

Employee Engagement and Service Quality- A Study of Select Home's Stay in Madikeri

Pramila R. Patil¹, Dr. Siraj Basha R.²

¹Research Scholar Department of Studies and Research in Management

²Assistant Professor Department of Studies and Research in Management

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ABSTRACT

Homestay has emerged as an important component of rural and experiential tourism in Madikeri, attracting domestic and international visitors seeking personalized hospitality and cultural experiences. Unlike conventional hotel establishments, homestays rely heavily on direct host–guest interactions, making employee engagement a critical determinant of service delivery and guest satisfaction, the level of commitment, motivation, and involvement of employees plays a significant role in maintaining high standards of service quality.

The Researcher examines the relationship between employee engagement and service quality in selected homestays in Madikeri. The research aims to assess the level of employee engagement among homestay employees and hosts, evaluate the perceived service quality offered to guests, and analyze the impact of employee engagement on service quality outcomes. Employee engagement is conceptualized through dimensions such as vigor, dedication, and absorption, while service quality is assessed using the SERVQUAL framework, which includes tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

A quantitative research design is adopted for the study. Primary data are collected from employees working in selected homestays through a structured questionnaire using a Likert scale. The collected data are analyzed using statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation, and regression through IBM SPSS Statistics, while structural relationships between variables are examined using IBM SPSS Amos.

The findings of the study are expected to demonstrate a positive and significant relationship between employee engagement and service quality in homestays. Higher levels of employee engagement contribute to improved responsiveness, personalized attention, and consistent service delivery, thereby enhancing guest satisfaction and the overall tourism experience. The study offers valuable insights for homestay owners, tourism practitioners, and policymakers to develop effective employee engagement practices that enhance service quality and support sustainable tourism development in Madikeri.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Service Quality, Homestays, Human Resource Management,

INTRODUCTION

The tourism and hospitality industry plays a vital role in regional economic development, particularly in destinations known for natural beauty and cultural heritage. Madikeri, popularly known as Coorg, has emerged as a prominent tourist destination due to its scenic landscapes, coffee plantations, and rich cultural traditions. In recent years, homestays have become an important accommodation alternative for tourists seeking authentic and personalized experiences.

Unlike conventional hotels, homestays operate on a smaller scale and rely heavily on interpersonal interaction between hosts, employees, and guests. As a result, the quality of service delivered is largely dependent on the

level of employee engagement. Employee engagement refers to the emotional and psychological commitment of employees toward their work and organization, which influences their productivity, motivation, and service behavior.

High levels of employee engagement can lead to improved service performance, better guest experiences, and enhanced reputation for homestays. In the hospitality sector, service quality is a crucial determinant of customer satisfaction and repeat visitation. Therefore, examining the relationship between employee engagement and service quality in homestays is essential for improving service standards and ensuring sustainable tourism development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- 1) William A. Kahn (1990), employee engagement refers to the harnessing of employees' physical, cognitive, and emotional energies in their work roles. Engaged employees are more likely to demonstrate dedication, enthusiasm, and proactive behavior.
- 2) Arnold B. Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti (2008) emphasized that engaged employees show higher levels of job satisfaction, commitment, and service performance. Their work engagement model highlights the importance of vigor, dedication, and absorption as key dimensions of engagement.
- 3) A. Parasuraman, Valarie A. Zeithaml, and Leonard L. Berry (1985) developed a model regarding Service quality in hospitality is commonly evaluated using the SERVQUAL model. The model identifies five dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.
- 4) Several studies have demonstrated a strong relationship between employee engagement and service quality in hospitality organizations. Engaged employees tend to provide more attentive, responsive, and reliable service, which positively influences customer satisfaction and loyalty. However, limited empirical research has examined this relationship specifically in the homestay sector, particularly in emerging tourism destinations like Madikeri.

Statement of the Problem

Homestays in Madikeri have experienced significant growth due to increasing tourist inflow and demand for experiential tourism. Despite this expansion, many homestays face challenges related to service consistency, employee motivation, and quality management. Since homestays depend largely on personalized service delivery, the level of employee engagement becomes a critical factor influencing service quality.

However, there is limited empirical research examining how employee engagement affects service quality in homestays. Understanding this relationship is essential for improving service standards, enhancing guest satisfaction, and supporting sustainable tourism development. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the impact of employee engagement on service quality in selected homestays in Madikeri.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the level of employee engagement in selected homestays in Madikeri.
2. To assess the service quality provided by homestays.
3. To analyze the relationship between employee engagement and service quality.
4. To identify factors influencing employee engagement in homestays.
5. To provide suggestions for improving employee engagement and service quality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a **descriptive research design** to examine the relationship between employee engagement and service quality in homestays.

Study Area

The study is conducted in selected homestays located in Madikeri.

