

# PRELIMINARY CONSTRUCTION OF AN INDICATED MODEL OF PERCEPTIONS OF INDUSTRIAL PROSPECTS – AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY EDUCATION IN TAIWAN

Lee, Wen-Chih

*MBA in Global Management,  
Hochschule Bremen,  
GERMANY*

## ABSTRACT

*This paper adopts “Convenience Sampling” for the questionnaire survey, and the objects of this research focus on in-school students in Southern Taiwan institutes to construct the indicated preliminary model. 250 questionnaires were sent directly to 10 academics at 6 schools by post, and 231 were retrieved. There were 12 components extracted, but parts of the components were absorbed into the same ones owing to the insufficiency of extracted essentials of the components after testing. Then, five components as a whole were summarized as “Personality Perceptions (PPs)”, “Perceptions of Industry Development and the Government’s Policy (PIDGP)”, “Perceptions of the Employment Market and Employment Willingness (PEMEW)”, “Curricular Designs (CDs)” and “Personality (PSNLT)”, through the meaning of the essentials in each component. In accordance with the acquired statistical figures and verification of the research hypothesis, indications that the most influential and important levels of perceptions of industry prospects for the interviewees are “Perceptions of the Employment Market and the Employed Willingness (PEMEW)”, and “Perceptions of Industry Development and the Government’s Policy (PIDGP)”; however, the level of “Curricular Designs (CDs)” has the lowest influence and significance. This research sums up the main research findings after analyzing the conclusions and research hypotheses. 1) Most of the interviewees who have greater willingness to be*

*employed in tourism and hospitality-related industries will obtain the updated information diligently and understand the tendencies in industry developments, and also improve or enhance their professional abilities to achieve their goals of working in this industry. 2) Most of the interviewees' personal perceptions of and personalities for the industry's prospects are quite weak and unstable. Furthermore, they are also lacking in enough multi-abilities and career plans to fit the demands of the industry's developments.*

**Key Words:** *Personality perceptions, industry prospective perceptions, vocational awareness, industrial policy and development.*

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **Research Motive**

The 21st century is a new era for the service industry, especially in prospective developments and growth of tourism and hospitality-related industries. Tourism and hospitality-related industries have become an activity of worldwide importance and significance. For a number of countries, tourism and hospitality-related industries are the largest commodities in the international trade, with the highest employment opportunities offered in society, and the one of the main sources of revenues for the whole national economy. Tourism and hospitality-related industries have been growing rapidly to become a major social and economic force in the world (Goeldner and Ritchie, 1998).

In global tourism and hospitality-related industries, Taiwan is still in its infancy. Cultivating and training outstanding tourism and hospitality-related professionals and managers are the first step and also one of the most important elements in developing tourism prospects and hospitality-related industries. This research expects to analyze detected and variable factors which have significant influences on the perceptions of industry prospects of in-school students in advance of constructing the preliminary indicated model.

## **Research Goal**

This research studies the perceptions of industry prospects of in-school students of tourism and hospitality management-related academic majors, and the contents are divided into four parts which are:

1. Whether personal perceptions will influence the willingness to be employed in the tourism and hospitality-related industry or not.
2. An evaluation of the perceptive status of the whole tourism and hospitality-related industry development environments for tourism and hospitality-related in-school students.
3. An analysis of factors which have significant influences on in-school students towards perceptions of industry prospects in the tourism and hospitality-related industry.

4. Whether government policies and tendencies in industry developments will influence industry prospects' perceptions in in-school students.

