Research Article

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The Impacts of Work Environment, Mentorship, Technological Integration, And Employee Turnover on TVET Students' Intention Toward Career in The Hospitality and Tourism Sector: A Quantitative Analysis

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of various factors, including the working environment, mentoring, staff turnover, and technology application, on the career intentions of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students within the hospitality and tourism industry. Employing a quantitative research methodology and a purposive sampling approach, the study successfully collected and analyzed 322 valid questionnaires, utilizing inferential statistics for data analysis. The study's findings reveal that, during their industrial training experiences, TVET students exhibit a positive perception of the working environment prevalent in the hospitality and tourism industry. Additionally, industry mentors play a crucial role in reinforcing their interest in this sector, while the integration of technology in the workplace is viewed favorably and significantly contributes to their intentions to pursue careers in the hospitality and tourism industry. Notably, staff turnover observed by TVET students during their internship programs does not appear to have a substantial influence on their career intentions. These insightful findings carry significant implications for a variety of stakeholders, including TVET students, Polytechnic institutions, and the broader hospitality and tourism industry.

Keywords:

TVET, Polytechnic Students, Working Environment, Mentoring, Staff Turnover and Technology Application, Intention To Career

1 Introduction

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has gained prominence as a pivotal tool for boosting productivity and equipping individuals with specialized skill sets tailored to specific employment opportunities. Nations worldwide have adopted TVET at varying levels, recognizing its significance in fostering economic growth, bolstering industries, advancing organizational capabilities, and contributing to societal development. TVET plays a crucial role in upskilling and integrating young individuals into the labor market, ensuring they possess high-quality technical competencies (Herlandy, 2019; Prunuske et al., 2019). Ismail and Hassan (2012), Ridzwan et al. (2017), and Qizi (2020) argued that, in the face of rapid technological advancements, the global labor market demands individuals with well-defined training and high-level skills prior to their entry into the workforce. Additionally, Kindness (2021) contended that TVET serves as a vital avenue for individuals with comparatively lower academic achievements to acquire psychomotor skills in specific trades. Consequently, a diverse array of TVET programs, encompassing fields such as engineering, automotive, computer technology, electronics, commerce, and the hospitality and tourism sector, are being offered to cater to the evolving demands of the labor market.

Many school leavers are increasingly opting for Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a platform to build and secure their future job prospects, driven by the numerous advantages it offers. In addition to various fields of study, the Malaysian government has shown a growing commitment to enhancing skill development and knowledge in the tourism and hospitality sector through TVET (MoHE, 2017). The Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has initiated skill-based TVET programs in tourism and hospitality at various higher education institutions, offering certificates, diplomas, and even degree-level qualifications. Public and private institutions, including polytechnics, community colleges, and colleges, serve as vital platforms for advancing TVET programs in tourism and hospitality. It is worth noting that conventional hospitality programs offer comparatively limited exposure to industry practices, whereas TVET programs prioritize industry-driven skill development. In traditional hospitality and tourism programs, students are required to complete a minimum of four to six months of industrial training, whereas TVET programs demand a more extensive twelve-month industry immersion (MQA, 2019).

A substantial body of literature in the field of hospitality and tourism has predominantly concentrated on various aspects related to graduate career expectations (Altman and Brothers, 1995; Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000; Cho et al., 2006; Walsh and Taylor, 2007), job retention and attrition among hospitality graduates (Dieke et al., 2020; Snell & Hart, 2008), job-hopping behaviors of graduates (Zahari et al., 2010; Yuen, 2016), graduate turnover rates (Goldsmith and Zahari, 1994; Nadiri and Tanova, 2010; Brown et al., 2015), and the challenges associated with the transfer of fresh graduates into the hospitality and tourism industry (Zahari et al., 2010). In the context of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), while there is a growing body of research dedicated to equipping students with industry-driven skills, there remains a notable

research gap concerning the influence of working environment, mentoring/ role models, staff turnover and technology application) toward TVET students' intention to pursue a career in the hospitality and tourism industry. Consequently, this study seeks to address this gap by shedding light on TVET students' attitudes and perceptions regarding the working environment, mentoring, employee turnover, technology utilization, and their career intentions in the hospitality and tourism industry, particularly following their internship experiences. This research endeavor aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject, bridging the existing knowledge gap and addressing pertinent issues within the field.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Intention toward Career

At the tertiary level of education, students often grapple with concerns about their future careers. Nyamwange (2017) points out that individuals, at some point, must confront the challenge of choosing an occupation. This challenge is particularly pronounced when selecting a study program, as many students believe that their choice of study program directly influences their future career prospects (Obuobisa, 2019).). It is essential to note that selecting the right study program is based on the choice of a future career, and an incorrect selection may lead to undesirable career outcomes. Nyamwange (2017) argues that choosing the right career is not a straightforward task; it requires specialized education and the ability to make informed decisions beforehand.

