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Hospitality & Tourism Students Perception towards Their Career

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Abstract: ***The hospitality and tourism industry greatly depends on human resources. Todays' students will be tomorrow's future of the hospitality and tourism sector. This article aims to examine the existing literature related to hospitality and tourism students' perceptions towards their careers. This study examined forty-seven articles published in Scopus Indexed journals between the year 2000-2022. Data from the selected publications were coded using content analysis. Study type, geography, research design, data collecting method, statistical approach, and important results were all coded. Seven dimensions were found to measure the students' perception towards hospitality and tourism sector. An attractive job, good salary, admirable job, good promotion opportunities, and a good lifestyle were the key factors that attracted hospitality and tourism students towards the industry. Whereas lower pay, unattractive job, lower social status, long working hours, and work-life balance were the key aspects that students didn't appreciate.***

Keywords: Students, Career Choice, Perception, Hospitality Industry, Tourism Sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality and tourism sector is worth billions of dollars and projected to grow at 3.9 percent per year (WTTC, 2019). Job opportunities are expanding in tandem with the industry's expansion. However, the Hospitality and Tourism sector has been severely impacted due to Covid-19. The 'World Travel and Tourism Council' (2020) reports stated that the industry generate 272 million jobs after losing jobs due to the Covid-19 outbreak. The hospitality and tourism industries are significant sources of employment, both directly and indirectly. Hospitality and tourism, being a highly labor-intensive business, provides a significant number of jobs and career chances for low-skilled and semi-skilled persons, underprivileged, female, and young people. The hospitality and tourism sector can be an essential source of job for several unemployed youths, reducing poverty in society (UNCTAD, 2010). Moreover, this sector is also known for its resilience.

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The hospitality industry is a service industry and largely depends upon a skilled, educated, and qualitative workforce. For providing & fulfilling the demand for the workforce, the education sector plays a significant role for providing competent staff with an optimistic attitude towards work in the area of hospitality and tourism. Usually, it is expected that students who enroll in a hospitality and tourism program will pursue their careers in the sector after completing the study.

The hospitality and tourism sector provides jobs, but the turnover rate is quite high. Further, the sector faces challenges of recruiting and retaining competent workforce, resulting in a deficit of skilled workforce (Richardson, 2008). Many features are ubiquitous in the hospitality and tourism sectors, affecting the shortage of skilled workforce. Several of these factors include an "adolescent temporary workforce," "low levels of formal education," "part-time and casual workers," "a large proportion of hours worked outside of regular working hours," "a high number of low-skilled jobs," "low pay,: "a negative industry image in the eyes of potential employees," "poor utilisation of student labour," and "high levels of staff turnover" (Brown, 2014; Hoque and Ashif, 2020; Jenkins, 2001; Ravish and Rakesh, 2020; Richardson, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012; Yim, 2014). These traits exacerbate the industry's significant issues with recruiting and retention.

The job opportunities, scope, social status, and industry perception are involved in selecting a career in any sector by students. Many researchers have worked on this to determine various factors affecting their career-related decision and perception towards the hospitality and tourism sector. Jaing and Tribe, 2009 had identified five factors ("Personal reasons, Nature of tourism jobs, Human factors, Educational factors, and Management factors") to investigate students' perception of pursuing a career in the tourism field. Research by Richardson (2009) has found that "an enjoyable job", "job security," "a pleasant working environment," and "high earnings" are the essential influences for the students to choose a career in the hospitality field. Kyriacou & Coulthard (2000) used nine factors for exploring the perception & attitude of students, were: (i) "Nature of work," (ii) "Social status," (iii) "Industry/Person Congeniality," (iv) "Physical working conditions," (v) "Pay/fringe benefits," (vi) "Promotion," (vii) "Co-workers," (viii) "Managers," (ix) "Commitment to the industry" further used by Aksu et al., 2005; Anh Hai Le et al., 2018; Bury and Iwasaki, 2018; Huang et al., 2014; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Le et al., 2018; Lo A.S., 2014; Nair et al., 2017; Papathannassi A., 2021; Richardson 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012a, 2012b; Yim et al., 2014.

