



**FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER EXPLORATION GOAL AMONG
HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM DIPLOMA STUDENTS IN PRIVATE
COLLEGES IN THE KLANG VALLEY, MALAYSIA**

By

SABRINA MOHD HASHIM

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
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Master of Science**

March 2024

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in
fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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March 2024

Chairman : Siti Fatimah binti Mohamad, PhD
Faculty : Food Science and Technology

Hospitality and tourism play an important role in global economic development and creating job opportunities. This has led to the increase in the number of graduates which is an indication on the need for the program to supplement the demand of the workforce in the industry. Despite this phenomena, previous studies have indicated that, the industry fails to attract the right candidates. The career self- management (CSM) model is the underlying theory guiding this study in which focus is on career exploration tasks and job seeking behaviour. This study examines the relationship between career decision self-efficacy, career optimism and outcome expectation towards exploratory goals.

A quantitative method through online survey questionnaire was distributed to 14 private colleges in Klang Valley. The unit of analysis for this study are hospitality and tourism diploma students in their final year, from private colleges in Klang Valley. This includes programs under hotel, travel, tourism, hospitality, accommodation, culinary, gastronomy and foodservice. A total of

190 students of diploma in hospitality and tourism students completed the survey. Out of the 190 responses, only 129 responses were accepted for analysis. Findings from all the three predictors (career decision self-efficacy, career optimism and outcome expectation) was found to explain 60.8% of the variance in exploratory goals. Additionally, two predictors (career decision self-efficacy and career optimism) showed a significant influence on exploratory goals with career optimism indicated t -value = 5.351 and $p < 0.05$, while career decision self-efficacy with t -value = 5.140, $p < 0.05$. However, Outcome Expectation was found to negatively influence Exploratory Goal. The result indicated ($\beta = -0.181$, $p = 0.13$), thus the hypothesis is not supported. Next, result indicated that career decision self-efficacy explains 53.7% of the variance in career optimism. Finally, career decision self-efficacy explains 35.1% of the variance in outcome expectation. In conclusion, the current study has provided evidence on the strong favourable impact of Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Career Optimism on Exploratory Goal. Whilst the relationship between Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Exploratory Goals was found to be mediated negatively by Outcome Expectations, the mediation analysis has proven that the association between Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Exploratory Goals was shown to be mediated by Career Optimism. Thus, this validates the significance of career optimism in the career exploration process which is an extension to the existing CSM model. The model in this study is anticipated to be the first to examine the career exploration process of hospitality and tourism diploma students of private colleges in Klang Valley. The findings of this study will enable educational institutions and the industry to have a better understanding and identify factors

of student's career decision making which could lead to greater retention of hospitality graduates in the industry

Keywords: Career decision-making, hospitality and tourism, Klang Valley, private colleges.

SDG: GOAL 4: Quality education.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**FAKTOR-FAKTOR YANG MEMPENGARUHI MATLAMAT PENEROKAAN
KERJAYA DI KALANGAN PELAJAR DIPLOMA HOSPITALITI DAN
PERLANCONGAN DARI KOLEJ SWASTA DI SEKITAR LEMBAH KLANG,
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Hospitaliti dan pelancongan memainkan peranan penting dalam pembangunan ekonomi global dan mewujudkan peluang pekerjaan. Ini telah membawa kepada peningkatan bilangan graduan yang merupakan petunjuk kepada keperluan program tersebut bagi memenuhi permintaan tenaga kerja industri hospitaliti. Di sebalik fenomena ini, kajian terdahulu telah menunjukkan bahawa industri hospitaliti dan pelancongan gagal menarik calon yang tepat. Model “Career Self Management” (CSM) adalah teori asas bagi kajian ini di mana tumpuan adalah pada tugas penerokaan kerjaya dan tingkah laku mencari pekerjaan. Kajian ini mengkaji hubungan antara efikasi sendiri keputusan kerjaya (Career Decision Self-Efficacy, CDSE), optimisme kerjaya dan jangkaan hasil terhadap matlamat penerokaan kerjaya. Kaedah kuantitatif melalui tinjauan soal selidik dalam talian telah diedarkan kepada 14 kolej swasta di sekitar Lembah Klang. Unit analisis bagi kajian ini adalah

