

Enhancing Employee Participation in Advent Recollection through Behavioral Management Strategies: A Case Study

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Abstract. Employee participation in institutional religious and spiritual activities is essential for holistic human development in Catholic higher education. This study examines employee participation patterns in the Advent recollection at Divine Word College of Legazpi and explores how behavioral management strategies can enhance meaningful engagement beyond mere attendance. Using a descriptive research design, the study analyzed institutional attendance records from 2024 and 2025 and behavioral indicators of engagement, including attentiveness, reflection, and responsiveness during recollection activities. Participation declined from 87% in 2024 to 64.53% in 2025, with an additional 2.51% recorded as excused in 2025. The findings suggest that external rewards and incentives initially encouraged attendance but were insufficient to sustain deeper and meaningful engagement, resulting primarily in compliance-oriented participation. Behavioral observations further indicated that extrinsic reinforcement had limited influence on sustained reflection and internal motivation. The findings also suggest that employees may move from externally regulated participation toward deeper engagement characterized by belongingness, personal meaning, and fulfillment when appropriate formative support is provided. Based on these findings, the study proposes structured interventions that combine behavioral reinforcement with reflective and formative processes. These include value-centered reflection, relational activities, recognition of active participation, and strategies that support autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Systematic monitoring through behavioral indicators and periodic evaluation is also recommended to assess progress and refine interventions. The study concludes that behavioral management strategies are more effective when integrated with approaches that cultivate intrinsic motivation, personal meaning, and community connection. Such an integrated approach can shift employee participation from reward-based compliance toward authentic, purpose-driven engagement, thereby supporting spiritual formation, employee development, and organizational cohesion in Catholic higher education.

Keywords: Advent Recollection; Behavioral Management; Employee Participation; Intrinsic Motivation; Spiritual Formation.

Introduction

Participation in institutional religious activities is central to the mission of Catholic higher education, where spiritual formation complements academic and professional development. The Advent recollection, in particular, provides employees with an opportunity for reflection, renewal, and communal engagement consistent with institutional values and the formative mission of Catholic education.

At Divine Word College of Legazpi (DWCL), the Advent recollection is conducted annually for employees as part of the institution's holistic formation program. However, variations in participation have raised concerns regarding the consistency and sustainability of employee involvement. Institutional attendance records show that participation reached 87% during the 2024 Advent recollection but declined to 64.53% in 2025, while an additional 2.51% of employees were officially excused. Although these figures demonstrate a substantial change in participation, attendance data alone cannot establish employees' levels of motivation, spiritual commitment, or fulfillment of psychological or personal needs.

Preliminary observations suggest that attendance may be influenced by extrinsic incentives, such as bonuses and institutional rewards. Although external reinforcement can increase observable participation, attendance does not necessarily indicate intrinsic motivation or meaningful engagement. Deci et al. (1999) noted that external rewards may, under certain conditions, undermine intrinsic motivation. Similarly, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposes that sustained and self-directed engagement is more likely when

individuals experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2020). From this perspective, external incentives may encourage employees to attend an activity without necessarily fostering sustained, autonomous, and internally meaningful engagement in its formative purpose.

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs is incorporated as a complementary interpretive framework rather than as a basis for concluding that employees' higher-order needs are unmet. Attendance records cannot independently establish the fulfillment or nonfulfillment of psychological, social, esteem, or self-actualization needs. Instead, Maslow's framework provides a broader perspective for considering how different human needs may relate to employees' motivation and participation. SDT, in contrast, provides the study's stronger motivational lens by distinguishing between externally regulated participation and engagement that becomes more autonomous and internally meaningful.

Although institutional religious activities are recognized as important components of formation in Catholic higher education, limited empirical attention has been given to employee participation in such activities within the institutional workplace context. Existing discussions of religious and spiritual formation tend to focus on students, theological formation, or broader spiritual development, with comparatively less attention to employees as participants in institutional religious and spiritual formation programs. Furthermore, limited research has examined the behavioral and motivational factors that influence employees' consistent participation, particularly when participation is supported by reinforcement strategies. There is also insufficient empirical understanding of how behavioral management approaches can move employees beyond mere attendance toward meaningful and sustained engagement in institutional religious activities. This gap highlights the need for context-specific research on strategies that encourage participation while preserving the formative and spiritual purpose of such activities.

