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## Self-Image, Career Development and Job Choice on Tourism Industry in Malaysia: A Perception of Students

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<b>Article History</b>	<b>Abstract</b>
<p><b>Article Submission</b> 22 August 2021</p> <p><b>Revised Submission</b> 18 October 2021</p> <p><b>Article Accepted</b> 21 November 2021</p>	<p>Students imagine jobs in the tourism sector with boring jobs, long working hours, unsafe work, low social status, unsatisfactory promotions, low wages, inadequate benefits, and poor physical working conditions. This study aims to determine student perceptions of self-image, career development, and job choices in the tourism industry. This study was a quantitative descriptive method. Quantitative research is intended to measure the problem, how well, and to whom a particular problem applies. This study involved 162 D3 Tourism Management study programs, Merlimau Polytechnic, Melaka, Malaysia, based on Krejcie and Morgan tables. Data was obtained using a questionnaire survey and observation. The questionnaire consists of Parts A, B, and C as instruments and measurements with a five-point Linkert scale. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23 was used to analyze data and information in research. The results showed that the value of self-image was 3.60, career development was 4.12, and job choice in the tourism industry was 3.80. Students' perceptions of self-image, career development, and job choices are high. Students feel the influence of research variables can attract interest to work in the tourism industry in the future.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Tourism, Self-Image, Career development, and Job Choice.</p>

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the industries in the global economy that contributes to international trade services. The tourism industry is experiencing rapid growth (Zha et al., 2021). The development of the tourism sector encourages economic growth from various sectors (Occultisan & Setyanto, 2020). From a financial perspective, an increase in tourist visits can significantly impact the economy in the tourist area (Seguí-Amortegui et al., 2019). In tourist areas managed by the surrounding community affect strategic orientation and innovating in tourism development (Xinhua, 2019), interacting in all regions of tourists, facilities, and local communities (Chi et al., 2020). They shape the tourism environment, share common interests, and are committed to influencing areas of practice or policy.

The demand for labour in the tourism sector affects the increasing need for tourism education. Tourism education is needed to prepare an adequate workforce to work in the tourism industry (Wang et al., 2019). Higher education in tourism as the main platform in building human resources according to industry needs. Tourism higher education aims to provide graduates with the specific skills and attributes required in operating the tourism workplace (Ka et al., 2020). In addition, tourism education needs to improve the employability of tourism graduates. Graduates currently employed by employers must possess both technical skills and employability skills (Meriç & Erdem, 2020).

Based on Number and Percentage of Malaysian Graduates by Employment Status by HEI Category, 2018. The Polytechnic produced 25,643 graduates. However, the researchers point out that professional improvement in the accommodation and travel industries is not encouraging enough. Students will generally choose a different business after graduation because they accept that pay rates at other companies are more severe than in the travel industry (Bilan et al., 2019; Komariah et al., 2020). In addition, some students in the tourism industry course have a terrible perception of self-image, career development, and job choices in tourism (Zhuang et al., 2019).

Self-image is important in building attitudes because work inclusion is controlled by understanding the meaning of work, which strongly relates to mental self-portraits and self-ideas. Self-image is an individual's way of seeing the impression of character qualities and attributes (Grilli et al., 2021; Kirby et al., 2019). For example, the mental self-image of travel industry HR consists of their ability to help individuals, meet new individuals, social skills, perseverance, disposition, inventiveness, approval, courtesy, relational skills, individual hygiene, an otherworldly life (Koçak, 2021). The determining factors that influence professional decisions are gender, financial status, character, self-sufficiency, workability, professional premiums, and monetary guarantees (Cai et al., 2021; Eshun & Tichaawa, 2019).

The need for trained and qualified staff in the tourism industry will enhance the image, career development, and employment options. The description of the work of the tourism industry must be applied to students so that bad perceptions about tourism can be eliminated (Dolezal & Novelli, 2020; Isik & Sezgin, 2020). The problem of student perceptions of the tourism sector can affect education in the tourism sector (Elfiondri et al., 2021; Purnomo et al., 2020). Based on the existing problems, this study aims to determine student perceptions of self-image, career development, and job choices for the tourism industry after graduating from school.

## 2. Research Method

This study was a quantitative descriptive method. Quantitative research is intended to measure the problem, how well, and to whom a particular problem applies. This study involved 162 D3 Tourism Management study programs, Merlimau Polytechnic, Melaka, Malaysia, based on Krejcie and Morgan tables. Data was obtained using a questionnaire survey and observation. The questionnaire consists of 30 items that have been adjusted and adjusted to measure self-image, career development, and job choices on student perceptions. Questionnaires were distributed using google forms directed to students to fill out complete answers. The questionnaire consists of Parts A, B, and C as instruments and measurements with a five-point Linkert scale. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23 was used to analyse data and information in research.

