The Effect of Training Quality, Work Environment, and Gender Equality Policy on Loyalty of Female Workers in Ethnic Tourism in Yogyakarta

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of Training Quality, Work Environment, and Gender Equality Policy on the loyalty of female workers in the ethnic tourism sector of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Utilizing a quantitative approach, data were collected from 150 female employees through structured questionnaires, and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results reveal significant positive relationships between all three independent variables and employee loyalty. Training Quality exhibited the strongest influence (β = 0.663, $p < 0.001$), followed by Gender Equality Policy (β = 0.470, $p < 0.001$) and Work Environment (β = 0.335, $p < 0.01$). The findings underscore the importance of investing in effective training programs, fostering a supportive work environment, and implementing robust gender equality policies to enhance employee loyalty. This research contributes to the understanding of workforce dynamics in the tourism sector and offers practical implications for managers seeking to improve retention and performance.

Keywords: Employee Loyalty, Training Quality, Work Environment, Gender Equality Policy, Ethnic Tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

The ethnic tourism sector in Yogyakarta is a key part of the local economy, attracting tourists with its rich cultural heritage. Female workers are essential to this sector, contributing to service quality and cultural promotion. However, their organizational loyalty is influenced by factors such as training quality, work environment, and gender equality policies[1]. Understanding these factors is vital for enhancing their commitment and optimizing the sector's potential. Skilled human resources, supported by educational institutions, enhance the loyalty of female workers through improved skills and career prospects [2]. Training focused on cultural heritage and service excellence can empower female workers and increase their loyalty. Moreover, the work environment, shaped by community participation and local wisdom, creates a supportive atmosphere for female employees [3], [4]. Despite efforts to promote gender equality, challenges persist, with discrimination still affecting women's roles in the workforce [5]. Implementing gender equality policies can foster a sense of belonging and loyalty among female workers.

Training quality and a supportive work environment are essential for enhancing employee performance and loyalty, especially in culturally rich sectors like Yogyakarta's tourism industry. High-quality training equips female workers with the skills needed to deliver exceptional service, fostering a sense of belonging and commitment. A positive work environment also plays a key role in improving job satisfaction and retention, critical factors in ethnic tourism. Training programs boost short-term efficiency and long-term development, crucial for organizational success [6]. Studies show that effective training enhances job satisfaction, productivity, and adaptability, with 95% of employees confirming its impact on their efficiency [7], [8]. A supportive work environment enhances motivation, job satisfaction, and career satisfaction, correlating strongly with employee

loyalty [9], [10]. Organizations that foster inclusive environments see increased loyalty and reduced turnover [10].

Moreover, the implementation of gender equality policies is essential in fostering an inclusive workplace. These policies ensure that female workers receive equitable treatment, opportunities for career advancement, and protection against discrimination. In industries like tourism, where gender dynamics can be pronounced, promoting gender equality is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic necessity. Organizations that embrace gender equality are better positioned to cultivate a loyal workforce, as employees are more likely to remain committed to employers who value their contributions and provide equal growth opportunities. This study aims to explore the effects of training quality, work environment, and gender equality policy on the loyalty of female workers in Yogyakarta's ethnic tourism sector.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Training Quality

Training quality is a pivotal factor in enhancing employee performance and loyalty, particularly in sectors like tourism where service delivery is crucial. Effective training programs not only improve job-specific skills but also foster emotional attachment and cultural competencies, essential for authentic engagement with tourists. This is particularly relevant in regions like Yogyakarta, where cultural heritage is central to tourism. Training significantly enhances employee skills, knowledge, and performance outcomes, as seen by the high percentage of employees who perceive training as effective in improving work efficiency, techniques, and competency [8], [11] . Participation in training also correlates with increased job satisfaction, productivity, and adaptability, which are critical for employee performance [7]. Effective training is linked to organizational success metrics such as profitability, innovation, and retention, while also fostering emotional attachment and loyalty to the organization [7], [11]. In ethnic tourism, training programs that incorporate local traditions empower employees, particularly female workers, enhancing their pride in cultural identity and commitment to their employers [11], [12].

