

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
MODERN EDUCATION
(IJMOE)**www.gaexcellence.com/ijmoe**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF HOSPITALITY AND
TOURISM CAREERS: EVIDENCE FROM KLANG
VALLEY, MALAYSIA**Ain Shamimi Arifin¹, Noraihan Mohamad²¹ Department of Hospitality, School of Hospitality and Creative Arts, Management and Science University (MSU), University Drive, Off Persiaran Olahraga, Section 13, 40100 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia ain_shamimi@msu.edu.my *<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4090-2346>² Department of Hospitality, School of Hospitality and Creative Arts, Management and Science University (MSU), University Drive, Off Persiaran Olahraga, Section 13, 40100 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia noraihan_mohamad@msu.edu.my *<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9815-7070>

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Article Info:**Article history:**

Received date: 29.07.2026

Revised date: 23.08.2026

Accepted date: 15.09.2026

Published date: 30.09.2026

To cite this document:

Ariffin, A. S., & Mohamad, N. (2026). Students' Perceptions of Hospitality and Tourism Careers: Evidence from Klang Valley, Malaysia. *International Journal of Modern Education*, 8(31), 1801-1817.

DOI: 10.35631/IJMOE.831104**Abstract:**

Malaysia's hospitality and tourism industry plays a significant role in the national economy, yet attracting students to pursue long-term careers in the industry remains a concern. This study examines students' perceptions of three factors associated with pursuing a career in the hospitality and tourism industry, namely nature of work, salary and benefits, and social status. A quantitative descriptive research design was adopted, involving a survey of 300 hospitality and tourism students from private universities in Klang Valley, Malaysia. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, to determine students' overall perceptions and the relative importance of the three factors. The findings indicate that students generally held positive perceptions across all three factors. Addressing these aspects may contribute to improving the attractiveness of the industry as a long-term career pathway for hospitality and tourism graduates.

Keyword:

Hospitality Students, Perceived Career Risk, Nature of Work, Salary and Benefits, Social Status



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Introduction

The hospitality and tourism industry are very vital in the world economy through job creation and cultural exchange (Dighliya et al., 2023). The industry contributed approximately 10% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and supported over 300 million jobs worldwide, with strong recovery following the post-pandemic period (WTTC, 2024). In Malaysia, the tourism and hospitality industry has similar regained its importance as a key economic supported by increasing international tourism arrivals, infrastructure development, global connectivity and government initiatives aimed at strengthening tourism recovery and employment sustainability (Malaysian Investment Development Authority [MIDA], (2020).

The industry's economic recovery has further strengthened its role as an important source of employment for hospitality and tourism graduates. The Department of Statistics Malaysia in 2025 reported the tourism sector generated RM291.9 billion with GDP of 15.1% in 2024 with approximately 3.5 million (21.6%) jobs of total national employment. The continued expansion of tourism activities therefore creates substantial employment opportunities and career for hospitality and tourism graduates. Despite the positive economic developments, to attract and retain skilled human capital continues to be a pressing challenge for the hospitality and tourism industry (Giotis, 2026). In Malaysia, among key concern is students' uncertainty and hesitation in pursuing careers in the industry due to their perceptions of potential career risks (Muniar et al., 2025).

In hospitality and tourism career, students' perceptions can be influence by several employment factors. According to Richardson (2013), the nature of work, salary and benefits, and social status may influence how students evaluate the industry as a potential career pathway. This study being supported by Kumar et al. (2023), these employment factors discourage them to enter the industry although the hospitality and tourism industry offered attractive job, good salary and promotion opportunities. Therefore, it is important to understand students' perceptions of the industry for long term employment.

The first perception of this study focused is nature of work. The nature of work of hospitality and tourism involves long working hours, irregular schedules, emotional labour, and physically demanding tasks may create challenges for maintaining work-life balance (Chang et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022). Although these nature of work are common across hospitality and tourism industry, students may perceive the nature of work differently depending on their expectations and prior exposure to the industry.

Moreover, students' career perceptions of salary and benefits are also important to consider. Hospitality employment is often associated with lower entry level wages and limited employment benefits as compared to other industries (Ardani et al., 2024). Although managerial and senior positions in hospitality and tourism industry may offered higher

financial salaries, students may place greater emphasis on immediate financial stability when making career decisions.