Grounded in behaviorism (Skinner, 1953) and supported by Applied Behavior Analysis (Cooper et al., 2007) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012), this study examines how structured behavioral strategies may enhance employee participation and engagement. SDT strengthens the motivational dimension of the study by explaining how external reinforcement may encourage observable participation, while autonomy-supportive conditions may contribute to more sustained and intrinsically meaningful engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs serves as a complementary interpretive framework for understanding human motivation without treating attendance patterns as direct evidence of unmet needs.

By integrating behavioral management, SDT, and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this study examines the Advent recollection not merely in terms of whether employees attend, but also in terms of the behavioral and motivational conditions that may support sustained and meaningful participation. The study therefore seeks to contribute context-specific empirical evidence on how behavioral management strategies can enhance participation while supporting the deeper formative and spiritual objectives of institutional religious activities.

Research Questions

This study examines how behavioral management strategies can enhance employee participation and foster meaningful engagement in the Advent recollection at Divine Word College of Legazpi.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the trends in employee participation during the Advent recollection?
2. How do reinforcement strategies influence employee participation in the Advent recollection?
3. What behavior-based interventions can be implemented to foster intrinsic engagement among employees in the Advent recollection?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study was conducted at Divine Word College of Legazpi (DWCL), a Catholic higher education institution, focusing specifically on employee participation in the Advent recollection event organized annually as part of the institution's formation program. All employees invited to the Advent recollection were considered participants. The research concentrated on analyzing participation trends, reinforcement strategies affecting attendance, and engagement behaviors during the Advent recollections held in 2024 and 2025. Data sources were limited to institutional attendance records and observed behavioral indicators, excluding other potential factors influencing participation. The scope did not extend to other religious activities or external organizations beyond DWCL. This delimitation ensured a focused examination relevant to institutional context and allowed for development of context-sensitive strategies to enhance employee participation in institutional religious and spiritual activities.

Literature Review

Employee Participation in Institutional Religious Activities

Employee participation in institutional religious activities is an important part of holistic formation in faith-based organizations, especially in Catholic higher education, where spiritual formation supports the institution's mission. Participation involves more than simply attending activities; it requires active and meaningful involvement in recollections, retreats, liturgical celebrations, and other faith formation programs that promote spiritual growth, strengthen commitment to the institution, and reinforce its mission. Syahir et al. (2025) found that participation in workplace religious and spiritual activities enhances employees' authenticity, work engagement, and overall well-being, including their emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual health. These findings suggest that religious activities benefit both employees and the institution by strengthening their connection to shared values. However, meaningful participation depends on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, highlighting the need for strategies that encourage genuine engagement rather than mere compliance. In Catholic schools, institutional religious activities are central to fulfilling the mission of providing holistic education. Catholic education promotes the intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual development of learners while integrating Christian values into all aspects of school life. As faith communities, Catholic schools rely on educators to model Gospel values and help preserve the school's Catholic identity, which is guided by the teachings and mission of the Church (Catholic Education Association of the Philippines, 2024). Therefore, encouraging employee participation in religious formation activities is essential for strengthening both personal faith and the institution's Catholic identity.

