

**Factors Influencing Career Decision-Making: A Comparative
Study of Thai and Australian Tourism and Hospitality Students**

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**A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

The School of International Business

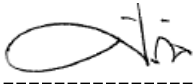
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2011

DECLARATION

I, Siriwan Ghuangpeng, declare that the PhD thesis entitled *Factors Influencing Career Decision-Making: A Comparative Study of Thai and Australian Tourism and Hospitality Students* is no more than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

 31/10/11

Siriwan Ghuangpeng

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed in various ways and assisted me to undertake and complete this research. Some of these influences have enabled me to complete my PhD and others gave me the support and opportunity to start my PhD studies.

First, I would like to thank the Royal Thai Government and Mahasarakham University for the financial support they provided to me during my PhD studies. I would like to sincerely thank my two supervisors, Associate Professor Susan Gillet and Associate Professor Barry O'Mahony. I would like to gratefully acknowledge their valuable time commitment and thank them for providing me with the guidance, feedback, and encouragement to keep me moving forward and to have confidence in my abilities to accomplish this research.

I would also like to give special thanks to Assistant Professor Albert Assaf, who supervised me whilst a lecturer at Victoria University and continued to generously and patiently assist me after he had resigned from the university to take up his position at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. I am most thankful to him for his assistance with my data analysis and for the help and advice he gave me in terms of my data analysis and understanding of my results. His support enabled me to complete this thesis and to develop a better understanding of quantitative research methods. I would also like to thank Mr. Austin Norman, my respected lecturer at Victoria University. I am grateful for his advice and encouragement, which were valuable beyond words.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge the support given by a variety of academics and colleagues who assisted me prior to and during the data collection in Australian and Thailand. These included Dr. Thu-Huong Nguyen, Mr. Barry Broon, Ms. Patricia Hasenrader, Assistant Professor Thanet Srisathit, Dr. Suvenas Sophonsiri, Mr. Pongphan Sathatip, Mr. Ruengsin Ommeepean, Dr. Puangchompoo Sapjaroen, Ms. Lanna Supyen and Ms. Parinda Jantori. Thank you so much, I really appreciate that you generously gave me your time and support and enable me to undertake this research.

I am indebted to many of my friends and PhD colleagues who made my study much more enjoyable. I wish to particularly acknowledge the assistance provided by two of my friends and PhD colleagues who played an important role in this process—Pan and Proud. They encouraged me, pushed me, believed in me and most importantly were always there when I needed them.

I also would like to acknowledge the help of family members in Thailand for their continued support for whatever I chose to do. I especially want to thank my father, for his lifetime of sacrifices, which have enabled me to reach this point. He has been my foundation and given me strength throughout this PhD journey.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to two of my high school teachers who started me on this educational journey of achievement—Mrs. Kruawan Panyamee and Mrs. Rampuang Poopat. They went beyond their call of duty when teaching me to learn and helping me to achieve. Without their dedication and encouragement, I would not have been given these academic opportunities. I know that I was very lucky to have been one of their students.

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.

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Chapter One

An Overview

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the current study which discusses the importance of understanding why some tourism and hospitality students seek a long-term career within the tourism and hospitality industry and why others select alternative careers. It also explores and identifies factors relevant to the career decision-making process of tourism and hospitality students within a Thai and an Australian context. This chapter includes research background, key issues and assumptions of the study, primary purposes, and the thesis plan.

1.2 Context of the Research

The tourism and hospitality industry is one of the fastest growing industries worldwide. It is reported that the industry represented approximately 3 per cent of the world's total labour force in 1999 (International Labour Organisation 2001) and rose to approximately 8 per cent and created more than 235 million jobs globally in 2010 (International Labour Organisation 2010). Although this rapid growth has provided greater employment opportunities in the industry, previous studies have indicated that despite high demand for employees, the industry has long been experiencing difficulties in retaining employees (Boella & Goss-Turner 2005; Wood 1997). Similarly, early research exploring careers in the tourism and hospitality industry among tourism and hospitality students also indicated that a high proportion of students expressed little interest in pursuing a career in the industry after graduation (Jenkins 2001; Rudall, Deery & Stewart 1996). As a result, the tourism and hospitality industry and education practitioners have sought to understand what drives career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry (Jiang & Tribe 2009; Richardson 2009).

Based on previous studies of career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry, several key issues and assumptions are underlined.

Previous career decision-making studies have sought to identify a number of single factors that may influence an employee's decision to either leave the industry or pursue a long-term career within the tourism and hospitality industry. These include employees' perceived job satisfaction (Lam, Baum & Pine 2001), gender (Purcell 1996), personality traits (Stone & Ineson 1997), the nature of tourism and hospitality work (Birdir 2002; Littlejohn & Watson 2004), seasonality (Jolliffe & Farnsworth 2003) and economic environment (Wong 2004). The weakness of this approach is that it does not assist tourism and hospitality employees to understand the interrelationship or importance of factors, or enable the industry to provide meaningful career paths for employees. As a result, it is essential to develop a broad perspective, and one useful approach in doing this is to consider career decision-making as a process. This allows a variety of important factors, both individual and environmental, to be identified and could be used to demonstrate the interrelation of these factors and how they influence career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry.

In addition, a review of the literature suggests that cultural values towards a career in the tourism and hospitality industry in different countries can have a significant influence on an employee's career decision-making process. For example, in South-East Asian countries such as Thailand and Indonesia, working in the accommodation sector (e.g. hotels and resorts) is perceived positively, as it is easier work than unskilled work in other industries such as construction, transportation, or manufacturing. Whereas, in Singapore, Hong Kong and Brunei, the industry appears to have difficulty attracting hotel workers because these countries, culturally, perceive serving people as degrading work and therefore working in a hotel can be seen as a low status job (Nankervis 2002). Accordingly, it can be seen that cultural values can either encourage or discourage people from working in the tourism and hospitality industry. It is also possible to conclude that employees' career decision-making in one country may be different in others. Thus, further research of career decision-making processes in different cultural contexts is required. The majority of previous studies of career decision-making were conducted in Western cultures such as the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (US) and Australia, and studies in Eastern cultures, for

example Thailand, are limited. Therefore, further investigation of career decision-making in an Eastern culture may provide meaningful insights into the extent of the impact of the cultural environment on how tourism and hospitality employees in different countries make their career decisions.

Furthermore, despite a number of career decision-making studies conducted with tourism and hospitality employees, limited studies have been conducted within a tourism and hospitality student context. Previous career decision-making studies among tourism and hospitality students have predominantly focused on the impacts of work-placement programs on the tourism and hospitality students' perceived career in the industry (McMahon & Quinn 1995; Raybould & Wilkins 2005). Thus, further investigation of career decision-making among tourism and hospitality students will be valuable in revealing more important factors associated with the students' career decision-making process and may provide meaningful outcomes for developing their careers in the industry following graduation.

This study seeks to address the above key issues in order to further our knowledge of career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry and provide a better understanding of career decision-making among tourism and hospitality students.

1.3 Plan of the Thesis

The primary purpose of the study is to investigate the career decision-making process of tourism and hospitality students from different cultural backgrounds, specifically Thailand (Eastern culture) and Australia (Western culture). The current investigation will focus on three main issues:

1. The identification of specific factors that tourism and hospitality students perceive to have an important role on their career decision-making;
2. The impact of the identified factors on the students' decision to select a career in the tourism and hospitality industry;
3. The impact of Thai and Australian cultures on the students' career decision-making.

To achieve these aims, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods are used to identify various factors associated with tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making processes and to convey the interrelationship between the underlying factors as perceived by both Thai and Australian students.

This thesis is presented in nine chapters. Chapter One has provided an overview of the thesis. Chapters Two, Three and Four review the literature relevant to the research questions, the empirical work, and theoretical framework for the current study. Chapter Five provides a description of the research methodology. Chapters Six, Seven and Eight provide a report and discussion of the results. Chapter Nine discusses the findings in terms of the initial research questions and outline the contribution of the findings to the existing body of knowledge on career decision-making within the tourism and hospitality context.

It should also be noted that tourism refers to a wide range of diverse business operations. These businesses are often seen as two separate industries; tourism and hospitality (Goeldner & Richie 2006). For example, tourism operations can include transport, tour operators, travel agencies, tourist attractions, conference businesses, souvenir shops, and tourist information services as well as hospitality operations including restaurants, clubs, caterers, hotels and resorts. In some countries, however, no distinction is made between tourism and hospitality. In Australia, for example, tourism is seen as the over arching term for both tourism and hospitality. This is evident at government level where both the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Tourism Australia (the main tourism body of the Federal Government) collect data and market tourism and hospitality as one sector and referred to as "The Tourism Industry". Therefore, in this study the tourism and hospitality sectors are referred to as one industry—the tourism and hospitality industry. Moreover, in Thailand, tourism and hospitality degree courses are not offered as separate programs. Instead degree levels studies are offered in tourism or in tourism management and prepare people for a variety of specific tourism and hospitality jobs. In some cases a double major is conveyed in the title, for example, a degree in tourism and hotel management but specific reference to the two industries is usually not explicit. As a result, it is impossible to separate tourism students in Thailand from hospitality students. For this reason, in this study, the term

tourism has been used to encapsulate both tourism and hospitality students. Generally, however, the majority of students' work-placements were within the hospitality sector.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of the current study. It introduces the research background and context of the current study. Later, it describes the key issues that have led to the current study and identifies the primary purpose, which is to investigate what drives career decision-making among tourism and hospitality students and to understand the implications of the cultural environment on their career decision-making. The next chapter will look at theoretical perspectives of career decision-making.

Chapter Two

Career Decision-Making: Theory and Research

2.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter provided an overview of the thesis. It identified the key issues and assumptions of the current study. It also discussed the primary purpose of the thesis which is to investigate career decision-making among tourism and hospitality students and to understand the implications of two specific cultural environments on students' career decision-making. This chapter specifically focuses on the theory and research findings of career decision-making. It defines the concepts of career decision-making and reviews relevant theoretical approaches of career decision-making, which form the theoretical framework of the current study. Later, the chapter explores the general context of career decision-making research.

2.2 The Concept of Career Decision-Making

Career decision-making can be defined as a process that describes or explains the choices that a person makes when selecting a particular career. It also helps to identify different factors involved in a person's career decision-making and provides an understanding of the way these factors have an impact on their career decisions and choices (Sharf 2002).

The concept of career decision-making was established in 1909, although the term 'career decision-making' did not become accepted terminology until 1979. Frank Parsons first introduced the notion of career decision-making in 1909 (Patton & McMahon 1999). He discussed his ideas about the way careers are selected in his book 'Choosing a Vocation'. Parsons (1909, p. 5) suggested that vocational choices should be based on three broad factors: "(1) a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambition, resources, limitations and knowledge of their causes; (2) knowledge of the requirements, conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work; (3) true reasoning on the relations of these two groups

of facts”. These three broad factors of vocational choice provided simple guidelines for individuals to consider when choosing their career and emphasised the importance of individuals having an understanding of themselves, their career alternatives and how to use this information for rational career decision-making (Jones 1994). Although Parsons’ views of vocational choice were introduced in 1909, the concept of career decisions and the term ‘career decision-making’ were not properly acknowledged until the 1950s. In the 1950s and in subsequent years, there were many changes to employment policies and the social environment of many countries. These changes led people to seek better career opportunities (Inkson 2007). In 1979, Michael Krumboltz introduced his ‘social learning theory of career decision-making’ and for the first time the term ‘career decision-making’ was used (Brown 2002). Krumboltz’s (1979) social learning theory of career decision-making is considered to be an important development for career decision-making theory as it introduced the concept of career decision-making and established a conceptual framework for understanding how individuals make career decisions during different stages of their life (Sharf 2006). The key elements and applications of Krumboltz’s (1979) social learning theory of career decision-making are discussed in the following section.

In recent years, there have been further developments in the theories of career decision-making. Parsons’ theory of vocational choice, however, has remained extremely influential and his ideas became the foundation for later career development theories which focus on the relationship between individuals and jobs or work environments (Sharf 2006). The significance of Parsons’ (1909) three broad factors is that they help individuals to gain a better understanding of themselves and their career alternatives and therefore enhance an individual’s ability to make effective career choices. These factors continue to form the foundation for the current theoretical approach to career decision-making.

2.3 Theoretical Approaches of Career Decision-Making

Theoretical approaches to career decision-making are based upon two major theoretical perspectives of career choice and development: psychological and sociological (Brown 2002). Psychological approaches seek to describe or explain the way individuals make career decisions based on individual factors which include personality, interests, abilities

and job satisfaction because these factors significantly influence the way individuals behave, think, and respond to making career choices. On the other hand, sociological approaches seek to develop a career decision-making process that allows individuals to consider the relevance of a variety of factors prior to their career decision-making. Sociological based theories focus on two major factors; demographic and environmental (Johnson & Mortimer 2002). Demographic factors refer to gender, ethnicity, and the socioeconomic status of the family. Environmental factors refer to social influences, such as the impact of family members, school friends, community values and practices, the work environment, family connections, the labour market structure and the economic environment.

This section first examines psychological approaches to career decision-making, concentrating particularly on two major theories: a theory of vocational personalities and work environments (Holland 1959), and career anchors (Schein 1978). Later it considers sociological approaches to career decision-making, focusing specifically on three theoretical approaches: self-efficacy (Bandura 1977), social learning theory of career decision-making (Krumboltz 1979) and social cognitive career theory (Lent, Brown & Hackett 1994). This section then concludes with general applications of these theories.

2.3.1 Psychological Approaches to Career Decision-Making

Two early and influential theories of career decision-making attempted to apply psychological approaches to help individuals make career decisions: the theory of vocational personalities and work environments by John Holland (1959) and career anchors by Edgar H. Schein (1978).

The theory of vocational personalities and work environment was introduced by John Holland in 1959 and emphasised the importance of the fit between vocational choices and work environments (Spokane, Luchetta & Richwine 2002). It was developed from Parsons' view of vocational choice, suggesting individuals should understand themselves and the nature of jobs and then find congruence between these two factors (Kidd 2006). In order to assist individuals to find congruence between themselves and the nature of a job, this theory proposes that human behaviour depends upon both personality and the environment in which the person lives and the way they express themselves, their interests and their values

through work choices and experiences (Holland 1992). Thus, Holland has categorised individuals into six personality types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional and he explains how these personality types are suited to particular work environments (Sharf 2002). For example, realistic personality types prefer to engage in the activities or tasks associated with the systematic manipulation of objects, tool, machines and animals, and do not need to work with others. Appropriate vocational choices for realistic personality types could relate to mechanical, agricultural or technical competencies. Whereas artistic personality types prefer to engage in activities or tasks associated with less structure, such as language, art, music and drama (Holland 1992).

Holland's six personality types are also a useful guideline for helping individuals to understand their personality and vocational interests and provide them with opportunities to make a rational job decision that could lead to career satisfaction (Hogan & Blake 1999). For example, an exploration of perceived personality and work environments among university librarians in Nigeria (Afolabi 1996) found that the majority of librarians perceived their personality as investigative which, according to Holland's theory, is a task-oriented person who is introspective and prefers to think things through rather than act impulsively. This personality type seemed to prefer jobs associated with research, cataloguing, classification and so on. Interestingly, library users perceived the librarians' working environment as requiring a social orientation because users expected librarians to have the ability to communicate well with library users. The study concluded that this incongruence between librarians' perceived personality and their working environment could lead to job dissatisfaction. It also concluded that individuals are likely to feel more satisfied with their career when they choose work environments that match their personalities and interests, and the more incongruence between their work environment and their personalities and interests, the less career satisfaction is likely. This study highlights the impact of the relationship between personality and work environment on individuals' career satisfaction and in the longer term it is likely that career satisfaction will affect individuals' future career decision-making.

Although this theory appears useful for helping people to clarify or interpret their career interests and occupational choices, there are some weaknesses associated with the theory's application. It is argued that while individuals and work environments are in constant interaction, the theory focuses on achieving a match between person and job, and it ignores the process affecting individuals' career decision and choice (Kidd 2006). Holland (1992) also supports this view-point as he suggested in his theory's application that in order to make an effective career decision, other factors influence career choice, including age, gender, social class and educational background. Previous studies also indicated that the structural validity of Holland's personality types' model is likely to have a limited application in some cultural contexts. For example, the examination of Holland's personality types among young black South African men and women (Toit & Bruin 2002) using multidimensional scaling analysis found a poor fit between the data and Holland's model. Thus, the study concluded that the model may not be applicable in some cultural contexts, for example, amongst South African youth. This finding was also supported by an investigation using Holland's six personality types in China (Leong & Tracey 2006). This study concluded that Holland's six personality types are more relevant in a Western context.

While Holland assists individuals to make career decisions by matching their personalities and work environment, Schein's career anchors focus on congruence between individuals' personalities, ability and their work environment. Edgar H. Schein (1978) proposed the concept of career anchors to guide individuals' career decisions and their career development in organisations. The theory emphasised that people tend to have specific values or desires towards their work at different stages of life, and these may include, for example, values in relation to their work and life as well as skills and abilities necessary to do the work.

Schein (1978) categorised individuals in terms of five different career anchors: technical/functional competence, managerial competence, security and stability, autonomy and independence and entrepreneurial creativity. Later, three further anchors were introduced: service and dedication to cause, pure challenge and lifestyle (Schein 1990). Each career anchor represents individuals' expectations and the competencies associated with their job or career, which drive their career decisions. For example, individuals with the security and

stability anchor tend to make career decisions based on security of employment and benefits, whereas individuals valuing autonomy and independence are likely to base their decision-making on the nature of their job and whether it allows them to have the freedom to perform their tasks with minimal organisational constraints (Schein 1978).

The concept of career anchors appears useful for helping individuals to find congruence between their career orientations and work environment (Ituma & Simpson 2006). At the same time, it helps employers to provide employees with appropriate work environments which increase employees' career satisfaction and commitment to an organisation (Baruch 2004). For example, an investigation of the relationship between career anchors and graduates sought to understand why graduates applied for jobs in large organisations and also assessed their perceived career competencies (Stewart & Knowles 2000). The study found that graduates applied for jobs in large organisations because they valued the security and stability anchor. They also perceived that large organisations would provide them with better career opportunities than small businesses. The study concluded that small business recruiters should consider providing employees with clear career paths and good training programs in order to make positions in their organisations appealing to new graduates. This study also demonstrated that career anchors provide organisations with a better understanding of potential employees' career orientation and allows organisations to develop strategies that enhance employees' career satisfaction and commitment to the organisation.

Although, Schein's career anchors instrument continues to be useful for individuals and organisations, it has been criticised. One criticism is that the theory was introduced in 1970s, when organisational structures were simple and linear and career paths within an organisation tended to move from an operational level upwards to higher levels (Baruch 2004). In recent years, however, it has been argued that career development not only progresses upwards, but is more transitional and can shift within either one function or cross-functions and without boundaries (Gilbert, Sohi & McEachern 2008). As a result, individuals' anchors might not be static but may change through different stages of their life (Suutari & Taka 2004).

Despite this criticism, it appears that the basic typology of Schein's career anchors continues to be relevant for career development. For example, a recent multicultural study used career anchors to investigate the impact of downsizing on the career plans of graduate business students in Australia/New Zealand, the USA, Malaysia, South Africa, and the UK (Marshall & Bonner 2003). The study found that career anchors were relevant to these students. However, age, gender, and culture were important predictors for their perceived career anchors. It suggested that age appeared to predict technical and functional career anchors among students from North America and Australia/New Zealand, whereas gender appeared to predict the same career anchor amongst students from Asia. The study also highlighted the relationship between downsizing and career anchors and suggested that downsizing was a significant predictor of managerial competence in students from Asia, whereas age was a significant predictor for job security and stability among students from Australia/New Zealand. This study demonstrated that factors such as age, gender and culture have implications for predicting career anchors, however, this does not detract from the basic concept that career anchors are relevant to career development within organisations in different cultural contexts.

Thus, Holland's (1959) personality types and work environment and Schein's (1978) career anchors have provided useful psychological approaches for understanding career decision-making. Principally, these theories seek to help individuals find congruence between themselves and their work environment and subsequently to increase their career satisfaction. Holland's personality types and work environment highlight the characteristics of a job relevant to individuals' personalities and interest. The theory may, however, be less effective in explaining how individuals develop their career decision-making and appears to have limited application to different cultural contexts (Leong & Tracey 2006). On the other hand, Schein's career anchors emphasise particular work environments relevant to individuals' abilities and expectations and appears to be a useful theoretical approach to help individuals make career decisions in different cultural contexts (Marshall & Bonner 2003).

2.3.2 Sociological Approaches to Career Decision-Making

Social learning theory has been the most influential theory for the development of a variety of sociological approaches to career decision-making. This theory seeks to explain human behaviour in terms of the relationship between the social environment and the way individuals learn, behave, and respond within specific social environments (Abbott 2001). Social learning theory forms theoretical foundations for three major theories of career decision-making: self-efficacy by Albert Bandura (1977), social learning theory of career decision-making by John D. Krumboltz (1979) and the social cognitive career theory of Lent, Brown and Hackett (1994).

The concept of self-efficacy was introduced by Albert Bandura in 1977 when he used social learning theory to investigate personality development (Prideaux 2001). He proposed that personality develops through learning experiences and human cognitive process (Bandura 1977) and that these learning experiences are influenced by the interaction of three key factors (Abbott 2001). These factors include ‘individual factors’ which refer to behaviour and ‘environmental factors’ which refer to the external aspects associated with an individual’s learning. The final factor, ‘psychological factors’, refers to cognitive process associated with how individuals learn from the consequences of the interaction between individual and environmental factors, such as their perceptions of learning experiences and their approach to problem solving. Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory of human personality has emphasised the importance of human cognitive process and introduced aspects of personality that develop as a result of an individual’s learning experiences. These are self-regulation (individuals’ ability to adjust themselves to different circumstances or their environment), self-esteem (individuals’ view of themselves as happy, confident, insecure or inadequate), self-punishment (a person’s capacity to behave in negative ways by trying to escape or through inactivity) and self-efficacy—is discussed in detail below (Abbott 2001). Although all of these influences are seen to be important, the concept of self-efficacy has been regarded as a key personality factor influencing career decision-making.

Self-efficacy is defined as individuals' belief in their capability to take the action required to deal with given tasks or prospective situations (Bandura 1982). Figure 2.1 provides a summary of Bandura's theoretical framework of how individuals develop self-efficacy. It suggests that individuals acquire self-efficacy through the relationships between personal efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies. Through this process, people learn about their capabilities and their perceived self-efficacy, and this tends to affect their ability to organise and accomplish given tasks or goal performances (Bandura 1997).

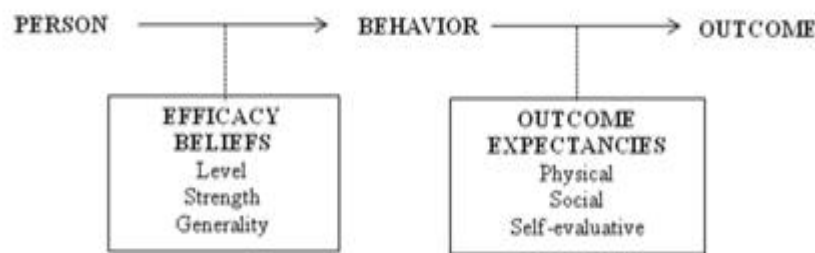


Figure 2.1 The conditional relationships between efficacy beliefs, and outcome expectancies. In given domains of functioning, efficacy beliefs vary in level, strength, and generality. The outcomes that flow from a given course of action can take the form of positive or negative physical, social, and self-evaluation effects.

(Source: Bandura 1997, p. 22)

Bandura's self-efficacy theory provides an understanding of how individuals develop self-efficacy and how their perceived self-efficacy can be used to predict certain behaviour (Betz 2004). These include whether individuals approach or avoid certain tasks or situations, the quality of their performance with certain tasks or situations and their persistence to overcome obstacles or disconfirming experiences. For example, an investigation of the relationship between self-efficacy and career aspirations and trajectories among children within specific socioeconomic environments (Bandura et al. 2001) found that children tended to base their career choices on their perceived occupational self-efficacy rather than on their academic performance. The study also found that socioeconomic environments appeared to have an indirect impact on children because it influenced parents' self-efficacy and their educational aspirations for their children. These findings demonstrated the influence of self-efficacy on career choices and the way in which children were likely to

choose the career they felt competent to do and which was perceived to match their self-efficacy. These children made career decisions based on their perceived occupational self-efficacy rather than their academic performance and were influenced by their parents' lack of educational aspirations for them.

This finding is supported by an investigation of the impact of parental socioeconomic levels on career aspiration among young Nigerian adolescents (Salami 2008). This study suggested that children from families with a high level of income appeared to have high career aspirations because their family was able to provide them with relevant academic support. It is likely that children from low socioeconomic backgrounds might lack the confidence to develop their career through higher education and highlights the impact of socioeconomic environment on the way children develop their perceived occupational self-efficacy.

As has been discussed, self-efficacy appears to have a significant impact on the way individuals perceive their career interests and competencies and these subsequently influence their career decision-making. Bandura's (1977) social learning theory of human personality and self-efficacy have also formed the theoretical foundation for two other important theoretical approaches to career decision-making; John D. Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory of career decision-making and Lent, Brown, and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive career theory.

John D. Krumboltz introduced his 'Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making' in 1979 and as previously mentioned, it was the first time that the term 'career decision-making' became accepted terminology (Brown 2002). Bandura (1977) used social learning theory to increase people's understanding of career decision-making through the concept of self-efficacy, but Krumboltz's (1979) theory included a range of additional influences over which an individual has little or no control. Krumboltz's social learning theory of career decision-making acknowledged the importance of two key elements of Bandura's social learning theory (Sharf 2006) that human behaviour results from learning experiences (action) and cognitions (knowing or thinking). Krumboltz's theory emphasises, however, that career decisions are not only based on individual factors such as gender, age, educational background, ability and family background but on other important factors

outside individuals' control, which affect their career availability and career decision-making (Mitchell & Krumboltz 1996). For example, the nature of job opportunities, monetary and social rewards of various occupations, labour laws and union rules, technological developments, changes in social organisation (for example welfare), the educational system and neighborhood and community influences can have an important impact on career decision-making.

Thus, Krumboltz applied a social learning approach which focused on the roles of four major influences on individuals' career decision-making (Patton & McMahon 1999). These factors were 'individual factors' (e.g. gender, abilities, skill, personality traits, and family background), 'environmental factors' (e.g. culture, occupational requirements and education), the relationship between skills and occupational tasks (match the needs of individuals to occupations) and career learning experiences (the impact of individuals' learning on their career decision-making). It also highlighted the relationship between an individual's beliefs and the environment and how these influence individuals' approach to learning new skills and ultimately affects their aspirations and actions. For example a person may have musical talent, however, the family's lack of financial support or limited access to musical training can affect his or her career decision to become a musician (Patton & McMahon 1999).

The interrelationship among these four factors has been demonstrated in a quantitative study, which used Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory of career decision-making to identify factors associated with career choices among urban agriculture students (Esters & Bowen 2004). The study found that parents and friends had a significant influence on the decision to enroll in the course but personal interests, learning experiences during the course and career opportunity in agriculture were perceived to influence subsequent career decisions. The study suggested that the theory was useful to identify relevant factors associated with students' family backgrounds, the impact of their learning experiences and factors facilitating their career. It suggested, however, that an in-depth qualitative study should be conducted to generate more factors and gain a better understanding of the interaction of factors influencing urban agriculture students. This recommendation might be related to the fact that the theory approaches individuals' career decision-making by

identifying a variety of factors affecting their career decision-making. It does not, however, provide an understanding of the interrelationship of these factors or how they impact upon individuals' career decision-making processes. Therefore, the value of an in-depth qualitative study is that it would allow additional factors to emerge and would provide a better understanding of the way these factors are interrelated and how they affect individuals' career decision-making.

As has been indicated, Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory of career decision-making is a useful approach for understanding how individuals make career decisions and indicates how this knowledge can be used to help individuals generate career alternatives and make effective career decisions under different circumstances (Sharf 2006). However, few empirical studies have examined this theory. One explanation for this could be that the theory was developed for career counseling purposes and to provide guidelines for career counselors working with their clients. Krumboltz's (1979) theory has been used to help clients explore their skills, interests, beliefs, values and personality and encourages career intervention to assist clients with strategies for their career development (Swanson & Fouad 1999).

While Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory of career decision-making applied Bandura's (1977) notions of individual learning on career decision-making, Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive career theory emphasises Bandura's concept of self-efficacy more explicitly (Lent, Brown & Hackett 2002).

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) seeks to explain how individuals make career decisions by considering the relationship between the individual (internal factors) and environmental (external factors) factors that influence an individual's learning, self-efficacy and career interest (Sharf 2006). This theory emphasises the interaction of *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy* and *outcome expectations* and the way these affect individuals' career interests and their choices. It is suggested that *learning experiences* influence the way individuals develop *self-efficacy* and perceived *outcome expectations* (i.e. consequences of particular actions, goals or tasks), whereas the interaction between *self-efficacy* and *outcome expectations* influence individuals' career interests and choices.

The theory also indicates the importance of understanding the impact on self-efficacy of background variables such as family, social class, gender, ethnicity and learning experiences, which include both the nature and quality of educational opportunity (Kidd 2006). For example, an investigation of the relationship between ethnic identity, career decision-making, self-efficacy and outcome expectations among Latino high school students in the northeastern US (Gushue 2006) indicated that ethnicity had a strong influence on beliefs regarding their ability to seek a career (*self-efficacy*) but no direct affect on their *outcome expectations*. The study suggested that these students seemed to develop their career decision-making in terms of their *self-efficacy* because it is likely that the more they achieved their tasks or goals (*self-efficacy*), the more confidence they developed in terms of their career decision-making.

Lent, Brown and Hackett (1994) have developed a model of career choice to conceptualise the process of individuals' career decision-making and factors influencing their choices. Figure 2.2 shows how individuals develop their career interest through the interaction of their *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy*, and *outcome expectations*, and these subsequently influence their career interests and choices.

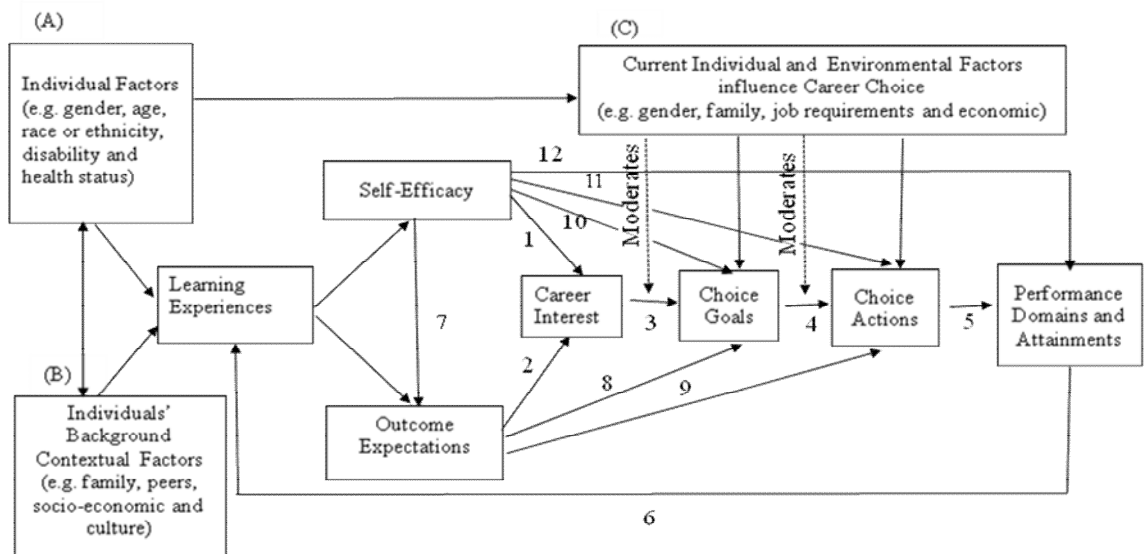


Figure 2.2 Model of person, contextual and experimental factors affecting career-related choice behaviour

(Source: Adapted from Lent, Brown and Hackett 1994)

The social cognitive model has been widely used to investigate career decision-making among young adolescents or students. For example, it has been used to predict vocational interest in information technology among undergraduate students in the US (Smith 2002), the study suggesting that social cognitive variables were strongly related to students' interest towards information technology. It appeared that students' self-efficacy had a significant impact on predicting their interest in information technology. Therefore, students with information technology experience expressed the highest interest, whereas students with computer anxiety unsurprisingly indicated low interest in information technology. The study suggested that in order to increase students' interest in information technology, it is essential to help students to develop their computer skills and to provide them with an encouraging learning environment. This finding was also supported by another investigation of social cognitive influences on Mexican American students' career choices (Flores et al. 2010) which suggested that students developed career interests consistent with their perceived self-efficacy. A study of high school students in Australia (Roger, Creed & Glendon 2008) found that personality affected the development of individuals' self-efficacy, whereas social support (family and friends) affected career goals and decision-making.

