

Determinants of Cruise Ship Career Preference among Goan Youth: A Push Pull Migration Perspective

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Abstract

Cruise ship employment has become an important overseas career choice for young people in Goa. This study uses the Push Pull Migration Model to examine the factors that shape this preference. A survey was conducted with three hundred youth between the ages of eighteen and thirty, supported by thirty semi structured audio interviews that lasted between twenty and thirty-five minutes. The findings show that the expectation of higher income, the desire for international exposure, strong support from family members, and easy access to recruitment channels all play an important role in encouraging youth to consider cruise ship careers. Limited local employment opportunities, low salaries, skill mismatch, and slow career progress act as major push factors. The study supports existing international research on maritime labour and youth migration. Recommendations are offered for policy makers, training institutes, and recruitment partners to help young people make informed and ethical career choices.

Keywords: Goan youth, cruise ship employment, migration decisions, hospitality workforce, overseas careers, maritime labour

1. Introduction

Cruise ship employment has become a significant overseas career pathway for young people in Goa. The state has a long history of maritime work and international migration, which has created a social environment in which overseas employment is widely accepted and often encouraged (Albuquerque, 2021). Although the hospitality and tourism industry provides many jobs in Goa, young workers often report dissatisfaction with low pay, seasonal employment, and slow career advancement.

These concerns push many youth to explore overseas opportunities that promise higher earnings and global exposure (Goa Labour Market Report, 2022).

At the same time, the global cruise industry continues to grow and has increasingly relied on workers from India, Indonesia, and the Philippines due to their strong service orientation (CLIA, 2023). Cruise ship jobs provide young people with attractive benefits including foreign currency salaries, free accommodation, meals, global travel, and structured career growth.

Although many Goans pursue cruise ship careers, very little academic research has examined the motivations of Goan youth specifically. This study applies the Push Pull Migration Model to identify the factors that shape their career choices.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Employment Challenges Faced by Youth in Goa

Goa's economy relies heavily on tourism and hospitality. While job availability is high, wages remain comparatively low and promotion takes time. Youth often face skill mismatch and limited opportunities for long term growth (Fernandes and Coutinho, 2019). Similar patterns of dissatisfaction are noted across India where economic conditions drive many young people to consider work abroad (Rajan, 2018).

2.2 The Global Cruise Industry and Its Workforce

The cruise industry has grown rapidly and now employs a diverse workforce from many parts of the world (CLIA, 2023). Indian workers are recognised for their communication abilities and adaptability in multicultural environments (Wu

and Chen, 2019). Young people are drawn to cruise jobs because they provide financial benefits and the chance to travel and develop new skills (Nair and D Silva, 2020).

2.3 Motivations for Choosing Maritime Careers

Research on maritime employment shows that workers often join this sector to earn better wages, gain adventure, travel, and develop professional skills (Gibson, 2020). Cruise ship jobs help improve communication, discipline, customer service, and teamwork (Baum et al., 2022).

2.4 Push Pull Migration Model

The Push Pull Migration Model explains migration through factors that push people away from their home region and factors that pull them toward a new destination (Lee, 1966). Push factors include unemployment, low wages, and a lack of advancement. Pull factors include better salaries, global exposure, and improved living conditions (De Haas, 2010). The model is widely used in tourism and maritime labour studies (Zopiatis et al., 2014, Thomas, 2021).

2.5 Gap in Literature

Although Goans represent a significant part of India's cruise ship workforce, there is limited research on what motivates them. This study fills that gap by using a mixed method approach.

3. Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Identify the push factors that influence Goan youth to consider cruise ship careers
2. Explore the pull factors that attract youth to the cruise industry
3. Understand the role of family and social connections
4. Identify the factors that strongly predict cruise career preference
5. Suggest practical recommendations based on the findings

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

A mixed method approach was used to combine the strengths of quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, 2014).

4.2 Quantitative Component

A structured survey was completed by three hundred Goan youth aged eighteen to thirty. Respondents were selected from colleges, training institutes, and community centres in North Goa and South Goa.

4.3 Qualitative Component

Thirty semi structured interviews were conducted through audio calls with cruise ship employees working in food and beverage, housekeeping, galley, bar service, entertainment, and utility departments. Interviews lasted between twenty and thirty five minutes.