pelajar diploma hospitaliti dan pelancongan di tahun akhir dari kolej swasta di Lembah Klang. Ini termasuk program yang merangkumi hotel, pelancongan, hospitaliti, penginapan, kulinari, gastronomi dan perkhidmatan makanan. Seramai 190 pelajar diploma dalam bidang hospitaliti dan pelancongan telah melengkapkan tinjauan tersebut. Dari jumlah 190 responden, hanya 129 respon diterima pakai untuk tujuan analisis. Hasil analisis ketiga-tiga peramal (efikasi sendiri keputusan kerjaya, optimisme kerjaya dan jangkaan hasil) didapati menjelaskan 60.8% varians dalam matlamat penerokaan. Selain itu, dua dari tiga peramal menunjukkan pengaruh signifikan terhadap matlamat penerokaan dengan optimisme kerjaya menunjukkan nilai- $t=5.351$ dan $p<0.05$, manakala efikasi sendiri keputusan kerjaya dengan nilai- $t=5.140$, $p<0.05$. Walau bagaimanapun, jangkaan hasil didapati mempengaruhi Matlamat Penerokaan secara negatif. Hasil analisis menunjukkan ($\beta = -0.181$, $p = 0.13$), maka hipotesis tersebut tidak disokong. Seterusnya keputusan analisis menunjukkan bahawa efikasi sendiri keputusan kerjaya menjelaskan 53.7% varians dalam optimisme kerjaya. Akhir sekali, efikasi sendiri keputusan kerjaya menjelaskan 35.1% varians dalam jangkaan hasil. Tambahan pula, terdapat impak yang menggalakkan daripada Keberkesanan Kendiri Keputusan Kerjaya dan Optimisme Kerjaya terhadap Matlamat Penerokaan. Walaupun hubungan antara Efikasi Kendiri Keputusan Kerjaya dan Matlamat Penerokaan didapati dimediasi secara negatif oleh Jangkaan Hasil, kajian ini membuktikan perkaitan antara Efikasi Kendiri Keputusan Kerjaya dan Matlamat Penerokaan ditunjukkan sebagai pengantara oleh Optimisme Kerjaya. Oleh itu, kajian ini berjaya membuktikan kepentingan optimism kerjaya dalam proses penerokaan kerjaya yang merupakan lanjutan

kepada model CSM sedia ada. Model dalam kajian ini dijangka menjadi yang pertama untuk mengkaji proses penerokaan kerjaya pelajar diploma hospitaliti dan pelancongan kolej swasta di Lembah Klang. Hasil kajian ini akan membolehkan institusi pendidikan dan industri, memahami dengan lebih baik dan mengenal pasti faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi keputusan kerjaya pelajar. Ini akan menghasilkan pengekalan graduan dalam industri hospitaliti.

Kata Kunci: hospitaliti dan pelancongan, kolej swasta, Lembah Klang, membuat keputusan kerjaya.

SDG: MATLAMAT 4: Pendidikan berkualiti.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1MOCC	1Malaysia One Call Center
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BCa	Bias-Corrected and Accelerated
BCI LL	Bias Corrected Interval Lower Level
BCI UL	Bias Corrected Interval Upper Level
CDSE	Career Decision Self-Efficacy
CEEE	Career Exploration Environment Exploration
CEI	Career Expectations and Intentions
CESE	Career Exploration Self-Exploration
CO	Career Optimism
CR	Composite Reliability
CSM	Career Self-Management
DBKL	Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur
DOSM	Department of Statistics Malaysia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HTMT	Heterotrait- Monotrait
ILMIA	Institute of Labour Market Information and Analysis
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KTA	Kolej Antarabangsa Cybernetics
LM	Linear Regression Model
MAE	Mean Absolute Error
MBPJ	Majlis Bandaraya Petaling Jaya
MBSA	Majlis Bandaraya Shah Alam
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education

MPAJ	Majlis Perbandaran Ampang Jaya
MPK	Majlis Perbandaran Klang
MPSJ	Majlis Perbandaran Subang Jaya
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
PEO	Program Education Outcome
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling Q2
R ²	Coefficient Determination
RMSE	Root Mean Square Error
RO	Research Objective
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
SLR	Systematic Literature Review
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
VIF	Variance Inflation Factors
WBL	Work Base Learning

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to focus on the background and research problems of the study. It discusses the research objectives and significance of implementing this study. This chapter begins with the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significances and conclusion at the end of the chapter.

