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Determinant of Career Intention in Malaysia Hospitality Industry for Hearing Disabled Youth

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Abstract

This study examined the association between the determinants influencing the career intention of students with hearing disabilities in the hospitality industry. Data were collected from 175 students with hearing disabilities who enrolled in Certificates in Hotel and Catering, Basic Culinary, and Basic Pastry at Polytechnic and Community Colleges (n=4) in Malaysia. Questionnaires were developed and distributed via face to face with the help of a sign language translator. The findings revealed that perceived industry characteristics ($r=0.611$, $p < .001$) and self-efficacy ($r=0.742$, $p < .001$) were strongly related to students with hearing disabilities' career intentions in the hospitality workforce.

Keywords: Disability; Self-efficacy; Career intention; Hospitality Industry

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1.0 Introduction

In Malaysia, youths with disabilities are better prepared and ready to work. The government has equipped this group with the skills needed to play vital roles in the country's economy, particularly in the hospitality and food and beverage (F&B) industries (Yusoff et al., 2013; Adnan & Hafiz, 2012). Polytechnics and community colleges have been running certificate and diploma programs that cater to youth with hearing disabilities since 2000, as these people have been found suitable for employment in the industries. These aligns with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs seek to uplift the people's standard of living

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without leaving anyone behind (Tah & Mokhtar, 2018). Therefore, the government's development efforts are also extended to persons with disabilities (PwD) using an inclusive community approach.

Over the last decades, two-year hospitality and food and beverage (F&B) programs at polytechnics have seen tremendous growth in student enrollment, including students with hearing disabilities (Department of Polytechnic Education, 2021). Although the government is assisting this group, there is still a long way to go before persons with disabilities (PWD) are accepted and treated equally in the workforce. A study reported that the hospitality industry faced difficulty finding the right job roles (Zahari et al., 2010). The authors noted that out of 123 respondents with hearing disabilities, 35% worked in other industries, and 29.3% were unemployed.

In the hospitality scenario, the main reason that graduates have an unfavorable attitude regarding gaining hospitality jobs when they graduate is that working conditions are subpar, wages are low, and there is much pressure, leading to a low unemployment rate (Ahmad et al., 2014). Besides, it is also considered that physically exhausting, repetitious duties, lengthy working hours, and a lack of desire all contribute to the decline of the hospitality industry. However, graduates with disabilities are motivated to seek work in the business by the success of others (Richardson & Butler, 2012). As they face a communication barrier in life, many hospitality industry students with hearing disabilities may not have high expectations of their career intentions. Still, they may have a solid resolve to work and achieve what they want. Therefore, this study aims to answer three research questions:

- i. What determinants influence career intention for students with hearing disabilities in the hospitality industry?
- ii. What is the perception of students with hearing disabilities towards the characteristics of the hospitality industry?
- iii. Does self-efficacy influence the career intention of students with hearing disabilities in the hospitality industry?

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Person with Disability in Hospitality Workforce

In terms of employment among persons with disabilities (PWD), according to the Department of Labour, as of 31 July 2021, out of 1,373,485 employees working in government agencies, only 4488 persons with disabilities are working in this sector, which indicates 0.33%. Meanwhile, 3,523 people with disabilities work in the private sector in several industries (Tiun & Khoo, 2013). In the hospitality industry, approximately half a million persons with disabilities were estimated to be employed in this industry by the U.S. government, representing 9.1 percent of all employees with disabilities (Jasper & Waldhart, 2012). In Malaysia, Zahari et al. (2010) discovered that graduates with hearing disabilities who have specialized skills in hotel and catering far lower percentage (35.6%) who were employed by hotels and restaurants directly as opposed to 35% who were employed by other industries or 29.33% who were unemployed, respectively. Although Yusoff et al. (2021) highlighted that people with disabilities are capable and willing to work in the hospitality industry, meanwhile, Alia & Morris (2019) indicates these people with disability (PWD) are excluded mainly and neglected from participation in the ordinary labour force because it is considered that they are unable to cope with the demands and stressors of the workplace.

It is believed that there are many challenges faced by youth with disabilities to enter the hospitality industry workforce. This can be seen whereby many employers are considered very selective in their worker selection, preferring to choose graduates without disabilities compared to graduates with hearing disabilities (Yusof et al., 2015). Workplace barriers that include a lack of knowledge on the employer's part about performance skills towards hiring youth with disabilities and future employment were focused on a lack of service and policy integration (Shaw et al., 2014). This group should have equitable access to employment and chances for training and professional growth to make meaningful contributions to the progress and advancement of any country (Khoo et al., 2013).

