
“Career Perception Of Post Graduate Tourism Students”

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Abstract:

Tourism has emerged as a key sector of the world economy and has become a major workforce in global trade. In fact India is the largest democratic republic in the world with immense possibilities of growth in tourism sector, with its vast cultural and religion heritage and varied natural attractions. The present paper describes post graduates' perception of career in the field of tourism. Implication of this study determines whether the students' intend to pursue future career in tourism and also help predict their future morale. The study investigated from post graduates perception on the overall image on the tourism industry, their understanding on the career prospects and thus, their attitude towards career in tourism. For the present study the method of data collection was primarily done through questionnaire surveys on first and second year students. Nearly 50 students were selected through random sampling technique. Standardized questionnaire was used in the study developed by Kusluvan and Kusluvan (2007). The results showed that overall the post graduates' perception are favourable. The findings also indicated that willingness to study tourism, willingness to work in tourism after graduation and work experience are important factors in shaping their image of tourism careers.

Key words: Tourism career, students' perception, attitude, tourism industry

Introduction:

Career choice is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, which makes it difficult to understand and predict. There are number of competing theoretical approaches for occupational selection or career choice, however, it is best understood as the interplay between individual agency and the contextual factors of structure and culture which enhance or construct one's social world. The discipline of management and the offerings by many of the new generation are increasingly encompassing the specializations of tourism, hospitality, sport, and event and in some cases recreation management. These courses are increasingly popular amongst students as they seek to study applied business principles and practices to their industry or sector of interest. In general, these sectors or industries are also less well-defined than say nursing or teaching, so in many ways it is even more important to know what factors are significant to individuals who seek career opportunities within them. Research focusing on tourism and hospitality as a career choice in postgraduate students has gained some attention.

Need and significance of the study:

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to identify the factors students studying in different management find important when looking for a career. From an educator's perspective, knowing what factors drive or influence these students in their future career is important for their attraction and retention. More importantly, the industries

as a whole could also benefit from a clearer understanding of what students perceive as important in a career and could use this information in their own recruitment of the best graduates and retention of high quality staff. For example, using the knowledge that graduates are seeking a range and variety of opportunities in their career, or that they are seeking a career which allows them to be creative and original, or to work with and help others, can empower organizations to consider, integrate and promote these aspects when creating position descriptions and career pathways through internal promotions opportunities.

Review of literature:

- Bitok Kipkosgei and co-authors (2015): “Perception of tourism students towards career choice in the Kenyan tourism industry: a comparative study of Moi university”. The study highlighted the types of tourism careers sectors preferred by most tourism students, and determining career preference of tourism students for formal employment, informal and entrepreneurship. The study adopted a Cognitive Motivational Theory and Attribution theory which identifies the impact of internal and external factors. The results revealed that a large proportion of students at the diploma level opt to pursue entrepreneurship as compared to the undergraduates who opt for formal employment.
- Meltum Erdogan(2013): This study aimed at investigating career expectations of students who continue their education in the field of tourism. Remarkably as a result, students do not find tourism business interesting; moreover, they consider choosing tourism as their career a mistake.
- Ruth D.Sibson (2011): The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine the factors undergraduate university students

looking for a career. The results indicated that having enjoyable work in the areas they were interested in notably sports and events and having food and a variety of opportunities and pleasant working conditions were the most significant. In contrast, factors such as professional prestige/high status, hours of work and salary did not rate as highly.

- Scott Richardson (2008): this study explored undergraduate tourism and hospitality student’s views of the industry as a career choice. A number of factors have been identified as being significantly different. From the results it is clear that students generally do not believe that a career in tourism and hospitality will offer them the factors that they find important.

Operational terms defined:

1. **Tourism:** is travel for pleasure also the theory and practice of touring the business of attracting, accommodating, and entertaining tourists and the business of operating tours.
2. **Career:** is an occupation undertaken for a significant period of a person’s life and with opportunities for progress.
3. **Students’ perception:** is an awareness, comprehension or an understanding of something
4. **Attitude:** is a way of feeling or acting toward a person, thing or situation.
5. **Tourism industry:** is a diverse industry which offers long-term career opportunities for enthusiastic individuals who want to put their education and skills to work in various environments.