Behavioral Management Strategies

Behavioral management strategies in the workplace refer to evidence-based approaches that use antecedent interventions, consequence management, and self-management techniques to improve employee performance, productivity, and well-being. Research has shown that antecedent strategies such as goal setting, task clarification, and job aids help shape positive employee behavior and improve work performance (Choi & Johnson, 2021). Similarly, Riu (2024) reported that combining behavioral management with effective recruitment, employee development, communication, and performance evaluation enhances both employee productivity and organizational performance. In addition, Roberge and Meunier (2023) identified four key self-management strategies among employees: managing thoughts and emotions, recovery, relationships, and task management. Furthermore, Ezerins and Ludwig (2021) demonstrated that Organizational Behavior Management (OBM) principles can effectively address workplace incivility by examining behavioral antecedents, consequences, and appropriate interventions. Collectively, these studies suggest that behavioral management strategies play a significant role in promoting positive workplace behaviors and improving employee engagement. Overall, the literature shows that behavioral management strategies are effective in improving employee engagement and participation by influencing positive workplace behaviors (Choi & Johnson, 2021; Ezerins & Ludwig, 2021; Riu, 2024; Roberge & Meunier, 2023). Guided by these findings, this study, examines how these strategies can be applied to encourage greater employee participation in Advent recollections.

Motivation and Employee Engagement

Employee motivation refers to an employee's internal and external drive to perform work-related tasks and achieve organizational objectives. It is influenced by intrinsic factors, such as personal satisfaction, achievement, and professional growth, as well as extrinsic factors, including salary, recognition, job security, and other workplace incentives. Employee motivation is widely recognized as a critical determinant of organizational success because it enhances employee performance, productivity, and commitment (Xie, 2024; Gomathy, 2022). The literature consistently supports the importance of employee motivation in improving organizational outcomes. Xie (2024) defines employee motivation as the drive that compels individuals to accomplish work-related tasks, whereas Gomathy (2022) describes it as an employee's "will to work." An empirical study involving 500 employees by Jain et al. (2025) found that both intrinsic factors (e.g., job satisfaction, personal growth, and recognition) and extrinsic factors (e.g., salary, job security, and work environment) significantly influence employee motivation. Similarly, systematic reviews have consistently shown that motivated employees exhibit higher productivity, greater job satisfaction, stronger organizational commitment, and lower turnover intentions (Jain & Morya, 2023). However, Kumar et al. (2025) emphasized that there is no universal approach to employee motivation, arguing that organizations should adopt context-specific strategies that address the diverse needs and expectations of their workforce. Above all, the reviewed literature demonstrates that employee motivation is a fundamental factor in promoting employee engagement, commitment, and active participation in organizational activities. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors significantly influence employees' willingness to become involved in workplace programs, while

evidence also suggests that motivational strategies should be tailored to the specific organizational context rather than relying on a universal approach (Gomathy, 2022; Jain et al., 2025; Kumar et al., 2025; Xie, 2024). In relation to this study, these findings provide a strong theoretical basis for examining how behavioral management strategies can serve as motivational mechanisms to increase employee participation in Advent recollection activities. By integrating context-appropriate motivational and behavioral interventions, the study seeks to identify practical strategies that encourage greater employee engagement in faith-based organizational programs, thereby contributing to both individual spiritual development and organizational well-being.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive research design to thoroughly explore employee participation behaviors within the specific institutional context of Divine Word College of Legazpi (DWCL). This design enabled an in-depth examination of participation trends during the Advent recollection events and provided a basis for describing observable patterns of employee attendance and engagement within the institutional setting.

Sampling Design

The sampling design of the study involved including all employees of Divine Word College of Legazpi (DWCL) who were invited to participate in the Advent recollection event. Thus, the study utilized a total population sampling approach, in which the entire group of invited employees constituted the research participants. Since the event was institution-wide and participation records were maintained for all employees, the sampling encompassed the full range of attendees and absentees related to the Advent recollections conducted in 2024 and 2025. This comprehensive inclusion enabled a thorough analysis of participation trends and behavioral patterns within the specific institutional context.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Divine Word College of Legazpi (DWCL), a Catholic higher education institution in Legazpi City, Philippines, owned and administered by the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), also known as the Divine Word Missionaries. Guided by its mission of providing quality education and service toward holistic human development, DWCL integrates spiritual formation into its institutional programs. As part of this commitment, DWCL conducts an annual Advent recollection for its employees. This study focuses on employee participation in the Advent recollection organized by the Human Resource Development Office (HRDO) and the Center for Spirituality and Mission (CeSMi).