Besides the above-mentioned four parts, this research will probe the sense of relations and relativities to improve competitive advantages in Taiwan's tourism and hospitality-related industries. To advance qualities in human resources, to spread employment markets, to lessen social burdens, and to deepen permanent developments in tourism and hospitality-related industries are also the goals.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Modern Education and Human Resource Development**

The "Sandwich Plan", a term widely used in tourism and hospitality education and industry, is used for the purpose of increasing and accumulating practical experience to reduce the distance in industry perception. Combined with theoretical and practical foundations in training talented professionals and managers and in accordance with industrial and enterprise, qualifications of human resource development (HRD) and educational training have become parts of the most significantly developing indicators in higher education systems of tourism and hospitality-related academies in Taiwan. Tang (1991) reported that Cooperative Vocational Educations (\*CVEs) could increase the industry perceptions and competitiveness of students both towards the academies and industries. In Western countries, the extracurricular internships of tourism and hospitality education have been implemented for a long time. Cooperative Vocational Education (CVE) to train tourism and hospitality-related talents is adopted in accordance with the industrial and enterprise needs of human resources in practical environments (Chian and Chen, 1991). Consequently, the educational model of Cooperative Vocational Education (CVE) in academies and industries has become one of the important channels for hiring and training human resources of the enterprises (Huang, 1996)

The issues of human resource development (HRD) and the educational training for tourism and hospitality-related industries have become parts of study essentials owing to the universalization of tourism and hospitality academies. Wu and Chen (2002) reported that the different educational systems in tourism and hospitality-related majors have different main points in cultivating and training professional talents, but basic foreign languages, computing and communication skills abilities are necessary. Technical and vocational schools, for example, the Universities of Technology and the Institutes of Technology are laying stress on technical and vocational knowledge, negotiating abilities, and aggressive interactions with the enterprises. The traditional universities and colleges, which include postgraduate programs, are laying stress on leadership, management, research and development (R&D), and problem-solving abilities, and also attach importance to theoretical foundations. However, relevant studies report that shortages of professional knowledge and techniques in tourism and hospitality related-professionals are the current difficulties and obstacles to developing and training human resources.

A new model which aims at ensuring productive interactions with host communities is presented. Zhang et al. (2002) indicated that academics perceive that upgrading their qualifications and getting more exposure to the outside world is important to them. The training and education issues faced in the 21st century are going to be improved and increased in the tourism and hospitality-related education system and its structure, along with revolutions in the design of the syllabuses with more multi-functional courses and integrated and applied approaches to theory and practice. The traditional teaching mode will change to a more modernized, innovative and interactive teaching mode, and with greater responsiveness of education to the needs of the industry. The notion of treating students as customers is rejected. Instead, viewing the industry as the customer is advocated. Hospitality educators are prompted to publish "industry-friendly" and "action-learned" research relevant to current problems. The action learning circle model is presented as a guideline for academics (Jayawardena, 2001b).

## **Social Development, Industrial Policy and the Employment Market**

Cultivation and training in human resources have become part of the most fundamental, but important work in a global, competition fierce, modern society. In the early stages of development, the technical labour intentions were unable to keep up with the demands of a modern society. At the present stage of development, human resources with scientific, technological and professional abilities are the key strengths of the economic and social transition of Taiwan. To comply with the demands of the new era, the educational revolution is becoming an important work; however, the education revolution should consider social demands, including the following.

1. Paying attention to market demands.
2. Paying attention to the liberality of the education.
3. Developing methods in training in running businesses and innovative ideas.
4. Having greater respect for personal values.
5. Learning and understanding social environments and social norms.

Under these trends, the educational system will achieve a significant break-through; meanwhile, the cross-century educational development has to receive positive inputs and supports to prevent behaviours deviating from the trends of the future. On aspects of the government's policy on the development of the tourism-related industry, "The White-Paper Policy in Tourism Development" (Bureau of Tourism, 2003) indicated that the 21st century is a new era with a breakthrough in innovative thinking, not only to face the changes and challenges of developing a tourism industry, but to march with the international community in step.

Global tourism numbers have grown 9.6 times from 69 million in 1960 to 644 million in 1999, and tourism income has also grown from 6,867 million dollars in 1960 to 4,545.53 hundred million dollars in 1999; in the whole world, it has grown 66.2 times.

UNWTO further estimates in advance that, by 2020, global tourism will grow to 1,602 million, and global tourism incomes will be also up to 2 trillion dollars. In addition, the relevant statistics carried out on the degree of the international economic contribution of the tourism industry by the WTTC (2000) indicated that the global industry's scale of tourism in 2000 (including tourism-related industries, investments and tax revenues etc.) was about 10.8% accounting for a global GDP, equivalent to 3.58 trillion dollars. The WTTC also estimates the employed population till 2010 in advance; the tourism industry will create career opportunities of approximately 60,000,000, and make the global tourism industry's employed population numbers reach 253 million people.

