

# “Motivation among travel agents in India: The moderating role of employee’s expertise and marital status”

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# MOTIVATION AMONG TRAVEL AGENTS IN INDIA: THE MODERATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEE'S EXPERTISE AND MARITAL STATUS

**Abstract**

This study contributes to the literature by offering insights over the relationship between job satisfaction and work stress with employees' motivation among travel agencies in India. The paper aims to determine the impact of job satisfaction and work stress on employees' motivation level with a specific focus on the moderating impact of employees' expertise and marital status in the context of travel agencies in Southern India. A survey was conducted over employees of travel agencies in Southern India by adopting scales from the extant studies, and data were analyzed using structural equation modeling through Smart PLS. The outcome of the study reveals that job satisfaction has a strong significant effect on employees' motivation, unlike work stress and employees' expertise has a partial significant moderating effect on the relationship between work stress and motivation. The study stressed much about the combined effects of the mediators. The present study has tested the new composite scale to measure the overall motivational level, unlike the previous studies. The survey was conducted between November 2019 and December 2019 and entails 164 respondents, the majority of the subjects are millennials between 18 and 35 years, with 43.3% having master's degree, all were found to be pre-qualified for the investigation.

**Keywords**

marketing, tourism, personnel management, South Indian companies

**JEL Classification**

M31, M12, M54, L83

**INTRODUCTION**

Human resource is the most dynamic resource to be utilized (van Mierlo, Bondarouk, & Sanders, 2018), much depends on their attitude, understanding, motivation, and satisfaction for an organization's flawless operations as they are the managers of all other resources. The achievement of any business is whirled on human resources. An unsatisfied and stressed employee affects organizations negatively (Idiegbeyan-Ose, Aregbesola, Owolabi, & Eyiolorunshe, 2019). Hence, considering the importance of human resource job satisfaction and stressful work pressure level are being vital for organizational success failure. It is imperative to study their combined effect on employees' motivation levels, and their vital impact is the reason for the constant research in the phenomenon of employees' job satisfaction, work stress, and motivation. It was also observed that employees' job satisfaction, stress, and motivation affect the team spirit, productivity, and effectiveness of other team members (Idiegbeyan-Ose et al., 2019). Employees' feelings about team members, rules, promotions, and rewards, emotional attachment and other psychological states of mind of employees all are related to job satisfaction (J. Čulibrk, Delić, Mitrović, & D. Čulibrk, 2018). To understand the chosen variables, it is necessary to understand how it is related to motivation.

Job stress is about tension, perceived uncomfortable disturbance, or stress among employees that can influence the employees' emotional state of mind, conditions of employees, and the behavior. A study found that work stress affects employees' behavior and has a direct and indirect influence on employee motivation (Noermijati & Primasari, 2015). Stress level proved as a major cause of employees' demotivation (Beehr, Walsh, & Taber, 1976) and higher attrition rates in various organizations around the world. Considering the rapid advancement and changes in the process and operations, it is becoming vital not to study only the direct effect of job satisfaction and stress on employees' motivation but also on the effect of key demographic aspects on employees' motivation. Extant studies have covered several demographic factors such as gender and age, among others, but very few studies were found regarding employees' area of expertise and marital status on employee motivation. Similarly, the present study examines whether marital status affects the relationship between employee's job satisfaction, work stress, and motivation level. Previous studies have covered the impact of marital status but detected mixed results (Sartono & Ardhani, 2015). Therefore, the present study covered two chosen variables as moderators, which may improve or can change the relationships among the constructs mentioned earlier.

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The following literature review will investigate the relationship between job satisfaction, work stress, and motivation and further the moderate effect of marital status and area of expertise on motivation. The study has taken into consideration three major factors, namely job satisfaction, work stress, and motivation level, to determine the moderating effect of selected demographic factors.

A study of Malaysian workers exhibited 'Job Security' being ranked 4 on a scale from 1 to 10, which signifies the pivotal role of job security in gauging job satisfaction (Islam & Ismail, 2008). Among the various theories that underline workplace motivation, Herzberg's (1966) thesis of motivator-hygiene remains the most impactful in the past decades. Primarily, the theory demarcates motivating factors into two domains: "motivator" factors that center on the work-sphere and the relationship the employee shares with it and "hygiene" factors, which concern the environment surrounding the employee's job front. Willem, De Rycke, and Theeboom (2017) observed that intrinsic motivation (autonomous factors) had indirectly affected job satisfaction, and extrinsic motivation (controlled factors) directly impacted job satisfaction. Monetary rewards are the generic motivator, whereas other financial incentives, such as bonuses and contests, operate only to induce efforts (Churchill, Ford, Hartley, & Walker, 1985).