Research Participants

Participants included all employees who were invited to participate in the Advent recollection. The event was organized by the DWCL's Center for Spirituality and Mission (CeSMi) and the Human Resource Development Office (HRDO). The inclusion of all invited employees was consistent with the total population sampling approach adopted in the study.

Research Instrument

The study used institutional attendance records and a structured behavioral observation sheet. Attendance records from the 2024 and 2025 Advent recollections provided quantitative data on employee participation trends. The observation sheet recorded three observable engagement indicators: attentiveness, participation in reflective activities, and responsiveness to communal practices. The researcher served as the sole observer and consistently applied the defined criteria during designated program activities. The presence or absence of each indicator was systematically recorded. Together, these instruments provided complementary data on employee participation and engagement in the Advent recollection.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data-gathering procedure involved multiple systematic steps to ensure the accurate and comprehensive collection of information on employee participation in the Advent recollection. First, institutional attendance records for the Advent recollections conducted in 2024 and 2025 were obtained from the Human Resource Development Office and the Center for Spirituality and Mission (CeSMi) at Divine Word College of Legazpi. These records provided baseline quantitative data on participation rates, including the percentage of employees who were present, absent, or officially excused. Next, behavioral observations were conducted during the recollection events to identify varying levels of employee engagement and to capture qualitative aspects of participation beyond mere attendance. The researcher, serving as the sole observer,

conducted observations across predetermined periods of each recollection program rather than limiting observation to a single point in time. These periods included the opening, reflection sessions, individual or group activities, communal prayer or liturgical practices, and concluding activities. This approach allowed the researcher to capture engagement across different components of the institutional religious activity. The behavioral observation protocol used specific and observable engagement indicators. Attentiveness was operationally defined as sustained attention to the facilitator, speaker, prayer, or activity, with minimal engagement in unrelated behaviors. Participation in reflective activities referred to observable involvement in assigned individual or group reflection exercises, such as writing, sharing, or completing designated activities. Responsiveness to communal practices referred to active participation in prayers, responses, songs, liturgical practices, group activities, and other communal components of the recollection. These indicators were documented systematically using a structured observation sheet. To enhance the reliability and consistency of the observations, the researcher used standardized operational definitions, predetermined observation periods, and a structured observation sheet throughout the data-collection process. The same predefined behavioral indicators and observation criteria were applied consistently across the designated periods and recollection activities. As the sole observer, the researcher maintained a uniform procedure for identifying, recording, and documenting the observed behaviors. This procedure promoted consistency in the observation process while recognizing the inherent limitation of a single-observer design. Throughout the data-collection process, the study employed the frameworks of Behaviorism, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to guide the identification and interpretation of behavioral patterns related to reinforcement and motivation. These frameworks provided the conceptual basis for examining observable employee behaviors and their relationship to participation and engagement. Finally, the collected data were organized and analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine participation trends, while pattern matching was used to examine behavioral indicators and engagement patterns. The integration of attendance records and structured behavioral observations allowed for a more nuanced understanding of both the extent and depth of employee involvement in the Advent recollections and provided evidence for examining participation in relation to reinforcement strategies.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What are the trends in employee participation during the Advent recollection?

Table 1. Summary of Key Data Results from Employee Participation in Advent Recollection

Results	Details	Implications
1. Participation Trends	Employee attendance decreased from 87% in 2024 to 64.53% in 2025, representing a 22.47-percentage-point decline in attendance. An additional 2.51% of employees were officially excused from participation.	The substantial decline indicates difficulty in sustaining consistent participation over time and warrants closer examination of the factors affecting continued involvement in the Advent recollection.
2. Association with Extrinsic Reinforcement	Attendance in 2024 coincided with the provision of extrinsic incentives, such as bonuses, whereas these forms of extrinsic reinforcement were removed in 2025	Higher attendance when incentives were prominent suggests that rewards can encourage immediate compliance; however, such reinforcement may not necessarily translate into intrinsic or sustained engagement.
3. Engagement Levels Variation	Mixed levels of engagement were observed. Some employees actively participated in the reflective and communal activities, whereas others demonstrated minimal involvement despite being physically present.	Physical presence does not necessarily equate to meaningful participation. This highlights the distinction between attendance as a behavioral outcome and genuine engagement as a motivational and experiential process.
4. Behavioral Patterns (Applied Behavior Analysis)	Antecedents: Institutional announcements concerning incentives. Behavior: Attendance at the Advent recollection. Consequences: Receipt of rewards or incentives.	Reinforcement appeared to increase attendance behavior, but its effect on deeper reflection, sustained participation, and internal motivation was limited.
5. Motivational Insights from Maslow's	Initial participation appeared to be influenced partly by lower-order considerations such as	The findings suggest that participation may be strengthened when institutional strategies