In addition, students' perceptions of hospitality careers may also be influenced by social status. This factor is particularly relevant in Asian cultural contexts, where family expectations and societal recognition strongly influence careers choices. Hospitality and tourism careers may sometimes be perceived as less prestigious compared to fields such as medicine, law, or engineering (Lee et. al., 2023). Consequently, concerns regarding social recognition and career prestige may influence students' perceptions of the attractiveness and long-term value of hospitality careers.

These perceptions may have been further reinforced by the COVID-19, which exposed the vulnerability of the hospitality and tourism industry to external disruptions through widespread job losses, reduced working hours, and increased employment uncertainty (Birtch et al., 2021). Although the industry has shown strong recovery, the experience may continue to influence how students evaluate the stability and risks associated with hospitality careers. Therefore, examining students' perceptions factors is relevant to understanding how the industry can strengthen its appeal among future hospitality and tourism professionals.

Despite the industry's significant contribution to Malaysia's economy and employment, limited empirical research has examined how nature of work, salary and benefits, and social status influence students' perceptions towards hospitality and tourism careers. This study particularly focuses among Malaysian students in private universities in Klang Valley.

Literature Review

Careers in the hospitality and tourism industry have attracted much scholarly attention, focused at understanding why students' reluctance to pursue long-term employment in this industry. In this section, the existing literature on nature of work, salary and benefits, and social status is reviewed.

Nature of Work

The nature of work in the hospitality and tourism industry has been identified as one of the most influential factors affecting students' career perceptions. Industry characteristics such as long working hours, irregular schedules, demanding physical and emotional interactions create concerns on work-life balance and long-term wellbeing (Chang et al., 2020). This is supported by Liu et al., (2022), students perceive hospitality jobs as stressful and unstable, which discourages them from viewing a career in the industry as a long-term employment.

Additionally, the service-oriented nature of the industry requires employees to maintain high levels of emotional labour when interacting with customers. Therefore, lead to burnout, fatigue, reduced job satisfaction and reinforcing negative perceptions of the profession (Mohadir et al., 2023).

Ardani et al., (2024) argued that the dynamic and fast-paced nature of hospitality provides opportunities for personal growth, skill development, and career advancement. This is because employees are exposed to diverse customer interactions and international environment, which can enhance employability and professional competencies.

Salary and Benefits

Salary and benefits represent another influential factor in students' career decisions, strongly linked to perceptions of job stability, career attractiveness, and long-term commitment. Empirical studies have consistently shown that hospitality jobs are perceived to offer lower entry-level salaries compared to other industries (Rosyidi, 2021). Moreover, the dependence on overtime pays, tips, and performance-based compensation creates income uncertainty, which may further discourage students from entering the industry (Demirović Bajrami et al., 2021).

Despite these concerns, some scholars highlight that the industry offers long-term financial growth opportunities, particularly for individuals who progress into managerial positions. Career advancement pathways in the hospitality and tourism industry can provide higher income and leadership opportunities (Perić et al., 2021). Nonetheless, students tend to prioritize immediate financial stability over long-term potential, which explains why salary and benefits concerns remain a contributor to perceived career risk.

Social Status

The role of social status in shaping career decisions is particularly significant in societies, where family expectations and societal perceptions influence employment choices. Students are encouraged to pursue professional such as law, medicine or engineering. These professions are seen as offering greater social recognition, while hospitality careers are often viewed as less prestigious (Lee et al., 2023). This perception is shaped by cultural norms, societal values, and stereotypes that associate hospitality jobs with low-skilled or temporary employment.

In line with this, research shows that individuals from certain socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to prioritize prestige and upward mobility when selecting careers (Mohadir et al., 2023). This reflecting how social status considerations can influence occupational preferences. However, current trends suggest that certain segments of the industry, such as luxury tourism, event management, and international hospitality careers, are gradually gaining higher professional credibility (Padhi et al., 2022). Despite this shift, negative stereotypes persist, and social status remains a significant barrier to attracting students to the industry.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive quantitative research design to examine the students' perceptions associated with pursuing a career in hospitality and tourism industry. This study involved 300 university students enrolled in hospitality and tourism programmes in Klang Valley. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising Likert scale items measuring the identified factors

A pilot test with 30 participants ensured the reliability and clarity of the survey instrument. Ethical considerations, including obtaining informed consent and maintaining confidentiality, were strictly followed in line with standard research practices (Amissah et al., 2020; Mohamad, N. 2022).

The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The mean scores were also compared to identify the relative

ranking of the three factors. Item-level mean scores were examined to identify specific aspects that received comparatively higher or lower perceptions among the respondents.

