



Institutional Predictors of Domestic Tourism Participation: How Organizational Structures Shape Travel Behaviour among Public University Employees

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ABSTRACT

This study examined influence of institutional predictors on domestic tourism participation among staff of Takoradi Technical University (TTU), Ghana, drawing on Institutional Theory. A descriptive survey design was used to collect data from 303 staff members selected through stratified and simple random sampling and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests and a Kruskal-Wallis H test. The results showed that most staff underutilize their leave days for domestic tourism and perceive limited institutional support. Staff category was significantly associated with preferred travel timing, with teaching staff more inclined toward vacation travel and non-teaching staff more reliant on weekends, holidays and planned leave. The study finds that staff category is significantly associated with when staff prefer to travel, and that perceptions of institutional factors leave policy, workload distribution, financial support and communication of tourism initiatives differ significantly depending on staff's preferred travel period. These findings indicate that institutional structures are closely linked to staff's ability to time and schedule domestic travel, and the study recommends that institutions adopt more flexible, well-communicated and adequately resourced support systems.

Keywords: Domestic Tourism, Institutional Theory, Leave Policy, Tourism Participation, Ghana, Takoradi Technical University

JEL Classifications: Z31, D02, D23, I23

1. INTRODUCTION

Domestic tourism has become an important component of national tourism development strategies (Kabote, 2020). The sector plays a crucial role in sustaining tourism activities during periods of economic uncertainty, travel restrictions and global crises, making it a reliable source of tourism demand (Khan, 2020). In Ghana, domestic tourism has gained increasing attention as a means of promoting local economic development and reducing dependence on international tourist arrivals (Adu-Ampong, 2018). The Ghana Tourism Authority and other stakeholders have implemented several initiatives to encourage residents to explore local destinations and participate in tourism activities (Eshun and Tichaawa, 2019). Despite these efforts, domestic

tourism participation remains relatively low among certain segments of the population, including employees within public tertiary institutions. Employees of tertiary institutions constitute an important market for domestic tourism because they often possess stable incomes, educational backgrounds and access to leave periods that could facilitate travel (Hutchings et al., 2020). However, participation in domestic tourism is not solely influenced by personal preferences or financial capability (Li et al., 2016). Institutional conditions within the workplace can significantly shape employees' ability and willingness to engage in tourism activities. Organizational policies, workload distribution, leave arrangements, staff welfare programmes, financial support systems and administrative structures may either encourage or constrain tourism participation.

At Takoradi Technical University (TTU), staff members operate within an institutional environment characterized by formal regulations, academic schedules, welfare systems and administrative procedures. These institutional arrangements influence how employees allocate their time and resources, including decisions related to leisure and travel. While previous studies have examined socio-economic and motivational factors influencing domestic tourism (Duong et al., 2023), limited attention has been given to institutional predictors within workplace settings, particularly in tertiary educational institutions in Ghana. This study is distinct from an earlier TTU-based study that examined broad barriers to domestic tourism participation among staff (Anderson et al., 2025); whereas that study catalogued the range of obstacles staff face, the present study isolates institutional structures specifically leave policy, workload distribution, financial support mechanisms and communication of tourism initiatives as predictors, and tests their statistical association with staff category and preferred travel scheduling, a relationship not examined in the earlier study.

Institutional Theory provides a useful lens for understanding this phenomenon by emphasizing how organizational structures, policies, norms and support mechanisms influence individual behaviour. The theory suggests that employees are more likely to participate in activities that are supported, encouraged and legitimized by their institutions. Consequently, understanding how institutional predictors influence domestic tourism participation among TTU staff is essential for developing effective policies and strategies that promote staff well-being while supporting the growth of domestic tourism in Ghana. This study therefore seeks to examine the institutional predictors of domestic tourism participation among staff of TTU from an Institutional Theory perspective.

1.1. Aim of the Study

To examine the influence of institutional predictors on the participation of staff of TTU in domestic tourism.