Within the context of hospitality and tourism, the intention students toward a career has become a focal point of concern among scholars. Without proper guidance, this could lead to unemployment and intense competition within these fields (Wong et al., 2019; Rosyidi, 2021; Lee et al., 2019). Failing to make informed career decisions can adversely impact career development and contribute to negative perceptions of the job market, particularly in the hospitality and tourism sector (Richardson, 2009; Rosyidi, 2021). Various attributes, such as the nature of work, social status, pay, industry-person compatibility, working conditions, and promotion opportunities, influence students' career choices in hospitality and tourism (Richardson, 2009; Mohammed, 2018; Mannaa, 2020). Positive perceptions of these elements can attract and retain talented individuals in the industry after graduation. Conversely, if these factors do not align with students' expectations, many hospitality and tourism graduates may leave the industry or not pursue careers in the field (Mannaa, 2020; Yunus et al., 2021; Roney, 2007; Sihite et al., 2020). In a challenging economic environment, possessing a degree no longer guarantees a career, as the number of graduates continues to rise, leading to fierce competition (Lee et al., 2019). Notably, research on career choices among hospitality and tourism students in the Malaysian context remains limited (Yunus et al., 2021). Yunus et al. (2021) and Mohammed (2018) suggest further investigation into the determinants influencing students' intention toward a career, especially within the realm of technical and vocational education.

2.2 Work Environment

The work environment pertains to employees carry out their job responsibilities and encompasses physical, psychological, and social aspects (Agbozo et al., 2017; Rosyidi, 2020; Zahari et al., 2010). The physical aspect addresses fundamental human needs such as safety, comfort, tangible working conditions, hygiene, and accessibility, all of which are designed to facilitate collaborative work (Vischer, 2008). The psychological work environment involves elements relevant to employees' behavior, including emotions, mood, psychological symptoms, affective disorders, cognitions (such as attitudes, perception, decision-making), and behaviors (for instance, effectiveness, absence, motivation) (Agbozo et al., 2017). In contrast, the social work environment encompasses communication styles and the relationships between superiors and subordinates (Chen and Shen, 2012; Lee et al., 2019).

In the context of the hospitality and tourism industry, particularly within hotels, the work environment is a crucial factor influencing whether graduates choose to remain in the industry or leave (Ferdian et al., 2021; Meirina et al., 2018). Employees and intern students working in a conducive environment tend to exhibit positive attitudes, greater responsibility toward their tasks, increased productivity, and enhanced creativity in product development, resulting in fewer customer complaints about services (Costea et al., 2005; Bolman and Deal, 1991; Karl et al., 2007; Roelofsen, 2002). Conversely, a poor work environment can lead to low job satisfaction, stress, ineffective communication among subordinates, and negative perceptions, ultimately encouraging individuals to exit the organization (Anandhwanlert and Wattanasan, 2017; AlBattat et al., 2014; Sibanyoni et al., 2015).

Research by Ashton (2017), Anandhwanlert and Wattanasan (2017), Grobelna and Dollot (2018), Kulsuvan (2000), Lee et al. (2018), and Richardson (2009) highlights the positive impact of a pleasant work environment on employee or student satisfaction. A favorable work environment and positive industry exposure motivate students to pursue careers in the hospitality and tourism industry after graduation (Kazi and Akhlaq, 2017; Mtemeri, 2017). In contrast, negative experiences such as working shifts, extended and irregular working hours, low salaries, and limited career advancement opportunities deter individuals from considering careers in the industry (Ahmad et al., 2014; AlBattat et al., 2014; Anandhwanlert and Wattanasan, 2017; Karatepe, 2013; Ozkan and Solmaz, 2015; Sibanyoni et al., 2015).

2.3 Mentoring

Mentoring, as a multifaceted process, yields a range of benefits for mentors, mentees, and organizations alike, with documented contributions to organizational success (Rekha, 2013; Tsaur et al., 2019). In the realm of career education, mentoring serves to legitimize and encourage individuals to translate their ambitions into tangible realities (Arora, 2020; Nauta and Kokaly, 2001). Assessing the impact of mentoring on students' academic and vocational decisions, Nauta and Kokaly (2001) find that mentoring and role models not only offer inspiration and modeling but also provide vital support and guidance. Some studies suggest that the popularity of celebrity chefs, for

instance, has led to an increase in enrollment in culinary arts programs (Gehrau et al., 2016; Zopiatis and Theocharous, 2013).