Hierarchy of Needs	security and material rewards, while sustained involvement appeared to require attention to higher psychological needs such as belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization.	address not only external rewards but also employees' needs for connection, meaning, recognition, personal development, and spiritual growth.
6. Overall Observation	Extrinsic rewards appeared effective in encouraging initial attendance but were insufficient to ensure long-term intrinsic engagement.	Institutional strategies should complement reinforcement with value-centered, reflective, relational, and spiritually meaningful interventions that encourage employees to participate because they personally recognize the value and purpose of the activity.

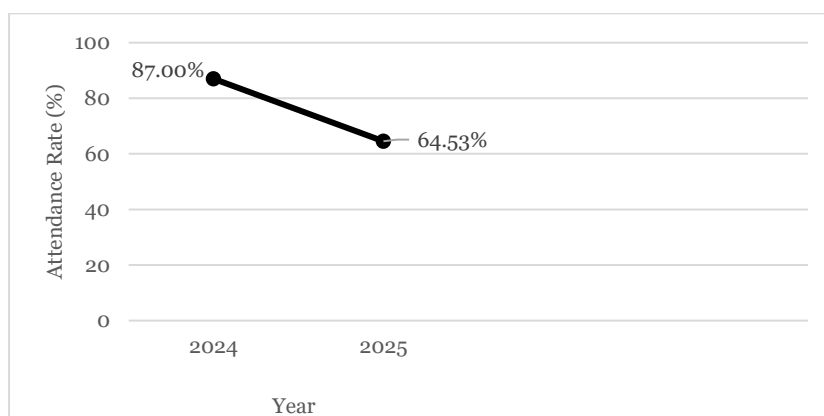


Figure 1. Overall Attendance Trend (2024 vs 2025)

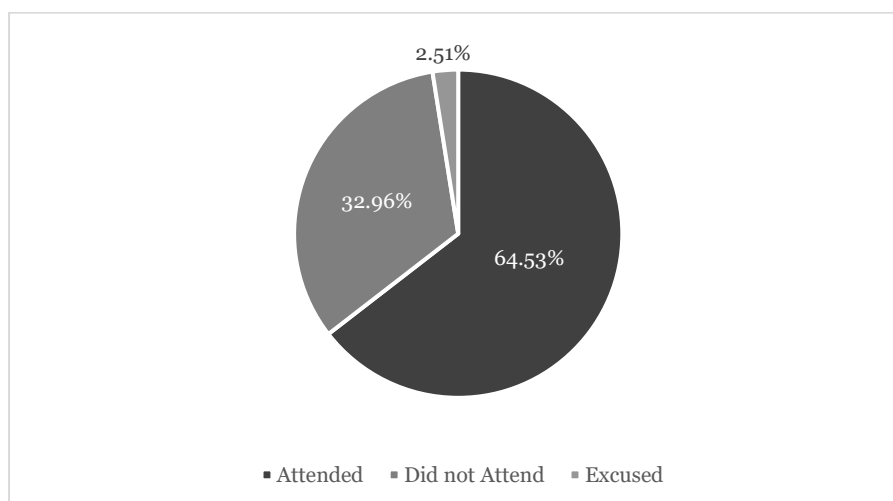


Figure 2. Participation Breakdown in 2025

Figure 1 presents the overall attendance trend for 2024 and 2025, showing a marked decline in employee participation in the Advent recollection at Divine Word College of Legazpi. Attendance decreased from 87% in 2024 to 64.53% in 2025, representing a 22.47-percentage-point decline. In addition, 2.51% of employees were officially excused from attending. Figure 2 presents the participation breakdown for 2025. The magnitude of the decline is an important and somewhat unexpected finding, particularly because the participation rate in 2024 indicated a relatively high level of institutional involvement. Rather than demonstrating a stable pattern of participation, the two-year data suggest that attendance was not consistently sustained over time. This decline warrants further examination of the factors that may have influenced