1.2. Research Questions

1. What institutional predictors influence domestic tourism participation among staff of TTU?
2. How do leave policies affect the participation of TTU staff in domestic tourism?
3. To what extent do institutional support measures such as welfare programmes, tourism initiatives, and financial assistance influence staff participation in domestic tourism?
4. Is there a relationship between staff category and preferred travel schedule among TTU staff?
5. How do institutional predictors influence the preferred travel schedules of TTU staff?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Concept of Domestic Tourism

Domestic tourism involves the activities of residents travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment but within their country of residence for a period not exceeding one consecutive year (Kabote, 2017). Domestic tourism is widely

recognized as a vital component of the tourism industry because it stimulates local economies, supports employment creation, promotes cultural exchange, and enhances national cohesion (Apriyanti, 2024; Bakalo et al., 2025).

Researchers have conceptualized domestic tourism from different perspectives. From an economic perspective, domestic tourism represents internal demand for tourism products and services that contributes directly to national income generation (Geetha and Baga, 2026). From a social perspective, domestic tourism provides opportunities for relaxation, recreation, learning and interaction among citizens from diverse cultural backgrounds (Chebli et al., 2021). From a developmental perspective, domestic tourism promotes the utilization of local tourism resources and facilitates balanced regional development (Holovchuk et al., 2025).

In the Ghanaian context, domestic tourism has become increasingly important in supporting the sustainability of the tourism sector (Adu-Ampong and Kimbu, 2019). Various campaigns and initiatives have been introduced to encourage residents to patronize local attractions, heritage sites, festivals, ecotourism destinations and recreational facilities. These efforts aim to increase awareness of Ghana's tourism resources while strengthening local economic development.

Participation in domestic tourism is influenced by several predictors (Li et al., 2015), including income levels, travel motivation, awareness of tourism opportunities, accessibility of destinations, available leisure time, social influences and institutional conditions. In tertiary institutions, workplace arrangements such as leave policies, workload schedules, welfare programmes, and organizational support can significantly affect staff ability to engage in domestic tourism activities. In this study, domestic tourism participation refers to the extent to which staff of TTU engage in travel activities within Ghana for leisure, recreation and related purposes. The study examines how institutional predictors influence such participation among employees of the university.

2.2. Influence of Institutional Predictors on Domestic Tourism Participation

Organisational frameworks and employment policies play a decisive role in determining staff involvement in domestic tourism and related leisure activities. In the context of tertiary institutions, workload distribution, leave arrangements, and staff welfare plans are critical in either enabling or constraining staff participation in tourism. Surikpe (2025) observe that academic staff in Ghana often underutilise their leave days for tourism due to competing personal obligations and institutional workload pressures. This suggests that organisational culture and administrative flexibility play a vital role in shaping participation levels. Similarly, Perera, (2024) emphasises that restrictions on leave approval are not uniform, as administrative flexibility varies across departments and between academic and non-academic staff.

Financial incentives have also emerged as an important institutional determinant of tourism engagement. Carneiro et al. (2022) argue that financial support schemes such as

travel allowances or welfare allocations can significantly boost staff participation in leisure tourism. However, the absence or insufficiency of such support often acts as a disincentive (Setiawan, et al., 2024). Beyond financial considerations, Adu-Ampong (2019) highlights a growing trend among Ghanaian universities to integrate leisure-based trips into staff welfare programmes, thereby enhancing staff socialisation while indirectly supporting domestic tourism. Institutional associations and welfare groups also influence staff participation. Adie et al. (2017) notes that effective policy sensitisation and communication are necessary to maximise the impact of institutional tourism initiatives; without clear communication, staff may be unaware of opportunities or support systems, which limits programme effectiveness. Karthik et al. (2026) similarly find that structured institutional incentives, including discounted travel packages and supported initiatives, encourage leisure travel among employees in tertiary institutions.

