

A STUDY ON EMPLOYEE LOYALTY IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MADHYA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

The tourism sector is one of the most significant sectors globally. Tourism has been given significant importance in almost all states of India. State governments are actively pursuing opportunities to capitalize on their tourist resources and potentials. The tourist sector in Madhya Pradesh plays a crucial part in its economic growth. The individuals employed in this business are the fundamental pillar supporting its success. Therefore, the implementation of robust HRD processes is essential for their growth and progress. The tourist promotion organizations must verify if the HRD practices implemented in Madhya Pradesh guarantee employee loyalty and whether these practices foster employee happiness, as well as how employee satisfaction leads to employee engagement. The study examined the HRD procedures used by public sector tourist organizations in Madhya Pradesh, with the aim of identifying the specific techniques employed by these agencies. The study asserts that both employee happiness and employee engagement exert a substantial impact on enhancing employee loyalty. Therefore, the study corroborates the current literature that asserts a favorable correlation between employee happiness and employee loyalty. Similarly, the present study provides solid evidence for the beneficial impact of previous research on staff engagement including employee loyalty. Ultimately, the study validated the theoretical framework elucidating the correlation among HRD practices, employee happiness, employee engagement, and employee loyalty. This is achieved by analyzing the data using exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and ultimately formulating structural equation modeling through hypothesis testing.

Keywords: Tourism, Human Resource Development, Employee Loyalty, Hospitality Industry, HRD Procedures, Employee Engagement, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Structural Equation Modeling

1. INTRODUCTION

Presently, tourism stands as the most vibrant segment of the tertiary sector and a pillar of the economy. It serves as a catalyst for societal transformation, fostering connections between nations, regions, and individuals, enabling them to engage with one another. Tourism is widely acknowledged as one of the world's most rapidly expanding and significant sectors due to its substantial economic advantages. Asia has the highest growth rate in the tourist business, with an increase of 8%. Europe follows with a growth rate of 4%, the Americas with 5%, and Africa with 7%. Tourism significantly contributes to global economic development through various economic advantages, including job creation, government revenue generation, development of underdeveloped areas, foreign exchange generation, and overall promotion of economic growth (Muhammed & Jagathyraj, 2008).

According to the UNWTTTC research, the travel and tourism industry contributed 10.2% to the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which amounts to US \$7.6 trillion. Additionally, it created 292 million employment opportunities in 2016, which is similar to 1 in 10 jobs worldwide. Tourism is classified as an "export" sector due to its ability to generate foreign currency through the influx of international travelers. Tourism facilitates global mobility across several dimensions. Tourism offers the opportunity to interact with diverse individuals from around the world, get insight into their cultures, and acquire information about the historical legacy of former civilizations. These encounters foster amicable relations among individuals worldwide and indirectly contribute to the consolidation of global peace. In recognition of its significance, the General Assembly of the United Nations designated the year 1967 as the "International Tourism Year."

Tourism has been regarded as the primary source of foreign exchange gains in several developing nations. As to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism has the top position in international services trade, representing 40 percent of worldwide trade in services and 6 percent of total world trade. The tourism business exhibits significant potential for both development and diversification. Tourism is experiencing rapid expansion and increased diversity, making it one of the fastest growing economic sectors globally. India has been identified by the World Travel and tourism Council (WTTC) as one of the rapidly growing tourist industries, alongside China, over the next 10 to 15 years. By 2027, the industry is projected to expand at a yearly rate of 6.8% to reach RS.28.49 lakh crore (US\$420 million), which would account for 10% of the GDP.

In 2022, international tourism saw robust performance, surpassing initial expectations. This was driven by significant accumulated demand and the easing or removal of travel limitations in several nations. In 2022, the number of foreign tourists exceeded 900 million, which is double the number in 2021 but still 37% lower than the number in 2019. International tourism rebounded to 63% of its pre-pandemic levels, which aligns with the scenarios projected by UNWTO in May 2022.

Year	FTAs in India (in Million)	NRIs arrivals in India (in Million)	ITAs in India (in Million)	Percentage Change over previous years		
				FTAs	NRIs	ITAs
2011	6.31	—	—	11.8	—	—
2012	6.58	—	—	4.3	—	—
2013	6.97	—	—	5.9	—	—
2014	7.68	5.43	13.11	10.2	—	—
2015	8.03	5.74	13.76	4.5	5.7	5.0
2016	8.80	6.22	15.03	9.7	8.5	9.2
2017	10.04	6.77	16.81	14.0	8.8	11.8
2018	10.56	6.87	17.42	5.2	1.4	3.7
2019	10.93	6.98	17.91	3.5	1.7	2.8
2020	2.74	3.59	6.33	-74.9	-48.6	-64.7
2021	1.52	5.48	7.00	-44.5	52.6	10.6
2022	6.19	—	—	305.4	—	—