### 3. Result And Discussion

#### Student perceptions of self-image working in the tourism industry

The results of measurements of self-image indicators for work in the tourism industry in the study can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Self-Image in Tourism Industry

No	Variable	Value	SD
1	High discipline attitude	4.46	0.591
2	Need high communication skills	4.51	0.549
3	Willingness to help people	4.31	0.664
4	Creativity	3.72	0.936
5	Minds were stressful	3.39	0.921
6	Family-life sacrificing	3.52	1.121
7	Long working hours	3.22	1.226
8	Exhausting and unstable work	2.84	1.033
9	Low social status	2.65	0.968
10	Poor physical working conditions	3.36	1.230
<b>Average</b>		<b>3.60</b>	

Table 1 shows the average value obtained by students regarding self-image in working in the tourism sector of 3.60, which means good. The self-image felt by students requires good communication skills for the services provided (Irwanto et al., 2018). Service is the most important part of the tourism industry because it is related to lodging, travel, visit administration, local expert administration, and other associated administrations (Sharif et al., 2020). Good communication skills in the tourism industry can positively impact customers and become an added value for hotels and parties related to tourism (Eckert & Pechlaner, 2019; Kichurchak, 2020). Effective communication is very important in the work environment and increases the company's value (Demirdağ, 2021; Ying et al., 2021). Good communication skills can enhance the visitor experience by accepting criticism and conveying a clear message (Sumarni et al., 2020). Communicating in a significant sense is not a specific skill, but when we listen, we understand what the other person is saying and respond significantly (Wahyuningtyas et al., 2019).

#### Students' Perceptions of Career Development and Job Choices in The Tourism Industry

The results of the measurement of Student Perceptions about Career Development and Job Choices in the Tourism Industry in the research can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. Students' Perceptions of Career Development

No	Variable	Value	SD
1	Preferences of the work environment of tourism and hospitality industry	4.33	0.610
2	There are many jobs variation in tourism and hospitality business skills	4.25	0.643

3	The tourism and hospitality industry offers a high salary	4.06	0.910
4	My family support my choice in pursuing a tourism and hospitality career	4.02	1.003
5	Tourism and hospitality attractiveness	4.28	0.723
6	Good opportunities for career advancement	4.25	0.723
7	My surrounding community perceive that working in tourism	3.93	0.882
8	A career in the tourism and hospitality business can secure my future	3.96	0.877
9	I will work within the tourism industry after the graduation	4.23	0.735
10	Studying tourism at the university level is a correct investment in career development	3.84	1.045
<b>Average</b>		<b>4.12</b>	

Table 2 shows the perception of career development with a score of 4.12 in the very high category. The work environment is the most important part of career development (Lawn et al., 2017). Students will undertake career development in the tourism and hospitality industry based on job preferences and the tourism and hospitality industry environment (Ahmad et al., 2019). Jobs in the tourism sector will not be boring and will have good opportunities for career advancement and Attraction of Tourism and Hospitality (Salem, 2021).

### **Job Choices in The Tourism Industry**

The measurement of Job Choices in The Tourism Industry in the study can be seen in table 3.

Table 3. Job Choices in The Tourism Industry

<b>No</b>	<b>Variable</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>SD</b>
1	I want to work at the hotel	4.26	1.101
2	I want to work at the restaurant	3.27	1.020
3	I want to work at tour operator/travel agency	3.75	0.953
4	I want to work at the recreation park	3.94	1.079
5	I want to work at the government tourism office	4.17	0.774
6	I want to work at the tourism and hospitality consultant	4.07	0.812
7	I want to work at the airport sector	4.01	0.946
8	I want to be a tourism and hospitality lecturer	3.62	1.206
9	I want to be a tourism hospitality researcher	3.77	1.326
10	I want to work at the theme park	3.12	1.155
<b>Average</b>		<b>3.80</b>	

Table 3 shows the choice of employment in the tourism industry has a score of 3.80 which means high. Students think that tourism is still an option after graduating from college. However, students need to learn about their chosen profession before graduating (Brundiers & Wiek, 2017).

Professional knowledge is required to reduce negative assumptions in the work they choose (Gladman et al., 2021; Kuo et al., 2019). Students' dominant choice is to work in hotels because students feel the knowledge gained at school about hotels is good (Hengxuan et al., 2021). The following students choose to work in the tourism office, tourism consultants and hotels, airport sector, recreation parks, travel agents, lecturers, and amusement parks and restaurants (Jumintono et al., 2018).

#### 4. Conclusion

Students' perceptions of self-image, career development, and job choices are high. Students feel the influence of research variables can attract interest to work in the tourism industry in the future. Students have a better understanding of the image of tourism, about careers and job options in the tourism industry. Students have a good picture of the travel industry professionals, but they also realize they do not have the same vision or insight. In addition, students still need more information about the image, career, and job options in the tourism sector, and lecturers must provide more examples to students related to this service industry.

This study only highlights the social expectations of student employment decisions, so further research should be directed towards understanding the obligations of students to work in the travel industry. In addition, continuous and continuous research should be carried out by analysis to understand the problem better and contribute to other researchers who wish to research students' perceptions of self-image, career development, and job choices in the tourism industry.

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