Another critical factor relates to workload distribution through academic calendars. Park et al. (2024) stress that structured academic schedules can either enable or constrain leisure travel, depending on how much flexibility they provide. Ngari and Macharia, (2017) also argues that rigid leave policies often reduce the likelihood of domestic tourism engagement among public-sector employees. Institutions that align vacation schedules with tourism-friendly periods therefore create more favorable conditions for staff participation. The availability of administrative structures and designated offices or personnel responsible for coordinating tourism-related activities can also promote participation. Suherlan (2017) emphasises the importance of institutional-level tourism units in managing staff tourism programmes; where such roles are absent or poorly publicised, participation tends to be low. Furthermore, loyalty and reward programmes may stimulate interest in domestic tourism, although Wolfgruber et al. (2021) caution that unless such initiatives are proactive, inclusive, and well-communicated, their overall impact remains limited.

Institutional predictors also intersect with staff preferred travel schedules. Research suggests that employees' perceptions of institutional flexibility differ depending on whether they travel during weekends, holidays, planned leave, or official vacation periods (Kempiak et al., 2017). Staff who rely on weekends for travel often face stricter institutional and workload constraints, while those who utilise vacation periods experience fewer barriers. This indicates that institutional support policies do not uniformly affect all staff but vary based on preferred travel schedules. Institutional factors such as leave, financial support, welfare initiatives, and scheduling flexibility significantly influence the extent to which staff engage in domestic tourism. Institutions that provide flexible, well-communicated, and adequately resourced support structures are more likely to foster higher participation among their employees.

The literature acknowledges that government and policy frameworks shape domestic tourism participation, yet institutional-level determinants such as workload, leave flexibility and staff welfare are rarely addressed. Studies tend to focus on national

or sectoral factors rather than workplace-level determinants. This limitation highlights the importance of studying TTU staff, whose participation decisions are likely influenced by institutional routines and administrative structures.

2.3. Institutional Theory Framework

Institutional Theory was initially developed by Selznick (1949; 1957) and later refined by Meyer and Rowan (1977). The theory was further advanced by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), who introduced the concept of institutional isomorphism through coercive, normative and mimetic pressures.

This study is grounded in Institutional Theory, which posits that individuals' behaviours and decisions are largely shaped by the formal and informal structures within the institutions in which they operate. According to the theory, organizational policies, rules, norms, support systems and established practices influence how individuals behave and respond to opportunities available to them. In the context of TTU, staff participation in domestic tourism is not solely determined by personal interest or financial capability but is significantly influenced by the institutional predictors created by the university.

The framework assumes that institutional predictors such as leave policies, workload distribution, academic calendar schedules, financial support mechanisms, staff welfare programmes, tourism initiatives, administrative support systems, staff association activities and communication of tourism opportunities constitute the institutional structures that influence staff participation in domestic tourism. These predictors can either facilitate or hinder employees' ability to engage in tourism-related activities. Flexible leave arrangements and supportive welfare programmes may encourage staff to undertake domestic trips, whereas heavy workloads, restrictive leave approval procedures and limited institutional support may discourage participation.

Institutional Theory further suggests that employees are more likely to participate in activities that are supported and legitimized by their organization. Therefore, when TTU provides tourism-related incentives such as staff retreats, organized excursions, travel allowances and awareness programmes, staff are more likely to perceive tourism participation as acceptable and beneficial. Equally, where institutional support is weak or absent, participation levels may decline despite employees having a personal desire to travel.

The framework therefore proposes that the institutional environment within TTU directly influences the extent to which staff participate in domestic tourism. The outcome of these institutional predictors is reflected in staff travel behaviour, including the frequency of domestic travel, utilization of leave periods for tourism, willingness to participate in tourism activities and preferred travel timing. Thus, the study conceptualizes institutional predictors as the independent variable and domestic tourism participation as the dependent variable, with Institutional Theory providing the explanatory basis for understanding how organizational structures and policies shape tourism participation among staff of TTU.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a quantitative research approach using a descriptive survey design. The quantitative approach was considered appropriate because it enabled the collection of numerical data that could be statistically analyzed to determine the predictors influencing domestic tourism participation. The design was suitable for this study because it enabled the researcher to examine institutional predictors of domestic tourism participation, how leave policies affect participation, how institutional support influences staff participation in domestic tourism and how institutional predictors influence the preferred travel schedules of TTU staff. The population included academic staff, administrative staff, senior staff and junior staff employed by the university. These categories of employees were selected because they form the active workforce of the institution and possess characteristics that make them potential participants in domestic tourism activities.