A study on nurses in Ghana observes that remuneration makes a significant positive effect on job satisfaction (Asiamah et al., 2019)

Employees with high job involvement are more focused towards their jobs (Hackett, Lapierre, & Hausdorf, 2001), are likely to have less turnover and leaving intentions (Blau, 1986; Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993), and are more motivated to stay with the organization (Bashaw & Stephen, 1994; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). The importance of motivation, commitment, and job involvement in the workplace is obvious as well-motivated and committed employees with high levels of job involvement affect both their own, as well as organizational outcomes (Lawler, 1986).

Various studies direct to the point that employees never ceased to expect appreciation for their efforts and achievements from their managers, colleagues, contemporaries, and families (Miller, Stead, & Pereira, 1991) and, every so often, financial rewards are outshined with verbal applause (Kohn, 1993). Various factors contribute to forming the job interest of an employee. One among them is the array of emotions the employees develop in a specified work environment, which is vital for developing an attachment to their work profile, this connect revitalizes all their efforts and keeps them submerged in a specified work atmosphere (Schmitt & White, 1978). To the extent that people value interesting work, in particular, degree of congruence is more likely to be related to the degree of job satisfaction, that is, job satisfaction is more likely to depend on having interesting

work that is congruent with interests (Swaney & Prediger, 1985).

An assessment of the drivers of motivation among pharmacists employed in various hospitals in Saudi Arabia in 2016 concludes that promotion remains one of the most dominant factors to instrument employees' motivation (Benslimane & Khalifa, 2016). A cross-sectional study on Chinese healthcare workers to ascertain the moderating role of satisfaction on attrition concluded that more promotion opportunities for workers improve job satisfaction in the long run (Chen, Ran, Zhang, Yang, Yao, Zhu, & Tan, 2019).

In the day-to-day lives of employed people, relationship with their co-workers is an essential factor. Sharing the same physical space is the result of co-worker relationships for a few workers; the other majority develops the same due to interdependent and team-based responsibilities (Basford & Offermann, 2012). Cross-sectional analysis of interdepartmental collaboration among nurses exhibits that peers who had cordial working relationships had greater job satisfaction (Weaver, Mani, & Wurmser, 2019), a study on early career teachers has significantly associated "collegial" relationships among peers and job satisfaction (Kelly et al., 2019).

A complete and thorough understanding of employees' motivation is required for organizations to address and accomplish the expectations of employees and organizations (Managing Human Assets, 1984). Baron (1983) defined motivation in his own right and stated that "motivation is collection or arrangements of procedures involved in the push and pulls forces that strengthen the actions towards reaching specific goals. The motivational level is generically a measurement of the degree of motivation in an employee; for this study, three indicators were ordained, namely overall motivation, overall satisfaction, and regularity.

For employees, happiness at the workplace is their belief that they could perform the given task fruitfully to achieve the organizational goals (Gyeltshen & Beri, 2019). Studies conducted in the past have recognized happiness as the foundation of better performance and higher motivation levels, which creates a workplace environment

of great interest for research and practice as well (Magnier-Watanabe, Benton, Uchida, & Orsini, 2019). No one can agree that happiness is a factor that provides enormous motivation for employees to achieve greater performance (Santoso & Kulathunga, 2016). The scale used in this study is not a commonly used international scale regarding overall motivation, there may be an inherent bias in self-report measures, but simultaneously the present study suggests towards how overall all motivation (chosen scale and same is the novelty of the paper) affected by both job satisfaction and work stress.

The emotional labor of employees can bring certain results, such as work commitment, revenue intentions, and well-being. The main mediators of emotional labor are stress and burnout (Lee & Madera, 2019). The study has adopted two measures of job stress, namely exhaustion and absenteeism. Lack of mental energy that disables the employee to perform is called emotional exhaustion, which is an unavoidable vector of burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). One form of emotional labor is the emotional stress created by job stress (Sandiford & Seymour, 2011). An examination was conducted among hospitality professionals employed in Ecuador and found that a customer-oriented work environment caused their emotional labor, which is interrelated to exhaustion, which is a proxy variable of stress.