As highlighted by Jackson et al. (2019), Morgenroth et al. (2015), and Nabi et al. (2019), mentoring or role models can motivate and inspire individuals to envision real job experiences, share invaluable insights into job requirements, and empower mentees to realize their goals, enhance their leadership abilities, improve communication skills, and bolster their confidence to pursue careers after graduation. Lee et al. (2018) observed that career decisions are influenced not only by the persuasions of immediate family and peer groups but also by the popularity of celebrities in the field (Gehrau et al., 2016; Teerakapibal and Melanthiou, 2019; Zopiatis and Constanti, 2012). In contrast, several studies have found that mentoring has a modest yet positive impact on students' educational attainment, with gender disparities noted, as male mentees often report receiving less psychosocial support than their female counterparts (De Freitas and Bravo 2012; Dennehy and Dasgupta, 2017; Jones et al., 2011).

In pursuing careers, graduates increasingly assess the effectiveness of mentor-mentee programs, which have been actively implemented in various organizations, including the hospitality and tourism sector (Deale et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2020; Rosyidi, 2020). Abdullah et al. (2020), Eissner and Gannon (2018), Ismail et al. (2021), Kim et al. (2015), Lee et al. (2018), and Okolie et al. (2020) highlight that many organizations in the hospitality and tourism industry have embraced mentoring programs in recent decades, as they deliver educational and career advantages for both mentors and mentees. Mentoring or role models not only influence students' or graduates' choices of educational programs but also play a pivotal role in guiding their decisions regarding subsequent job or career selections after graduation (Rosyidi, 2020; Nabi et al., 2019).

2.4 Employee Turnover

Employee turnover remains a pressing concern within the hospitality and tourism industry, with worldwide implications (Cicerale, 2020; Said et al., 2020). This challenge is pervasive, affecting developed and developing countries, including the Malaysian hospitality sector (Haldorai et al., 2019). The consequences of high employee turnover are far-reaching, impacting an organization's competitiveness, profitability, and overall performance due to the loss of critical corporate resources and assets (Makumbuta et al., 2019). Singh and Loncar (2010) define employee turnover as the rate of change in an organization's workforce during a specified period, involving replacing current employees with new ones. Multiple factors contribute to the high employee turnover rate in the hospitality and tourism industry (Butijer, 2020; Richardson and Butler, 2012). Social status, compensation and benefits, and the nature of the work are among the significant predictors of turnover (Bello and Bello, 2021; Mannaa, 2020). These factors have received substantial attention from academic researchers (Lee et al., 2019; Rosyidi, 2020) due to their profound impact on various aspects of organizations, including productivity, performance, service or product quality, operational costs, and the development of human capital (Dwesini, 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Qiu et al., 2017). High employee turnover poses a considerable threat to organizations and their operations.

In the context of a new generation, turnover presents distinct challenges, necessitating different management approaches to retain and motivate this demographic within organizations. Employee turnover significantly influences the behavior and perceptions of hospitality and tourism intern students, impacting their career decisions upon graduation (Kazi and Akhlaq, 2017; Jeofrey, 2017). Previous research by Casado (1992), Jenkins (2001), Kusluvan and Kusluvan (2000), and Purcell and Quinn (1996) revealed that new students often held positive views of the hotel industry. However, after undergoing internships or industry exposure, they frequently altered their career aspirations, opting for fields other than the hospitality industry. This shift aligns with the observations of Ashton (2017), Butijer (2020) and Lee et al. (2018), who contend that only about half of hospitality and tourism management graduates choose to work in tourism-related industries. Ahmad et al. (2014), AlBattat and Som (2014), King et al. (2003), and Waryszak (1999) note that many graduates worldwide opt to leave tourism careers or fail to enter tourism-related industries, making it increasingly challenging to attract and retain new graduates as employees (Chang et al., 2014; Mohammed, 2018).

2.5 Technology Application

The hospitality and tourism industry has profoundly transformed, primarily due to the far-reaching influence of technology and digitalization. This shift has not only revolutionized how people live and work but has also opened up new global competition opportunities for businesses and educational institutions (Fowkes et al., 2007; Gati and Tal, 2008; Gati and Kulcs'ar, 2021; Hirschi, 2018; Tracey, 2020). Technological advancements such as computer reservation systems, GPS, mobile computing, and travel apps like Tripadvisor, Trivago, Booking.com, Expedia, and Kayak.com exemplify this integration of technology in the hospitality and tourism sector (Buhalis and Law, 2008; Xiang et al., 2015).

Globalization has added a new dimension, enabling informed decisions about destinations, accommodations, and diverse tourism products (Parry, 2011; Stroehmeier, 2007; Wang et al., 2018). Technology and digitalization have become pivotal for travelers and the holistic development of the tourism industry (Barwise and Watkins, 2018; Dlamini and Johnston, 2016; Gangeshwer, 2013; Jones et al., 2015). Technology has empowered travel agencies to offer product information and booking services, further streamlining the industry (Kim et al., 2007).