employee participation across the two years. The decline should not, however, be interpreted automatically as evidence that employees became less spiritually motivated. The available attendance data establish a behavioral change but do not, by themselves, identify its specific causes. Several organizational, situational, or motivational factors may potentially have contributed to the decline, including differences in scheduling, competing work responsibilities, perceptions of the activity, changes in institutional communication, or variations in the availability and salience of incentives. Thus, the finding is best understood as an indication that attendance alone may be insufficient for assessing the sustainability and quality of employee participation. The finding becomes particularly significant when considered alongside the observed association between attendance and extrinsic reinforcement. Attendance tended to be higher when bonuses or institutional incentives were emphasized, suggesting that external consequences may have influenced employees' immediate participation decisions. From a behavioral perspective, this pattern is consistent with the principle that behavior followed by reinforcing consequences is more likely to recur. However, the decline in attendance in 2025 suggests that reinforcement alone did not guarantee sustained participation. The variation in engagement further strengthens this interpretation. Some employees participated actively in the reflective and communal dimensions of the recollection, whereas others were physically present but minimally involved. This distinction is important because attendance represents observable participation, whereas engagement involves the quality, intentionality, and psychological involvement associated with the activity. Consequently, the 22.47-percentage-point decline should be considered not merely a numerical reduction in attendance but also a signal for the institution to examine how participation can be made more meaningful and sustainable.

Research Question 2. How do reinforcement strategies influence employee participation in the Advent recollection?

The findings indicate that reinforcement strategies, particularly extrinsic rewards, influenced employee participation by encouraging attendance and behavioral compliance during the Advent recollection. Institutional announcements concerning incentives functioned as antecedent conditions, attendance represented the target behavior, and the subsequent receipt of rewards served as a consequence that could reinforce attendance. From the perspective of Applied Behavior Analysis, this sequence provides a useful explanation for why attendance may increase when participation is associated with desirable external consequences. Nevertheless, the findings also suggest an important limitation of relying heavily on extrinsic reinforcement. The ability of a reward to produce attendance does not necessarily mean that it produces intrinsic motivation. Deci et al. (1999), in their meta-analysis of 128 studies, found that several forms of tangible and expected extrinsic rewards could undermine intrinsic motivation, particularly when rewards became controlling or were closely tied to engagement, completion, or performance. This finding provides theoretical support for interpreting the present results: incentives may be effective for producing an observable behavior in the short term while not necessarily fostering a personal desire to engage in the activity for its inherent value. This distinction is further explained by Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which differentiates motivation according to the degree of autonomy underlying behavior. Gagné and Deci (2005) argued that motivation in organizational settings should not be understood simply as either intrinsic or extrinsic because extrinsic motivation can vary in its degree of internalization and autonomy. Employees may therefore attend because they are externally pressured, because they feel personally obligated, because they recognize the value of the activity, or because they genuinely find the activity meaningful. These forms of motivation may produce similar observable behavior, such as attendance, but differ substantially in their psychological quality. Ryan and Deci (2020) similarly emphasized that intrinsic motivation and well-internalized forms of extrinsic motivation are strengthened when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Applied to the Advent recollection, this suggests that employees are more likely to develop sustained engagement when they are given meaningful opportunities to participate, understand the personal and institutional value of the recollection, experience supportive relationships with colleagues, and recognize the activity as relevant to their personal and spiritual development. Therefore, the present findings should not be interpreted as demonstrating that extrinsic rewards are inherently ineffective. Rather, they suggest that extrinsic reinforcement may be useful for initiating or supporting attendance but may be insufficient as a primary strategy for cultivating sustained and meaningful engagement. The 22.47-percentage-point decline between 2024 and 2025 reinforces this concern because it indicates that relatively high participation in one year did not automatically translate into sustained participation in the following year. The findings consequently support a shift from a predominantly compliance-oriented approach toward one that combines appropriate behavioral reinforcement with strategies that facilitate internalization and personal meaning.