A sample size of 303 respondents was used for the study, drawn from a target population of 799 using Yamane, 1967.

$$n = \frac{N}{K+N(e)^2}$$

N=Sample frame

n=Sample size

K=Constant (1)

e=Degree of error expected is 0.05

$$n = \frac{799}{1+799 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{799}{1+799 (0.0025)}$$

$$= \frac{799}{1+1.9975}$$

$$n = \frac{799}{2.9975}$$

N = 266

To calculate the sample proportion for the various units, the population (799) and the sample size (266) were used

$$P = n = \frac{266}{799} = 0.333$$

The sampling proportion of 0.333 was then multiplied by the number of staff in each stratum (Faculty, Department, Sector, or Section) to determine how many respondents should be drawn from that stratum. Because the resulting figures for several strata contained decimal values, each stratum's allocation was rounded up to the next whole number rather than to the nearest whole number, a conservative approach used to avoid under-representing smaller strata. This rounding procedure produced a final sample of 303, which is 37 more than the minimum of 266 required by

the Yamane formula. The larger sample improves the precision of subgroup comparisons, such as between teaching and non-teaching staff, without compromising the representativeness achieved through stratified random sampling.

The sample size was considered adequate to provide a representative view of the target population and to ensure the reliability of the findings. The study employed a stratified sampling technique to divide the population into two main groups, namely teaching staff and non-teaching staff. Following the stratification process, simple random sampling was used to select respondents from each category. The use of simple random sampling ensured that every staff member had an equal chance of being selected, thereby minimizing selection bias and enhancing the representativeness of the sample.

The primary data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire built on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), responses were subsequently collapsed into three categories (Agree, Neutral, Disagree) for ease of presentation in the results. The instrument was chosen because it enabled the researcher to gather information from a large number of respondents efficiently and uniformly. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to expert review. Lecturers and research supervisors with expertise in tourism research examined the instrument to determine whether the items adequately reflected the objectives of the study.

A pilot study was conducted among respondents with characteristics similar to those of the target population. The responses obtained from the pilot test were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or above was considered acceptable, indicating that the instrument possessed satisfactory internal consistency and reliability.

Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the appropriate authorities of TTU. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to selected respondents within the university community. Of the 310 questionnaires distributed, 303 were completed and returned based on the number needed. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that their participation was voluntary. Adequate time was provided for respondents to complete the questionnaires, and completed questionnaires were collected for analysis. The personal administration of the questionnaires helped to achieve a high response rate and provided respondents with the opportunity to seek clarification where necessary.

Data collected from the field were coded, cleaned and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were used to summarize respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and responses to the study variables.

Inferential statistical techniques were also employed to determine the relationships between the independent variables and domestic tourism participation. A Chi-square test was used to examine the

relationship between staff category and preferred travel timing, while a Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to examine differences in perceived institutional predictors across preferred-travel-period groups. The level of significance for all statistical tests was set at 0.05.

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the study. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and were assured that their participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained before the administration of the questionnaire.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Institutional Predictors on the Participation of TTU Staff in Domestic Tourism

This section presents the results for the institutional predictors shaping staff participation in domestic tourism at TTU. Respondents were asked about institutional predictors that affect participation, the results can be seen in Table 1. The first statement assessed was whether staff utilise their leave days for domestic tourism activities. The results revealed that only 36.6% (F = 111) of the respondents agreed with the assertion, while 16.2% (F = 49) remained neutral and a larger proportion, 47.2% (F = 143), disagreed. Most TTU staff do not often use their leave days for domestic tourism, possibly due to competing personal commitments or institutional workload pressure. This aligns with the finding of Kusi et al. (2014) that the limited use of leave for tourism is common among academic staff in Ghana, largely due to other personal obligations or institutional workload pressures.