As has been indicated in these studies, social cognitive career theory appears to be a useful approach for gaining a better understanding of individuals' career decision-making processes. It allows a variety of factors associated with career decision-making processes to be identified and provides a constructive explanation for how these factors are interrelated and can subsequently lead to career decision-making and choice. Most importantly, the approach appears to be relevant to a variety of different cultural contexts.

As has been discussed, social learning theory has important applications for the development of sociological theories of career decision-making, as it provides the theoretical basis for Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy, Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory of career decision-making and Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive career theory. Although, all theories emphasise the importance of career decision-making as a developmental process, they focus on different applications. Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy seeks to explain the impact of social factors on how individuals develop self-efficacy and make career decisions. Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory aims to help individuals

recognise the individual and environmental factors which can either support or form a barrier to their career choices. Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive career theory seeks to provide a structured career decision-making process of how individuals develop their career interest through the interaction of learning experiences, self-efficacy and outcome expectations.

2.3.3 Research into Career Decision-Making Theories

Although the theoretical approaches of career decision-making—Holland's (1959) personality types and work environment, Schein's (1978) career anchors, Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy, Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory of career decision-making and Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive career theory, have developed from different theoretical bases, they are often combined or used in conjunction with other theories in order to understand how individuals make career decisions. This research is important because it demonstrates the influences of these theoretical approaches and the varied ways the theories can be used to obtain a better understanding of the interrelationship of factors associated with career decision-making.

For instance, Holland's personality types and work environment theory highlights the influence of personality on career interests and emphasises the need for congruence between personality and work environments. This approach can be used, therefore, to predict the likelihood of individuals choosing particular career options. The theory has, however, been used in one particular study to better understand how individuals develop specific career interests by focusing on the impact of family background on the development of Holland's enterprising personality type (Schröder & Schmitt-Rodermund 2006). This study found that family background affected an individual's development of an enterprising personality and that family background can be used to predict patterns of enterprising interest.

Another study used Schein's career anchors, a theory generally used to examine individuals' abilities or expectations associated with their potential career, to examine the relationship between career expectation and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) among Finnish business students (Järnlström 2000). The MBTI is a personality theory associated with different typologies of individuals' judgment and behaviour towards the world of work

(Sharf 2006). The study indicated that there was a relationship between career expectations and personality as students with the same career anchor tended to share similar personality types. This study also recommended that further research should be conducted to examine how this relationship could be used to predict career choice.

Specifically, Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive career theory is important because it demonstrates the way psychological and sociological based theories can be integrated or used in conjunction with each other to provide a better understanding of individuals' career decision-making. As previously discussed, this theory was a development of Bandura's (1977) concept of self-efficacy and Krumboltz's (1979) ideas regarding the importance of an individual's learning background. One particular study integrated Holland's six personality types with the social cognitive career framework to investigate the interrelationship of personality, career decision-making self-efficacy and commitment of Chinese students' career choice process (Jin, Watkins & Yuen 2009). The study found a strong relationship between personality and career decision-making self-efficacy and indicated that personality could predict career commitment and choice. Thus achievement-oriented students, who were efficient and hardworking appeared to have strongly develop career self-efficacy and were likely to achieve and commit to their career goals. The study also highlighted the involvement of family within the Chinese culture and the influence on students' career decision-making self-efficacy to pursue their career goals. This study demonstrated the way personality and cultural values affect parental roles and individuals' development of self-efficacy. These factors subsequently influence an individual's career goals and decisions.

As can be seen, these theories have been applied to career decision-making research in a variety of different ways. Each theory is primarily useful to identify different factors associated with individuals' career decision-making. Thus, psychological based theories identify the importance of individual factors—personality, interest, ability and expectation and how these factors affect career decisions. Sociological based theories identify a wider range of factors associated with individuals' career decision-making, for example individual factors (self-efficacy and interest) and environmental factors (parents, socioeconomic background and culture) and indicate how these factors are interrelated and influence

individuals' career decision-making and choices. Hence, using these theories in conjunction with each other provides a better understanding of how individuals make career decision-making.

This section has endeavored to provide an overview of relevant theoretical approaches to career decision-making. Two different psychological theories were discussed; Holland's personality types and work environment and Schein's career anchors. These two theories aim to help individuals find a work environment that matches their personality, interests, or abilities. Three different sociological approaches discussed the application of social learning theory; Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy, Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory to career decision-making and Lent, Brown and Hackett's social cognitive career theory. These theories are useful as they allow a variety of factors associated with individuals' career decision-making to be identified and can be used to explain how individuals develop rational career decisions and make choices.

2.4 The Context of Career Decision-Making Research

Previous studies have used different psychological and sociological approaches to identify a range of factors associated with career decision-making and to examine the way different factors influence how individuals make career decisions. In recent years, career decision-making studies have examined three different perspectives; employees, students and cultural influences on career decision-making.

2.4.1 Employee Perspectives

Career decision-making studies among employees have suggested that employees consider a variety of factors when they make a decision about their career. Several studies suggest that many employees make their career decisions based on individual factors. For example, a study examining the impact of self-efficacy on bank employees' career commitment and success (Ballout 2009) found that employees with high self-efficacy were likely to have stronger career commitment, greater career satisfaction and a stronger determination for career success than those with low self-efficacy. This particular study demonstrated that employees' perceived self-efficacy may affect their decision to attain or withdraw from a

particular career. It also indicated that the higher their perceived self-efficacy, the more confident employees were to maintain their career goals. Personality has also been found to have an impact on career decision-making. An investigation of the relationship between personality and job preference among hospitality employees (Stone & Ineson 1997) suggested that managers in the hospitality sector are commonly interested in jobs providing social contact. They also have a tendency to be practical and concerned with short-term solutions to problems at the operational level rather than long-term strategic planning. A similar finding was also identified in an investigation of managerial attitudes towards activities in the hospitality sector (Waryszak & King 2001) which suggested that most front-line hospitality managers found deskwork activities relatively unpleasant and preferred hands-on activities. These two studies highlighted the importance of congruence between personality and job expectation. The mismatch between these, in the longer-term, is likely to lead to career dissatisfaction. Gender difference is another individual factor perceived to be important for career decision-making. One study of charity retail managers (Broadbridge & Parsons 2005) found that both male and female managers' most valued aspects of their job were a sense of pride for doing something meaningful, and job autonomy. Female managers also perceived that the position allowed them to better manage family responsibilities and work. This study demonstrates the influence of family responsibilities on female employees and how this can affect their decision regarding career choice.

Although these individual factors appear important, Watson, Buchannan, Campbell and Briggs (2003) highlighted four components that employees perceived to impact on their career decision within an organisation. These are the organisation can provide meaningful work (e.g. the opportunity to develop new skills, to progress their careers and work being valued by other); fair and reasonable pay; reasonable job security and quality of personal relationships (support provided by management team, good relationships and friendship with colleagues and reasonable working hours). The impact of these work environment and organisational policies on employees' career decision-making were evident previous studies. For example, an investigation of factors associated with the work environment and their impact on small business employees' job satisfaction in the US (Davis 2004) suggested that supervisors, co-workers, pay, opportunities for promotion and morale were major factors

affecting employees' job satisfaction. The study also suggested that low job satisfaction among employees could have a psychological impact on their attitude towards working in the organisation and could lead to a lack of enthusiasm and interest in work. This finding implies that if employees feel dissatisfied with their work environment, they may lack career commitment and may seek career opportunities elsewhere.

One study investigating the impact of age discrimination policies and support on employees in large organisations (Rabl 2010) found that older employees (50 years⁺) tended to perceive their age as likely to affect their career within the organisation more negatively than younger employees (30-40 years). Also, older employees who perceived a lack of organisational support expressed a fear of failure. Thus, organisational support may affect older employees' self-efficacy and may mean they become less committed to maintaining their career. A converse effect was found in another study which examined the relationship of demographic factors and job satisfaction among healthcare professionals (Kavanaugh, Duffy & Lilly 2006). This study found that older employees expressed high levels of satisfaction with their job. This finding appeared to be associated with the employees feeling that their work experiences were valued and they were being paid for their work appropriately by the organisation.

These two studies demonstrate the way organisational support can impact on employees' self-efficacy and career satisfaction. It is likely that low levels of self-efficacy and career satisfaction would have a negative impact on their career commitment to the organisation. Furthermore, an investigation of the impact of location among expatriates working in London (Dickmann & Mills 2010) suggested that London is a location which can enhance employees' career success. This is because London is perceived to be a global business centre. Thus, working in London can enhance employees' learning, skill development, career progress and lifestyle. This study highlights the importance of location and emphasises that employees may select a particular location over others if it is seen to be more desirable in terms of providing a better environment for career progress and success than others or to satisfy lifestyle needs.

Thus, it can be seen that a variety of factors can affect employees' career progress. These include gender, age, employees' perceived self-efficacy, family responsibilities, pay, co-workers and organisational support and the business environment. These factors can either facilitate or hinder employees from achieving career satisfaction and success and can influence their career decisions at different stage of their lives.

2.4.2 Student Perspectives

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in examining career decision-making among university students and graduates. It is anticipated that these findings may lead to the development of strategies that allow young people to make rational career decisions and good career choices (Hodkinson 1998). This information may also have meaningful implications for educational institutions and assist them to facilitate students' career opportunities and to help students achieve career success after graduation (Jeffreys 2004). Previous studies have investigated students' career decision-making in terms of two questions;

- Why students choose a particular course of study?
- What makes a student choose a particular job following graduation?

Several studies investigating the first issue have suggested that students enroll in particular courses for a variety of reasons. For example, an investigation of factors perceived to be important by young college students (Maringe 2006) found that students chose the course based on their interest in the subject, employment opportunities and career prospects after graduation. This was followed by the structure of the course, tuition and other costs involved with the course. Another study conducted among library and information science students (Moniarou-Papaconstantinou et al. 2010) indicated that many students did not select a course because it was their first choice, but based on the likelihood of entry to the university and whether it would provide positive employment opportunities in library information science after graduation. These findings are consistent with investigations into the reasons tourism and hospitality students selected a course in Australia (O'Mahony, Whitelaw & McWilliam 2008). It was found that many students made decisions based on choosing a university rather than selecting a course into which they would be accepted.

However, for some students, the decision to enroll in a particular course was based on good employment opportunities and the perceived image of the industry, as well as their previous work experience in the industry. These studies appear to suggest that students make career decisions based on job opportunities, workforce demand, their own economic background, family or family support and the desire to pursue higher education, rather than as a result of their specific career interests.

Some studies have investigated what makes students choose a particular job after they graduate. These studies have suggested that there are a variety of factors associated with students' career decision-making. For example, the relationship between gender and students' decisions to pursue a career in entrepreneurship (Schwarz et al. 2009) suggested that male students express more interest in having their own business than do female students. Similar gender differences have been found amongst accounting students (Danziger & Eden 2007), with male students being more interested in having their own business than female students. Female students indicated that they prefer to work as employees because they realise that the nature of a job can make it difficult for them to manage work and family commitments when they marry. This interaction between gender and job is also consistent with the earlier findings of career decision-making among employees.

The opportunity to undertake work experience appears to be another factor affecting students' career decision-making. It has been argued that work experience provides students with opportunities to explore different jobs and learn about their future career. Hence, they develop more confidence to make career decisions (Smith, Dalton & Dolheguy 2004). Students with limited work experience, however, tend to lack the ability to generate career options or make career decisions based on career interests rather than abilities associated with their career (Feldman & Whitcomb 2005). As a result, students with work experience were likely to make more effective career decisions than those without experience. These studies, therefore, demonstrated the value of work experience for students' career decision-making because it provides students with opportunities to learn about their potential career and develop their abilities relevant to their career expectation.

Family background also plays an important role in students' career decision-making. An investigation of graduate teachers pursuing a career in teaching (Mau, Ellsworth & Hawley 2008) found that, of those graduate teachers who indicated strong persistence and satisfaction with their teaching career, 16% had mothers and 7% had fathers who were teachers. This study, therefore, indicated that the graduates' career similarity to their parents, particularly their mother, was a factor predicting job satisfaction and career persistence.

Socioeconomic background may also influence students' career decision-making and choices. An investigation of career decision-making behaviour among students from working class family backgrounds (Greenbank & Hepworth 2008) indicated that a lack of financial support can have a negative impact on students' decision-making or their educational choices. They are also likely to have limited career options as they may be unable to seek employment far from their home town.

As has been discussed, students make career decisions based on several factors and parental roles and their socioeconomic background can have either a positive or negative impact on their career decision-making.

2.4.3 Cultural Influence on Individuals' Career Decision-Making

Culture appears to influence the way individuals think, behave and make decisions (Jeffreys 2004). The impact of culture on career decision-making has highlighted that culture underpins the fundamental judgments that individuals make and these judgments influence their behavioural intentions, expectations and outcomes relevant to particular careers in their cultural context (Hofstede 2001). Hence, career is a process associated with plans, intentions, goals, and actions and culture is the context for this career process, which can either facilitate or constrain individuals in developing their career choices and their success (Young, Valach & Collin 2002). Therefore, career and culture are closely interrelated.

Investigations of career decision-making suggest that there are similarities in the factors perceived to be associated with career decision-making in different cultures. These include the impact of age, which has been found in studies in the Netherlands (Kooij et al. 2008), Scotland (Magd 2003) and the UK (Martin & Gardiner 2007). The impact of gender has

been identified in Hong Kong (Ng & Pine 2003), Austria (Mayrhofer et al. 2008), China (Tu, Forret & Sullivan 2006) and New Zealand (Mooney & Ryan 2009). Family factors (i.e. parents, family responsibilities and socioeconomic background) have been found in studies in China (Zhang & Wu 2004), Taiwan (Horng & Lee 2009) and the US (Mau, Ellsworth & Hawley 2008). The impact of the location has been found in studies in India (Gokuladas 2010) and the UK (Dickmann & Mills 2010). Some studies have, however, suggested that the extent to which individuals see these factors as influencing their career decision-making depends upon their cultural contexts. For example, an investigation of the relationship between gender and achieving a managerial position among MBA students who had had work experience in managerial positions in a large South African University (Booyesen & Nkomo 2010) indicated that managerial positions were strongly perceived to suit men more than women. It was suggested that this finding may be associated with South Africa's social perception that men are leaders and that men in South Africa tend to feel uncomfortable or reluctant to work under female managers. Whereas an investigation of female hotel managers in Singapore (Li & Leung 2001) found that women were often promoted to a managerial level. However, these managers indicated that their culture also required them to take on additional family responsibilities as a mother, a wife and to take care of their parents. Subsequently, these cultural influences made it difficult for these female managers to balance their responsibilities towards their work and their family and eventually led to low job satisfaction and slow career progress to higher managerial levels in the organisation. These studies highlight the impact of gender on career development and that in some cultures it is easier for men to develop their career in an organisation. Even when men and women have equal career opportunities within an organisation, some cultural views of gender roles can affect career development. As a result, this may eventually influence men and women to make different career decisions at different stages of their life.

Also, some studies indicate that the nature of particular careers may be viewed similarly by individuals from different cultures, but their work value may be perceived differently. One investigation, for example, conducted a comparative study of English and Malaysian accounting students' perceptions towards a career in accounting (Germanou, Hassall & Tournass 2009). The study found that students from both countries indicated strong

interests in pursuing a career in accounting after graduation because it provided good career opportunities, although they admitted that accounting was a stressful job and accountants may be required to work under difficult conditions. The study emphasised the fact that cultural background can strongly influence personal values towards a career. Thus, it found that while English students valued the accounting profession for its economic benefits, sense of achievement and being able to contribute to the well-being of society, Malaysian students valued the profession because it provided them with employment stability and career advancement opportunities.

As has been discussed, culture can have a significant impact on the career decision-making of individuals. Although similar factors are perceived to influence career decision-making, individuals use their cultural interpretation to make rational career decisions.

In summary, this section has reviewed and discussed a range of career decision-making research findings. As can be seen, career decision-making is a complex process and previous studies appear to suggest that employees and students do not make career decisions based on one factor but consider a range of factors such as age, employees' perceived self-efficacy, family responsibilities, work and the business environment. These factors either facilitate or prevent employees and students from achieving career satisfaction and success and influence their subsequent career decision-making.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of career decision-making and defined the concepts of career decision-making. It reviewed relevant psychological and sociological theories of career decision-making and the application of these theories in career decision-making research, providing the theoretical framework for the current research. The chapter also explored empirical studies of career decision-making from three different perspectives: employees, students and cultures. As this research indicates, a broad range of individual and environmental factors are associated with individuals' career decision-making, including age, gender, family background and career opportunities. The next chapter introduces the context and key issues underpinning the current study.

Chapter Three

Context of the Research

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Two discussed the theory and research findings relevant for career decision-making. This chapter provides an understanding of careers within a tourism and hospitality context and addresses the importance of career decision-making for the tourism and hospitality industry. It considers career paths within tourism and hospitality and identifies a variety of factors associated with career development in the industry. This chapter also highlights the importance of further investigation into career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry and identifies key issues and assumptions underpinning the current study, which seeks to understand the career decision-making process of tourism and hospitality students from two different cultural backgrounds.

3.2 Career Prospects in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry

The tourism and hospitality industry is one of the fastest growing industries worldwide. It is reported that the industry represented approximately 3 per cent of the world's total labour force in 1999 (International Labour Organisation 2001) and rose to approximately 8 per cent and created more than 235 million jobs globally in 2010 (International Labour Organisation 2010). This rapid growth has provided greater employment opportunities because of the labour-intensive nature of an industry in which services are predominantly delivered through human interactions. The industry also provides varied employment opportunities because it consists of a number of business sectors, including tour operators, transport companies, food and beverage firms, souvenir shops, entertainment and recreational facilities (Kusluvan 2003). Thus, as the industry grows employment opportunities increase and as a result the tourism and hospitality industry has become an attractive industry because it offers considerable career opportunities for employees.

3.3 Career Paths within the Tourism and Hospitality Industry

The expansion of the tourism and hospitality industry worldwide provides career opportunities and allows tourism and hospitality practitioners and educators to develop different career paths for employees. Thus, current and potential employees can be provided with the opportunity to choose the most appropriate career path and to develop successful and satisfying careers in tourism and hospitality.

Goeldner and Richie (2006) have provided a systematic model of the career paths available within the tourism and hospitality industry as illustrated in Figure 3.1 Career paths within tourism and hospitality industry. According to this model, tourism and hospitality employees are from diverse backgrounds and have different knowledge and skill levels.

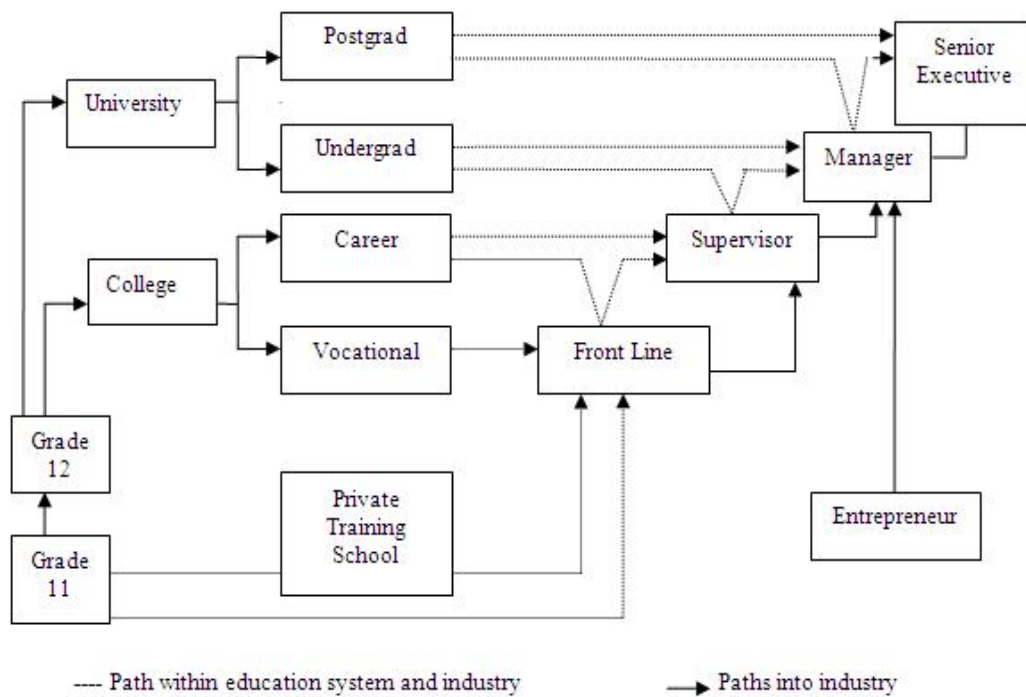


Figure 3.1 Career paths within tourism industry

(Source: Goeldner & Richie 2006, p. 83)

For example, at a front line level, some employees may have completed only Grade 11, whereas, others may have had post-secondary and vocational training. At a managerial level, some staff may have obtained a management position through their work experience as frontline staff and supervisors, whereas, others may have graduated from university or have had previous business or management experience. Goeldner and Richie (2006) emphasise that employees frequently choose career paths that match their perceived personal values and interests and it would therefore be anticipated that those who enjoy working as frontline staff like dealing with people and have positive attitudes towards customer service.

Goeldner and Richie (2006) also recognise that this conceptual model may be an oversimplification because the tourism and hospitality industry is large and diverse, but it does suggest that there are a number of different routes available in different sectors and at different levels within tourism and hospitality organisations. This is supported by the fact that investigations of tourism and hospitality career paths in different countries indicate similar career paths to those identified by Goeldner and Richie (2006). Of particular interest is the fact that tourism and hospitality employees come from diverse backgrounds and may or may not have relevant skills, knowledge or qualifications prior to commencing employment. For example, it appears that in Denmark (Hjalager & Anderson 2001) the majority of employees enter the industry with no formal education other than primary or secondary school qualifications, and only a small minority of employees (less than 10%) have formal vocational or university qualifications. Moreover, the highest qualifications of staff with post-secondary training tended to be a diploma, not a university degree (Hjalager & Anderson 2001). However, more recent research does not appear to be available to indicate whether or not this trend is changing in Denmark. A similar trend has, however, been found among hotels managers in the Guangdong province of China (Li, Tse & Xie 2007). This study reported that more than half of the managers had relevant tourism and hospitality backgrounds, but their highest qualifications were generally at a vocational level (63%). A small number of the managers had university qualifications (12.6%) and others had entered the industry straight from secondary school (15.5%).

Goeldner and Richie (2006) suggest that university graduates are qualified to take on supervisory and management positions within tourism and hospitality organisations after they graduate, but one criticism of their model is that it is unlikely that university graduates will become managers immediately after completing their degree. Several studies have found that it is implausible for graduates to obtain these positions as their first job in the industry, unless they have had relevant work experience in the industry. For instance, an empirical study examining the attitudes of three to five star hotel managers in Ireland towards hospitality graduates found that 90 per cent of managers prefer to recruit graduates with practical skills rather than those with analytical skills (Connolly & McGing 2006). They also tend to promote graduates with work experience in the industry to management or supervisory positions rather than those who have good qualifications but lack practical experience.

This has been found in the tourism and hospitality industries in different countries. For example, an investigation of career paths within the hospitality sector in New Zealand, found that since the introduction of tertiary hospitality qualifications in 1993, the first few graduates reached senior management positions (for example, a general hotel manager) after 10 years working in the sector (Harkison, Poulston & Kim 2011). A similar length of time was also found among managers working in four and five star hotels and first class holiday villages in Antalya, Turkey (Anafarta & Cizel 2003). The study found that 42 per cent of these managers also had considerable work experience (6-11 years) in tourism and hospitality sectors, and 57 per cent had been working in their current workplace between three and six years. Realistically, graduates may take several years to gain sufficient experience in the industry to be able to take on supervisory and management positions.

Despite there being similarities and differences in career paths within tourism and hospitality in different countries, Goeldner and Richie's (2006) systematic model provides a useful illustration of career paths into the industry and the way employees may progress within an organisation. It also appears relevant for a range of different countries. There appear to be a number of ways for tourism and hospitality employees to start their career in the industry. Also, tourism and hospitality sectors do not emphasise academic qualifications as strongly as work experience. Therefore, employees with extensive experience in the

industry are able to move into supervisory or management positions without post-secondary educational qualifications. However, in the longer-term employees with both extensive work experience and higher education qualifications are more likely to progress their career paths within tourism and hospitality sectors than those who do not have an academic qualification (Harper, Brown & Irvine 2005).

3.4 Career Development of Tourism and Hospitality Employees

The term '*career*' is traditionally defined as 'professional work life' and later it has been expanded and used interchangeably with the terms *vocation*, *occupation*, *work*, and *job* (Patton & McMahon 1999). The tourism and hospitality industry consists of a wide range of business operations, and therefore appears to provide employees with good career opportunities. For example, tourism operations can include transport, tour operators, travel agencies, tourist attractions, conference businesses, souvenir shops and tourist information services and hospitality operations can include restaurants, clubs, catering, hotels and resorts (Goeldner & Richie 2006). Although a wide range of business sectors exist within the tourism and hospitality industry, many career studies have focused on hospitality operations such as hotels and restaurants and relatively few investigations have been conducted within the tourism operations of transport, travel agents, tour operators and attractions (Kusluvan 2003). This appears to be because tourism is an industry dominated by the hospitality sector (Riley, Ladkin & Szivas 2002).

The tourism and hospitality industry also provides considerable career opportunities because it permits employees to enter the industry with low levels of education (Price 1994) and provides unskilled and semi-skilled work (Baum 1996). Thus, it encourages potential employees from diverse backgrounds to enter the industry with or without relevant qualifications and with varying skill levels. Previous literature, however, has indicated that developing a career in this industry is broad and more complex than is frequently understood. This is because career success is influenced by a variety of complex factors which can be categorised into three major groups: individual factors, environmental factors and additional factors impacting upon individual's career success.

3.4.1 Individual Factors

Achieving career success in the tourism and hospitality industry may depend on a variety of individual factors which can either support or form a barrier for employees. These factors include gender, age and other personal attributes.

Gender plays an important role in determining career options at different levels of tourism and hospitality organisations. In the hotel sector, for instance, it appears that males are perceived to have better career opportunities than females (Anafarta & Cizel 2003). In general, hotels appear to have stereotypical views of appropriate types of work for male and female employees, with men being seen to suit jobs in food and beverage areas, whereas women are perceived to suit jobs in housekeeping, sales and marketing (Wood 1997), and administration (Hjalager & Anderson 2001). Men are also more likely to advance their careers to higher managerial levels than women, who are promoted predominantly to middle managerial level and not beyond (Huffman & Torres 2001). One possible reason that may limit females' career progress to higher managerial positions, is that they are perceived to be likely to establish a family and become committed to family responsibilities, rather than to their organisations. The stress and pressure involved with balancing work and family responsibilities among female employees may also negatively affect their career satisfaction and work quality (Li & Leung 2001). Subsequently these female employees may have difficulty moving their career through different managerial levels within an organisation.

A further reason why men may be able to develop better career paths within organisations when compared with women, is because in the hotel sector general hotel managers tend to be promoted from food and beverage areas (Nebell III, Braunlich & Zhang 1994; Wadongo, Kambona & Odhuno 2011), in which male employees are predominant. The next most common path to hotel manager is the front office. Housekeeping, accounting or marketing are least likely to lead to promotion to hotel general manager (Ladkin & Juwaheer 2000) and it is in these areas that females are predominant. Thus, it may be no surprise that for hotel sectors in countries like Scotland, almost 85 per cent of general hotel managers are males (Harper et al. 2005).

In some countries, however, the trend for a hotel general manager to be male may be less pronounced. For example, an investigation of career paths of hotel general managers in Guangdong, China (Li et al. 2007) found that nearly one third of the total number of hotel general managers were females. The study indicated that most general managers gained prior experience in front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, sales and marketing and accounting respectively. The sales and marketing and human resources areas were also perceived to play a critical role in employees' career progress to general manager positions. The study suggested that the reasons most hotel general managers tended to be promoted through front office, housekeeping and food and beverage are because these areas play important roles in the operation of the hotel. Skills and knowledge in sales and marketing and human resources are perceived as important for the hotel general manager as they assist them to manage the market and people within the organisation. This study demonstrated the positive impact organisational strategies can have on employees' career paths and may have provided female employees with greater opportunities to obtain higher management positions.

Thus, it can be seen that gender can play an important role in the career progress of male and female employees within tourism and hospitality organisations. It appears that some organisations favor male employees, whereas others provide greater career opportunities for female employees and this subsequently affects the way male and female employees develop their career path in the industry.

Age is another individual factor which can have either a positive or negative impact on careers in the tourism and hospitality industry. For example, this has been found in studies of employment in the hospitality sector in the UK (Janta 2011; Martin & Gardiner 2007). Thus findings suggested that 80 per cent of employees in the UK's hospitality sector were aged between 18 years and 29 years (Janta 2011). This confirms previous findings indicating that older employees made up about 20 per cent of the hospitality workforce and suggests that hospitality remains an industry which predominantly employs younger staff. Moreover older staff working in the industry are more frequently found in organisations with a large or formal human resources structure whereas younger employees tended to work in pubs, clubs, and restaurants (Martin & Gardiner 2007). Another

investigation in Scotland (Magd 2003, p. 398) highlighted that some managers perceived older employees (55 year⁺) to be “inflexible and reluctant to change, too slow, and found it hard to adapt to new technology”, were therefore reluctant to employ older employees. These studies appear to indicate that young people may find that the industry offers better employment opportunities, while some employees may find it difficult to continue working in the industry as they become older. Career opportunities for older employees may also be limited within the tourism and hospitality sectors to firms with a large or formal HR structure. These studies demonstrate the relationship between age and career opportunities in tourism and hospitality and suggest that age can impact on employees’ career decision-making.

Personal attributes are also considered to have a significant impact on career decision-making. Previous studies suggest that people with particular personality traits and skills can achieve better career progress in the tourism and hospitality industry than those people who lack these specific traits and skills. These traits and skills include being flexible and enthusiastic at work, possessing the ability to communicate and handle change and to deal effectively with diversity (Akrivos, Ladkin & Reklitis 2007), being open to change and self-assured (Stone & Ineson 1997), paying attention to personal presentation and verbal communication and having an ability to adapt to different working environments (Anafarta & Cizel 2003) and being calm under pressure (Harkison et al. 2011). Some studies have suggested that personal interests can increase an employee’s level of job satisfaction in the industry. For example, an investigation of factors associated with employees’ satisfaction in ski hotels in New Zealand found that many employees worked there because they appreciated the beautiful scenery and because it provided employees with the opportunity to ski after work (Boon 2006). This was consistent with findings from another study investigating employees’ perceptions of working in the hotel sector in India, which found that many employees enjoyed being part of the glamour and atmosphere of the hotels (Jauhari & Manaktola 2009). It can be concluded, therefore, that employees with particular personalities, skills and interests appear to make a long-term career commitment and achieve better career progress in the tourism and hospitality industry.

As has been discussed, it is apparent that personal attributes can play an important role in tourism and hospitality employees' career development and success. Factors such as gender and age can influence the way employees perceive their career opportunities and their ability to progress within an organisation, whereas personality, skills and interests are more likely to impact upon employees' career satisfaction and long-term career commitment to an organisation.

3.4.2 Environmental Factors

One critical element affecting the career prospects of tourism and hospitality employees is the fact that employment opportunities are largely dependent on demand from particular industry sectors (Riley et al. 2002). This employment demand is often contingent upon a variety of environmental factors (Wong 2004). The impact of the economic environment, in particular, can influence industry growth positively or negatively and may increase or decrease demand for employment. For example, the economic environment can have a positive impact on the economic growth of many tourism destinations and, as a result, enhances employment opportunities (Baum 1999; Baum, Amoah & Spivack 1997). On the other hand, the economic environment at a tourism destination may also affect demand for employment. The impact of inflation rates on the US and Thailand provides an illustration of the inter-connection between economic growth and employment demand in the tourism and hospitality industry. In the US, the decision to decrease inflation rates, increased unemployment and, as a result, some industry sectors had to reduce costs in their business operations (Fridgen 1996). Conversely, in 1997 Thailand became an economically attractive destination for international tourists when the country experienced a financial crisis which resulted in high inflation rates. This negative economic environment promoted tourism growth in the country and Thailand's international tourist arrivals increased from 7.764 million in 1998 to 10.799 million in 2002 (Chaisawat 2004). Thus, the impact of the economic environment can influence industry growth positively or negatively and its impacts can either increase or decrease employment opportunities.

