

# Examining Job Motivation on Kolej Komuniti Students' Intention to Working in Hotel Industry

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## Abstract

The hospitality industry in Malaysia is currently going through post-pandemic and has been challenged with the issue of luring in and keeping quality employees. Hotels are also having problems hiring new staff since younger generations, known as Gen-Z, prefer gig economy jobs and don't enjoy working long hours despite overtime pay. As TVET institutions is preparing students to be competent and qualified workers to meet the industry's demands and expectations, it is crucial to understand their attitudes and intention towards working in that sector. Therefore, this study aims at examining job motivation on Kolej Komuniti Students' intention towards working in the hotel industry as a career choice. Data for this study were gathered through a self-administered questionnaire on 168 students in the hotel operation programme at seven Kolej Komuniti Malaysia. The findings highlight the overall students' intention to engage in industry as a career option is positive. The research will help TVET institutions, policymakers and hospitality sector in motivating students to pursue careers in industry.

## Keywords:

Hotel Industry, Job Motivation, Students' Intention, Hotel Operation, Kolej Komuniti Malaysia

## 1 Introduction

The hospitality sector in Malaysia is expected to develop at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of more than 6.5% over the course of the projection period, with a present market value of USD 4 billion (Mordor Intelligence., n.d.). Malaysia's hotel business, like the country's tourism industry, is quickly increasing. There are more prospects for professional career progression due to the large size of the hospitality industry in Malaysia (Zubair and Shamsudin, 2021). The hotel sector has continuously been listed as one of the top three tourist receipt producers each year, as well as one of the top five for employment in the broader tourism industry (Malaysian Association of Hotels, 2023).

As for the employment, Malaysia's hotel sector is well renowned for being a vital economic growth accelerator, creating jobs and fostering socioeconomic development (Mordor Intelligence., n.d.). However, while hospitality industry growth generates job creation, these jobs are also has be found as difficult to replenish the workforce as hotels jobs are perceived as 3D—dirty, dangerous and difficult work (TTG Asia, 2023; MAH, 2023), which has long been seen as unattractive by locals. Yet, the alarming fact of the hotel industry, MAH (2023) also noted that the hotels are also having difficulty finding new employees since younger generations, Gen-Z, prefer gig economy employment and do not appreciate working long hours despite overtime compensation. The situation has gotten worse when formerly hired hotel personnel who lost their job due to the epidemic are reluctant to re-join simply because they have created careers in other sectors over the lapsed period. Locals also not willing to remain long on hotel positions, and their substantial turnover rate has a negative impact on hotel operations since it means hotels cannot maintain a constant quality of service for their guests. These facts are the impetus for performing this investigation. Therefore, this research is to investigates job motivation and students' intention to work in hotel industry.

Today's students are to become future competent practitioners, it is critical to grasp their perspectives about the hospitality industry itself. In line with that, this study suggests four types of job motivation for investigating hospitality students' intention to work in hotel industry: nature of works, social factors, industry-person congeniality and; pay/benefit and promotion opportunities. These factors were chosen based on their theoretical relevance, which is supported by research and theory in the hospitality area (Pol and Patil, 2015; Singh and Amandeep, 2017; Mohammed, 2018; Le, Klieve and McDonald, 2018; El-Houshy, 2018; Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000; Mannaa and Abou-Shouk , 2020; Yunn-Ying and Selvanayagam, 2021; Sonawane, Badhiye and Gadekar, 2022; Mlotshwa (n.d); Liu, He, and Wu, 2022)

From an academic perspective, this study significantly contributes to understanding students' intentions to work in the hotel industry, providing valuable insight into factors influencing career decisions by identifying crucial aspects impacting their intents, such as job nature and social factors. This academic insight is reinforced by its practical implications, providing actionable insights for educational institutions and industry stakeholders seeking to improve recruitment methods, tailor training programs, and

effectively manage workforce difficulties. Overall, the study bridges academic research with real-world applications, fostering informed decision-making and improved practices in talent management within the hotel sector.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 TVET Institutions in Malaysia**