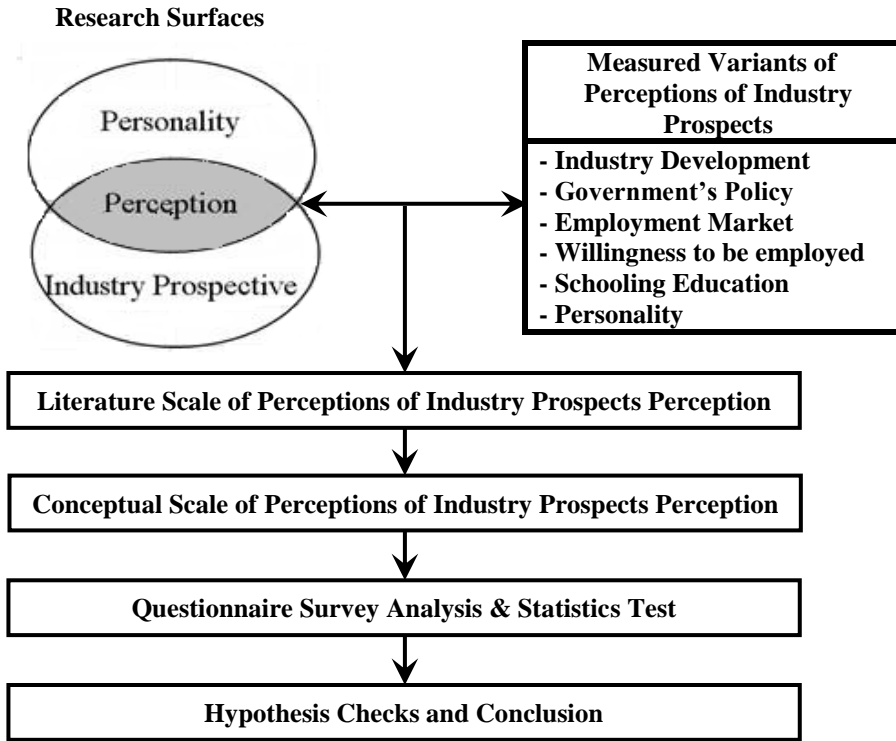
Finally, global tourism development has had three main trends in recent years, namely, the continual emergence of new and developing tour destinations, the diversification of tour products, and the fierce competition of tour destinations. In the last half century, international tourists were concentrated in W. Europe and N. America, accounting for 70% of global tourism. As a geographic advantage, Taiwan occupies a connected area of Asia Pacific, so promoting its strength is the top priority (Bureau of Tourism, 2003).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Structure**

This research focuses on motives, goals, literature reviews and studied levels of the questionnaire survey to construct directions in the perceptions of industry prospects. This research adopts SPSS Statistics Software as an analytical tool after confirming the studied questions and hypothesis, and describes the research structure, methodology, and processes as follows (Table 3-1-1).

**Figure 3-1-1: Research Structure**



### **Research Limit in Survey**

1. This research focuses, as the main participants, on in-school students who study in Southern Taiwan higher institutes; however, there are many variables which will affect the results. So, it is not enough to represent them as a whole, owing to the limits of the survey samplings considered with the demographic, geographic, social, educational and environmental variables.
2. This research adopts "Convenience Sampling" instead of "Random Sampling" owing to its limitations on time, manpower, and financial resources to support the whole development along with the lack of previous academic papers and statistical data.



## **Research Hypothesis**

According to the motive, goal, literature review and research structure, the hypotheses of this research could be expressed as the following:

- H1: Studying in tourism and hospitality academies is for the purpose of personal interest or self realization.
- H2: Personal interests are the main incentives while searching for jobs.
- H3: Practical experience is more achievable and useful for the needs of the employment markets in the tourist industry than the theoretical basis.
- H4: Education plays an important role as an auxiliary.
- H5: Being efficient influences the willingness of the employed to regard the positive attitudes of the government favourably.
- H6: Rates of employment will be increased efficiently if the government promotes and develops industrial policy diligently.
- H7: The potential utility of the industry determines employment.
- H8: Social assessment and evaluation of the industry determine employment.

