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Tourism Student's Perceptions of Career in the Tourism Industry: study of Indonesian and thai students

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A B S T R A C T

The aim of this research is to analyze the differences in opinions of two groups, Thai students and Indonesian students regarding careers in the tourism industry. This research determines whether one group is more committed to a career in industry than another group. The approach in this research uses quantitative descriptive with survey methods. The research results show that there are significant differences between the two groups, especially when comparing their responses to careers in the tourism industry. From these results it is said that Thai students are more likely to believe that background can influence interactions and relationships between colleagues and guests in the tourism industry, while Indonesian students are more likely to be satisfied after working in the tourism industry and committed to continuing their career in the tourism industry after graduating. In addition, it was found that students' perceptions of careers in the tourism industry were much more positive than previous research. This has implications for tourism entrepreneurs because it shows that students have a positive perception of the industry. So, there is a greater possibility of joining this industry after graduation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is the largest service industry which produces the largest employment opportunities in the world (Tuzunkan, 2018). The impact of tourism on job creation, as well as tourism education and training has been documented since the mid-1960s (Airey & Frontistis, 1997). Since the last few years, the travel and tourism industry has experienced consistent growth, and in 2019 this industry contributed to 10.3% of global GDP and generated 330 million jobs (WTTC, 2020). International tourism experienced a strong recovery especially in the Asia-Pacific region. In the first quarter of 2023, the number of trips doubled compared to 2022, while tourist arrivals rose 54% from pre-pandemic levels after several destinations and source markets opened in late 2022 and early 2023 (UNWTO, 2023). Job opportunities are expanding along with industry expansion (Dighliya, 2023).

The tourism industry has an impact on the business sector, making it one of the most profitable sectors to experience career growth (Benaraba et al., 2022). The tourism industry offers decent job prospects, thereby triggering the expectations of other people outside the sector, this also results in shifting a person's ambition to seek career opportunities in the tourism industry (Benaraba et al., 2022). The hotel and tourism industry is a significant source of employment, both directly and indirectly (Dighliya, 2023). Rasheed et al., 2020, stated that career opportunities are workers' expectations regarding the extent to which work responsibilities and job prospects are linked to their professional preferences and priorities in the current organization.

Previous research has examined student attitudes and perceptions of the tourism industry and found various factors that students consider when choosing a career in the industry (Aksu & Köksal, 2005; Amissah et al., 2020; E. A. Brown et al., 2014; Casado, 1992; King & Hang, 2011; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; M. Thetsane et al., 2020; Roney, 2007; Sibson, 2011). Sibson, (2011), stated that the main factors that have an impact on the perceptions and attitudes of Tourism and Hospitality students are gender, work experience, study period and friends/family members who work in the industry. Tan et al., 2016, research with 70 Hotel and Tourism Management students at UiTM (Pulau Pinang) found that social status and salary play an important role in choosing a career in this industry. Domingo et al., 2016 found that students pay attention to salary, promotion opportunities, career prospects, job security, and work environment when choosing a career in the hospitality & tourism industry. Maxwell et al., 2010, also found that undergraduate hospitality & tourism students in Scotland valued career factors including promotions, good salaries and job security.

Global employment in the travel and tourism sector increased slightly in 2022 compared to the previous year. Despite the increase, the number of jobs in travel and tourism worldwide is still below the pre-pandemic figure, namely 295 million in 2022. According to estimates, this figure is expected to increase to 320 million in 2023 (WTTC, 2023).

The development of the tourism industry depends on many factors, but one of the most important factors is the qualifications of human resources (Tuzunkan, 2018). The tourism and hospitality industry worldwide is faced with problems in attracting and retaining quality employees, which has led to a shortage of skilled personnel to manage a large number of tourism and hospitality businesses (Deery & Shaw, 1999; Ferris et al., 2002; Freeland, 2000). The tourism and hospitality industry has always faced challenges in finding and retaining quality staff (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000).

