[31]

Tourism Students' Career Conceptions towards Service Industry Profession: A Case Study from Human Resource Perspective

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes and perceptions of current undergraduate tourism and hospitality students towards careers in the industry. For this study, a sample of 132 undergraduate students from hospitality and tourism management programs in was surveyed in research location. SPSS (Version 21) was used to explore the data. Results shows that the career factor items students have concerns over include job security, pay and promotion, reasonable workload, and job-family balance offered within the industry. Surprisingly, the most alarming finding to come out of this study is that more than 40% of the tourism students are undecided and not willing to work in the industry, which means the industry lose more than one third of the qualified graduates. Implications for hospitality and tourism educators and industry employers are discussed.

Keywords: Career Perceptions, Human Resources, Tourism Industry, Tourism Education, Hospitality Profession

Introduction

When the wider economic impact of the industry is taken into account, the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was USD 6, 630.4 bn (9.3% of GDP) in 2012, and is forecast to rise by 3.2% in 2013. Also, Travel & Tourism directly supported 101,118,000 jobs (3.4% of total employment) and this is expected to rise by 1.2% in 2013 (World Travel and Tourism Council 2012). These figures clearly indicate that the role of tourism and hospitality as a job provider is significant, but the emergence of new and exotic destinations, plus rapidly changing consumer behavior, in particular, tourists who demand more personalized services, also necessitate an adequate supply of skilled manpower for the industry (Baum 2006).

Tourism is essentially a labor intensive industry, requiring large numbers of people to service it. The critical socioeconomic importance of tourism to tourist destinations, the increase in world tourism and in tourist demand for quality goods and services, the concomitant requirement for tourist destinations to deliver quality services and products, and the labor intensive nature of the industry, all suggest the need for a well-educated and trained cadre of hospitality and tourism professionals. Szivas (1999, p 154) and Nolan (2002) arguethat only competent and motivated employees can deliver highquality services and achieve competitive advantage for their firms and tourist destinations. According to Baum, Amoah and Spivack (1997) tourism is a labor intensive service industry and dependent for survival (and for competitive advantage) on the availability of qualified personnel to deliver, operate and manage the tourism product. In this regard, Human Capital Theory (Schultz 1971) indicates

that individuals with more human capital, for example; skills, knowledge and expertise developed through education and personal experience, achieve higher performance. Past empirical research supports the theory that there is a significant positive relationship between higher education and organizational success (Bates 1990; Cooper et al. 1994; Kangasharju & Pekkala 2002; Pennings et al. 1998).

Since the continued prosperity of tourism depends, to a large extent, on the employment of well educated, motivated and committed people who are satisfied with their jobs, it is very important to provide qualified tourism graduates with a positive attitude towards working in the tourism industry (Aksu and Koksal 2005; Kusluvan & Kusluvan 2000; Richardson 2012). Because, probably the most fundamental challenge facing the hospitality industry is *"the attraction and retention of the necessary number and quality of young people"* (Lewis and Airey 2001, p.7), attracting people who wish to choose tourism as a career has become a challenging task, and particularly when we consider the negative image many people have of the industry.

There is a common perception held that tourism and hospitality is an unprofessional industry, offering low pay and few benefits, very little training and career prospects, and unsociable working hours, all of which have collectively formed a negative image of tourism as a career (Arasli et al. 2006; Baum 2007; Brien 2004; Deery & Shaw 1999; Freeland 2000; Kusluvan & Kusluvan 2000; Richardson 2010; WTTC 2002). As a consequence, the tourism industry today faces greater challenges in attracting skilled and motivated staff than other sectors in the economy (Kelley-Patterson & George 2001). Negative perceptions of tourism as a career have become a global phenomenon and without immediate and strategic effort, shortages of skilled personnel will continue to be the one of the most crucial issues facing tourism and hospitality businesses (Andorka 1996; Emenheiser et al. 1998; Ferris et al. 2002; Hinkin & Tracey 2000; Powell 1999; WTTC 2002).

The Northern Cyprus tourism industry is a case in point; the area relies heavily upon tourism revenues and the ability to attract qualified individuals to the industry is crucial. Many local industry stakeholders argue that while the future prosperity of the industry depends on the quality of its people, the Northern Cyprus hospitality industry has been facing managerial problems such as a shortage of skilled personnel (Alipour and Kilic 2005; Arasli et al. 2006).