1.2 Background of the Study

This section describes the background of the current study by providing a review on the hospitality and tourism industry and higher education institutions in Malaysia. In addition, this section discusses the content of the current study which includes key variables involved.

1.2.1 Hospitality and Tourism Industry

World Travel and Tourism, in 2022 reported that the industry has accounted for 7.6% (US\$ 7.7 trillion) of the total global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) creating 300 million employments in the hospitality and tourism industry worldwide (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2023). In 2021, the Malaysian hospitality and tourism industry has contributed 12.8% to the country's total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022). As the Malaysian tourism industry continues to grow, the country is expected to

attract 2.0 million tourist arrivals in 2023 with a contribution of RM8.6 billion (Tourism Malaysia launches new strategic & marketing plan for 2022- 2026, n.d.). The industry has been responsible for creating jobs which accounted for 23.3% at 3.52 million of the total number of employed persons in Malaysia in 2021 (Department of Statistics Malaysia Official Portal, n.d.). Table 1.1 shows the increasing number of employments in the tourism industry in 2020 and 2021.

Table 1.1 : Employment in the Tourism Industry

Year	Total (million person)	Tourism Industry (million person)	Segments (%)		
			Food and Beverage	Retails Trade	Country- specific tourism services
2021	15.1	3.52	35.4	33.6	17.6
2020	15	3.46	34.5	33.4	17.4

(Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022)

Food and beverage as well as retail trade segments have been found as the main contributors to the total number of employments in the tourism industry with a share of 35.4% and 33.6% respectively. The number has shown an increase from 2020 with food and beverage employed at 34.5% and retail trade at 33.4% (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022).

Concurrent with the economic growth of the country in the year 2022, the Malaysian government announced that the country's minimum salary is RM1,500 (Povera et al., 2022). According to the Ministry of Higher Education's annual survey data as compiled by Malay Mail shows that a minimum of 10 per cent of fresh graduates from the general field have been earning between

RM1,001 to RM1,500 for at least the past 10 years (I. Lim & Ayamany, 2021). In contrast, the average salary for entry levels in hotels in Klang Valley RM2,000 – RM3,500 (Glassdoor, 2023; Jobstreet, 2023). Aside from the higher than average basic salary, the hospitality and tourism industry offers various benefits such as overtime pay, travel benefits and career growth programs to their employees in the effort to attract local talents (Malaysian Association of Hotels, 2023).

1.2.2 Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia

The stiff competition in obtaining skillful and knowledgeable labour force have shifted the view of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to focus on the human resource needs of the industry (Eurico et al., 2015). In Malaysia, there are a total of 97 higher education institutions that offers various diploma programs on hospitality and tourism programs to support the need for labour within the industry (Portal Pengambilan Pelajar Politeknik Dan Kolej Komuniti, n.d.; Senarai Program Diploma Yang Ditawarkan Di IPTA/UA, n.d.). These institutions have made their primary aim in preparing undergraduates for future employment. The institutions are divided into two categories which are public and private higher education institutions. The public higher education institutions are funded mainly by the government which encompasses University, Polytechnic, Community College and Public Skills Training Institute (MyGovernment, 2021). On the contrary, the private higher education institutions refer to institutions that offers various programs with the degree of graduation from certificate, diplomas and degrees to honorary degrees which is supported primarily by their own endowment funds and students' tuition

fees.

From the total of 97 institutions, 78 institutions represent the private higher education institutions across Malaysia (Basri, personal communication, August 23, 2023). Table 1.2 shows the total number of private colleges offering hospitality and tourism diploma programs in Malaysia.

Table 1.2 : Number of Private Colleges Offering Hospitality and Tourism Diploma Programs in Malaysia

State	Number of Private Colleges
Klang Valley	16
Sabah	11
Pulau Pinang	10
Johor	7
Sarawak	6
Negeri Sembilan	6
Melaka	5
Perak	4
Pahang	4
Kelantan	4
Kedah	3
Terengganu	2

(Source: Ministry of Higher Education, 2021)

Various hospitality and tourism program were found offered within the 16 institutions in Klang Valley. Programs include tourism management, hotel management, culinary arts and events management. Figure 1.1 shows the total number of program levels offered by the private colleges across Malaysia.