Research Question 3. What behavior-based interventions can be implemented to foster intrinsic engagement among employees in the Advent recollection?

The findings indicate that employees initially responded to extrinsic motivators such as material rewards and institutional incentives, but these strategies were insufficient to sustain long-term participation. The observed decline in attendance, together with the variation in engagement among those who attended, suggests that interventions should address not only the occurrence of the behavior but also the motivational processes underlying that behavior. The concept of intrinsic motivation is particularly relevant in this regard. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity because it is inherently interesting, satisfying, or meaningful rather than primarily because of an external reward or pressure (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In the context of the Advent recollection, intrinsic engagement may be reflected in employees' willingness to participate in reflection, prayer, communal activities, and spiritual formation because they perceive these experiences as personally meaningful and valuable. Such engagement differs from attendance motivated primarily by the expectation of receiving a bonus or avoiding a negative consequence. The findings can therefore be strengthened by considering the three basic psychological needs identified by Self-Determination Theory: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy involves experiencing a sense of volition and meaningful choice; competence involves feeling capable and effective; and relatedness involves experiencing connection and belonging with others (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Within the Advent recollection, autonomy may be supported by providing employees with meaningful opportunities for reflection and participation rather than emphasizing attendance alone. Competence may be supported through activities that enable employees to express, understand, and apply spiritual and institutional values in their professional and personal lives. Relatedness may be strengthened through small-group reflection, communal sharing, and activities that foster genuine interpersonal connection. The findings also suggest that the institution can retain reinforcement strategies while changing what is reinforced. Instead of rewarding attendance alone, the institution may provide meaningful recognition for behaviors associated with active participation, such as involvement in reflection activities, collaborative service, group sharing, or other observable forms of constructive engagement. This approach is consistent with the behavioral perspective because it continues to use reinforcement, while simultaneously directing reinforcement toward behaviors that represent the quality of participation rather than mere physical presence. Value-centered reflection activities may likewise help employees connect the Advent recollection with the broader mission and Catholic identity of the institution. Community-building initiatives can address the relational dimension of participation, while opportunities for personal spiritual reflection can provide employees with greater ownership of the experience. Meaningful recognition can also communicate that the institution values employees' authentic involvement rather than simply their compliance with an attendance requirement. The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) perspective can provide an additional behavioral framework for systematically defining and reinforcing desired participation behaviors. However, in the context of the Advent recollection, such principles should be adapted carefully to ensure that spiritual participation is not reduced to a system of rewards and observable behaviors. The purpose of behavioral strategies should be to create conditions that support meaningful participation rather than to commodify spiritual engagement. The findings therefore suggest that an effective intervention should integrate behavioral reinforcement with autonomy-supportive, relational, reflective, and value-centered practices. Such an approach recognizes that sustainable participation is more likely when employees progressively internalize the value of the Advent recollection rather than participate solely because of external incentives. In organizational settings, Gagné and Deci (2005) emphasized the importance of autonomous forms of motivation and the internalization of organizationally valued behaviors. Applied to the present study, this means creating conditions in which employees gradually move from participation based primarily on external contingencies toward participation grounded in personal meaning, institutional values, communal belonging, and spiritual purpose.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, institutional authorization was obtained from the appropriate authorities of Divine Word College of Legazpi (DWCL), including the Religious Education Unit Head, the Director of the Center for Spirituality and Mission, and the Director of the Human Resource and Development Office. These authorizations permitted the researcher to conduct the study within the approved institutional setting and to access the non-identifiable institutional information necessary for the research. The study did not undergo a separate formal ethics committee review, and no ethics approval, as the research relied primarily on existing non-identifiable institutional attendance records and structured observations of routine advent recollection events. The study nevertheless adhered to applicable institutional research policies and ethical safeguards throughout the research process. Following completion of the study, the DWCL Research Office was informed of the research outcomes. Separate institutional approval from the School President and the Vice President for