In line with the government's objective to improve Malaysia's reputation as a developing country based on the tourism industry, hospitality is a field of skills that is growing rapidly in Malaysia. To accomplish this objective, Malaysia's hotel business needs a trained workforce to provide quality services to guests. In order to achieve this mission, the government has taken serious steps in creating a medium to produce skilled and qualified workers to meet the needs and requirements of the industry by creating Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). According to UNESCO, TVET is "a process that involves aspects of education, in addition to general education, technology and science studies relating to the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding, and knowledge related to work in various sectors of life and the economy."

In Malaysia, TVET is not a new phenomenon. Only that TVET is sometimes misconstrued as a secondary alternative and is only open to people who have less impressive academic records. This statement is supported by Department of Polytechnic Education of the Ministry of Higher Education where one of the challenges to the TVET system is parents and students typically view TVET as a "last resort" option for further studies (UNESCO – UNEVOC, 2019). In actuality, the stigma is no longer relevant because businesses are increasingly paying attention to TVET graduates (Jabatan Pembangunan Kemahiran (JPK), n.a). For the record, on September 27, 2017, the previous prime minister YAB Dato's Sri Mohd Najib b Abdul Razak, launched (and branded) TVET Malaysia in an effort to transform the parents' unfavorable impression of TVET abilities. Given that many of us have been focusing more on academics for so long, this stigma is widespread.

Kolej Komuniti is one of the public TVET institutions that was established in 2001 under the management of the Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM) which nowadays renowned as Ministry of Higher Education and provide TVET training as well as lifelong learning. As of 2023, a total of 105 Kolej Komuniti have been operating in Malaysia (Portal Pengambilan Pelajar Politeknik dan Kolej Komuniti, n.d.). Table 1 below refers to the list of Kolej Komuniti in Malaysia that offer courses in Hotel Operation or under scope of hospitality.

Table 1: List of Kolej Komuniti Offering Hotel Operation Courses

No.	Course	Study Period	Kolej Komuniti
1	Sijil Operasi Perhotelan	4 Semester (2 Years)	Kolej Komuniti Kuantan, Pahang
			Kolej Komuniti Rompin, Pahang
			Kolej Komuniti Bukit Beruang, Melaka
			Kolej Komuniti Selayang, Selangor
			Kolej Komuniti Chenderoh, Perak
2	Certificate in Food and Beverages (Joint Certificate's with Taylor's University)	4 Semester (2 Years)	Kolej Komuniti Sungai Petani, Kedah.
			Kolej Komuniti Beaufort, Sabah
			LTA (Langkawi Tourism Academy) @ Kolej Komuniti Langkawi, Kedah
3	Certificate in Room Division (Joint Certificate's with Taylor's University)	4 Semester (2 Years)	LTA (Langkawi Tourism Academy) @ Kolej Komuniti Langkawi, Kedah

Source: Adapted from Portal Pengambilan Pelajar Politeknik dan Kolej Komuniti (n.d.).

## 2.2 Job Motivation

Several studies related to the students' attitude and intention towards working in hospitality industry have been done by many researchers (Pol and Patil, 2015; Singh and Amandeep, 2017; Mohammed, 2018; Le, Klieve and McDonald, 2018; El-Houshy, 2018; Kuslvan and Kuslvan, 2000; Mannaa and Abou-Shouk, 2020; Yunn-Ying and Selvanayagam, 2021; Sonawane, Badhiye and Gadekar, 2022; Mlotshwa (n.d); Liu, He, and Wu, 2022) on several factors. A survey of the literature on job satisfaction measures, attitudes toward job, motivations of personnel in industry led to the prior identification of nine characteristics of attitudes towards working in the hospitality industry; (1) nature of work, (2) social status, (3) industry-person congeniality, (4) physical working conditions, (5) pay/fringe benefits, (6) promotion, (7) co-workers, (8) managers, and (9) commitment to the industry (Kuslvan and Kuslvan, 2000).