## **Research Object and Sample**

This research focuses on undergraduate and postgraduate in-school students at 10 academies of six higher institutes as the main participants. In order to be equal and realistic, 25 samplings were sent to each academy; also as correspondents, this research alternatively chose three universities/ colleges in the Higher Education System (HES) and another three Universities of Technology/ Institutes of Technology in the Technical and Vocational Education System (TVES) in Southern Taiwan (Table 3-4-1), and probed the perceptions of industry prospects of in-school students towards the tourism and hospitality-related industry.

**Table 3-4-1: Research Objects and Samples**

Name of School (Abbr.)	Title of the Academic Dept./Inst.	Degree	Education System	Retrieve No. / Sent No. (#)	Retrieved RORs (%)
Diwan University	Tourism & Leisure	B.A.	HES	25/25	100%
	Hospitality Management	B.A.	HES	24/25	96%
Leader University	Hotel Management	B.A	HES	24/25	96%
Toko University	Travel Management	B.A	HES	22/25	88%
	Hospitality Management	B.A	HES	21/25	84%
Tajen University	Recreation & Sports Management	B.A	TVES	22/25	88%
	Hotel & Restaurant Management	B.A.	TVES	23/25	92%
National Kaohsiung Hospitality College	Hospitality Management	M.A.	TVES	23/25	92%
	Travel Management	M.A	TVES	23/25	92%
Tatung Institute of Commerce & Tech.	Food & Beverage Management	B.A.	TVES	23/25	92%
Total Amount	-----	-----	-----	231/250	92.40%

There were 242 samplings retrieved, accounting for 96.8%, and 11 invalid and uncompleted samplings were eliminated. The total valid and complete samplings were 231, accounting for 93.2%. It was certified as an effective and valid study.

## Research Method

The questionnaire survey for this research was adapted as a suitable and effective research instrument according to the following scales: the Vocational Awareness scale, the Career Self-Efficacy

scale, and the Career Decision-Making scale. This research adopted SPSS for Windows to analyse retrieved data, and carried out tests to construct the validity and reliability with Component Analysis (PFA), Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Coefficient), One-Way ANOVA, Post Hoc Test (Multiple Comparisons-Sheffe), Frequency, Descriptive Statistics, and Correlation Analysis (Pearson's Correlation Coefficients).

## **Estimated Conclusions and Suggestions**

This research is based on industry development, government policy, industry perception, willingness to be employed, human resource development, education policy, curricular design, personality and personal perception etc. as well as the literature reviews. It also establishes clear research directions and core values for the whole research structure.

This research expects to produce research results, and adduce actualized and concrete suggestions through total codifications of theories and practices after analysing literature reviews and statistical analysis modes. This chapter is divided into three parts, namely, summarizing conclusions and proposing feasible and useful suggestions for further research.

## **MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS AND HYPOTHESES VERIFICATIONS**

This paragraph mainly adduces main findings and verification results from the research problems, goals and hypotheses in accordance with the studied findings and discussed results, which are described as follows:.

### **1. Adduced findings and verification of research problems and goals**

*1.1 Whether personal perceptions have influences on the willingness to be employed in the tourism and hospitality-related industry or not.*

In comparison with acquired values and the research hypothesis from groups of “PPs” and “PSNLT”, we find that both groups obviously have lower scores than others. The group of “PPs” have a higher score than the “PSNLT” after testing by One-way ANOVA (F-value and P-value). Values in both two components are not quite visible and essential, meaning that even though the “Personal Perceptions” have greater influences on industry prospects for in-school students than “Personality”, the validity and essentiality still need to be improved and increased.