Research results show that a small percentage of tourism and hospitality graduates continue into this industry after graduation and an even smaller percentage continue in this industry after five years (El-Houshy, 2018). Robinson et al., (2016) found that students and graduates of hospitality and tourism programs had no intention of entering the industry after

graduation. This does not encourage the best graduates to work in this sector (Littlejohn & Watson, 2004). However, Ross (1994) found that 'the majority of respondents were very interested in employment and possibly a career in the tourism/hospitality industry. Research conducted by Purcell & Quinn (1996), found that those undertaking a Higher National Diploma program tended to be more committed to developing a career in the tourism and hospitality industry due to the highly specialized skills and fewer options open to them.

A recent report from ACI HR Solutions states that more than 70% of people are experiencing disruption to pay and employment, and the number looking to switch to other industries is increasing (Supplement, 2021). Aksu & Köksal (2005), stated that tourism students have negative perceptions and attitudes towards the tourism industry. The hotel sector and tourism industry face problems with a bad image in the eyes of prospective employees (Aksu & Köksal, 2005; Brien, 2004; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; M Riley et al., 2002; Wijesundara, 2015). However, research conducted by Chung & Chan (2017) , concluded that students in New Zealand have a positive image of this industry.

The image of an industry has major implications for the perceptions of prospective employees (Michael Riley et al., 2002). A person's perception of their career is very important to be successful in any context (Wijesundara, 2015), especially for students who want to enter an industry that suits their program (Benaraba et al., 2022). According to Airey & Frontistis (1997), one area that has received less attention is the perceptions and attitudes of the younger generation towards careers in tourism.

Several researchers have studied the perceptions of undergraduate tourism and hotel management students, the results of the study show that novice students have a positive image of this industry, in contrast to students who have work experience tend to have a less positive image (Casado, 1992). Based on research by (Reichenberger & Raymond, 2021), it shows that some students have a positive view of pursuing their careers in the Tourism Industry. In contrast, research by Kusluvan & Kusluvan (2000) ; Ünlüören et al., (2010) students have negative perceptions of various dimensions of work in the tourism sector.

At a time when tourism is considered one of the largest industries and sources of employment in the world, it is time to know more about what prospective new workers think, to provide a basis for attracting the best possible workforce (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000). Understanding student perceptions not only enables institutes and colleges to attract students, but also helps educators in designing effective learning (Shah et al., 2021). For employers, this offers a better understanding of the industry characteristics that deter students from joining the industry (Shah et al., 2021). An employee's commitment to any industry will be determined by his perception and attitude towards work in that industry and the types of jobs available in that industry (Wijesundara, 2015). So, this perspective is very important to show their career in the tourism industry.

Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that a career in the tourism industry is important for the development of the industry itself and students' perceptions influence their decision to pursue a career in the industry. This research was conducted to determine the extent to which student perceptions influence careers in the tourism industry, compare the perceptions of Indonesian students with international students interested in pursuing a career in the tourism industry and identify factors that respondents consider important when choosing a career, so it is very interesting to research. This research can provide students' views on careers in the tourism industry to tourism business actors and the government so that they can take preventative action if necessary.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Career

Researchers have defined the term career differently. Career is a pattern of work-related experiences that covers a person's life journey (S.P et al., 2006). According to M Riley & Ladkin (1994), a career is a series of jobs arranged over time. Feldman et al. (1991) stated that career is a series of a person's work experiences over time. It can also be thought of as a collection of personally felt attitudes and actions related to work experiences and activities throughout a person's life (Kim et al., 2009). Ayres (2006), claims that traditionally, there is a lifelong career philosophy concept that is adhered to by workers. According to this philosophy, workers are expected to devote their entire career span to one industry sector, and often, under one organizational banner.

Career trajectories reflect changes over time for individuals in career advancement, often involving promotion and development of qualifications (Cappellen & Janssens, 2005; Inkson, 2004; Ladkin, 2002). Theoretical approaches to career decision making can be seen from two main perspectives, namely psychological and sociological, which discuss aspects of career choice and development (D. Brown, 2002). Analysis of hotel employees' career histories provides insight into the structure and motivation of career paths, assisting in strategic planning of human resources and managerial succession (Ladkin, 2002). Career anchor theory is used to understand occupational self-concept and the motives that drive a person's career development (Schein, 1979). Career perception is a very important thing in a person's life, especially for students who want to work in fields related to their study program (Benaraba et al., 2022).