Against this backdrop, the current study aims to examine the attitudes and perceptions of current undergraduate tourism and hospitality students towards a career in the industry. There is a paucity of empirical research on thissubject in the tourism and hospitality management literature. Thus, the current study contributes to the tourism and hospitality management literature and aims to assist industry practitioners.

Theoretical Background

One of the key human resources issues in tourism is labor shortage (Arasli et al. 2006; Ferris et al. 2002; Hinkin & Tracey 2000; Richardson 2009; WTTC 2002). There seems to be an increasing imbalance between the demand for and supply of tourism workers (Choy 1995),

and this issue if not addressed immediately will severely affect the sustainability of global tourism (Christensen Hughes 2002; Richardson 2009). At the same time, the change in demography with the aging of the population and fewer younger people has also resulted in a shrinking labor pool (Baum 1993; WTTC 2002). Therefore, the tourism industry has faced problems attracting qualified, skilled and motivated labor, which also forces tourism operators to compete more aggressively to make sure potential employees choose them over other industries of the economy (Lucas and Jeffries 1991).

The lack of labor supply in tourism is also a result of the negative image of the industry (Baum 2006; Brien 2004; Deery & Shaw 1999; Travel Trade Gazette 2000; Richardson 2009 2010; WTTC 2002). The poor image of tourism professions in the eyes of potential employees was said to be the key factor preventing school leavers and university graduates from choosing tourism and hospitality as their career (Choy 1995). In identifying major concerns in tourism, the findings of Baum et al. (1997) have validated this by confirming that the negative image of work in the industry is one of the main issues affecting the industry.

Tourism has long been perceived as an unattractive industry in which to work, particularly in terms of its remuneration and working conditions (Baum 2007). Tourism jobs are often seen as low paid (Arasli & Karadal 2009; Baum et al. 1997; Lucas & Jeffries 1991), having unsociable working hours (Daskin 2013; O'Leary & Deegan 2005), poor working conditions (Baum & Nickson 1998; Alipour & Kilic 2005), a lack of career advancement opportunities (Getz 1994; Richardson 2008; 2009) and requiring few skills (McGinn & Binder 1991; Pizam 1982; Shaw & Williams 2002). These negative images have collectively affected the ability of tourism to attract and retain skilled staff compared to other industries (Christensen Hughes 2002; Lucas & Jeffries 1991; Richardson 2008), and they are difficult to improve when the nature of the work and wages in tourism may be seen as less attractive than the work and wages in other sectors (Kelley-Patterson & George 2001).

When tourism graduates end up not working in tourism, this results in wasted effort and investment in providing the knowledge and skills needed by the tourism industry. It has been suggested that an effective way to manage the retention of graduates to work in tourism is by targeting the first stage in the human resource management process; the recruitment stage (Aksu & Koksal 2005; D'Annunzio-Green et al. 2000; Kusluvan & Kusluvan 2000). As a consequence, future studies that attempt to understand the perceptions of the labor market towards tourism as a career could examine individuals who have yet to enter the industry and are possibly planning to do so.

Changes in the higher educational environment are having a tremendous impact on the education process, curricular, learning outcomes and instructional practices (Sigala & Baum 2003). In particular, education and training are vital to the tourism and hospitality industry in terms of providing a foundation of knowledge and experience for those who wish to enter the tourism industry as a career choice (Horner & Swarbrooke 2004). Effective tourism education and training require a cooperative approach, involving partnerships among

academic institutions, private enterprises and government at different levels, to balance between academic principles and technical knowledge and vocational skills.

In this regard, tourism education programs at higher education institutions in Northern Cyprus have been offered over two decades as mandated by the Higher Education Act. There are at present five universities operating in Northern Cyprus and all universities offer tourism and hospitality programs at vocational, undergraduate and graduate level. It is worth noting that these programs at these universities operate under the language medium of English and that entry exams to assess language knowledge are compulsory.

Research Methodology
Sample and Data Collection
There are five universities in Northern Cyprus that offer tourism education at different levels. In order to examine the career perceptions and attitudes of undergraduate tourism students in Northern Cyprus, all the tourism and hospitality management schools from these universities were included in the survey. This provides a 100% sampling ratio among the schools.Specifically, the sample in this study consisted of last year tourism students, because these students are expected to have working experience and reflect the realities in the industry.