In the context of hospitality and tourism, technology significantly influences career decisions, especially among Millennials and Generation Z (Arana et al., 2015; Solnet et al., 2015; Ferdian et al., 2021). Digital natives, like Millennials and Generation Z, have distinct perceptions of the industry shaped by their rapid access to information (Barron et al., 2007; Brown et al., 2015; Fok and Yeung, 2016; Lub et al., 2012). Their proficiency in technology is evident during internships, where they exhibit positive attitudes, teamwork, task-completion abilities, and customer service skills (Johnson et al., 2018; Lemy et al., 2019). Conversely, individuals with limited technological skills may face constrained career prospects or choose alternative fields (Brown et al., 2014; Deloitte,

2017; Goh and Lee, 2018; Goh and King, 2019; Nyanjom and Wilkins, 2016). These insights underscore the pivotal role of technology in shaping graduates' career decisions during internships and after graduation. To bolster the industry with proficient and adaptable employees, top management must invest in training new talent to keep pace with technological advancements (Ivanov et al., 2019).

3 Study Hypotheses

In hospitality and tourism programs, the inclusion of industrial training is a fundamental requirement for completing certificates, diplomas, and degree programs (Anjum, 2020; Azmi et al., 2019). According to Ayub et al. (2017) and Jamil et al. (2013), industrial training provides students with the invaluable opportunity to apply the knowledge acquired in their academic programs to real-world work environments. During this period, students gain exposure to the working environment, mentoring, and technology application and can observe employee turnover. One of the pivotal factors affecting an individual's decision to remain in or exit an industry is the quality of the working environment (Ferdian et al., 2021; Meirina et al., 2018). Various dimensions of the workplace environment have been identified as influential elements, comprising the physical, psychological, and social facets. The physical workplace encompasses aspects like tools and equipment, technological infrastructure, spatial configuration, noise levels, physical safety measures (including protective clothing), ventilation, lighting, and partition height (Vischer, 2008;) The psychological environment pertains to emotional well-being, mood, affective disorders, cognitive aspects (including attitudes, perceptions, and decision-making processes), and behaviors (including effectiveness, absenteeism, and motivation), while addressing issues such as bullying and interpersonal conflicts (Agbozo et al., 2017). The social environment involves interactions with peers, teamwork dynamics, communication, the nature of relationships between superiors and subordinates, and the role of industry supervisors (Chen and Shen, 2012; Lee et al., 2019). A favorable working environment has been shown to enhance employee teamwork (Cascio and Wayne, 1999; Lai et al., 2002), job performance, and job satisfaction (Agbozo et al., 2017; Vischer, 2007), as well as overall productivity and employee motivation (Qarri and Fejza, 2018; Lu et al., 2021). Consequently, scholars argue that a positive working environment can serve as a powerful attraction for prospective candidates, particularly recent graduates, in their pursuit of personal career growth.

Mentoring and role models are recognized as dynamic and mutually beneficial relationships, often serving as a wellspring of inspiration for graduates as they navigate their career decisions. Jackson et al. (2019) and Stelter and Melton (2016) contended that mentoring empowers individuals to take charge of their learning, enhance their skills, and optimize their potential through the valuable insights and guidance offered by mentors. Significantly, mentoring has a consistent correlation with career advancement, especially in fields such as business administration (Ahmed et al., 2017) and entrepreneurship (Jean and Tremblay, 2020; Ghosh, 2013; Roche, 1979), nursing, medical and healthcare (Harun et al., 2022; Lin, 2021; Tuomikoski et al., 2020; Terry,

2020), education (Quinlan et al., 2018), engineering (Ali et al., 2016; Hashim and Latib, 2020), and hospitality (Ali et al., 2016; Jaafar et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2019; Noordin et al., 2013; Rosyidi, 2020; Zahari et al., 2010). These comprehensive studies concur in recognizing that mentoring and role models significantly boost students' aspirations concerning their post-graduation career choices. Furthermore, the influence of mentoring extends to shaping students' intentions in career choices after graduation. This influence goes beyond mere guidance and includes preparing students for the transition to professional life, promoting lifelong learning, and enhancing their prospects for professional and career success. This is reinforced by the works of Bourbonnais and Kerr (2007), Hilli et al. (2014), Meretoja et al. (2006), Okolie et al. (2019), Stelter and Melton (2016), and Tuomikoski et al. (2020).

