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Abstract:
The main objective of this study is to acknowledge the perceptions of undergraduates on pursuing a career in the Hospitality Industry. The service industry such as hospitality industry of Bangladesh is a significant sector contributing to the economic development and have seen flourishing prosperity in recent years. The success of hospitality industries and their prestigious brand image have encouraged youth generation specially undergraduates to pursue their future career in Hospitality industry. This study basically identifies twenty variables associated with the influencing factors that may instigate undergraduates to pursue the Hospitality industry as their career choice. By a systematic analysis of twenty independent variables result shows that, six variables are statistically arrived at 1% significant level that means have significant influence on undergraduates’ perception and another eight variables are estimated as 5% of significant level. This implies that ensuring high Salary, brand names of the company, Job security, diversified working opportunity, and proper replacement polices each of the variables is positively influencing undergraduate’s preference in career choice in hospitality industry. This study concludes with few practical implications that have been extracted in the light of empirical findings to influence undergraduates’ perceptions positively towards hospitality industry.

Keywords: Hospitality, Dhaka University, Perceptions, Influencing Factors, Career Choice, Bangladesh.

Introduction
The Tourism and hospitality industry plays a vital role in the economic growth and development of countries worldwide. In Bangladesh, this industry has been rapidly expanding, contributing significantly to employment generation and foreign exchange earnings. With its dynamic nature and potential for growth, it has become an attractive field for many aspiring professionals. Bangladesh is blessed with a large part of young generation and youths specially undergraduates are the one who are fascinated to work in diverse and challenging industry similar to Hospitality Industry. However, according to Ashif and Hoque (2020), various factors such as personal experiences,
societal expectations, and cultural norms influence the perceptions of undergraduates regarding pursue a career in the hospitality industry which is complex and multifaceted.

In recent years, due to the changing consumer preferences, technological advancements, and evolving global trends Bangladesh hospitality industry have undergone some significant transformations. It encompasses a broad spectrum of sectors, including hotels, restaurants, tourism, event planning, and entertainment, providing a multitude of career paths for individuals with diverse interests and skills. In spite of being an emerging industry in Bangladesh, this sector lacks a qualified, skilled and dedicated human force to operate the activity smoothly. Currently the majority of human resources in Bangladesh’s hospitality industry, apart from some five-star hotels, have a mid-level and lower-level of education and industrial training and only a few have graduation degree from tourism discipline (Richardson & Thomas, 2012). Several empirical research suggests that a lot of students who are graduating from tourism background are not interested and somehow do not opt to engage in the career choice in hospitality industry. Despite its vast potential, there exists a range of perceptions and misconceptions among undergraduates for selecting their future career in hospitality industry (Wen et al., 2018).

For some undergraduates, the hospitality industry is seen as a glamorous and exciting realm, where they can immerse themselves in the world of luxurious hotels, exquisite restaurants, and thrilling events. It has been noted that undergraduates often envision to interact with people from all walks of life, creating unforgettable experiences and forging lasting connections through their employment. The prospect of working in a vibrant and ever-evolving industry, where no two days are the same, add to the allure of hospitality as a career choice (Ashif and Hoque, 2020). On the other hand, there are those who perceive the hospitality industry as demanding, challenging, and potentially exhausting. The long and irregular working hours, high-pressure environments, and the need to constantly meet the expectations of guests can be seen as drawbacks by some undergraduates. Concerns about work-life balance, job stability, and career progression may lead them to question whether a career in hospitality is the right path for them (Anthony et al, 2021). However, it is important to recognize that perceptions are not universal, and there is a growing shift in attitudes among undergraduates towards the hospitality industry.

Nevertheless, the practitioners and administrative personnel of the hospitality industry would agree upon the fact that for decades the hotel industry has suffered with significant staff turnover, which has a detrimental impact on the sector’s efficiency, quality of service, training, and human capital (Wen et al., 2018). Additionally, it has been difficult for the tourist and hospitality sectors to find and keep skilled workers across the globe. The hospitality industry must address some human resource perceptions in order to retain personnel and build a variety of human resources. In order for today’s students to be good practitioners of future, it is crucial to comprehend how they view professions in tourism and hospitality (PIZAM and SHANI, 2009).