To receive permission for data collection, the campus administrators of the each university were contacted and provided with a sample of the questionnaire and an official letter explaining the purpose of the study. Upon receipt of permission, in order to test for any necessary revision of the research content, the questionnaire was pilot tested with 15 students from the schools. As a result of the pilot test, no reason was found to change the survey instrument. In this field study, non-probability convenience sampling was conducted. The questionnaire was distributed to 195 last-year tourism students along with a cover letter and information assuring confidentiality.

The research team tried to collect data on a face to face basis and, so as to get a higher response rate. As a result, nearly most of the questionnaires were conducted on a face to face basis with the willing respondents and the rest of the respondents were asked to contact the research team via email or telephone to return the self-administered questionnaires by hand over the following days. Of the 195 questionnaires, 132 were completed and usable for further data analysis, yielding a response rate of 67.7%.

Questionnaire Development and Measures
Based on the literature review, the measurement for the related construct was adopted from the existing measure that had been used in the relevant literature (e.g., Richardson 2012). The survey instrument used for the present study is organized of two parts. The first part consist of a twenty (20) item scale developed by Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000) was used to measure the extent to which tourism students believe a career in tourism and hospitalityoffers these items. Sample items from this scale are ''A job that I will find enjoyable'' and ''Colleagues that I can get along with''. All measures used a 5-point Likert-type scale that

ranged from '5' = 'strongly agree' to '1''strongly disagree'. The second part of the survey was composed of profile of the survey sample; gender, work experience, qualification for a managerial job, intention to work in the tourism industry, sector preference, and position expected upon graduation. The profile items were measured using from two-point scales to seven-point scales. Gender, on the other hand, was coded as dichotomous variable (0=male and 1=female).

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21 was used to analyze the data. As for statistical techniques, first reliability (Cronbach's alpha) value and validity tests were conducted. Next, mean score descriptive analysis was employed to observe average responses of the respondents who participated in this survey. The exploratory factor analysis was performed in order to provide support for issues of dimensionality and convergent validity. At the final stage, independent samples*t*-test was conducted to see the possible impact of the control variables such as gender and work experience on the perceptions of tourism careers.

Analysis and Results

Descriptive Statistics

As it is shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents in this study are females with 52.3%. When we look at the working experience column, we see that 84.1% of the students have industry experience. Unexpectedly, one fourth of the respondents seem that they are not sure about their qualifications to take a responsibility of managerial job. Surprisingly, only 59.1% of the tourism students seem decisive to work in the tourism industry. The majority of the students have a preference for working in the accommodations and air transport sections with 39.9% and 25.8 % of the students have a preference for working in other sectors out of tourism. Over 60% of the respondents are expecting to work in supervisory and assistant department managerial jobs, including the students who preferred other sectors.

Table 1: Respondents' Profiles

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	63	47.7
Female	69	52.3
Work experience		
Yes	111	84.1
No	21	15.9
Qualification for a managerial job		
Yes	90	68.1
No	9	6.9
Undecided	33	25.0
Intention to work in the tourism industry		
Yes	78	59.1
No	19	14.4
Undecided	35	26.5
Sector preference		
Accommodation	32	24.0
Catering/restaurant	10	7.6
Entertainment	8	6.0
Travel/tour agency	12	9.0

Air transportation	21	15.9
Tourism education	15	11.4
Other sectors out of tourism	34	25.8
Position expected upon graduation		
Blue collar	6	4.5
Supervisor	38	28.8
Assistant department manager	44	33.3
Department manager	13	9.8
Assistant general manager	7	5.3
Tourism lecturer	15	11.4
Others	8	6.0

Psychometric Properties of the Measure

In order to test construct reliability, this study used Cronbach's alpha coefficient to examine internal consistency (Nunnally 1978). As shown in Table 2, the overall reliability for the scale exceeded the acceptable cut-off value of 0.70 as suggested by Nunnally (1978), indicating that items are free from random error and internal consistency is adequate (Fornell & Larcker 1981). In order to see whether the distribution of the values was adequate for conducting analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was used and the construct exceeded the threshold value of 0.50 (0.904 > 0.50) as suggested by Field (2000). In addition, Bartlett's test of sphericity measure indicated that the multivariate normality of the set of distributions was normal for the construct, showing a significant value, $p = 0.000$ (< 0.05). Therefore, the data was feasible for conducting the factor analysis. In observing the communalities, as presented in Table 2, all factor loads werefound to be significant and exceeded the recommended threshold value of 0.50 as suggested by Barclay, Thompson and Higgins (1995). Means and standard deviation scores were also presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Students' Ratings for Career Factor Items the Industry Offers

