

FACTOR AFFECTING UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES STUDENTS PERCEPTION'S TOWARD CAREER ENHANCEMENT IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: A CASE OF UITM PENANG

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ABSTRACT

The hospitality industry requires skilled workers in the restaurant, hotel and lodging sector in order to perform specific and unique tasks such as serving food, bed-making, turn down services and many more. Being an industry that is labor intensive, hospitality establishments strive to attract potential workers, especially fresh graduates to join them. Fresh graduates who are knowledgeable, committed, motivated are sought after by the industry but due to a number of factors, most graduates are not keen to join the hospitality industry. One of the factors that influenced their perception of the industry is their very own experience while going through their practical training. The difference between their expectation of the industry prior to the practical training and their real experience during it is too different thus altering their perception or image of the industry. Therefore this study was conducted to examine the factors affecting the undergraduates' perception towards the industry in the case of students from the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, UiTM Penang. The findings indicated that the nature of work and social status are factors that affect the perception of the undergraduates.

Keywords: nature of work, social status, hospitality industry

INTRODUCTION

Hospitality industry is a labor intensive industry, requires professional and skilled workers to perform several tasks such as bed-making, serving foods and drinks and others. Graduates from hospitalities schools are some of the prospects to fulfill this requirement from the industry. The industry always seeks a cause and problems including the factor that are causing the students from joining the industry. Furthermore, the industry wants to hire the committed and motivated people who are well educated and who are satisfied with their jobs, thus a qualified hospitality student with a positive perception towards working in the hospitality industry (Anandhwanlert & Wattanasan, 2016). Wang and Huang, (2014) stated that administrators of education and programs should understanding the central on how to attract and recruit hospitality student based on their perception and attitude toward hospitality industry. Developing a more effective

courses that are related to the industry, such as housekeeping, room division and barista may equip and prepare the students for the nature of work in hospitality industry.

Students that have higher education of hospitality industry are no longer interested to working in the industry sector and at the same time the industry lacks of younger talent due to facing problem of attracting and retaining the younger workers (Cassel, Thulemark & Duncan, 2018; McDonnell, 2017; Barron, 2008). Industry has recent been highlighted about the issue of skill shortage and labors in the hospitality industry worldwide (Le, McDonald & Klieve, 2018; Ashton, 2017; Richardson, 2010). The shortages of human resources were identified in this hospitality industry because this industry is too huge and have some issues such as recruitment, education, language skills, performance management and others. In Malaysia, undergraduate's hospitality students having a negative perception of long working hour, low salary, and involve a strong mental and physical capability that may lead to the lack of confident and having a less intention to pursue their jobs career in hospitality industry. The objective of this study is to examine on how nature of work and social status influence undergraduate's student perception towards a career enhance in hospitality industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nature of Work

Work pressure is one of the factors that lead to negative student perceptions towards the industry. In other words, student making assumptions that working in hospitality career are stressful and exhausting (Gobelna & Dollot, 2018; Kulsuvan, 2000). Students nowadays prefer an enjoyable and pleasant working environment, hence avoiding a stressful environment that lead them to pressure condition ((Le, McDonald & Klieve, 2018; Ashton, 2017; Richardson, 2009). Having a good environment of work rather than working under pressure and challenging made undergraduates attached with their perception because while they work as a casual workers at certain industry, they seek for a good manager or leader in terms of helping them to make the task to be easy and understanding, but the characteristic on a leader is not available and from this situation it is automatically make them feel stressful in working under pressure (Ashton, 2017; Richardson, 2008). This statement is also supported by Nachmias and Walmsley (2015) where in their finding found that the reason student had never joined the industry is due to the working condition and nature of the job itself. According to Ahmad, Rashid and Shariff (2014), stated that mostly student do not want involves in the hospitality industry because of this job sector was tiring and exhausting due to a long working hour such as required to working on shift.