Absenteeism, defined as 'unplanned absences' (Australasian Faculty of Occupational Medicine, n.d.), is generally a habitual pattern of nonappearance for duty or responsibility without a valid reason. Systematic absenteeism can be a result of depression in the employee, which is caused due to long working hours and job stress (Kato, 2013). One can find a significant relationship between employee mental health issues and their leaves of absences. In this case, depression is also the main culprit for the employees (Kawakami, 2012). A study of absenteeism and work stress in a Swiss enterprise shows that 195 Swiss Franc per person per month is the productivity loss because of job stress and associated absenteeism (Brunner, Igic, Keller, & Wieser, 2019).

The study aims to empirically investigate the effects of two variables that are technical expertise

and marital status on the motivational level of travel agents. Technical expertise can be described as in any field; there is a technical level of work that requires specialized knowledge and skill. It can be learned through education, experience, or both. Technical expertise has been used as a moderating vehicle in previous studies, in a particular study of gauging emotions and ERP information-sourcing, the technical expertise of the buyer was deployed as a moderator and it was observed that technical expertise did affect sourcing behavior (Leger, Riedl, & Vom Brocke, 2014).

Pioneering studies to understand the synergies between motivation level and job satisfaction portray significant associations between the given constructs (Evans, 1998). A critical review of Herzberg's dual-factor theory emphasizes on the fact that there exists a transactional relationship between job satisfaction and motivation (House & Wigdor, 1967). It has also been evidenced that intrinsic job attributes are positively related to job satisfaction (Lu, 1999a), and motivation is positively associated with job satisfaction (Jehanzeb, Rasheed, Rasheed, & Aamir, 2012). Although no academic endeavors have proved any linearity between the constructs in the past, the arena remains open for further discourse.

Lu (1999b) reports that extrinsic job attributes are positively related to depression (an operand of work stress), a research on community health workers in China has advised policymakers to take into cognizance both work stress and motivation as they exhibit scalar relationships (Li, Hu, Zhou, He, Fan, Liu, Zhang, Li, & Sun, 2014). According to Syaifuddin (2016), work stress affects considerably on work motivation. According to Siegrist (1996), the effort-reward imbalance model suggested that work stress caused by a disparity between high commitment and effort at work and little rewards, including remuneration, appreciation, and career advancement. Hence, the present study examines the impact of work stress on employees' motivation to find how does work stress affects motivation. Therefore, the following hypotheses have been framed:

*H1: Job satisfaction has a significant positive effect on employee's motivation at travel agencies.*

*H2: Work stress has a significant effect on employees' motivation at travel agencies.*

The conceptual framework of the study promulgates four relationships among the moderators and other endogenous and exogenous variables, the *a priori* assumptions are hypothesized further.

A study by Noordin and Jusoff (2009) academic staff indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between marital status and job satisfaction, which leads to an increment in motivation among academic staff. Another study states that no statistically significant evidence proves and reveals differences regarding job satisfaction level between 'married' and 'unmarried' (Azim, Haque, & Chowdhury, 2013). Therefore, it seems logical to test the moderating impact of marital status between job satisfaction and employees' motivational level.

Investigations on medical students have indicated that married people were less stressed than their unmarried colleagues and were, thus, more motivated towards classes (Coombs & Fawzy, 1982). It was evidenced that unmarried females were least affected by stress, in yet another study on the marital status of hotel employees in North Cyprus, it was observed that marital status has a negative correlation with intrinsic motivation and high stress (Karatepe & Uludag, 2007). Considering the pieces of literature discussed above, it is an interesting aspect to test if marital status influences the relationship between work stress and motivational level.

Moreover, in a study on nursing professionals, it was established that honing and utilizing a worker's expertise has a significant association with motivation and protracts job satisfaction (Choi, Goh, Adam, & Tan, 2016). According to Phonthanukitithaworn, Naruetharadhol, and Ketkaew (2017), learning and training significantly correlate with job satisfaction. It means as the employee's skills improve satisfaction enhances, related to this finding, it can be established that the increasing expertise can improve satisfaction. To the best of the authors' knowledge, very limited studies were found regarding employees' expertise, and its role in job satisfaction and motivation, and the same is the novelty of the present study.