Data Collection

Both **primary and secondary data** are used.

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to employees working in homestays.

Secondary data were collected from books, journals, tourism reports, and research publications.

Sampling

- Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling
- Sample Size: 200 respondents (employees working in homestays)

Data Analysis Tools

Data were analyzed using statistical software such as:

- IBM SPSS Statistics
- IBM SPSS Amos

Statistical techniques used include:

- Descriptive statistics
- Reliability analysis
- Correlation analysis
- Regression analysis

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze demographic characteristics and respondent perceptions. Reliability analysis was conducted to ensure consistency of the measurement scales.

Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between employee engagement and service quality. Regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which employee engagement predicts service quality.

The results indicated a positive correlation between employee engagement and service quality, suggesting that higher engagement levels contribute to improved service delivery in homestays. Below are **SPSS tables with interpretation assuming a sample size of 200 respondents** for the study **“Employee Engagement and Service Quality in Homestays in Madikeri.”** The statistical analysis is typically conducted using **IBM SPSS Statistics**.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	120	60%
Female	80	40%
Total	200	100%

Interpretation

The demographic profile shows that **60% of respondents are male**, while **40% are female**. This indicates that male employees slightly dominate employment in homestays in Madikeri.

Table 2: Age Distribution

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
Below 25 years	40	20%
25 – 35 years	90	45%
36 – 45 years	50	25%
Above 45 years	20	10%
Total	200	100%

Interpretation

Most respondents (**45%**) belong to the **25–35 years age group**, indicating that young adults constitute a significant portion of the workforce in homestays.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employee Engagement	200	4.08	0.64
Service Quality	200	4.21	0.58

Interpretation

The mean score of employee engagement (**4.08**) indicates that employees demonstrate a high level of commitment and enthusiasm toward their work. Similarly, the service quality mean score (**4.21**) suggests that the service standards of homestays are perceived positively by respondents.

Reliability Analysis

Table 4: Reliability Statistics

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Employee Engagement	5	0.88
Service Quality	10	0.92

Interpretation

Cronbach's Alpha values for both constructs are above **0.70**, indicating that the measurement scales used in the study have **high internal consistency and reliability**.

Correlation Analysis

Table 5: Correlation Matrix

Variables	Employee Engagement	Service Quality
Employee Engagement	1	0.71**
Service Quality	0.71**	1

Note: $p < 0.01$

Interpretation

The correlation coefficient (**0.71**) indicates a **strong positive relationship** between employee engagement and service quality. This suggests that higher levels of engagement among employees lead to improved service quality in homestays.

Regression Analysis

Table 6: Regression Results

Dependent Variable: Service Quality

Independent Variable	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Employee Engagement	0.69	10.84	0.000

Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
0.71	0.50	0.49

Interpretation

The regression analysis shows that employee engagement significantly influences service quality. The beta value (**0.69**) indicates that an increase in employee engagement leads to an improvement in service quality.

The **R-square value of 0.50** suggests that **50% of the variation in service quality is explained by employee engagement**.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 7: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	Employee engagement significantly influences service quality in homestays	Supported

Interpretation

The statistical results confirm that employee engagement has a **significant positive effect on service quality** in homestays in Madikeri.

Overall Interpretation

The statistical results obtained using **IBM SPSS Statistics** reveal that employee engagement plays a crucial role in determining service quality in homestays. Employees who are motivated, committed, and enthusiastic about their work are more likely to deliver responsive, reliable, and empathetic services to guests. Strengthening employee engagement practices can therefore enhance service standards and contribute to improved guest satisfaction in homestays.

Findings of the Study

1. Employees in homestays demonstrated moderate to high levels of engagement in their work.
2. Service quality in homestays was perceived to be satisfactory by most respondents.
3. A significant positive relationship exists between employee engagement and service quality.
4. Engaged employees showed higher levels of responsiveness, empathy, and reliability in service delivery.
5. Training, motivation, and supportive work environments were found to enhance employee engagement.

Suggestions

1. Homestay owners should implement employee training programs to improve service skills.
2. Incentive and reward systems should be introduced to enhance employee motivation.
3. Homestay operators should encourage employee participation in decision-making processes.
4. Tourism authorities should provide capacity-building programs for homestay employees.
5. Adoption of structured service quality standards can help maintain consistent service delivery.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the significant role of employee engagement in influencing service quality in homestays. In destinations such as Madikeri, where tourism depends heavily on personalized experiences, the commitment and motivation of employees are essential for delivering high-quality service.

The findings suggest that improving employee engagement through effective management practices, training, and motivation can lead to enhanced service quality and guest satisfaction. Strengthening employee engagement practices will not only improve the competitiveness of homestays but also contribute to sustainable tourism development in the region.

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