The impact of restrictions on leave approval on domestic tourism participation was also examined. Here, 33.0% (F = 100) of staff agreed that leave restrictions limit their ability to engage in domestic tourism, 25.7% (F = 78) of respondents were neutral on this position, and 41.3% (F = 125) disagreed. This result suggests that although some staff perceive leave restrictions as a barrier, a larger proportion either do not experience this limitation or are indifferent. This outcome is consistent with Essel, (2025) who noted that administrative flexibility often varies between academic and non-academic staff in Ghanaian universities.

Concerning financial support from TTU for domestic tourism, 38.0% (F = 115) of the respondents agreed that TTU provides allowances to support such activities, while 21.1% (F = 64) were neutral and 40.9% (F = 124) of the respondents disagreed. This is not entirely surprising, as public sector workers are generally not given such incentives to the same extent as private-sector employees, where such support is sometimes offered as a performance reward. This agrees with Carneiro et al. (2022), who emphasised that financial support programs like travel grants or welfare allocations can significantly boost staff leisure tourism participation.

A more positive observation was recorded on whether the university organises staff trips to promote domestic tourism: 60.7% (F = 184) of the respondents agreed, 21.1% (F = 64) were neutral, and 18.2% (F = 55) disagreed. Staff recognize TTU's efforts in

organising tourism-related staff trips or retreats. This finding supports Adu-Ampong (2018), who highlighted this growing trend in Ghanaian universities of incorporating leisure trips and socialisation activities into staff welfare programmes.

Respondents were further asked whether staff associations at TTU encourage tourism within staff welfare programmes: 36.3% (F = 110) agreed, 35.6% (F = 108) were neutral, and 28.1% (F = 85) disagreed. This observation points to a possible gap in policy communication, supporting Haxton, (2015) argument that institutional tourism factors require adequate sensitisation and communication, and that a lack of policy awareness often limits programme effectiveness in tertiary institutions.

On the availability of initiatives, 54.1% (F = 164) of the respondents agreed that initiatives provided by TTU make it easier for staff to participate in domestic tourism, with 16.8% (F = 51) neutral and 29.0% (F = 88) disagreeing. Staff perceive that institutional initiatives such as travel packages, discounts, or allowances have played a moderately positive role in enhancing their domestic tourism participation, aligning with Cheng et al. (2021), who found that institutional incentives in tertiary institutions encourage leisure-based travel participation among staff.

Regarding TTU's clear tourism support system, only 37.0% (F = 112) of staff agreed that institutional factors allow them enough time for domestic travel, while a larger proportion, 42.2% (F = 128), disagreed and 20.8% (F = 63) were neutral. Most staff believe the current leave arrangements do not sufficiently support their tourism participation needs, resonating with Anderson et al. (2025), who reported that rigid leave policies often hinder domestic tourism engagement among public-sector employees in Ghana.

Staff also expressed views on whether the academic calendar creates opportunities for local travel: 44.6% (F = 135) agreed, 35.3% (F = 107) disagreed, and 20.1% (F = 61) were neutral. While some academic staff may enjoy vacation breaks suitable for travel, others may find these periods too short or packed with other commitments. This finding supports Park et al. (2024), who observed that structured academic calendars can either enable or constrain leisure tourism participation depending on scheduling flexibility.

On whether tourism opportunities are included in HR programmes, 46.5% (F = 141) of respondents agreed that such opportunities exist at TTU, while 36.0% (F = 109) disagreed and 17.5% (F = 53) remained neutral. The mixed responses may suggest that such provisions exist but are not well-publicized or accessible to all staff categories, echoing Suherlan's (2017) emphasis on the importance of institutional-level tourism units in coordinating staff tourism programmes and enhancing participation.

