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Education-Driven Motivation as a Key Determinant of Tour Guide Performance in Community-Based Walking Tours

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Abstract

Jakarta, as a metropolitan city rich in history and culture, offers substantial potential for community-based tourism development through walking tours. The quality of tourist experiences is closely associated with the competence of tour guides, which is reflected in their education, certification, motivation, and professional performance. This study examines the relationships between education and certification with motivation and their associations with the performance of the Jakarta Good Guide walking tour community. Data were collected from 32 respondents and analysed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that education is positively and significantly associated with motivation ($\beta = 0.803$; $p < 0.001$), whereas certification is not significantly associated with motivation ($\beta = 0.022$; $p = 0.870$). Motivation shows the strongest association with performance, as indicated by the largest path coefficient in the model ($\beta = 0.850$; $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, motivation mediates the relationship between education and performance within the tested model ($\beta = 0.683$; $p < 0.001$). In contrast, certification does not demonstrate significant direct or indirect associations with performance. These findings highlight the role of motivation as a key mechanism linking education and performance within this sample. From a practical perspective, the study suggests that community-based tourism development programs may benefit from prioritizing educational initiatives and motivational enhancement rather than relying solely on formal certification processes.

KEYWORDS

Education; certification; motivation; performance; tour guides; walking tour.

Introduction

Jakarta, as Indonesia's megacity and cultural hub, embodies a rich blend of historical heritage, cultural assets, and complex urban dynamics (Journal, 2025) Destinations such as Kota Tua, the Menteng district, Glodok Chinatown, traditional markets, and modern art centers illustrate the city's unique juxtaposition of tradition and modernity (Supina & Banse, 2023). One of the emerging strategies to offer authentic tourism experiences is the walking tour, which enables visitors to explore the city while directly engaging with local culture and communities (Altamira, 2025)

The success of walking tours is strongly contingent upon the competence of tour guide communities, as guides function not merely as information providers but as experiential mediators who co-create meaning between visitors and destinations. Guide competence encompasses multidimensional capabilities, including in-depth historical and cultural knowledge, effective communication skills, interpretive storytelling, emotional intelligence, and professional conduct throughout the service encounter. These competencies critically determine the perceived authenticity, educational value, and memorability of the visitor experience, which subsequently influence tourist satisfaction, positive word-of-mouth, and long-term loyalty (Febriani & Muttaqin, 2025; Supina & Banse, 2023).

From a service-dominant logic perspective, tour guides act as frontline actors who directly shape value co-creation processes during tourism experiences. Their interpretive abilities transform passive sightseeing into meaningful learning encounters by contextualizing heritage narratives and facilitating cognitive and affective engagement Weiler & Black, 2015). Empirical studies demonstrate that knowledgeable and skilled guides significantly enhance visitor understanding, emotional attachment, and destination appreciation, thereby improving overall experience quality (Huang, Hsu, & Chan, 2010). Moreover, effective communication and storytelling competence contribute to experiential immersion, which has been shown to predict higher satisfaction and revisit intention (Kim et al., 2012).

Professional performance and ethical behavior are equally critical, as reliability, empathy, and service assurance foster trust and reduce perceived risks during tours. According to service quality theory, guide professionalism functions as a tangible determinant of service reliability and responsiveness, directly affecting customer evaluations and loyalty outcomes (Chang et al., 2014). In heritage and walking-tour contexts specifically, accurate knowledge dissemination is essential to prevent misinformation and to preserve the integrity of cultural narratives, reinforcing authenticity and destination credibility (Ap & Wong, 2001).

Several studies indicate that formal certification does not consistently exert a significant influence on motivation or performance. In the tourism context, a gap has been identified between formal credentials and actual workplace practices, where experiential learning and contextual knowledge often play a more decisive role (Baum, 2006; Baum et al., 2016) Furthermore, drawing on Self-Determination Theory, external forms of recognition such as certification do not necessarily enhance intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Additional empirical evidence also suggests that certification does not consistently lead to improvements in service performance (Rivera & Upchurch, 2008).