There is also a strong relationship between employment opportunities and the seasonality of tourism demand (Leiper 2003). The tourism and hospitality industry has three common

seasonal patterns during the year: high or peak seasons (busy times), shoulder seasons (intermediate times) and low or trough seasons (quiet times). These seasonal patterns lead to wide spread seasonal employment, underemployment and unemployment (Jolliffe & Farnsworth 2003). This seasonality may also be increased by some marketing approaches. For example, a recent investigation of staff turnover in the Greek tourism industry (Chalkiti & Sigala 2010) found that because the industry markets itself in terms of its natural environment—sea, sand and sun—this has created seasonal employment demand. In the summer months there is increased demand for employment in the peninsular regions which causes decreased demand for employment in the insular regions. This seasonal pattern subsequently affects employees' prospects for job progression and job stability in the insular regions. Employment demand caused by seasonality in the tourism industry means employees have limited control over their employment opportunities and this may encourage employees to look for other career options in industries which can provide them with more stable employment conditions.

Other environmental factors in the tourism and hospitality industry also influence employment opportunities at some tourism destinations. For example, growing concern with nature-based and sustainable tourism has increased tourists' demand for these types of destinations (International Labour Organisation 2001). Also, safety and security have become important issues for tourists. Since September 11, 2001, tourists' concerns about the safety and security of their destinations have increased (Walker 2008). Significantly, in 2002 a series of explosions in Bali, one of the popular tourist destinations of Indonesia, caused a great fall in the number of visitors to the island the following year and resulted in 'widespread unemployment and a collapse in living standards on the island' (Darma Putra & Hitchcock 2006, p. 164). This may cause considerable fluctuations in employment opportunities at tourism destinations, which may at times be regarded as safe but at other times be perceived as presenting risks to tourists' personal safety.

As has been indicated, environmental factors such as economic conditions demand for employment and seasonality, can substantially affect the career opportunities and success of tourism and hospitality employees. This is because the industry sectors must respond to these environmental changes and a more effective employment practice may be to employ

only the number of staff necessary to operate on day-to-day basis (International Labour Organisation 2001) and to use casual staff for peak periods. Thus, these environmental factors either promote or hinder the career progress of tourism and hospitality employees and may mean the employees have limited control over their career decision-making if they wish to continue working in the industry.

3.4.3 Additional Factors Impacting upon Employees' Career Success

As previously discussed individual and environmental factors can affect the career development and success of tourism and hospitality employees. Other factors may also affect employees' career development and their success in the industry. Previous studies have identified several additional factors, which include background qualifications and work experience, family, employment conditions and organisational attributes.

Background qualifications and work experience are perceived to be important factors enhancing long-term career success in the tourism and hospitality industry. As mentioned earlier, the tourism and hospitality industry allows people with different types of knowledge and skills to progress their career, but having the right background qualifications and work experience remain essential for employees' long-term careers. The importance of background qualifications and work experience was found among hotel general managers in Scotland (Harper et al. 2005) and it appears that employees with relevant qualifications and training in the tourism and hospitality industry achieve better career success in the industry than those without. It was found that at managerial level employees with formal qualifications tended to progress their career faster than those without, because at these levels there is an emphasis on possessing business and management skills, such as good communication, decision-making and business management skills, whereas those without formal qualifications often lack these skills.

Similar findings have also been identified in the tourism and hospitality industry in other countries. For example, an investigation of career progress among tourism and hospitality employees in India (Jauhari 2006) suggested that, although employees with training and vocational qualifications were initially able to progress their careers in the industry, they later appeared to have difficulty moving from a supervisory level to a higher managerial

position in the organisation because they lacked necessary knowledge and skills for management. In some countries, for example Turkey and Thailand, language skills are particularly important for the careers of tourism and hospitality employees. In Turkey, foreign language skills appear to play a significant role in becoming a hotel manager, as 60 per cent of hotel managers appear competent in English and 16 per cent appear confident speaking English and German (Anafarta & Cizel 2003). Whereas in Thailand, English language is a basic skill requirement even for entry level positions (Baum 1996). In addition, an investigation of the impact of qualifications on employees' careers in hotels, restaurants and catering firms in Denmark (Hjalager & Anderson 2001) found that employees with high educational qualifications and a training background relevant to the industry tended to have higher average incomes and retention rates than those without. These studies suggest that relevant qualifications can provide long-term career development opportunities for tourism and hospitality employees and employees with relevant tourism and hospitality qualifications are therefore more likely to develop successful careers in the industry than those without.

Family factors may also affect career development in the tourism and hospitality industry. Previous studies, as discussed earlier, have indicated that employees often find it difficult to balance work and family responsibilities. An investigation of career progress among female managers of five star hotels in Singapore (Li & Leung 2001) suggested that many female managers experienced difficulty balancing their family and work responsibilities. This is because in the Singapore culture, women are expected to maintain the family responsibilities of being a mother to her children, daughter to her parents, wife to her husband and manager at work. Therefore, in trying to fulfill these roles, female managers experienced high levels of stress which had a negative impact on their work performance. The difficulty of balancing work and family has also been found among male employees. An investigation of factors influencing the career development of hotel and resort managers in Antalya, Turkey (Anafarta & Cizel 2003) found that among the 350 managers in the study, of whom 62 per cent were male and 60 per cent were married, having a family, spouse or dependent child tended to have a negative impact on their career in the organisation. Absenteeism of 27 percent of these managers was for family reasons. The difficulty of balancing family and

work life for married employees may be explained by the nature of the industry which requires employees to work long and often unsocial hours (O'Leary & Deegan 2005), for example during the night, weekends and on public holidays. Therefore, working in the tourism and hospitality industry might not be a practical career choice at particular stages of life and employees with family commitments may have less desire to continue to develop their career in the industry.

Employment conditions have also been a major factor affecting careers in the industry. As has been indicated, the tourism and hospitality industry offers career prospects to employees with different knowledge and skill levels, however, employees often experience poor working conditions. These include working irregular hours in the hotel and resort sectors, rotating shifts of morning, afternoon, evening and night (Boella & Goss-Turner 2005), a lack of training and limited opportunities for career progress (Lee-Ross & Pryce 2010). Despite these poor employment conditions, employees often receive lower pay, in the hotel sector particularly, compared with other industries (Kelley-Patterson & George 2001; Wong 2004). Subsequently, employees with high expectations of long-term financial benefits might have low career commitment, as the pay or wage structures of the industry are relatively poor and eventually may not meet their financial expectations. As a result, it is not surprising that the industry has long experienced low rates of staff retention (Gustafson 2002) because some employees may find it difficult to develop their career in the industry.

Organisational attributes, including location, size, organisation and business structure and management practices, can also have significant implications for employees seeking to develop a career in the tourism and hospitality industry. It has been perceived by employees that well-developed tourism destinations provide better employment opportunities and international hotel chains such as Ritz Carlton, Holiday Inn and Sheraton can provide better employment conditions associated with training and learning environments which subsequently enhance future career opportunities in the industry (Qiu & Lam 2004). Large organisations or well-established businesses also appear to provide better pay than medium and small businesses (Riley et al. 2002). Some small and medium business establishments, such as restaurants and pubs, may provide good short-term career opportunities, particularly for young staff, whereas large business establishments may provide better long-term career

opportunities as these establishments tend to have well-developed human resource structures, providing employment opportunities for employees of all ages (Martin & Gardiner 2007). Therefore, it can be seen that organisational attributes can facilitate employees' career success substantially and that large and well-established organisations may provide better career opportunities to employees in terms of employment stability, pay and work conditions compared with smaller organisations.

This overview of career development amongst tourism and hospitality employees has discussed a broad range of individual, environmental and other factors which can positively or negatively affect the way employees develop their career within the tourism and hospitality industry. These factors include gender, age, personal attributes, the impact of the economic environment and seasonality on demand for employment, background qualifications and skills, family and organisational attributes. Essentially, in order to develop a successful career in this industry, current and potential employees need to understand the impact of these factors on their career opportunities in the industry generally and within their organisations.

3.5 Factors Influencing Career Decision-Making in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry

As has previously been discussed, the tourism and hospitality industry appears to provide high career opportunities. Since there is an increasing demand for employees, it is easy for people to enter the industry as it welcomes employees from diverse backgrounds with different work experiences and education. However, developing a successful career in the tourism and hospitality industry is not as easy as obtaining entry into the industry because it depends on a variety of factors. This appears to be supported by findings from previous studies suggesting that despite the tourism and hospitality industry being an attractive workforce for people who seek employment opportunities, the industry has long experienced difficulties maintaining employees to establish long-term careers in the industry (Lee-Ross & Pryce 2010; Wood 1997). This is found particularly at an operational level, at which many people find getting a job in the tourism and hospitality industry easier than in other industries, however, it appears that they then realise that making satisfactory career progress

in the industry does not happen easily (Boella & Goss-Turner 2005). Tourism and hospitality practitioners have sought to understand what drives employees to decide whether to stay or to leave the tourism and hospitality industry, to allow them to develop strategies for retaining current employees and trying to make positions in the industry more attractive to potential applicants (Gustafson 2002). As a result, career decision-making has been examined by tourism and hospitality practitioners in order to identify factors which employees perceive to be important for their career and to gain a better understanding of how these factors influence career decision-making.

During the past two decades, investigations of career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry have focused on two key issues: the reasons people choose to work in the tourism and hospitality industry and the reasons people subsequently leave the industry. Research into the first issue has identified a range of reasons why people become tourism and hospitality employees. Previous studies have found that employees made the decision to work in the tourism and hospitality industry based on a variety of factors. For example, employees perceived that their jobs matched their gender and housekeeping tended to suit females (Purcell 1996) or there was a match between job and their educational qualifications and work experience (Ladkin 2000). Another factor attracting employees was that they enjoyed being part of the glamour and atmosphere of hotels (Jauhari & Manaktola 2009) or employees enjoyed the atmosphere and lifestyle of their workplace location (Hing 1997; Mkono 2010). Others entered the industry because they felt competent to do the job and job satisfaction motivated them to continue working in the industry (Lam, Baum & Pine 2001). This study also indicated the importance of a match between self-efficacy, perceived occupational self-efficacy and career expectations and provides further support for the social cognitive career theory of Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994).

Studies in New Zealand and Hungary have found a significant relationship between career opportunities in the tourism and hospitality industry and employees entering the industry. An investigation of employee motivation in New Zealand (Brien 2004) suggested that many employees at an operational level chose to work in the industry because it was easier to find a job when compared with other industries. Similar findings were also identified in Hungary (Riley et al. 2002) where an investigation of employee motivation suggested people entered

the industry because they had limited alternative career choices and the tourism and hospitality industry provided better career opportunities than other industries. These two studies suggest that choosing to work in the tourism and hospitality industry may not represent employees' first choice of a career. Working in the industry, however, provides these people with an income while they look for a preferred career. Therefore, it is understandable that some employees leave their jobs when they find a more desirable job elsewhere.

Whilst, some studies have sought to identify a variety of factors associated with tourism and hospitality employees' decisions to work in the industry, other studies have sought to identify reasons employees leave their jobs in the industry. Previous studies suggest that the majority of tourism and hospitality employees left their job because they did not cope well with the employment conditions, irregular working hours, long work hours (Birdir 2002; O'Leary & Deegan 2005), low pay (Kelley-Patterson & George 2001), working when the majority of the population is not (Riley et al. 2002), or a lack of appropriate education, training, or career support from the organisation (Anafarta & Cizel 2003). These employment conditions cause high pressure and stress among tourism and hospitality employees (Lam & Xiao 2000) and give employees a minimal amount of time to spend with family or to socialise with friends (Riley et al. 2002).

Other studies have suggested that environmental conditions, such as economic factors and seasonality, also affect employees' career decisions. For example, an investigation of the impact of supply and demand in the labour market (Wong 2004) suggested that unexpected fluctuations in the macroeconomic environment profoundly influence the propensity of business and leisure traveler to travel and their willingness to spend money on leisure and hospitality related activities. These fluctuations within the macroeconomic environment are likely to impact on the tendency of hotel and restaurant employers to either increase or reduce the number of employees working in these sectors. Another study investigated the impact of the drought on resort communities in Colorado, USA (Wilhelmi, Hayes & Thomas 2008) and found that it had a negative economic impact on local tourism businesses, including summer resorts, retail outlets and restaurants. As a result of the economic decline and the negative impact it had on businesses, tourism and hospitality employees were likely

to be asked to leave their work in spite of their wish to continue working in the industry. These two studies demonstrate the impact of environmental factors and show that it is difficult for both managers and employees when there are unstable employment conditions. It provides employees with limited control over their career decision-making and may force them to look for other career options. Thus, some employees wishing to develop their career in the tourism and hospitality industry find it difficult to maintain and develop their career due to environmental circumstances.

Career decision-making has become a key focus for tourism and hospitality educational practitioners. Early research exploring students' perceptions of a career in the tourism and hospitality industry indicated that a high proportion of students expressed little interest in pursuing a career in the industry after graduation (Jenkins 2001; Rudall et al. 1996). The most common explanation for students leaving the industry is consistent with what has previously been discussed and relates to the negative nature of work in the hospitality industry, including unsocial working hours, relatively low pay and the often poor working conditions.

An investigation of career decision-making among tourism and hospitality students (O'Mahony et al. 2008) suggested that students enrolled in the course because they had a positive image of industry growth as reported by the media, their work experience in the industry, personal observation and information obtained through a reference group which investigated the reasons why students choose to enroll in a hospitality degree. Another study undertook further investigation into tourism and hospitality students' career intentions in the industry which highlighted that first year students expressed the most positive career intentions towards the industry whereas final year students expressed the least positive intentions (Jenkins 2001). This study also emphasised that students appeared to make their career decision of whether to seek a career in the industry after graduation or not after their work-placement program.

Research examining the impact of work-placement programs on students' career decisions suggests that there are three important ways the program influenced the way students made career decisions after graduation (McMahon & Quinn 1995; Raybould & Wilkins 2005).

Firstly, the work-placement provided an opportunity for the students to experience the actual work environment and influenced the students' perceptions of the industry. Prior to working in the industry, students' perceptions differed from the reality of their work experience. Thus, the greater the mismatch between their prior perception and the reality of work experience, the more negative the impact on their career decision-making. Secondly, organisations frequently did not meet students' expectations of what constituted an appropriate work placement, which according to students meant providing them with meaningful learning opportunities. Finally, students appeared discouraged because industry practitioners emphasised operational skills and did not recognize the value of the managerial skills that students had developed during their degree. Accordingly, graduates often indicated that their capabilities had not been effectively utilised or developed by the industry. At this stage it is not clear whether organisations under-utilise the skills of graduates or whether undergraduates make unrealistic assessments of their own abilities. It would appear that undergraduates and industry practitioners have different perspectives about what constitutes appropriate work for graduates. These misperceptions between students and the industry surface whilst students are engaged in the work-placement process and have a long-term impact upon their commitment to the industry.

As has been discussed, there are a variety of factors that tourism and hospitality employees and students perceive to affect their career decision-making. Career decision-making studies among tourism and hospitality employees revealed that some make career decisions based on their personal interests and abilities and some make career decisions based on the labour market environment and career opportunities. However, uncontrollable factors such as the economy and seasonality can also affect tourism and hospitality employees positively and negatively, and may subsequently influence the way they make career decisions. Previous studies of career decision-making among tourism and hospitality students have also identified that many students made their career decisions based on finding a match between themselves and their work environment or job tasks. These empirical studies have demonstrated that developing a career in the tourism and hospitality industry is much more difficult than entering the industry and career success is determined by a variety of complex factors.

3.6 Limitations of Existing Research into Career Decision-Making

The review of literature and previous studies of career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry have identified three major limitations and provide directions for future research.

Firstly, as has been discussed in an earlier section, the existing literature investigating career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry has predominantly focused on the application of either psychological approaches (individual factors such as gender, qualifications and work experience) or sociological approaches (environmental factors such as economic conditions, seasonality and career opportunity) independently. Some of the same issues, which have been identified in the more general theoretical approaches to career decision-making, have also emerged as important for tourism and hospitality employees. These studies have not, however, looked at the same range of factors which underpin the previous discussion of the interrelationship of these factors.

More importantly, the findings suggest that individuals are unable to make effective career decisions based on one specific factor. For example, some employees may intend to stay in the industry, however, if employment demand is low, they may be required to leave their jobs. Accordingly, it can be argued that in order to gain a better understanding of career decision-making within a tourism and hospitality context, it is necessary to approach career decision-making as a process, whereby individuals consider a range of factors and make decisions based on their assessment of these factors.

Thus future research in the tourism and hospitality industry needs to use the information previously discussed and consider career decision-making as a process that allows a variety of important individual and environmental factors, to be identified and seeks to understand the relative impact of these factors. This approach could then be used to demonstrate the interrelation of these factors and how they may affect the career decision-making of tourism and hospitality employees.

Despite a number of career decision-making studies being conducted with tourism and hospitality employees, few studies have been conducted within the context of tourism and

hospitality students. Those career decision-making studies that have been conducted with tourism and hospitality students have predominantly focused on the impact of the work-placement program on the students' perceived career in the industry. Thus, further investigation of career decision-making among tourism and hospitality students is crucial, as the findings will provide a better understanding of the factors associated with students' career decision-making processes. In addition, the findings may be used to compare the similarity and differences of career decision-making between tourism and hospitality employees and students, and such knowledge could assist the industry and educational practitioners to facilitate the career development of current and potential employees.

Furthermore, the cultural environment appears to have important implications for career decision-making in the industry. In some countries, for example Turkey and Thailand, language skills are considered to be particularly important for the careers of tourism and hospitality employees. In some South-East Asian countries, cultural values can have positive or negative impacts on career development in the tourism and hospitality industry (Nankervis 2002). For example, in Thailand and Indonesia, working in the accommodation sector (e.g. hotels and resorts) is perceived to be a good job option, as it is easier work than unskilled work in other industries such as construction, transportation, or manufacturing. Whereas in Singapore, Hong Kong and Brunei, the industry appears to have difficulty attracting hotel workers because these countries, culturally, perceive serving people as degrading, and therefore working in a hotel is seen to have a low status. Significantly, in Heilongjiang-China (Qiu & Lam 2004), it found that despite industry growth, the city still encounters labour shortages especially among young people. This appears to be because young people are not encouraged by their parents to work in the industry, as serving people is culturally considered as "analogous to losing face" (Qiu & Lam 2004, p. 48).

As can be seen, the cultural environment can influence the knowledge and skills required by employees in the tourism and hospitality industry and cultural values towards a career in the tourism and hospitality industry either encourage or discourage people from working in the industry. Thus, it is essential to explore careers in the tourism and hospitality industry from different cultural perspectives in order to gain a better understanding of the way people select a career in the industry. This will allow tourism and hospitality practitioners and

educators to facilitate career development for employees and students in the industry effectively.

Future research needs to address these key issues in order to extend the knowledge of career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry. It is also important for future research to provide a better understanding of tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making within different cultural contexts.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of careers in the tourism and hospitality industry. It has highlighted that tourism and hospitality employees may come from different knowledge backgrounds and possess different skills, however those with relevant knowledge and skills appear to make better career progress than those without. This chapter also identified a variety of factors that can have an impact on tourism and hospitality employees' career progress in the industry. It also addressed the importance of career decision-making in the industry and explored a variety of factors suggested by previous studies as appearing to influence career decision-making of tourism and hospitality employees. The chapter concluded by indicating the limitations of previous research and identifying key issues and assumptions to be included in future research. The next chapter will provide a theoretical framework and indicate its application for the current study.

Chapter Four

Theoretical Framework

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Two provided an overview of relevant theoretical approaches and previous research into career decision-making. Chapter Three reviewed relevant literature and understandings of the way employees develop their careers within the tourism and hospitality industry. It specifically emphasised the important implications of career decision-making and outlined key issues for future research into career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry. This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical framework for the current study. It also identifies the primary purpose, specific aims and research questions. The chapter concludes with how the proposed theoretical framework is applied in the current study in order to address the identified aims and research questions.

4.2 Proposed Theoretical Framework

The previous chapter identified three key issues that require further research in order to better understand the career decision-making of employees in the tourism and hospitality industry. The first issue discussed and considered career decision-making as a process that allows a variety of important factors, both individual and environmental factors, to be identified and seeks to understand the relative impact of these factors. A further issue identified in the previous chapter was the lack of career decision-making studies within a student context and that further research in this context was needed in the tourism and hospitality industry. The final key issue was the impact of culture on career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry. It was argued that it is essential to explore careers in the tourism and hospitality industry from different cultural perspectives in order to gain a better understanding of the way people make career decisions in different cultures.

Based on these key issues, the current study sought to investigate what drives the career decision-making process of tourism and hospitality students and to understand the impact of cultural influences on this process. In order to achieve this, this study used Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive career theory to investigate the career decision-making process used by selected Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students. In these two countries, the tourism and hospitality industry is important but they represent two very different cultural contexts. Thailand and Australia were, therefore, selected so as to understand the way tourism and hospitality students use their cultural interpretations to make rational career decisions.

Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive career theory (SCCT), which was discussed in Chapter Two, was seen to provide an appropriate theoretical framework for the current study because this model demonstrates the processes involved in how individuals develop their career decision-making (see Chapter Two: Figure 2.2). The theory also allows a variety of individual and environmental factors associated with the career decision-making process to be identified and provides an explanation for how these factors are interrelated. The theory can also be used to predict the likelihood of individuals making specific career decisions and choices. In addition, the theory has been widely used for research into career decision-making and to investigate the choices young adolescents, including high school and university students, make in different cultural contexts (Flores et al. 2010; Gushue 2006; Roger et al. 2008; Smith 2002).

While SCCT helps to conceptualise the career decision-making process of tourism and hospitality students, Thailand and Australia were selected to provide a better understanding of cultural influences on tourism and hospitality students' perceptions of the importance of factors associated with the career decision-making process. Thailand and Australia are popular tourist destinations for the Asian and Pacific regions. For example, the tourism and hospitality industry in Thailand has been growing continuously during the last ten years and the number of international tourists visiting Thailand rose from 7.76 million in 1998 to 14.46 million in 2007 (Tourism Authority of Thailand 2008). In 2004, Thailand earned approximately US\$10,034 million and was ranked as the fourth most popular international tourist destination in the region after China, Australia and Japan (World Tourism

Organisation 2005). Even a decade ago, Thailand was one of the top four international tourist destinations in the region, it was reported that Australia earned around US\$7.5 billion in 1999 and more recently has been ranked as amongst the world's top 15 international tourist destinations (International Labor Organisation 2001), increasing its tourism revenue to US\$13 billion in 2004. This success moved it into the world's top 10 international tourism destinations (World Tourism Organisation 2005).

Despite the importance of the tourism and hospitality industry to Thailand and Australia, these countries are culturally very different. Hofstede's five dimensions of national culture (2001) can be used to compare countries:

1. *Power distance* refers to the extent to which a hierarchical structure is accepted.
2. *Uncertainty avoidance* relates to the amount of stress expressed when faced with an unknown future
3. *Individualism* versus *collectivism* is the extent to which a culture values individual performance rather than the efforts of the group
4. *Masculinity* versus *femininity* is the extent to which a culture values stereotypical male or female characteristics
5. *Long-term* versus *short-term orientation* relates to the extent to which people's efforts are associated with future or current goals.

Table 4.1 provides a comparison of the five dimensions of national culture difference for Thailand and Australia. Hofstede (2001) suggests that Thailand is classified as having an Eastern culture orientation, whereas Australia is considered to have a Western culture orientation. Although Hofstede's work has come in for some criticism, the fundamental issues relating cultural differences that he exposes have been confirmed by other scholars particularly within regards to Eastern and Western culture. For example, people from Eastern societies value interpersonal relationships and are therefore likely to avoid certain activities such as making direct criticism in which would cause a negative impact on their friendship (Reisinger & Turner 2003; Trompenaars 1993; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars 1993). Conversely, people from Western societies value individuals' performance and equality and therefore they are likely to be able to cope with direct criticism from others

(Maznevski 1994; Trompenaars 1993). As Table 4.1 indicates, Thai culture values social traditions and young people are expected to respect their parents, older relatives and teachers. Family is considered to be very important. Whereas Australia is a less traditional society and less hierarchical power structures exist between young people and their parents, older relatives and teachers. Weaker family ties may exist when compared to Thai culture. Thailand and Australia, therefore, were considered to be appropriate for the current study because whilst the tourism and hospitality industry has an important impact on both countries' economies, Thailand and Australia have different cultural orientations.

Table 4.1 Some key differences between Thailand and Australia

Cultural Dimensions	Thailand	Australia
Power distance Thailand = High Australia = Low	Children are taught to respect parents, older relatives and teachers. They are expected to be obedient and become independent at a later age.	Children treat parents, older relatives and teachers with less respect. They are expected to become independent at a young age.
Uncertainty avoidance Thailand = High Australia = Low	Employees experience higher work stress about uncertainty and tend to stay with the same employer. They prefer to work for larger organisations.	Employees experience lower stress about uncertainty and are less hesitant to change employers. They are less influenced by the size of organisations.
Individualism verse collectivism Thailand = Collectivism Australia = Individualism	They have a collective orientation and belong to a traditional society which rewards group rather than individual performance. They have strong family ties and opinions are predetermined by the group rather than individuals.	They have an individual orientation and a modern society, which rewards individual performance. Weaker family ties and personal opinions are valued.
Masculinity verse femininity Thailand = High Australia = Low	The society endorses stereotypical male and female values that men are perceived to show competitive and assertive behaviour and women are expected to show caring and nurturing behaviour.	The society stresses equality and quality of work life. More women are able to achieve management positions. Men and women have broader career opportunities and stereotypical values are less entrenched.
Long-term verse short-term Thailand = Long-term Australia = Short-term	The society emphasises long-term goals, persistence and perseverance, and leisure time is regarded as unimportant.	The society emphasises short-term goals and quick results, and leisure time is valued.

(Source: Hofstede 2001)

4.3 Orientation of the Current Research

As previously discussed, the broad aims of this research were to investigate what drives tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making and to better understand the career decision-making process. The research sought to identify factors perceived to have an impact on the career decision-making of students within two different cultures—Thailand and Australia, and to understand some of the ways in which culture influences students' career decision-making.

In order to achieve these goals, the current study examined a number of issues and sought to:

1. Identify specific factors that tourism and hospitality students perceived to influence their career decision-making;
2. Investigate the impact of these identified factors on the students' decisions to choose a career in the tourism and hospitality industry;
3. Understand the role of these identified factors on the students' career decision-making from a Thai and an Australian perspective.

The current study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods to address these aims. Quantitative research methods were used to identify factors that were perceived to impact on the career decision-making of tourism and hospitality students. Qualitative research methods were used to gain a better understanding of the way Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students use culture to interpret these identified factors and how their interpretations influence their career decision-making. It was anticipated that this research would provide a better understanding of tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making processes and highlight the importance of cultural influences on their career decision-making.

4.4 Theoretical Applications of the Current Research

This section focuses on the theoretical applications of social cognitive career theory (SCCT) on the current research, with an emphasis on two components of the theory. The current study initially used the SCCT model to investigate the career decision-making process of

Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students. The model was then used to provide guidelines for understanding the influences of the identified factors on the career decision-making processes of Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students.

4.4.1 Applications of SCCT Model

The current study used the SCCT model to investigate factors associated with tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making and to answer—What are the factors that appear to influence the career decision-making of tourism and hospitality students?

A quantitative research method was used to answer the above research question by selecting a variety of issues which previous research had found to play a role in the career decision-making of tourism and hospitality employees. These issues were then categorised into six broader factors as proposed by the SCCT model, namely *individual factors*, *individuals' background contextual factors*, *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy*, *outcome expectations*, and *career interest*. The SCCT model suggests that these factors are interrelated, although it should be noted that the current study specifically sought to investigate whether these factors had an impact upon tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making and did not attempt to establish interrelationships between the factors. SCCT theory suggests, however, that those *individual factors*, *individuals' background contextual factors*, *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy* and *outcome expectations* affect how individuals develop their career interest and *career interest* influences their career decision-making. Therefore, the proposed six factors were hypothesised as the following.

Factor 1: Individual Factors

The SCCT model indicated that *individual factors* such as gender and age. Previous studies of career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry have found that gender and age both influence career decision-making among tourism and hospitality employees. Gender appears to strongly influence career decision-making because some jobs are perceived to suit a specific gender. For example, men are seen to suit jobs in food and beverage areas, whereas women are seen to suit jobs in housekeeping and sales and marketing (Wood 1997). As a result, it was hypothesised:

H₁ Gender is related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Gender is related negatively to students' career interest

A further individual factor which appears to affect career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry is age. Previous studies have indicated that age impacts on career opportunities because the tourism and hospitality industry appears to suit younger employees (Janta 2011) and career opportunities in the industry are perceived to be limited for employees who are 55⁺ years (Magd 2003). The current study involved both young and older undergraduate students. Therefore, it was hypothesised:

H₁ Age is related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Age is related negatively to students' career interest

Factor 2: Individuals' Background Contextual Factors

In addition to *individual factors* such as gender and age, there are other factors that may impact either positively or negatively on individuals when developing their career interests. These include parents, school teachers, peers, cultural values and beliefs and job opportunity (Sharf 2006). These factors are identified as *individuals' background contextual factors*. Previous studies have indicated that *individuals' background contextual factors* can either encourage or form a barrier for people considering employment in the tourism and hospitality industry, for example a positive influence may be high employment demand (Baum et al. 1997; Brien 2004) or having a positive image of working in the industry obtained through reference groups or course entry requirements (O'Mahony et al. 2008). Cultural values can also form a barrier for people choosing to work in the tourism and hospitality industry, particularly in countries such as China (Qiu & Lam 2004), Singapore, Hong Kong and Brunei (Nankervis 2002). There are also additional factors associated with *individuals' background contextual factors*, as identified in a participant survey (see Appendix A: Question 8). As a result, it was hypothesised:

H₁ Individuals' background contextual factors (i.e. family, friends, school teachers, cultural values, industry image etc.) are related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Individuals' background contextual factors (i.e. family, friends, school teachers, cultural values, industry image etc.) are related negatively to students' career interest

Factor 3: Learning Experiences

Individuals' learning experiences can significantly influence career interests because learning experiences allow individuals to learn more about their own abilities to perform specific tasks (Sharf 2006). When students are pursuing their degree in tourism and hospitality, several factors are considered to have an impact on the way they learn about their future career. These include work placement programs, the relevant industry experience of academic staff and course structure (Littlejohn & Watson 2004). These factors may either enhance or discourage students' career interests in the tourism and hospitality industry. There are also additional factors associated with tourism and hospitality students' learning experiences, identified in the participants' survey (see Appendix A: Question 10). As a result, it was hypothesised:

H₁ Learning experiences are related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Learning experiences are related negatively to students' career interest

Factor 4: Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs about their abilities to accomplish tasks or to achieve particular courses of action (Bandura 1987). Evidence suggests that those who are confident in their abilities to undertake a particular task are more likely to pursue the task persistently and successfully (Nilsson, Schmidt & Meek 2002).

The current study used a previously validated self-efficacy inventory—*Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form* or *CDMSE-SF* (Betz, Klein, & Taylor 1996; Creed, Patton & Watson 2002)—to examine the relationship between students' *self-efficacy* and their *interest* in choosing a career in the tourism and hospitality industry (see Appendix A: Section C). This inventory consists of 25 behavioural statements designed to measure an individual's beliefs and confidence in their ability to complete different tasks relevant for

their career decision-making. The degree of confidence was measured using a five point likert scaling from 'no confidence at all' to 'complete confidence'.

Although this career instrument has been used in a variety of different studies and in different cultural contexts, one particular study used this instrument to examine the relationship between career decision-making self-efficacy and career exploration amongst African American high school students (Gushue et al. 2006). The study suggested that there was a relationship between self-efficacy and the ability to generate possible careers because it found that students' perceived self-efficacy influenced their career interests, abilities, goals, and confidence to search for a desired career. As a result, it is hypothesised:

H₁ Self-efficacy will have a positive impact on students' career interest

H₂ Self-efficacy will have a negative impact on students' career interest

Factor 5: Outcome Expectations

Outcome expectations have been defined as an individual's estimate of the likely probability of an outcome (Sharf 2006). Thus, people tend to develop either positive or negative career interests depending on the match between their outcome expectations and their experiences of tasks, jobs or careers.

The current study used *Schein's Career Anchors Inventory* (1978), which was discussed in an earlier chapter (see Appendix A: Section C). It suggests that people tend to have specific values or desires that they seek to satisfy in their work. These may include values in relation to their work and personal life, as well as skills and abilities necessary to actually do the work. *Schein's Career Anchors Inventory* consists of 22 attitudinal statements, which measure an individual's assessment of their ideal career. Participants indicate the strength of their opinion of these given ideal statements using a nine point scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Previous studies using *Schein's Career Anchors Inventory* indicated that it is a useful instrument to examine the congruence between employees' career attitudes and their career expectations (Ituma & Simpson 2006). This inventory also appears to be relevant for different countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, the US, Malaysia, South Africa and the UK (Marshall & Bonner 2003).