Students who have limited work experience appear to have limited ability to make career choices or decisions based on their career interests, compared to abilities directly related to their career path (Feldman & Whitcomb, 2005). As a result, students who have work experience tend to make more effective career decisions than those who do not. Family background also plays an important role in students' career decisions. Research conducted by Mau et al (2008) found that career similarity between graduates and their parents, especially mothers, was a factor that predicted job satisfaction and career persistence. Socioeconomic background can also influence students' decision making and career choices. research conducted by Greenbank & Hepworth, (2008) shows that a lack of financial support can have a negative impact on students' decision making or their educational choices.

2.2. Perception toward tourism and hospitality industry

Perception is the main form of human cognitive interaction with the surrounding reality (Perception, 1969). Students choose study programs based on their interest in the subject, job opportunities and career prospects after graduation (Maringe, 2006). A study of library and information science students showed that many chose courses based on their chances of university admission and positive job prospects after graduation (Moniarou-Papaconstantinou et al., 2010). This is in line with research conducted by O'Mahony et al., (2008) on Tourism and Hospitality students, it was found that many students made decisions based on their choice of university rather than choosing the study program they would accept. For some students, the decision to take a particular course is influenced by promising job prospects, the image they believe in of the industry, and previous work experience in the sector (Ghuangpeng, 2011).

In a study conducted by Casado (1992), it was found that students tend to listen quite realistically before graduating but the number of student turnover is high, novice students have a positive image of this industry, while students who have work experience are less

positive. It is clear that work experience as trainees in industry influences their perceptions negatively (Kozak, M., Kızılırmak, 2001; Pavesic, D & Brymer, R, 1990). Students make career decisions based on job opportunities, labor demand, their own economic background, family or family support and desire to pursue higher education, not based on their specific career interests (Ghuangpeng, 2011).

There are various factors involved in the career decision making process of students. For example, the link between gender and students' decisions to pursue a career in entrepreneurship, as highlighted by Schwarz et al. (2009), shows that male students are more interested in owning their own business compared to female students. Gender differences The same thing was also found among accounting students, where male students were more interested in having their own business than female students (Danziger & Eden, 2007). Female students stated that they prefer to work as employees because they realize that the nature of the work can make it difficult for them to manage work and family commitments when they get married (Danziger & Eden, 2007). This industry is seen with a glamorous image in one aspect, while on the other hand it is considered to have low skill levels, low social status, and minimal financial compensation (M Riley et al., 2002). When tourism is considered one of the largest industries and sources of employment in the world, it is time to find out more about what prospective workers think about tourism, in order to provide a basis for attracting the best workforce (Richardson, 2009).

3. METHOD

This research was carried out using a quantitative approach with descriptive methods. This quantitative approach was used by researchers to measure tourism student's perceptions of career in the tourism industry. In this research there are two variables, namely the independent variable and the dependent variable. The independent variable in this research is Perception (X1) which consists of nature of work (X1.1), pay/ fringe benefits (X1.2) and co-workers (X1.3). The dependent variable is career (Y) which consists of psychology (Y1.1) and sociology (Y1.2).

The data collection techniques used in this research are literature study, questionnaires and observation. This research method is an explanatory survey method. This method is carried out by collecting related information using a questionnaire and aims to find out the opinions of the population being studied and taking samples from that population. The population in this study were Tourism students at Indonesian educational universities and international Tourism students at Prince of Songkla University Phuket campus Thailand, who have experienced working in the tourism industry by taking samples using the Tabachnick & Fidel formula with the results of a sample calculation of 106 respondents.