As such, El-Houshy (2018) looked at the importance of exploring the perceptions of hospitality students at the Faculty of Tourism in Alexandria University towards the industry as a career choice through 20 statements that led to the factors respondents felt relevant when picking a career. He noted that despite the fact that most students aspire to work in the hospitality sector after graduation, they still do not find it to be a

desirable career path. Meanwhile, Kusluvan and Kusluvan (2000) discovered unfavorable or poor opinions towards various aspects of working in the tourism industry such as stressful jobs, lack of family life due to the nature of work, long working hours, exhausting and seasonal (unstable) jobs, low social status, unsatisfactory and unfair promotions and more. Similar results were found by Mannaa and Abou-Shouk (2020) that investigate the elements connected to cultural aspects and society and their impact on the perception of Tourism students in United Arab Emirates (UAE) to work in the tourism sector after graduation. They observed that the social aspect, the nature of work and the pay and promotion benefits have an adverse effect on students' commitment to work in that area. It differs from the findings of the study by Mohammed (2018) in exploring the influence of physical working condition, pay and benefits and promotion opportunities on students' intentions. It was discovered that all of the investigated factors were found to have beneficial impact on students' intention to work in the hotel industry. However, the overall perspective founded by Sonawane, Badhiye and Gadekar (2022) indicates that undergraduate hospitality management students' generally have both positive and negative perceptions of the industry. Likewise, many studies have found a positive relationship between all of attitudes stated (independent factors) towards dependent factors; intention to work in hospitality industry (Yunn-Ying and Selvanayagam, 2021). Although numerous studies have been conducted in Malaysia context (Mohammed, 2018; Yunn-Ying and Selvanayagam, 2021) no research has yet been conducted at the Kolej Komuniti setting. Thus, the current study aims to explore the job motivations and intention of hotel operation students in Kolej Komuniti Malaysia towards working in hotel industry.

Malaysia's hospitality industry has been through a difficult period. Throughout COVID19, retrenchments, salary cuts, and closures have resulted in an accidental labor scarcity among local hotels (MAH, 2023). Moreover, hospitality careers have often been characterized as having low wages, seasonal employment, repetitive task, stressful, irregular working hours, low social status, and significant being physical and emotional demands (Rihardson, 2009; Solnet et al., 2012; Gan, 2016; Nyanjom and Wilkins, 2016; Robinson et al., 2016; Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000; Sangaran and Selvanayagam, 2021; Shi et al., 2022), that leads to decreased job satisfaction and motivation as well as increase the turnover rate. These factors may potentially dissuade students from seeking employment opportunities within the industry (Goh and Lee, 2018). Therefore, it holds significance for stakeholders in the hospitality sector (including educational institutions and industry players) to understand and address students' job-related needs and expectations. This insight can help attract students to pursue careers in the hospitality industry while also knowing their perceptions towards the hospitality industry. Incorporating relevant literature on job motivation, notably concentrating on the factors examined in this study (nature of works, social factors, industry person congeniality, and; pay/benefit and promotion opportunity) would also contribute to the research findings' depth and validity.

### 2.3 Students' Intention to Working in Hotel Industry

Previous studies on student's intention to work in hotel industry found several points. Giousmpasoglou and Marinakou (2021) found that hotel internships and student's satisfaction is the key determinant to lead career intention. This point is supported by the Huang, Liu, and Hsu (2020) and Mensah et al., (2020) which stated that students' intention to stay in in the hospitality sector may be influenced by their perceptions of their practical training experience. Both of these observations imply that students' intentions in relation to their career choices may have been impacted by the significance of exposure to hotel internships. Furthermore, it also has been discovered that career success and career intention are related (Giousmpasoglou and Marinakou, 2021). It supported by Chang and Busser (2020) who stated that the psychological effects of the job experience are referred to as a career success. However, according to Richardson and Butler (2012), the hospitality business lacks elements that would satisfy current students (future workers), hence it must utilize methods and techniques to remedy the problem. Thus, four research hypotheses proposed related to examining job motivation on Kolej Komuniti students' intention towards working in hotel industry which are:

- H1a: There is a relationship between nature of work and students' intention*
- H1b: There is a relationship between social factors and students' intention*
- H1c: There is a relationship between industry-person congeniality and students' intention*
- H1d: There is a relationship between pay/benefits and promotion opportunities and students' intention*

Based on the literature review pertaining to the study variables, the framework of this study proposed as followed:

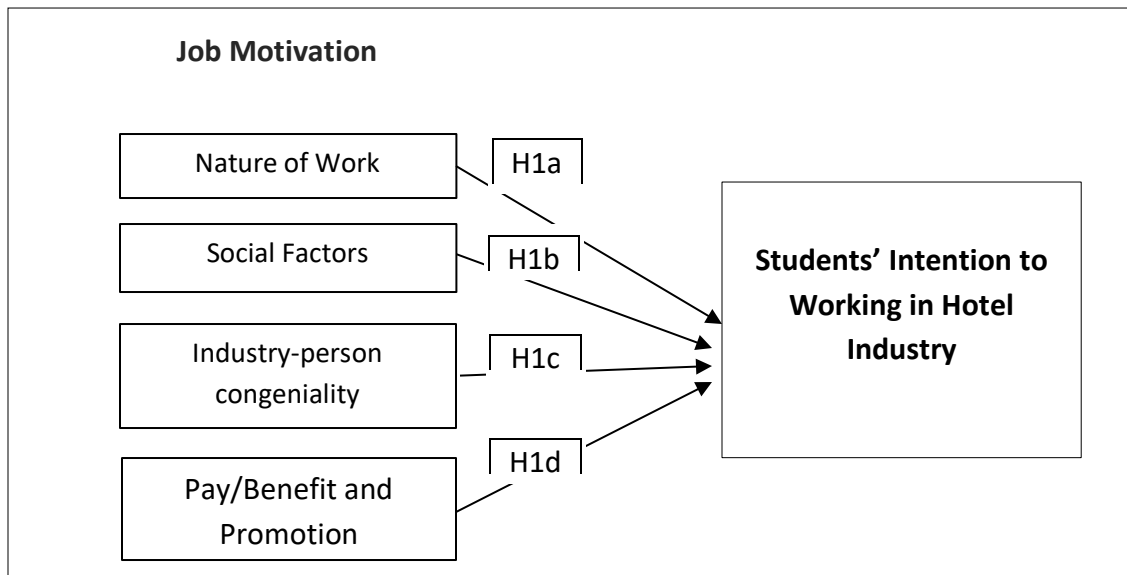


Figure 1: Research framework

### **3 Methodology**

#### **3.1 Sample**

The subject of this study was individual students in Kolej Komuniti in Malaysia. Specifically, in these six different states namely Pahang, Melaka, Selangor, Perak, Kedah and Sabah were selected. In this study, the link to the online survey form which is Google Forms was created and shared through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Telegram and WhatsApp. Respondents frequently prefer to complete survey questions online since they can do it at their convenience and pace, improving response rates. From the 200 questionnaires distributed, a total of 180 questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate on 90%. 12 questionnaires were found to be unusable due to them being incomplete or the respondents were not the subjects of focus in this study. Therefore, only 168 questionnaires were coded and analysed. Data for this study were gathered through self-administered questionnaires. In this research, purposive sampling is used because of the filtering questions in the questionnaire and the selection of the respondents.