2.2 Work Environment

A supportive work environment is a critical determinant of employee loyalty, as it fosters job satisfaction and engagement, which are essential for retaining employees, particularly in high-stress industries like tourism, where employees frequently interact with customers. Positive management practices, effective communication, recognition, and opportunities for professional development are key components of such an environment. Research shows that transformational leadership positively influences employee loyalty by creating a supportive and motivating atmosphere [13]. Leadership styles that prioritize employee well-being and collaboration are vital for retention, especially in high-stress sectors like tourism [14]. Open communication and recognition of achievements further strengthen employee trust and loyalty, with organizations that prioritize these practices more likely to retain their workforce [10], [15]. Additionally, opportunities for professional development enhance job satisfaction and commitment,

which is particularly important in tourism, where employees face unique challenges [15], [16].

2.3 Gender Equality Policies

Gender equality policies are essential for promoting inclusivity and fair treatment in the workplace, particularly in sectors like ethnic tourism, where traditional gender roles may influence dynamics. These policies improve job satisfaction and career opportunities for female workers while boosting loyalty and reducing turnover. Research shows that organizations with strong gender equality initiatives experience higher employee satisfaction and commitment, key for fostering an inclusive environment [17]. Gender equality policies address wage gaps, unequal promotions, and leadership underrepresentation [17]. In the USA, laws like the Equal Pay Act and Title VII have advanced gender equality, though challenges remain [18]. In Africa, grassroots movements empower women despite cultural and socioeconomic barriers [18]. Strategies such as diversity initiatives, closing pay gaps, and promoting work-life balance help challenge gender biases [17]. Successful approaches, like affirmative action in the USA and grassroots efforts in Africa, offer valuable lessons [18]–[20].

2.4 The Interplay of Training Quality, Work Environment, and Gender Equality

The interplay between training quality, work environment, and gender equality policies is crucial in shaping employee loyalty. A positive work environment enhances the effectiveness of training programs, leading to greater employee commitment, while gender equality policies further reinforce these benefits by fostering a supportive and inclusive atmosphere. This combination contributes to a more loyal and engaged workforce, as various studies have shown. Well-structured training programs in a conducive work environment boost employee motivation and satisfaction, which in turn improves productivity and loyalty [21]. A supportive work environment directly correlates with increased employee loyalty, as employees who feel encouraged are more likely to stay committed [10], [14]. Gender equality policies, though not directly discussed, can be inferred to enhance organizational support, fostering a sense of belonging and fairness, thereby positively moderating the relationship between organizational commitment and loyalty [22]. Affective commitment strongly influences loyalty, which in turn boosts organizational performance, while improvements in compensation and work environment further enhance employee retention [22], [23].

In the ethnic tourism sector in Yogyakarta, understanding these interrelationships is crucial for developing strategies to enhance female workers' loyalty. The literature indicates that organizations that invest in high-quality training, foster a supportive work environment, and implement gender equality policies are better positioned to retain their workforce and improve overall performance.
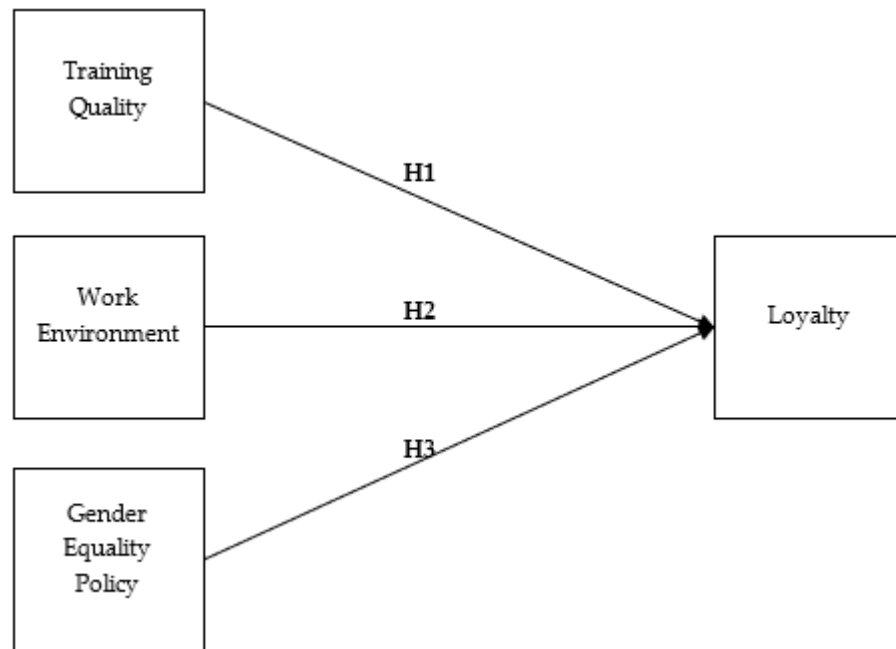
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