Employee turnovers relate to employees leaving their current positions within an organization (Kumazhege, 2017), and can be categorized as voluntary or involuntary (Greyling and Stanz, 2010). Voluntary turnover occurs when initiated by the employee, while involuntary turnover is initiated by the organization (Nasurdin et al., 2018). These turnover events have both monetary and non-monetary repercussions, impacting the recruitment and hiring process (Haider et al., 2015), knowledge and skills (Yamamoto, 2011), and social capital (Sutherland, 2004). This phenomenon is not limited to a specific industry, as it affects organizations in various sectors, including nursing, medical, healthcare, engineering, hospitality, business administration, and entrepreneurship (Harun et al., 2022; Lin, 2021; Ali et al., 2016; Hashim and Latib, 2021; Jaafar et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2019; Noordin et al., 2013; Rosyidi, 2020; Zahari et al., 2010; Ahmed et al., 2017; Jean and Tremblay, 2020; Ghosh, 2012; Roche, 1979).

Previous research indicates that graduates from various programs either never entered their respective industries or left them unattended to return (Blomme et al., 2009; King et al., 2003; Stalcup and Pearson, 2001; Walsh and Taylor, 2007). Factors such as workplace conditions, compensation, motivation, engagement, the work environment, and job satisfaction contribute to turnover (Holston-Okae and Mushi, 2018). Additionally, human resources practices and perceptions about selection and compensation practices significantly influence turnover intentions among employees (Nasurdin et al., 2018; Santhanam et al., 2015). Importantly, higher employee turnover within an organization significantly influences fresh graduates or new employees in their long-term career decisions (Kazi and Akhlaq, 2017; Mtemeri, 2017).

In the modern era, the pervasive application of technology and digitalization has a profound impact on various industries and the global landscape (Khatri, 2019). Ukanwa and Chiemeka (2021) argue that technology applications create a favorable working environment, cost and production efficiency, and time savings. Moreover, many jobs are expected to become partially or entirely automated in the future (Cajander et al., 2020; Kroth et al., 2019; Nadimpalli, 2017; Shankar et al., 2021). The extensive use of technology across various professions undeniably shapes the perceptions of the younger generation regarding their career choices (Arana et al., 2015; Baum, 2019a). Chaudhary and Jha (2021) and Tabora (2020) contend that the younger generation is inclined to choose careers in which technology applications are widespread (Ferdian et

al., 2021). Teo and Zhou (2014) revealed that individuals with lower technology or digital skills tend to experience frustration in their job performance, leading to reduced confidence in their technology use (Agarwala et al., 2008; Lai, 2008). This frustration may eventually result in leaving their current field or opting for less technologically demanding roles (Brown et al., 2014; Deloitte, 2017; Nyanjom and Wilkins, 2016). Conversely, Johnson et al. (2018) and Lemy et al. (2019) found that individuals well-versed in the latest technology and digitalization, including micro-cloud computing, new robotics, 5G telecommunications, the Internet of Things, virtual reality, augmented reality, mixed reality, laser scanning devices, and mobile GPS, exhibit strong job performance and confidence in customer interactions. These individuals are more likely to enjoy longevity in their careers or choose to remain in their specific industry (Nyanjom and Wilkins, 2016). In line with these rationales, we propose the following hypotheses:

H_1: The working environment positively influences the intentions of TVET internship students to pursue a career in the hospitality and tourism industry

H_2: Mentoring/ Roles Model positively influences TVET internship students' intention to pursue a career in the hospitality and tourism industry.

H_3: Staff turnover positively influences TVET internship students' intention toward careers in the hospitality and tourism industry.

H_4: Technology application positively influences TVET internship students' intention toward a career in the hospitality and tourism industry

4   Methodology

This research is fundamentally descriptive in nature, with the primary objective of elucidating the distribution of specific variables with underlying causal hypotheses. Employing quantitative methodology, the study adopts a cross-sectional design and employs a self-reported, self-administered survey questionnaire as the principal data collection tool. The study centers on a cohort of hospitality and tourism Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students from nine Polytechnics in Malaysia who have undergone internship programs. This group constitutes the unit of analysis and serves as the sample for the study. The survey instrument is structured into three sections. Section A elicits demographic information from the respondents. Section B encompasses measurements of independent attributes related to the working environment, mentoring, employee turnover, and technology application. Section C is focused on assessing the intention to pursue a career in the field. The survey items are primarily drawn from existing sources, such as Zahari (2004), Ferdian (2021), Kusluvan (2000), and Ammissah (2020), with minor linguistic modifications tailored to the study's specific context. Respondents are required to express their perspectives using a seven-point Likert scale, spanning from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"). In addition, a Malay language version of the survey questionnaire is provided, which has been meticulously translated from the original English version by a language expert.

Prior to its finalization, a pilot study is conducted to validate the reliability and validity of the questionnaire items.