It should, however, be noted that this career instrument is not a direct measure of students' outcome expectations. Previous studies have suggested that many tourism and hospitality students had had limited work experience and had unrealistic views of jobs or careers in the tourism and hospitality industry (Jenkins 2001; McMahon & Quinn 1995; Raybould & Wilkins 2005) and some did not have a clear idea about their career following graduation (Jameson & Holden 2000). Therefore, *Schein's Career Anchors Inventory* sought to establish the way tourism and hospitality students perceive their expectations of the specific jobs or tasks impacting on their career interests, and the current study hypothesised:

H₁ Outcome expectations is related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Outcome expectations is related negatively to students' career interest

According to SCCT theory, *individual factors* (gender and age), *individuals' background contextual factors* (parents, teachers, peers, social background and the economic environment), *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy* and *outcome expectations* can either enhance or limit individuals' employment and career opportunities, and these factors may directly predict individuals' career interests and career choices (Turner & Lapan 2002). Regression analysis therefore was employed to determine the relationships between each of these factors and students' career interests and the way they differently predict students' career decision-making.

Figure 4.2 shows the application of the SCCT model in the current research. It indicated six major factors which constitute the career decision-making process. The quantitative research approach and regression analysis were used to examine the relationship of each of these factors with students' career interests, which subsequently influence their decision to choose a career in the tourism and hospitality industry.

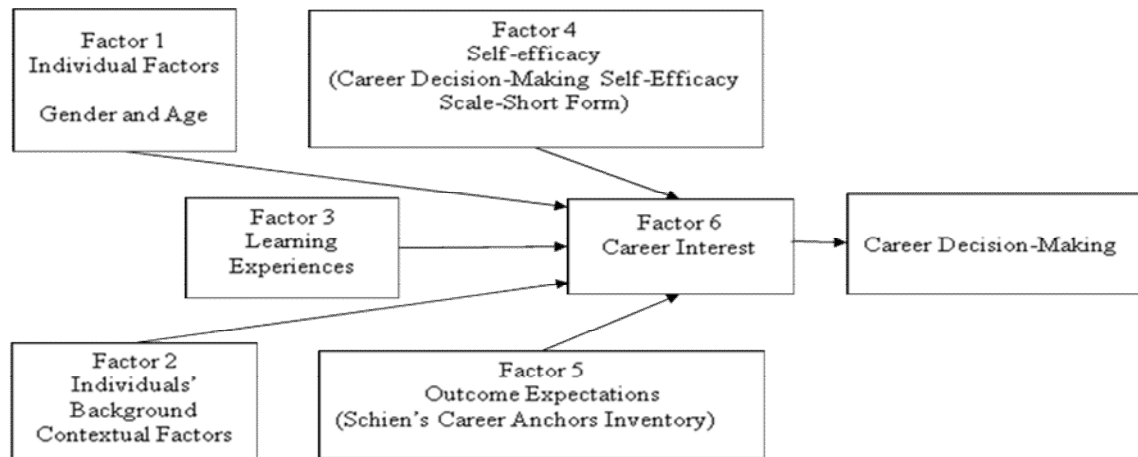


Figure 4.2 Application of SCCT's model on the current research

It was anticipated that the application of the SCCT model would help to conceptualise the career decision-making process of tourism and hospitality students. One valuable aspect of this model was that it allowed a range of factors to be used in investigating how Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students perceived these factors during the career decision-making process.

4.4.2 Applications of SCCT for an Understanding of Cultural Influences on the Tourism and Hospitality Students' Career Decision-Making Process

The final aim of the current study was to understand the impact of the identified factors on the career decision-making process of Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students. To achieve this aim, SCCT was used to provide a theoretical framework for investigating the impact of cultural influences on tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making process within Thailand and Australia. Thus, the final research question of this study was—How do Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students perceive these factors and to what extent do these factors have an impact on their career decision-making?

It was anticipated that the qualitative research approach would explain how Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students perceived the identified factors, which were obtained from the application of the SCCT model, and were associated with Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students' career interest. These factors are *individual factors* (gender and age), *individuals' background contextual factors* (family, peers and

employment opportunities), *learning experiences* (course structure and work-placement program), *self-efficacy* (individuals' views of their ability to achieve tasks or goals) and *outcome expectations* (level of expectations regarding their career or job). The qualitative research approach was used to underpin how these factors impacted upon students' career interest and explain how they influenced career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Participants selected from the Thai and Australian student cohorts were asked to identify what they perceived to be important for their career decision-making and to describe how these factors influenced the way they made career decisions. For example, it was expected that parents, peers and teachers might influence Thai and Australian students differently. This was because the influence of parents, peers, and teachers in a collectivist society were anticipated to play a significant role on Thai students' decisions regarding a university course (Hofstede 2001). Conversely, parents, peers and teachers were expected to have less influence on Australian students (O'Mahony et al. 2008).

Qualitative research methods were also used to address how these factors were linked together to subsequently influence the Thai and Australian students' career decision-making to choose a career in the tourism and hospitality industry. According to SCCT, the key theoretical constructs emphasise the interaction of *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy* and *outcome expectations* and the way these affect individuals' career decisions. Thus, the current study used SCCT as the theoretical framework for analysing the in-depth information and to convey how Thai and Australian students' learning experiences impact on their development of abilities, confidence (*self-efficacy*) and expectations for their career (*outcome expectations*) and how this subsequently influenced the decision to pursue a career in the tourism and hospitality industry.

It was anticipated that the application of SCCT would provide an understanding of tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making process within Thai and Australian contexts and demonstrate ways in which culture influences career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide an overview of the theoretical framework and how it was used in the current study. It discussed that Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive career theory was used to provide this framework and it identified Thailand and Australia as the cultural contexts for the study. It also provided an introduction to the current study and outlined the aims, research questions and the way the study was carried out. This chapter concluded with an explanation of theoretical applications of the study, focusing on the SCCT model and how the model was used to formulate hypotheses for the current study and to provide theoretical guidelines for understanding the career decision-making of tourism and hospitality students in Thailand and Australia. The next chapter focuses on the methodology of the current research.

Chapter Five

Research Methodology

5.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, the theoretical framework and its application for the current study were introduced and discussed. This chapter provides details about the methodological research framework for the current study. The chapter consists of three major sections: research design and methodology, the quantitative study and the qualitative study. The research design and methodology section focuses on the research procedures, including the choice of research methods and the selection of participants. It covers issues relating to language translation, ethics and confidentiality related to research preparation prior to data collection and analysis. The second and the third sections of the chapter relate to the quantitative and qualitative studies and focus on the research instruments, data collection, and data analysis techniques.

5.2 Research Design and Methods

The research design has been defined as the framework for conducting research and helps researchers to ensure that the study will be carried out successfully (Churchill 2001). Generally, the research design is used to justify decisions and choices relating to the research procedure (Sekaran 2003). Specifically, such justifications should show that the five aspects—research purpose, theoretical framework, research questions, research methods, and sampling strategy—are appropriately inter-connected (Robson 2002). The current study follows these aspects of research design. This section provides an overview of the research methodology for the current study. It justifies the research methods used, implementation of the research methods and planning for data collection.

5.2.1 Developing Research Methods

The choice of research methods for the current study was influenced by the purpose of the research, which investigated the factors that drive the career decision-making process of tourism and hospitality students to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry. It also sought to understand how these identified factors impacted upon the career decision-making behaviour of individuals from different cultural backgrounds, specifically Thailand and Australia. As previously discussed, the social cognitive learning model of the career decision-making process helped to generate possible factors associated with individuals' career decision-making processes and was used as a theoretical framework for the current study. The main purpose of the current study and its theoretical framework was to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the factors that appear to influence the career decision-making of tourism and hospitality students?
2. How do Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students perceive these factors and to what extent do these factors have an impact on their career decision-making?

Accordingly, there were three assumptions made for selecting the research methods to answer these research questions. Firstly, the selected research methods needed to identify the variety of factors associated with the career decision-making process. Secondly, the selected research methods had to be able to predict the relationship between each of these identified factors and the career decision-making behaviour of tourism and hospitality students. Finally, the selected research methods needed to allow in-depth information to be collected and analysed in order to show how tourism and hospitality students from different cultural contexts perceive the identified factors as important for their career decision-making behaviour. Consequently, the current study used mixed methods research: quantitative and qualitative methods. The following section discusses in more detail the mixed methods research used in the current study. Later sections provide further discussion of the selection of Thailand and Australia as two cultural contexts for the study, and the way in which participants were selected.

5.2.2 Choice of Research Methods: A Mixed Methods Approach

As briefly indicated, the current study used mixed methods research which involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Mixed methods research is commonly used as a strategic research approach that is able “(a) to demonstrate a particular variable will have a predicted relationship with another variable and (b) to answer exploratory questions about how that predicted (or some other related) relationship actually happens” (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003, p. 15). Similarly, the current study used quantitative methods to identify a variety of factors associated with the career decision-making process and to indicate the statistical significance of these factors. It also permitted the relationship between the identified factors and career decision-making process to be tested (Sakaran 2003).

In addition, the current study sought to gain a better understanding of the impact of students’ cultural backgrounds on the way they perceived the importance of the identified factors associated with the suggested career decision-making process. Thus, the study was interested in exploring the way in which the factors identified by the quantitative study appeared to operate in two different cultural contexts. For example, it investigated the perceived importance of gender to tourism and hospitality students from different cultures and the way in which it influences their career decision-making process. Using only a quantitative research approach would not have allowed more detailed information to be obtained. Therefore, a qualitative method was also selected to explore and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the way in which the selected cultural contexts of Thailand and Australia impacted on the tourism and hospitality students’ career decision-making process.

Mixed methods research was considered to be an appropriate research framework for the current study because it helped to demonstrate a constructive career decision-making process and provided a better understanding of how tourism and hospitality students from different cultural backgrounds perceived career decision-making. It could also be used to confirm the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches (Flick 2009). Consequently, the research findings could be used to establish a better understanding of tourism and hospitality students’ career decision-making process.

5.2.3 The Implementation of Mixed Methods Research

As there are several strategies for implementing quantitative and qualitative methods in one research design, it is important to ensure that the selected strategy matches the research problem and purpose (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007). Thus, the current study used a quantitative approach to identify factors associated with tourism and hospitality student's career decision-making and the way these factors impacted on their decision to pursue a career in the tourism and hospitality industry. The qualitative data was used to explore the importance of the factors identified by the quantitative data and their influence on tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making. In other words, the selected mixed methods research strategy for the current study linked the quantitative and qualitative results in order to interpret and explain tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making process and behaviour (Flick 2009). Figure 5.1 shows the implementation of the mixed methods research in the current study. It demonstrates that the current study involved two different data collection phases: the quantitative research method, followed by the qualitative research method. The results of the two phases were then integrated during the interpretation phase. Qualitative results, as occurred in this study, are commonly used to assist in explaining and interpreting the findings from the quantitative study (Creswell 2003).

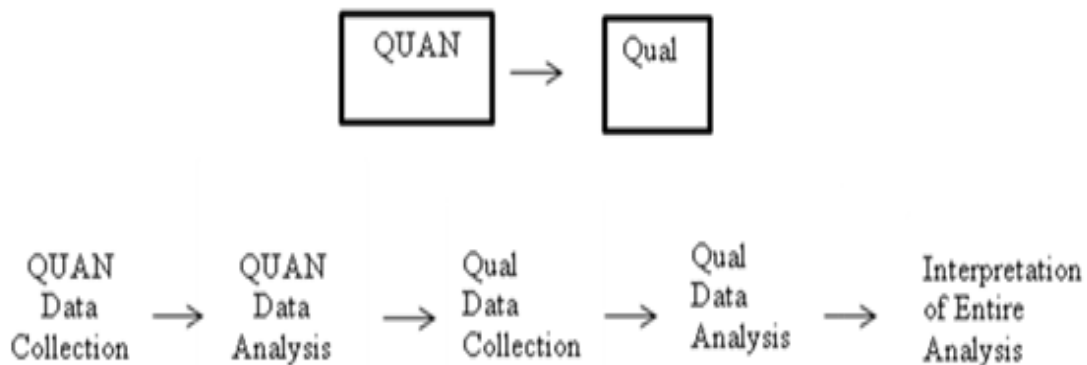


Figure 5.1 Sequential explanatory design

(Source: Creswell 2003, p. 212)

This sequential explanatory design was an appropriate strategy for the current study because it provided a clear research process and was straightforward to implement. The major weakness of the design is that it requires substantial time for data collection as it involves two separate studies (Creswell 2003). Later in this chapter, the quantitative and qualitative research approaches are presented as two separate studies: the quantitative study and the qualitative study. Each section provides discussion of the choices of research instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques.

5.2.4 The Selection of Participants: A Case Study Research Strategy

As has been indicated, the study collected data from tourism and hospitality students. The selection of participants was a case study approach. As a result, participants were recruited from three universities: two Thai universities and one Australian university. Three universities were selected for this study because tourism and hospitality courses in Australia are commonly offered within a Business degree, whereas, in Thailand these courses may be offered as part of either a Business or Arts degree. As the current study sought to understand the impact of a variety of factors associated with the career decision-making process for tourism and hospitality students, it was decided that data obtained from students from different tourism and hospitality degree backgrounds and from different cultural contexts enhanced the validity of the study. Intrinsic to case study research is the fact that empirical results are obtained from selection of specific groups or a small number of individuals (Robson 2002). Thus, the current findings provide detailed information about tourism and hospitality students attending three specific universities but they cannot be generalised to other Thai or Australian tourism and hospitality universities. Case study approach, however, is considered as useful approach for the current study because case study has been suggested to be suitable for the research questions of ‘what’ and ‘how’ and provides an in-depth contextual understanding of a particular groups or individuals (Yin 1994).

The target participants for the current study were also selected from two particular groups of students; students who were enrolling for work-placement and students who had completed their work-placement program. These two groups were chosen because they had different

levels of knowledge about their selected career. It was assumed that the first student group had been enrolled in their tourism and hospitality course for long enough to have developed some knowledge and understanding of the demands associated with a career in the tourism and hospitality industry, but that the second student group had greater industry knowledge gained from their work experience.

It should be noted that Thai and Australian students had work-placements of different durations—the Thai students' work-placement was three months whereas the Australian students' work-placement was equivalent to two semesters of the students' study workload or ten month working period. This was unavoidable as it reflected the course structures of the tourism and hospitality programs at the selected universities. However, it was predicted that this would not have a major impact because people tend to judge their jobs based on their competencies, values, needs and feeling (Noe 2008) and hence make decisions quickly about whether or not they match to the job. The current study included students who had completed their work placement and explored the real world of the tourism and hospitality work environment because they were seen to be able to evaluate and make their own career decisions based on their experiences. It did not seek to compare the impact of the duration of a student's work experience on their career decision-making. Thus, it was anticipated that these target groups would be able to identify a variety of factors associated with their career decision-making process and provide insight into how these factors impacted upon their career decision-making.

5.2.5 Translation for Research Instruments

Since the current study was conducted in two countries, Thailand and Australia, the research instruments required two language versions: a Thai version for Thai students and an English version for Australian students. As a result, the current study used back translation or double translations, to ensure that the quality of the research instruments of the two different languages were comparable. Forbes (2010) suggested that back translation method is seen to be one of the most valid translation methods for cross-cultural studies as it provides the best translation results.

The double translation process for the current study included four major steps. First, the quantitative and qualitative research instruments, which emerged from the literature review, were available in English. The English version of these research instruments were then sent to an appropriately qualified Thai person, an English lecturer employed within higher education, and she translated the English version of these research instruments into the Thai language. Then, once the research instruments had been translated into Thai, they were passed on to a different but similarly qualified Thai person to translate them from Thai to English. Finally, the translated Thai to English versions of the quantitative and qualitative research instruments were compared to their original English version and checked by a panel of three Australian academic experts in tourism and hospitality for any word or meaning variation, inconsistencies, mistranslations, or lost words and phrases, to ensure the consistency of meaning and content of the questionnaire and the semi structured in-depth interview questions. Although the double translation processes were time consuming, McGorry (2000) suggested that it was important to ensure that the questionnaire and semi structured in-depth interview questions in the Thai and English versions were equivalent in content and meaning.

5.2.6 Rules on Ethics and Confidentiality

The rules on ethical standards, privacy, and confidentiality, which Rea and Parker (2005) recommended, were crucial considerations for the current study. Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Victoria University and the Thai educational institutes involved in the study. During data collection, the participants were fully informed of the study's purpose and of the information that the researcher sought to gather. As Mertens (2005) suggested, it is important for a researcher to respect participants' privacy, security and interests. Thus, participants were informed that their information was confidential and that the information provided would only be used for the purpose of the current study and would not be provided to other stakeholders (for example, their work placement organisations or universities). This was to ensure that there were no consequences for participating in the study. Participants were also assured that they could withdraw from the study at anytime during the process.

In summary, this section has endeavored to provide an overview of the research design, methods and procedures that were used as a framework for conducting the current research. The next section focuses on the quantitative study and discusses the research design, the instruments used and the analysis techniques employed in the current research.

5.3 The Quantitative Study

Quantitative research has been defined as a research approach associated with “the use of standardized measures so that the varying perspectives and experiences of people can fit into a limited number of predetermined response categories to which numbers are assigned” (Patton 2002, p. 14) and it emphasises “the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables” (Ryan & Bernard 2000, p. 8). This section provides a more detailed explanation of the quantitative study in the current research, covering the quantitative research method, sampling strategy, data collection, monitoring data collection and data analysis.

5.3.1 Quantitative Research Method

There are several approaches which can be used to collect quantitative data, such as self-administered questionnaires, telephone questionnaires and online questionnaires. The choice depends on various considerations, including the purpose and nature of the research, as well as the research timeline and budget (Gray 2004).

The current study used self-administered questionnaires to collect quantitative data. Nardi (2006) suggested that there are several advantages to using self-administered questionnaires to collect quantitative data. These questionnaires can be distributed to a large number of participants in one location, such as a classroom, which means that all participants can complete the questionnaire under the same conditions and at their own speed and a higher response rate can be achieved. It is also cost effective and less labour intensive for large sample sizes.

The questionnaire was used for two purposes. Firstly, it was used to collect three main types of information for the quantitative data analysis: the demographic, behavioural and attitudinal factors associated with the participants' career decision-making. Secondly, it was used to identify the participants who would be selected for the qualitative study. The selection of questions emerged from the theoretical framework, which identified the factors associated with career decision-making. These consisted of individual factors, for example gender (Ladkin 2000), work motivation and job satisfaction (Lam et al. 2001), personality (Stone & Ineson 1997), environmental factors, such as pay, working environment (Wong 2004) and job availability (Brien 2004). In addition, the questionnaire used two previously validated career inventories: the *Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form* or CDMSE-SF (Betz et al. 1996) and the *Career Anchors* (Schein 1978), which were discussed in the previous chapter. These career inventories were used to investigate factors associated with tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making process and related their behavioural approaches to career decision-making and their career orientation, which were seen as likely to subsequently influence their career decision-making process.

The questionnaire was designed to take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Following Veal (2005), the questionnaires used two different measurement types, which were considered appropriate for participants to answer: pre-closed questions, and scaling. Pre-closed questions provided respondents with either a range of answers to choose from, or, for some questions, they were asked to supply an answer. For example, respondents provided their contact details if they were interested in participating in an interview. Questions using likert scaling were used to measure factors associated with tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making. Nardi (2006) suggested that these measurements—pre-closed questions and scaling—make it easier and quicker for participants to complete the questionnaire and they are also easier to code for the quantitative data analysis.

The questionnaire consisted of five sections (see Appendix A) and these are described in some detail in the next paragraph. These were:

- An Introduction to the current study
- Section A: Student's demographic information
- Section B: Factors associated with student's career learning
- Section C: Student's career profile
- Section D: Factors associated with student's career interest

The questionnaire began with an introduction to the current study. It informed the participants about the study and included a statement of the purpose of the study, any issues concerning the participant (such as requirements for completing the questionnaire, ethics rules and confidentiality).

Section A: The Students' demographic information was designed to obtain descriptive information and individual factors associated with tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making process. This section comprised mainly pre-closed questions.

Section B: Factors associated with student's career learning section was designed to identify the factors that influenced how participants develop their career interests in the tourism and hospitality industry. Each question used a five point likert scale and asked the participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement associated with a given factor or statement.

Section C: The Students' career profile was designed to obtain information on the participants' behavioural approach to career decision-making and how they perceived themselves and their ideal career. This section used two previously validated career inventories: the *Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (CDMSE-SF)* and Schein's *Career Anchors*. The *Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (CDMSE-SF)* was developed by Betz, Klein, & Taylor (1996) and consists of 25 behavioural statements measuring individuals' beliefs and their confidence to complete different tasks involved in career decision-making. The degree of confidence is expressed as a five point range from 'no confidence at all' to 'complete confidence'.

Schein's Career Anchors was developed by Schein (1978) and consists of 22 attitudinal statements measuring how individuals identify their ideal career. The participants were

asked to indicate their views on given ideal career statements. On a nine-point scale, the degree of agreement ranged from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

Section D: Factors associated with students' career decision-making was designed to identify the factors that tourism and hospitality students perceived to be important for them when selecting their job or career and which were likely to subsequently impact on their decision to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry following graduation. This question used a five-point likert scale, on which participants indicated the importance of each factor.

To ensure this self-administered questionnaire provided quality data for the quantitative study, the current study focused on three major aspects of developing a questionnaire survey, as suggested by Balnaves and Caputi (2001). These were design, validity and measuring questions. The questionnaire was designed in a way that made it easy for the participants to complete it and provided clear information about the study and clear instructions. The most important consideration in developing the questionnaire was the selection of questions as the study aimed to identify the factors associated with participants' career decision-making by incorporating factors that had been the subject of previous studies and which were considered to influence tourism and hospitality employees and students. Therefore, the researcher selected questions relevant to the aims of the study, allowing a variety of factors associated with career decision-making to be identified and conclusions drawn about the relationships between suggested factors (Balnaves & Caputi 2001).

In addition, the current study used pre-validated career inventory instruments. Mertens (2005) argued that these instruments were developed in a Western context and therefore it was recognised that the validity and reliability of these instruments may be problematic in an Eastern context such as Thailand. Despite this criticism, previous studies using the *Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form* have been conducted with Chinese high school students (Hampton 2006) and *Schein's Career Anchors* have been used with Malaysian graduates (Marshall & Bonner 2003). These studies indicated that the instruments were also valid in an Eastern cultural context. It should also be noted that the current study used these instruments as part of the theoretical career decision-making model to confirm

whether a strategic approach to career decision-making and career orientation were perceived to be important factors and whether these instruments were relevant to the theoretical model. Thus, the *Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form* and *Schein's Career Anchors* were considered theoretically relevant instruments for the current study for both Thai and Australian students.

Prior to the completion of the questionnaire, the researcher asked six academic experts in tourism and hospitality education, three Thais and three Australians, to review and comment on the overall content and presentation of the questionnaire. This strategy ensured that the design and construction of the questionnaire was relevant to the current study and suitable for the participants (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007).

5.3.2 Data Collection

The timing and location of the data collection were crucial considerations for the study. The questionnaires were distributed in three different locations: at two Thai universities located in the North-Eastern region of Thailand and at one Australian university in Victoria. The selected sample groups were either students who were in the process of applying for their work-placement program or students who had just returned from their work-placement program. This meant that data had to be collected at specific times each year. Inappropriate timing at a location would have had a negative impact on the research timeline and sample size.

The following procedures were used to collect data from tourism and hospitality students who were applying for work-placement at the three universities. The researcher attended several lectures and distributed questionnaires to those students who agreed to participate in the study. These questionnaires were completed in the class. The researcher visited each class twice so as to increase the response rate, as some students might have been absent on the first visit.

To collect data from those tourism and hospitality students who had returned from work-placement, the researcher distributed questionnaires to students in many different locations. This was because many students chose to enroll in their work-placement as the final subject

in their course. The returning Thai Arts students were required to submit their work-placement portfolio at the faculty administration office within the first week of the semester following completion of their work-placement program. As a result, the researcher distributed the questionnaires from the faculty administration office during this week. For the Thai Business students, the faculty held a one day seminar at which the returning students presented their work-placement portfolio and information on their work-placement experience. The researcher attended the seminar in the morning and asked students to participate in the research. The questionnaires were distributed to those who agreed to participate during their morning session break and the researcher waited to collect the questionnaires during the day. At the Australian university, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to participants during classes for the subjects in which most of the returning students enrolled in prior to completion of their course. The researcher visited each of these classes twice to increase the response rate and to obtain a satisfactory sample size.

5.3.3 Data Analysis

Prior to data analysis, the researcher implemented three major steps suggested by Kent (2001). These were editing, coding and entering data into an analysis package. Editing was used to ensure that the data obtained from the questionnaires was filled in by the target participants and questionnaires appeared to have been fully and accurately completed. Each valid questionnaire was then coded and the participants' coded responses were keyed into the selected analysis package, SPSS. The researcher finally checked the data file to ensure that all the data had been keyed into SPSS accurately and was ready for analysis.

Crosstabulations and regression analysis were two important statistical techniques used in this research. Crosstabulations was used to summarise the general characteristics of the participants. This included the total number of participants, their gender and university and the proportion of participants applying for and returning from work-placement. The regression analysis was then conducted to identify factors associated with tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making process. This regression analysis sought to answer the following research question—What are the factors that appear to influence the career decision-making of tourism and hospitality students? To answer this research

question, several hypotheses were proposed, as discussed in the previous chapter. These were:

Factor 1: Individual factors (Gender and Age)

Gender:

H₁ Gender is related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Gender is related negatively to students' career interest

Age:

H₁ Age is related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Age is related negatively to students' career interest

Factor 2: Individuals' Background Contextual Factors

H₁ Individuals' background contextual factors (i.e. family, friends, school teachers, cultural values, industry image etc.) are related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Individuals' background contextual factors (i.e. family, friends, school teachers, cultural values, industry image etc.) are related negatively to students' career interest

Factor 3: Learning Experiences

H₁ Learning experiences is related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Learning experiences is related negatively to students' career interest

Factor 4: Self-efficacy

H₁ Self-efficacy will have a positive impact on students' career interest

H₂ Self-efficacy will have a negative impact on students' career interest

Factor 5: Outcome Expectations

H₁ Outcome expectations is related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Outcome expectations is related negatively to students' career interest

The statistical technique was selected because it seemed able to answer the research questions, as it analyses “the relationship between a single, metric outcome variable and two or more predictor variables” (Blaikie 2003, p. 146) and determine which predictors are important and how they affect the response (Elliott & Woodward 2007). Therefore, regression analysis helped to measure what factors (predictors) were important to the tourism and hospitality students’ career decision-making, the way these factors were related to career interests, and how they affected students’ decisions to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry (outcome variable that depends on interrelationship between the predictors).

5.4 The Qualitative Study

Qualitative research is defined as a research approach that investigates the constructed nature of reality and emphasises the quality of entities, processes and meanings rather than statistical measurement (Denzin & Lincoln 2000). The current study used the qualitative study to explore the meaning of the factors associated with tourism and hospitality students’ career decision-making, which had been identified by the quantitative study. This research approach was used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the way in which the selected cultural contexts, Thailand and Australia, impacted on tourism and hospitality students’ career decision-making. This qualitative study is presented in three parts: qualitative research method, data collection and data analysis.

5.4.1 Qualitative Research Method

Three common methods are used for qualitative data collection; interview, observation, and written document (Patton 2002). Each of these techniques has advantages and disadvantages. The current study used interviews to collect the qualitative data. Mertens (2005) suggested that although conducting interviews can be time consuming, it allows a full range and depth of information to be gathered about participants’ opinions, perceptions, and experiences associated with their career decision-making.

Several types of interview can be conducted, for example internet interviews, group interviews, consensus panels and telephone interviews (Minichiello, Aroni & Hays 2008).

The current study used telephone interviews to collect the qualitative data. This was because the participants for the interviews were either students who were returning to their university for the final year of their course or students taking their work-placement as the final part of their course. By the time the interviews took place, some students were already working or had returned to their home towns and it would not have been practical to conduct face-to-face interviews. Therefore, telephone interviews were considered the most appropriate tool for this qualitative study because they could be conducted with participants who were at different locations and participants could choose the time that best suited them for the interview (Gray 2004). This was seen to likely have a positive impact on the sample size of the qualitative study. In addition, the interview could be conducted with a number of samples in a short time and was cost and time efficient (Minichiello et al. 2008).

The telephone interviews for the current study were semi structured in-depth interviews. The interviews followed the normal research process and used several questions to ensure that important issues were addressed (Mertens 2005). This semi structured in-depth interview provided opportunities for the researcher to gain a better understanding of the participants' perceptions of a variety of factors. It indicated how they made their career decisions and identified those factors that they perceived to have important implications for their career decision-making behaviour.

A semi structured in-depth interview has been recognized as a useful method for collecting qualitative data for several reasons (Flick 2009). It allows the researcher to reorder questions during an interview to enable the participant to reflect or elaborate on their views. It also allows the wording of questions to be flexible and the language level to be adjusted to suit participants from different backgrounds. Finally, it provides an opportunity for the researcher to clarify the meaning of the participants' answers. Therefore, the semi structured in-depth interview was an effective method for the current study and allowed the researcher to be flexible in the wording of questions and the language level to suit students from different degrees (Arts and Business) and cultural backgrounds (Thailand and Australia). Consequently, this enhanced the quality of the information obtained.

The questions used for the semi structured in-depth interview emerged from the theoretical framework and were based on the social learning theory of Krumboltz (1979) and previous studies of career decision-making. The questions were predominantly open questions, although some were more structured. Structured, open-ended questions allow the participants to answer on the basis of their knowledge and experiences (Flick 2009). For example, “What are three most important factors for you when selecting a job and why?” (see Appendix D: Question 8). The semi structured in-depth interviews were designed to take approximately 30 minutes for each session but the actual length varied.

5.4.2 Data Collection

Previous studies suggested that tourism and hospitality students made their career decision after completing the work-placement program (Jenkins 2001; Raybould & Wilkins 2005). The qualitative study therefore used a combination of ‘purposeful’ and ‘stratified’ sampling strategies to recruit participants for the semi structured in-depth interview. It was purposeful because the target participants for the semi structured in-depth interviews were tourism and hospitality students who had completed their work-placement. These students were selected because it was considered important to interview students who had gained practical knowledge and work experience in the tourism and hospitality industry and this may not have been the case for students who had not yet undertaken their work-placement program. It was considered that these students were the most suitable participants for the qualitative study as they had developed knowledge and skills from working in the tourism and hospitality industry. As a result, they were able to provide and elaborate on information associated with the career decision-making of tourism and hospitality students.

Once the purposeful sampling process was completed, the researcher used stratified sampling. Stratified sampling is a sampling strategy that assigns participants to different subgroups by using specific criteria, when the participants for each subgroup are available (Mertens 2005). The current study divided the purposeful sampling group into different subgroups by following three criteria as indicated in Figure 5.2. The participants were first segmented into two subgroups based upon whether or not they intended to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry after graduation. Then participants from each of these

two subgroups were divided according to their satisfaction with their work-placement. This led to the creation of three subgroups. Participants from each of these three subgroups were then segmented according to the positions they had during work-placement, for example waiters/waitresses, front office attendants, housekeeping staff, kitchen staff and human resources staff. This sampling strategy was used to provide in-depth information about the way in which tourism and hospitality students, from a variety of learning and work experience backgrounds, made career decisions.

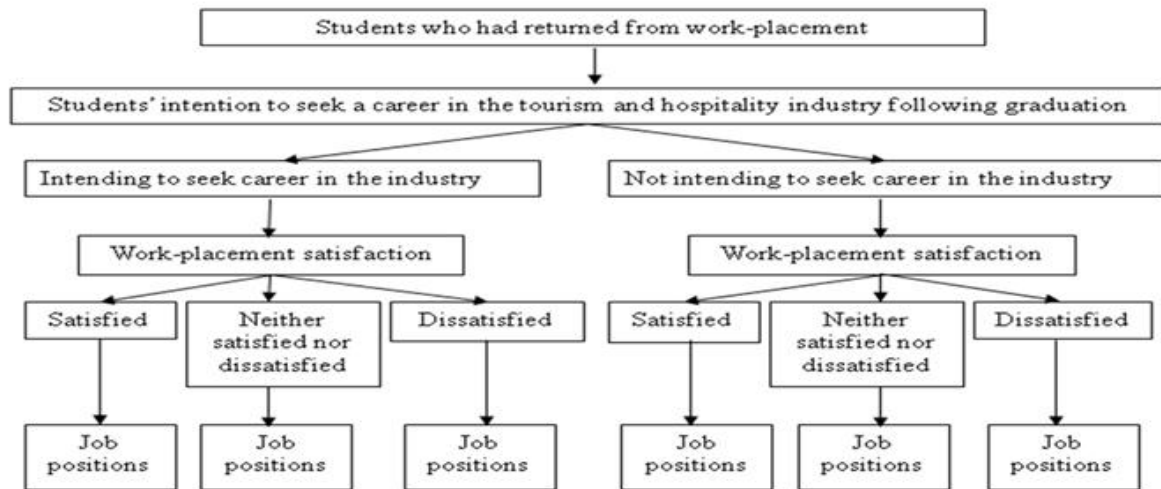


Figure 5.2 Sampling strategies used to recruit participants for the qualitative study

After the participants had been categorised into the required subgroups, the researcher arranged a suitable time for the telephone interviews. Note-taking was used to record the information obtained from the interviews when they were carried out, and detailed notes were made. Minichiello et al. (2008) suggested that note-taking is likely to make a researcher listen more carefully to what an interviewee is saying in order to determine what words, phrase or ideas should be recorded. It also allows the researcher to record tone and speech patterns from the interview, which can help the researcher to clarify or recall the meaning of words, phrases or ideas from the interviewee. One criticism of note-taking is that it can be difficult for researchers to interact with interviewees while information is being recorded during the interviews, so the researcher tried to ensure that rapport was maintained during the interviews.