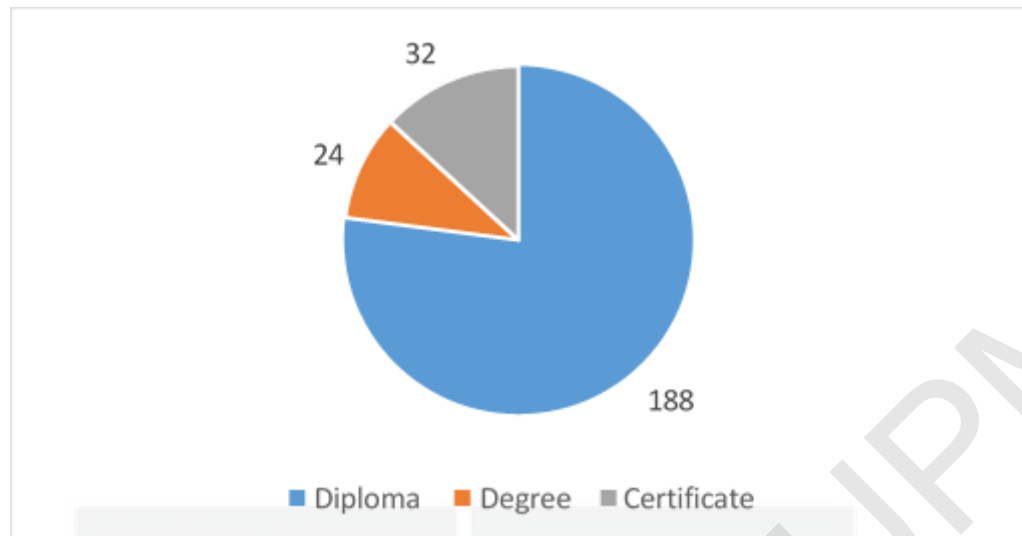


Figure 1.1 : Total Number of Program Levels Offered by Private Colleges in Malaysia

(Source: Ministry of Higher Education, 2021)

The large number of institutions offering the program with the various program level offered, indicates the demand for the program. This is especially important as the future graduates are expected to fulfil the demand of manpower in the hospitality and tourism industry.

1.3 Problem Statement

The problem statement will discuss the problem from two perspectives: theoretical and practical. The theoretical problem statement discusses the underlying theory of this study and the current body of knowledge. The practical problem statement on the other hand, is derived from the academic and industrial literature.

1.3.1 Theoretical

Drawing from Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), the Career Self-Management (CSM) model (Lent & Brown, 2013) focuses on the process aspect of career behaviour for instance the process involves exploring career options, career decision- making and job search. This study is intended to identify the primary means through which career decision self-efficacy contributes to the career exploration process and the factors that mediate its relation to exploration goals.

Previous studies found limited research have examined the influence of career optimism on vocational behaviour such as job search behaviour and called for further research to fully understand its relationship (Eva et al., 2020; Gunkel et al., 2010; Rottinghaus et al., 2005). Specifically, there was no empirical study conducted to examine the relationship between career optimism and exploratory goal variables. Furthermore, the mediating effect of career optimism between career decision self-efficacy and exploratory goal has not been tested in past research. To fill this gap, this study sought to expand the CSM model with the addition of career optimism as a mediator between career decision self-efficacy and exploratory goal. The expansion is intended to examine whether career optimism leads individuals to engage in greater career exploration and undertake more job search activities such as looking at job ads and applying for more jobs.

In the Malaysian context, eight studies (Aziz, 2020; Aziz, 2021; Bidder, 2022; Zulfakar, 2021; Omar et al., 2021; Wahab et al., 2020; Yunus et al., 2021)

were published on hospitality and tourism students' career decision-making from 2020 – 2022. These studies employed various theories to determine the factors influencing student's career decision-making from private and public universities and universities from around Malaysia. No empirical test of CSM model has been performed in the context of hospitality and tourism diploma students in Klang Valley. Thus, this study will focus on testing of CSM and the influence of career optimism on hospitality and tourism diploma students from private colleges. The findings will provide further understanding on factors that enhances vocational attitudes and behaviour.