There is a significant association between the deployment of employee skill and knowledge in the mitigation of work stress/fatigue and the development of hard and soft skills (Araújo & Pestana, 2017). In a common observation, expertise can improve skill and make the job manageable, ultimately reducing the work pressure and stress. To test the discuss issues, the following hypotheses are framed:

- H3: Marital status moderates the relationship between Job Satisfaction and Motivation level of employees.*
- H4: Marital status moderates the relationship between Work stress and Motivation level of employees.*
- H5: Employee's expertise moderates the relationship between Job satisfaction and Motivation level of employees.*
- H6: Employees' expertise moderates the relationship between Work stress and Motivation level of employees.*

Hence, the earlier literature review was summarized in a conceptual framework (see Figure 1).

## AIMS

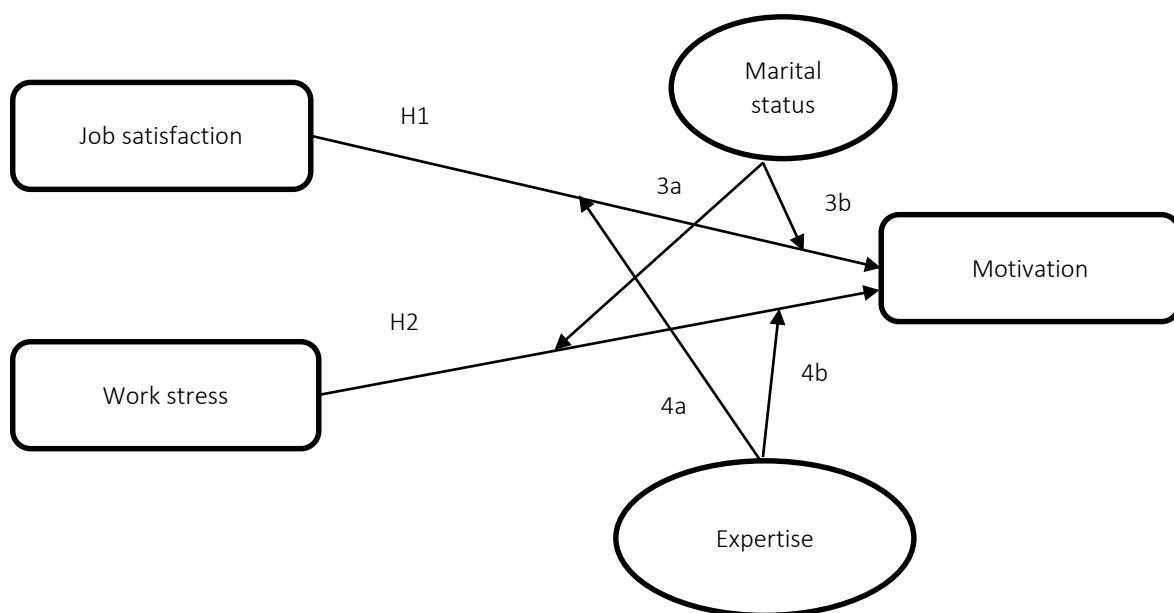
To conclude, the main objective of the present study is two-fold: first, to determine the effect of job satisfaction and work stress on employees' motivation, second, to examine the moderate effect on the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation, as well as on the relationship between work stress and employees' motivation.

## 2. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Sampling design and data collection

The study implemented a mixed sampling technique for data mining. First, with the non-randomized technique of convenient sampling, the respondents who were dispersed all over Southern India were identified and targeted. The technique's merit is given by Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016). Secondly, after selecting the respondents, the randomized sampling technique was deployed to give equal chance of selection. The respondents are people working with tour and travel agencies/operators in the major South Indian travel markets of Hyderabad, Trivandrum, and Chennai.

Source: Authors.



**Figure 1.** Hypothetical framework

Data were collected through the intercept approach and an online survey by a structured questionnaire. Out of 200 questionnaires distributed (online and physical), 164 were found eligible for analysis. Survey respondents were pre-qualified to ensure that their knowledge of motivational drivers and other constructs. Data collection was undertaken between November 2019 and December 2019. On average, the questionnaire took seven minutes to fill. Table 1 depicts a socio-demographic profile of respondents for this study.

**Table 1.** Summary of socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Source: Authors' field survey, November-December 2019.