The questionnaire consists of two parts. Part A comprised of nine questions and was developed to collect the demographic profiles of the respondents as well as their willingness to study the programmer. The questions were derived from a survey done by (Roney and Otzin,2007), then evaluated and rewritten to fit the specific context before being sent to students. Part B was designed to record the job motivations and intention of students toward the hotel industry. This part includes five constructs: nature of work in hotel operation, social factors, industry-person congeniality, pay/benefits and promotion opportunities, and career intention/commitment to work in hotel industry after graduation. The intention of students was recorded on a Likert five-point scale in which 5 was scored as strongly agree, 4 as agree, 3 as neutral/not sure, 2 as disagree, and 1 as strongly disagree. In answering the research objectives of this study, the statistical tool used in this study was the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS).

### **4 Results**

#### **4.1 Descriptive Analysis**

From the response, 124 respondents (73.8%) are female and the remaining 44 (26.2%) are male. Majority of respondents were alumni (n:66, 39.3%). The second highest respondent group in Semester 2 (n:51, 30.4%). Meanwhile, 19.0% that represented 32 respondents belong to the Semester 4 students. There are only 10 respondents (6%) that are from Semester 1 and only 9 respondents (5.4%) from Semester 3 students. Majority of the 161 respondents (95.8%) are willing to study hotel operation programmes. In terms of the work experience in the hospitality industry, 132 respondents (78.6%) had experience.

Table 2: Respondents' Demographic Profile

Demographics	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	44	26.2
Female	124	73.8
<b>Semester</b>		
Semester 1	10	6.0
Semester 2	51	30.4
Semester 3	9	5.4
Semester 4 (Industrial Training]	32	19.0
Postgraduate/Alumni	66	39.3
<b>Study Major Willingness</b>		
Yes	161	95.8
No	7	4.2
<b>Practical work experience in the industry</b>		
Yes	132	78.6
No	36	21.4

#### 4.2 Mean and Standard Deviation of study variables

From Table 3, mean for the study variables ranged from 3.559 to 3.657. Respondents of this study were moderately and highly rated by perceived job motivation. Hence, students' intention to work in the hotel industry obtained high mean value. Respondents of this study highly agreed that they would be working and gain experience in the hotel industry.

Table 3: Mean for Study Variables

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b><u>Job Motivation</u></b>			
• Nature of Work	168	3.638	0.851
• Social Factors	168	3.657	0.845
• Industry Person Congeniality	168	3.648	0.836
• Pay/Benefit and Promotion opportunity	168	3.559	0.839
	168	3.665	0.849



**Students' Intention to Working in Hotel Industry**

**4.3 Pearson Correlation**

Table 4 exhibits the results of correlational research design between variables. Strength of correlation as follows  $r=1$  was perfect relationship,  $r \geq 0.7$  with strong relationship, meanwhile  $0.5 < r < 0.7$  as moderate relationship, Next  $r \leq 0.5$  was weak relationship, the last strength was  $r = 0$  means no relationship.

Table 4: Correlations Analysis of Nature of Work and Students' Intention

Correlations			
		Students' Intention	Nature of Work
Students' Intention	Pearson Correlation	1	.450**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		>.000
	N	168	168
Nature of Work	Pearson Correlation	.450**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	>.000	
	N	168	168
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)			

As shown in Table 4, the results showed value to be  $r = .450$ ,  $p > .000$ ) was regarded strong. It demonstrates that there is a no favorable association between nature of work and students' intention to working in hotel industry. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was fully rejected.

Table 5: Correlations Analysis of Social Factors and Students' Intention

Correlations			
		Students' Intention	Social Factors
Students' Intention	Pearson Correlation	1	.837**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		<.000
	N	168	168

Social Factors	Pearson Correlation	.837**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	<.000	
	N	168	168
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)			

The Table 5 portray that the correlation coefficient was  $r = .837$  with p-value of  $<.000$  implying that there is a strong association between social factors and students' intention to working in hotel industry. Thus, hypothesis 2 are supported.

