

## **ABSTRACT**

The current study investigated what factors appear to drive the career decision-making of Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students. This study was conducted to identify various factors that Thai and Australian students perceived to play an important role in their decision to seek a career in the industry. It also sought to understand the way these factors impacted on Thai and Australians' career decision-making and how their cultural interpretations influenced their decision-making.

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect and analyse the data. The quantitative study, which involved 818 questionnaires, was used to help identify the factors that Thai and Australian students perceived to be important. The qualitative study involved 88 semi structured in-depth interviews and provided further explanations for how the factors suggested by the quantitative study were interconnected and influenced career decision-making of Thai and Australian students.

The findings identified several factors that were perceived to influence the career decision-making process of Thai and Australian students. Of particular importance were gender, the feedback students received during work-placement, family obligations and career opportunities in the industry. These factors appeared to be interrelated and could have a positive or negative impact on students' decision to seek a career in the industry. The study also highlighted the important implications of culture for career decision-making and suggested that although Thai and Australian students identified similar factors as influencing their career decision-making, they perceived the importance of these factors differently.

The study concluded that career decision-making is a complicated process. Although this study provided a structured model to demonstrate how students make their career decision, it is essential to recognise the complex range of factors associated with students' decisions. It should also be recognised that since a case methodology was used this research should be regarded as a template for further research rather than as providing a definitive career decision-making model for tourism and hospitality students in Thailand and Australia.