Characteristic	Detail	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	114	69.5%
	Female	50	30.5%
Marital status	Married	72	43.9%
	Single	92	56.1%
Age of respondents	18-25	52	32%
	26-34	86	53%
	35-44	23	11%
	45+	03	04%
Educational qualification	Primary	02	0.6%
	Secondary	17	9.8%
	Bachelor	74	46.3%
	Master	71	43.3%
Salary level	Below 20,000	38	23.2%
	20,001 – 30,000	52	31.7%
	30,001 – 40,000	38	23.2%
	Above 40,001	36	22%
Expertise domains	Operations	41	28.4%
	Sales	52	31.2%
	Marketing	15	6.0%
	Human resources	17	10.2%
	Finance and accounting	38	24.2%

## 2.2. Construct measurement

The research constructs and their sources have been presented in Table 2. The items were measured on a Likert scale using 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Table 2 shows a summary of construct indicators questionnaire items with their respective literature sourced and a measurement scale. It is important to note that the instruments measuring the constructs were adapted from the extant literature and are shown in the proceeding table (see Table 3: factor loadings).

**Table 2.** Constructs, definition, and their sources

Source: Authors.

Construct	Scales (operationalization)	Literature adapted
Job satisfaction	JS1: My Job is well paid.	Traynor, M., & Wade, B. (1993). The development of a measure of job satisfaction for use in monitoring the morale of community nurses in four trusts. <i>Journal of Advanced Nursing</i> , 18(1), 127-136.
	JS2: My job provides good scope for promotion and development.	
Work stress	WS1: I am mentally drained after work time is over	Hamel, K., & Bracken, D. (1986). Factor structure of the job stress questionnaire (JSQ) in three occupational groups. <i>Educational and Psychological Measurement</i> , 46(3), 777-786.
	WS2: I am often absent from work.	
Motivational level	ML1: Supervisor is supportive.	Lundberg, C., Gudmundson, A., & Andersson, T. D. (2009). Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of work motivation tested empirically on seasonal workers in hospitality and tourism. <i>Tourism Management</i> , 30(6), 890-899.
	ML2: I have good relationship with Peers and Seniors.	

## 3. EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The various tests of the study were conducted using Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) version 3.2.9 as the application does not require the dataset to be normally distributed, unlike CB-SEM, which requires among other assumptions, the data to be distributed normally. As a result, statistical assessments are not challenged by non-normal data; PLS-SEM proves to be a better alternative (Rai et al., 2013).

### 3.1. Model fit test

Hair et al. (2017) argue the importance of referring to PLS-SEM literature to approach the statistical tests provided with the application package. Construct reliability is examined through Dijkstra-Henseler's rho along with Cronbach's alpha coefficients. In Table 3, the indicated values surpass the threshold of 0.5, exhibiting robustness among the coefficients of construct's reli-

**Table 3.** Factor loadings, construct reliability, and validity

Source: Authors' processing from SMART PLS-SEM 3.2.9.

Construct	Items	Loading	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ )
Job satisfaction	JS1	0.752	0.847	0.734	0.638
	JS2	0.766			
Motivation	ML1	0.868	0.886	0.796	0.748
	ML2	0.917			
Work stress	WS1	0.882	0.888	0.799	0.749
	WS2	0.906			

ability as proposed by (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair, Hollingsworth, Randolph, & Chong, 2017). PLS-SEM software (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015) was used to gauge the psychometric elements of the constructs and their accompanying items. After obtaining 0.7 thresholds of the composite reliability, the analysis satisfies those requirements. Convergent validity is depicted by AVE, which has surpassed the minimum threshold of 0.5 (Table 3).

On the latent constructs' indicator loadings, all items were loaded evocatively to their constructs. The indicators contain minimum loadings (coefficients) of approximately 0.7 and maximum loadings of 0.9, which is in alignment with Bagozzi and Yi's (1988) recommendation of a threshold value over 0.6 (see Table 3). The variables have a minimum load of 0.752 and a maximum load of 0.917 in values; therefore, the gist of all the constructs (and their measurements) used in this study are shown in Table 3 with their corresponding coefficients.

To constitute the discriminant validity, Fornell-Lacker's criterion was deployed to examine the occurrence of discriminant validity among the latent variables (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014). Observations from the Fornell-Lacker's criterion showed that constructs conform to basic and stringent assumptions that establish discriminant validity. Values listed diagonally (in bold) of the

Fornell-Lacker's table (see Table 4) depict AVE's of the measured constructs and ideally should exceed 0.5. To ascertain discriminant validity, an individual construct's AVE should be of greater value (coefficient) at both column and row positions.