Findings

Demographic of the respondents

Based on table 1, the study surveyed a total of 300 university students enrolled in hospitality and tourism programs. Among the respondents, 161 (53.7%) were male and 139 (46.3%) were female. In terms of age, the largest group was 162 students (54%) in the 21-25 years old range, followed by 90 students (30%) aged 18- 20 years, and 48 students (16%) aged 26-30 years.

Regarding nationality, 236 students (78.7%) were Malaysian, while 64 students (21.3%) were international students. The respondents came from private universities in Klang Valley, from Management and Science University (32.8%), INTI University (18%), Sunway University (16.4%), UNISEL Shah Alam (15.6%), Taylors University (9%) and others (8.2%).

In terms of career intentions, 244 students (81.3%) indicated an intention to pursue a career in the hospitality and tourism industry, whereas 56 students (18.7%) did not intend to pursue a career in the industry. This finding indicates that most respondents already demonstrate a positive inclination towards hospitality and tourism careers.

Table 1: Profile Demographics Respondents

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	161	53.7
Female	139	46.3
Total	300	100
Age		
18-20 years old	90	30
21-25 years old	162	54
26-30 years old	48	16
Total	300	100
Nationality		
Malaysian	236	78.7
Non-Malaysian	64	21.3
Total	300	100
University		
Management and Science University	80	32.8
INTI University	44	18
Sunway University	40	16.4
UNISEL Shah Alam	38	15.6
Taylors University	22	9
Others	20	8.2
Total	300	100

Do you plan to pursue a career in the

industry?

Yes	244	81.3
No	58	18.7
Total	300	100

Reliability Test

A reliability analysis was conducted to examine the internal consistency of the measurement items for the factors examined in this study. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated separately for nature of work, salary and benefits, and social status. The results indicate that the items within each factor demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, supporting their use for subsequent descriptive analysis. Table 2 presented the Reliability Test of the questionnaire items.

Table 2: Reliability Test

Factor	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Nature of Work	5	0.762
Salary and Benefits	5	0.748
Social Status	5	0.785

Note: Cronbach's alpha values were calculated based on the pilot study (n = 30).

Descriptive Analysis

A descriptive analysis was conducted examine students' perceptions of factors associated with pursuing a career in the hospitality and tourism industry. The mean and standard deviation values were used to determine the overall tendency of respondents' perceptions. The analysis also examined individual items within each factor to identify aspects that received comparatively higher and lower ratings.

As presented in Table 3, the overall mean score for nature of work was 19.65 across five items. It is indicating generally favourable perceptions among students. The highest rated item was "I feel confident that there are good chances for career growth," with a mean score of 4.03 (SD = 0.964). This finding indicates that students recognise opportunities for career development within the hospitality and tourism industry.

The item "I am comfortable with the working hours in this industry" recorded a mean score of 3.93 (SD = 1.047), suggesting that students generally viewed the working hours positively. Similarly, the item concerning the fast-paced work environment recorded a mean of 3.90 (SD = 1.063), while the perception that jobs in the industry offer steady work recorded a mean of 3.90 (SD = 1.066).

The lowest rated item was "I feel that this industry provides a balanced and manageable workload," with a mean score of 3.89 (SD = 0.972). Although this score remains within a generally favourable range, it suggested that workload and work-life balance may be comparatively less favourable aspects of students' perceptions of hospitality and tourism employment.

The findings indicated that students generally favourable perceptions of salary and benefits, with an overall mean score of 19.81 across five items. The highest rated item was *"I feel that the benefits like insurance and bonuses are good,"* with a mean score of 4.05 (SD = 0.965). This suggested that students have a positive perception of the additional employment benefits associated with hospitality and tourism careers.

The item *"I believe there are many chances for moving up in this industry"* recorded a mean of 4.02 (SD = 0.950), indicated that respondents recognised opportunities for career advancement. The perceptions that salary matches the work required and that salaries in the industry are fair also received relatively positive ratings, with mean scores of 3.94 (SD = 1.001) and 3.93 (SD = 1.006), respectively.

However, the lowest rated item was *"I believe overtime work in this industry is fairly paid,"* with a mean score of 3.88 (SD = 1.106). Although the mean remains generally favourable, this result indicated that overtime compensation is a comparatively weaker aspect of students' perceptions of salary and benefits. The relatively higher standard deviation also suggests greater variation in respondents' views regarding overtime pay.