Finally, on whether loyalty programmes at TTU have positively influenced staff interest in domestic tourism, 37.0% (F = 112) of respondents agreed, while 31.4% (F = 95) disagreed and 31.7% (F = 96) remained neutral. This suggests that while TTU may have introduced some tourism-friendly initiatives, many staff still do not feel directly impacted, agreeing with Wolfgruber et al. (2021), who

argue that unless tourism factors are proactive, well-communicated, and inclusive, their impact on staff behavior remains minimal. The internal consistency of the items measured was supported by an overall Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.776, indicating good reliability for the scale of institutional-factor indicators used.

4.2. Relationship between Staff Category and Preferred Travel Schedule

Goulias (2018) asserted that people's working schedules influence their travelling behaviour. The findings of this study likewise revealed that staff job roles significantly influenced travel preferences at TTU. A chi-square test showed a strong association between staff category and preferred travel predictor, $\chi^2 = 16.159$, $P = 0.001$. Specifically, teaching staff demonstrated a stronger inclination to travel during vacation periods (50.4%) compared to non-teaching staff (35.9%). Conversely, non-teaching staff were more likely to travel during holidays (36.5%) and weekends (17.1%), and were the only group reporting travel during official planned leave (100.0%). These results in Table 2 align with the Push-Pull model of travel behavior (Giddy, 2018), which explains that internal motivations (push factors) and external constraints or opportunities (pull factors) jointly shape travel preferences.

In this case, the structured academic calendar of teaching staff operates as both a constraint and an enabler, "pushing" them toward travel during long vacation breaks. Non-teaching staff, whose schedules are more regular throughout the year, appear to capitalize on shorter institutional breaks such as weekends, public holidays, and planned leave, reflecting the role of occupational context in shaping travel timing.

This observation is consistent with previous studies that highlight how socio-demographic characteristics of staff influence travel choices (Humagain and Singleton, 2021). In particular, Chen and Rahman (2018) emphasized that travel motivations are not uniform but vary according to lifestyle and work responsibilities. Similarly, Backhaus et al. (2023) found that occupational structure often dictates whether travelers opt for short-term or long-term trips. The present study's findings reinforce these arguments, showing that teaching staff lean toward longer vacation-based travel, while non-teaching staff prioritize shorter, more flexible trips.

Moreover, the findings resonate with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), which suggests that perceived behavioural control affects intention and behavior. Teaching staff, with predetermined breaks, experience a high level of perceived control over longer travel planning. Non-teaching staff, by contrast, adjust their travel choices to align with institutional holidays or weekends, reflecting the constraints of their job roles.

The results also echo Bahanshal, (2026) assertion that contextual factors, such as work schedules and institutional calendars, strongly condition domestic tourism behaviour. In the Ghanaian setting, this distinction is particularly relevant, since public holidays and festivals such as Oguaa Fetu Afahye or Ankos are often integrated into short leisure trips by non-teaching staff, whereas teaching staff's patterns are tied more to extended breaks that allow for immersive cultural or wellness tourism experiences.

4.3. Institutional Predictors on the Preferred Travel Schedule

To assess whether institutional factors influence the preferred travel schedule of TTU staff, a Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted; results are shown in Table 3.

The results revealed a statistically significant difference in perceptions of institutional predictors across the four travel preference groups vacation, weekend, holidays and planned leave $H = 18.048$, $P < 0.001$. This indicates that the perception of how institutional predictors impact domestic tourism participation is not uniform across staff who prefer different travel periods. Further inspection of the mean ranks showed notable differences. Staff who preferred to travel on weekends reported the highest mean rank (199.34), suggesting that this group perceives institutional predictors as having a stronger impact on their ability to participate in domestic tourism. This could be attributed to limited institutional flexibility or workload pressures during weekends, possibly making it harder for this group to engage in travel activities.

Furthermore, respondents who preferred planned leave had a mean rank of 163.50, indicating a relatively moderate perception of institutional predictors. Those who preferred holidays had a mean rank of 149.57, while respondents who indicated vacation as their preferred travel period had the lowest mean rank (134.70). The lower mean rank among vacation-preference respondents suggests that they may face fewer institutional constraints, such as scheduling conflicts or administrative restrictions, when planning travel during designated vacation periods. This finding supports Chen (2017) and Kempia et al. (2017), who argue that institutional flexibility interacts with personal scheduling preferences to shape tourism participation.