Social Status

Ahmad et. al (2014) mentioned that the reason of a student does not want to fit in into hospitality industry is because lack of time that they feel unworthy yet affecting their personal social life. Considering the unusual hours worked, they believed that this sector are not worthy to join because they assume that they have to work outside normal hour such as need to working in public holidays and need to working until late at night (Farmaki, 2018; Richardson, 2008). Srinivasan and Karmakar, (2014) mentioned about a few students that are not able to follow up with the hospitality course content because they are considering the requirement of working in long working hour and the hardship, Furthermore, most of the student have exposed with a work experience such as industrial training and helps them to know about the industry environment more closely. Other than that, based on previous researcher, the serious findings about undergraduates perceptions they indicated that the hospitality students are mostly

worried about good starting salary, job security, reasonable workloads and job family balance (Daskin, 2016). While student have been completed their training practical and make it as a work experience, their perceptions towards hospitality industry is more to negative view just because of irregular long working hours (Brown, Thomas & Bosselman, 2015; Roney & Öztin, 2007). Brown et. all (2015) in their study found that the long hours were also the most common theme for the least desirable trait of their careers when they were in the hospitality industry. In fact, they must work for long hours in the industry and they expect something worth with their effort such as social benefit or rewards but what they get is just a poor rewards and limited managerial expertise. Because of that issues, many undergraduates student looking forward to their career with a recognition of commitment to other aspect of life such as family and leisure time (Yi Lin & Anantharajah, 2019; Brown *et all*, 2015; Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge, & Ogden, 2007).

METHODOLOGY

This study is using quantitative research approach which is distributing the online questionnaire form to the respondent. Population for this study is the students in the scope of hospitality undergraduate’s student in UiTM Penang Campus that consist of three courses which is Tourism, Hotel Management and Culinary Arts. For this study, sampling is drawn from students in Faculty of Hotel and Tourism, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Penang branch. Type of sampling for this study is non-probability sampling. Instrumentation has be adopted from Penny Wan, Wong, & Kong, (2014) and from Wang & Huang, (2014). The instrumentation used a 5 point Likert Scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. Frequencies and mean rating including descriptive statistics had been used to analyzed responses of all respondent who are involve in this research survey. The survey was distributed for two months to ensure the respond rate is higher. This study is using a snowball sampling, by distributing the online survey links to the respondents, yet the links being passed to other respondents within the same population. A screening question had been included in the instrumentation to ensure the sampling gathered is valid for the study. For statistical technique, reliability value and correlation tests had been used to see the impact on the types of variables such as nature of work and social status (Daskin, 2016). An Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 had been used in analyzing the data gathered.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile

The distributed online questionnaires were able to capture 100 respondents which are 100% of respond rated, consisting of 60% female and 40% male. For the highest frequency of major study mostly come from Hotel Management field with the percentage of 47%, followed by Culinary Arts with the frequency of 35% and Tourism students 18%.

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1: Nature of Work

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
I find jobs in hospitality industry interesting	100	3.87	0.981

I think that jobs in hospitality are worth doing	100	3.53	1.150
Considering the working hour and workload pay is good in hospitality industry	100	3.45	1.201
There is always something new to learn each day	100	4.14	0.921
Jobs in the hospitality industry are challenging	100	4.23	0.941

Nature of work that consist of five statement which all statement represents different mean statistic and standard deviation. For the statement of “jobs in the hospitality industry are challenging” have the highest mean response is 4.23 with a standard deviation of 0.941 and the most respondent choose to strongly agree with this statement. The second highest of mean is 4.14 with a standard deviation of 0.921 for the statement of “there is always something new to learn each day” and this statement supported by 44 frequency of agree part. The next mean response is 3.87 with a standard deviation of 0.981 for the statement of “I find jobs in hospitality industry interesting” that have almost respondents choose to agree. Meanwhile the lowest mean is 3.53 with a standard deviation of 1.150 for the statement of “I think the jobs in hospitality industry are worth doing” that supported by the 42 agreed respondents followed by the statement of “considering the working hour and workload pay is good in hospitality industry” with the mean is 3.45 and the standard deviation of 1.201.

Table 2: Social Status

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
I talk to my relative/friends with pride about my future career in hospitality industry	100	3.50	1.040
Working in the hospitality industry is respected (prestigious)	100	3.60	.964
Working in hospitality industry is regarded as an important and beneficial service to society	100	3.88	.820
There are good opportunities for promotion/advancement in hospitality industry	100	3.86	.921
Family and social life is negatively affected for people working in hospitality industry	100	3.66	1.007

Social status consists of five statement about social status. The highest mean statistic reported is 3.88 with a standard deviation of 0.820 for the statement “Working in hospitality industry is regarded as an important and beneficial service to society” and the most respondent choose agreed for this statement. The second highest in this variable is “There are good opportunities for promotion/advancement in hospitality industry” with the mean response is 3.86 and the standard deviation is 0.921, that the data showed 45 of respondents choose agree part for the answered. For the statement of “Family and social life is negatively affected for people working

in hospitality industry” and “Working in the hospitality industry is respected (prestigious)” itself have the different mean which is 3.66 and 3.60 with the different standard deviation also with 1.007 and 0.964, and at the same time, the data of frequency showed that the respondents agreed for this two statement. Meanwhile the lowest mean is 3.50 and the standard deviation is 1.040 for the statement of “I talk to my relative/friends with pride about my future career in hospitality industry” that most of the respondents rated for agreed part.