### 3.2. Structural equation modeling – hypotheses testing

This phase of the study establishes the cause-effect relationship among the constructs of the under-pinned research intention. Inferences reveal that there is a direct effect between work stress and job satisfaction with motivation.

#### 3.2.1. Direct effect

The survey reveals that the construct 'Job Satisfaction' is positively significant with motivation and the second construct, 'Work Stress' being negatively significant among Indian travel agents; therefore, the coefficient of regression and *t*-statistic for Job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.470$ ,  $t = 5.528$ ) and Work stress ( $\beta = -0.091$ ,  $t = 1.386$ ) were analyzed to be significant (see Table 4).

#### 3.2.2. Indirect (moderating) effect

The SEM further describes the indirect effect of moderating factors' expertise and marital sta-

**Table 4.** Test of discriminant validity – Fornell-Larcke's criterion

Source: Authors' processing from PLS-SEM 3.2.9.

Construct	1	2	3
	Motivation	Work stress	Job satisfaction
Motivation	<b>0.893</b>	–	–
Work stress	–0.189	<b>0.894</b>	–
Job satisfaction	0.291	0.351	<b>0.788</b>

Note: Squared correlations; AVE in the diagonal (in bold).



**Table 5.** Path coefficient: Direct and Indirect relationship

Source: Authors' processing from PLS-SEM version 3.2.9.

Effects	$(\beta)$	Empirical remarks				
		Mean value	Std. dev.	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis supported
Direct effect						
Job satisfaction → Motivation	0.470	0.477	0.085	5.528	0.000	Yes
Work stress → Motivation	−0.091	−0.091	0.066	1.386	0.166	Yes
Indirect (moderation) effect						
Expertise → Job satisfaction → Motivation (mod1)	0.089	0.082	0.084	1.063	0.288	No
Expertise → Work stress → Motivation (mod2)	−0.045	−0.041	0.056	0.804	0.422	No
Marital status → Job satisfaction → Motivation (mod1)	−0.112	−0.089	0.076	1.131	0.258	No
Marital status → Work stress → Motivation (mod2)	−0.013	−0.110	0.071	1.570	0.117	No
Dependent variable	Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ )				Adjusted $R^2$	
Motivation	0.239				0.200	Satisfactory

Note:  $\beta$  – regression coefficient and  $t$  – significant value ( $t > 1.96$ ) or ( $p < 0.05$ ).

tus. In the first situation (mod1) the table reports a  $\beta = 0.089$  and  $t$ -value of 1.063 which do not comply with the accepted values but exhibits positive significance, mod2 (effect of expertise on work stress and motivation) displays negative relationship moderating effect with  $\beta = -0.45$  and  $t$ -statistic of 0.804 respectively, mod3 (effect of marital status moderating job satisfaction and motivation effect) also capture negative symmetry among the aforementioned variables signaling no effect with  $\beta$  value reporting at  $-0.112$  and  $t$ -value at 1.131, both defaulting the threshold. Mod4, which tries to capture the moderating effect of marital status on work stress and motivation, also reports a negative  $\beta$  coefficient of  $-0.013$  and a  $t$ -value of 1.570, which does not signal any significant moderated relationship. Therefore, the results, however, show that there are no moderating effects that can predict the endogenous variable from the statistical point of view.

### 3.2.3. Coefficient of determination ( $r$ )

It can be understood that 23% of all variations are caused by the exogenous variables can be seen in Table 5, with the adjusted  $R^2$  accounting for 20% of the variation caused by the variables.

## 4. DISCUSSION

Inspecting the first research hypothesis; whether job satisfaction has a significant positive effect on employee's motivation at travel agencies, the study

reflects upon extant studies by Alfonso Sousa-Poza and Andrés A. Sousa-Poza (2000) wherein multiple drivers of the notion of job satisfaction have been observed to be affected by motivation. Furthermore, the outcome also resonates with the pre-mentioned works of Evans (1998), House and Wigdor (1967), Lu (1999), Jehanzeb et al. (2012). The study supports Roos and Van Eeden (2001) who used three instruments to detect a linear relationship between employee motivation and job satisfaction.