These results demonstrate that institutional predictors influence domestic tourism participation differently depending on the time staff prefer to travel. Staff seeking to travel outside the official vacation period, particularly during weekends or planned leave, may perceive more barriers or less support from the institution. In the TPB model, this relates to perceived behavioural control, where institutional constraints can limit actual behaviour regardless of positive attitudes or social support. From the Push-Pull Theory viewpoint, institutional leave policies influence the push factor of "opportunity for leisure" and may determine whether staff can take advantage of destination pull factors during peak or off-peak seasons.

4.4. Hypothesis Testing

- H_0 : There is no significant relationship between staff category and preferred travel schedule, and no significant difference in perceived institutional factors across preferred-travel-period groups.
- H_1 : There is a significant relationship between staff category and preferred travel schedule, and a significant difference in perceived institutional factors across preferred-travel-period groups.

A chi-square test showed a significant relationship between staff category and preferred travel schedule ($P = 0.001$), and

Table 1: Influence of institutional predictors on the participation of TTU staff in domestic tourism

Institutional Factors	Agree, F (%)	Neutral, F (%)	Disagree, F (%)	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's alpha
I often utilize my leave days for tourism	111 (36.6)	49 (16.2)	143 (47.2)	1.89	0.911	0.776
Leave restrictions limit my participation	100 (33.0)	78 (25.7)	125 (41.3)	1.92	0.859	
TTU provides financial allowances for tourism	115 (38.0)	64 (21.1)	124 (40.9)	1.97	0.889	
The university organizes staff retreats or tourism trips	184 (60.7)	64 (21.1)	55 (18.2)	2.43	0.781	
Staff Association encourages participation	110 (36.3)	108 (35.6)	85 (28.1)	2.08	0.799	
I would participate more if there were supported initiatives	164 (54.1)	51 (16.8)	88 (29.0)	2.25	0.878	
TTU has a clear tourism support system	112 (37.0)	63 (20.8)	128 (42.2)	1.95	0.890	
Academic calendar creates travel opportunities	135 (44.6)	61 (20.1)	107 (35.3)	2.09	0.890	
Tourism opportunities are included in HR programs	141 (46.5)	53 (17.5)	109 (36.0)	2.11	0.904	
Loyalty programs/rewards motivate travel	112 (37.0)	96 (31.7)	95 (31.4)	2.06	0.826	
Overall scale reliability						

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 2: Relationship between staff category and preferred travel predictors

Variable	Staff Teaching	Non Teaching	Chi-square Value	P- value
When do you like to Travel?			$\chi^2=16.159$	0.001
Vacation				
F	67	61		
%	50.40	35.90		
Weekend				
F	12	29		
%	9.00	17.10		
Holidays				
F	29	62		
%	21.80	36.50		
Planned leave				
F	00	43		
%	000	100.0		
Total	108	195		

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 3: Influence of institutional factors on the preferred travel schedule

Preferred travel period	N	Mean rank	Kruskal-Wallis H	P-value
Vacation	128	134.70	H=18.048	0.000
Weekend	41	199.34		
Holidays	91	149.57		
Planned Leave	43	163.50		
Total	303			

Source: Field data, 2025

a Kruskal-Wallis H test showed a significant difference in perceived institutional predictors across preferred-travel-period groups ($P < 0.001$), suggesting that institutional structures such as the academic calendar and leave flexibility are closely linked to when staff are able to travel. On this basis, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted: staff category is significantly related to preferred travel schedule, and perceptions of institutional factors differ significantly across preferred-travel-period groups.