Reliability Test

Table 3: Reliability Test

Variable	Number of scale item	Cronbach’s alpha coefficient
Nature of work	5	.802
Social Status	5	.781

Table 3 showed results of section that have consistency of alpha coefficient or reliability which is above 0.7. Nature of work that was measured by 5 scale items that showed the highest alpha coefficient which is 0.802. This result followed by social status that have the reliability of alpha coefficient is 0.781. This statement was supported by Sekaran (2013), in his research said that coefficients above 0.80 is considered good while coefficients less than 0.60 is poor. Almost more than half of respondent “agree” to nature of work influenced their perception in pursuing career in hospitality industry and mostly it come from female respondents. This analysis was supported by the previous study which is Baum (2013), he stated that women are more seeking work in the tourism and hospitality industry than the economy sectors and they agreed that working in hospitality is more challenging but interesting at the same time. More respondent agreed about their perceptions of working in the hospitality industry will had a problem with their family and social life because of unusual hours worked and have no balancing in life. It is indicated that the findings was related to the image of hospitality industry that has two sides of perceptions, which the first side is on some people that seen the industry as a glamorous one while the other side they are seen as a low skill jobs, low status and have low pay (Richardson, 2009).

Correlation Analysis

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

		Nature of Work	Social Status
	Pearson Correlation	1	.310**
Nature of Work	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N		100
Social Status	Pearson Correlation	.310**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	

Based on table 4, the correlation of each independent variable is significant at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, two tailed toward undergraduate's perception towards hospitality industry. The figure of value between nature of work and undergraduate's perception toward hospitality industry is 0.219, meanwhile the value between social status and undergraduate's perception is 0.386. As the result, it showed that there is positive relationship between independent variables and undergraduate's perception toward hospitality industry. According to Walsh Chang and Tse (2015) from his previous reference concluded that student of tourism and hospitality management are ambitious for their future career at the beginning but their expectation and perception about the industry is more challenging. Thus, the results on this section showed that more student do not agree that working in the hospitality industry are worth doing and good in workload pay. This result was supported (Le, McDonald & Klieve, 2018; Ashton, 2017; Richardson, 2009), he said that even though respondent belief the hospitality industry definitely offering a good starting salary, but it is not a workload pay. Undergraduates had enjoyed while working in the industry during their internship and recognised the social benefits but these student also highlighted the poor reward and have no commitment of life such as family and leisure time (Cassel, Thulemark & Duncan, 2018; McDonnell, 2017; Barron, 2008). According to Anandhwanlert and Wattanasan (2016), irregular working hour by working in hospitality industry directly affected family life and meeting people. In addition, while focused on overall perceptions, the family support may also act as other possible variables impacting these students' career perceptions. Factor on social life as a variable are not strongly associated with the undergraduates perception on working in hospitality industry but the result indicated that social status have a positive relationship.

CONCLUSION

Hospitality industry is a fast-paced industry that urged the potential workers to think twice before involving to this job sectors. All the negatively and positively factor might be affecting the person expectations to continue their career job in this industry. From the study that have been conducted, it emphasized that nature of work and social status is some of the factors that influences the undergraduate's decision making on their future carrier. This study examined the measurement components of hospitality industry student's career perceptions and their relationship as well. From the industry's perspective, this study highlights about the undergraduate's perception and as more accurate of information and awareness of the hospitality industry as well as the specifics careers for hospitality students. According to Wang and Huang (2014), many of the hospitality students do not possess positive perceptions about their future careers and they are likely to change their goals, ambitious and career according to demanding in job career. Based on the comparison of the result with previous researcher on this study, these factors are found as significant in expecting the undergraduate's perceptions towards hospitality industry. There are some of the student even lack of confident in pursuing a career in the hospitality industry after received more information about the hospitality background and working conditions. The researcher also stated that industry knowledge may be an advantages or opportunity to enlighten students in concerning the career opportunities that they may have in the future. Nevertheless, hospitality industry requires a potential and talented young worker as for them to ensure their business growing and expanding successfully in the future.

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