1.3.2 Practical

Hospitality and tourism play an important role in global economic development and creating job opportunities. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), 41.8 million young people aged 15-24 are expected to enter the labour market between 2017 and 2030 (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019). Despite the need for labour force, the industry continues to face challenges in acquiring new talents. According to the Malaysian Association of Hotels (2023), hotels are facing difficulties in recruiting talents as the younger generations prefer freelance jobs with shorter and flexible hours as opposed to working within the industry in spite of overtime pays.

Previous studies have shown that first-year students had a more favourable perception of careers in the industry than continuing students (Anthony et al., 2021). Among the reasons are negative perceptions of students towards the industry with many reluctant to join the industry upon graduation primarily

because they did not find the industry enjoyable and are dissatisfied with their job upon entering the field (Goh & Okumus, 2020; Rastogi et al., 2019). In Malaysia, hospitality and tourism students perceive the industry negatively while quoting difficulty to finding a stable job due to the seasonality nature of the industry, low salary, unacceptable physical working conditions and social reputation (Aziz, 2020; Aziz, 2021; Omar et al., 2021). Similarly in a study conducted on Ghanaian students reported that 47% of students perceived careers in the industry to be poor in nature while 42% of students thought careers in the industry offer poor salaries and 61.60% perceived careers in the industry to be stressful (Anthony et al., 2021). In a comparative study between South Korean students and American students, it was found that South Korean students showed lower motivation and satisfaction due to low salary and high turnover while the American showed higher motivation and job satisfaction (Kim & Spears, 2022).

This is evidential as according to the Institute of Labour Market Information and Analysis (ILMIA), accommodation and food service sector experienced the highest average turnover rate at 30% in 2018. From the study, 76% of the establishments within the sector are experiencing difficulty in filling up certain vacancies. When asked about the reasons why the vacancies are hard-to-fill, 66% of establishments mentioned it was due to the lack of applicants. According to the Malaysian Association of Hotels (2023), even with better salary and benefit, the industry is still experiencing a 20% shortage of manpower. In addition to the turnover issue, Aon Hewitt Malaysia 2015 Hotels and Hospitality Industry Survey found that across all support staff in the hotel

and hospitality industry, the attrition rate of 18% is double that of the general Malaysian workforce (Aon Hewitt, 2016). Figure 1.2 shows the average turnover rate by sector.



Note: Turnover rate is calculated based on the total number of employees who resigned in 2017 over average number of employees for 2017.

Figure 1.2 : Average Turnover Rate by Sector
(Source: ILMIA, 2019)

Despite the lack of applicants, previous study conducted in hotels within Klang Valley and Terengganu, between 21%-24% of employees were identified as diploma holders which was found to be one of the largest groups of qualification among employees (Majid et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2020). In addition, a study done in a Traders Hotel, Kuala Lumpur found that 41% of the employees with a managerial post have a diploma qualification (Binwani, 2022). In a separate study conducted in 14 hotels in Klang Valley, 50% of the respondents were found to be diploma graduates (Haldorai et al., 2019). This indicates the need for diploma graduates to fill positions within the industry.

In an effort to track Malaysian university graduates' employability, the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education continuously conducts Tracer Study surveys. The main objective of the study is to assess the graduate's thoughts on the program of study and services that was available to them within the higher learning institution as well as their experience in seeking employment upon graduation. In 2019, 69.2% of degree graduates from various field of study were employed however diploma graduates have a lower rate of employment at 54.4% (Education, 2020). According to MOHE, in 2017, only 12% of diploma undergraduates from private colleges sought for their first job during the final semester of their education from various programs. This is followed by 36% during the first month after graduation (Education, 2021). In a report by the Department of Statistics, the number of unemployed graduates in 2019 was 170.3 thousand persons and 161.3 thousand persons in 2018 (Malaysia, 2020b). In 2019, it was found that as high as 21% of unemployed graduates were from private education institutions (Ministry of Higher Education, 2020). Unemployed graduates could have an adverse effect on society and national economic development. This group of individuals will have less spending power which may impact the country's national development. Widespread unemployment may hinder organisations and countries from innovating and developing competitive advantages based on human capital investment, which impacts future prospects (International Labor Organization, 2015).