The data analysis technique used in this research is regression analysis. The sampling technique used in this research is probability sampling because each member of the population has the same opportunity to be used as a sample. Meanwhile, the method used is a simple random sampling method. While the use of the descriptive method is an effort made to characterize the condition of a phenomenon in an organized manner, as well as the status of a phenomenon under a thorough examination (Mycock & Tonge, 2012) it is intended to provide an overview of Tourism students' perceptions of careers in the tourism industry.

Retrieval of research data using a questionnaire distributed to 106 respondents with the following criteria:

1. Indonesian University of Education tourism student
2. Prince of Songkla University Phuket campuss tourism student
3. Have experienced working in the tourism industry

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1.   Characteristic Identity Respondens

This study involves 100 Tourism students from two different educational institutions, namely Prince of Songkla University (PSU) and Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI). These students were selected due to their diverse characteristics, identities, and experiences within the tourism industry. All respondents have practical experience working in the tourism sector, providing them with a firsthand understanding of the realities of the working environment in the tourism industry. This exposure equips them to offer valuable insights regarding their career perceptions within this industry. The focus of the study is on the diverse characteristics and experiences among these students, as it is believed that these factors significantly influence their perspectives on careers within the tourism industry. To gather information on the characteristics, identities, and experiences of the respondents, the researcher conducted a questionnaire survey, with an analysis concentrated on aspects such as gender, nationality, year of study, and age. A meticulous analysis of the data is anticipated to contribute significantly to understanding the dynamic relationship between individual characteristics and perceptions of careers in the tourism sector. The characteristics of the respondents have been processed and presented in Table 4.1.

TABEL 4. 1
RESPONDEN CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics		University		Total
		PSU	UPI	
Year	year1	14	2	**16**
		87.5%	12.5%	**100.0%**
	year2	8	3	**11**
		72.7%	27.3%	**100.0%**
	year 3	18	27	**45**
		40.0%	60.0%	**100.0%**
	year4	9	15	**24**
		37.5%	62.5%	**100.0%**
	>year5	1	3	**4**
		25.0%	75.0%	**100.0%**
Nationality	Thailand	27	1	**28**
		96.4%	3.6%	**100.0%**
	Indonesian	2	49	**51**
		3.9%	96.1%	**100.0%**
	Chinese	9	0	**9**
		100.0%	0.0%	**100.0%**
	Other	12	0	**12**
		100.0%	0.0%	**100.0%**
Gender	Male	17	21	**38**
		44.7%	55.3%	**100.0%**
	Female	33	29	**62**
		53.2%	46.8%	**100.0%**
Age	<19	17	2	**19**
		89.5%	10.5%	**100.0%**
	20-22	25	48	**73**
		34.2%	65.8%	**100.0%**
	>23	8	0	**8**
		100.0%	0.0%	**100.0%**

Source: Processed Data, 2023

Based on the table, it can be seen that the respondents in this study are predominantly female, accounting for 62%, while male students constitute 38%. In terms of age groups, there are 19 students under 19 years old, 73 students aged 20-22, and 8 students aged over 23. Regarding nationality, there is diversity among the respondents, with 28 individuals from Thailand, 51 from Indonesia, 9 from China, and 12 from other countries (Japan, Germany, Kazakhstan, etc.). This diversity is attributed to the presence of international students at PSU. From the table, it is also evident that 45% of the respondents are third-year students. Table 4.2 presents detailed characteristics of the respondents and a comparison between the characteristics of PSU and UPI students.

4.2. Characteristic Respondens Experience

Respondents' experiences are one of the important things to see how students perceive their careers in the Tourism Industry. Based on information sources, 71% of respondents in this study learned about the tourism industry via the internet, 35% through friends and 2% from other sources. The highest consideration for students when choosing a tourism major was based on interest because 66 students felt that the tourism major suited their interests, so they chose to continue their education in this industry and following friends was the least consideration, namely only 14% of students chose the tourism industry because they followed friend.