The researchers establish contact with the coordinators of the Industrial Relations and Training Unit in each polytechnic, seeking their collaboration in obtaining information about students who have completed industrial internships. Given the geographical dispersion of these students across the nation, face-to-face administration of questionnaires is logistically challenging. To address this, the researchers opt to utilize an online method, employing Google Form surveys. Prior to participating in the study, the respondents are apprised of the study's objectives and the purpose of the survey. They are also assured that the information they provide will be held in strict confidentiality, with no individual respondents identifiable through the data collected. Ultimately, the study successfully gathered a total of 322 responses. Based on frequency, 41.3% (n=133) of respondents are males compared to 58.7% (n=189) females. The age group of 20 to 21 years old accounted for 23.6% (n=76), 22 to 23 years old with 69.3% (n=223) and 24 to 25 years old with 7.1% (n=23).

5 Results and Discussion

5.1 Hypotheses testing

In accordance with the research objectives and hypotheses, the analysis employed Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The PLS-SEM encompassed a dual-stage approach, encompassing the assessment of the inner model, which pertains to the measurement model, and the outer model, which pertains to the structural model, with a primary emphasis on elucidating the associations between the latent exogenous and endogenous constructs.

5.2 Measurement model assessment

The reflective measurement model serves as an indirect means of gauging a specific latent or unobservable concept. The determination of causality within this model is contingent upon the construct itself. This approach entails an examination of four critical parameters associated with assessments of latent constructs, namely: (i) internal consistency reliability, (ii) indicator reliability, (iii) convergent validity, and (iv) discriminant validity of the construct measures. The results of these assessments are presented in Table 1, which includes the reflective measurement model's outer loadings, indicator reliability, composite reliability, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) scores, and Cronbach's Alpha value.

Table 1 : Reflective Measurement Model

Indicators	Outer Loadings	Composite Reliability	AVE	Cronbach Alpha
Work Environment				
BWE1: Working hours in hospitality within my expectation	0.947	0.978	0.936	0.966
BWE3: I am well understood that the working environment fluctuates	0.980			
BWE9: Others being helped through my work	0.975			
Mentoring/Role Model				
BMRM1: Industry mentor shaping my interest in H&T industry	0.913	0.936	0.787	0.904
BMRM3: Industry mentors provide great support on my internship	0.971			
BMRM4: The success of staff in H&T inspires me emulate their success	0.944			
BMRM7: Mentoring develops my vocational skills in H&T industry	0.692			
Staff Turnover				
BST5: Many employees claimed H&T work are stress and pressured	0.800	0.956	0.813	0.944
BST6: Some employees stressed they will take a job in another industry	0.908			
BST7: Many *employees'* things other industries offer better promotional opportunity than H&T	0.950			
BST8: Many employees expressed they will leave the industry if they find a better job	0.936			
BST9: Many employees said they don't really mind which industry they work, as long as the job is interesting	0.906			
Technology Application				
BTA1: Enjoy working in situation that using technologies	0.891	0.974	0.884	0.967
BTA3: Technologies makes my work faster, efficient and time saving	0.963			
BTA5: I have to constantly update my technological skill	0.958			
BTA6: I feel upset when less technology applied in the workplace	0.924			
BTA8: I am able to apply my technology knowledge with the immediate situation	0.962			
Intention to Career				

ITC1: I tend to choose work in H&T industry after finishing my study	0.876	0.985	0.855	0.983
ITC2: I will take hospitality and tourism career as a temporary expedient	0.927			
ITC3: This industry gives me better social status and improve my work-life balance	0.946			
ITC4: I will definitely take a job in this industry if technology in widely used	0.811			
ITC5: I wish to contribute my knowledge and skill by giving back to this industry	0.940			
ITC6: I could manage my work life balance by working in this industry	0.845			
ITC7: I believe this industry will give a reasonable reward and benefit	0.979			
ITC8: I will accept almost any job to stay in the hospitality industry	0.964			
ITC9: I expect to get ahead and built quicker in this industry	0.970			
ITC10: I expect to work in the hospitality industry most of my working life	0.946			
ITC11: I will work in this industry if it offers flexibility working	0.948			

Note: Items with a value loading <.70 are deleted

Upon scrutiny of Table 1, the evaluation of internal consistency reliability is predicated on items within the model that exhibit composite reliability (CR) values surpassing the threshold of 0.7. Subsequently, the assessment shifts to convergent validity, which was ascertained via the calculation of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). An AVE value exceeding 0.5 signifies that the constructs under investigation collectively account for more than half of the variance within their respective measurement items, thereby establishing the model's discriminant validity. Hence, the measurement model is deemed to possess discriminant validity.