No specific review study has been done in the context of hospitality and tourism students' perceptions. The present study reviews the scholarly work related to perception of hospitality and tourism students towards their careers.

Objective:

Specifically, the aims of this study are:

1. To finds the top journal and trends in publication year wise
2. To know the perception of hospitality and tourism students towards their career through published sources
3. To analysis the perception of hospitality students towards their career through published sources

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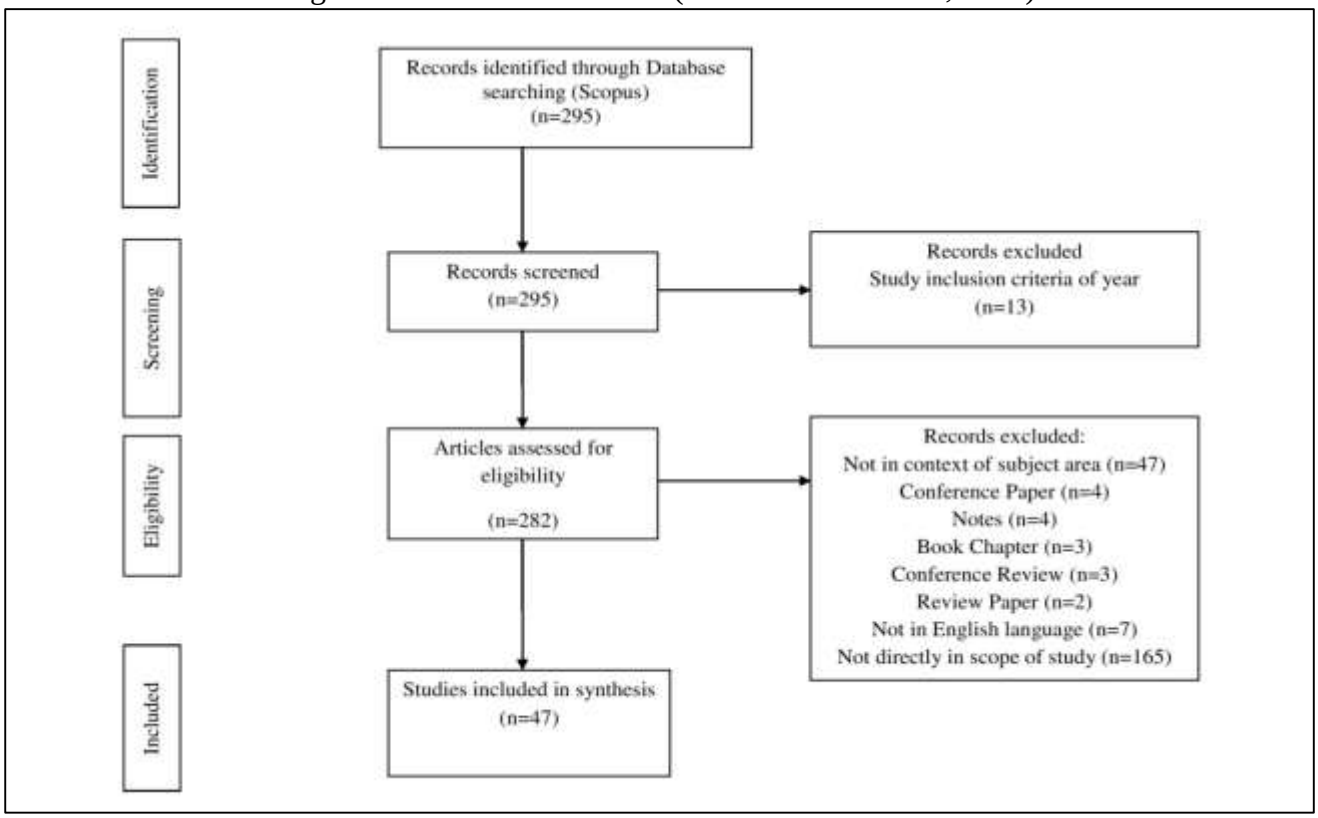
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2. METHODOLOGY