2.2 Characteristics of the Hospitality Industry

The hospitality industry encompasses a wide range of businesses and services to provide guests comfort, relaxation, and enjoyment. Despite its importance for trade and industrialization, the hospitality industry also acts as a job and income provider (Kim, 2011). Among the hospitality industry, the hotel, food service, and tourism industry is believed to be a promising service sector and contributor to Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP) (Awang et al., 2008) and job opportunities. According to Ahmad, Rashid, and Shariff (2014), the critical factors in the hospitality industry are wages, a better balance between work and life, and better relationships between managers and workers. Moreover, there is a great deal of interplay between frontline workers and consumer markets, and the labor itself depends on both intangible and tangible aspects of the products (Kim & Spears, 2022).

Reasonable compensation and exciting jobs are other essential factors in boosting employee motivation. According to Lo & Lamm (2005), constant staffing shortages, work overload, excessively long hours, conflicting shift schedules, and demanding patrons are all features of the hospitality industry that can cause even the toughest worker burnout and accelerate staff turnover. First impressions and persuasion are crucial in any business, but they are more critical in the hospitality industry (Barber & Scarcelli, 2010). This characteristic of the hospitality industry has affected future employment among the hospitality students entering the workforce. Richardson and Butler (2012) investigated the perceptions of Malaysian students majoring in tourism and hospitality and found that only some students believed a job in the hospitality business would provide them with the things they valued most. These hospitality industry characteristics like nature or work, physical working conditions, pay benefits, and co-workers influence the student's career intention when they undergo internship. Despite the characteristics and challenges faced by students with disabilities in hospitality nature, students with hearing disabilities might view the hospitality industry and their career intentions as compared to students without disabilities. As this is a crucial

part of hospitality, the study needs to examine how students with hearing disabilities perceive this characteristic in the market. Thus, we propose:

H1: There is a relationship between perceived industry characteristics and career intention among students with hearing disabilities in hospitality industry.

2.4 Self-efficacy

The individual's self-efficacy influences assumptions about an individual's ability to cope and persevere in adversity. According to Crites (1961), self-efficacy is about individuals' belief in their ability to carry out the following five tasks: self-appraisal, vocational information gathering, plans for the future, problem-solving, and goal selection. Meanwhile, Bandura (1977) stated that self-efficacy is a person's ability to carry out a strategy in future scenarios determined by a set of beliefs. Bandura's theory proposed that judgments lead to behaviour or performance and that self-efficacy judgments are determined by performance accomplishment, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological or emotional. He added that self-efficacy also emphasized its crucial role in motivating a person to make a career decision. The stronger the self-efficacy, the greater the performance and, hence, the stronger the commitment of such an individual, leading to better career prospects. The most important decision a person will ever have to make in his life is selecting a career. It depends upon the benefits they expect to reap by believing in their capabilities to achieve it (Lent et al., 1994).

Meanwhile, Feltz and Payment (2005) identified that self-efficacy facilitates pursuing a specific goal, such as a career in the hospitality industry, by acting as a mediator. Enrolling in a course does not guarantee that someone will pursue a career in that field. In the hospitality industry, possessing the right attitude and necessary skills is crucial for success. However, few studies have been conducted on related self-efficacy factors influencing career intention among students with hearing disabilities in the hospitality industry. Thus, we also propose:

H2: There is a relationship between self-efficacy and career intention among students with hearing disabilities in the hospitality industry.

2.5 Career Intention in Hospitality Industry

Chuang and Jenkins (2010) defined career intention as the degree to which a person has made deliberate professional preparations to carry out a particular action in the future. As a result of technological advancement, hospitality undergraduates now have access to a broader range of options for job searches (Chang & Tanford, 2018). Students' career goals, particularly their desire to work in the hospitality business, have become popular among educators and scholars (Chuang & Jenkins, 2010; Song & Chon, 2012; Wan et al. 2014). Significant variables like gender, culture, family and friends, school counsellors, and social and economic conditions were examined in order to predict students' intentions to pursue careers related to their majors based on their ideas and interests (Chuang & Jenkins, 2010).

Conversely, career intentions related to people with hearing disabilities could involve various fields aimed at supporting individuals with hearing impairments, promoting accessibility, and advocating for inclusive environments. Youth with disabilities have social communication difficulties, and professional anxiety is expected to affect students' hospitality career intentions. Graduates with hearing disabilities will feel anxious and lack confidence while communicating with non-disabled workers due to their communication barriers (Zahari et al., 2010). Entering the world of work is part of a significant challenge for this group.