To further affirm this conclusion, discriminant validity was rigorously assessed using the cross-loading criteria of Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Chin (1998). These criteria are contingent upon two fundamental principles: (i) the square root of the AVE should exceed the correlations between a given measure and all other measures, and (ii) indicators' loadings must surpass their respective construct's loadings on other constructs. In line with the Fornell-Larcker assessment, it is noteworthy that all off-diagonal elements are lower than the square roots of AVE (emphasized along the diagonal), thereby satisfying the criteria laid out by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Meanwhile, the cross-loading analysis concurs with the measurement model's discriminant validity, as prescribed by the second assessment by Chin (1998). Consequently, this study substantiates the presence of discriminant validity within the measurement model.

5.3 Structural Model Assessment

The present study conducted a path estimation, also called nomological validity, to assess the significance of hypothetical relationships within the inner model. The structural model analysis enabled the researcher to affirm or refute each hypothesis, thereby offering insights into the strength of the associations between independent and dependent variables. The relationships between independent and dependent variables were examined using the SmartPLS 3.1.1 algorithm's output, with the path relationships being scrutinized through the regression coefficient (β) to assess their significance. The significance of these coefficients was determined based on the t-values obtained via the SmartPLS bootstrapping procedure. The significance of each relationship was ascertained through the t-statistics output, and Table 2 provides a comprehensive listing of the path coefficients, observed t-statistics, and their corresponding significance levels for each hypothesis path. The results presented in Table 2, which were derived from the path analysis, underscore the substantial positive impact of work environment, mentoring /role model, and technology application experience during internship influence TVET students intention to career in the hospitality and tourism industry. These findings highlight these factors' pivotal role in shaping individuals' attitudes and dedication toward pursuing a profession in the hotel industry.

Table 2: Path coefficients, T-statistics, and significance levels.

Hypo	Path Analysis	Patch Coefficient (β)	T Statistics	P Values	Result
H_1	Work Environment -> Intention to Career	0.754	6.249	0.000	Accepted
H_2	Mentoring/Role Model -> Intention to Career	0.091	1.722	0.043	Accepted
H_3	Staff Turnover -> Intention to Career	0.070	1.205	0.114	Rejected
H_4	Technology Application -> Intention to Career	0.207	1.705	0.044	Accepted

H_1 produced a significant relationship between working environment and intention to career in the hospitality and tourism industry (β: 0.754, t: 6.249, p <0.05). This suggests that TVET students, during their internship program, understand the nature of the work and are quite embraced by the overall working environment in this industry. This indicates that TVET students could adapt to the physical working environment, be pleasant to work with colleagues, and accept the workload; thus, these elements having a significant impact on their intention to career in the hospitality and tourism industry. The H_2 is clearly supported when a significant relationship appeared between mentoring/role models and intention to career (β=0.091 and t= 1.722, p<0.05). This indicates that industry mentoring appointed at the workplace by the institutions positively influenced TVET students' intention to pursue careers in the industry. H_3,

however, is not supported by an insignificant relationship between employee turnover and intention to career in hospitality and tourism (β= 0.070 and t=1.205, p>0.05). Staff turnover seen by TVET students' during the internship program did not influence their intention to career in the hospitality and tourism industry. In this sense, although employee turnover is considered one of the central issues in the hospitality and tourism industry, TVET students might see that move out and move in is common among the hospitality and tourism industry employees as they might leave the organization when getting much better offer in term of position and salary in other organizations. H4 is clearly supported when a significant relationship appeared between technology application and intention to career in the hospitality and tourism industry (β= 0.207 and t= 1.705, p<0.05). In this sense, applying technology in the workplace creates interest in performing their job and clearly influences TVET students' intention to work in the hospitality and tourism industry. As previously mentioned in the literature, the hospitality and tourism industry now, without exception, relies on technology ranging from reservation systems, online booking platforms, management, accounting, engineering, and even food and beverage.

6   Discussion, Implication and Conclusion

The causal relationship between working environment, mentoring/ role model, technology application, staff turnover, and intention to career in the hospitality and tourism industry is obtained through inferential statistics. This empirical inquiry yields valuable insights into a significant nature. Evidently, during their internships, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students undergo a substantial augmentation in their comprehension of the intricacies inherent in the world of work, thereby fostering their alignment with the holistic work environment prevailing in the hospitality and tourism sector. This observation aligns harmoniously with the research findings of Ferdian et al. (2021) and Meirina et al. (2018), both of whom assert that the work environment, encompassing its physical, psychological, and social dimensions, exerts a marked influence on the career intentions of millennial students specializing in hospitality and tourism. This influence remains consistent even in the face of the challenging job opportunities that some of these students encounter in their respective countries. Nonetheless, it is pertinent to note that these findings are at odds with a body of existing literature, which contends that suboptimal working conditions, unfavorable experiences such as shift work or prolonged and irregular working hours, inadequate remuneration, deficient communication among subordinates, and high-stress levels collectively contribute to a negative perception and inhibit students from harboring long-term career aspirations within the industry. This contrary perspective is evident in the research of Ahmad et al. (2014), AlBattat et al. (2014), Anandhwanlert and Wattanasan (2017), Karatepe (2013), Lei et al. (2021), Ozkan and Solmaz (2015), Sari et al. (2019), and Sibanyoni et al. (2015).