A greater understanding of how the hospitality sector can retain highly educated and competent personnel is also crucial. Several studies have revealed that the hotel business has an unfavourable image among students studying tourism, implying that it may be difficult to attract and retain talented workers. According to Richardson and Thomas (2012), student perceptions of the business are influenced by employment nature, societal status, compensation and incentives industry-person congeniality, physical working conditions, advancement opportunities, fellow workers, leadership, and industry passion. The emphasis on professionalism high Salary, brand names of the company, Job security, diversified working opportunity, and proper replacement policies each of the variables is positively influencing undergraduate’s preference in career choice in hospitality industry.
In this evolving landscape, it is crucial to delve deeper into the perceptions of undergraduates in selecting their future career in the hospitality industry (Anthony et al., 2021). To ensure that the hospitality industry continues to draw talented people who can shape its future and contribute to its growth, educators, industry leaders, and aspiring professionals can collaborate to bridge the gap between perception and reality by understanding their perspectives, motivations, and concerns.

Literature Review

The hospitality sector is one of the fastest-growing in the international economy and plays a big role in global trade. There have been increasing worries about how students are seen in the industry and whether or not they want to work in it, even though the hospitality industry provides a wealth of chances for career advancement and employment. Numerous studies have indicated that a significant segment of students pursuing hospitality majors demonstrate disinterest in pursuing careers in the field. According to Richardson (2008) study of Australian hospitality students, factors that discouraged their interest included physically demanding work, low pay, the perception of low-status careers, long working hours, limited involvement and advancement opportunities, and strict management.

A favourable view arose, contributing to heightened awareness of hotel management courses. Singh and Ad (2017) study revealed the critical impact these courses have in changing students' perceptions. On the other hand, several studies have indicated that exposure to the sector may be a transforming force. After being exposed to the industrial setting, students' views shifted from being positive to being negative. Datta and Jha (2015) attributed this change to stress and worries about things like poor pay, long work hours, and a decline in social standing. Kumar et al. (2014) examined how students' attitudes changed as they progressed through their education and after being exposed to the business, and they found that fewer students were planning to pursue careers in the hotel industry.

According to Kumar (2015) investigation gender discrepancies in perception, finding that females had fewer favourable perceptions of salary and advancement possibilities in the business. According to Maxwell et al. (2010) discovered that those who had prior experience in the hotel sector were less likely to seek employment in the profession. Students considering a career in hospitality stated a preference for difficult tasks, ethical companies who offer professional growth chances, and steady employment as characteristics that might improve retention. In contrast, several research has found that people have a positive attitude towards working in hospitality. According to Lu and Adler (2009) study, for example, found that the majority of Chinese undergraduate students wanted to work in the business because of high earnings, intriguing employment possibilities, and potential for personal growth.

Akin Aksu and Deniz Köksal (2005) emphasise that in order to address these issues, sectoral and governmental strategies are required. According to the Le et al., (2018) investigated factors impacting tertiary students' views of employment in hospitality within a Vietnamese environment. It's interesting to note that respondents from higher education (HE) showed less optimism and dedication to a future in hospitality than did respondents from vocational education and training (VET) institutes. Mandatory internships emerge as an essential component in promoting the strong growth of the hotel business. Trainees face several hurdles in their quest of professional development, including prolonged duty hours and high-stress work situations.

Several research papers, such as Cook et al. (2004) argue for collaborative efforts by governments, industry players, and educational institutions to address and overcome these difficulties. Various studies have examined and evaluated graduates' perspectives about their futures in the travel and hospitality sector. In contrast to optimistic perspectives, a recurring topic in the majority of researches is on
pessimistic judgements, which are shaped by variables such as poor pay and job security. A similar finding was reported in the study by Walmsley et al. (2020) which showed that very few students were attracted to the idea of working in the hospitality sector. Employer interviews confirmed the 'ignorance barrier' that prevents young people from applying for jobs in the hospitality industry.

According to Raybould and Wilkins (2005) the sector places a strong premium on graduates who lack real-world experience and frequently forces them to begin in operational jobs. Graduates' opinions on professional progression within the sector are likewise unclear. Even the most accomplished students are directed into management training programmes that focus primarily on hands-on training. According to Richardson (2008) graduates frequently believe that working excessively long hours interferes with living a normal life and has an impact on family life. Furthermore, respondents to his survey said that the industry's vulnerability to seasonality contributes to the general lack of assurance around secure work. The 2002 George Street Research highlights the general ignorance of participants about the range of employment options in the sector.