Fig. 1 Foreign Tourists Arrival in India (Source: Bureau of Immigration, Govt. of India)

In 2022, Europe, which is the largest destination region globally, saw 585 million visitors. This number represents over 80% of the levels seen before the pandemic, which is a decrease of 21% compared to 2019. In 2022, the Middle East had the highest proportional growth compared to other areas, with the number of arrivals reaching 83% of the pre-pandemic levels. This is a decrease of 17% compared to the figures in 2019. Africa and the Americas had a resurgence of around 65% of its pre-pandemic tourists, however Asia and the Pacific region only achieved a recovery rate of 23%, primarily owing to more stringent pandemic-related measures. Western Europe and the Caribbean had the highest percentage of recovery, with 87% and 84% respectively, compared to their levels before the epidemic.

According to the study conducted by the UNWTO Panel of Experts, 72% of the participants anticipate improved performance in 2023. Nevertheless, a majority of experts (65%) hold the opinion that international tourism would not recover to the levels seen in 2019 until the year 2024 or beyond. According to UNWTO's projections for 2023, foreign visitor arrivals may reach between 80% and 95% of the levels seen before the pandemic this year. Europe and the Middle East are anticipated to achieve these levels. Nevertheless, there are significant threats that lie ahead, particularly in the realms of economics and geopolitics. Tourists are anticipated to exhibit a growing inclination towards seeking optimal cost-effectiveness and opting for local travel in light of the demanding economic circumstances.

In 2022, India had a remarkable influx of 6.19 million international tourists, representing a staggering yearly growth rate of 305.4% compared to 2021 (Fig. 1). The total expenditure by foreign visitors in India in 2022 was 134,543 crore INR, with an annual growth rate of 106.8% compared to 2021. In 2021, there was a significant increase in the number of domestic visitors to all states within the country, reaching a total of 1731.01 million individuals. This represents an annual growth rate of 155.5% compared to the previous year. India's contribution to International Tourism Receipts is estimated to be around 2.08% of the total global travel expenditure.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Currently, tourism is one of the greatest and most rapidly expanding sectors worldwide. It significantly influences the economic and social progress of any state. One greets the visitors and bids them farewell as acquaintances became friends. The expansion of tourism in any nation is a consequence of the synchronized endeavors of both governmental and private sector tourist organizations.

Public sector tourism bodies, such as MP Tourism Board and Madhya Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation Ltd., primarily focus on the structural and developmental aspects of the tourism industry. They assume a leadership position by providing suitable laws and administration to serve the requirements of tourists, locals, and tourism enterprises. The successful implementation of tourism as a service business relies on the effective performance of its personnel. Robust HRD procedures are necessary for this. The effective implementation of HRD practices in the tourist sector is based on

the principle of placing the appropriate individuals in suitable positions. However, the HRD practices in this area remain generally undisclosed. The personnel department is responsible for adopting HRD practices. However, at times their actions are limited to attending events and preparing salaries. In order to enhance the skills and abilities of personnel in public sector tourist organizations, it is necessary to provide them with education on training, performance evaluation requirements, career planning, developmental initiatives, welfare measures, and awards. All of these factors contribute to the development of contented and devoted employees. Therefore, the researcher chose the topic, "HRD practices in the tourism industry of Madhya Pradesh, specifically focusing on public sector tourism agencies."

3. STRATEGY OF DATA ANALYSIS

During the process of data collection, the responses of the participants to the questionnaire items were gathered and immediately entered into the computer. This approach was used to eliminate any intermediary stages that may introduce mistakes, since the survey design allowed for direct input of the data (Zikmund, 2000). The gathered data was inputted into IBM SPSS, followed by data preprocessing to examine the data and carry out any required editing, coding, transcribing, along with cleansing. Following the completion of data setup, the data underwent inspection and exploration. Subsequently, suitable methodologies for data analysis have been selected with careful attention given to the study objectives, data qualities, and the fundamental aspects of the statistical approaches. Initial data analysis was conducted, followed by hypothesis testing using data analysis. The initial data analysis involved utilizing IBM SPSS 23.0 for windows to determine descriptive statistics, do frequency distribution evaluation, and assess reliability and validity. The use of structural equation modeling was utilized to assess the validity and validate the provided hypotheses. The variables in this study were measured from the viewpoint of the employees. Therefore, the unit of analysis for the whole research is the employees of public sector tourist organizations in Madhya Pradesh.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Exploratory Factor Analysis & CFA

Several studies have proposed that the first stage in scale purification involves employing exploratory factor analysis to decrease the number of items. The research constructs were assessed using Principal Component factor Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation.