The findings of this study also unequivocally demonstrate the positive impact of industry mentoring on the career intentions of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students within the hospitality and tourism sector. Mentor-mentee

programs actively implemented within various organizations serve not only to enhance interns' soft, hard, and vocational skills but also shed light on their inclination toward pursuing a career in the hospitality and tourism industry post-graduation. To put it differently, the presence of industry mentors appointed in the workplace by educational institutions has a favorable influence on the career aspirations of TVET students in this sector. This aligns well with the research conducted by Deale et al. (2019), Khan et al. (2021), and Rosyidi (2020), which underscores that mentor-mentee programs, currently widespread in various organizations, serve as catalysts for the holistic development of interns, encompassing their soft, hard, and vocational skills, and concurrently kindle their interest in embarking on careers within the hospitality and tourism industry upon graduation. Additionally, it is noteworthy that the influence of mentoring on students' career intentions finds resonance with the work of Jackson et al. (2019), Morgenroth et al. (2015), and Nabi et al. (2019), who have noted that mentoring can play a pivotal role in motivating and inspiring individuals by providing them with insights into the actual job experience and valuable information about the rules and dynamics of the profession.

In the context of the Generation Z phenomenon, it is apparent that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students have an intrinsic affinity for technology application, considering it an integral part of their professional lives. This resounding acceptance signifies that these students not only readily incorporate technology into their work but also anticipate its potential to enhance the efficiency, speed, and overall enjoyment of their tasks. Conversely, they exhibit diminished motivation when technological knowledge is not applied in their work. This observation aligns with the growing consensus that newer generations exhibit distinct perspectives on the hospitality and tourism industry when compared to their predecessors. Specifically, they are highly expected to work in a technologically driven environment. This alignment is substantiated by the works of Barron et al. (2007), Brown et al. (2015), Fok and Yeung (2016), and Lub et al. (2012).

In contemporary literature, it is well-documented that the hospitality and tourism industry, without exception, relies extensively on technology, encompassing reservation systems, online booking platforms, management, accounting, engineering, and even food and beverage services (Mahajan et al., 2016; Ivanov et al., 2019; Solnet et al., 2016; Huang and Rust, 2018). The pervasive application of technology progressively attracts young, potential candidates to pursue careers in this industry. As posited by Barron et al. (2007), Brown et al. (2015), Fok and Yeung (2016), and Lub et al. (2012), the determination to remain in the industry or seek alternative opportunities hinges significantly on the extent of technology integration, with young employees expressing discontent and a propensity to leave the industry when technology is underutilized in the workplace (Nyagadza et al., 2022; Ernst et al., 2019; Webster and Ivanov, 2020).

Remarkably, the occurrence of staff turnover observed by TVET students during their internship programs does not appear to exert a substantial influence on their career intentions within the hospitality and tourism industry. While employee turnover remains a salient concern in this sector, TVET students tend to perceive it as a commonplace phenomenon among industry employees. They may view such transitions

as a natural response to attractive offers in terms of position and salary available in other organizations. This finding diverges from the perspective presented by Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) and Jeofrey (2017), who contend that internships marred by high employee turnover negatively impact students' post-graduation career decisions. However, this observation aligns with the insights of Ahmad et al. (2014), AlBattat and Som (2014), King et al. (2003), and Waryszak (1999), which highlight the global tendency of graduates to exit the tourism sector or face challenges in entering tourism-related industries. This phenomenon compounds the difficulty in attracting and retaining new graduates as employees (Chang et al., 2014; Mohammed, 2018).

The noteworthy positive intention among TVET students to pursue careers in the hospitality and tourism industry warrants earnest consideration. There is a compelling case to be made that the industry has the potential to harness the talents and qualifications of young TVET graduates, provided that the enduring stigma of passive acceptance and the industry's unfavourable employment reputation can be alleviated. In this vein, the industry should actively seek out TVET graduates to address the persistent workforce shortages in the hospitality and tourism sector. This goal can be more attainable if the industry undertakes a revaluation and implements proactive measures to mitigate employee turnover and work-related pressures. Strengthening the connection between the industry and polytechnic and community colleges is essential to ensure that educators maximize the benefits of the TVET educational process for students and the industry. Furthermore, polytechnic educators should cultivate realistic perceptions of the industry among TVET students to mitigate potential cognitive dissonance. Fostering robust relationships among government policymakers, educational institutions, and industry stakeholders will undoubtedly optimize the benefits derived from the TVET educational process, contributing to the growth of the hospitality and tourism industry and the national economy.

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