The study employs a quantitative research design to examine the relationships between the independent variables (training quality, work environment, and gender equality policy) and the dependent variable (loyalty of female workers). This approach allows for the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data, enabling the identification of patterns and statistical relationships among the variables. The research follows a correlational design to assess the extent to which the independent variables predict the loyalty of female workers.

3.2 Sampling

The target population for this study consists of female workers employed in the ethnic tourism sector in Yogyakarta. A non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling, is used to select participants who meet specific criteria: they must be female employees working in the ethnic tourism industry for at least six months, ensuring they have sufficient experience to provide informed responses regarding their training, work environment, and perceptions of gender equality policies. The sample size is determined to be 150 female workers, based on recommendations for structural equation modeling (SEM), which typically requires a minimum of 100 to 200 samples for robust analysis [24], providing adequate statistical power to detect significant relationships between the variables.

3.3 Data Collection

Data for the study is collected through a structured questionnaire administered face-to-face to ensure clarity and accuracy in responses. The questionnaire is designed to capture demographic information and measure the independent and dependent variables. The items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), allowing for a nuanced understanding of participants' perceptions.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data collected from the questionnaires will be analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS 3) software, a powerful statistical technique that allows for the examination of complex relationships among variables and the testing of theoretical models. The analysis will be conducted in several steps: first, basic descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency distributions) will summarize the demographic characteristics and survey responses. Next, the reliability and validity of the constructs will be assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), with composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) to evaluate these properties. The structural model evaluation will then test the relationships between the independent and dependent variables, with path coefficients examined for strength and significance, using bootstrapping techniques to assess statistical significance. Finally, the overall fit of the model will be evaluated using indices such as the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were calculated for the demographic variables and the survey items. The sample consisted of 150 female workers from various ethnic tourism establishments in Yogyakarta. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Sample

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
18-25	30	20.0
26-35	60	40.0
36-45	40	26.7
46 and above	20	13.3
Education Level		
High School	40	26.7
Diploma	50	33.3
Bachelor's Degree	50	33.3
Master's Degree	10	6.7
Years of Experience		
Less than 1 year	20	13.3
1-3 years	60	40.0
4-6 years	40	26.7
More than 6 years	30	20.0

The majority of respondents were aged 26-35 (40.0%), with most holding a diploma or bachelor's degree (66.6%). The years of experience ranged predominantly from 1 to 3 years (40.0%).

4.2 Measurement Model

The measurement model is a critical component of structural equation modeling (SEM) as it assesses the validity and reliability of the constructs being studied. In this research, we evaluated the measurement model for the constructs of Training Quality, Work Environment, Gender Equality Policy, and Employee Loyalty. The results presented in the table below demonstrate the loading factors, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct.