Before using PCA, the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis was evaluated. These checks are conducted using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sample adequacy and the Bartlett test of sphericity.

Table 1

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sample Adequacy		.779
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1834.35
	df.	339
	Significance	0.000

The KMO measure confirms the extent to which each item accurately predicts the corresponding dimension without any errors. Table 1 displays the KMO values obtained in the current investigation, which were .779 for the EFA. These values above the recommended threshold of 0.60, as proposed by Hair et al. (2010). In addition, the statistical analysis of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded a significant result ($p=.000$), indicating that the correlation matrix exhibits substantial correlations between variables. The factors were retrieved based on the criterion of eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1 and by scree plot analysis. After removing 35 items, this research revealed five criteria related to HRD practices. The five components had eigenvalues greater than 1 and jointly accounted for 62.37 percent of the variance. The majority of variables exhibited a high loading ($> .50$) on the five components. The findings were in line with the theoretical concepts put out by Triandis et al. (1998). All the items had item-total correlations over 0.5. The Cronbach's alpha for most items was lower than the Cronbach's alpha for the factors when those items were removed. The findings demonstrated a strong level of dependability for the constructs.

Table 2: Model Fit Indices for CFA

Fit indices	Estimated values	Recommended Level
χ^2	1177.367(df= 1039, $p = .354$)	
χ^2/df	1.02	<3
CFI	.989	>.90
IFI	.978	>.90

As previously mentioned, the CFA model fit indices provided support for the proposed threshold. This corroborated the fact that the data aligns well with the model. Additionally, the study examined the estimations of factor loading. For all instances, the factor loadings displayed substantial loading estimates (Table 2). The analysis of the standardized CFA factor loadings confirmed that all the loadings exceeded the required minimum threshold of 0.50. Overall, the CFA estimates provided evidence that the scales utilized are both reliable and valid.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

This study included a total of eight distinct univariate tests. Throughout all of these tests, a total of eight distinct dependent variables were taken into account. The factors include Training and Development (TD), Performance Appraisal (PA), Employee Welfare and Quality of Work Life (EW), Career Planning and Development (CD), Rewards (R), Employee Satisfaction (ES), Employee Loyalty (EL), and Employee Engagement (EE).

Eight separate hypotheses were decided upon for analysing the research which are present here for reference-

- Employee Satisfaction is greatly impacted by training and development.
- Performance appraisal has a big impact on employee satisfaction.
- Employee welfare and quality of work life have a substantial impact on employee satisfaction.
- Career planning and development have a substantial impact on employee satisfaction.
- Rewards have a substantial impact on employee satisfaction.
- Employee satisfaction has a substantial impact on employee engagement.
- Employee satisfaction has a substantial impact on employee loyalty.
- Employee engagement has a big influence on employee loyalty.

This research employed Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to examine conceptual models and evaluate offered assumptions. The SEM operation was conducted using SPSS software, following the recommendations of specialists such as Baumgartner & Homburg (1996), Byrne (2001), Hair et al. (1995), and Kline (2005). The value of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) lies in its ability to simultaneously utilize both structural and measurement models (Hair et al., 1995). Additionally, SEM has the advantage of enabling researchers to evaluate different models (Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996; Diamantopoulos, 1994).

Evaluating the adequacy of fit is a key objective while implementing SEM. This study utilized many criteria to assess the adequacy of fit in structural equation modeling (SEM), recognizing that no individual statistical significance test can accurately determine the proper model (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). According to Byrne (2001), the assessment of model fit should consider many criteria that may evaluate model fit from various viewpoints. Baumgartner and Homburg (1996) expressed their disapproval of over dependence on the Chi-square statistic as a sole indicator of overall model fit. They also highlighted the insufficient use of other fit indices. In addition, they suggested the inclusion of a range of additional fit indices in research studies.