4.4 Data Collection Tools

Survey questions were adapted from previous studies on migration and career motivation (Yuen et al., 2018 and Zopiatis et al., 2014). Interview questions focused on motivation, family influence, recruitment experiences, and perceptions of cruise ship employment.

4.5 Data Analysis

Survey data were analysed using descriptive statistics and logistic regression with SPSS (Hosmer and Lemeshow, 2013). Interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis based on the method proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006).

5. Results

5.1 Demographic Profile

Variable	Percentage
Male	87 percent
Female	13 percent
South Goa	55 percent
North Goa	45 percent
Hospitality Background	49 percent
Family Member at Sea	41 percent

The sample reflects the male dominated nature of cruise industry employment.

5.2 Quantitative Findings

Factor	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Salary Advantage	4.18	0.59	Strong pull
Desire for Travel	4.05	0.66	Strong pull
Local Job Quality	2.52	0.79	Push
Skill Mismatch	3.47	0.74	Push
Peer Influence	3.01	0.89	Moderate
Recruitment Access	3.63	0.71	Enabler

Respondents clearly valued salary benefits and international exposure.

5.3 Cruise Career Preference

Fifty six percent of respondents preferred cruise ship employment, while forty four percent preferred local jobs.

5.4 Predictors of Cruise Career Preference

Predictor	B	p value	Odds Ratio
Salary Advantage	0.94	less than 0.001	2.56
Family Network	0.75	0.003	2.11
Travel Desire	0.65	0.006	1.92
Recruitment Access	0.44	0.024	1.55
Local Job Quality	minus 0.58	0.012	0.56

Salary expectation and family connections were the strongest predictors.

6. Qualitative Findings

6.1 Financial Motivation

Most participants said they joined cruise ships to support their families and earn better salaries. This matches global findings on maritime workers (Yuen et al., 2018).

6.2 Interest in International Experience

Youth valued the opportunity to travel, see new places, and work with people from different cultures. This aligns with Gibson’s (2020) observations.

6.3 Family Support and Influence

Family members working on ships played an important role by providing information and encouragement, which reflects chain migration patterns (Massey et al., 1993).

6.4 Dissatisfaction with Local Jobs

Many participants expressed frustration with low salaries and few opportunities for career advancement in Goa. Similar concerns have been reported in other studies (Baum et al., 2022).

6.5 Opportunities for Professional Growth

Cruise work helped participants build communication skills, discipline, and confidence (Wu and Chen, 2019).

7. Discussion

The findings show that Goan youth choose cruise ship careers due to a combination of economic, social, and experiential factors. Push factors such as low wages and slow growth in Goa are similar to those found in other tourism-based regions (Fernandes and Coutinho, 2019). Pull factors such as better income, global exposure, and structured career paths match international studies on cruise employment (Liang et al., 2016). The Push Pull Migration Model provides a suitable explanation for these combined motivations.

8. Implications

8.1 Policy Recommendations

- Introduce structured overseas career counselling in colleges
- Strengthen monitoring of recruitment practices
- Provide information on worker rights and safe migration

8.2 Training Recommendations

- Improve hospitality training and align it with cruise industry standards

- Emphasise communication, teamwork, and customer service skills
- Offer pre departure orientation

8.3 Industry Recommendations

- Ensure transparency in contracts and salary information
- Provide better mental health support for new workers
- Create mentoring programs for first time cruise employees

9. Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. The sample represents only youth from Goa, therefore the results may not apply to other regions in India. The data is self reported and may include personal bias. The sample has more male participants, which reduces representation of women. Interviews lasted between twenty and thirty five minutes and may not capture deeper personal experiences. The study examines motivation at a single point in time, without considering how preferences may change. The findings do not include direct observation of work on board ships. Finally, the study does not examine the detailed functioning of recruitment agencies.

10. Conclusion

Cruise ship careers appeal strongly to Goan youth because they offer better salaries, opportunities to travel, and strong family encouragement. Local job dissatisfaction increases their intention to seek overseas work. The Push Pull Migration Model helps explain these motivations clearly. Strengthening training programs, regulating recruitment practices, and offering informed guidance can help young people pursue cruise ship careers confidently and safely.

11. References

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