5.4.3 Data Analysis

Prior to data analysis, the researcher used Creswell's (2003) suggestions as a guideline for data preparation. This involved organising, arranging, and having a general sense of the information that had been collected. The researcher read through the interview record as soon as each interview was completed, to ensure that information was written legibly. Later the information was divided into three data sets: Thai Arts students, Thai Business students, and Australian Business students. Then within each data set, the information was grouped according to the positions that the participants had during the work-placement. The researcher then read through all interviews to gather a general sense of the information from each data set.

To analyse the qualitative data, the current study followed the principle of the content analysis to provide guidelines and a systematic framework for analysis. Generally, content analysis involves two major procedures: coding the data and constructing the relationship amongst the coding data. Coding involves generating descriptions or categorising the data, so that later the relationships between the coded data can be determined or constructed (Creswell 2003), and hence qualitative data can be coded based on words, concepts, sentences and themes (Minichiello et al. 2008). Next step is to construct the relationship amongst the obtained coding data and make sense of the data. Ryan & Bernard (2000) suggested that the construction of relationships of qualitative data should be based upon the theoretical framework of the study. As a result, after the data coding, the researcher constructed the relationships amongst the obtained coding data and made inferences based on Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) SCCT model and Krumboltz's (1979) social learning career theory. Content analysis has been described as a useful qualitative analysis technique that can systematically and comprehensively generate a summary or overview of the data set (Wilkinson 2004). Therefore, the current study followed the above content analysis procedures to analyse the qualitative data and to provide a greater understanding of the quantitative results.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the research design, methods and analysis which were used to carry out the current study. The research design for the current study needed to be able to address the central research questions, which were to investigate the factors that drive tourism and hospitality students to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry. The current study also sought to understand how these factors impact on the career decision-making behaviour of tourism and hospitality students from different cultural backgrounds, specifically Thai and Australian students. In investigating the research questions, both a quantitative and qualitative study was conducted. The quantitative study sought to identify factors associated with tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making, and the qualitative study provided explanations for the interrelationship of the factors suggested by the quantitative study. These two approaches were used to provide a better understanding of the tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making when seeking a career after graduation. The next chapter reports on the quantitative study and its results.

Chapter Six

The Quantitative Study: Results and Discussion

6.1 Introduction

As has been discussed in previous chapters, the broad aims of the current research were to investigate what drives tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making and to better understand their career decision-making process. The research used both quantitative and qualitative studies to achieve these aims. This chapter specifically reports on the quantitative study which was used to identify the factors suggested by Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive career theory—*individual factors, individuals' background contextual factors, learning experiences, self-efficacy, outcome expectations* and *career interest*—to be important for their career decision-making process. It was anticipated that the results from the quantitative study would determine which factors were perceived to play a significant role in the students' career decision-making process.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first provides an overview of the data collection and preparations for the quantitative data analysis. The following section provides information about the questionnaire participants, including students' demographic details, work-placement information and career profiles. The third section presents the quantitative results of the questionnaire survey. In this part, the findings of the initial analysis are presented. These explored the major factors included in the study (i.e. gender, age, family background, and career interest in the tourism and hospitality industry) impacted upon students' career decisions. The regression results were then presented and these identified factors associated with career decision-making. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings.

6.2 Data Collection and Preparations for the Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative study used questionnaires to collect data. These questionnaires were distributed in three different locations: at two Thai universities located in the North-Eastern region of Thailand and at an Australian university located in Victoria, Australia. The selected sample groups were either students who were soon to commence their work-placement program or who had just returned from their work-placement program. This data was only available at specific times each year. Timing and location of data collection were therefore important considerations for the current study, as inappropriate timing at each location could impact on the research timelines and size of the sample.

Generally, Thai tourism and hospitality students from the selected universities apply for their work-placement at the end of their third academic year and undertake their work-placement during summer school. They then return to their universities for the first semester of their fourth academic year, which is the final year of the course. Alternatively, students undertake their work-placement during the second semester of their fourth year and return to their university to submit their work-placement report and complete their degree. The work-placement period for Thai students was approximately three months. Students from the Australian university can apply for their work-placement at the end of their second year or at the end of their third year of study. Their work-placement is equivalent to two semesters of study or ten months of work.

Table 6.1 indicates times and locations of data collection and the estimated total number of targeted students from the three universities. The questionnaires were distributed to students at their respective locations. Prior to distributing questionnaires, the researcher informed students who the targeted participants were. This minimised the collection of unrelated responses. After the participants received their questionnaires, the researcher was available at the location to provide any assistance needed to complete the questionnaire.

Table 6.1 Time and locations of data collection and the estimated total number of targeted students

Participants	Locations	Time of Academic year	Estimated total number of the targeted students
Students applying for work-placement	Thai Arts University	February	250
	Thai Business University	January	125
	Australian University	October	260
Students returning from the work-placement	Thai Arts University	June	300
	Thai Business University	February	140
	Australian University	March	226

Once the participants had completed the questionnaire, the researcher checked to ensure that all questions had been answered. If questions were unanswered and time permitted, participants were asked to complete these questions. The researcher also asked the students who were potential participants for the semi structured in-depth interviews to provide contact details (e-mail address or telephone contact number) on the questionnaire. In addition, if participants had provided their telephone contact number and a questionnaire was incomplete, the researcher contacted students and asked them if they would answer the questionnaire over the telephone. These processes helped to ensure that the researcher collected complete and satisfactory data. However, after the data collection schedule had been completed, the researcher found that the number of Australian Business students was relatively small compared with Thai Business and Thai Arts students. It was concluded that this would impact on the quality of the quantitative data analysis. Therefore, the researcher decided to increase the sample size of Australian students to a size that was large enough to be representative of this student population.

Prior to the quantitative data analysis, the researcher ensured that the questionnaires had been completed by the target participants and had been fully and accurately completed. Each valid questionnaire was then coded, to allow the information collected to be transferred into the analysis package. The coded participants' responses were keyed into the selected analysis package SPSS. The researcher finally checked the data file to ensure all data had been keyed into SPSS accurately and was ready for analysis.

6.3 An Overview of Tourism and Hospitality Students' Profiles

Table 6.2 provides a summary of the number of questionnaires obtained from each target university and indicates that a total of 818 questionnaires were obtained for the quantitative data analysis. The table indicates that there were a similar proportion of Arts students (49%) and Business students (51%). There were also a similar proportion of students who were applying for work-placement (52%) and students returning from work-placement (48%). Thai Arts students formed the largest proportion of students in the study, but combining Thai Business (27%) and Australian Business students (24%) gave similar proportions of Arts and Business students. One likely reason for a higher number of completed questionnaires from Thai Arts students is that more students were enrolled at that particular university. At the time the researcher distributed questionnaires, she was informed by the academic co-ordinator for the students' work-placement program that there were approximately 250 students eligible to apply for work-placement and approximately 300 students who had returned from work-placement. At the Thai Business university, the researcher was informed that the course had an intake of approximately 120-130 students each academic year.

At the Australian Business university, enrollments were also smaller, although at the time the researcher distributed the questionnaires she was unable to obtain precise numbers of students of work-placement status. However, based on the number of the Australian Business students that applied for work-placement, as reported over the previous five years, the university had approximately 130 students applying for work-placement and approximately 113 students returning from work-placement each semester. The researcher ensured a satisfactory sample size of Australian Business students by distributing the questionnaires in a class that the target students enrolled in prior to work-placement or following their work-placement. Due to the constraints of the data collection timelines, the total number of questionnaires obtained from Australian Business students was considered a satisfactory proportion of the total population, although it was less representative of the population than the data from Thai Arts students. It had a similar response rate to the Thai Business students.

Table 6.2 A summary of the number of questionnaires and response rates obtained from the target universities

Students' work-placement status	Thai Arts University	Thai Business University	Australian Business University	Total	(%)
Applying for work-placement	194	110	125	429	52
Response rates (%)	77	85	48		
Returning from work-placement	206	113	70	389	48
Response rates (%)	69	87	31		
Total	400	223	195	818	100
(%)	49	27	24	100	

It should also be noted that while eligible students from the target universities could apply for the work-placement program, not all students were able to find a workplace to undertake their program. These students were required to apply for the work-placement program again in the following semester (for Thai students) or in the final year of their course (for Australian students). The total number of students returning from work-placement was, therefore, likely to be either a similar proportion or slightly less than the proportion of students who were applying for the work-placement program at the time the researcher collected the data.

6.3.1 Students' Demographic Information

Table 6.3 provides an overview of the relevant demographic information for the three groups of students, including gender, age, background qualifications and family background in the tourism and hospitality industry. Table 6.3 shows that most students were female (82%) and only about one fifth were male. The age range of students was from 19 to 39 years, however most students were 21 years (41%) followed by 22 years (32%) and 20 years (10%). A wider age range was found amongst Australian Business students, with four students aged between 27 and 30 years and two students over 31 years. No Thai students were in these older age ranges. Table 6.3 also shows that most students enrolled in a tourism and hospitality course with high school qualifications (82%), followed by a small number with either a completed diploma in tourism and hospitality (8%), or a diploma in another course (5%), for example marketing, human resource management, business management or international trade. A small number had another qualification (4%), which was mainly a

bachelor degree in another discipline. Table 6.3 also shows that the majority of Thai students entered the course with high school qualifications (n=623, 83%), whereas half of the Australian students entered the course with a diploma (n=195, 50%). This reflects differences in the educational pathways into a tourism and hospitality course in the Thai and Australian contexts. In regard to family background, the majority of students (86%) were from non tourism and hospitality industry family backgrounds. However, for approximately one fifth of students, one or both parents were employed in the industry. More Australian Business students had parents working in the industry (n=195, 26%), followed by Thai Arts students (n=400, 13%) and Thai Business students (n=223, 9%) respectively.

Table 6.3 Students' demographic information

Profiles	Thai Arts Students		Thai Business Students		Australian Business Students		Total	
Gender	(n=400)	(%)	(n=223)	(%)	(n=195)	(%)	(n=818)	(%)
Male	71	17.8	34	15.2	45	23.1	150	18.3
Female	328	82	189	84.8	150	76.9	667	81.5
*1 questionnaire unanswered (0.1%)								
Age	(n=400)	(%)	(n=223)	(%)	(n=195)	(%)	(n=818)	(%)
19 years	0	0	0	0	27	13.8	27	3.3
20 years	29	7.3	16	7.2	37	19	82	10
21 years	209	52.3	86	38.6	40	20.5	335	41
22 years	140	35	88	39.5	30	15.4	258	31.5
23 years	13	3.3	27	12.1	17	8.7	57	7
24 years	1	0.3	4	1.8	14	7.2	19	2.3
25 years	2	0.5	1	0.4	9	4.6	12	1.5
26 years	0	0	0	0	6	3.1	6	0.7
27-39 years	0	0	0	0	16	8.2	16	2
* 10 questionnaires unanswered (1%)								
Background Qualifications	(n=400)	(%)	(n=223)	(%)	(n=195)	(%)	(n=818)	(%)
High school	307	76.8	211	94.6	89	45.6	670	81.9
Diploma in Tourism or/ and Hospitality	3	0.8	0	0	64	32.8	67	8.2
Diploma in other courses	1	0.3	3	1.3	33	16.9	37	4.5
Other qualifications	22	5.5	6	2.7	5	2.6	33	4
*11 questionnaires unanswered (1.3%)								
Family background in Tourism and hospitality industry	(n=400)	(%)	(n=223)	(%)	(n=195)	(%)	(n=818)	(%)
Both parents employed in the industry	18	4.5	7	3.1	24	12.3	49	6
Father or mother employed in the industry	23	5.8	13	5.8	26	13.3	62	7.6
No parents employed in the industry	354	88.5	203	91	143	73.3	700	85.6
*7 questionnaires unanswered (0.9%)								

Table 6.3, therefore, suggests that students came from a variety of different backgrounds in terms of their age, qualifications and family background, although some groups were more homogeneous than others. For example, the majority of Thai Arts and Thai Business students were 21-22 year-old, and entered the course with high school qualifications. Australian students, however, varied more in terms of age range (19 to more than 30 years) and they entered the course with either high school or diploma qualifications.

6.3.2 Students' Work-placement Information

A total of 818 students participated in the quantitative study, of which 389 students had returned from their work-placement program. These students worked in 11 different types of tourism and hospitality operations (see Appendix C: Table 6.1) including hotels, resorts, travel and airline operations and foodservice operations. Most students worked in hotel operations (46%) followed by resorts (30%) and travel agent and tour operations (8%) respectively. Approximately five students (1%) worked in positions unrelated to the tourism and hospitality industry.

Interestingly, while most students across the target universities worked in the hotel operations, there were some differences in terms of the type of business operations that Thai and Australian students worked in. For example, approximately one third of Thai Arts and Thai Business students (n=319, 36%) worked in the resort hotel sector, whereas there were no Australian students who worked in this sector. Furthermore, approximately one fifth of the Australian students worked in event and convention management, clubs and entertainment and foodservice businesses, but neither Thai Arts nor Thai Business students worked in these sectors. These findings seem to indicate the variety of tourism and hospitality operations available in different locations.

The results also indicate that students occupied a wide range of different positions during their work-placement program (see Appendix C: Table 6.2) including waiter/waitress, front office staff, housekeeping staff, event coordinator, airline ground service staff, administration staff, guest relation staff, tour coordinator and restaurant manager. The survey responses show that the majority of students had operational level jobs (n=389, 98%) and only four students worked at a managerial level. The results also indicated that all

students in managerial level positions were Australian students and all Thai students worked in operational level positions only. These findings suggest that some tourism and hospitality workplaces in Australia provided students with opportunities to work at both an operational and managerial level during their work-placement program. These opportunities, however, appeared to be associated with students' previous work experience because those students who held a management position had been working in the organisation for some time and had been promoted to a managerial position before they applied for their work-placement program.

The survey also explored students' work-placement satisfaction (see Appendix C: Table 6.3) and found that the majority of students across the target universities were satisfied with their work-placement experience (n=389, 87%). Among the Thai Arts students in particular, work-placement satisfaction was exceptionally high, as 193 out of 206 students (93.7%) expressed that they were satisfied with their work experience. Although Thai Business students were less satisfied, it was still a positive experience for the majority of students (n=113, 79%) and similar results were found amongst Australian Business students (n=70, 81%). Interestingly, while Thai Arts students expressed a high rate of work-placement satisfaction, the Thai Business and Australian Business students had a similar proportion of those who were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their work experience—Thai Business students (n=113, 18%) and Australian Business students (n=70, 13%), and students who were dissatisfied with their work experience—Thai Business students (n=113, 3%) and Australian Business students (n=70, 4%).

6.3.3 Students' Career Profiles

The questionnaire sought information on a range of relevant background factors associated with students' career decisions (see Appendix C: Table 6.4). These factors included academic performance, work experience, students' perceptions of a career in the industry and their career interest in the industry. The survey found that the majority of students appeared to perform well academically. Approximately half of the students (n=389) held distinction grades; one third of students held a credit grade and a small proportion of students held higher distinction (5%) and pass grades (3%) respectively. The survey also

indicated that a similar proportion of students had relevant work experience in the tourism and hospitality industry (n=818, 56%) as those who had no work experience in the industry or no work experience at all (n= 818, 42%). The survey suggested that the majority of students across the target universities had some type of work experience relevant to the tourism and hospitality industry, particularly the Australian Business students (n=195, 83%), followed by Thai Business students (n=223, 13%). Whereas, the majority of students with no work experience (n=400, 49%) were Thai Arts students, followed by Thai Business students (n=223, 28%). In addition to students' academic performance and work experience information, the survey also asked students about their perceptions of the tourism and hospitality industry. The survey revealed that about two thirds of students (n=818, 73%) indicated that what they learned during the course had changed their perceptions of the tourism and hospitality industry from what they had expected when they commenced their course. The reasons for these findings are explored in the qualitative study discussed in the next chapter. The survey also explored which career paths in the tourism and hospitality industry students were interested in and found that food and beverage (27.6%), travel businesses (i.e. airlines, travel agencies, tour operators: 20%), front office (17%), event and conventions (7.8%) and human resources (6.8%) were the most popular areas that students sought to work in. However, Thai and Australian students ranked their top three career paths differently. While food and beverage, travel businesses and front office, respectively, were the three most popular areas for Thai Arts and Thai Business students, events and conventions, front office and travel businesses, respectively, were the three most popular areas among Australian Business students.

6.3.4 Summary

This section has provided an overview of students' background information that is associated with the major factors suggested by previous studies to have an impact on individuals' career decisions. These included gender, age, family background in the tourism and hospitality industry, work experience, academic performance and students' perceptions of a career and career path in the industry. This information shows that the students participating in the study came from a range of backgrounds in terms of their family background, academic performance, work experiences and career interest in the industry.

6.4 The Quantitative Results: Identification of Factors Associated with Students' Career Decision-Making Process

This section summarises the quantitative results, which are presented in two parts. The first part reports on the crosstabulations used to explore students' career decisions. These were associated with a variety of factors that had been suggested by previous research to play an important role in students' career decision-making process, for example gender, age and family background. The later part presents the regression analysis, which was used to identify the factors associated with students' career decision-making process, based on Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive career theory.

6.4.1 Exploring Students' Career Decisions

This section explores the general views of students in regard to their career decision making in the industry. The analyses involved crosstabulations associated with the major factors included in the study. These were gender, age, family background, students' academic performance, students' learning experience and students' career interests in the industry. It was anticipated that the findings would provide information on the factors associated with students' career decision-making and provide a better understanding of the regression analysis results, as presented in the later section.

The first set of analysis explored the decisions of students across the target universities to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry. Table 6.4 presents the results and indicates that the majority of students (n=818, 81%) intended to start a career in the industry following graduation. This proportion was exceptionally high amongst Thai Arts students (n=400, 91%) and Australian Business students (n=195, 92%), followed by Thai Business students (n=223, 80%). These findings appeared to suggest that the tourism and hospitality students regarded a career in the industry as their first choice after graduation.

Table 6.4 Students' decision to seek a career in the industry

Seek a career in the industry	Thai Arts Students		Thai Business Students		Australian Business Students		Total	
	(n=400)	(%)	(n=223)	(%)	(n=195)	(%)	(n=818)	(%)
Yes	365	91.3	178	79.8	179	91.8	722	88.3
No	13	3.3	42	18.8	15	7.7	70	8.6

*26 questionnaires unanswered (3.2%)

Table 6.5 shows the relationship between gender and age and students' career decisions. Table 6.5 indicates similar career intentions towards the industry amongst male and female students and across all age groups. The findings indicated that both male (n=145, 91%) and female (n=646, 91%) students had exceptionally strong career intentions towards the industry. The majority of students in each age group also indicated their desire to seek a career in the industry. The findings, however, appeared to suggest that younger students (19 - 22 years) had stronger career intentions towards the industry than the small number of older students included in this research. These findings are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Table 6.5 Students' career decisions associated with gender and age

Factors	Decision to seek a career in the industry						
	Yes	(%)	No	(%)	Total	(%)	
Gender (n=818)							
Male (n=150)	132	91	13	9	145	17.7	
Female (n=667)	589	91.2	57	8.8	646	79	
Total	721	88.1	70	8.6	791	96.7	
						*27 questionnaires unanswered (3.3%)	
Age (n=818)							
19 years	26	100	0	0	26	3.2	
20 years	76	93.8	5	6.2	81	9.9	
21 years	293	91	29	9	322	39.4	
22 years	228	91.9	20	8.1	248	30.3	
23 years	46	82.1	10	17.9	56	6.8	
24 years	17	89.5	2	10.5	19	2.3	
25 years	11	91.7	1	8.3	12	1.5	
26 years	5	83.3	1	16.7	6	0.7	
27-39 years	12	85.7	2	14.3	14	1.7	
Total	714	87.3	70	8.6	784	95.8	
						*34 questionnaires unanswered (4.2%)	

Table 6.6 presents the relationship between students' family background in the tourism and hospitality industry and students' career decisions. Table 6.6 indicates that there was a high intention to seek a career in the industry among students whose parents (n= 47, 94%), or father or mother (n=62, 94%) had worked in the industry. These findings appeared to suggest that having a family background in the industry was likely to have a positive impact on students' career decision-making in the industry. The impact of family background on students' career interest in the industry will be further investigated by the qualitative study. The findings also indicated strong career intention among students to seek a career in the industry irrespective of whether they had family connections to the industry. The qualitative study will also investigate these findings to explore in more depth the variety of factors associated with students' career decision-making in the industry. The results of the qualitative study are presented in the next chapter.

Table 6.6 Students' career decisions associated with family background

Family background	Career Decision for a career in the industry					
	Yes	(%)	No	(%)	Total	(%)
Both parents employed in the industry (n=47)	44	93.6	3	6.4	47	5.7
Father or mother employed in the industry (n=62)	58	93.5	4	6.5	62	7.6
Parents not employed in the industry (n=676)	613	90.7	63	9.3	676	82.6
Total	715	87.4	70	8.6	785	96

*33 questionnaires unanswered (4%)

Table 6.7 presents students' career decisions according to their academic performance. It indicates that the majority of students from each academic performance group were intent on pursuing a career in the industry (all groups above 80%). However, these findings suggest a positive relationship between students' academic performance and their decision to pursue a career in the industry, as the results revealed that the highest proportion of students who intended to seek a career in the industry were students achieving high distinction grades (n=38, 97%), followed by distinction grades (n=410, 92%), credit grades (n=285, 90%) and pass (n=24, 83%) respectively.

Table 6.7 Students' career decisions according to academic performance

Academic performance	Decision to seek a career in the industry					
	Yes	(%)	No	(%)	Total	(%)
Pass (50-59%) (n=24)	20	83.3	4	16.7	24	2.9
Credit (60-69%) (n=285)	255	89.5	30	10.5	285	34.8
Distinction (70-79%) (n=410)	377	92	33	8	410	50.1
High Distinction (80% up) (n=38)	37	97.4	1	2.6	38	4.6
Total	689	91	68	9	757	92.5

*61 questionnaires unanswered (7.5%)

Table 6.8 shows the relationship between students' decisions to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry after graduation and their satisfaction with their work-placement program. Table 6.8 indicates that the majority of students were satisfied with their work-placement program (n=389, 83%). There was an exceptionally strong intention to seek a career in the industry amongst students who were satisfied with their work-placement program (n=323, 93%). The findings also indicate relatively strong career intentions towards the industry among students who reported being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (n=36, 61%) and dissatisfied (n=9, 67%). These findings, therefore, suggest that students who were satisfied with their work-placement program were highly likely to continue their career in the industry after graduation (93%). Students who were dissatisfied with their work-placement were less strongly committed to the industry but many (67%) still sought a career within the industry after graduation. The impact of work-placement satisfaction on students' career decisions will be further explored in the qualitative study in the next chapter.

Table 6.8 Students' career decision associated with work-placement satisfaction

Work-placement satisfaction	Decision to seek a career in the industry					
	Yes	(%)	No	(%)	Total (n=389)	(%)
Satisfied (n=323)	300	92.9	17	5.3	323	83
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (n=36)	22	61.1	14	38.9	36	9.3
Dissatisfied (n=9)	6	66.7	3	33.3	9	2.3
Total	328	84.3	34	8.7	368	94.6

*21 questionnaires unanswered (5.4%)

Table 6.9 summarises the relationship between students' career decisions to enter the industry and the nature of their work experiences. Table 6.9 indicates that most students who had industry related work experience (n=441, 91.6%) or unrelated work experience (n=70, 92.9%) intended to seek a career in the industry. Many students who had no work experience (n=280, 91.1%) also intended to seek a career in the industry after graduation. These findings suggest that in this study, students who had not had previous work experiences were still committed to seek a career in the industry. Although there were strong career intentions among students who had work experience, students without previous work experience also indicated strong career intentions. These findings indicate that students with no work experience make their career decisions based on factors other than work experience. The qualitative findings are presented in the next chapter, which further investigated the impact of work experience on students' career decision-making, as well as other factors students perceive to influence their career decision-making.

Table 6.9 Students' career decisions associated with work experience

Work experience	Decision to seek a career in the industry					
	Yes	(%)	No	(%)	Total (n=818)	(%)
Work experience related tourism and hospitality industry (n=441)	404	91.6	37	8.39	441	53.9
Work experiences unrelated tourism and hospitality industry (n=70)	65	92.9	5	7.1	70	8.6
No work experience at all (n=280)	255	91.1	25	8.9	280	34.2
Total	724	88.5	67	8.2	791	96.7

*27 questionnaires unanswered (3.3%)

This section has explored the association between a student's decision to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry and gender, age, family background and work experiences. In addition to these factors, and as suggested by the literature, the decision to enter the tourism and hospitality industry is also likely to be influenced by a match between gender and job or career. Students were therefore asked to identify a career path in the industry that they would be interested in.

Table 6.10 shows the relationship between students' career interests and gender. Table 6.10 reveals that the most popular career paths were food and beverage (28%), travel businesses (20%) and front office (17%) respectively. It also indicates that food and beverage was the most popular career path selected by male students (n=150, 32%) and female (n=667, 27%) students. Male and female students expressed different interests in three career paths: front office, travel businesses, event and conventions, human resources and marketing. The findings suggested that female students (n=647) were more interested in front office (19%) and events and conventions (8.5%) than were male students (n=150, front office 8%; event and convention 5%). Whereas, male students (n=150) were more interested in a career in travel (23%), human resources (9%) and marketing (7%) than were female students (n=647, travel businesses 19%; human resources 6%; marketing 5.5%). The relationship between gender and career interests in the industry will be further explored in the qualitative study.

Table 6.10 Relationship between students' career interest and gender

Career interests	Gender					
	Male		Female		Total	
	(n=150)	(%)	(n=667)	(%)	(n=818)	(%)
Food and Beverage	48	32	178	26.7	226	27.7
Travel Businesses	34	22.7	129	19.3	163	20
Front Office	12	8	127	19	139	17
Event and Conventions	7	4.7	57	8.5	64	7.8
Human Resource	14	9.3	42	6.3	56	6.9
Marketing	10	6.7	37	5.5	47	5.8
Housekeeping	4	2.7	20	3	24	2.9
Others	14	9.3	57	8.5	71	8.7
Total	143	17.5	647	79.2	790	96.7

*28 questionnaires unanswered (3.3%)

In summary, this section indicated that the majority of students reported that they intended to seek a career in the industry after graduation. It also explored the factors associated with students' decisions to seek a career in the industry, such as gender, age, family background and work-placement programs. The next section presents the results identifying the factors associated with students' career decision-making process.

6.4.2 Factors Associated with Students' Career Decision-Making Process

The previous section used crosstabulations to explore the associations between students' decisions to seek a career in tourism and hospitality industry and the major factors included in the current study. In this section, regression analysis was employed to identify factors that predicted career decision-making of Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students based on Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive career theory.

According to this theory, the career decision-making process is associated with six major factors: *individual factors* (gender and age), *individuals' background contextual factors*, *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy*, *outcome expectations* and *career interest*. *Career interest* is likely to predict individuals' *career decision-making*. Therefore, this quantitative study primarily investigated the factors (*gender, age, individuals' background contextual factors, learning experiences, self-efficacy* and *outcome expectations*) that predicted students' career interest. The relationship between career interest and career decision-making will be investigated in the qualitative study in the following chapter.

Regression analysis was used to investigate the following hypotheses associated with students' career interest (*Factor 6: Career Interest*). The development of these hypotheses was discussed in Chapter Four: Theoretical Framework.

Factor 1: Individual factors (Gender and Age)

Gender:

H₁ Gender is related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Gender is related negatively to students' career interest

Age:

H₁ Age is related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Age is related negatively to students' career interest

Factor 2: Individuals' background Contextual Factors

H₁ Individuals' background contextual factors (i.e. family, friends, school teachers, cultural values, industry image etc.) are related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Individuals' background contextual factors (i.e. family, friends, school teachers, cultural values, industry image etc.) are related negatively to students' career interest

Factor 3: Learning Experiences

H₁ Learning experiences are related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Learning experiences are related negatively to students' career interest

Factor 4: Self-efficacy

H₁ Self-efficacy will have a positive impact on students' career interest

H₂ Self-efficacy will have a negative impact on students' career interest

Factor 5: Outcome Expectations

H₁ Outcome expectations is related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Outcome expectations is related negatively to students' career interest

The following variables were used in the regression analysis:

Dependent variable

Career Interest: A set of variables measured by the question "Please rate each of the following factors in terms of their importance to your job". This question consisted of 16 items which included, for example, "Job that fits my personality, abilities and interests", "job that provides for my financial need", "nature of the job" and "career prospects/ advancement". These items were coded on a scale ranging from 1 = not important at all to 5 = very important (See Appendix A: Question 15).

Independent variables

Gender: This variable was coded as a dummy.

Age: This was measured as a continuous variable collected directly from respondents.

Individuals' background contextual factors: A set of variables measured by the survey question “What motivated you to enrol in a tourism and hospitality course?”. There were 12 items in this question which included, for example, “Your Tertiary Entry Rank (TER)”, “family”, “the industry profile reported by the media” and “availability of jobs in the industry”. These items were coded on a scale ranging from 1 = not important at all to 5 = very important (see Appendix A: Question 8).

Learning Experiences: A set of variables measured by the survey question “Please rate each of the following factors that have had a positive impact on your study”. There were 10 items in this question which included, for example, “your academic performance”, “career ambitions”, “learning/teaching environment” and “work experience in the industry”. These items were coded on a scale ranging from 1 = not at all positive to 5 = very positive (see Appendix A: Question 10).

Self-efficacy: A set of variables measured by the ‘Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form’ (Betz, Klein, & Taylor 1996), a pre-validated instrument as discussed in ‘Chapter Four’. There were 25 items in this question which include, for example, “choose a career that will fit your preferred lifestyle”, “change careers if you did not like your first choice”, “decide what you value most in an occupation” and “determine the steps you need to take to successfully attain your chosen career”. The items were coded on a scale ranging from 1 = not confident at all to 5 = complete confidence (see Appendix A: Section C).

Outcome expectations: A set of variables measured by the ‘Career Anchors’ inventory (Schein 1978), a pre-validated instrument discussed in ‘Chapter Four’. There were 22 items in this question which included, for example, “my career goal is

to be in a position that requires making decisions that affect many people”, “my idea of a career is one that allows me the freedom to do a job on my own way and in my own time”, “the security and stability of a job are more important to me than freedom and autonomy” and “financial and employment security are of primary importance in my career decisions”. These items were coded on a scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 9 = strongly agree (see Appendix A: Section C).

Prior to the regression analysis, preliminary analyses were undertaken to provide the basic characteristics of the current data set and ensure internal consistency (Heppner & Heppner 2004). Table 6.11 presents the construct means, standard deviation and reliability of five major variables—*individuals’ background contextual factors*, *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy*, *outcome expectations* and *career interest*. Table 6.11 suggests that students rated *individuals’ background contextual factors* (M=3.974) and *career interest* (M=4.172) as important. They also rated *learning experiences* to have a positive impact on their study (M=3.861). In addition, students generally felt that they had the confidence to make career decisions as they rated their *self-efficacy* towards being confident (M=3.667). These findings appeared to suggest *individuals’ background contextual factors*, *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy* and *career interest* were likely to have a significant impact on students’ career decisions. Despite that students rated positively on *individuals’ background contextual factors*, *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy* and *career interest*, they rated their *outcome expectations* to be negative, as they generally disagreed on the statements associated with the career expectations identified by the career anchors (M=4.180).

Table 6.11 Construct Means, Standard Deviation and Reliability

Variable	Mean	Variance	Cronbach's Alpha
Individuals’ background contextual factors	3.974	0.1673	0.811
Learning experiences	3.861	0.2097	0.791
Self-efficacy	3.667	0.2889	0.793
Outcome expectations	4.18	0.4381	0.89
Career interest	4.172	0.1549	0.792

Table 6.11 also provides levels of internal consistency of the current data. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients yielded values ranging from 0.70 to 0.80 for all variables. These alpha coefficients are considered to show adequate reliability (Heppner & Heppner 2004; Kent 2001).

Table 6.12 presents the results from the regression analysis. The table includes the coefficient, standard errors and the T-statistics for each of the model variables. The results show that *gender*, *individuals' background contextual factors*, *learning experiences* and *self-efficacy* have a significant impact on students' career interest, whereas *age* and *outcome expectations* have no significant impact on students' career interest. The findings also suggest that *learning experiences* were perceived to have the most significant impact and *outcome expectations* had the least impact on students' career interest in the industry. These findings will be explored further in the discussion later in this chapter. How these factors interact and impact on students' career decision-making will also be explored in the qualitative study presented in the following chapter.