The assumptions in this study were formulated and examined using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The comprehensive outcomes of the same are shown in the subsequent Table-

Table 3: Path estimates of SEM

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
ES	<---	TD	.061	.011	4.9	***
ES	<---	PA	.119	.055	2.29	.021
ES	<---	EW	.065	.021	3.1	. ***
ES	<---	CD	.026	.020	3.51	***
ES	<---	R	.103	.073	-1.72	.089
EE	<---	ES	.284	.058	4.326	***
EL	<---	ES	.212	.061	3.214	***
EL	<---	EE	.281	.058	4.643	***

Hypothesis one posited that training and development exert a favourable influence on employee satisfaction. Furthermore, the calculations (Table 3) provided evidence for a substantial impact ($\beta = .061$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, the study confirmed hypothesis 1 and concluded that training and development exert a favourable impact on employee satisfaction. The second hypothesis posited that performance appraisal exerts a beneficial influence on employee satisfaction. However, the study did not provide evidence for the considerable impact ($\beta = .119$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, the study refutes hypothesis two and concludes that performance assessment does not have a beneficial impact on

employee satisfaction. Hypothesis three posits that employee welfare and quality of work life have a beneficial influence on employee satisfaction. The estimates (Table 3) provided evidence in favour of a significant impact ($\beta = .065$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, the study confirmed hypothesis three, asserting that employee welfare and quality of work life exert a favourable impact on employee satisfaction.

Hypothesis four posits that career planning and development have a beneficial impact on employee satisfaction. The analysis of the route estimates revealed a statistically significant influence ($\beta = .026$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, the investigation provided evidence in favour of hypothesis four.

Hypothesis five posited that rewards had a favourable influence on employee satisfaction. However, Table 3 does not provide evidence of a significant impact ($\beta = .123$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, the study did not provide evidence for hypothesis five.

Hypothesis six posited that employee satisfaction has a substantial impact on employee engagement. The analysis of the route estimates revealed a statistically significant influence ($\beta = .284$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, the study confirmed hypothesis four and concluded that employee satisfaction had a beneficial impact on employee engagement.

The seventh hypothesis of the study stated that employee satisfaction has a substantial influence on employee loyalty. The analysis of the route estimates revealed a statistically significant influence ($\beta = .212$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, the study confirmed hypothesis seven and concluded that employee happiness had a beneficial impact on employee loyalty.

Hypothesis eight posits that employee engagement has a favourable impact on employee loyalty. The analysis of the path estimates revealed a statistically significant influence ($\beta = .281$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, the investigation confirmed hypothesis eight.

Following table 4 presents summary of the hypotheses-

Table 4: Summary of the Results of Test Hypotheses

SI. No.	Alternative Research Hypothesis	Result
1	Training and development significantly influence the employeesatisfaction.	Supported
2	Performance appraisal significantly influences the employeesatisfaction	Rejected
3	Employee welfare and quality of work life significantly influencethe employee satisfaction.	Supported
4	Career planning and development significantly influence theemployee satisfaction	Supported
5	Rewards significantly influence the employee satisfaction	Rejected
6	Employee satisfaction significantly influences the employeeengagement	Supported
7	Employee satisfaction significantly influence the employee loyalty	Supported
8	Employee engagement significantly influence the employee loyalty	Supported

5. CONCLUSIONS

As part of this testing, the study initially performed preliminary data screening. In addition, the study analyzed the demographic and psychographic traits of the subjects included in the study. In the subsequent part, the study conducted a comprehensive analysis of EFA to assess the one-dimensionality of the scale measures. In addition, the study employed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the reliability and validity of the scale measures. Once the reliability and validity of the scale measures were confirmed, the study proceeded to examine the presented hypotheses using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). During this step, the study found that the suggested model had a high level of robustness and demonstrated a strong fit with the data. Subsequently, the test of hypotheses further confirmed the importance of all the provided hypotheses.

From the standpoint of training and development, the study discovered that employee satisfaction is positively influenced by training and development. This finding is consistent with previous researches. These studies suggest that implementing continuous learning and training programs in the workplace has a substantial impact on employee satisfaction. Therefore, the study confirms the initial premise that Training and development exert a substantial impact on employee satisfaction. Furthermore, in terms of performance appraisal, the study's findings suggest that employee satisfaction is not positively affected by performance appraisal. The study contradicts the previous research findings, which suggest that an effective performance assessment system enhances employee productivity and motivation. The present study refutes the second hypothesis, which states that performance appraisal has a substantial impact on employee satisfaction. Furthermore, regarding employee wellbeing and quality of work life, the study's findings align with previous researches. All of them firmly endorse the notion that enhancing employee welfare and improving the

quality of work life will heighten employee satisfaction. Therefore, the study confirms the third hypothesis, which states that employee welfare and quality of work life have a considerable impact on employee satisfaction. Furthermore, in terms of career planning and development, this study corroborates the previous researches. These studies found that when organizations offer superior career planning and development initiatives, it enhances their ability to enhance talent and ultimately results in employee satisfaction. Therefore, the study's findings confirm hypothesis four, which asserts that career planning and development have a major impact on employee satisfaction.