### *1.2 Evaluation of the perceptions the whole tourism and hospitality-related industry environment developments by tourism and hospitality-related in-school students.*

After analyzing relevant statistical values and the research hypothesis, it was found that most of the interviewees who are going to acquire and collect the useful and updated developing tendencies of the tourism and hospitality-related industry have more positive attitudes towards developments of the tourism and hospitality-related industry. In addition, most of the interviewees are satisfied with the laws, policies and packages which have been provided for the tourism and hospitality-related industry by the government, and also think that the rates of employment are going to be increased efficiently if the government promotes and develops tourism and hospitality-related policies diligently.

### *1.3 Analysis of the detected factors which are having influences on tourism and hospitality-related in-school students and industry prospects' perceptions.*

We found that the group of “PEMEW” had higher scores than others in comparison with acquired statistical values and the research hypothesis. The ranges between two components - “PEMEW” and “PIDGP”, did not have great drops, meaning both two components are having greater influences on industry prospects' perceptions by in-school students than others, but the group of “PEMEW” is still the main detected factor with its higher score.

*1.4 Whether government's policies or tendencies of industry development will influence the perceptions of industry prospects of tourism and hospitality-related in-school students.*

The government's policies or tendencies of the industry developments are having greater influences on the perceptions of industry prospects of tourism and hospitality-related in-school students according to the research hypothesis. Most of the interviewees think that the rates of employment and industry development are going to be increased or improved efficiently if the government promotes and develops tourism and hospitality-related policies and activities diligently. Furthermore, most of the interviewees are satisfied with laws, policies and packages provided for the tourism and hospitality-related industry by the government, and also have positive attitudes towards the development of the tourism and hospitality-related industry in Taiwan.

## **2. Verification of the research hypotheses**

Most of the research hypotheses are presented and verified for visibility and validity after being tested by statistical analysis. The variable headings include H2 and H5 in the groups of "PEMEW"; H3, H4, H6, H7, H10 and H12 in the group of "PIDGP"; however, the variable headings in the groups of "PPs (H1 and H8)" and "CDs (H9)" are invisible and invalid. After completing the above-mentioned work, this research explains and checks the research hypotheses with extracted components and groups.

Finally, this research cancels invisible and invalid essentials, and verifies the reality of each research hypothesis one by one after comparing them with two rotated component matrixes to enhance the efficiency of the reliability and validity.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

After analyzing and summarizing the literature reviews and statistical results, this research concludes that the most influential and important factor for the perceptions of tourism and hospitality-

related industry prospects for the interviewees is “Perceptions of the Employment Market and Employment Willingness (PEMEW)”; the second one is “Perceptions of Industry Developments (PID)”, and the last one is “Curricular Designs (CDs)”. According to the above-mentioned, this research makes two concrete conclusions after understanding the important and essential factors, and also after evaluating the whole research.

1. Most of the interviewees who have greater willingness to be employed in tourism and hospitality-related industries are collecting updated information diligently and understand the tendencies of industry development and are also improving and increasing their professional abilities and competencies to achieve their goals of working in the same industry. However, their education cannot offer enough information to in-school students to achieve their goals effectively. This research suggests that school curriculum programs be adjusted or re-designed. For instance, practical programs including internship or sandwich plans should be considered to offer more than theory to fit the demands of industry development. Moreover, teachers and educators could train or provide more practical and updated information about the industry development in tourism and hospitality-related fields during the in-school periods.
2. Most of the interviewees had personalities for and personal perceptions about the prospects of the industry which were weak and unstable. Furthermore, they also lacked the multi-abilities and career plans to fit the demands of industry development. Including professional licensing and diverse courses/training into the required in-school programs are considered to be useful for increasing or improving professional abilities and perceptions of industry prospects.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

For the questionnaire survey, this research adopted 231 samplings to proceed with statistical analysis owing to the limitations on time, human power, and material costs; in theoretical

applications, the questionnaire samples are more suitable if they can be over 20% of total statistical parameters.

Therefore, this research suggests that the researchers who are interested in using the same or relevant themes could adopt more samplings or study other variables, such as environment, demography, teaching goals, information requirements, etc. and also focus on a regular object to understand perceptive degrees, influential degrees, and influential factors in the perceptions of industry prospects.

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