Career factor items	Strongly agree / agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / disagree	Mean	SD	Factor Loads
A job that I will find enjoyable.	70.3%	19.7%	19%	3.75	1.38	0.73
Job mobility—easy to get a job anywhere.	69.7%	19.7%	10.6%	3.83	1.16	0.64
A job where you gain transferable skills.	67.5%	22.0%	10.6%	4.04	1.18	0.67
The opportunity to travel abroad.	67.4%	12.9%	19.7%	3.84	1.42	0.68
A job that offers opportunity for further training.	66.7%	11.4%	21.9%	3.70	1.38	0.70
A job with high quality resources and equipment.	60.6%	9.1%	30.3%	3.52	1.56	0.69
A job where I can use my university degree.	59.8%	22.7%	17.4%	3.79	1.35	0.74
A career that provides intellectual challenge.	56.8%	25.8%	17.5%	3.70	1.24	0.64
A job which gives me responsibility.	56.1%	25.0%	18.9%	3.68	1.36	0.66
A job where I can care for others.	49.2%	21.2%	29.6%	3.20	1.30	0.77
A job where I will contribute to society.	47.8%	31.8%	20.5%	3.47	1.32	0.70
A job that is respected.	46.2%	33.3%	20.4%	3.46	1.29	0.60
Good promotion prospects.	45.5%	22.0%	32.6%	3.37	1.45	0.55
High earnings over length of career.	44.7%	30.3%	25.0%	3.40	1.34	0.72

Pleasant working environment.	44.7%	28%	27.3%	3.29	1.38	0.70
Colleagues that I can get along with.	41.7%	32.6%	25.7%	3.20	1.31	0.69
Reasonable workload.	31.0%	11.4%	57.6%	2.55	1.58	0.64
A secure job.	28.8%	34.8%	36.3%	2.90	1.42	0.63
A job that can easily be combined with parenthood.	27.3%	14.4%	58.3%	2.51	1.35	0.67
Good starting salary.	21.2%	11.4%	67.4%	2.17	1.31	0.59
Cronbach's alpha	0.93					

Notes: N = 132. SD: standard deviation. *All items are measured on five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*.

Table 2 also shows details of the degrees of agreement with each one of the 20 statements provided in the first part of the questionnaire. For simplicity, perceptions were summarized in group percentages as "strongly agree and agree" and "strongly disagree and disagree". The overall mean value was 3.36 out of 5, which means the perception of the respondents towards the tourism profession, in general, was neither favorable nor unfavorable. The important part of this section is to try to understand the extent to which the tourism and hospitality industry offers these items. As shown in Table 2, a noticeable fact is that there are only 9 areas where more than 50% of respondents claimed the industry offers those factors; a job that I will find enjoyable (70.3%); a career that provides intellectual challenge (56.8%); a job which gives me responsibility (56.1%); a job where I can use my university degree (59.8%); a job where you gain transferable skills (67.5%); a job with high quality resources and equipment (60.6%); the opportunity to travel abroad (67.4%); job mobility - easy to get a job anywhere (69.7%) and a job that offers opportunity for further training (66.7%).

Majority of the respondents (70.3%) believe they will definitely find an enjoyable job in the tourism and hospitality industry. On the other hand, while the majority of the respondents agreed with the statements; colleagues that I can get along with (41.7%); pleasant working environment (44.7%); good promotion prospects (45.5%); high earnings over the length of my career (44.7%); a job where I will contribute to society (47.8%); a job that is respected (46.2%) and a job where I can care for others (49.2%), most importantly 67.4% of them did not agreed that the industry offers good starting salaries. Furthermore, 58.3% of the respondents did not agreed with the statement; a job that can easily be combined with parenthood, 57.6% of them did not believe the industry offers reasonable workloads and in addition, 36.3% did not believe the industry offers a secure job.

Independent Samples t-Test
In order to test comparison of the mean scores of career perception, this study used the independent samples *t*-test. As shown in Table 3, there is a statistically significant relationship between work experience and perceptions of tourism careers (0.000, *p*< 0.05). It appears that students with work experience have more negative attitudes towards tourism jobs. It can be claimed that as students progress in their degree and gain more experience as trainees in the sector, their image of the industry changes for theworse. Again according to Table 3, there is a significant gender-based difference in the perception of tourism careers

(0.001, $p < 0.05$). This result shows that male students have more negative perceptions towards working in tourism jobs than do female students.