In a research done by MOHE, the number of hospitality and tourism diploma graduates within the Klang Valley in 2019 and 2020 were 688 and 752

respectively. The increase in the number of graduates is an indication of the need for the program to supplement the demand of the workforce in the industry. Despite the negative perceptions of students towards the industry, hospitality and tourism study remains one of the most pursued programs in local universities and colleges (Bidder, 2022). Thus, further investigation of career exploration goals is important in revealing factors associated with the diploma students' career decision-making process. This study will focus on hospitality and tourism diploma students from private colleges in Klang Valley primarily due to the area consisting the largest number of private colleges offering hospitality and tourism diploma program in Malaysia. Additionally, various studies have been conducted on diploma hospitality and tourism students from Sabah, East Malaysia and Northern Malaysia between 2021 and 2022 (Bidder, 2022; Omar et al., 2021; Yunus et al., 2021), however none of which focuses on diploma students from private colleges in Klang Valley. The findings may provide meaningful discovery to help diploma students in developing their careers in the industry following graduation.

1.4 Research Question

There are three research questions for this study:

1. What is the relationship between Career Decision Self-efficacy, Career Optimism, Outcome Expectations and Exploratory Goal among hospitality and tourism diploma students in private colleges in Klang Valley.
2. Does Career Optimism mediates the relationship between Career Decision Self- efficacy and Exploratory Goal among hospitality and tourism diploma students in private colleges in Klang Valley.

3. Does Outcome Expectations mediates the relationship between Career Decision Self-efficacy and Exploratory Goal among hospitality and tourism diploma students in private colleges in Klang Valley.

1.5 Research Objective

The purpose of the study is to investigate the career decision-making process of undergraduates in Diploma in Hospitality program. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the relationship between Career Decision Self-efficacy, Career Optimism, Outcome Expectations and Exploratory Goal among hospitality and tourism diploma students in private colleges in Klang Valley.
2. To investigate the role of Career Optimism as a mediator between Career Decision Self-efficacy and Exploratory Goal among hospitality and tourism diploma students in private colleges in Klang Valley.
3. To identify the role of Outcome Expectations as a mediator between Career Decision Self-efficacy and Exploratory Goal among hospitality and tourism diploma students in private colleges in Klang Valley.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The current study attempts to integrate Career Optimism variable in the existing CSM model. The findings can offer both meaningful theoretical insights and significant practical implications for education and human resource management in the hospitality industry. The following sections discuss the theoretical and practical significance of the study.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

The current study aims to enrich the existing body of knowledge on factors influencing the career exploration goal of diploma in hospitality and tourism students within Klang Valley. Firstly, the Career Self-Management (CSM) model which emphasizes the process aspects of career development, such as how people make career decisions will be used as guide for this study. Drawing from the model as applied to job search behaviour, this study extends the existing model with the addition of career optimism variable to further investigate the influence of Career Decision Self-Efficacy, Outcome Expectations, Career Optimism and Exploratory Goal in the students' career exploration process. In particular, career optimism leads individuals to engage in greater career exploration and undertake more job search activities such as looking for job vacancies and applying for jobs openings. Additionally, the mediation role of career optimism and outcome expectation will be examined. Thus, the proposed framework will be the first to test the mediation role of career optimism between career decision self- efficacy and exploratory goal.

Secondly, the current study aims to contribute to the existing knowledge on diploma in hospitality and tourism student's career exploration goal within the context of Klang Valley. Previous study has revealed that comparatively limited work has examined the influence of career optimism on vocational behaviour particularly in Asia (Eva et al., 2020). Up to 2020, only four Asian countries have studied Career Optimism variable which includes China, India, Korea and Philippines (Eva et al., 2020). The model in this study will be the first to examine the career exploration process of hospitality and tourism

diploma students of private colleges in Klang Valley.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

This study proposes significant practical implications on hospitality and tourism educators and career counsellors. Previous studies have shown that once students have enrolled in a program, such as hospitality management, their choice of major affects their career choice (Smith, 2010). This statement is a sufficient reason for hospitality programs, or more specifically educators and career counsellors, to provide appropriate career-related assistance and guidance (Sheila, 2001). Educational institutions could take action to assist students to be committed to serving in the industry upon graduation. Apart from that, this study is anticipated to enhance the understanding of student's career optimism. The findings will enable institutions to identify factors that could lead to greater retention of hospitality graduates in the industry, whether they are students from tourism, hotel, culinary or food service. Educators and career counsellors may use the information gathered to focus on helping students understand career-related rewards available for their current efforts and the anticipated rewards of a particular educational or career path.