Ultimately, the study examines the correlation between rewards and employee satisfaction. Several scholars have emphasized the significant role of rewards in promoting employee happiness. However, the present study contradicts the previous research conclusions. The remuneration provided to staff of public sector tourist organizations is inadequate, as it is restricted solely to their wage. The study refutes the fifth hypothesis, which states that rewards have a substantial impact on employee satisfaction.

The study demonstrates that employee happiness has a favorable impact on staff engagement. SEM path estimations corroborate this. The study's findings corroborate the past research findings. All of them assert emphatically that an increase in employee satisfaction has a beneficial effect on employee engagement. Therefore, the study confirms the sixth hypothesis and asserts that employee satisfaction has a beneficial impact on employee engagement.

Ultimately, the study validated the theoretical framework elucidating the correlation between HRD practices, employee happiness, employee engagement, and employee loyalty. This is achieved by analyzing the data using exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and ultimately formulating structural equation modeling through hypothesis testing.

6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The study aims to analyze the demographic, behavioral, and attitudinal elements that impact the human resource development (HRD) practices of public sector tourist organizations in Madhya Pradesh. The study's findings suggest several practical implications for enhancing HRD processes and fostering employee loyalty in public sector tourist organizations in Madhya Pradesh.

- Training and development initiatives inside the organization result in observable modifications in employee behavior. It improves employees' abilities and aids in their preparation for future duties. It fosters collaboration, enhances organizational dedication, minimizes staff attrition, facilitates the integration of new technologies, increases satisfaction, improves service performance, and boosts employee self-esteem.
- Performance appraisal is the official process used in an organization to assess the contributions and characteristics of prospective workers. It assists managers in using it as a foundation for assessing employee performance and considering them for advancement. It establishes a logical basis for determining piece-work rates, bonuses, etc., and also cultivates a vigilant attitude among the organization's senior executives. Performance evaluation enables employees to design appropriate training and development programs to enhance performance quality, while also serving as a foundation for managerial job transitions.
- Employee welfare and quality of work life enhance the physical and mental well-being of employees, hence enhancing their productivity. Enhancing the public perception of the organization and fostering improved labor relations are the benefits of this practice. Provision of welfare measures to employees enhances their quality of life and leads to an improvement in their degree of job satisfaction.
- Career planning and development initiatives in the organization ensure a sufficient pool of skilled workers for future management, technical, and other crucial jobs. Implementing career planning and development activities in an organization enhances staff mobility by strategically planning assignments, reduces employee turnover, mitigates job classification pressure, increases job satisfaction and loyalty towards the organization, and contributes to reducing organizational chaos.
- Employees will exhibit a favorable reaction towards the organization when they are appropriately compensated. Providing appropriate acknowledgment and incentives to employees fosters a positive disposition towards the organization and enhances employee productivity. It enhances job satisfaction, employee happiness, staff retention, and loyalty. Providing rewards to employees fosters the development of a team-oriented culture among them.
- Employee satisfaction serves as a measure of the overall morale of employees inside the business. The level of employee involvement is directly correlated with the productivity of the organization. An employee who is content with their job is more likely to remain with the organization for an extended period of time. However, an actively involved employee makes a more extended and valuable contribution to the organization. An employee who is content and actively involved is crucial for the success of any organization.

- Devoted and content employees are the invaluable resource of the organization. Enhanced work satisfaction among employees leads to a decrease in absenteeism, an increase in morale and productivity, and fosters employee loyalty.
- An engaged employee is aware of the business environment and collaborates with others to optimize their contributions for the organization's advantage. Engaged employees exhibit beneficial behaviors in the workplace.

7. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite making significant contributions to both theory and practice, the researcher acknowledges that the current study has numerous noteworthy shortcomings. Nevertheless, the study suggests that other researchers should use this constraint as a chance to explore these regions and further their research, so enhancing both theoretical and practical comprehension. The primary focus of this study is on the HRD practices specifically within public sector tourist agencies. Therefore, it is possible to replicate the same study in the human resource development methods of private sector tourist firms.

- The report does not address HRD practices in the tourist industry from a sustainability perspective. There is potential for doing study on HRD practices for sustainability in the tourist sector of Madhya Pradesh.
- The study focuses on the specific HRD methods employed by public sector tourist companies in Madhya Pradesh. There is more potential to implement human resource development techniques inside public sector and its properties.
- Another opportunity exists to do research by conducting a comparison analysis of HRD practices between the Department of Tourism's properties and other public sector's properties.
- The expansion of the tourist industry may be achieved via the collaborative efforts of governmental and private sector tourism bodies. There is an opportunity to conduct a comparison analysis of the human resource development (HRD) methods between governmental and private sector tourist organizations in Madhya Pradesh.

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