PRISMA structure was followed for this study for a systematic review, as shown in figure 1. A PRISMA flow chart plots the identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion stages. (De Battista et al., 2021). The search was conducted from 2000 to 2022 to access the Scopus database. "Students Perception" or "Careers perception" or "Career Choice" or "Career aspirations" and "Hospitality" or "Tourism" keywords were used to search & collect research articles. The Boolean operators (or/and) and search filters were applied to provide more concentrated results.

By using the above keywords, a total number of 294 articles were collected. Further, collected articles were shortlisted by publishing year, followed by subject area and language. Two hundred eight two (282) articles were found between the years 2000 to 2022. "Business Management and Accounting," "Social Sciences," "Arts and Humanities," "Economics," "Econometrics and Finance," "Environmental Science" and "Psychology" were included in the subject area. The other subject area was excluded because of irrelevance to the field, like Chemistry, Energy, computer science, etc. Seven papers were excluded due to being published in other languages.

Figure 1: PRISMA Flowchart (Source: Moher et al., 2009)



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The conference papers, business reports, books chapters, discussion notes, announcements, conference/research comments, book reviews, and editorial comments were omitted from the study. Two hundred forty-eight (248) articles were excluded in the screening stage. Further, the titles and abstracts of all two hundred nineteen (219) were reviewed for relevance to hospitality and tourism student perception, career choice, career intention and excluded those articles with no focus on study scope or related to other fields. As a result, forty-seven (47) articles were identified as hospitality and tourism students' perceptions for an in-depth analysis. The articles used into the synthesis were from twenty-eight different journals, with twenty-one (21) journals having one article only. In contrast, two (02) journals have two articles, and two (02) journals have three articles. The most articles (07) were published in "Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism," followed by five articles in "Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism" and four articles in "Journal of Hospitality Leisure Sport and Tourism Education."

Table 1: Number of articles per journal

Journal's name	**n=47**
Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism	7
Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism	5
Journal of Hospitality Leisure Sport and Tourism Education	4
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	3
Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education	3
Current Issues in Tourism	2
Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	2
Asia Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism	1
Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	1
Dirasat Human and Social Sciences	1
Educational Administration Theory and Practice	1
Empirical Research in Vocational Education and Training	1
Hospitality And Society	1
International Journal of Economic Research	1
International Journal of Hospitality Management	1
International Journal of Management in Education	1
International Journal of Tourism Policy	1
International Review of Management and Marketing	1
Journal Of Arabian Studies	1
Journal Of China Tourism Research	1
Journal Of Hospitality and Tourism Research	1
Management Science Letters	1
Quality Assurance in Education	1
Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism	1
Tourism Management	1
Tourism Management Perspectives	1
Transformations In Business and Economics	1

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For each paper, the gathered data comprised the title, author's name, publishing year, and publication journal. Study type, geography, research design, data collecting method, statistical approach, and important findings were all coded. Based on current research and a thorough discussion, recurring categories were found for each discipline.
The information gathered was examined in two stages. First, descriptive statistics were presented to explain the student perception research in hospitality and tourism. The selected publications' content and methods were summarised and presented. Second, the research findings on students' perceptions were examined using an analysis.

3. SYNTHESIS OF KEY RESULTS

3.1 Identify publishing year, sample region, and sample size

Researchers have been more concerned with studying hospitality & tourism students' perception of their careers in recent years. 21.3 per cent of survey were performed in the last two years (2021-2022). 42.5 per cent of survey were performed in 2016-2020, followed by 21.3 per cent of studies in 2011-2015, and 8.5 per cent in 2006-2010. Very few studies were conducted in 2000-2005 (only 6.4 per cent).