Table 3: Independent Samples *t*- Test Results

		N	Mean	SD	t value	Sig. (2-tailed)	F value
Working Experience							
Perceptionssum	Yes	111	63.43	17.02	-6.69	0.000	39.325
	No	21	88.57	4.90			
Gender							
Perceptionssum	Male	63	61.93	19.64	-3.44	0.001	13.328
	Female	69	72.44	15.32			

Notes: *All items are measured on five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*.

Conclusion and Implications

It is suggested that an effective way to manage the retention of graduates to work in tourism is by targeting the first stage in the human resource management process; the recruitment stage (Aksu & Koksal 2005; D'Annunzio-Green et al. 2000; Kusluvan & Kusluvan 2000). So, it is very important that the attitudes and perceptions of tourism students towards a tourism profession are examined before they enter the labor market. Therefore, this current study aimed to contribute to the relevant literature and assist industry practitioners by examining the attitudes and perceptions of last year tourism students at the five universities of Northern Cyprus.

A number of interesting results have been noted in this study. The results of this survey indicated that the general attitude towards tourism as a profession appears to be neither positive nor negative. This is an alarming finding meaning some students have chosen tourism education, but seem to be undecided about tourism as a career. This finding also signals a gap between the educators, industry and students. The critical findings of the present study indicate that the tourism students are mostly concerned about job security, good starting salaries, reasonable workloads and job-family balance.

Another critical finding of this study is that having direct experience working in the tourism and hospitality industry may cause students to acquire negative views towards pursuing a career in the industry. This clearly shows that working in the industry does have a major negative impact on the students' intentions to pursue careers in the industry. On the other hand, unlike the past empirical research undertaken by Roney and Oztin (2007), the current empirical results show that the female students have more positive perceptions towards working in tourism jobs, in comparison with their male counterparts. Possibly the most alarming finding is that overall more than one-third of the students claim that they are not willing to work in the tourism and hospitality industry after graduation. Can an industry, already facing an acute skills shortage, lose more than 40% of their qualified graduates and still remain viable?

Managerial Implications

The findings of this research study depict that more than 40% of the tourism students from the universities of Northern Cyprus are not willing to work in the industry; an industry that urgently needs well-educated and skilled personnel. This means the industry will lose more than one-third of qualified graduates. Although there are an increasing number of the tourism and hospitality graduates from the universities of Northern Cyprus, the tourism industry in Northern Cyprus is still facing a serious human resources problem that may have a negative impact on the destination service quality in general. Therefore, industry practitioners and tourism educators should cooperatively deal with these problems as soon as possible if they want to improve the service quality of Northern Cyprus as a destination brand, because only competent and motivated employees can deliver high quality services and achieve competitive advantages for their firms and tourist destinations (Baum et al. 1997; Nolan 2002; Szivas 1999). Based on this reality, this current study provides some important implications for both the tourism educators and the industry practitioners.

Firstly, even if new students start with a more optimistic view of the industry, after an internship period and (for some students) part-time work experience, they develop a less favorable perception. This may be explained by a lack of sophistication in human resource policies and practices in many tourism businesses. In general, tourism and hospitality trainees complain that they are not given the opportunity to demonstrate their career potential, but are instead used as cheap labor to do menial work. Foremost, the tertiary tourism educators, starting from the first year of education, should balance the theoretical education and training at a rate of 50% and 50%.

Tourism students should certainly become professionalized according to their occupational preferences such as travel agency, marketing, catering, and so forth. Through rotations in different branches, their skills and capabilities should be observed and directed accordingly. Standardized working conditions for trainees should be provided by the industry practitioners and all these training periods should be under the routine control of tourism educators. After a long period of training, new graduates will be ready to take managerial positions. Tourism educators must work more closely with the industry partners when designing future curricula, because there is a general notion that the number of practical courses covered by the current tertiary curriculum is insufficient. For example, the MICE sector (Meeting, Incentive, Conference and Exhibition), health sector and catering sector were largely ignored within current tourism and hospitality programs. These sectors in the tourism industry require well-educated and skilled personnel, so, a number of practical courses should be covered by the current tertiary curriculum.