In this study, 71.9% of UPI students were graduates of tourism vocational schools. It can be concluded that there is a relationship between vocational schools and universities in the Tourism sector, which makes students decide to continue their education in the Tourism industry, whereas at PSU, only 28.1% of students come from tourism vocational school graduates, which is a very low figure compared to in Indonesia. Apart from that, 91 UPI and PSU students stated that they chose the Tourism major voluntarily. It can be concluded that they chose voluntarily and already have a realistic picture of career opportunities and working conditions in the tourism industry.

Apart from that, based on the results of the questionnaire, students have experience working in the hotel sector (29 people), destinations (31 people), airline companies (4 people), food and beverage (19 people), travel agencies (13 people) and government (4 people person). Of all students who participated in this research, 86% of students had work experience of <6 months, 10% of students had work experience of 6-12 months and 4% of students had work experience of >1 year. The type of work most often done by students is internship with a total percentage of 68%. In terms of interest, PSU students are more interested in working in the hospitality sector because they received the largest total votes compared to other fields, namely 14, while for UPI students they are mostly interested in the destination sector with a total of 14 votes.

4.3. Comparison of Student Perceptions of Careers in the Tourism Industry

In this research, researchers adapted the dimensions developed and used by Aksu & Köksal (2005), Kusluvan & Kusluvan, (2000), Richardson (2010), for perception variables. From a total of 9 dimensions, researchers chose 3 dimensions to adapt and research, namely nature of work, pay/fringe benefits, and co-workers. Meanwhile, for the career variable, researchers used psychology and sociology dimensions adapted from research by (Brown,2002; Feldman et al., 1991).

TABEL 4. 2
COMPARISON OF STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Item	N	Mean		Mean Difference	F	Sign (2-tailed)
		PSU	UPI			
Nature of Work						
1. I find work in the tourism industry very interesting	100	4.06	4.43	-0.370	0.087	0.021
2. Jobs in the tourism industry are diverse	100	4.24	4.49	-0.245	4.521	0.114
3. Jobs in the tourism industry are viable	100	4.18	3.98	0.203	0.047	0.206
4. Working in the tourism industry is very enjoyable	100	3.94	4.02	-0.081	6.374	0.674
5. Working in the tourism industry really makes me stressful	100	2.43	2.57	-0.140	0.721	0.453
6. Working hours in the tourism industry are too long and make me tired	100	2.63	2.75	-0.112	8.302	0.565
7. I find work in the tourism industry are difficult	100	2.80	2.98	-0.184	10.464	0.288
8. There is always something new that I can learn, when I work in the tourism industry	100	4.22	4.45	-0.226	4.601	0.187
Pay/Fringe Benefit						
9. I feel the salary for jobs in tourism industry is low	100	3.00	2.96	0.039	0.721	0.831
10. In tourism industry, working hours and workload are appropriate and balance	100	3.24	3.14	0.108	8.797	0.582
11. The allowance (bonuses, free time, holidays, food, transportation, insurance, etc) provided are very adequate	100	3.51	3.63	-0.117	0.089	0.513
Co-Workers						

Item	N	Mean		Mean Difference	F	Sign (2-tailed)
12. The working environment in the tourism industry makes me very comfortable	100	3.63	3.80	-0.171	0.062	0.290
13. There is good cooperation and team spirit among collages in the tourism industry	100	3.86	4.02	-0.162	4.513	0.342
14. There are good relationships between employees in the tourism industry	100	3.92	3.92	-0.003	2.004	0.985
15. People working in the Tourism Industry are very boring	100	3.80	3.59	0.208	1.517	0.347
Valid N (listwise)	**100**					

Source: Processed Data, 2023

Of the 3 dimensions of perception variables, 1 dimension was found that had a significant difference, namely the nature of work dimension. In this dimension there are 15 statement items, and one of the 15 statement items was found to be significantly different. These findings show that Indonesian students tend to be more likely to agree that jobs in the tourism industry are very interesting than Thai students.