A self-administered questionnaire was used in a recent study by Yunus et al. (2021) to determine how students felt about the tourism and hospitality industries. The study found that opinions among students studying hospitality ranged from favourable ones motivated by high incomes, interesting occupations, and chances for personal growth to negative ones motivated by low-status, low-paying, and physically taxing employment as well as long hours. This disparity in opinions highlights the value of exposure to the sector and highlights gender-based disparities in opinions on prospects for advancement and compensation. In conclusion, the hotel and tourism sector emerges as the greatest employer of semi-skilled and skilled labour, which propels the creation of educational institutions in numerous locations to satisfy the need for qualified workers in these fields.

According to Littlejohn and Watson (2004) attitudes held by students and graduates, in addition to information gained, are crucial in keeping talent in the field. However, because of their rigorous schedules, little pay, and unsatisfactory working circumstances, students' impressions of their previous job experiences—whether official or informal—tend to be negatively impacted by them. The most talented recent graduates are not drawn to the field in large numbers by this circumstance. Given this, it is critical to examine and evaluate how recent graduates in hospitality and tourism see their jobs, emphasising the value of optimism and persistence in supporting the travel and hospitality sector. The results of this kind of investigation may provide human resource managers and tourist planners with important information, especially when it comes to modifying graduates' attitudes and perspectives during their academic careers to be in line with the demands of the modern business.

**Research Methodology**

To investigate the variables influencing students to pursue a profession in the hospitality business, both primary and secondary data were utilized. Personal interviews and individual surveys were used to acquire primary data from Dhaka University's department of tourism and hotel management students. To gather background information on the basis of undergraduate students' career choices, consultations with tourism professionals were conducted. And they have found some common explanations (variables) that have a direct effect on undergraduate students' future career. Furthermore, the detected variable is supported by reliable literature such as various media articles, academic publications, and study papers.

To meet the research criteria, the study examined a variety of published and unpublished literature on the issue. Purposive sampling was used in the study to choose a sample size of 100 current THM department students at Dhaka University. The survey's participants were undergraduate students currently enrolled in the University of Dhaka's THM department,
including 47% of respondents from the department's fourth year, 36% from its third year, 16% from its second year, and the remaining 1% from its first year. The main body of information was gathered between January 4, 2023, and March 31, 2023. Out of the 150 students who were initially recruited, only 130 agreed to take part and complete the questionnaire by supplying their data. Only 116 valid surveys have been sorted; the remaining ones were disqualified due to incomplete responses. Lastly, 100 questionnaires were chosen for this study's final data analysis. As a result, the study's sample size is 100.

A twenty-one-question structural questionnaire had been created. For the purpose of gathering data, a common seven-point Likert scale—where 1 denotes "strongly agree" and 7 denotes "strongly disagree"—was utilized to create the questionnaire. The first 20 questions on the Likert scale were used to gather data for the dependent variable, while the remaining questions were utilized to measure the independent variable. The quantitative data was processed, examined, and visualized using the statistical programme SPSS 22.0. According to the goals of the study, several statistical tests and techniques, including regression analysis and descriptive statistics, have been carried out.

The undergraduate's perception to select a profession in the hospitality industry (Y) is the chosen dependent variable for data analysis. The related independent variable (Xi) is provided below:

- X1= High Salary
- X2= Brand Names
- X3= Job security
- X4= Communication skill
- X5= Diversifies industry
- X6= Family support
- X7= Practical Training
- X8= Replacement Polices
- X9= Captivating Incentives
- X10= Work hour
- X11= Work Environment
- X12= Social Status
- X13= Work Location
- X14= Equal Opportunities
- X15= Promotional scope
- X16= Academic Result
- X17= Timely Payment
- X18= Job availability
- X19= Passion for service
- X20= Work Life Balance

The intention of students to choose a profession in the hospitality industry is essentially measured by the dependent variable "Undergraduates preference of pursuing career in HI" (Y). Additionally, factors influencing the dependent variable are found using the independent variables, Xi.