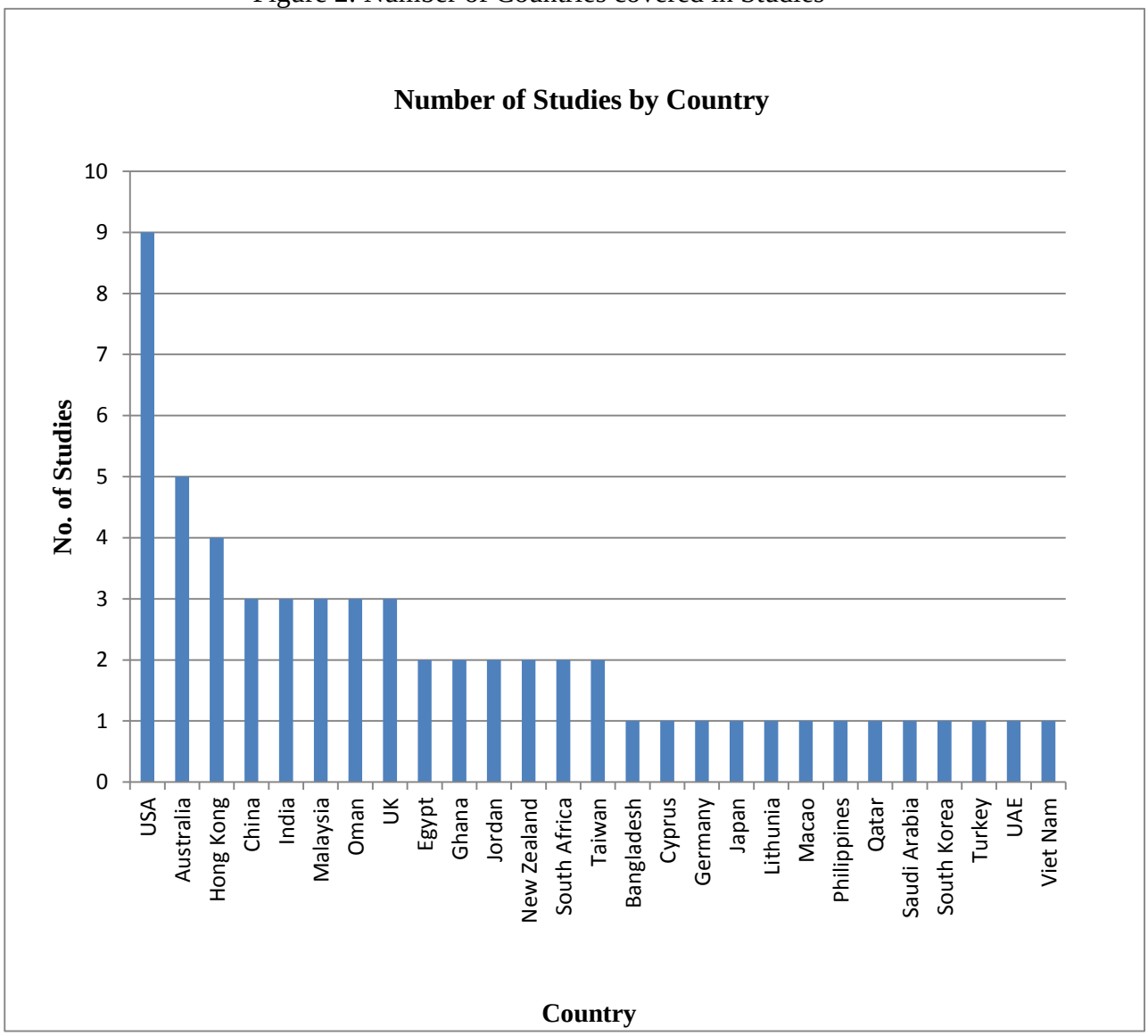
Table 2: Research by publishing year, study region, and sample size.