Table 6.12 Regression Results

Dependent Variable: Career Interest			
Variable	Coefficient	Standard Errors	T-Statistics
Intercept	14.3249	1.6154	8.8676 **
Gender	-0.8692	0.3851	-2.257**
Age	0.0236	0.057	0.4144
Individuals' background contextual factors	0.2089	0.0415	5.0337**
Learning experiences	0.2211	0.0292	7.5643**
Self-efficacy	0.1292	0.046	2.8077**
Outcome Expectations	-0.0013	0.0006	-1.6493

** Statistically significant at the 5% confidence level

Based on the results presented in Table 6.12, the quantitative study supported most hypotheses underpinning the current study but indicated that *age* and *outcome expectations* did not predict career interest. As indicated, the following are concluded from the quantitative analysis.

Factor 1: Individual factors (Gender and Age)

Gender:

H₁ Gender is related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Gender is related negatively to students' career interest

The finding indicated that difference in gender affect students' career interest (T= -2.257, p<0.05). Therefore, H₂ Gender is related negatively to students' career interest was accepted.

Age:

H₁ Age is related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Age is related negatively to students' career interest

This factor was hypothesised, that age is related to students' career interest either positive or negatively, was rejected as the results indicated that age were found to have no effect on students' career interest (T=0.4144, p>0.05).

Factor 2: Individuals' background Contextual Factors

H₁ Individuals' background contextual factors (i.e. family, friends, school teachers, cultural values, industry image etc.) are related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Individuals' background contextual factors (i.e. family, friends, school teachers, cultural values, industry image etc.) are related negatively to students' career interest

The results showed that higher levels of support students received from their background contextual factors led to a higher level of career interest in the industry (T=5.0337, p<0.05). Therefore, H₁ Individuals' background contextual factors are related positively to students' career interest was accepted.

Factor 3: Learning Experiences

H₁ Learning experiences is related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Learning experiences is related negatively to students' career interest

The results indicated that higher levels of learning experiences valued by students led to a higher level of career interest in the industry (T=7.5643, p<0.05), which. Therefore, H₁ Learning experiences are related positively to students' career interest was accepted.

Factor 4: Self-efficacy

H₁ Self-efficacy will have a positive impact on students' career interest

H₂ Self-efficacy will have a negative impact on students' career interest

The findings indicated that higher levels of students' self-efficacy led to a higher level of career interest in the industry (T=2.8077, p<0.05). Therefore, H₁ Self-efficacy will have a positive impact on students' career interest was accepted.

Factor 5: Outcome Expectations

H₁ Outcome expectations is related positively to students' career interest

H₂ Outcome expectations is related negatively to students' career interest

This hypothesis, outcome expectations (students' career expectations) is related to students' career interest, was rejected as the results indicated that outcome expectations were found to have no effect on students' career interest (T= -1.6493, p>0.05).

6.4.3 Summary

This section presented the quantitative analysis and results. It began by exploring career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry among Thai and Australian students. The results indicated that the majority of Thai and Australian students intended to seek a career in the industry after graduation. It also explored whether students' career decision-making was associated with the major factors included in the current study, for example, gender, family background, and work experience. This was used to provide a relevant background of students' career decision-making. Later, the regression results were

presented which identified factors predicting students' career interest in the industry. The findings indicated that students' career interest was likely to be influenced by *gender*, *individuals' background contextual factors*, *learning experiences* and *self-efficacy*. *Age* and *outcome expectations* were, however, found to have no significant impact on students' career interest. The next section discusses these findings.

6.5 Discussion

This study investigated what drives tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making and sought to better understand their career decision-making process. The chapter identified which of the factors suggested by social cognitive career theory—*individual factors* (gender and age), *individuals' background contextual factors*, *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy* and *outcome expectations*—influenced students' *career interest* in the industry. The results of the main analysis suggested that the factors impacted differently on students' career interest.

6.5.1 Individual factors (Gender and Age)

The results indicated, as anticipated, that gender impacted on career decision-making among Thai and Australian students. This finding supports previous research findings into the impact of gender on the career decisions of male and female employees in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Previous studies investigating the relationship between gender and a career in the tourism and hospitality industry suggested that gender had a significant impact on career opportunities in the industry, particularly in the hotel sector. For example, Anafarta and Cizel (2003) found that male employees were perceived to have better career opportunities in the industry than female employees. Huffman and Torres (2001) also found that men were more likely to advance their careers to senior management levels, whereas women were promoted predominantly to middle management levels and not beyond. In the hospitality sector in Scotland, Harper, Brown and Irvine (2005) found that almost 85 per cent of general hotel managers were men. Previous studies also suggest that management in hotels appears to have stereotypical views of appropriate types of work for male and female

employees. For example, men were seen to suit jobs in food and beverage (Wood 1997) and women were seen to be better suited to jobs in front office (Ladkin & Juwaheer 2000).

The results presented in Table 6.10 support the previous findings that explored the relationship between students' career interest and gender. There is some support for the fact that stereotypical views of appropriate work for men and women exists, but this is less pronounced than in previous studies. Thus, Table 6.10 indicates that more male students were interested in food and beverage (32%) but many female students (27%) were also interested in food and beverage. More significant gender differences were evident in regard to front office, with many more female students interested in front office jobs (19%) than male students (8%). These findings provide some support for previous studies that suggest that gender influences job selection among students, although food and beverage jobs now appear to be seen by a significant minority of female students as an attractive option. As the research indicates, gender can have a significant impact on career paths and opportunities among male and female employees in the industry. It seems likely that some students are aware of these issues and take gender into consideration when making their career decisions.

The findings indicated that age did not predict students' career interest in the tourism and hospitality industry. There are a number of possible explanations for this, which are related to the age range of the participants in this study and the nature of the industry. Martin and Gardiner (2007) and Magd (2003), who investigated the relationship between age and career in the hospitality sector among employees in the UK and Scotland, suggested that the industry was seen to be a young person's workplace. Martin and Gardiner (2007) found that young people make up approximately 80 per cent of the hospitality workforce in the UK. The suggestion that hospitality is a young person's industry is endorsed by Magd's (2003) research, which found that career opportunities for older employees (55⁺ years), in Scotland appeared to be limited, as some managers indicated they were reluctant to employ older employees.

The current study provides some support for the findings of the two earlier studies, and indicates that the industry is perceived to be suited to young employees. The quantitative data indicated that the majority of students participating in the questionnaire survey (n=818)

were between 21 years (41%) and 22 years (32%). Therefore, the majority of students were aged between 21 and 22 years, and too few older students were represented in the sample for age to have a negative impact on their career interest. The relationship between students' career interest and age is presented in Table 6.5. These findings suggest strong career intentions among students aged between 19 and 22 years, with more than 90% of students in these age groups intending to seek a career in the industry. Strong career interests were even higher among 19 year old students, with all (n=26, 100%) intending to seek a career in the industry. These findings, therefore, appeared to suggest that the majority of students in this study were too young to be aware or were disinterested in the fact that that age may limit their career opportunities in the industry in the future.

6.5.2 Factor 2: Individuals' Background Contextual Factors

The current study supported this hypothesis and indicated that individuals' background contextual factors had a positive impact on students' career interest. There were a variety of factors associated with students' background contextual factors in the current study. These included family, friends, school teachers or counselors, the industry profile as reported in the media, and perceptions of career opportunities in the industry. The quantitative results found that having immediate family members working in the industry, in particular, had a positive impact on students' career decision-making. The quantitative results presented in Table 6.6 highlighted that there was a high intention to seek a career in the industry among students who had both parents (n= 47, 94%) or either their father or mother (n=62, 94%) working in the industry.

Similar findings on the impact of parents' career on young adolescents' career decisions has been found in previous research. For example, research among graduate teachers pursuing a career in teaching (Mau, Ellsworth & Hawley 2008) found a strong persistence to pursue a career in teaching among graduate teachers who either had their mother (16%) or father (7%) working as a teacher. The career of parents, therefore, appears to be a predictive factor for students' career decision-making. Factors other than students' family background in the tourism and hospitality industry that impact on the career decisions of students will be further explored by the qualitative study presented in the next chapter.

6.5.3 Factor 3: Learning Experiences

The results from the current study indicated that a range of learning experiences had a positive impact on students' career interest. The factors included in students' learning experiences in the current study were academic performance, the perceptions of the learning and teaching environment and work experience in the industry. The quantitative study explored the students' career decisions associated with their academic performance and work experience in the industry and found that these factors had a positive impact on the decision to seek a career in the industry. Thus Table 6.7 indicates that students with good academic performance express stronger intentions to seek a career in the industry than do weaker students (High distinction = 97%, Distinction = 92%, Credit = 89.5%, Pass = 83%). It should, however, be noted that irrespective of academic success, the majority of students appear to be committed to seeking a career in the industry. Table 6.9 suggested that strong intentions towards a career in the industry were found among students with work experience related to the industry (n=441, 92%).

One explanation for the relationship between students' decision-making and academic performance and work experience is that these experiences give students confidence to pursue their career goals. Smith (2002) investigated undergraduate students' career interest towards information technology and found that students with information technology experience expressed highest interest, whereas a lower career interest was found among students with limited experience or a lack of computer skills. It could be concluded from this study and the current study that students with good academic performance feel confident to work in the industry based on the knowledge and skills they learn from the course. Students with work skills related to the industry also have confidence in developing their career in the industry based on the knowledge and skills they had learned from their work places.

6.5.4 Factor 4: Self-efficacy

Bandura (1997) highlighted the importance of self-efficacy and its impact on individuals' beliefs in their abilities to pursue particular goals or accomplish particular tasks. The current study used a previously validated self-efficacy inventory, *Career Decision-Making Self-*

Efficacy Scale-Short Form or *CDMSE-SF* (Betz et al. 1996), to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and students' interest in choosing a career in the tourism and hospitality industry.

The results obtained from the quantitative study supported Bandura's research and indicated that self-efficacy was likely to influence students' career interest in the industry. The preliminary analysis (Table 6.11) shows that students generally felt confident to make career decision as their *self-efficacy* ratings were in the direction of being confident (M=3.667). These results on the impact of self-efficacy on career interest have also been found in previous research. For example, Gushue et al. (2006) used the *CDMSE-SF* with African American high school students and their results suggested that there was a relationship between self-efficacy and the ability to generate possible careers. The study found that students' perceived that self-efficacy influenced their career interests, abilities, goals and confidence to search for a desired career. It appears that self-efficacy can have a significant influence on the way individuals make their career decisions. Social cognitive career theory, however, suggests that individuals tend to develop their self-efficacy through the interactions between learning experiences and outcome expectations. As this discussion indicates the results from quantitative study highlight a relationship between self-efficacy and career interest but the nature of this relationship is not clear. As a result, the qualitative study explores the interrelationship of these factors in more depth and provides a better understanding of the way self-efficacy, learning experiences and outcome expectations interrelate and eventually influence students' career decision-making. The qualitative results are presented in the next chapter.

6.5.5 Factor 5: Outcome Expectations

The quantitative indicated that students perceived outcome expectations as having little impact on their career interest. Outcome expectations have been defined as an individual's estimate of the likely probability of an outcome (Sharf 2006). It is suggested that people develop either positive or negative career interests depending on the match between their outcome expectations and their experiences of tasks, jobs or careers. The current study used *Schein's Career Anchors Inventory* (1978) to establish how tourism and hospitality students'

expectations of specific jobs or tasks impact on their career interest. The preliminary analysis (see Table 6.11) indicated that students generally disagreed ($M=4.180$) with the views presented on the ideal career statements.

This finding suggested that these students had low expectations of their career. Low career expectations among the Thai and Australian students could be explained by findings obtained in previous studies that suggest many tourism and hospitality students have limited work experiences and unrealistic expectations of jobs or careers in the tourism and hospitality industry (Jenkins 2001; McMahon & Quinn 1995; Raybould & Wilkins 2005). Furthermore, some students do not have clear ideas about their future career after graduation (Jameson & Holden 2000). According to the demographic results for students participating in the current study, the majority of these students had previous work experience (66%) although about one third had no work experience. It is, however, unclear the amount of work experience that student had. The most likely explanations for the current findings, therefore, are either that students' previous work experience was either limited or non-existent, and so they were unsure of what to expect from their future job or career, or these students had no clear idea of what they were looking for or what characterised a desirable career.

In addition to the findings obtained from the career anchors, the exploration of the relationship between students' career decisions and their satisfaction with their work-placement program (Table 6.8) supported the main analysis. This indicated that most students who were satisfied with their work-placement program were likely to continue their career in the industry after graduation ($n=389$, 83%). Many students who expressed either dissatisfaction with their work-placement or were neutral about the experience still did not have a desire to seek a career outside the industry after graduation and expressed the intention to seek a career in the industry after graduation (students who neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, $n=36$, 61% and dissatisfied, $n=9$, 67%). Since there were some issues that were unclear in relation to the impact of outcome expectations on students' career decision-making, this issue was further explored in the qualitative study. The qualitative results are presented in the next chapter.

6.5.6 Factor 6: Career Interest

As has been discussed, *gender*, *individuals' background contextual factors*, *learning experiences* and *self-efficacy* had an impact on the career interest of Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students. *Age* and *outcome expectations* were not able to predict students' career interest in the tourism and hospitality industry. Although it was at times unclear how these factors were interrelated or how they impacted on students' career interest in the industry, these findings were valuable for establishing which factors were associated with students' career decision-making. As a result, the impact of *individual factors* (*gender* and *age*), *individuals' background contextual factors*, *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy* and *outcome expectations* was further investigated in the qualitative study in order to increase the depth and meaning of the quantitative results and provide a better understanding of the way these factors impact on students' career interest and why students perceived some to be more important than others.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented and discussed the quantitative study. As previously mentioned, a total of 818 Thai and Australian students participated in the quantitative study. The majority of participants were female students aged between 21 and 22 years. About one fifth of the students had family backgrounds in the tourism and hospitality industry and about half of these students also had work experience related to the industry. Crosstabulation analysis explored students' career decisions and indicated that the majority of students intended to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry after graduation. The analyses also found that the most popular career paths with students were food and beverage, travel businesses and front office respectively. The regression results identified which factors appeared to predict students' career interest in the tourism and hospitality industry—*individual factors* (*gender* and *age*), *individuals' background contextual factors*, *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy* and *outcome expectations*. The results indicated that *gender*, *individuals' background contextual factors*, *learning experiences* and *self-efficacy* had a significant impact on students' career interest, whereas *age* and *outcome expectations* were found not to impact on students' career interest. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the quantitative findings. Whilst these findings identified factors influencing students' career

interest, they were not able to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these factors influence students' career decision-making process. The next chapter continues to investigate the interrelationship between these factors and students' career decision-making, in order to clarify how the factors suggested by the quantitative study impact on the tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making.

Chapter Seven

The Qualitative Study: Results

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reported on the quantitative data results and analysis obtained from the questionnaires. These findings identified which factors suggested by the Model of Social Cognitive Career Theory—*individual factors, individuals' background contextual factors, learning experiences, self-efficacy and outcome expectations*—had a significant correlation with students' *career interest*. The quantitative study indicated that these factors may correlate with students' *career interest* positively or negatively and subsequently influence the way Thai and Australian students make career decisions. Whilst these findings demonstrated relationships, they could not provide an explanation of how these factors influence students' career decision-making process. The current research, therefore, used qualitative data to gain a better understanding of how the factors emerging from the quantitative study impact on tourism and hospitality students' career decision-making. It was anticipated that the qualitative study would help to identify the roles of the factors (*individual factors, individuals' background contextual factors, learning experiences, self-efficacy, outcome expectations and career interest*) and explain the way they affect students' decisions to pursue a career in the tourism and hospitality industry. The current research also sought to understand the influence of culture on career decision-making in a Thai and Australian context. The qualitative study, therefore, expands upon the findings of the quantitative study and demonstrates the extent of cultural influences on the career decision-making of Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students. The qualitative study is presented in two separate chapters. This chapter reports on the qualitative analysis and results obtained from the semi structured in-depth interviews. The relevance of the qualitative findings to social cognitive career theory will be highlighted and explained in detail in the next chapter.

7.2 Data Collection and Preparations for the Qualitative Data Analysis

The study used semi structured in-depth interviews to obtain the qualitative data. The participants were purposively recruited from students who had returned from a work-placement program. The researcher used a stratified sampling strategy to select participants from a variety of learning and work experience backgrounds (see Chapter Five: Figure 5.2). There were 389 respondents who had returned from work-placement, or 48% of the total participants in the questionnaire survey. These consisted of 206 respondents that were Thai Arts students, 113 respondents that were Thai Business students and 70 respondents that were the Australian Business students. Following the stratified sampling strategy, the researcher recruited a total of 88 participants for the interview or 23% of the total number of students who had returned from work-placement. The number of students recruited for the interviews and the representative number from each university were as follows: 40 Thai Arts students, 36 Thai Business students and 12 Australian Business students.

The researcher employed several strategies to ensure the semi structured in-depth interviews collected all relevant data. These included, ensuring the questions asked were unambiguous and the researcher clarified words or ideas with the interviewees to ensure responses were recorded accurately. The researcher also encouraged interviewees to provide information that was relevant to the research questions and the theoretical framework. At the close of the interview, the researcher summarised the information obtained from the interview and read back some direct quotes or words to the interviewees to further ensure the information provided had been correctly recorded and accurately expressed the respondent's ideas. The researcher then applied content analysis and coded the data by focusing on individual words, sentences and themes. Once the coding was completed, the researcher followed the theoretical framework of social cognitive career theory to construct relationships within the qualitative data.

It should be also noted that when presenting the qualitative results, the researcher used a combination of approaches. These included verbal data such as quotations and themes provided by the participants as well as numerical data such as the total number of students who responded to particular themes or issues. Using numerical data in qualitative studies can be controversial because it is common practice in quantitative research. However,

Maxwell (2011) suggests that numerical data is also a valuable strategy for qualitative research as it can provide supplementary support for the evidence from the quantitative data. It was seen to be particularly appropriate for the current qualitative study because it involved a relatively large number of participants (88 participants) and the data analysis involved identifying themes or issues associated with students' career decision. Therefore, the researcher used the numerical data primarily to indicate the extent of the support for the quantitative results rather than making conclusive statements based on numeric calculations.

7.3 Students' Profiles

The semi structured in-depth interviews were conducted with a total of 88 participants from three universities. These participants were selected using a stratified sampling strategy which based on three conditions: their intention to seek employment in the tourism and hospitality industry, their level of work-placement satisfaction and their job position during the work-placement program. Table 7.1 provides an overview of the profiles for the 88 tourism and hospitality students from the target universities.

Table 7.1 indicates that the majority of participants were female students and the majority ranged in age from 19 to 22 years. A much smaller number of students were aged between 23 and 26 years. A wider age range was found amongst the Australian Business students with four students aged between 27 and 30 years and two students over 31 years. There were no Thai students in these older age ranges. Table 7.1 also indicates that most students at these universities were intending to seek employment in the tourism and hospitality industry. Among the Thai Arts students, this intention was exceptionally high as 38 out of 40 students expressed an intention to pursue a career in the tourism and hospitality industry. Interestingly, the intention to seek employment in the tourism and hospitality industry was less among Thai Business students but was similar among both Thai Arts and Australian Business students with two third of these students expressing an intention to seek employment in the industry. In terms of students' work-placement satisfaction, the majority of students from the target universities appeared satisfied with their work-placement experiences. Among the Australian Business students, the majority of the students expressed satisfaction with their work-placement. This was followed by Thai Business

students and Thai Arts students. It was found that, more Thai Business students were neutral about their work-placement and said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied or were dissatisfied with their work-placement program. On the other hand, a smaller proportion of Thai Arts students and Australian Business students were dissatisfied with their work-placement. Table 7.1 concludes with a summary of the positions that these 88 students took during their work-placement program.

Table 7.1 Students' profiles of the semi structured in-depth interviews

Profiles	Thai Arts Students		Thai Business Students		Australian Business Students		Total	
	(N=40)	%	(N=36)	%	(N=12)	(%)	(N=88)	(%)
Gender								
Male	8	20	0	0	5	42	13	15
Female	32	80	36	100	7	58	75	85
Age								
19-22	35	88	29	81	2	17	66	75
23-26	5	13	7	19	4	33	16	18
27-30					4	33	4	5
31 and over					2	17	2	2
Decision to pursue career in the tourism and hospitality industry								
Yes	38	95	25	69	8	67	71	81
No	2	5	11	31	4	33	17	19
Work-placement satisfaction								
Satisfied	34	60	23	64	10	83	67	76
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	8	9	25	1	8	13	15
Dissatisfied	3	8	4	11	1	8	8	9
Work-placement positions								
Waiter/ Waitress	13	33	9	25	5	42	27	31
Housekeeping	9	23	8	22	0	0	17	19
Front Office	4	10	6	17	5	42	15	17
Support staff	5	13	9	25	0	0	14	16
Cook assistant	7	18	2	6	0	0	9	10
Airport ground service	0	0	2	6	1	8	3	3
Others	5	13	0	0	1	8	6	7

As can be seen, the majority of students worked as waiters/waitresses, followed by housekeeping staff, front office staff, support staff (e.g. administrative staff) and a small

group of students worked in other sectors (e.g. tourist information centre). Table 7.1 illustrates that students participating in the semi structured in-depth interviews came from a wide range of backgrounds in terms of their age, career intentions, work-placement satisfaction and job experience during their work placement program. The next section presents results from the semi structured in-depth interviews and explores these students' views on factors related to their career decision-making

7.4 The Qualitative Results: Explanations for Career Decision-Making

According to Social Cognitive Career theory (SCCT), the career decision-making process is associated with six major factors: *individual factors (gender and age), individuals' background contextual factors, learning experiences, self-efficacy, outcome expectations and career interest*. *Career interest* is likely to predict individuals' *career decision-making*. In previous chapter, which reported on the quantitative study, found that Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students indicated that *gender, individuals' background contextual factors, learning experiences and self-efficacy* influenced their *career interest* in the tourism and hospitality industry, whereas *age and outcome expectations* appeared to have no influence on their *career interest* in the industry. The qualitative results, therefore, expand upon the findings from the quantitative study and explore the relationship between students' *career interest* and their career decision-making after graduation. This chapter also demonstrates the extent of cultural influences on the career decision-making of Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students

Students were asked several questions (see Appendix D) to elicit further information regarding those characteristics underpinning the current study—their *individual factors, individuals' background contextual factors, learning experiences, self-efficacy, outcome expectations and career interest* factors and to explore the way these factors influence the career decisions students make. The qualitative results are initially presented in the context of the career decision-making process. This began with students' decisions to enroll in a tourism and hospitality course and concludes with their career intentions after completing their course. This allows a variety of factors associated with students' career decision-making to emerge and shows interrelationships between these factors.

Whilst, this Chapter Seven presents the qualitative results which identified a variety of issues and their impacts on students' career decision-making process, the results are discussed in the next chapter. Chapter Eight highlights and discusses the roles of the factors suggested by SCCT—*individual factors, individuals' background contextual factors, learning experiences, self-efficacy, outcome expectations* and *career interest*—and their impact on students' career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry. This discussion will seek to provide a better understanding of how students make their career decisions and the impact of various factors on their career decision-making.

The qualitative results are presented in four sections. The first section (7.4.1) explores what drives students' decisions to enroll in a tourism and hospitality course. The next section (7.4.2) identifies students' previous expectations about their course and the industry, what students have learned during their course and the impact of their learning experiences on their decision to seek a career in the industry. The following section (7.4.3) reports on the impact of the work-placement program on students' perceptions towards a career in the tourism and hospitality industry. The final section reports on students' career intentions and the factors they perceived to impact on their decision to either seek a career in the industry after graduation or not.

7.4.1 What drives students' decisions to enroll in a tourism and hospitality course?

This question sought to identify factors associated with students' career interests towards the tourism and hospitality industry. In addition, it allowed students to reflect upon their perceptions of their tourism and hospitality course and working in the industry prior to entering the course and the industry.

The interviews revealed that students from Thailand and Australia appeared to share similar reasons for deciding to enroll into a tourism and hospitality course. As indicated in Table 7.2, twelve themes were commonly found within both countries. Table 7.2 shows that about two third of 88 Thai and Australian students suggested that they enrolled in a tourism and hospitality course for two main reasons. The first reason given by more than a third of these students was that the course matched their personal learning preferences, abilities or

interests. One Thai student explained that the course structure suited her learning preferences and stated that:

“The subjects in this course would be varied, and importantly it has a more practical rather than theoretical orientation”

(Thai Business student-TB083)

Students also mentioned that they perceived themselves to have the abilities either to complete the course or work in the industry. Thus, one Australian student responded:

“I chose this course because it seemed to be not difficult for me to study. Also, at that time my parents owned a restaurant, and sometimes I helped them by working as a waitress. So I had some ideas about what working in the hospitality business would be like”

(Australian Business student-AB070)

The students chose the course also based on their personal interests. One Thai student described it as follows:

“I like travelling. So the knowledge and skills learnt from the course would be useful personally and professionally”

(Thai Arts student-TA205)

The second main reason given by the students for enrolling in a tourism and hospitality course was that the industry provided good job opportunities. Thai and Australia students made similar statements and agreed that they had formed this opinion based on a variety of different sources. For example, the news, teachers at school and friends suggested that the industry was continuing to grow, so the labor market provided good job opportunities. Some students also had connections with the industry, such as a family hospitality business or relatives who worked in the industry and could help students to get a job after graduation.

Despite, the key reasons for many Thai and Australian students' decision to enroll into a tourism and hospitality course was because it matched their personal learning preferences, abilities or interests and they thought that the tourism and hospitality industry would provide good job opportunities. Other issues were perceived differently by Thai and Australian students. A sizable number of Thai students (15 of 76 students) enrolled into a tourism and hospitality course because they considered that the course would provide them with

opportunities to travel. Another reason given by a smaller group of Thai students (10 of 76 students) was that the industry provided them with an opportunity to enjoy serving, entertaining or working with people. Several Thai students also indicated that they chose the course because the subjects seemed to be easy to study. For Australian students, about one third of these students perceived two reasons to be equally important. Firstly, they perceived that the course allowed them to enjoy serving, entertaining or working with people. This indicates that significantly more Australian than Thai students appeared to value the idea that working in a tourism and hospitality context was largely about looking after and working with people. Another important reason was that enrolling into the course received positive support from family, friends, or school teachers. A quarter of the Australian students responded that workplace atmosphere and working environment was important.

Interestingly, some reasons were perceived to be unimportant by either Thai or Australian students. The first example of this is that the course was perceived to provide travel opportunities. Whilst 15 Thai students perceived this as their third most important reason for choosing a tourism and hospitality course, Australian students perceived it as unimportant. The differences between Thai and Australian students were also evident in terms of whether working in the industry provided good pay and incentives. Thus, six Thai students perceived this as important for them, however for Australian students it was not a consideration for enrolling into a tourism and hospitality course. The final reason showing inconsistency between Thai and Australian students was the perception that the course would facilitate work in the tourism and hospitality industry, providing a beautiful, elegant, and challenging work environment. Whilst three Australian students perceived this as their second most important reason for choosing the tourism and hospitality industry, Thai students perceived it as unimportant. These findings appeared to indicate that Thai students perceive that a career in the industry is associated with leisure and income, whereas with Australian students it is the job characteristics and work environment that drive their career interest in the industry.

Since some Thai and Australian students were from different degree orientations, this study aimed to identify similarities and differences between tourism and hospitality students from different degree orientations, namely a Business degree versus an Arts degree orientation. As is evident from Table 7.2 there appeared to be some minor differences between Business and Arts students' responses. The most significant difference appeared to be that more Business than Arts students indicated that their course facilitated them to work in the tourism and hospitality industry which they thought would be an easy, fun, or exciting job. Five of 36 Thai Business students and one of 12 Australian students perceived this to have partially influenced their decision to enroll in the tourism and hospitality course, however no Thai Arts students considered it an influence on their decision. Also, a substantially smaller number of Thai Business and Australian Business students than Thai Arts students indicated that they enrolled into the course because it provided good future job career opportunities.

Within a Thai context, the difference between Thai Business and Thai Arts students became more substantial. Their views were significantly different on five dimensions, as follows: the course provides good job opportunities for the future, the course is easy to study, students had positive support from family, relatives, friends or school teachers, the course facilitated students to work in tourism and hospitality which they thought would be easy, fun or exciting and the course matched students' academic background with the university entry ranking. These results also indicated that more Thai Arts students saw their course as providing them with good job opportunities for the future, whereas only one fifth of Thai Business students viewed this as important. Thai Business and Thai Arts students also had significantly different views on the expectations of their course, the work environment of the industry and the extent to which they received support from family, relatives, friends and school teachers. This indicated that Thai Business students saw their future work environment to match their preferences and interests whereas to Thai Arts students, having the ability to pursue their study was important. Furthermore, almost one fifth of the Thai Arts students perceived family, relatives, friends and school teachers to partially explain their decision to enroll into the course, whereas Thai Business students perceived this as unimportant to them.

Table 7.2 Reasons for students enrolled into a tourism and hospitality course

The course is perceived to be	Thai Arts Students (N=40)	Thai Business Students (N=36)	Australian Business Students (N=12)	Total (N=88)
1. Match individual's learning preference, abilities or interests	16	8	9	33
2. Provide a good job opportunity in the future	20	8	3	31
3. Provide travel opportunity	8	7	0	15
4. Allow students to work where they can enjoy serving, entertaining and working with people	7	3	2	12
5. Be easy to study	7	1	1	9
6. Have positive support from family, relatives, friends or school teachers	7	0	2	9
7. Facilitate students to work in tourism and hospitality which they think it would be easy, fun or exciting	0	5	1	6
8. Work in the industry which it would be good pay and incentives	3	3	0	6
9. Prepare students before entering the industry because they know someone who can help them to get a job in the industry after graduate	1	2	0	3
10. Facilitate students to work in tourism and hospitality industry where workplace atmosphere is beautiful and elegant, and working environment is challenging and variety	0	0	3	3
11. Match students' academic background with the university entry ranking	1	0	1	2
12. Match students' career aspiration	0	0	1	1

It was also found that although Thai Arts students and Australian Business students differ in terms of their degree orientations and cultural background, they have many similar reasons for enrolling in a tourism and hospitality course. These reasons include the positive support students received from family, relatives, friends or school teachers and the match between students' academic background and the university course entry ranking. A sizable number of Thai Arts and Australian Business students also selected the course because it was perceived to match their individual learning preferences, abilities or interests. These three reasons were seen to be similarly important by Thai Arts students and Australian Business students, but were not considered important by any Thai Business students.

Table 7.2 sets out the 12 reasons that had influenced students' decisions to enroll into a tourism and hospitality course. These reasons were grouped into four broad factors to help identify the factors students perceived to be associated with their career interest, based on social cognitive career theory. Table 7.3 identifies these four broad factors as *personal fulfillment*, *industry image*, *social influences*, and *course image*.

Table 7.3 indicates that 62 of 88 students across three universities enrolled in a tourism and hospitality course because they perceived that the course would provide personal fulfillment. *Personal fulfillment* was seen by students to mean that the course would be taught in ways that enhanced students' learning, enabled them to study effectively and to be confident in their ability to complete the course. They also expected to gain knowledge or develop skills that fulfilled their personal interests. About half of Thai and Australian students perceived the *industry's image* to be the second most important factor influencing their decision to enroll into the course. The industry image factor covered several aspects of the tourism and hospitality industry, including workplace atmosphere, the work environment and good job opportunities for the future. Approximately one fifth of the students perceived *social influences* that affected their decisions. *Social influences* were seen by these students to refer to people such as family members, relatives, friends and school teachers. A small number of the students perceived *course image* to influence their decision to enroll in a tourism and hospitality course. For these students, the important consideration was that the course was perceived to be easy to study.

Table 7.3 Factors influencing the students' decision to enroll in the tourism and hospitality course

Factors	Thai Arts Students (N=40)	Thai Business Students (N=36)	Australian Business Students (N=12)	Total (N=88)
1. Personal fulfillment	32	18	12	62
2. Industry image	21	13	8	42
3. Social influences	8	2	2	12
4. Course image	7	1	1	9

Based on social cognitive career theory, it appears that these four broad factors were to be associated with self-efficacy, outcome expectations and individuals' background contextual factors. Personal fulfillment was seen to be associated with two major factors; self-efficacy (how individuals perceive their abilities to achieve particular goals or tasks) and outcome expectations (individuals' expectations on the consequences of their actions). The industry image was seen to be associated with outcome expectations, whereas the course image was seen to be associated with self-efficacy. Social influences highlighted the impact of individuals' background contextual factors (the roles of family, relatives, friends, and school teachers).