The findings reveal that students demonstrated the most favourable perceptions for social status, with an overall total mean score of 20.34 across five items. The results indicated that students recognised the professional and social value associated with careers in the hospitality and tourism industry.

The highest rated item was *"I feel that hospitality careers can contribute positively to society,"* with a mean score of 4.14 (SD = 0.974). This indicated a strong perception among students that hospitality careers make a positive contribution to society. The item *"I believe working in hospitality and tourism is a professional job"* also recorded a high mean score of 4.07 (SD = 0.979), suggesting that respondents generally viewed hospitality and tourism employment as a professional occupation.

Both *"I feel proud to tell others if I work in the industry"* and *"I think careers in this field have strong recognition"* recorded mean scores of 4.06, with standard deviations of 1.034 and 0.936, respectively. These findings indicate that students expressed positive attitudes towards the professional recognition and personal pride associated with hospitality and tourism careers. The lowest rated item was *"I believe society values hospitality professionals,"* with a mean score of 4.01 (SD = 0.948). Although this remains a favourable rating, it was comparatively lower than the other social status items. This suggested that students may perceive a slight difference between the professional value of hospitality careers and the level of recognition given to hospitality professionals by society.

Overall

Overall, the comparison mean scores indicates that all three factors received generally favourable perceptions from the respondents. Social status recorded the highest mean score (20.34), followed by salary and benefits (19.81) and nature of work (19.65). These findings suggested that students generally perceive hospitality and tourism careers positively across social status, salary and benefits, and the nature of work.

Among the individual items, the highest mean was recorded for the statement that hospitality careers can contribute positively to society ($M = 4.14$), while the lowest mean was recorded for the statement concerning fair payment for overtime work ($M = 3.88$). This indicates that students' most favourable perception relates to the social contribution of hospitality careers, whereas overtime compensation represents a comparatively weaker aspect.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that students generally hold positive perceptions of the three factors associated with pursuing a career in hospitality and tourism. Nevertheless, specific aspects, particularly workload balance and overtime compensation, received comparatively lower ratings.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Nature of work	Comfortable with the working hours	3.93	1.047
	Balanced and manageable workload	3.89	0.972
	Excited about fast-paced environment	3.90	1.063
	Jobs offer steady work	3.90	1.066
	Good chances for career growth	4.03	0.964
Salary and Benefits	Salaries are fair	3.93	1.006
	Chances for moving up	4.02	0.950
	Salary matches work required	3.94	1.001
	Overtime work is fairly paid	3.88	1.106
	Benefits such as insurance and bonuses are good	4.05	0.965
Social Status	Hospitality and tourism is a professional job	4.07	0.979
	Proud to tell others about working in the industry	4.06	1.034
	Careers have strong recognition	4.06	0.936
	Society values hospitality professionals	4.01	0.948
	Hospitality careers contribute positively to society	4.14	0.974

Discussion

The findings of this study provided empirical insights into students' perceptions of factors associated with pursuing a career in the hospitality and tourism industry. Overall, the findings indicate that students held generally favourable perceptions across all factors. Among the three factors, social status recorded the highest overall mean, followed by salary and benefits and nature of work. The findings suggest that students generally recognise the professional and social value of hospitality and tourism careers, while certain aspects of working conditions and financial compensation remain areas of comparatively lower perception.

The findings indicate that students generally held positive perceptions of the nature of work in the hospitality and tourism industry. In particular, the highest rated item concerned opportunities for career growth, suggesting that students recognise the potential for professional development within the industry. This finding is consistent with the literature highlighting the opportunities provided by hospitality employment for developing professional competencies, gaining diverse work experiences, and progressing into more senior positions (Ardani et al., 2024).

Meanwhile, workload and work-life balance received the lowest rating among the nature of work items. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that long working hours, irregular schedules, and demanding work environments are common characteristics of hospitality employment (Chang et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022). The comparatively lower perception of workload balance suggests that students may recognise the career opportunities available in the industry while remaining aware of the demanding nature of hospitality work. This finding highlights the importance of presenting a balanced understanding of hospitality careers to students. While the industry can provide opportunities for career development and diverse work experiences, working conditions remain an important consideration. Greater attention to workload management, reasonable working hours, employee wellbeing, and work-life balance may contribute to more favourable perceptions of hospitality employment among future graduates.

Salary and benefits also received generally favourable perceptions from the respondents. The highest rated item within this dimension concerned on employment benefits such as insurance and bonuses, followed by opportunities for career advancement. These findings suggest that students recognise that hospitality employment can provide benefits beyond basic salary and may offer opportunities for progression over time.