Within the aspect of the industry, this study will provide better understanding of factors that contribute to students' career optimism and allow industry partners to use the knowledge as an advantage. Knowing the students' perceptions and expectations will allow organizations within the industry to plan future events or programs which will help them to attract the right talent. Additionally, the findings of this study will be able to identify the source of

motivation for students intending to join the industry. Thus, with the knowledge, the industry will be able to create or highlight the exciting aspects of working in the industry.

1.7 Chapter Layout

Chapter 1 presents the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significances and concludes the organisation of the research study.

Chapter 2 discusses issues on all matters related to the hospitality and tourism from the aspect of education, industry and the career decision-making among undergraduates. The chapter consist of an in-depth discussion of the underlying theory of this study and the influences on the undergraduate's exploration of potential future career.

Chapter 3 clarifies the methodology employed within this study. The chapter elaborates on research design, sampling method, questionnaire design and administration as well as data collection method and pretesting. The chapter consists of the justification on the selection of the data analysis method.

Chapter 4 analyses the findings of the data analysis and interpretation. It consists of the summary of findings of this study.

Chapter 5 discusses the overview of the major findings of this study. In addition, it discusses on the implications, limitations and suggestions for future

research.

1.8 Definition of Terms

This section consists of the definitions of the variables from the conceptual model of this study (refer to figure 2.1). The following terms are defined to clarify the usage within this study.

Career Decision Self-efficacy refers to the degree of confidence experienced by an individual on their ability to engage and accomplish tasks associated with career decision- making and career commitment (Taylor & Betz, 1983)

Career Optimism refers to “a disposition to expect the best possible outcome or to emphasize the most positive aspects of one's future career development, and comfort in performing career planning tasks” (Rottinghaus et al., 2005, p. 11)

Outcome Expectations refers to the belief that an anticipated outcome of an action is the result from a certain behaviour (Hackett & Betz, 1981, p. 328)

Career Exploration Goal refers to the act of engaging in exploring careers or job search behaviour and career decision-making (Brown & Lent, 2017; Ireland & Lent, 2018; Lent & Brown, 2013).

1.9 Scope of the Study

This section discusses the scope of the study which includes the subject area of investigation, the theory underlying the framework and sample population. Firstly, the underlying theory of the current study is based on previous behavioural studies. The study aim is to examine career exploration process. The variables in the conceptual framework were adopted and adapted to assess an individual's behaviour in planning for future career goal. Predicated on the research objectives of the current study, the questionnaire consists of questions related to career decision self-efficacy, career expectations and intentions, career optimism, career exploration and self-exploration which is elaborated in Chapter 3. Further justification for the applied theory is extensively discussed in the following chapters.

This study focuses on students undergoing diploma in hospitality and tourism mainly due to the limited number of previous researches conducted on the sample population. The sample population was specifically from Klang Valley due to the area consisting the highest number of colleges offering hospitality and tourism diploma programs. Between 2020 – 2022, only three studies were found conducted on diploma students from hospitality and tourism program (Bidder, 2022; Omar et al., 2021; Yunus et al., 2021). Further justification on the sample population is elaborated in Chapter 3.

1.10 Conclusion

The introduction chapter discussed the background of the study, where the growth of the hotel industry has contributed tremendously to the nation's

income. With the rapid growth of the industry, it has resulted in the increase number of enrolment in hospitality and tourism program. However, despite the phenomenon, the industry fails to attract graduates. This chapter elaborated on the problems from the theoretical and practical perspectives that influenced the research objectives of this study. The findings of this study were anticipated to have theoretical and practical significances. The significances include extending the academic literature, particularly in the career exploration goals and the influence of career optimism among diploma students of hospitality and tourism in private colleges in Klang Valley.

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