TABEL 4. 3
COMPARISON OF STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF CAREER IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Item	N	Mean		Mean Difference	F	Sign (2-tailed)
		PSU	**UPI**			
Psychology						
1. A job in the tourism industry really suits with my personality	100	3.51	3.84	-0.333	10.253	0.063
2. After graduating, I am interested in continuing a career in the tourism industry	100	3.69	4.29	-0.600	12.300	0.007
3. A job really suits with my abilities and interests	100	3.96	4.10	-0.139	2.885	0.467
4. I am very satisfied working in the tourism industry	100	3.65	4.04	-0.386	11.871	0.039
5. A career in the tourism industry is very suitable for the long term	100	3.61	3.76	-0.152	0.369	0.445
Sociology						

1. Background influences interactions and relationships with colleagues and guests in the tourism industry	100	4.12	3.75	0.377	0.103	0.015
2. Gender influences experience and employment opportunities in the tourism industry	100	3.39	3.35	0.035	2.044	0.851
3. The work environment influences job satisfaction	100	4.37	4.18	0.191	0.621	0.236
4. Family and friends influence perceptions of career in the tourism industry	100	3.88	3.61	0.270	0.138	0.157
5. the association in the tourism industry has affected to me	100	3.63	3.63	0.005	9.855	0.978
Valid N (listwise)	**100**					

Source: Processed Data, 2023

In table 4.3 depicts all statements from the career variable, it can be seen that there are significant differences between groups. Of the 10 total statement items in 2 dimensions, 3 statement items were found to be significantly different. In the first dimension, there are 5 statement items to describe the psychological dimension. The findings show that there are 2 statement items that are significantly different, namely that Indonesian students are more likely to strongly agree to continue a career in the tourism industry than Thai students. Apart from that, Indonesian students also tend to be more satisfied when working in the tourism industry than Thai students.

In the second dimension, namely sociology, there are 5 statement items and 1 of them has a significant difference, namely Thai students tend to agree more that background influences interactions and relationships between colleagues and guests in the tourism industry compared to students in Indonesia.

5. CONCLUSION

The results of this research are not in line with the research findings of Kusluvan 2000, Aksu 2005 and Richardson which found that tourism industry experience had a negative impact on students' perceptions and attitudes towards careers in the tourism industry. The results of this research found that students' views of the tourism industry were much more positive than before, even tourism students in Indonesia felt satisfied after experiencing working in the tourism industry and they were also interested in continuing their career in

the tourism industry after graduating. This is in stark contrast to the findings of Robinson et al (2016), who found that tourism students had no intention after graduating. However, the results of this study are in line with research conducted by Reichenberger & Raymond (2021), which found that students have a positive view of pursuing their careers in the Tourism Industry.

Researchers also found that the perceptions of Indonesian and Thai students did not have too many significant differences. Of the 25 statement items, there were only 5 statement items that were significantly different in two dimensions. In the results of this research, it was found that Indonesian students believed that careers in industry were more attractive than Thai students. This could provide an opportunity for tourism and hospitality organizations in Indonesia to target these tourism students after graduation as they are more likely to pursue careers in the industry. Additionally, if given the right opportunities are more likely to develop their careers within the industry. Attracting large numbers of graduates will help alleviate the skills shortage currently facing the Tourism industry.

This study makes an important contribution in understanding students' perceptions of employment in the tourism industry, which can help organizations improve their employment image and reduce employee turnover rates, so further research is needed. Bowen & Lawler (1995), stated that it is important to understand employee perceptions of the tourism and hospitality industry because negative perceptions can lead to poor service delivery, dislike of guests, negative work attitudes, and high turnover rates. Miller & Madsen (2003), stated that if employees do not feel proud of their work or do not find dignity in what they do, they are likely to leave the industry or even worse they will stay in the industry, but because of negative attitudes. them towards their work, they provide poor service. Therefore, for hospitality organizations to be successful in the future, the image of employment in the service sector must be improved (Waryszak & King, 2001).

The limitation of this research is that there are too few samples to represent the two populations due to the limitations of researchers in finding respondents, especially students at PSU. A further limitation associated with this study is that UPI students were overrepresented in the sample. This is because these researchers have a wider reach at UPI.

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