Despite the limitations of pedestrian infrastructure in Jakarta and the lack of regulatory support for standardized walking tour guide practices Musthofa & Saputra (2023), this study addresses an important empirical gap by examining how human capital attributes specifically education, certification, and motivation are associated with performance within a community-based walking tour context. In doing so, the study contributes to the broader understanding of informal urban tourism economies, where structured regulation is limited but community-driven practices play a significant role. Against this backdrop, the present study investigates how education and certification influence the motivation and performance of walking tour guide communities. Motivation serves as a critical variable, as it determines how effectively guides apply their knowledge and skills during tours, ultimately shaping visitor satisfaction and the overall tourism experience (Altamira, 2025).

Focusing on the attributes of tour guide communities, this study seeks to address the central research question: how are education and certification associated with the motivation of tour guide communities, and how is motivation related to their performance during walking tours? The study aims to identify key factors associated with professionalism and service quality among tour guide communities, while also providing a scientific basis for the development of training initiatives and competency frameworks in the walking tour sector in Jakarta.

Through this approach, the study aims to offer both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it extends existing discussions in tourism workforce literature by examining the interplay between education, certification, and motivation in shaping guide performance. While prior studies emphasize the role of formal training and certification (Supina & Banse, 2023), this study also engages with critical perspectives that highlight the importance of non-formal and experiential learning in tourism labor contexts, where practical skills and community-based knowledge often play a central role. Practically, the findings are expected to serve as a guideline for policymakers, the tourism industry, and local communities to improve the quality of walking tours, empower guides, and strengthen Jakarta's position as a sustainable urban destination that delivers authentic tourism experiences (Altamira, 2025).

Methods

This study employed a quantitative survey approach to analyze the effects of education and certification on motivation and their subsequent impact on the performance of walking tour guide communities in Jakarta. Data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to members of the Jakarta Good Guide community. Primary data measured the variables of education, certification, motivation, and performance, while secondary data were used to complement and validate the findings, including community activity reports, visual documentation, and relevant literature on tour guide competencies (Noe et al., 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

The validity of the instrument was assessed through construct validity, with thresholds set at factor loadings ≥ 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) ≥ 0.50 (Henseler et al., 2016). In addition, item validity was examined using the Pearson Product Moment method, with the criterion of r-calculated > r-table (0.361), ensuring that each questionnaire item was relevant in measuring its respective variable (Sugiyono, 2021). The reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, with a value of $\alpha \geq 0.70$ considered reliable, indicating the internal consistency of each variable. All questionnaire items met the criteria for validity and reliability, making them suitable for measuring community competence and performance tourist guide walking tour.

Given the relatively small population size, a near-census approach was adopted, resulting in 32 valid responses out of 35 members. Rather than relying solely on formula-based sampling, this approach ensures a high level of representativeness of the community (Sugiyono, 2017). The use of PLS-SEM is considered appropriate for this study due to its suitability for exploratory models and small sample sizes, as well as its ability to handle complex relationships among latent constructs without requiring strict distributional assumptions (Hair, 2014). The population consisted of all registered members of the Jakarta Good Guide community (N = 35). Although members are geographically distributed across several cities, they are actively involved in organizing and conducting walking tours in Jakarta. Therefore, the unit of analysis is defined at the community level, with Jakarta serving as the operational context of the study. All members of the community were considered part of the study population, ensuring comprehensive coverage of individuals directly engaged in walking tour activities within the Jakarta context.

The study focused on four key variables: education, certification, motivation, and performance of the walking tour guide community. Education was conceptualized as the level of formal educational attainment of tour guide community members, as reflected in their highest completed degree (e.g., diploma or bachelor's degree, both tourism and non-tourism fields), consistent with human capital perspectives (Becker, 1993; Noe et al., 2006). Education was treated as a categorical variable and operationalized using dummy coding in the PLS-SEM model.