Secondly, Davidson and Timo (2006) point out that the dilemma facing the industry is that skilled employees are keen to advance. Traditionally the tourism and hospitality industry has had limited internal career opportunities, which imposes a ceiling on career growth and is one of the major factors affecting staff exit behavior. Industry practitioners, therefore, need to modify their training programs and more clearly define their career paths for this new generation of graduates. This study suggests that universities need to play their part in

ensuring that students are being given realistic expectations of the types of position available in the industry. They also need to provide students with a greater awareness of the working conditions in the industry.

The careers and career paths offered by the industry also need to be more adequately developed, and these paths require more extensive and comprehensive marketing and promotion. Information about the career paths available should be made easier to access for current and prospective staff in order for them to start planning their careers. This information could be provided during induction with the employer when students begin their casual or part-time positions while they are still studying. This will introduce students to the career paths on offer and advise them of the skills and training they will require pursuing these opportunities. This will facilitate career planning whereby these students will begin to plan their career with the employer from their first days on the job.

Thirdly, conditions of employment relating to pay/benefits, job security and unusual working hours need to be improved. Where there is no will to improve conditions for employees on the part of the private sector, the public sector law makers can be called in to regulate human resource policies and practices in the tourism industry, which is a trend in many European countries. For example, tourism firms may be obliged to make up a certain proportion of their work force from tourism and hospitality management graduates. Determination of a minimum wage and maximum weekly or daily working hours are other areas where law makers can intervene. Importantly, the current study shows that the future leaders of the hospitality industry (tourism students) are looking for a career that offers them a good work-life balance. They want flexibility in their rostering and freedom to have a life outside the workplace. It is imperative that the industry works on using innovative rostering techniques to ensure these workers can get the good work-life balance that they seek. For example, rotation in working hours may be applied between willing employees.

A rotational system in intensive customer-oriented areas can be improved for working days such that a group of employees may alternately not work at the weekends by working ten hours in the weekdays. If this were to occur then all parties would benefit. The employee would be happy, therefore, more productive and more likely to stay with the employer, and the employer would benefit through reduced staff turnover, lower costs and higher productivity of the workforce, which all add up to greater profits for the organization. Also, as these future leaders are extremely concerned with their work-life balance, if the employer can meet their needs in this area the workers are less likely to be concerned about the wages offered.

Consequently, this current study has suggested that the major reason for the negative image of the industry is the use of outmoded human resource management. Because, this study claims that after a training or part-time work period, the students become less willing to make career plans towards working in the industry. This shows that both the hospitality schools and the industry trainers are not sufficiently working in coordination. Before commencing the training period, human resource departments should assess the qualifications, skills and

career trends of the students and accordingly direct and follow them during their career development process. Onlyoutmoded human resource management perspectives would evaluate the tourism and hospitality students as manpower trainees during high season periods.

Thus, this kind of managerial perspectives always undermine the image of the industry. Modernized human resources applications in the industry would help to improve the quality of work experience and, as a result, potentially improve the image of the industry. Over the long-term, the general employment conditions in the industry could be improved to enable today's students, with formal qualifications, to become the effective managers of tomorrow. It can be claimed that one of the ways of increasing the share of direct employment in tourism is to increase the supply of well-educated manpower.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Like all research, the present study has also some limitations. First, the study is based on a sample of students from Northern Cyprus universities and cannot be generalized to students in other countries. Future studies in other countries are necessary for a complete understanding of career perceptions and expectations of hospitality students. Second, the method for examining career perceptions and expectations used descriptive statistics and thus has limitations in explaining the complicated relationships among different measurement variables. More in-depth studies, possibly qualitative in nature, are needed to ponder the unrevealed reasons and aspects of career perceptions and expectations. Third, according to Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994), "socio-cognitive factors are important to career entry and also influence subsequent career choices and adjustment''. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that this study did not test based on the aspect of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). Forth, as a sample selection, this study included the last year tourism students in the survey. This is also a limitation and future studies could look at other levels of tourism and hospitality students.

Future research on the attitudes of undergraduate tourism students can take some directions. Firstly, in a longitudinal research, this study can be repeated in Northern Cyprus or elsewhere. Attitudes and perceptions of undergraduate tourism students towards careers in tourism in Northern Cyprus or other countries can be compared. Secondly, relationships among students' socio-economic or demographic variables and their attitudes towards tourism jobs can be investigated.

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