Table 2. Measurement Model

Variable	Code	Loading Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variant Extracted
Training Quality	TQT.1	0.874	0.936	0.954	0.839
	TQT.2	0.953			
	TQT.3	0.919			
	TQT.4	0.918			
Work Environment	WEV.1	0.889	0.857	0.902	0.698
	WEV.2	0.860			
	WEV.3	0.768			
	WEV.4	0.820			
Gender Equality Policy	GEP.1	0.826	0.902	0.927	0.718
	GEP.2	0.860			
	GEP.3	0.873			
	GEP.4	0.849			
	GEP.5	0.827			
Loyalty	LOY.1	0.795	0.901	0.924	0.672
	LOY.2	0.891			
	LOY.3	0.877			
	LOY.4	0.844			
	LOY.5	0.741			
	LOY.6	0.759			

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

The measurement model analysis confirms the validity and reliability of the constructs, with high loading factors and strong reliability metrics demonstrating that the items effectively measure their constructs. This is crucial for understanding the factors influencing female workers' loyalty in Yogyakarta's ethnic tourism sector. The high reliability of all constructs, particularly the Training Quality construct, highlights the impact of effective training on employee perceptions and behaviors. The slightly lower AVE for the Work Environment construct suggests the need for refining the measurement items. Discriminant validity is confirmed when the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

	GEP	LOY	TQT	WEV
Gender Equality Policy	0.847			
Loyalty	0.556	0.820		
Training Quality	0.769	0.591	0.816	
Work Environment	0.791	0.530	0.717	0.836

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

The discriminant validity assessment confirms that the constructs—Gender Equality Policy, Loyalty, Training Quality, and Work Environment—are distinct and measure unique aspects of the study. This ensures the structural model's integrity, meaning the analyzed relationships accurately reflect the influence of independent variables on employee loyalty.
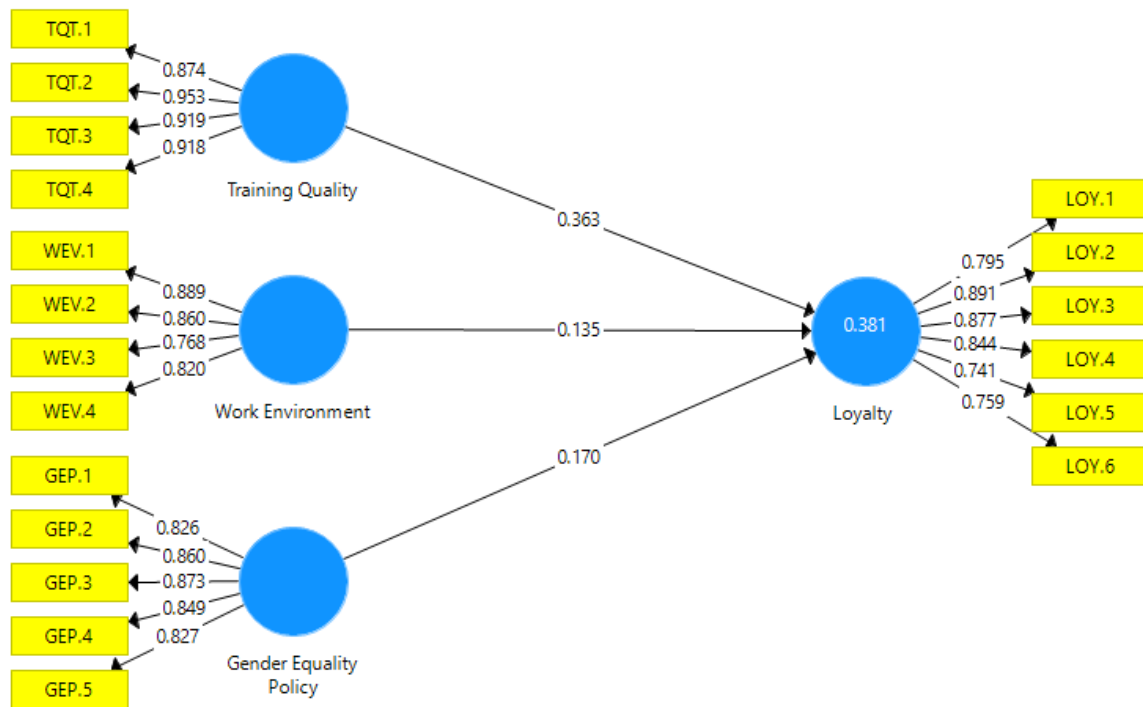
Figure 2. Model Results
Source: Data Processed by Researchers, 2024