Certification referred to formal recognition of competence obtained through professional certification programs for tour guides, categorized into levels such as junior tour guide,

Table 1. Definition of research operationalization

Variable	Definition	Indicators	References
Education	The process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and professional competencies by members of the walking tour guide community through formal education, work experience, and professional interactions.	1. Bachelor's degree in tourism 2. Bachelor's degree in non-tourism 3. Diploma in tourism 4. Diploma in non-tourism	(Noe et al., 2006); (Deci & Ryan, 2000a); (Dewey, 2025)
Certification	Formal recognition of the competencies of community members through training or professional certification programs, including levels such as Junior Tour Guide, Intermediate Tour Guide, and Tour Leader.	5. Junior Tour Guide 6. Intermediate Tour Guide 7. Tour Leader	(Indonesia, 2009; Noe et al., 2006);
Motivation	The internal drive of community members to achieve excellence and deliver high-quality services, including knowledge attainment, behavioral change, and skill mastery.	8. Knowledge attainment 9. Behavioral change 10. Skill mastery	(Deci & Ryan, 2000b; Noe et al., 2006)
Performance	The outcomes and behaviors of community members in guiding walking tours, encompassing technical ability, conceptual skills, responsibility, initiative, and interpersonal competence.	11. Technical ability 12. Conceptual skills 13. Responsibility & initiative 14. Interpersonal competence	(L. M. Campbell, 1999; Sonnentag & Frese, 2002)

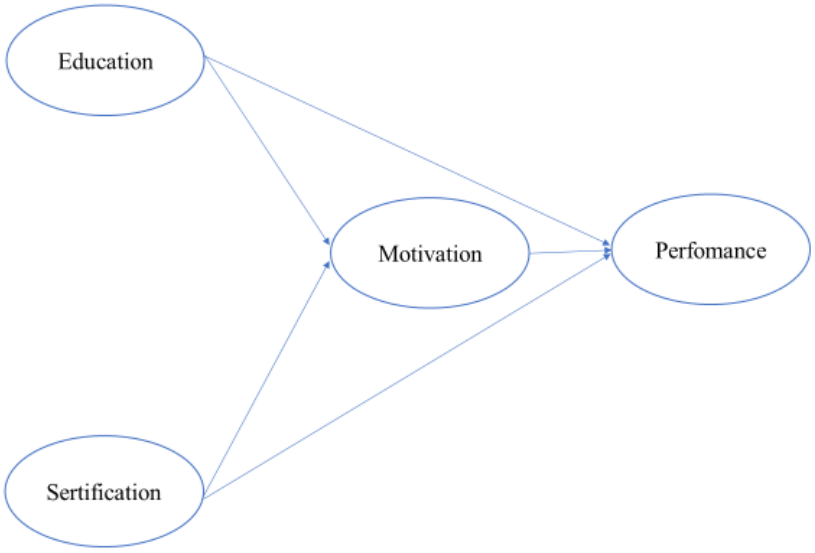

Figure 1. Research conceptual framework

intermediate tour guide, and tour leader. Similar to education, certification was treated as a categorical variable and included in the model using dummy coding.

Motivation was defined as the individual's drive to improve performance and deliver high-quality services (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In this study, motivation was operationalized using proxy indicators related to behavioural engagement and self-development orientation. Although these indicators may not directly capture intrinsic or extrinsic motivation constructs, they are treated as observable manifestations of motivational processes within the context of community-based tourism.

Performance encompassed the behaviours and outcomes demonstrated by community members in conducting walking tours, including technical ability, conceptual skills, responsibility, initiative, and interpersonal competence (J. P. Campbell et al., 1993), and was modelled as a reflective construct. The operational definitions of these variables are summarized in Table 1.

Data analysis in this study was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach. PLS-SEM was selected due to its suitability for analyzing complex relationships among latent variables, its ability to accommodate small sample sizes, and its robustness to non-normal data distributions, making it appropriate for exploratory research in social and behavioral contexts (Hair Jr et al., 2021).

The use of PLS-SEM is further justified given the relatively small sample size and the exploratory nature of the model. Following commonly used minimum sample size guidelines in PLS-SEM, the sample exceeds the "10-times rule," which suggests that the minimum sample size should be at least ten times the maximum number of structural paths directed at any construct in the model (Hair Jr et al., 2021). In this study, the maximum number of arrows pointing to a construct is two, indicating that the sample size is adequate for model estimation.