Coding Field	**Category**	**N (47)**	**Percentage (%)**
Publishing Year	2000-2005	3	6.4
	2006-2010	4	8.5
	2011-2015	10	21.3
	2016-2020	20	42.5
	2021-2022	10	21.3
Sample Size	Below 100	12	25.5
	101-200	8	17
	201-300	12	25.5
	301 & above	14	29.8

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Figure 2: Number of Countries covered in Studies



The geographic continents covered by the researchers were Asia, Australia, Africa, Europe, and North America. Approximately fifty (70) per cent of hospitality and tourism students' perception survey were performed in the top two continents (Asia and North America). The highest number of studies were conducted in the United States of America, followed by Australia, Hong Kong, China, India, Malaysia, and the United Kingdom.

As the table illustrated, 25.5 per cent of studies were taken sample size of below 100, 17 per cent studies took 101-200, 25.5 percent of studies took 201-300, and 29.8 per cent of studies were carried 301 & above sample size. One article was theoretical base. Researchers generally used the convenience and random method of sample techniques to gather the data.

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3.2 Identify key research methodology

Table 4 summarizes the methodological analysis of the articles collected. Regarding the type of study, most research (97.9 per cent) in hospitality fields was empirical, while one study was conceptual. In all articles, 76.6 per cent of studies were quantitative, and 12.8 per cent were mixed-method research, rest of 8.5 percent purely qualitative research. One study was theoretical base. The findings propose that hospitality students' perception research is generally quantitatively centered.

Table 3: Research by study type, research design, data collection, and statistical techniques

Coding Field	Category	N (47)	%
Type of study	Theoretical	1	2.1
	Empirical	46	97.9
Research Design	Qualitative	4	8.5
	Quantitative	36	76.6
	Mixed	6	12.8
Data Collection	Interview	4	8.5
	Survey (Paper)	25	53.2
	Online Survey	14	29.9
	Mixed (Interview & Survey)	3	6.4
Statistical Technique	Univariate	15	32
	Multivariate	15	32
	Descriptive	11	23.4

Survey (Paper) was the most prevalent (53.2 per cent) in terms of data collection methods. The next most widespread data gathering technique was an online survey (29.9 per cent) used in the quantitative approach study. In addition, mixed method was used by 6.4 per cent of studies followed by 8.5 per cent of studies conducted an interview for data collection.

Regarding statistical approaches employed in quantitative and mixed-methods research publications, the most frequently employed multivariate and univariate analysis (32 per cent each). Factor analysis, cluster analysis, regression, discriminate analysis, multidimensional scaling, and correspondence analysis were comprising multivariate statistical approaches. 23.4 per cent of studies used descriptive statistical techniques, such as means, frequencies, and standard deviation. At the same time, the rest studies did not use any statistical techniques due to its qualitative approach.

3.3 Analysis of Perception

Career perception is essential in one's life, particularly for college students who want to work in an area related to their study program (Benaraba, 2022). Studies by Richardson S. in 2009, 2010, 2012a & 2012b found that “an enjoyable job,” “job security,” “a pleasant working environment,” “a safe job,” “new things to learn every day,” and “high earnings” were the important influences for the students to choose a career in the sector. Similar findings shown by other studies, like Armoo A.K. & Neequaye, 2014; Aziz H., 2013; Lo A.S., 2014; El-Dief, 2019; Hoque & Ashif, 2020; Kwan, 2005; Mohd. A. A. & Rashid B. 2016; Nachmias S.

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2017; Vu H. T., 2020, and Li & Zhang, 2022. A study by Ammisah et al. (2020) revealed that "an opportunity to care for others," "establish their jobs," "gain transferable skills" and further "training and education" were essential influences in pursuing a profession in the hospitality and tourism sector. Students' career choice was also influenced by parents and community status of the hospitality & tourism jobs (Kwan, 2005; Lee P.C. et al., 2019; Penny Wan et al., 2014; Wong & Liu., 2010).