The second inspection of the study pertains to work stress has a significant effect on employees' motivation at travel agencies, the findings provide empirical support to Van Yperen and Hagedoorn's (2003) study on the influencing factor of work stress on employee's motivation level and further corroborates with Li et al.'s (2014) study on the similar parallel.

The third finding of the investigation deals with the indirect or the moderating effect of demographic factors, namely marital status with job satisfaction and motivation wherein the study does not substantially reflect the explanations of authors like Kemunto, Adhiambo, and Bosire (2018), Noordin and Jusoff (2009), Kemunto et al. (2018), which implies that marital status does not moderate the relationship between individual motivation and jobs satisfaction at travel agencies, which may be because most of the respondents were unmarried 56.1%, as careers in the travel and tourism industry are relatively new and appeal to the millennials

and the later generations vis-à-vis to the previous generations. Moving on to the fourth hypothesis formulated, which aims to gauge the moderating effect of marital status on work stress and motivation level of employees, the result of the study is contrary to observations made by Coombs and Fawzy (1982), Feldman (1973), Karatepe and Uludag (2007). What may explain this departure from conventional theory is that employees of travel agencies and tour operators are mostly from Gen X and Gen Y cohorts, and many of the respondents remain single.

The fifth aim of the study was to understand the indirect effect of employee's expertise on job satisfaction and motivation level of employees. The study reveals that there exists no such relationship among the above constructs. It may be noted that a large segment of the respondents is young and mechanically are in the early stage of their careers, which infers that they are still honing their expertise/skill sets. This elucidates non-conformity with existing theory provided by Choi et al. (2016) and Phonthanakitithaworn et al. (2017). On the other hand, it proves the observation made by Kultalahti and Viitala (2014) regarding the skill set/expertise gap among millennial entry-level workers. The culminating research objective was to determine the moderating relationship of employee expertise with work stress and motivation level; the

theoretical evidence was acquired from Araújo and Pestana (2017), the empirical outcome of this study is epistemologically divergent, the cause may be similar with the one stated above, pertinent to the stage in the life cycle of the respondent.

The study challenged existing notions about human resource administration which provides a ground for introspecting even the established philosophies like the Herzberg's theory of intrinsic motivation and its implication on tourism manpower. The investigation also signals that there is a need to integrate methodologies to study human resources in emerging sectors like hospitality and tourism. For industry practitioners, especially owners of tourism businesses, the study highlights the unique needs of millennial and post-millennial workers and conveys a future direction. As per the sample population, the tourism industry is rich in educational qualifications, as 43.3% of all respondents reporting a master's degree, considering the outcomes of this study, which has established substantial correlation among satisfaction and work stress with worker motivation, the onus now is on practitioners to utilize innovative managerial practices to harness and retain valuable human asset in the tourism and travel industry and realize the fact that different generational cohorts warrant the use of unique HR practices and, thus, 'one size does not necessarily fit all sizes'.

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## CONCLUSION

This study provides useful insights for corporate houses and agencies and public policy advocates and policymakers. By having a clear idea of how to increase employee's motivation, policymakers can design or adjust existing policies to achieve better results in equipping employees with adequate internal motivation and support, which are needed in the cohesive organizations for flawless and smooth growth and functioning. Based on the significant association between job satisfaction and motivation, and work stress and motivation, this study concluded that employers should adopt effective satisfaction measures and cognitive-behavioral therapies to reduce work stress, which can be traced easily through poor productivity and demotivated internal environment in any poor performing firms. The study took the efforts to trace the effect of the employees' area of the expertise and marital status to identify their impact on employee's motivation. However, the results show that it does not have any significant effect.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The authors believe that a limitation of the study is that it covered only one industry and one region. They advise for further studies to consider the effect of expertise and marital status of the employees at a higher level in varied industries with even more rigorous statistical methodology. The study gave

interesting findings that job satisfaction and work stress do affect employees' motivation, and it seems logical that the demographic and changing factors related to individual employees might affect their motivation level. Although the present study achieved its aim, it has its limitations. The present study covers only one country, which limits its findings to generalization to other environmental contexts. Nevertheless, the replication of the present study in different contexts proposed by this paper and the addition of variables to gauge a wider ambit of relationships can contribute to overcoming these limitations and further developing knowledge for more sustainable tourism industry.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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