Table 6: Correlations Analysis of Industry Person Congeniality and Students' Intention

Correlations			
		Industry Person Congeniality	Students' Intention
Students' Intention	Pearson Correlation	1	.829**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		<.000
	N	168	168
Industry Person Congeniality	Pearson Correlation	.829**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	<.000	
	N	168	168
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)			

Based on table above, the results revealed a correlation coefficient of  $r = .829$  and p-value was  $<.000$  less than 0.01 which is demonstrated a strong relationship between industry person congeniality and students' intention. Hence, hypothesis 3 are supported.

Table 7: Correlations Analysis of Pay/Benefit and Promotion Opportunity and Students' Intention

Correlations			
		Students' Intention	Pay/Benefit and Promotion Opportunity
Students' Intention	Pearson Correlation	1	.859**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		<.000
	N	168	168
Pay/Benefit and Promotion Opportunity	Pearson Correlation	.859**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	<.000	
	N	168	168
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)			

Table 7 portray that the correlation coefficient was  $r = .859$  with p-value of  $<.000$  implying that there is a strong association between pay/benefit and promotion opportunity and students' intention to working in hotel industry. Thus, hypothesis 4 are supported.

## 5 Discussion

This study examined job motivation on Kolej Komuniti Students' intention to work in the hotel industry. The findings highlight the overall students' intention towards working in industry as career choice is positive which is similar with the results of some previous studies reported by Yunn-Ying and Selvanayagam (2021) and El-Houshy (2018). It also highlights the importance of social factors, industry-person congeniality, and attractive pay/benefit packages in shaping students' intentions to pursue a career in the hotel industry. However, while the nature of work is viewed positively, its influence on students' intentions towards working in the industry requires further exploration. The rejection of the hypothesis H1a suggesting a relationship between the nature of work and students' intentions might be attributed to the intricacies of nature of work itself. There are some variations in respondents' perceptions such as balancing parenthood with a hotel career and forming relationships with colleagues. These differences in opinion indicate that individual experiences and preferences play a role in shaping their overall outlook on working in the hotel industry. The ability to balance parenthood with a hotel job might not be the primary factors guiding their career decisions. Same goes finding colleagues to get along with might not be the sole determinants of long-term career intentions. In essence, students' intentions, although positive in many aspects,

are influenced by a multitude of factors, making it challenging to establish a direct and exclusive relationship between their positive experiences in the hotel industry and their long-term career intentions. These results also may have been influenced by the high percentage (78.6%) of respondents who have practical work experience. This figure indicates that a substantial portion of the respondents has first-hand knowledge of the nature of work in this field. It's plausible that students with practical work experience might have a more realistic understanding of the challenges and complexities associated with hotel industry jobs. It's also affected students' decision on whether to remain or quit the industry (Giousmpasoglou and Marinakou, 2021). While they might appreciate certain aspects of the work, they could also be aware of the demanding nature of the profession, which may have influenced their perceptions and contributed to a more nuanced perspective. These insights are invaluable for educational institutions and industry stakeholders, emphasizing the need to focus on these key factors to attract and retain talent within the hotel sector.

## **6 Conclusion and Future Research**

This study revealed a variety of conclusions. However, one significant finding was that deeper understanding on nature of work is one of the primary variables influencing students' intention to enter the hotel business. Overall, understanding all the perceptions discussed is vital for educational institutions, policymakers, and industry stakeholders. It highlights areas of strength that can be emphasized and areas of potential improvement that could be addressed to enhance job satisfaction, work life balance, and overall employee well-being in the sector. These insights are valuable for strategic planning, employee retention efforts, and the development of supportive workplace policies within the hotel industry. Future research can explore more on the nature of work which will facilitate the development of targeted strategies, ensuring the hotel industry remains an attractive and competitive career choice for aspiring professionals. The holistic approach is vital for nurturing a skilled and motivated workforce, thereby sustaining the growth and vitality of the hotel sector. Additionally, revisiting the research questions and considering a more nuanced approach in future studies could help in exploring the relationship between the nature of work and students' intentions more comprehensively.

## **7 About the author**

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