4.3 Model Fit

Model fit evaluation is an essential step in structural equation modeling (SEM), as it assesses how well the proposed model corresponds to the observed data. The following metrics are utilized to determine the model fit in this study: Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), distance measures (d_ULS and d_G), Chi-Square, and Normed Fit Index (NFI).

Table 4. Model Fit Results Test

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.090	0.090
d_ULS	1.549	1.549
d_G	0.870	0.870
Chi-Square	545.509	545.509
NFI	0.750	0.750

Source: Process Data Analysis (2024)

The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) measures the average discrepancy between observed and predicted correlations, with values closer to zero indicating better fit. In this study, both the saturated and estimated models have an SRMR of 0.090, slightly above the recommended threshold of 0.08, suggesting reasonable fit but room for improvement. The distance measures, d_ULS (1.549) and d_G (0.870), indicate moderate fit, with lower values preferred, while the consistency between saturated and estimated models suggests stability. The Chi-Square value of 545.509 indicates the model does not perfectly fit the data, but the value must be interpreted with degrees of freedom and p-value. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) of 0.750, although below the acceptable threshold of 0.90, indicates some explanatory power but a less-than-ideal fit.

Table 5. Coefficient Model

	R Square	Q2

Loyalty	0.481	0.365

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

The R² value in this study for Loyalty is 0.481, indicating that 48.1% of the variance in employee loyalty is explained by the independent variables: Training Quality, Work Environment, and Gender Equality Policy. This moderate explanatory power suggests that while these factors significantly influence loyalty among female workers in Yogyakarta's ethnic tourism sector, 51.9% of the variance remains unexplained, potentially influenced by factors like organizational culture or external conditions. Managers should focus on improving training, work environments, and gender equality policies to enhance loyalty, while exploring other influencing factors. Additionally, the Q² value for Loyalty is 0.365, indicating moderate predictive relevance.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in structural equation modeling (SEM) involves evaluating the relationships between independent and dependent variables to determine whether the proposed hypotheses are supported by the data. In this study, we examine the impact of three independent variables—Gender Equality Policy, Training Quality, and Work Environment—on the dependent variable, Loyalty.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values
Gender Equality Policy -> Loyalty	0.470	0.470	0.137	4.245	0.000
Training Quality -> Loyalty	0.663	0.658	0.130	7.787	0.000
Work Environment -> Loyalty	0.335	0.347	0.129	3.052	0.002

Source: Process Data Analysis (2024)

The study's hypothesis testing reveals significant positive relationships between Gender Equality Policy, Training Quality, and Work Environment with employee loyalty. The path coefficient for Gender Equality Policy is 0.470, supported by a T statistic of 4.245 and a highly significant P value of 0.000 (p < 0.001), confirming its strong positive effect on loyalty. Training Quality shows an even stronger relationship with a path coefficient of 0.663, a T statistic of 7.787, and a P value of 0.000 (p < 0.001), indicating a significant impact on loyalty. The Work Environment also positively influences loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.335, a T statistic of 3.052, and a P value of 0.002 (p < 0.01), though its effect is comparatively moderate. In summary, all three hypotheses—H1 (Gender Equality Policy), H2 (Training Quality), and H3 (Work Environment)—were supported, confirming their positive influence on employee loyalty.

Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on the critical factors influencing the loyalty of female workers in Yogyakarta's ethnic tourism sector. By examining the relationships between Training Quality, Work Environment, and Gender Equality Policy, we gain a comprehensive understanding of how these elements contribute to employee loyalty. This discussion contextualizes the results within existing literature and offers practical insights for industry stakeholders. The analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between Training Quality and employee loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.663 and a highly significant p-value (0.000), aligning with prior research that highlights the role of effective training in boosting employee satisfaction and commitment [10], [22], [25]. High-quality training equips employees with essential skills, increases confidence, and fosters a sense of belonging. In ethnic tourism, where service delivery and cultural competence are crucial,

tailored training that reflects Yogyakarta's cultural heritage can enhance engagement, leading to a skilled and passionate workforce and higher loyalty rates.

The findings indicate a moderate but significant effect of Work Environment on employee loyalty (path coefficient of 0.335, p = 0.002), highlighting the importance of a supportive workplace culture in retaining employees. A positive environment with effective communication, management support, and recognition enhances job satisfaction and commitment [26]–[28]. In culturally rich tourism sectors like Yogyakarta, a supportive work environment helps employees engage with customers and deliver exceptional service. Organizations prioritizing collaboration and inclusivity through feedback, team-building, and recognition programs are likely to see increased loyalty, especially among their female workforce.

Gender Equality Policy

The study found that Gender Equality Policy has a substantial impact on employee loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.470 and a p-value of 0.000, emphasizing the importance of equitable treatment and opportunities in fostering loyalty. Previous research has shown that organizations promoting gender equality experience higher employee satisfaction and retention [22], [29], [30]. In the ethnic tourism industry, where gender dynamics are significant, robust gender equality policies—such as ensuring equal pay, career advancement opportunities, and a respectful, diverse workplace culture—are essential for enhancing loyalty and improving organizational reputation and employer attractiveness.

The interconnectedness of Training Quality, Work Environment, and Gender Equality Policy suggests that organizations must adopt a holistic approach to enhance employee loyalty. Improvements in one area can positively influence others; for instance, effective training can enhance the work environment by equipping employees with the skills to handle challenges, while strong gender equality policies foster an inclusive atmosphere that encourages participation in training. This integrated approach aligns with Zhang et al. (2022), who found that addressing multiple aspects of employee experience leads to greater organizational commitment. By recognizing this synergy, tourism managers can implement more effective strategies that meet the diverse needs of their workforce.

Practical Implications for Stakeholders

The findings of this study have practical implications for stakeholders in the ethnic tourism sector:

1. Government and industry bodies should encourage and support the implementation of gender equality policies and training programs tailored to the tourism sector. This can involve providing resources, guidelines, and incentives for organizations to adopt best practices.
2. HR professionals should prioritize creating supportive work environments and investing in high-quality training programs. This includes conducting regular assessments of training needs and employee satisfaction to identify areas for improvement.
3. Operators should recognize the value of investing in their workforce. By prioritizing training, fostering a positive work environment, and implementing gender equality initiatives, they can enhance employee loyalty and service quality, ultimately leading to improved customer satisfaction and business performance.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study contributes valuable insights, it has certain limitations. The research is context-specific, focusing on female workers in Yogyakarta's ethnic tourism sector, which may limit

the generalizability of the findings. Future research could explore these relationships in different cultural contexts or expand the sample to include male workers, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of loyalty dynamics in the tourism industry.

Additionally, qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could provide deeper insights into the lived experiences of female workers and the specific factors that influence their loyalty. This mixed-methods approach could enrich the findings and offer more nuanced recommendations for organizations.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of Training Quality, Work Environment, and Gender Equality Policy in shaping the loyalty of female workers in Yogyakarta's ethnic tourism sector. The significant positive relationships suggest that organizations must prioritize these factors to boost employee retention and engagement. High-quality training programs that emphasize both job-specific and cultural competencies, alongside a supportive work environment with effective communication and recognition, are key to fostering loyalty. Additionally, robust gender equality policies ensure female workers feel valued and empowered. By addressing these interconnected factors, tourism managers can enhance employee loyalty, leading to better organizational performance and customer satisfaction.

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