The analysis was carried out in two stages. First, the outer model (measurement model) was applied to evaluate convergent validity and indicator reliability. Convergent validity was assessed through factor loadings (≥ 0.70) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE ≥ 0.50) (Hair Jr et al., 2021). Indicator reliability was examined using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha, both with a minimum threshold of 0.70, to ensure the internal consistency of indicators in measuring the latent constructs (Henseler et al., 2015). This stage was

Table 2. Hypothesis test results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	*t*-Statistics	*p*-Values	Decision
H1	Education → Motivation	0.803	7.656	0.000	Supported
H2	Certification → Motivation	0.022	0.164	0.870	Not Supported
H3	Education → Performance	0.007	0.047	0.963	Not Supported
H4	Certification → Performance	0.076	0.755	0.450	Not Supported
H5	Motivation → Performance	0.850	6.043	0.000	Supported
H6 (Indirect)	Education → Motivation → Performance	0.683	4.321	0.000	Supported
H7 (Indirect)	Certification → Motivation → Performance	0.019	0.158	0.874	Not Supported
H8 (Total)	Education → Performance	0.690	6.298	0.000	Supported
H9 (Total)	Certification → Performance	0.094	0.677	0.498	Not Supported

essential to confirm that each indicator appropriately captured the intended dimensions of the competencies of the walking tour guide community.

Second, the inner model (structural model) was employed to examine the relationships among latent variables and to test the proposed hypotheses. The significance of the structural paths was assessed using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples, applying the criterion of t-statistics > 1.96 at a 5% significance level (Hair et al., 2022). The model's predictive accuracy was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2), where values of ≥ 0.75 are considered substantial, 0.50–0.75 moderate, and 0.25–0.50 weak (Chin, 1998a). In addition, predictive relevance (Q^2) was examined, with $Q^2 > 0$ indicating that the model has satisfactory predictive validity (Geisser, 1975a)

In this study, education and certification were modeled as independent variables, motivation as a mediating variable, and performance of the walking tour guide community as the dependent variable (Figure 1). The SEM-PLS approach enabled the researchers to evaluate both the structural relationships among latent constructs and the measurement relationships between indicators and their respective constructs. This approach thus provided a comprehensive understanding of how education and certification influence the motivation of community tour guides and, in turn, their performance in delivering walking tours (See Table 2).

Result and Discussion

Data analysis in this study was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This method was selected because it is well-suited for analyzing complex research models, particularly in cases with relatively small sample sizes, and it does not require strict assumptions of data normality (Hair Jr et al., 2021).

The analytical procedure was conducted in two stages. First, the measurement model (outer model) was assessed to evaluate construct validity and reliability. Convergent validity was examined using factor loadings (≥ 0.70) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE ≥ 0.50), while internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, and Composite Reliability (CR ≥ 0.70). The results indicate that all constructs meet the required thresholds for convergent validity and internal consistency, confirming that the measurement instruments are reliable and valid in capturing the latent constructs (Hair Jr et al., 2021).

Second, the inner model (structural model) was evaluated to examine the relationships among latent variables and to test the research hypotheses. The significance of path coefficients was assessed using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples, as recommended by Streukens & Leroi-Werelds (2016). Hypotheses were considered statistically significant if t-statistics exceeded 1.96 at the 5% significance level (Chin, 1998b).

The model's predictive capability was assessed through the coefficient of determination (R^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2). The R^2 value of 0.667 for the motivation construct indicates that education and certification collectively explain 66.7% of the variance in motivation. The R^2 value of 0.801 for performance indicates that education, certification, and motivation explain 80.1% of the variance in performance. Furthermore, the Q^2 values of 0.320 for motivation and 0.370 for performance exceeded zero, indicating that the model has predictive relevance (Geisser, 1975b; Stone, 1974). Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping approach with 5,000 resamples within the PLS-SEM framework. The results are presented as follows.

Education is positively and significantly associated with motivation (β = 0.803; t = 7.656; p < 0.001), supporting H1. In contrast, certification is not significantly associated with motivation (β = 0.022; t = 0.164; p = 0.870), leading to the rejection of H2. Furthermore, education is not significantly associated with performance (β = 0.007; t = 0.047; p = 0.963), and certification is also not significantly associated with performance (β = 0.076; t = 0.755; p = 0.450), resulting in the rejection of H3 and H4. Motivation is positively and significantly associated with performance (β = 0.850; t = 6.043; p < 0.001), supporting H5. The mediation analysis shows that education is significantly associated with performance through motivation (β = 0.683; t = 4.321; p < 0.001), supporting H6. However, certification does not demonstrate a significant indirect association with performance through motivation (β = 0.019; t = 0.158; p = 0.874), leading to the rejection of H7. When considering total effects, education shows a positive and significant association with performance (β = 0.690; t = 6.298; p < 0.001). In contrast, certification does not demonstrate a significant total association with performance (β = 0.094; t = 0.677; p = 0.498).