Finance was obtained for the presentation of the study at the National Research Conference. The study utilized existing institutional attendance records and structured observations conducted during Advent recollection events. Individual informed consent was not required because the study used non-identifiable institutional records and observations of routine institutional activities and did not involve direct participant intervention or the collection of personally identifiable information. The researcher took measures to minimize potential psychological, social, or religious harm and avoided interfering with the conduct and religious significance of the Advent recollection. The study respected the spiritual and religious nature of the activities and was undertaken to understand and support meaningful participation rather than to impose, judge, or coerce religious engagement. Confidentiality and anonymization were maintained throughout the research process. Results were reported in aggregate form to further minimize the possibility of identifying individual participants. Research data were handled and stored securely throughout the study. Electronic files were maintained in password-protected storage, while printed documents were kept in a secure location accessible only to the researcher and authorized personnel. Data were used exclusively for the stated research purposes and were not disclosed to unauthorized individuals. Following the prescribed retention period, research materials will be securely disposed of in accordance with institutional policies and applicable data-protection requirements, including the Philippine Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). These safeguards were implemented to uphold respect for persons, privacy, confidentiality, non-maleficence, and responsible data management throughout the research process.

Conclusion

This study advances the understanding of employee motivation within faith-based organizational contexts by integrating behavioral management strategies with motivational theories such as Self-Determination Theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Findings demonstrate that while external reinforcement can effectively prompt initial participation in religious activities like the Advent recollection, sustainable engagement requires fostering intrinsic motivation grounded in autonomy, relatedness, and personal meaning. By highlighting the limitations of extrinsic incentives and advocating for value-centered, reflective, and relational interventions, the research underscores the importance of internalization processes that deepen spiritual and institutional commitment. Consequently, the study contributes to the theoretical discourse by illustrating how behavioral and motivational frameworks can be contextualized to enhance authentic, purpose-driven participation in faith-based settings. This integrative approach not only enriches the organizational behavior literature but also provides a nuanced understanding of motivation that aligns behavioral science with the spiritual and formative goals characteristic of faith-based organizations, thereby offering a more holistic perspective on sustaining meaningful engagement beyond mere compliance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the institution implement a structured, multi-component program to promote genuine and sustained employee participation in the Advent recollection. Rather than relying primarily on attendance-based incentives, the institution should refine its reinforcement strategies by recognizing meaningful engagement, such as active participation in reflection activities, small-group sharing, collaborative service, leading reflections, or facilitating prayer, with a target of at least 50% of participants demonstrating these behaviors and recognition or certificates provided annually during advent recollection. The program should also integrate reflective and value-centered activities that foster autonomy, competence, and relatedness through small-group discussions, meaningful choices, and opportunities for interpersonal connection, supported by facilitation guides and training in autonomy-supportive approaches. Pre- and post-participation assessments should be conducted to measure perceived meaningfulness, connectedness, and personal growth. To further strengthen relational engagement, peer-led reflection circles or mentoring sessions may be established, with a goal of reaching at least 70% employee participation within the first year. Consistent monitoring should be undertaken through behavioral observation checklists assessing attentiveness, responsiveness, and active participation, with a target of at least 80% of observed behaviors reflecting active engagement, complemented by annual reviews of attendance records, behavioral indicators, and participant feedback. Potential implementation challenges, including resistance to change, time constraints, and perceptions of irrelevance, should be addressed through clear communication of the program's purpose and benefits, integration of activities into existing institutional routines, and meaningful employee involvement in program design. Finally, the institution should adopt a continuous improvement approach that combines quantitative measures, such as attendance and behavioral data, with qualitative feedback from surveys and focus groups to evaluate outcomes and refine strategies. Overall, success may be indicated by a sustained 15–20% increase in meaningful employee engagement and participation over one year, thereby supporting a more internally motivated, relational, and sustainable approach to institutional religious and spiritual formation.

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