4.5. Discussion

Taken together, the findings support the study’s central proposition, grounded in Institutional Theory, that domestic

tourism participation among TTU staff is shaped less by personal preference than by the institutional structures surrounding staff leave policies, workload distribution, financial support, and the visibility of tourism-related initiatives. The low proportion of staff who report using leave days for tourism (36.6%) alongside relatively weak perceptions of institutional support (37.0% agreement on a clear tourism support system) suggests that TTU’s formal structures are not yet fully legitimizing or actively encouraging tourism participation in the way Institutional Theory would predict is needed to drive behaviour change.

At the same time, the comparatively strong endorsement of staff retreats (60.7%) shows that where TTU does intervene directly through organised trips rather than passive policy staff respond positively. This is consistent with the view that legitimized, institutionally sanctioned activities (Institutional Theory) are more readily taken up than activities staff must arrange independently within a constraining leave and workload environment.

The differences found between teaching and non-teaching staff, and across preferred-travel-period groups, indicate that institutional influence is not uniform. Teaching staff’s reliance on the academic calendar functions as both a constraint and an enabler, consistent with the Theory of Planned Behaviour’s emphasis on perceived behavioural control, while non-teaching staff’s dependence on weekends and planned leave which carry the strongest perceived institutional constraints in this study point to a policy gap that current leave arrangements do not adequately address for this group.

Institutional Theory remains the primary lens for this discussion, since the leave policies, workload structures and communication systems examined here are institutional predictors by definition. The Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Push–Pull model are drawn on only as secondary, individual-level lenses that help explain how staff experience and respond to those institutional predictors: perceived behavioural control (TPB) captures how teaching and non-teaching staff internalise institutional constraints differently, while push–pull factors capture how institutional leave provisions translate into an opportunity, or lack thereof, for leisure travel. Read this way, the three frameworks are complementary rather than competing explanations for the same findings.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of institutional predictors on domestic tourism participation among staff of TTU. The findings show that most staff do not use their leave days for tourism, and many feel that institutional restrictions on leave approval limit their ability to travel. Although a majority of staff (60.7%) acknowledged that the university organises staff trips, there was comparatively low agreement (37.0–38.0%) regarding awareness of financial support, clear tourism support systems, or policy integration within staff welfare programmes. Beyond staff retreats, there appeared to be limited structured institutional support to promote consistent staff engagement in domestic travel.

A Chi-square test showed a statistically significant relationship between staff category and preferred travel schedule ($P = 0.001$), and a Kruskal-Wallis H test showed a statistically significant difference in perceived institutional predictors across preferred-travel-period groups ($P < 0.001$). Together, these results confirm that staff category and preferred travel schedule are significantly related, and that perceived institutional factors vary significantly depending on when staff prefer to travel. Leave availability, workload, and work schedules appear closely tied to when staff can take part in domestic tourism: In Theory of Planned Behaviour terms, these factors may reduce people's perceived ability to travel even where the desire to do so exists; from a Push–Pull Theory perspective, institutional leave policies may shape the push factor of opportunity for leisure and whether staff can take advantage of destination pull factors during particular seasons.

5.1. Recommendations

Based on the findings, TTU management should consider reviewing leave approval procedures to reduce restrictions that disproportionately affect non-teaching staff, particularly around weekend and planned-leave travel. Clearer and more consistent communication of existing tourism-related initiatives through staff associations, HR programmes, and departmental channels would help close the awareness gap identified in this study. Expanding structured institutional support, such as travel allowances or discounted packages, beyond occasional staff retreats could help translate staff's expressed willingness to participate (54.1% indicated they would travel more with supported initiatives) into actual behaviour. Future research could adopt a longitudinal or multi-institutional design to test whether these relationships hold across different organisational contexts and over time.

5.2. Limitations

This study is limited by its cross-sectional survey design, which captures staff perceptions at a single point in time and cannot establish causal relationships between institutional predictors and tourism participation. The zero-count cell observed in the Teaching/Planned Leave category (Table 2) means one expected chi-square cell count fell below the conventional minimum of 5, which may affect the robustness of that particular test; a larger or more evenly distributed sample would strengthen confidence in this result. The study was also confined to a single public university, which may limit the generalisability of findings to

other tertiary institutions with different institutional cultures, leave policies, or resource levels.

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