Objectives:

1. To study and understand the perception of student’s towards tourism.
2. To identify the level of satisfaction from tourism industry.

3. To investigate the student's preference for working in specific tourism sectors.
4. To identify the problems in tourism industry.

Research methodology

Sample size and technique: The researcher has chosen 50 post graduate students for data collection.

Method and tool: Survey method was used and research tool was developed by Kulsuvan and Kulsuvan(2000)

Analysis and interpretation: the collected data were analyzed by percentage analysis.

Table 1: Type(s) of Tourism related businesses like to work

The above table reveals that 32% of students would like to work in travel agency. 28% of the

S no	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Travel agency	16	32%
2.	Hotel	10	20%
3.	Airline company	14	28%
4.	Tour operator	5	10%
5.	Other	5	10%
	Total	50	100%

students with airline agency, 20% of them prefer to hotel, 10% of students with tour operator and others. The above table shows that students would like to work tourism related businesses.

Table 2: Friends/relatives who work in the tourism industry.

S no	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	35	70%
2.	No	15	30%
	Total	50	100%

The above table reveals that 70% of students say yes for the above statement. 30% of the students say no for the same. The above table shows that students inspired by their relatives/friends who work in the tourism industry.

Table 3: statements regarding tourism career:

Sl N	Statements	Frequencies					Percentage					
		SA	A	N	D	SD						
1	Promotion opportunities are satisfactory in the tourism industry.	15	25	5	3	2	30%	50%	10%	6%	4%	100%

2	Tourism related jobs are more respected than the other jobs.	5	15	20	10	0	10%	30%	40%	20%	0	100%	
3	To study tourism management at the university level is a correct investment in career development	15	20	8	4	3	30%	40%	16%	8%	6%	100%	
4	One can make good money by working in tourism.	14	27	2	2	6	28%	54%	4%	4%	12%	100%	
5	Working in tourism does not provide a secure future.	1	2	2	25	20	1%	4%	4%	50%	40%	100%	
6	Irregular working hours in tourism affects family life negatively.	5	7	3	18	17	10%	14%	6%	36%	54%	100%	
7	Meeting new people by working in tourism is a pleasant experience.	30	19	0	0	1	60%	38%	0	0	1%	100%	
8	It is not necessary to have a university degree to work in the tourism industry.	7	12	4	5	8	14%	24%	8%	10%	16%	100%	
9	It is hard to find job security in tourism.	4	7	5	22	12	8%	14%	10%	44%	24%	100%	
10	Since many of the managers in tourism do not have a university degree, they are jealous of university graduates working in the industry.	7	10	19	5	9	14%	20%	38%	10%	18%	100%	
11.	There is no sexual discrimination in tourism.	10	24	3	6	7	20%	48%	6%	12%	14%	100%	
12.	In general, the advantages of working in the tourism industry outweigh the disadvantages.	10	20	13	2	5	20%	40%	26%	4%	10%	100%	
		Each row 50						100%					

Suggestion and conclusion:

Thus, as the studies discussed here have shown, although there may be a range of

recurring factors that influence a student's choice of career, they do vary in importance according to the career, and they do vary according to cultural values, norms and beliefs. It is also important to recognise that decisions regarding occupations or careers change over time. In reality, there will be a number of influences, interactions, turning points and transformations which affect an individual's choice of career or career path throughout their lifetime.

We must remember that each individual has different influences and that they differ at varying points in their life, and that this study has been conducted at one point in these students' lives. However, from the findings of this and other similar studies, it can be argued that, generically, career choice is about having enjoyable and interesting work and a pleasant work environment which offers a range of job and career opportunities. There are a range of other factors, however, that must attract people to work in certain industries. The results of this study, which focused on students recently enrolled in the course, indicate that there are some areas educators and employers could target in their recruitment and retention strategies.

There is a real opportunity to extend this focus on the careers within these industries to highlight further the opportunities there are to work with, and assist, people in their day to day work. Moreover, focusing on the opportunities people have for originality and creativity in their various roles may further attract those with this interest into the workforce.

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