The findings of this study indicate that education is positively associated with motivation (H1 supported). This result is consistent with Ahn & Back (2018), who emphasize that higher levels of education are associated with stronger individual orientation toward self-development. From a Self-Determination Theory perspective, this relationship reflects the role of internal motivational processes in shaping individual behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2000a).

In addition, this finding can also be interpreted through alternative theoretical lenses. Expectancy Theory suggests that individuals are more motivated when they perceive that their efforts will lead to valued outcomes (Vroom, 1964), which may be reinforced by higher levels of education. Similarly, Goal-Setting Theory highlights that individuals with greater knowledge and capability are more likely to set and pursue meaningful goals, thereby strengthening their motivational orientation (Locke & Latham, 2002)..Within the context of community-based walking tour guides, education appears to provide a conceptual foundation that supports motivation to deliver high-quality guiding services. This finding is also in line with Kusluvan et al. (2010), who highlight the role of formal education in supporting professionalism and work-related

motivation in the tourism sector.

Conversely, certification does not demonstrate a significant association with motivation (H2 rejected). This result contrasts with (Kusluvan et al., 2010), who suggest that formal recognition such as certification may enhance self-confidence. The lack of a significant relationship in this study may reflect contextual characteristics of the guiding community, where experiential learning and practical skills are often emphasized over formal credentials, as noted in tourism workforce research. However, this interpretation remains tentative and was not directly tested in the present study. This finding is consistent with Baum (2019), who argues that practical competencies and lived experiences are often more highly valued than formal certification in tourism contexts.

Furthermore, both education and certification are not significantly associated with performance (H3 and H4 rejected). These findings differ from prior studies Rivera & Upchurch (2008) anda Zhang et al. (2020) that emphasize the role of education and certification in enhancing tourism performance. In this study, theoretical knowledge and certification do not appear to be directly associated with effective practice, which is consistent with prior research highlighting gaps between formal qualifications and workplace performance in tourism settings (Baum et al., 2016).

In contrast, motivation shows the strongest association with performance (H5 supported), as indicated by the largest path coefficient in the model. This finding is consistent with Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000)and empirical evidence from (Chen et al., 2025), which highlight the importance of internal motivational factors in shaping individual performance. Similar findings are reported by Chen et al., 2025; and Karatepe & Olugbade (2017), who identify work motivation as a significant predictor of employee performance in the hospitality industry.

The mediating role of motivation is also supported (H6 supported), indicating that education is associated with performance through motivation within the tested model. This suggests that motivation functions as an intervening mechanism linking educational background and performance outcomes. In contrast, certification does not demonstrate a significant indirect association with performance through motivation (H7 rejected), supporting Joppe & Li (2016), argument that certification in tourism may function more as an administrative requirement rather than a direct driver of motivation or performance.

Overall, the total effect of education on performance is significant (H8 supported), whereas certification remains non-significant (H9 rejected). While the direct association between education and performance is not significant, the indirect association through motivation contributes to performance outcomes within this study. Certification, however, does not demonstrate meaningful associations with performance, either directly or indirectly.

These findings contribute to the theoretical discourse by extending existing motivational frameworks in tourism research. While prior studies have primarily positioned motivation as an outcome of human capital development, this study demonstrates its role as a mediating mechanism that links education to performance within community-based tourism contexts.

In doing so, the findings suggest a shift from viewing motivation as a complementary factor to recognizing it as a central process through which educational attributes are translated into performance outcomes, particularly in informal and practice-oriented tourism settings.. From a managerial perspective, the results suggest that community development programs may benefit from emphasizing motivational strategies grounded in education and experiential learning, rather than relying solely on formal certification.

