational culture is ranked low relative to other causes, it still plays an essential role with regard to employee motivation. Mutual respect, teamwork, and ethical culture lead to teamwork and minimise work conflict. This culture also facilitates service excellence, as employees are motivated to strive as one to satisfy customers.

Managerial Implications

The results of this study have several practical implications for tourism organisations, policymakers, and human resource managers in the Alappuzha district and other tourism destinations. First, organisations must focus on employment stability and career continuity. Long-term contracts, reduced seasonal layoffs, and provision of social security benefits will significantly boost employee confidence and commitment. Job security programmes not only ensure less turnover but also make employees invest their energies in organisational success.

Second, tourism organisations should focus on leadership practices. Training should be provided to managers on supportive and participative leadership styles that are aimed at guidance, empathy, and recognition. Leadership development programmes can enhance supervisory performance and the culture of trust. Frequent feedback, appreciation,

and openness between managers and employees will enhance morale and participation.

Third, the significance of skill development emphasises the necessity of constant training programs. Customer service, language proficiency, digital tourism platform, and crisis management training should be structured as part of training programs that organisations design. Partnerships with tourism training facilities and government organisations may assist in strengthening employees competencies and career development. Employees are also trained to embrace changes in technology and customer demand.

Fourth, organisations are supposed to encourage free communication and employee involvement. Formal communication protocols, such as meetings, suggestion reports, and feedback mechanisms, will help increase frankness. The sense of ownership and motivation will be enhanced because employees will participate in operational decisions and service innovation. Creativity and problem-solving are also fostered by participative management in service delivery.

Fifth, although money is not the only incentive, fair and clear systems of compensation are also needed. Equity in the distribution of salaries, incentives, and service charges is needed in organisations. Motivation can be increased using performance-based rewards, recognition programmes, and non-financial rewards, such as flexible schedules and work-life balance.

Sixth, a sound organisational culture ought to be a part of the strategic emphasis. Tourism organisations are expected to foster teamwork, respect, diversity, and ethical practices. A conducive culture minimises stress and improves teamwork, which is essential in customer-focused settings. Organisational identity can be enhanced by cultural schemes, such as engagement programmes, team-building programmes, and welfare schemes for employees.

Finally, policymakers and tourism authorities should encourage human resource development in the tourism sector. Government programs, such as skill development schemes, certification programs, and employment security, can enhance workforce stability and service standards. Partnerships between the state and businesses will be helpful for the growth

of sustainable tourism in Kerala.

Future Research Recommendations

Future studies could expand on the current study by using a larger and more varied sample of tourism destinations in Kerala and other parts of India to increase the generalisability of the results. A comparative analysis of organised and unorganised tourism and urban and rural destinations might provide a better understanding of the differences in employee motivation. It is also suggested that longitudinal studies should be conducted to assess how motivational variables and employee engagement change over time, especially in a busy and seasonal business such as tourism. Moreover, future research could follow a mixed methods design by incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews and case studies to obtain a more holistic picture of employee experience and organisational practices. Further research on how digital change, technology adoption, and generational differences affect motivation and engagement will also be useful in establishing sustainable and employee-focused human resource practices in the tourism industry.

Limitations of the Study

Similar to any research, the present study has a few limitations. The study was conducted only among tourism employees in the Alappuzha district; therefore, the findings may not fully represent other tourism destinations with different work environments and organisational practices. Also, the data were based on employees' self-reported perceptions, which may sometimes reflect personal bias

Conclusion

Conclusively, the current research confirms that psychological and developmental aspects of employee motivation in the tourist industry of the Alappuzha District have a greater touch than the financial incentive. The results show that job security, supportive leadership, and skill development opportunities are important for increasing employee engagement and commitment to service, whereas communication, participation, and a positive organizational culture also boost motivation and

minimise turnover intentions. Although monetary rewards are still worth keeping, they cannot maintain long-term commitment in a service-based industry. Therefore, tourism organisations should implement a motivational framework based on the integration of financial, social, and emotional support systems and that is employee-oriented. Such an approach will not only enhance the satisfaction and performance of employees but also serve to develop service excellence, customer loyalty, and the sustainability of tourism in the Alappuzha district and other similar destinations.

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