3.0 Materials and Methods

The quantitative approach was utilized as the data collection method in this analysis. Considering the difficulties of students expressing their opinions verbally, the researcher used self-reported questionnaires, which was the most appropriate method. It is important to note that the sampling method used for this study is homogeneous purposive sampling, in which the study respondents were students with hearing disabilities who are enrolled in the Certificates of Hotel and Catering, Basic Culinary and Basic Pastry program at four public institutions, including the Johor Bahru, Arau, Kota Kinabalu Polytechnic, and Selayang Community College. The survey questionnaires consisted of three main sections: Section A dealt with the respondents' demographic profiles, Section B assessed the perceived industry characteristics of the hospitality industry and their self-efficacy, and Section C asked about career intention towards the hospitality industry with seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). The original questionnaire in the English language was translated to Malay by a language expert before being distributed to accommodate persons with hearing difficulties on a more fundamental level.

Once permission was received from the Headquarters Department of Polytechnic and Community College, Putrajaya, the questionnaires were distributed to respondents face-to-face with a professional sign language translator to help the students answer the questions. The questionnaire was distributed between March 2023 and May 2023. A pilot study was conducted to verify the reliability and validity of the items used before a final version of the questionnaire was confirmed. One hundred eighty-two students with hearing disabilities were identified to participate, but only 175 were usable. In addition, the data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 22 for descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics (Pearson Correlation) was used to determine the association between variable groups.

4.0 Results

4.1 Respondents' profile

There is no clear gender difference among the 175 respondents, with female students (n=89, 50.9 %) responding differently than male students (n=86, 49.1%). The age range of most responders was 18 to 20 (n = 80, 45.7%), followed by 21 to 23 (n = 95), or 54.3%. Regarding students background higher learning institutions, Johor Bahru Polytechnic accounted for 22.3% (n=39), Arau Polytechnic for 30.9% (n=54), Kota Kinabalu Polytechnic for 25.7% (n=45), and Selayang Community College for 21.1% (n= 37). The majority of respondents in the program of study for these students came from the domains of Basic Culinary (15.4%, n=27), Certificates in Hotel and Catering (76%, n=133), and Basic Pastry (8.6%, n=15). Regarding prior work experience, 45.6% (n=78) had no previous employment history, and 55.4% (n=97) had worked for less than two years.

4.2 Descriptive statistics

The mean scores of the Likert scale answers for each item in the questionnaire were compiled and presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Average scores (±SD) of questionnaire items by students with hearing disabilities from hospitality program at Polytechnic and Community College, Malaysia.

Code	Items	Mean	S.D
Perceived Industry characteristic			
PIC1	I think salary in most hospitality jobs is sufficient to satisfactory life.	5.71	1.300
PIC2	I find job in the hospitality industry interesting.	5.57	1.184
PIC3	Working environment are clean in hospitality industry.	5.52	1.458
PIC4	To me, job in hospitality are exhausting.	5.46	1.276
Self-efficacy			
SE1	Because of my capabilities, I expect I can earn a position within the hospitality industry.	5.77	1.123
SE2	I have self-assurance that I could earn a position within the hospitality industry.	5.63	1.224
SE3	I expect I can perform well in a job in the hospitality industry.	5.60	1.259
SE4	The work I would do in the hospitality industry would be very difficult.	5.21	1.536
Intention			
INT1	I intend to work in the hospitality industry after graduation.	5.73	1.145
INT2	I will certainly join the hospitality industry in the future.	5.72	1.325
INT3	I intend to enter career that related to hospitality industry.	5.70	1.126
INT4	I plan to work in the hospitality industry after graduation.	5.69	1.196

The range of mean scores for the four perceived industry characteristics was 5.46 to 5.71, suggesting that while most respondents found the hospitality workforce exciting and offered a decent wage and a clean working environment, they also found the job exhausting. Respondents also agreed with all four self-efficacy measures, with mean values ranging from 5.21 to 5.77. Despite the possibility of difficulty, they anticipate doing well in the field and securing a place in the hospitality workforce. Regarding intention, most respondents said they would most likely work in hospitality organizations and planned to pursue careers in that field. Their mean scores varied between 5.69 and 5.73.

4.3 Hypothesis testing

The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis described the direction and intensity of the linear relationship between the variables of interest concerning the two proposed hypotheses. A correlation coefficient (r) value of 0 between two variables implies no link at all; a value of 1 indicates a perfect positive correlation and a value of -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation (Pallant, 2016). Table 2 below shows the analysis output of the hypotheses about career intention.