This study is also consistent with Sulistyadi et al. (2016), who found that motivation is associated with organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) among hotel employees in Jakarta. Within the context of guiding communities, motivation may also be related to extra-role behaviors, such as providing additional information to tourists and supporting group experience. The findings further align with Maulana & Eddyono (2025), who identify motivation as a mediating mechanism between workload, job rotation, and employee performance in the public sector. While both contexts differ, motivation appears to play a comparable role as an intervening factor associated with performance outcomes. However, these relationships should be interpreted within their respective contexts and not generalized beyond the scope of this study.

These results are also consistent with the broader community-based tourism literature, which emphasizes intrinsic motivation and local capacity building as important factors associated with sustainable performance and community welfare. Saadah & Eddyono (2025) show that post-pandemic resilience in Desa Wisata Tinalah is associated with self-reliance and collective learning. Similarly, prior studies report that Budiawan & Eddyono (2025),participatory empowerment and skills enhancement are associated with improved service quality and destination competitiveness in Pantai Kastela. Hadiningsih & Eddyono (2025), also demonstrate that community-based tourism development in Desa Batulayang is associated with improvements in local welfare through active participation and enhanced managerial capacity. These findings support the role of motivation as an important mechanism within the context of community-based tourism.

Finally, the findings are consistent with Sulistyadi et al. (2017), who emphasize the importance of education and capacity building in enhancing sustainable tourism competitiveness. In this context, education is associated not only with knowledge acquisition but also with the development of skills and awareness that support tourism sustainability (Eddyono, 2022; Eddyono et al., n.d., 2022). (Eddyono et al., 2021a, 2021b) (Eddyono et al., 2020, 2021b). However, these relationships should be interpreted as associative rather than causal, given the cross-sectional design of the study

Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence that education is positively associated with motivation, which in turn is associated with the self-reported performance of community-based walking tour guides. Certification, however, does not demonstrate a significant association with either motivation or performance. Motivation is identified as a key mediating mechanism linking education and performance within the context of this study. This finding offers a conceptual contribution by repositioning motivation not merely as an outcome of human capital development, but as a central process through which educational attributes are translated into performance outcomes. By framing motivation as a mediating mechanism, the study provides a basis for extending human capital perspectives in tourism, particularly in community-based and informal settings where the translation of knowledge into practice is not automatic.

The contribution of this study lies in both theoretical and practical aspects. From a theoretical perspective, the findings position motivation as an important mechanism linking human capital attributes and performance outcomes in tourism contexts, in line with prior studies across public and private sectors. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of educational initiatives and capacity-building programs that

prioritize intrinsic motivation over administrative certification processes. In low-resource community settings, such strategies may be implemented through peer-to-peer learning, mentorship programs among experienced and novice guides, and community-based training sessions that emphasize experiential knowledge and storytelling skills. In addition, local tourism planners may support motivation-driven development by facilitating collaborative learning platforms, informal workshops, and partnerships with local stakeholders, rather than relying solely on formal certification schemes. These approaches provide more accessible and context-sensitive pathways for enhancing guide performance within community-based tourism environments.

Despite these contributions, the study has certain limitations. The focus on a single community of walking tour guides restricts the generalizability of the findings across diverse tourism sectors. In addition, the findings are shaped by the specific socio-urban context of Jakarta, where informal tourism practices, limited pedestrian infrastructure, and evolving regulatory support may influence how education, certification, and motivation are experienced by tour guides.

These contextual characteristics may limit the applicability of the results to other settings with different institutional and infrastructural conditions. At the same time, they provide a basis for future comparative studies to examine how varying urban and governance contexts influence the relationship between human capital factors and performance in tourism. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to draw causal inferences regarding the relationships among education, motivation, and performance.

Future research is encouraged to examine similar relationships across different types of tourism services and community-based enterprises. The use of longitudinal and mixed-method approaches may provide deeper insights into the dynamics of motivation over time. In addition, exploring the role of contextual factors such as digital capabilities, destination governance, and sustainability practices may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how human resource-related factors are associated with performance and destination competitiveness in sustainable tourism contexts.

Author contributions

All authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. Fauziah Eddyono was responsible for conceptualization, methodology, data analysis, and drafting of the manuscript. Nurlaeli contributed to data collection, literature review, and critical revision of the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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