It found that almost 70% of students had the intention to join the industry, while other studies showed that more than half of students seeking employment in other sectors (Bury J., 2018; Richardson, 2010). Students were motivated and positively perceived the industry before the work experience/industrial exposure. While after the industry exposure, their perception changed from positive to negative on different aspects of hospitality and tourism sector (Jenkins, 2001; Kim H.B. and Park E.J., 2013; Richardson, 2010). In contrast, Nair G.K. et al. (2017) found that the student's perception was not changed after the industry exposure. Social experience during industrial exposure was the key factor in reducing students' unfavorable perceptions of job-related aspects (Kim & Park, 2013).

Studies also indicated the significant issues related to a lack of talented workforce, which additional relate to the "unattractive job," "lower wage," 'low job status in society," "overloaded work," "limited developmental opportunities," "long working hours," and "being controlled by task-oriented managers" (Richardson, 2009, 2010, 2012a & 2012b). Because of lengthy working times, job insecurity, and low pay, students' attitudes and perceptions of the hospitality business are inadequate. Hospitality & Tourism jobs are usually disgraced in society, with persons having a unfavourable attitude toward the work's nature. As a result, many hospitality students have switched jobs to other, higher-paying sectors. Mostly number of students expressed little interest in pursuing career in the hospitality sector after completing their studies (Jenkins, 2001). Studies on the effect of the Covid - 19 widespread on hospitality and tourism students' perception showed the pandemic affected students' perception towards their careers. Students looked forward to finding an alternative option for a job due Because of the epidemic, there were changes in the nature of employment, reductions in income and benefits, less job security, fewer prospects for advancement, and uncertain career options (Benaraba et al., 2022). However, most students still had the aim to work in the sector (Shah et al., 2021).

4. DISCUSSIONS

With the expansion of the hospitality and tourism sector, it is required to attract the new generation to pursue their career in the hospitality sector to fulfill the industry's demand. Many factors affect students' perceptions towards their careers in the hospitality and tourism sector.

The students had positive thoughts about the industry when they joined a course or before industrial exposure. They were willing to join the industry after completing their study. The perception towards the hospitality and tourism sector had changed after the industrial exposure and as the study progressed. They were seeing a better opportunity in another sector. Personal interest, nature of work, and social implications considered for not joining a career in the hospitality and tourism sector. Lengthy working hours, lower social status,

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stressful job, no personal life, lower pay, unfavorable promotion, unstable job, unhealthful working condition, and unfavorable behavior of manager, etc., are some issues that were found inadequate for them. They had no intend to join the hospitality and tourism sector as their career for such reasons.

The negative perception about the industry on the above factors was not even in one country, but it was found in most countries where a study was conducted. One study showed that about half of students showed interest in starting their own business. Several exciting findings have been found in this review study. Most studies discovered that having prior experience in the hospitality sector was the leading cause of negative perception towards the industry. Expect ten studies; all studies revealed that overall, above one-third of respondents said that they would not join the hospitality and tourism sector after their study. Numerous research studies have found that persons joining the hospitality and tourism industries did not make the correct job choices and regarded an undesirable career. But it is a challenge for the hospitality and tourism educators and industry to recruit and retain students to persuade their careers in this field.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study reviewed the hospitality and tourism students' perception articles published in academic journals from 2000 to 2022. Based on the review, the study identifies the dimensions to measure the perception and identify the students' perception towards their career in the hospitality and tourism sector.

This study concluded that seven dimensions ("personal interest," "nature of work," "social status," "pay & benefits," "co-workers & managers," "work experience," and "job & promotion opportunities") were the key dimensions to measure the perception. These factors play an essential role in perceiving the hospitality and tourism sector and further to job intention or commitment to the industry. Work experience, nature of work, and pay & benefits were critical factors affecting the students' perception. The "nature of work" and "pay & benefits" offered by the industry was found unsuitable for the students; as the result of no job intention in the hospitality and tourism industry.

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