**Discussion**

It is clear from examining the study's results that people now have pessimistic views about pursuing careers in the hospitality sector. Given that the purpose of this study is to identify the factors that both support and undermine students' decision to pursue jobs in the hospitality sector, some recommendations regarding the traits that were chosen based on qualitative research are provided. It's important to recognize the potential for a high salary. As undergraduate gain experience and develop their skills, they can progress to higher-paying positions within the industry, ensuring a rewarding financial future. The hospitality industry is potential for job security. By staying informed about industry trends, adapting to changing circumstances, and consistently demonstrating undergraduate’s abilities, they can position for long-term job security within the industry. Choosing a career in the hospitality industry can positively impact undergraduate social status. According to a Penny Wan et al. (2014) study, social status had a significant impact on students' perceptions of their future job prospects and their dedication to the hospitality industry.

The hospitality industry offers ample opportunities for career growth and promotion. With hard work, dedication, and a commitment to continuous learning, undergraduate can
progress to managerial and leadership positions within establishments. Embracing technology, the hospitality industry has evolved into a smart work environment. Automation and digital systems have streamlined operations, enhancing efficiency and effectiveness. Staying updated with emerging technologies is crucial to succeed in this evolving landscape (Ratna et al., 2023). The hospitality industry in Bangladesh is known for providing equal opportunities to individuals from diverse backgrounds. It promotes inclusivity, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or social background. Choosing organizations that prioritize diversity and inclusivity ensures undergraduate have a fair chance to succeed and contribute to a vibrant and inclusive work environment. The hospitality industry offers flexible work hours, which is advantageous for individuals seeking work-life balance or those with specific scheduling needs. However, it's important to note that certain positions, such as managerial roles, may require irregular working hours during peak times. Excellent communication skills are essential for success in the hospitality industry. From interacting with guests to collaborating with team members, effective communication ensures smooth operations and enhances customer satisfaction. Embracing diversity not only enhances student’s cultural knowledge but also allows you to develop valuable interpersonal skills and expand their professional network. Working with diverse people provides a rich and dynamic work environment that fosters personal and professional growth. Understanding the replacement rule is crucial when pursuing a career in the hospitality industry. This rule refers to the need for constant service and staff availability, as the industry operates 24/7, including weekends and holidays. Students have to be prepared for irregular working hours and embrace the dynamic nature of the industry, which requires availability during peak periods and willingness to fill in for absent colleagues. Gaining practical experience through internships, part-time jobs, or volunteer work is highly valued in the hospitality industry (Sonnenschein et al., 2017). This industry places a high value on practical experience, as it equips undergraduate with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their role. The more experience students accumulate, the more desirable they become to employers, increasing their chances of securing better positions and higher salaries.

Working for reputable and well-established hospitality brands can offer numerous benefits. Well-established and reputable brands often offer better training programs, growth opportunities, and benefits. Joining a respected brand enhances undergraduate professional credibility and opens doors to future opportunities. Ensuring timely payment is crucial for job satisfaction and financial stability in Hospitality industry (Mafini, 2019). Transparent and reliable payment processes contribute to financial stability and job satisfaction. Research and inquire about payment practices during the interview process to ensure undergraduate financial expectations align with the company's policies.

The availability of job opportunities is an important factor to consider when pursuing a career in the hospitality industry. Research the current job market and growth projections to ensure there are sufficient opportunities for undergraduate desired career path. Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is essential for overall well-being (Kang & Wang, 2018). While the hospitality industry can be demanding, it's important to choose establishments that prioritize work-life balance. Prioritizing work-life balance ensures undergraduate can excel in their career while also enjoying personal fulfilment and quality time with loved ones.

**Conclusion**

Twenty crucial characteristics that significantly affect undergraduates' opinions about pursuing a profession in the hospitality sector have been found by this study. Notably, factors including wealth, equal employment chances, social standing, potential for advancement, job stability in the hospitality sector, and a positive work atmosphere are important in determining undergraduates' choices when it comes to choosing a profession in this field. These
characteristics have had a direct impact on undergraduates' opinions and career decisions.

It's critical to recognize that opinions held by students at Dhaka University might not align with those of students at other public or private universities. Students in different universities may not place the same value on similar traits. Although this study focuses on attitudes that are important to Dhaka University students, its goal is to identify the most important characteristics that may be relatable to students from a variety of educational backgrounds. In conclusion, the hospitality sector can be propelled into a position where undergraduate perceptions regarding career choices in the industry witness a significant and positive upswing by addressing and minimizing the negative aspects associated with different attributes in conjunction with the collaboration of various authorities and governmental initiatives.

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Conflict of Interests
There is no conflict of interest.

References