This section identified the reasons for students' decisions to enroll into a tourism and hospitality course. The findings suggested that the majority of Thai and Australian students presented two major reasons that drive their decision to choose the course. They considered that the course matched their learning preferences, abilities or interests and that the industry would provide good job opportunities after graduation. The findings also highlighted that the reasons provided by Thai and Australian students appear to be associated with three components of social cognitive career theory; self-efficacy, outcome expectations and individuals' background contextual factors.

The next section continues to explore students' career decision-making process. It focuses on students' perceptions of their tourism and hospitality course and students' perceptions of a career in the industry, which have been acquired while studying.

7.4.2 What are the students' expectations of their course and the industry?

The previous section identified that *individuals' background contextual factors*, *self-efficacy* and *outcome expectations* were likely to drive students' decisions to enroll in their tourism and hospitality course. Social cognitive career theory, which suggests that individuals' expectations are likely to influence the way they perceive their actual *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy* and *outcome expectations*, helps to better understand the students' career decision-making. Students were asked what they had previously expected of their course and the industry and what they had learned during the course that had changed their previous

perceptions of the tourism and hospitality industry. This question sought to specifically explore the impact of *outcome expectations* on students' career decision-making.

Table 7.4 identifies students' expectations of a tourism and hospitality course and the industry and illustrates that students from all three groups had various views about their course and the industry. Ten different views were expressed by students, although some of these were more evident amongst some groups of students. As Table 7.4 shows, most Thai and Australian students have positive perceptions of a career in the tourism and hospitality industry, as one third of the students expected that working in the industry would be easy and fun. This was particularly true of Australian Business students and Thai Business students. In addition, 12 out of 88 students expected that it would be easy to get a job. Table 7.4 also identifies students' expectations of their course and shows that several students had previously perceived that the course would be easy and fun to study. Other students had expected that the course would focus on practical more than theoretical concepts. Thai and Australian students, however, varied in their assessment of their course. Thais expected that the course would provide them with good opportunities to learn different languages, especially English (20 of 76 students), but no Australian students were expecting to learn other languages. Possible reasons for these differences are discussed in the next chapter.

In terms of different degree orientations, Thai Business and Australian Business students had similar expectations of their course and the industry. For example, they expected that the course would focus on practical rather than theoretical skills and had high expectations that working in the industry would be easy and fun. Thai Arts students did not have these expectations. Rather they had strong expectations that the course would provide good opportunities for them to learn different languages. Table 7.4 also identifies other issues raised by Thai and Australian students. Surprisingly, only one Thai and one Australian student expected that educational qualifications would facilitate their career progress in the industry. The other expectations perceived to be important for Thai students, but not Australian students, was the expectation that knowledge and skills would be transferable to other fields of work and that working in a hotel would be well paid. These issues show the

influence of cultural background and socio-economic differences on the students' expectations.

Table 7.4 Students' expectations of their course and the tourism and hospitality industry

Students' expectations of the tourism and hospitality course and industry	Thai Arts Students (N=40)	Thai Business Students (N=36)	Australian Business Students (N=12)	Total (N=88)
1. Working in the industry will be easy and fun	8	13	5	26
2. The course will provide good opportunities for students to learn different languages especially English	14	6	0	20
3. The course will be easy and fun to study	6	8	2	16
4. It will be easy to get a job	9	0	3	12
5. The course will focus on practical more than theoretical	2	4	2	8
6. Knowledge and skills are transferable to other field works	3	4	0	7
7. Working in a hotel is well paid	3	3	0	6
8. Jobs within operational level were perceived to be low and unskilled jobs	4	0	0	4
9. The course will provide variety of subjects	1	2	0	3
10. Educational qualification will advance career progress in this industry	1	0	1	2

The students were also asked if what they had actually learned or experienced matched what they had expected to learn. Table 7.5 indicates the accuracy of Thai and Australian students' initial perceptions about their course and the tourism and hospitality industry. It indicates that the majority of students strongly agreed that their actual learning and experiences were different to what they had expected (65 of 88 students), although differences were evident between Thai and Australian students. Interestingly, many Australian Business students (10 of 12 students) identified that their expectations had changed. Although the majority of Thai Arts and Thai Business students indicated that their experiences were different from their expectations, the proportion was smaller than the Australian students.

Table 7.5 Accuracy of students' perceptions of their course and the industry

Students' perceptions	Thai Arts Students		Thai Business Students		Australian Business Students		Total	
	(N=40)	(%)	(N=36)	(%)	(N=12)	(%)	(N=88)	(%)
Changed	29	73	26	72	10	83	65	74
Unchanged	11	27	10	28	2	17	23	26

The students identified several issues about the tourism and hospitality course and industry that were different from what they had expected. The interviews suggested that the major changes in Thai and Australian students' views involved the course structure, subject content and job opportunities in the industry. Students reflected on the way their perceptions of the course structure and subject content had changed as follows:

“The course provided fewer English subjects than I had expected. So, students did not gain enough confidence to use English during their work-placement program. I also had expected that the course would be more practical bases but it was more about theoretical concepts”

(Thai Arts student-TA197)

“The course provided fewer English subjects than I had expected. I also thought that the course would have a more practical orientation but it was more on theoretical”

(Thai Business student-TB092)

“I found that some subjects learned during the course were interesting but their content was not practically relevant to the industry for example, subjects like economics, statistics and information technology. Graduates would be unlikely to have opportunity to utilise or develop skills in these areas, especially at an entry level of the industry”

(Australian Business student-AB70)

The above views indicate that although Thai and Australian students had different expectations of their course, they expressed disappointment about their course and the subject content. The students highlighted that the course structure and subject content should be more practical and better facilitate career entry into the industry.

Other students who, as indicated in Table 7.4, expected that working in the industry would be easy and fun, and that it would be easy to find employment after graduation, were disappointed about the nature of the industry. Some of them provided comments that:

“I thought that there would be plenty of jobs by the time I graduated. However I struggled to find a job for my work-placement program as so many students were applying for the program. After my work-placement, I have also realised that it is not easy to get a job in a hotel. There is high competition, especially from students with their major study in English. They are our competitors”

(Thai Arts student-TA152)

“Working in the industry is not as easy and fun as it looks. It requires knowledge, skills and more effort than I had expected”

(Thai Business student-TB077)

“The course was not as difficult as I had expected but job opportunities are not easy because it is getting more and more difficult if you want to move on higher position or into managerial areas”

(Australian Business student-AB16)

As can be seen, these Thai and Australian students highlighted the impact of course content on their career entry into the industry. They also provided their views on career opportunities within the tourism and hospitality industry. Although both Thai and Australian students reported that job opportunities in the industry as less easy than they had expected. Thai students in particular highlighted the impact of English skills on their confidence to enter the industry. This is one example of the impact of culture on the skills required by the tourism and hospitality industry.

In contrast to the negative perceptions of the course and the industry discussed above, some students reflected that their perceptions towards the course and the industry had changed in a positive way. One Australian Business student responded:

“The course was beyond my expectations. I learned more than I had previously expected, especially in subjects about clubs and gaming, yield management and theories of management, I found that these subjects were interesting and useful”

(Australian Business student-AB02)

Students with unchanged perceptions of the course and the industry explained that their perceptions were unchanged because they had had some background knowledge about the industry prior to their enrollment. For example, some students explained:

“My sister has been working in a hotel and I also used to work part-time where she is working. So I had some ideas about working in a hotel already before enrolling into the course”

(Thai Arts student-TA117)

“I have been helping my parents in our restaurant, so I had pretty much an idea about working in this business sector before enrolling into the course. So what I have learned during the course it is just something that builds on my previous knowledge and skills”

(Australian Business student-AB15)

These students’ views suggested that students with background knowledge and first-hand experience in the tourism and hospitality sectors were likely to have more realistic ideas of the knowledge and skills required by the sector.

To help understand the impact of students’ perceptions of their course and career on their career decision-making, students were asked what their ideal job was at that moment. This question was asked to explore students’ career intention after graduation. The findings revealed that although Table 7.5 suggested that most Thai and Australian students’ perceptions of the course and the industry had changed, these changes appeared to have had a positive impact on students’ career interests in the tourism and hospitality industry.

As Table 7.6 shows, most students from each university had identified ideal jobs and indicated that their ideal jobs were predominantly related to the tourism and hospitality industry. A significantly higher proportion of Thai Arts students and Australian Business students indicated that their ideal jobs related to the tourism and hospitality industry (90%), whereas the proportion was lower for Thai Business students (78%). It is also interesting to see that a relatively high proportion of students had not identified an ideal job, as these students were entering the final year of their course. As Table 7.6 shows, this was higher among Thai Arts students than students from the other two universities.

Table 7.6 Students' ideal jobs

Students' Ideal jobs	Thai Arts Students		Thai Business Students		Australian Business Students		Total	
	(N=40)	(%)	(N=36)	(%)	(N=12)	(%)	(N=88)	(%)
Yes	30	75	32	89	10	83	72	82
<i>Related tourism and hospitality industry</i>	27	90	25	78	9	90	62	86
<i>Unrelated tourism and hospitality industry</i>	3	10	7	22	1	10	14	14
No	10	25	4	11	2	17	16	18

So far, this section has sought to understand the impact of students' expectations about their course and the tourism and hospitality industry on their career decision. Based on social cognitive career theory, the findings highlighted that the *outcome expectations* (students' expectations towards their course and the industry) appeared to impact on students' *self-efficacy* to make career entry into the industry. *Outcome expectations*, however, appeared to have a lesser impact on students' *career interest* in the industry because despite a higher proportion of students agreed that their perceptions about their course and the industry had changed. The majority of students positively expressed their career interest in the industry.

7.4.3 The impact of the work-placement program on students' perceptions towards careers in the tourism and hospitality industry

Work-placement programs are considered to play a significant role in students' career learning because they provide an opportunity for students to utilise the skills and knowledge that they have learned during their course and to explore different aspects of the industry. This section explores the nature of students' work-placement experiences and endeavours to understand the impact of their experiences on three components of social cognitive career theory: *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy* and *outcome expectations*. Social cognitive career theory suggests that the interrelationship between these factors subsequently impacts on the way students' develop their career interest and their likelihood of seeking a career in the tourism and hospitality industry after graduation.

An overview of the students' work-placement profiles is contained in Table 7.7. It should be noted that some students worked in more than one job. Therefore, the frequencies in this table are based on the number of jobs that all students in the study occupied, rather than those for the students interviewed. Table 7.7 shows that most Thai students were female, whereas amongst the Australian students, the proportion of male and female students was similar. Table 7.7 also shows that most Thai and Australian students were placed within accommodation business establishments followed by airline and tour or travel agencies. A small number of students had work-placement programs in other tourism and hospitality businesses, such as restaurants, clubs and government institutions related the tourism and hospitality industry. In terms of the positions students had during their work-placement programs, about one third of students worked as waiters or waitresses. A smaller proportion worked in housekeeping, front office staff, in support positions, such as human resources, administration, finance and accounting, assistant cook and airport ground staff. Some students worked in other positions for example as business center staff in a hotel or resort recreation staff.

Table 7.7 Students' work-placement profiles

Profiles	Thai Arts Students (N=40)		Thai Business Students (N=36)		Australian Business Students (N=12)		Total (N=88)		
		%		%		(%)		(%)	
Gender									
	Male	8	20	0	0	5	42	13	15
	Female	32	80	36	100	7	58	75	85
Type of Business Establishments									
	Accommodation	35	88	30	83	9	75	74	84
	Airline	1	3	4	11	1	8	6	7
	Tour/ Travel agent	3	8	2	6	0	0	5	6
	Others	1	3	0	0	2	16	3	3
Positions									
	Waiter/ Waitress	13	33	9	25	5	42	27	31
	Housekeeping	9	23	8	22	0	0	17	19
	Front Office	4	10	6	17	4	33	14	16
	Support staff	5	13	9	25	0	0	14	16
	Cook assistant	7	18	2	6	0	0	9	10
	Airport ground service	0	0	2	6	1	8	3	3
	Others	5	13	0	0	2	16	7	8

In order to investigate the impact of the work-placement program on students' learning experiences, students were asked to indicate how important the work-placement program was to them and to identify the reason why it was important. Table 7.8 shows how students perceived the work-placement program, indicating that most students regarded it as important. It should, however, be noted that there was considerable variability between the three groups. Among the Australian Business students, all ranked it as important and most Thai Arts students also saw it as important. Although, many Thai Business students regarded it as important, they appeared to be less satisfied than the other two groups of students. Despite high numbers of student perceiving the work-placement to be important to them, it is evident that Thai Business students were neutral or saw their work-placement more unimportant to them than did Thai Arts students or Australian Business students.

Table 7.8 The perceived importance of the work-placement program

Level of importance	Thai Arts Students		Thai Business Students		Australian Business Students		Total	
	(N=40)	(%)	(N=36)	(%)	(N=12)	(%)	(N=88)	(%)
Important	38	95	31	86	12	100	81	92
Neutral	1	3	2	6	0	0	3	3
Unimportant	1	3	3	8	0	0	4	5

In Table 7.9 several key themes were identified. These summarise what students perceived to be important about their work-placement. As this table shows, about half of Thai and Australian students suggested that their work-placement program helped them to learn about their future career in terms of the work environment and the job. This knowledge allows students to assess whether their personality, interests and ability match the work environment and job characteristics. Approximately one third of the students perceived that the work-placement program allowed them to learn about various aspects associated with the job, such as the knowledge and skills required. Similar proportions of students also perceived that the work-placement helped them to make career decisions about the job they wanted after graduation and helped them to learn more about the reality of working in the tourism and hospitality industry. A relatively small group of students perceived that their work experiences during the program benefited them when entering the industry or they

perceived that this program allowed them to explore career opportunities and choices. A small proportion of students also noted that the work-placement program provided them with an opportunity to utilise the knowledge and skills acquired during the course and to gain new knowledge and skills from the workplace.

Table 7.9 Issues associated with students’ perceived importance of the work-placement program

Reasons the students perceived work-placement as important	Thai Arts Students (N=40)	Thai Business Students (N=36)	Australian Business Students (N=12)	Total (N=88)
1. Helps students to define their decision about their personal preference of the job, or career or working environment that match their personality, interests and ability	24	16	5	45
2. Helps students to learn or understand more about the jobs relating skills and knowledge requirement and nature of the jobs	9	16	3	28
3. Helps students to make their career decision after graduate	12	7	5	24
4. Helps students to learn and understand working environment in the industry	16	2	5	23
5. Work experience obtained from the work-placement impacts on career entry and progress	4	3	5	12
6. An opportunity to explore career and choices in the industry	3	5	2	10
7. Opportunity for students to utilise the skills and knowledge learned from the course and develop new skills and knowledge from the workplace	1	1	6	8

The following are some explanations offered by students about the value of their work-placement program. Although students valued different aspects of the experience, their comments show that this experience allowed students to develop both personally and professionally.

“I learned about the job I was doing. I also learned to be responsible for myself and my job and how to work with other people”

(Thai Arts student-TA047)

“For me, work-placement was a turning point in my life. It had a significant impact on my future career decisions. I also think that if students are happy with their work experience during the work-placement, they will continue to make career progress in the industry, but if not, they may decide to work in other industries.”

(Thai Business student-TB092)

“Work-placement offers students opportunities to explore work in the industry. It is a hand on experience, so students have an opportunity to relate theory to practice, especially for students who had no work experience before. They learn a great deal from this program.”

(Australian Business student-AB23)

It can be seen that students valued their work-placement program and saw it as providing them with an opportunity to develop their career in the tourism and hospitality industry. They perceived that the work-placement program allowed them to utilise their knowledge and skills, to learn about their job and provided them with opportunities to explore the work environment. Students appear, therefore, to develop possible career choices and make decisions about their future career based on their experiences during their work-placement program.

When looking at what was valued about the work experience program, an interesting difference emerged between Thai and Australian students. It appeared that the majority of Thai Arts and Thai Business students considered that their work-placement was important because it helped them to understand the relevance of their personality, ability and interests to their career. Whereas, half of the Australian Business students perceived the work-placement program as an opportunity to develop their professional skills by utilising their knowledge and skills and gaining new knowledge and skills. This suggests that whilst Thai students considered their work-placement an opportunity to explore future career options, Australian students focused on personal development for their future career. The reasons for these differences will be explored further in the discussion (Chapter Eight).

Students were also asked what they felt about their work experience program. Table 7.10 provides an overview of students' views on their work experience and indicates that the majority of students across the three universities were positive about their work experience.

The interviews revealed that Australian Business students were more positive about their work experience than were Thai Arts or Thai Business students. It is unclear why Thai Arts and Thai Business students appeared to be less positive about their work-placement program than Australian students. Two possible explanations are that Thai students were provided with less meaningful work opportunities during their work-placement. An alternative explanation is that the longer duration of the Australian work-placement led to greater satisfaction among students.

Table 7.10 Students' work-placement experience

Students' work-placement experiences	Thai Arts Students		Thai Business Students		Australian Business Students		Total	
	(N=40)	(%)	(N=36)	(%)	(N=12)	(%)	(N=88)	(%)
Positive	23	58	21	58	10	83	54	61
Neutral	9	23	8	22	1	8	18	21
Negative	8	20	7	19	1	8	16	18

As Table 7.11 indicates, students perceived that five key factors impacted on their work-placement experience, namely *personal fulfillment*, *the work environment*, *the learning environment*, *personal learning and development* and *organisational attributes*. *Personal fulfillment* related to whether students were satisfied with their work-placement based on whether it provided them with what they had expected to experience or achieve. *The work environment* described the people students had contact with in the workplace, including staff, colleagues, visitors and guests. *The learning environment* referred to the training program provided by the workplace, tasks given to students and the way supervisors or trainers facilitated their learning at work. *Personal learning and development* referred to whether students were satisfied with the knowledge and skills provided by the organisation. *Organisational attributes* described the overall aspects of the workplace, including atmosphere, staff meals and facilities.

Table 7.11 Factors associated with students' work-placement experience

Factors associated with students' satisfaction	Thai Arts Students (N=40)	Thai Business Students (N=36)	Australian Business Students (N=12)	Total (N=88)
Personal fulfillment	9	19	6	34
Working environment	15	15	3	33
Learning environment	16	11	4	31
Personal learning and development	13	6	9	28
Organisational attributes	8	10	4	22

As Table 7.11 shows, tourism and hospitality students across the three universities perceived each of these factors as having some relevance, but valued them differently. Thai Arts students considered *the learning environment* and *work environment* to be the most influential determinants of work-placement satisfaction. Whereas, Thai Business students emphasised the importance of *personal fulfillment* and Australian Business students emphasised *personal learning and development*. Some explanations for the relationship between these factors students perceived to impact on their work-placement satisfaction and the way they felt about their experiences are included below. Students with a positive perception of their work-placement described their experiences as follows:

“My experience during the work-placement was fantastic. I liked the job I did. I enjoyed working with staff training, they were nice people. I worked in a resort where I needed to get a boat from the staff residence to the workplace. It was fun for me”

(Thai Arts student -TA066)

“I was satisfied with my work experience. I learned how to do the job and I felt proud of myself when I completed my job successfully”

(Thai Business student-TB080)

“Exhausted but fantastic! It involved hard work and high pressure to complete the workload required by the course but I felt good at work because I worked with very nice people”

(Australian Business student-AB02)

Some examples of the responses from students with negative experiences of the program were:

“I felt terrible. I experienced unpleasant treatment from some staff at the workplace and it was so stressful for me.”

(Thai Business student-TB099)

“I was not happy with my work-placement experience. This is because I didn’t like the attitudes of my colleagues in providing service to the guests. They just did the job for money. They didn’t care about being professional guest service providers. Also, I had to work so hard but I was underpaid. It was long working hours and relatively short break for staff meal.”

(Australian Business student-AB069)

The above students’ comments highlight the important role that colleagues play in determining whether students have a positive or negative experience. Irrespective of whether students were positive or negative about their work-placement, they appeared to have developed an accurate view of working in the industry. One particular student indicated that:

“I had some work experience in the industry prior to the program so I had more opportunity gain a better understanding of working in different areas in a hotel. For example working in food and beverage is physically hard and working in front office, which I had thought that was easy job actually requires someone who is able to multitask and have versatile knowledge to serve guests”

(Australian Business student-AB70)

As these results indicate, the work-placement program plays an important role in developing students’ career learning. It allows students to gain a better understanding of the nature of the industry and to explore their career options in the industry. Students were asked whether they would be interested in applying for the position that they had during the work-placement and the reasons for their decisions. This question was asked so as to understand the impact of the work-placement program on students’ career decisions in the industry and to identify factors that appeared to influence their decisions.

As Table 7.12 shows, a complex relationship appears to exist between students' work-placement satisfaction and their intention to apply for the job they did during their work-placement. Thus, there is no clear trend that students who were satisfied with their work-placement will actively look for the same job as undertaken during the work-placement. The proportions of Thai and Australian students who were satisfied with their work-placement were almost equally divided between the students who do and do not intend to apply for the job they did during the work-placement. This also indicates that students' dissatisfaction may not always have a negative impact on the career decisions they make. This is because two out of eight students who were dissatisfied with their work-placement expressed their intention to seek the job they did during the work-placement. However, there is a strong likelihood that the majority of students who were dissatisfied or neutral about their work-placement will seek jobs other than that of the work-placement.

Table 7.12 Relationship between students' work-placement satisfaction and their job intentions

Level of Satisfaction and job intention	Thai Arts Students (N=40)	Thai Business Students (N=36)	Australian Business Students (N=12)	Total (N=88)	(%)
Satisfied	34	23	10	67	76
Job intention					
Yes	18	12	4	34	51
No	16	11	6	33	49
Neither dissatisfied or satisfied	3	9	1	13	15
Job intention					
Yes	1	3	0	4	31
No	2	6	1	9	69
Dissatisfied	3	4	1	8	9
Job intention					
Yes	1	0	1	2	25
No	2	4	0	6	75

Table 7.13 shows the relationship between the specific jobs that Thai and Australian students did during their work-placement and whether or not they would intend to apply for this job. Whilst 88 students participated in the interviews, some students experienced more than one specific job. Therefore, Table 7.13 shows the number of students' completed specific jobs rather than the actual number of students interviewed.

Table 7.13 indicates that more than half of Thai and Australian students (n=91) were not interested in applying for the job they had done during their work-placement (56%) and this was found across a range of different jobs. Therefore, of the 17 students who worked in housekeeping, 12 students expressed no intention to apply for this job in the future. Similarly, students who worked in other jobs, for example on tourism information desks, in a supervisory position in catering, or in a business support center in a hotel (seven students in total), only one student was still interested in such a job. Most students who had had support staff positions did not intend to apply for a similar job (approximately two thirds). Support staff describes those working in an organisation's support areas such as human resources, accounting, finance, and purchasing and inventory control. Interestingly, of those students who had worked as waiters and waitresses, almost half were interested in applying for similar jobs after graduation. Although a substantial number of students did not wish to apply for the jobs that they had done during their work-placement, front office positions appeared to be well-liked by many students. Of the 14 students who had worked in front office positions, nine students were interested in applying for a front office job.

Table 7.13 Relationship between job positions and students' intention to apply for the job

Positions	Number of students	Job intention	
		Yes	No
Waiter/ Waitress	27	14	13
Housekeeping	17	5	12
Front Office	14	9	5
Support staff	14	5	9
Cook assistant	9	5	4
Airport ground service	3	1	2
Others	7	1	6
Total (N)	91	40	51
(%)	100	44	56

Table 7.12 and Table 7.13 appear to indicate an unclear relationship between students' work-placement satisfaction and their intention to apply for the same job as undertaken during their work-placement. Students provided several reasons for their decisions, indicating that students' decisions to apply for a job were not only based on their level of work-placement satisfaction.

The interviews identified six themes perceived to have an impact on Thai and Australian students' intention to apply for a job similar to that held during their work-placement. Summarised in Table 7.14, these factors are *personal preferences, career opportunities and career path, job characteristics or job requirements, ability to perform the job, career learning and personal development* and *job image*.

According to Table 7.14, nearly half of both Thai and Australian students made their decisions based on *personal preferences*. Other students made their decisions based on *career opportunities and career path, job characteristics or job requirement, ability to perform the job, career learning and personal development* and *job image* respectively. These factors, however, are perceived to have different impacts on students. It also appears that some differences exist between Business and Arts students. For example, Thai and Australian Business students perceived *personal preferences, career opportunities and career path* and *job characteristics or job requirements* as the most important factors for them. Thai Arts students, however, considered *personal preferences, job characteristics or requirement* and their *ability to perform the job* to have a substantial impact on their decisions. These results also appear to indicate that Thai and Australian students had different perceptions of *personal preferences* and *career opportunities and career path*. *Personal preferences* was perceived to have a major impact on both Thai Arts and Thai Business students, whereas career opportunities and career path were perceived to be the more influential determinants of Australian students' decisions to apply for the job they had during the work-placement. These similarities and differences appear to be influenced by a student's degree and cultural background, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Table 7.14 Factors influencing students’ intentions for applying the job completed during their work-placement program

Factors	Thai Arts Students		Thai Business Students		Australian Business Students		Total	
	(N=40)	(%)	(N=36)	(%)	(N=12)	(%)	(N=88)	(%)
1. Personal preferences	16	40	14	39	4	33	34	39
2. Career opportunity and career path	7	18	10	28	10	83	27	31
3. Job characteristics/ requirements	14	35	9	25	2	17	25	28
4. Ability to perform the job	10	25	4	11	2	17	16	18
5. Career learning and personal development	4	10	3	8	2	17	9	10
6. Job image	2	5	4	11	1	8	7	8

The followings are some examples of how students explained their personal preferences, career opportunities and career path, job characteristics or job requirements, ability to perform the job, career learning and personal development and job image.

Students perceived their *personal preferences* to be associated with whether the job matched their interest or personality. For example:

“Yes, I want to work as a cook. It is fun and I enjoy cooking”
(Thai Arts student-TA098)

“I want to apply for a job in front of house areas, so as I have chance to meet people, working in an office is boring”
(Thai Business student-TB105)

“Yes, I intend to apply for this job (front office). I love the job and enjoy doing it”
(Australian Business student-AB23)

These views show that some students intend to apply for a certain job in the industry simply because they like and enjoy doing the job.

Career opportunities and career path describe students’ perceptions about the likelihood of obtaining a specific job and whether there is a potential career path. For example, they made the following comments:

“I personally like working as a cook, but I don’t think I will apply this job. This is because I need to develop more cooking skills, I also have learned that it is difficult for a female to make career progress in this area”

(Thai Business student-TB076)

“No, I don’t intend to apply for this position (a five star hotel receptionist). If you want to grow in the hotel industry, working in back of house in areas such as human resources, marketing and administration will give you better career path. These areas provide you with long term employment and opportunities to make career progress. Also, skills used in these areas are transferable. So you can work in other business sectors outside the industry”

(Australian Business student-AB70)

The views above have been selected to indicate that for many Thai students, career opportunities and a career path are influenced by a match between job and gender. For Australian students, career opportunities and a career path are influenced by understanding the nature of the industry.

Job characteristics or requirements refer to the nature of the job or other characteristics needed for a person to undertake the job. For example, students noted how these experiences had influenced their decision making in the following ways:

“I worked as a waitress and I don’t have the intention to work as a waitress anymore. It is hard work and you have no time for yourself because it is shift work and uncertain working hours”

(Thai Business student-TB096)

“I don’t want to work as a business center employee. It can be busy during the high season when many guests are staying in a hotel and it can be a very boring job to do during the low season when there are not many guests in the hotel”

(Thai Arts student-TA197)

“Yes, I intend to apply for a hotel front office job. I have thought about changing my job but it is hard to change from this job to another because this industry requires experience. So, I have to continue doing this job but not by choice”

(Australian Business student-AB69)

These views highlight the nature of jobs in the tourism and hospitality industry. Working in the industry involves shift work, uncertain working hours, and work experience can be essential for developing a career in the industry. Also factors such as seasonality impact on daily operations.

Ability to perform the job refers to students' beliefs about their ability to do the job or to be able to cope with certain working environments. For example, many students had developed clear ideas about their strengths and weaknesses and understood the relevance of these, as indicated by the following comments:

“I worked in housekeeping and I am intending to apply for this job. I am personally interested in working in front of house areas such as food and beverage and front office but I am still not confident to work in these areas. I think my English is not good enough to interact with foreigner guests”

(Thai Arts student-A023)

“I intend to apply for the job I had (waitress) because I have some work experience already and I am comfortable with the work environment”

(Australian Business student-AB15)

As these students' views illustrate, work experience and the work environment can have a positive or negative impact on students' perceptions of their efficacy or ability to carry out the job. Specifically, this Thai Arts student highlights the importance of language skills and how this could have a negative impact on her career if she worked in front of house areas such as front office and food and beverage. These comments emphasise the impact of cultural background on job requirements in the tourism and hospitality industry in Thailand.

Career learning and development refers to students choosing a job because they want to explore and learn different things and develop their skills and knowledge. For example:

“I don't intend to apply for a housekeeping position because I want to learn other jobs in order to gain more knowledge and skills. Also, this will help me to figure out what kind of job will suit me”

(Thai Arts student-TA129)

“I don’t intend to apply for the position I had (waitress) because I want to move on to a higher position or work in other areas that can expand my skills and knowledge”

(Australian Business student-AB68)

Job image refers to how a job is perceived by students, their family or community. For example:

“I carried out two jobs during my work-placement, a waiter and I worked in housekeeping. I prefer to work as a waiter rather than in housekeeping. I think working in food and beverage is more suitable for a male whereas housekeeping is more like a female job”

(Thai Arts student-A061)

“I don’t intend to apply for this position (housekeeping). I took this position for my work-placement because at that time I had limited choices in terms of workplace and job availability. Also, my parents suggest that since I’ve got a degree, I should find a better job than this”

(Thai Business student-TB093)

“No, I don’t intend to apply for a job as a food and beverage attendant anymore. It is easy to find a job in this area. I am now looking for a better job with better pay”

(Australian Business student-AB16)

The above comments show that Thai students’ perceptions of a job are influenced by the match between job and gender and the prestige of the job as viewed by their family. Whereas Australian students appear to associate job image with employment opportunities in the labour market and the benefit the job will provide to them. These comments also indicate how culture influences the relationship between educational qualifications and job and the way Thai and Australian students value certain jobs in the industry.

In summary, this section has tried to highlight the impact of a work-placement program on students’ perceptions about their career in the tourism and hospitality industry. It has also endeavoured to identify the interrelationship between three major factors of social cognitive career theory: *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy* and *outcome expectations*. The findings indicated that *learning experiences* were likely to influence students’ self-efficacy in applying for a job in the industry and the way they establish their *outcome expectations*

associated with the job and the nature of the industry. The findings elaborated that most Thai and Australian students perceived that the work-placement program played an important role in their learning experiences during the course because it allowed them to gain a better understanding of the nature of work in the industry. Several factors were identified as having a positive and negative impact on their work-placement experience, such as whether the experience satisfied their personal expectations, the quality of the training program provided by their workplace, the nature of their trainers or supervisors, work colleagues, and the overall qualities of the workplace. Work-placement also allows students to learn the knowledge and skills required by a job and to gain a better understanding of the work environment. These appear to have either a positive or negative impact on the way students develop their perceptions of the job and their abilities to perform the job. For example, many Thai students perceived that English was essential for front office staff. Thus, students perceived that their lack of English skills caused them to lack the confidence to apply for this position. Interestingly, it was found that there was not a clear trend between students who were satisfied with their work-placement experience and their intention to continue working in that position. It was found that half of those students who were satisfied with their work experience did not intend to apply for the job they had during their work-placement and this appeared to be because other issues that were seen to be more important.

This section also reflected upon the nature of the industry within a Thai and Australian context and found both similarities and differences. Whilst Thai and Australian students appear to agree that career opportunities in the tourism and hospitality industry depend upon an individual's knowledge and skills, career opportunities can be limited. Thai students saw a clear relationship between gender roles and jobs. For example, housekeeping was perceived to suit females more than males. In contrast, Australian students did not consider gender roles as having an impact on their career, but they perceived personal learning and development and career advancement as important to their career decision.

7.4.4 What drives students' career decisions in the tourism and hospitality industry?

The qualitative results in this chapter have explored the factors associated with students' career decision-making process. This began with describing the factors students perceived to impact on their decision to enroll in a tourism and hospitality course. It also described the impact of the work-placement program on the way students perceived a career in the industry. This section addresses the main research question of the current study. It investigated the role of career interest. Social cognitive career theory suggests that career interest is likely to predict individuals' career decision-making. This section seeks, therefore, to establish possible factors that drive tourism and hospitality students' career interest and career decisions about whether or not to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry. This section, first reports on the factors perceived by students to be important for achieving their desired career. It later presents the findings relating to Thai and Australian students' career decisions.