The positive perception of career advancement is consistent with previous studies suggesting that hospitality careers can provide career opportunities to progress into supervisory and managerial positions (Perić et al., 2021). This indicates that students may view the industry as offering longer-term opportunities for professional and financial development.

Nevertheless, overtime compensation received the lowest rating within the salary and benefits dimension. This finding is relevant given that hospitality employment commonly involves extended or irregular working hours. Concerns on whether additional working hours are fairly compensated may influence students' overall evaluations of employment conditions. Previous research has similarly highlighted concerns related to compensation structures and financial rewards within hospitality employment (Demirović Bajrami et al., 2021).

The findings therefore suggested that while students generally perceive salary and benefits positively, compensation for additional working hours remains an area that could be strengthened. Transparent remuneration structures, appropriate overtime compensation, and clearly communicated career progression pathways may help improve students' perceptions of the financial attractiveness of hospitality careers.

Among the three factors examined, social status recorded the highest overall mean. This indicating the most favourable perception among respondents. The highest rated item was the belief that hospitality careers can contribute positively to society, followed by the perception that hospitality and tourism is a professional occupation. These findings suggest that

respondents increasingly recognise the professional and social contribution of hospitality and tourism careers.

The positive perception of social status is particularly noteworthy because previous literature has identified occupational prestige as a potential concern within the hospitality industry (Lee et al., 2023). However, the findings of this study indicate that the students viewed hospitality employment as professional and socially valuable.

This positive perception may reflect increasing awareness of the professional competencies required within the hospitality and tourism industry. In contemporary hospitality careers extend beyond traditional service roles and include management, event management, luxury tourism, digital hospitality, sustainable tourism, and international career opportunities. Such developments may contribute to improving the professional image of the industry and its recognition among younger generations (Padhi et al., 2022).

Although social status received the highest overall perception, the item concerning whether society values hospitality professionals recorded the lowest mean within this dimension. This suggests that students may personally recognise the professional value and social contribution of hospitality careers while perceiving comparatively less recognition from society at large. Strengthening public awareness of hospitality professionals' skills, responsibilities, and contributions may therefore further improve the industry's occupational image.

Overall, social status received the highest overall perception, suggesting that students increasingly recognise hospitality and tourism as a professional and socially valuable career field. Salary and benefits received the second highest perception, indicating generally favourable views of employment benefits and career advancement, although concerns regarding overtime compensation remain. Nature of work recorded the lowest of the three overall scores, particularly due to comparatively lower perceptions of workload balance. This suggests that working conditions may require greater attention even though students recognise opportunities for career growth.

Implications

Academic Implications

First, the favourable perceptions suggest that hospitality education can play an important role in strengthening students' understanding of the career opportunities available within the industry. Academicians and programme coordinators can incorporate more comprehensive career-related content into hospitality curricula to expose students to diverse career pathways, professional roles, career progression opportunities, and emerging areas of employment.

Second, the comparatively lower perception of workload balance within the nature of work dimension highlights the importance of preparing students with realistic expectations regarding hospitality employment. Hospitality programmes can integrate discussions and learning activities related to work-life balance, employee wellbeing, workload management, emotional labour, and professional resilience. Such approaches can help students develop a more balanced understanding of both the opportunities and challenges associated with hospitality careers.

Third, the findings related to salary and benefits, comparatively lower rating for overtime compensation, suggest that students would benefit from greater awareness of employment conditions and remuneration structures. Academicians can provide students with information about salary progression, employment benefits, overtime policies, and career advancement pathways across different hospitality occupations. This information can be incorporated through industry talks, career development activities, case studies, and internship preparation. Finally, the high perception of social status indicates that students increasingly recognise hospitality and tourism as a professional and socially valuable career field. Academic institutions can further strengthen this perception by highlighting the professional competencies, managerial responsibilities, leadership roles, and societal contributions associated with hospitality and tourism occupations. Greater integration of industry professionals and authentic workplace experiences into teaching and learning may further strengthen students' understanding of the professional nature of the industry.

Managerial Implications

The findings also provide implications for hospitality and tourism industry managers and employers. Since nature of work received the lowest overall perception among the three factors, industry stakeholders should pay particular attention to working conditions and employee wellbeing. Employers can consider initiatives such as more effective workload distribution, reasonable scheduling practices, adequate staffing levels, and measures that support work-life balance. Improving these aspects may contribute to a more attractive perception of hospitality employment among prospective graduates.