Table 2: Summary of Pearson correlation analysis on association with career intention

		Career intention
Perceived industry characteristic	Correlation Coefficient	.611**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	175
Self-efficacy	Correlation Coefficient	.742**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	175

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A strong correlation was found between perceived industry characteristics (r = .611**) and career intention. This value explains that 61.1% of student's career intentions have a significant relationship with perceived industry characteristics in the hospitality industry. These indicated that the students have a positive attitude towards careers and jobs in the hospitality industry, although they found the hospitality workforce exhausting. This result supported Anthony et al. (2021), who stated that hospitality students' positive visions of employment explain their keen interest and intention to work in the hospitality workforce. It was essential for hospitality and tourism

students to have a job with a pleasant work environment (Richardson,2009); salary and benefits were the economic considerations that impacted undergraduates' career decisions to join the industry. (Coros et al., 2021).

Like self-efficacy, there was also a positive correlation between self-efficacy ($r = .742^{**}$) and career intention. This value clarified that 74.2% of students' career intentions are significantly related to their self-efficacy toward the hospitality industry. This result is in line with what (Arghode et al., 2021) found that the influence of self-efficacy on career decision-making, interest formation, and goal establishment in the future workforce is crucial among college students. Besides, self-efficacy is the foundation of self-motivation for individuals, enabling them to make critical career decisions confidently (Bhalla & Dawra, 2020).

5.0 Discussion

The above findings signify that perceived industry and self-efficacy have influenced hospitality students with hearing disabilities' career intentions in the hospitality industry. This study found that both variables were strongly correlated. In terms of the perceived industry characteristic, the respondent's views that instead of a hospitality job being exhausting, the industry is fascinating, offers a decent wage, and has a clean working environment. The result indicates that both variables were strongly related to their student's career intentions in the hospitality industry. In addition, since this study is primarily focused on students with hearing disabilities, the self-efficacy theory will support the integration of the perceived industry characteristic and the self-efficacy that this group encounters when pursuing a profession in the hospitality sector. Self-efficacy is crucial as it influences self-perception and determines people's ability to accomplish life goals effectively. According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to regulate their actions, exercise power over their surroundings, and maintain motivation while striving for their objectives. The broad effects of self-efficacy on career behaviors include choice, performance, and persistence (Betz & Hackett,1986). Although self-efficacy was particularly important for goal setting, implementation, and achievement, it was also a dependable target in treatment plans (Lippke, 2020).

Based on the findings, the students have a positive perspective on the characteristics and self-efficacy. This positive finding may provide some implications for industry practitioners. Hiring hospitality graduates with hearing disabilities may help the industry overcome the high employee turnover and labor shortage that continues in restaurants and hotels. The finding implied there is an opportunity for industry players to hire this particular group, as many of them are actively seeking jobs. From an institutional perspective, it is beneficial for organizations to develop a curriculum to meet industry requirements and the student's interests. Special programs have been offered at higher-learning institutions for hearing-disabled youths to enhance their skills and meet the demands of working in various industries. With the expertise and abilities given to this particular youth group, they can be offered the opportunity to contribute to the country's economy by joining the workforce.

This study also provides significant implications for the government, particularly the Ministry of Human Resource and the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development. These two ministries have a significant legal role as "guardians" of the welfare and well-being of PWDs. They can impose stricter monitoring processes on all industry practitioners to comply with the Disability Act 2008, giving PWDs equal opportunity and uplifting their quality of life. On top of that, the collaborative efforts between hospitality institutions, industry practitioners, and the Ministry of Human Resources should continuously be held. In the long run, these efforts will ensure that the government's allocation and intention of giving equal opportunities in education and employment and curbing discriminatory practices, especially against graduates with hearing disabilities, could be achieved.

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Paper contribution to related field of study

This study will enhance comprehension of the matter and diverse viewpoints, encompassing students with hearing disabilities, about their professional prospects in the hospitality sector. This study aims to generate novel ideas, knowledge, and theories regarding human resources, specifically focusing on the career intentions of disabled youth who have received specialized career education in the hospitality industry. In addition, it can notify hospitality organizations about institutions that provide specialized hospitality courses for disabled youth, preparing them for future work opportunities.

Limitations and directions for future research

Aside from its contributions to the present body of knowledge, this study has significant drawbacks that demand further investigation. This study only focuses on quantitative methods that examine the factors influencing hearing-disabled youth's career intention in the hospitality industry. Therefore, subsequent research can include qualitative methods for hospitality graduates with hearing disabilities on their challenges and barriers, expectations, and motivation factors in their intention to work in the hospitality industry. Although the qualitative approach was challenging due to the graduates' inability to communicate their opinions verbally, data gathering would be significantly facilitated by a qualified sign language interpreter and could provide in-depth results. The second limitation is merely associated with the sampling. The sample of this study solely depends on the students with hearing disabilities who enrolled in hospitality

programs at four public institutions, with a low number of respondents. The institution's enrolment number of students is limited to 15 to 20 intakes per semester.

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