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Graduates' Perception on the Factors Affecting Commitment to Pursue Career in the Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the barriers influencing hospitality undergraduates pursuing a career in the hospitality industry. A total of 70 final year diploma students majoring in hotel and tourism management, UiTM (Pulau Pinang) participated in this study to complete the survey. Based on the results of the regression among nature of work, social status, pay/benefits and commitment to the hospitality industry, it was found that the model was significant with predictors explaining 45% of the variation in commitment to the hospitality industry. The findings showed that only two predictors statistically had significant contribution to the commitment hospitality industry and those predictors were social status and pay benefits. In term of importance, social status was the largest unique contribution to the commitment to the hospitality industry. The negative characteristics of the hospitality industry have reduced the graduates' interest to seek a career in the industry upon graduating even the need to attract and recruit hospitality graduates to work in the hotel industry is very crucial towards the future success of the industry since the industry is facing the problem of employee shortage.

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Keywords: social status; pay/benefits; career commitment; hospitality industry

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1. Introduction

In Malaysia, tourism industry is one of the major contributors to the economy. In 2013, tourism sector was the sixth largest contributor to the economy and has contributed RM51.5 billion to Gross National Income (GNI) (Tourism Malaysia, 2014). Parallel to the development of the tourism industry, there is higher demand for qualified and skilled employees to ensure the success and competitiveness of the industry. True to this factor; the tourism and hospitality industry require employees; and the more consumers they serve; the greater level of revenue they can gain hence, more staff members in the operation must be required (Hayes and Ninemeier, 2009).

Having said that, it was revealed that most hospitality students do not join the hospitality industry right after completing their study (Pavesic & Brymer, 1990). This is supported by several recent studies which discuss on the issues pertaining to commitment of students in joining the hospitality industry afterwards (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Chellen & Nunkoo, 2010; Aksu & Koksul, 2005; Roney & Oztin, 2007; Barron & Maxwell, 1993; Richardson, 2012). Kusluvan and Kusluvan (2000) also stated that from previous appraisal of different dimensions of attitudes such as nature of work, social status, industry-person congeniality, physical working conditions, pay and benefits, promotion opportunities as well as relationship between co-workers and managers; it is very challenging to conclude that respondents have a strong commitment in working in the hospitality industry. Moreover, it is widely accepted that the characteristics of the industry such as long working hour, poor working environment, salary and lack of pay and benefits had created poor image of the industry thus reduced the commitment level of the students (Roney & Oztin, 2007). In conjunction to that, this research focused on examining the key barriers that influenced the Malaysian hospitality students' perspective to pursue their career in the hospitality industry.

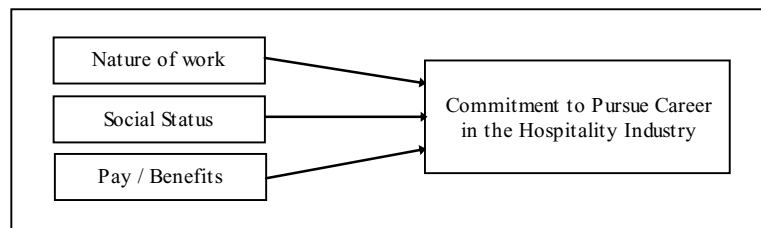


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000).

2. Methodology

In this study, all measurements pertaining to the four variables identified are nature of work, social status, pay benefits and commitment to work in the hospitality industry. These were derived from Kusluvan and Kusluvan (2000) (refer to Table 1). Multi-measurement items for each variable were adopted to overcome the limitations of a single item due to its higher rate of measurement error. Each item was measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). A mid-point of 3 = neither was not used as it encourages respondents to choose neither agree nor disagree to the statement.

Table 1. Measure of the study variables

Variable	Number of items	Sources	Type of scales
Nature of Work	15 items	Kusluvan & Kusluvan	5- point Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)
Social Status	8 items	Kusluvan & Kusluvan	5- point Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)
Pay/benefits	4 items	Kusluvan & Kusluvan	5- point Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)
Commitment to the Hospitality Industry	15 items	Kusluvan & Kusluvan	5- point Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)
Demographic Profile	11 items	Kusluvan & Kusluvan	5- point Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)

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