Regarding salary and benefits, the comparatively lower rating for overtime compensation highlights the importance of transparent and fair remuneration practices. Hospitality organisations should clearly communicate salary structures, overtime policies, incentives, and employment benefits to prospective and current employees. Providing transparent career progression pathways and demonstrating how employees can progress from entry-level positions to supervisory and managerial roles may also strengthen the attractiveness of hospitality careers.

The findings concerning social status indicate that students generally recognise hospitality and tourism as a professional occupation and acknowledge its contribution to society. Nevertheless, the comparatively lower rating for societal recognition suggests that industry stakeholders can strengthen the public image of hospitality careers. Employers and industry associations can promote the professional competencies, career achievements, leadership responsibilities, and societal contributions of hospitality professionals through industry campaigns, career events, professional awards, and engagement with educational institutions.

Industry managers should also strengthen collaboration with higher education institutions. Structured internships, industry mentoring, career talks, workplace visits, and graduate recruitment programmes can provide students with realistic exposure to hospitality employment. Such initiatives can help students understand actual working conditions while simultaneously allowing employers to communicate career opportunities, remuneration structures, and progression pathways more effectively.

Overall, the managerial implications suggest that improving the attractiveness of hospitality careers requires attention to both employment conditions and industry image. By strengthening workload management, remuneration transparency, career progression, employee benefits, and professional recognition, hospitality organisations can present the industry as a more attractive and sustainable career pathway for future graduates.

Limitations of Study

Several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the study employed a descriptive quantitative research design; therefore, the findings are limited to describing students' perceptions of nature of work, salary and benefits, and social status. The study does not establish causal relationships between these factors and students' career decisions, career intentions, or perceived career risk. Consequently, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that any particular factor directly influences students' willingness to pursue a career in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Second, the study involved 300 hospitality and tourism students from private universities in Klang Valley, Malaysia. As the respondents were selected from a specific geographical area and institutional context, the findings may not be generalisable to hospitality and tourism students from public universities, other regions of Malaysia, or other educational contexts. Future studies could include a broader sample covering different regions and types of higher education institutions.

Third, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire responses, which may be affected by respondents' individual experiences, expectations, and perceptions at the time of data collection. Students who have had greater exposure to the hospitality industry through internships or part-time employment may perceive the industry differently from those with limited industry experience. Future research could therefore consider incorporating respondents' level of industry exposure as an additional contextual factor.

Finally, the study focused specifically on nature of work, salary and benefits, and social status. Other factors that may shape students' perceptions of hospitality careers, such as career development opportunities, organisational culture, job security, work-life balance, family influence, employability, and opportunities for international mobility, were not examined. Future research could expand the range of factors and employ inferential or qualitative approaches to obtain a deeper understanding of students' career perceptions and decision-making processes.

Conclusion

This study examined students' perceptions of three factors associated with pursuing a career in the hospitality and tourism industry, nature of work, salary and benefits, and social status. Based on responses from 300 hospitality and tourism students in private universities in Klang Valley, the findings indicate that students generally held favourable perceptions across all three dimensions. Among the factors examined, social status recorded the highest overall mean, followed by salary and benefits and nature of work. This suggests that students generally recognise hospitality and tourism as a professional and socially valuable career field. The findings provide important implications for both higher education institutions and hospitality industry stakeholders.

Overall, the study contributes to a better understanding of how hospitality and tourism students perceive key factors of careers in the industry. While the findings demonstrate generally favourable perceptions, continued efforts to improve work-life balance, compensation practices, career development, and professional recognition are important for strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of hospitality and tourism careers among future graduates.

Acknowledgements: The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Management and Science University (MSU) for providing the necessary resources and support throughout the course of this research. Special appreciation is extended to colleagues and peers who contributed valuable insights and constructive feedback, which greatly enhanced the quality of this paper.

Funding Statement: No Funding.

Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. All authors have contributed to this work and approved the final version of the manuscript for submission to the International Journal of Modern Education (IJMOE).

Ethics Statement: This study did not involve any human participants, animals, or sensitive data requiring ethical approval. The authors confirm that the research was conducted in accordance with accepted academic integrity and ethical publishing standards.

Author Contribution Statement: All authors contributed significantly to the development of this manuscript. [Ain Shamimi Arifin] was responsible for the conceptualization, methodology, and overall supervision of the study. She also handled data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results. [Noraihan Mohamad] contributed to the literature review, drafting, and critical revision of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript prior to submission.

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