Students were asked what they perceived to be the three most important characteristics of their desired career. This question sought to identify issues associated with students' career interests and the way these issues drive their career decisions. Table 7.15 identifies four major characteristics that Thai and Australian students identified as the most important aspects of their desired career or job. These were pay and salary, a job that fitted their personalities, interests and abilities, location of the workplace and the organisation's profile respectively. The students, however, perceived these aspects to be of varying importance. For example, Thai Arts and Australian Business students perceived pay and salary as the most important aspect of their career decision-making. Whereas Thai Business students valued the match between a job and their personalities, interests and abilities as the most influential factor on their career decision-making. The relationship between students' degree background (Arts versus Business) and their career interest in the tourism and hospitality industry are unclear. However, culture appears to have an important impact on students' career interest in the industry.

Table 7.15 shows that whilst, Thai Arts and Thai Business students ranked location of the workplace as the third most important characteristic of their desired career, Australian Business students did not consider it as amongst the three most important characteristics of their desired career.

Table 7.15 Factors associated with students' career decision

Factors	Thai Arts Students (N=40)	Thai Business Students (N=36)	Australian Business Students (N=12)	Total (N=88)
Pay and Salary	24	25	9	58
Job that fits my personality, interest and ability	15	31	6	52
Location of the workplace	19	24	4	47
Organisation's profile	20	9	7	36

Both Thai and Australian students valued the location of the workplace and the organisation's profile. The following comments of Thai and Australian students show why the location of the workplace was seen to be important.

“Working in a hotel normally doesn't allow staff to have a long holiday or break period. So I prefer to work where I can conveniently visit my hometown and spend minimal time traveling and have more time with my family”

(Thai Arts student-TA016)

“I prefer to work close to my family so I can save some living costs for example rent and transportation cost to visit my family”

(Thai Business student-TB078)

“My workplace should be close to my house or accommodation and give me easy access to work. Then I don't need to spend so much time traveling and save on public transport or car parking fees”

(Australian Business student-AB18)

“The workplace should be close to my accommodation, because after work, especially working in a hotel or restaurant, you are tired and want to go home and rest as soon as you can”

(Australian Business student-AB08)

As can be seen from these comments, Thai and Australian students had similar views and preferred that their workplace be close to their accommodation, therefore providing them with more time to rest after work and to save on living expenses. Thai students, however, strongly emphasised the importance of family. They wanted the distance between their workplace and their family to be short so as to allow them to spend more time with their family. This issue will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Thai and Australian students indicated the importance of an organisation's profile, but appeared to value it for different reasons:

“I look for the organisation that provides long term job security and has a good image or reputation, so it will look good on my resume when I apply for a new job”

(Thai Arts student-TA145)

“The Organisation that I look for should have a good reputation and be well established”

(Thai Business student-TB082)

“The organisation has to provide good training for staff as I can develop my skills and enhance my experience. This subsequently benefits my career progress”

(Australian Business student-AB15)

Thai students expected that a well established organisation with a good reputation would provide them with employment stability and facilitate their career development. Whereas Australian students perceived that their chosen organisation should enhance their personal development and facilitate their career progress. These differences will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

After students had been asked to identify the important aspects of their career, they were asked about their career decisions and whether they intended to seek a career in the industry following graduation. They were also asked to provide reasons for their decision. This question was designed to investigate the impact of students' career interests on their career decision-making. The interviews revealed that most students intended to seek a career in the industry, as shown in Table 7.1. As this table indicates, an exceptionally high proportion of Thai Arts students sought a career in the industry after graduation (95%), followed by Thai

Business students (69%) and Australian Business students (68%) respectively. It is interesting that more Arts students than Business students intended to enter the industry and that the results for Thai Business and Australian business students were virtually the same. Thus, most of the students who did not intend to seek a career in the industry were either Thai Business students (31%) or Australian Business students (32%). Table 7.16 and Table 7.17 summarise the factors students perceived to impact on their career decision-making.

As Table 7.16 indicates, several factors were perceived to influence students' decisions to pursue a career in the tourism and hospitality industry. The three factors perceived to have the most important impact on students' career decisions were personal preferences, the ability to utilise or develop knowledge and skills and job characteristics respectively. Thai Arts students, however, appeared to perceive these factors differently from Thai Business and Australian Business students. Therefore, Thai Arts students perceived personal preferences and utilisation or development of their knowledge and skills as the most important factors for them, whereas Thai Business and Australian Business students perceived personal preferences and job characteristics as more important.

Some students explained their personal preferences stating that:

“I intend to apply for a job in food and beverage because it suits my gender and I like meeting people”

(Thai Arts student-TA061)

“I want to be a tour guide because it is fun and I have the opportunity to meet new people all the time. I also have learned during my work-placement that age doesn't have an impact on the job because I met some tour guides that are in middle aged but they are still working fine”

(Thai Arts student-TA051)

“Yes, I intend to work in the industry but I prefer to work in human resources or marketing rather than front of house because that doesn't suit me. I don't like dealing with customers”

(Australian Business student-AB27)

These students obviously perceived that it was essential for staff in the industry to enjoy meeting and working with people. The comments also demonstrate that they understand the needs to match their personality, interests and abilities with the job. Thai students, in

particular, appear to indicate that their culture influences the way they perceived the importance of gender and age on their decisions.

One Thai student explained her decision to seek a career in the industry in order to utilise or develop her knowledge and skills in the following way:

“I intend to apply for a job in food and beverage so as to utilise the knowledge and skills learned from the course and the work placement. However, if I had more choice I would prefer to work outside the industry because I don’t like the uncertain working hours required by the industry”

(Thai Arts student-173)

As this student indicates, she valued her relevant knowledge and skills but the nature of the industry appears to undermine her long term commitment to a career in the industry.

One Thai student, seeking a career as a tour guide, elaborated on the importance of job characteristics as follows:

“I like this job because it allows me to work independently, so I can have control over my work. Most importantly, I don’t like working in the same environment all the time, so this job suits me well as I have to move from one place to another”

(Thai Business student-TB103)

This student reflected upon the positive aspects of being a tour guide. He also highlighted in his comments the need to achieve a match between job characteristics and an individual’s personality and interests.

A smaller group of Thai and Australian students noted that incentives and allowances and work environment were important for their decision to work in the tourism and hospitality industry. Some students highlighted the positive aspects of incentives and allowance thus:

“Pay and salary isn’t very different working in a hotel but you earn extra from service charges and good allowances such as accommodation for staff and free meals”

(Thai Arts student-TA062)

“I want to work as a wholesaler for holiday packages as I will get holiday discounts and commission”

(Australian Business student-AB68)

Thai and Australian students, however, perceived the following factors differently: career prospects or progress, job image and employment opportunities. Table 7.16 indicates that career prospects or progress was valued more by Australian Business students (4 students) than Thai students, with only one Thai student from a business degree considering it an important factor. Two Australian students provided the following explanation for the importance of having a job providing career prospects or allowing progress in the industry:

“I want to become a chef because I am interested in cooking. Although, it is easy to start working in the industry as a cook or chef, it can be difficult to make career progress within an organisation. However, I consider that a cook or chef can work in various business sectors or I can have my own restaurant, so it provides good career prospects for me”

(Australian Business student-AB16)

“I want to work in an airline company because there are a variety of jobs I can do. So it will allow me to work in different operational areas. I also can make career progress to a management level in the future within the organisation”

(Australian Business student-AB09)

These students’ comments highlight the impact of personal interests on their career prospects in the industry and indicate how personal interests are likely to drive people to commit to a long term career in the industry.

Job image and employment opportunities were perceived as important among Thai students, particularly for Arts students. However, no Australian students perceived these factors as relevant to their decision to seek a career in the industry. For example, some Thai students explained job image as follows:

“I intend to apply for a front office position although I carried out a job as a waitress during my work placement. This is because this position is less physical work, has a better job image and provides a higher salary than being a waitress”

(Thai Arts student-TA077)

“I want to be a flight attendant because I like the elegant look of the uniform and good pay and incentives”

(Thai Arts student-TA122)

These comments reflect the way Thai students perceived positive and negative aspects of certain jobs in the industry, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Interestingly, employment opportunities in the industry, which earlier findings indicated was one of the major reasons for students enrolling in a tourism and hospitality course, was not found to be important. In fact, only three out of 88 Thai and Australian students considered employment opportunities to influence their decision to seek a career in the industry.

Table 7.16 Factors influencing students who seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry

Factors	Thai Arts Students (N=38)	Thai Business Students (N=25)	Australian Business Students (N=8)	Total (N=71)	(%)
Personal preferences	19	10	5	34	48
To utilise or develop knowledge and skills	17	6	1	24	34
Job characteristics	3	11	3	17	24
Incentives and allowances	4	3	1	8	9
Career prospect/ progress	0	1	4	5	7
Working experience in the industry	4	0	1	5	7
Work environment	1	1	2	4	6
Job image	4	0	0	4	6
Employment opportunity	2	0	0	2	3

Table 7.17 summarises the factors students perceived to impact on their decision not to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry after graduation. Seven factors were identified as influencing this decision. Nine out of 17 Thai and Australian students perceived that job characteristics or job requirements was the most influential factor for not seeking a career in the industry. This was exceptionally high among Thai Arts students followed by Australian Business students and Thai Business students. Some students

described their perceptions about job characteristics or job requirements in the following way:

“I don’t want to work in the industry. Although it can be well paid, the job generally is physically hard work and it requires you to work with uncertain work routines and to work during holidays or at night”

(Thai Arts student-TA126)

“I cannot cope with shift work as it doesn’t allow me to have enough rest and spend time with family and friends”

(Australian Business student-AB08)

These students’ comments show the similarity of job requirements in the tourism and hospitality industry in Thai and Australian contexts, and that industry jobs are associated with routine work, uncertain working hours and being required to work at night or during the holiday season.

Despite most students perceiving job characteristics or job requirements as playing an important role in their decision not to seek a career in the industry, Thai and Australian students perceived several other factors as impacting on their decision. These included factors such as personal preferences, work environment, pay and salary and job image. Although there were similarities and differences between Thai and Australian students’ perceptions of these factors, Thai Business students appeared to share more similar views to Australian Business students rather than to Thai Arts students. Thai and Australian Business students perceived that the work environment impacted on their decision to not seek a career in the industry. One Thai Business and one Australian Business student made their decision not to seek a career in the industry because of the hospitality work environment.

“I don’t like a long line of management staff. It is very stressful for me to cope with”

(Thai Business student-TB095)

“In the hospitality industry, staff can come from different ethnic or religious backgrounds, so sometimes it is difficult to fit into the work environment when you are a minority group in the staff team”

(Australian Business student-AB70)

These students highlight the negative impact of either a hierarchical organisational management structure or the diversity of colleagues' backgrounds on the work environment. This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Despite the similarity of Thai and Australian students' views on work environment, Thai Arts students viewed other factors differently from Thai and Australian Business students. One third of Thai Business students and about half of the Australian Business students perceived that personal preferences influenced their career decisions, however no Thai Arts students viewed this as important for their decisions. The following comments from Thai Business and Australian Business students show their reasons for not seeking a career in the industry and how their personal preferences played an important role.

“I think dealing with guests is not my kind of job because I am an impatient person. So, I don't want to end up arguing with the guests”

(Thai Business student-TB90)

“I want to have my own business because I want to make decisions about my work and the hospitality industry doesn't allow me to make decisions on my work much”

(Australian Business student-AB02)

These students' views reflected their perceptions that there needs to be a match between the job characteristics and an individual's personality. Thus, people with certain personality traits, such as patience, are better suited to the industry and those who seek autonomous work are less likely to be interested in working in the industry.

Differences between the three student groups emerged in relation to the impact of family obligations. One Thai Business and one Australian Business student perceived that family obligations influenced their decision not to seek a career in the industry, whereas no Thai Arts students perceived this as an important factor. One Thai Business student explained her decision for not seeking a career in the industry thus:

“I want to work close to my family as have a well paid job and to get good pay in this industry I need to work in a big hotel. Unfortunately, there is no big hotel in my province, so I need to find work outside the industry”

(Thai Business student-TB093)

Whereas, the Australian business student explained his decision in the following way:

“My family has a family business and I need to help my parents manage our business. I chose this course because I am personally interested in the hotel industry and knowledge and skills from hotel management can be applied to my family business”.

(Australian Business student-AB23)

As can be seen, these students demonstrate how family obligations can influence career decisions. The Thai Business student wanted to live close to her family. Her view also reflected the relationship between location and pay structure and how these impact career decisions in the tourism and hospitality industry in Thailand. The Australian Business student seemed not to have intended to seek a career in the industry when he decided to enroll in a tourism and hospitality course. His view, however, highlighted that knowledge and skills of hotel management are transferable and allow him to develop a career outside the industry. These findings will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Australian Business students considered several additional factors to be important, some of which were similar to those of Thai students and others different. These included personal preferences, work environment and career prospects or progress. One particular Australian Business student explained her decision for not seeking a career in the tourism and hospitality industry and showed how personal preferences, the work environment and career prospects or progress were interrelated and influenced her decision to seek a non-hospitality job after graduation.

“No, I do not intend to work in this industry. I personally like the job and I am passionate about customer service. However, during my co-op (work-placement) I have learned that working in this industry you have to work so hard but it is low pay. You have to put a lot of effort into the work but the level of appreciation from both your management and customers is low. Management did not put enough effort in creating a good team work environment, especially for shift work when sometimes staff have to cope with extensive work hours. I intend to work in real estate where I can still use my customer service skills but receive better pay”

(Australian Business student-AB70)

This student reflected upon the impact of her work-placement experiences on her perceptions of the requirement of the job, the pay structure in the hotel sector, the poor organisational management, negative impact of guests and that her existing knowledge and skills were transferable to another industry.

Interestingly, Table 7.16 and Table 7.17 show that some Thai and Australian students' perceptions were significantly different in terms of the influence of three factors, namely pay and salary, job image, and career prospects or progress. For Thai students, pay and salary was not a disincentive to seek a career in the industry, whereas it was perceived as a factor impacting career decision among Australian students. Some Thai Arts students also considered that job image either encouraged or formed a barrier to them seeking a career in the tourism and hospitality industry, however no Thai or Australian Business students perceived job image as having a positive or negative influence on their decision to pursue a career in the industry.

Table 7.17 Factors influencing students who do not seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry

Factors	Thai Arts Students (N=2)	Thai Business Students (N=11)	Australian Business Students (N=4)	Total (N=17)	(%)
Job characteristics or requirement	2	5	2	9	53
Personal preference	0	4	2	6	36
Work environment	1	1	1	3	18
Pay and salary	0	0	1	2	12
Family obligation	0	1	1	2	12
Career prospect/ progress	0	0	1	1	6
Job image	1	0	0	1	6

On the other hand, some Australian Business students considered career prospects or progress to influence their career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry both positively and negatively, whereas only one Thai student valued it as an important positive influence. Whether these differences reflect on the impact of cultural differences or are caused by operational differences within the tourism and hospitality industry in Thailand and Australia will be discussed in the next chapter.

7.4.5 Summary

This part has reported the findings of the qualitative study. The findings were presented in sequential stages of students' career decision-making process which began from their decision to enroll into the course and concluded with their career decisions after they graduate. The findings identified a variety of factors associated with students' career decisions, constructed how these factors were interrelated and the way these factors influenced students' career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of data collection and student profiles for the qualitative study in the current research. It also reported on the results and analysis of the qualitative study. The results were presented in four main sections which sought to establish factors associated with students' career decision-making process. The first section explored students' decisions to enroll into a tourism and hospitality course, finding that personal fulfillment and industry image were the most influential factors for the decision to enroll into the course. The next section explored students' expectations of their course and the impact of their expectations on a career in the tourism and hospitality industry. It found that, despite a perception by most students that what they had learned during the course was different from their expectations, many students still expressed their intention to seek a career in the industry after graduation. A later section explored the role of the work-placement program and investigated its impact on students' career intentions. The findings highlighted that students' work-placement satisfaction is likely to predict their career decisions in the industry. The final section explored students' career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry and found that students appeared to consider several factors when making a career decision. Some factors were perceived to have either positive or negative impacts on their career decision-making.

The next chapter discusses these findings and focuses on the relationship between these findings and the theoretical framework of social cognitive career theory. It will also discuss these findings in terms of how they relate to the existing literature of career decision-making in general and within the tourism and hospitality industry.

Chapter Eight

The Qualitative Study: Discussion

8.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the results obtained from the qualitative study and indicated that students perceived that a broad range of factors impacts on their career decision-making process. These factors included their personal preferences, family, job competency, work-placement program, employment opportunity and career prospects. This chapter discusses possible explanations for these results and how the suggested factors drive the career decision-making of Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students.

8.2 Explanations for Factors Associated with the Students' Career Decision-Making

Chapter Seven presented students' career decision-making process, beginning with their decision to enroll in a tourism and hospitality course through to their likely career decision following graduation. It presented a variety of factors that Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students perceived to play an important role in their career decision-making. The chapter discussed and provided explanations for the results, based on the study's theoretical framework and by reference to previous research.

According to the theoretical framework for career decision-making—Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)—six major factors are suggested to play an important role in the decision-making process. These are *individual factors*, *individuals' background contextual factors* (e.g. *family, teachers, peer, cultural values and industry image*), *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy*, *outcome expectations* and *career interest*. Theoretically, these factors are interrelated and influence individuals' career decision-making in a variety of ways. Thus, *individual factors* and *individuals' background contextual factors* influence *learning experiences of individuals*. *Learning experiences* then influence how individuals perceive their self-efficacy and their expectations about the outcome of certain tasks or performances. The interaction between *learning experiences*,

self-efficacy and *outcome expectations* subsequently influences the way individuals develop their *career interest*. Career interest is likely therefore to predict individuals' career decision-making.

The discussion of the qualitative results focuses on the previously mentioned six major factors, how they are interrelated and how they influence Thai and Australian students' career interest and career decision-making. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the way cultural factors appear to impact on the career decision-making of Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students.

8.3 Discussion of the Qualitative Results

The qualitative results as they related to the factors deemed to be important in the qualitative study are discussed as follows—Factor 1: Individual Factors (gender and age), Factor 2: Individuals' Background Contextual Factors, Factor 3: Learning Experiences, Factor 4: Self-efficacy, Factor 5: Outcome Expectations, Factor 6: Career interest, including the relationship between career interest and career decision-making and the cultural interpretation of Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students on career decision-making.

8.3.1 Factor 1: Individual Factors (Gender and Age)

The current study specifically investigated the impact of gender and age on students' career decision-making. The findings were consistent with the quantitative study that gender was perceived to play more important role in students' career interest than age. However, the qualitative results indicated that culture influences Thai and Australian students' perceptions of the impact of gender and age on their career decision-making.

The fact that gender plays an important role in employees' decisions to choose a particular job or career path in the tourism and hospitality industry supports the findings of previous studies that within hospitality stereotypical views exist about the type of work that is appropriate for male and female employees, particularly in the hotel sector. Previous studies indicated that males are seen to suit jobs in food and beverage areas, whereas females are

seen to suit jobs in housekeeping (Wood 1997). Although this research was conducted more than 10 years ago, some support for these findings were evident in the current study. The qualitative results indicated that while gender appeared to have no impact on students' career interests or their decision to enroll in a tourism and hospitality course, did influence their career interest and decision-making. This may have been because students perceived there to be a match between gender and career choices in the industry. Thai students who worked in the hotel sector seemed to have particularly stereotypical views of appropriate types of work for male and female employees, such as men should work in food and beverage areas, whereas women suited housekeeping jobs. Interestingly these views were evident amongst Thai students after they had worked in the industry.

The results from the study also suggested that culture impacts on students' perceptions of gender in relation to career decision-making. The findings indicated that Thai students had stronger perceptions of a relationship between gender and operational tasks than did Australian students. This finding is consistent with the findings from a multicultural study using career anchors (Marshall & Bonner 2003) which suggested that gender predicted the technical and functional career anchors amongst Asian students, whereas gender was not a significant predictor of this anchor for Australian students. These findings also support Hofstede's (2001) contention that cultural differences exist between Thailand and Australia and these will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Whilst gender appeared to influence students' career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry, age was perceived to be generally unimportant and this finding was consistent with the results obtained in the quantitative study. This finding may be understood by considering the results from previous studies of age and employment opportunities in the United Kingdom's (UK) hospitality industry. These studies found that the industry was seen to be a young person's job (Janta 2011). As the students in this qualitative study were mostly aged under 25 years, the issue of age did not emerge during the research possibly because many are likely to be unaware that age may limit their career opportunities in the industry in the future. In the current study, for example, only one Thai student (n=76) indicated that she was interested in being a tour guide and considered this job as likely to provide her with long-term employment opportunities because she had met older

tour guides who still worked in the industry. In spite of the views of this particular Thai student, the remaining Thai and Australian students (n=88) appeared to perceive age as unimportant for their career in the tourism and hospitality industry. This finding therefore appeared to reflect upon the nature of the tourism and hospitality work environment rather than cultural influences on students' career decision-making.

8.3.2 Factor 2: Individuals' Background Contextual Factors

The findings obtained from the qualitative study supported the quantitative study and provided additional evidence that *individuals' background contextual factors* appear to impact students' career interest and career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry. Thai and Australian students identified several social environmental factors associated with their background contextual factors. These factors were family background, school teachers, friends, employment opportunities and cultural background. The semi structured in-depth interviews revealed that family background, school teachers, friends and employment opportunities were perceived to play an important role in students' decisions to enroll in a course, whereas their career decision-making seemed to be influenced by their family background and culture.

Thai and Australian students perceived that their family background, school teachers, friends and employment opportunities played an important role on their decision to enroll in a tourism and hospitality course. For example, students whose parents owned a restaurant suggested that they chose the course because they were interested in further developing their knowledge and skills in order to help their parents with daily business operations. Hence students with family members or relatives working in the tourism and hospitality industry decided to enroll in the course because they had learned about the job and workplace environment through their family members and relatives. Their family's business background and other family members developed students' positive perceptions of the industry and they became interested in pursuing a career in the industry. School teachers and friends seemed to play a similar role to family members and relatives, as some students indicated that they enrolled in the course because school teachers and friends had positive views regarding career opportunities in the industry. The finding that family and friends

have an impact on students' course selection has previously been found in an investigation of course selection among urban agriculture students (Esters & Bowen 2004). This research suggested that some students chose to enroll in the course because their parents were involved in urban agriculture and others were convinced by their friends' positive views to about the course. The impact of family background, family members, school teachers and friends on students' career interest and career choice also support Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory of career decision-making, which indicates that family background, neighborhood, and community influence individuals' aspirations and actions (Mitchell & Krumboltz 1996).

Although Thai and Australian students perceived family background, school teachers and friends to influence their decision to choose the tourism and hospitality course, their career decision appeared to be influenced by two major factors—family background and culture. Both Thai and Australian students perceived that their job or career would allow them to balance work and family responsibilities. Thai students, however, indicated stronger family ties, which appeared to impact on their career options. The findings suggested that several Thai students intended to look after their parents and therefore preferred to seek a job close to their family. This finding reflects the Thai culture and the importance of family obligations and supports Hofstede's (2001) research on cultural dimensions which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The perceptions of family obligation among Thai students were considered to have both positive and negative impacts on employment in the tourism and hospitality industry. On the positive side, students whose families lived in tourism destinations decided to work in the industry, although they might not have otherwise been interested in a career in the industry. On the other hand, students whose families were located outside tourism areas were less likely to consider a career in the industry as a viable option. Although these students were interested in a career in the industry, they recognised that employment opportunities were limited for them. These findings support Dickmann and Mills' (2010) investigation into the important relationship between location and career decisions among expatriates working in London. This particular study emphasised that employees select a

particular location over others if it is seen to satisfy their lifestyle needs as well as career development.

Another background contextual factor impacting students' career interest and career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry was cultural background. The findings indicated that cultural background impacted on the way Thai and Australian students perceive career and relevant skills required by the tourism and hospitality industry in their countries. For example, Thai students perceived that language skills, especially fluency in English, were essential to work in the hospitality industry, whereas no Australian students saw language skills to be essential for the industry. These students' perceptions are likely to be correct and stress the importance of English language skills for Thai students. The fact that having a second language was not seen to be important by Australian students may be because Australia is an English speaking country, whereas Thailand is not and Thai tourism and hospitality employees need to be able to speak English to deal with international tourists. The importance of language skills, especially English among Thai students has also been found by Baum (1996), who indicated that for Thailand, English language fluency is a basic skill requirement for even entry level to the industry and this fact appears to be recognized by these Thai students. The importance of language skills for employees seeking a career in the tourism and hospitality industry has also been found in other non English speaking countries. For example, Anafarta and Cizle (2003) found that possessing foreign language skills played a significant role in becoming a hotel manager, as most managers in their study appeared to be competent in English and German.

Cultural background also appeared to influence the way Thai students perceived their career in the industry. The study found that among the 13 Thai students who had no intention of seeking a career in the hospitality industry, one student said explicitly that he did not intend to seek a career in the industry because his parents perceived working as a front line hotel employee to be a job of low status and he intended to seek a career that matched his parents' expectations or wishes. Although this finding was mentioned by only one student it demonstrated the relationship between a negative image of a career in the industry and the influence parents have on their children's career decision-making in Thailand. Ironically, the study suggested that the negative perception of a career in the industry appeared to have

little impact on Thai students' decisions to enroll in a tourism and hospitality course. One possible explanation for this finding may be that in some countries, such as Thailand, parents consider education to be important for their children. Therefore, they allow their children to choose a course they are interested in or likely to be accepted into but some parents may become concerned when their children later choose a particular career as they may see this to have a negative impact on the family's status or reputation. The important influence of career image and parents on career decisions in the tourism and hospitality industry has also been found to be an issue in China (Qiu & Lam 2004), Singapore and Hong Kong (Nankervis 2002). In these countries, a career in the hospitality industry is perceived as being a low status job and young people are not encouraged to work in the industry, as parents perceive that serving people is comparable to losing face. Career image and the influence of parents on career decisions were predominantly valued by Thai students and were less of a concern for Australian students. The different views of career image and the role of parents for Thai and Australian students supports Hofstede's (2001) five national cultural dimensions, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

It was also interesting to find that employment opportunities in the industry were perceived to have no impact on students' career decision-making. Most Thai and Australian students regarded employment opportunities to have played an important role in their decision to enroll in a tourism and hospitality course and they commented that they had enrolled because they saw high employment demand in the industry. However, this did not appear to play a major role in their decision to seek a career in the industry after graduation. One likely explanation for this finding is that students realised during their studies that, although employment demand in the industry was growing, employment opportunities depend on a range of other environmental factors. For example, demand in tourism destinations (Baum et al. 1997), the impact of seasonality (Leiper 2003) and knowledge and skills required by the jobs (Harper et al. 2005; Jauhari 2006). As a result, students were likely to make their career decisions based on a variety of factors, and not just on employment demand in the industry.

8.3.3 Factor 3: Learning Experiences

The qualitative study further investigated the relationship between the *learning experiences* and students' career decision-making process. It did this by focusing on the impact of students' experiences during their work-placement program, and several key findings highlighted the impact of these work experiences on students' career interests and career decision-making. The qualitative findings supported the quantitative findings and indicated that students' learning experiences had an important influence on students' career interest.

These findings suggest that Thai and Australian students perceived that their work experience in the tourism and hospitality industry played an important role in establishing their career interests and their decision to seek work in the industry after graduation. The findings indicated that about half of the students considered that their work experience helped them to decide what type of job or what kind of work environment was suitable for them. This finding supports research conducted by Smith et al. (2004), which argued that work experience provides students with opportunities to explore different jobs and learn about their future career.

Furthermore, one third of Thai and Australian students indicated that their work experience influenced their career decisions to work in the industry after graduation. The impact of work experience on career decisions among tourism and hospitality students has also been confirmed by previous studies. For example, Jenkins (2001) investigated career intentions among Dutch and English hospitality students and found that students appeared to make their career decision to either seek a career in the industry or not after they had gained some work-experience in the industry.

Another key finding on the impact of *learning experiences* in the current study was that students' experiences appeared to strongly influence their *self-efficacy* and *career interest*. Since work experience allowed students to gain career information, it seems likely that they gradually learned the knowledge and skills required for certain jobs. For example, as previously discussed, some Thai students learned that English was considered to be an important skill for careers in front office and in food and beverage areas. Thus students with low self-efficacy in terms of their English skills lacked the confidence to work in these

areas. Work experience also provided students with opportunities to carry out a variety of tasks. As a result, students tended to develop their self-efficacy based on their performance with given tasks. In addition, several Australian students indicated that their work-placement job gave them the confidence to enter and develop a career in the industry. Thus, work experience tended to have a significant impact on the development of students' career self-efficacy and career interest. These findings support Bandura's (1997) work on self-efficacy and demonstrate the important relationship between individuals' learning experiences and outcome expectancies and the way these influence individuals' perceived self-efficacy and their ability to accomplish certain tasks or to pursue certain goals.

The qualitative study also indicated that Thai and Australian students had different perceptions of the way work experiences facilitated their career in the tourism and hospitality industry. Thai students suggested that work experiences allowed them to explore possible career choices and facilitated their career entry into the industry after graduation. Whereas, Australian students perceived work placement as developing relevant knowledge and skills in the industry and they felt that their work experience allowed them to progress their career in the industry after graduation. This difference between Thai and Australian students may be attributed to cultural differences, however, an alternative explanation is that it relates to the length of the work placement program required by different tourism and hospitality courses. Thai students had approximately three months of work placement and this relatively short period of time may only be long enough for students to explore and learn a little about the industry. Australian students had a much longer period of approximately ten months, and therefore their work-placement program may have provided them with opportunities to start to develop and build their careers. As a result, the Australian students focused on strengthening the knowledge and skills required at a career entry level and then anticipated to advance their career further after they graduated.

8.3.4 Factor 4: Self-efficacy

Bandura (1997) suggested that individuals acquire self-efficacy through the relationship between their personal self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies. Through this process they learn about their capabilities and their perceived self-efficacy, which tend to affect their

ability to pursue certain tasks or goals. The current findings support the importance of the concept of self-efficacy and also supported the quantitative findings that self-efficacy played an important role in students' career interest. Moreover, the findings suggested that students developed their personal self-efficacy based on what they perceived there to be a match between their personal attributes and the job or career. These personal attributes were associated with students' perceptions of their personality, personal interests and abilities that match the job or career.

In terms of students' perceptions of the match between personality and a job in the tourism and hospitality industry, the findings indicated that certain types of personality traits were perceived by students to have a positive impact on developing a long-term career in the tourism and hospitality industry. The findings suggested that students perceived the industry to be about looking after people. Thus, they highlighted that having a patient personality and enjoying working with people were important personality traits for a career in the industry and they tended to judge their self-efficacy based on this. As a result, some students who perceived themselves as being impatient expressed low self-efficacy to work as front line staff. Whilst these particular personality traits have not been identified in previous studies, the importance of personality traits and skills has been noted in many studies. For example, Akrivos et al. (2007) highlighted that people with particular personality traits, such as being flexible, enthusiastic at work and possessing the abilities to communicate effectively and deal effectively with diversity are likely to make better career progress in the industry than those who lack these personality traits and skills. Stone and Ineson (1997) also found two other personality traits to have a positive impact on a long-term career in the industry, namely being open to change and self-assured.

Personal interests are associated with students' preferences for different aspects of their desired job or career. For example, some students wished to work in a front office because they liked the atmosphere of the work environment, whereas other students not wishing to work in food and beverage said they were not interested in routine tasks, irregular or long work hours. This study and previous research indicate that a variety of positive and negative aspects associated with the work environment and job requirements impact on career decisions in the tourism and hospitality industry. In terms of positive aspects, Jauhari and

Manktola (2009) investigated the impact of these on career decisions among hotel employees in India. Their study indicated that many employees chose to work in a hotel because they enjoyed being part of the glamour and atmosphere of a hotel workplace. Similar findings were also found in Boon's (2006) investigation of employees' decision to work in ski resorts, which found that many employees worked there because they enjoyed the beautiful scenery of the place and the workplace provided them with opportunities to ski after work. The influence of negative factors was investigated by Boella and Goss-Turner (2005) and they identified several aspects of work in the tourism and hospitality industry that many employees have difficulty coping with. These include working irregular hours in the hotel and resort sectors, and rotating morning, afternoon, evening and night shifts.

In addition to personality and personal interests impacting on students' self-efficacy, the current study also suggested that students developed their self-efficacy based on a perceived match between their skills and abilities and the requirements of a job. For example, some Thai students who had work placements in housekeeping realised that housekeeping tasks were physically demanding and decided they would prefer to work in front office, as these tasks were less physically demanding. Among Thai students, as previously mentioned, English was perceived to be an essential skill for working in front office and food and beverage and some students felt reluctant to seek work in these areas if they perceived that their English was poor. These findings suggest that the more students achieved a match between their skills and abilities and the tasks required by the job, the higher their self-efficacy was likely to be. These findings provide strong support for Schein's (1978) concept of career anchors, which argues that people choose their jobs based on their career expectations and competencies.

Research suggests that a variety of others factors influence the way individuals develop their self-efficacy, including gender, work experiences and background qualifications (Kidd 2006). These factors also emerged in the current study. Gender was perceived to be a particularly important factor for achieving a match between job and career. As has been discussed earlier, stereotypical views of appropriate jobs for male and female employees in the hotel sector were evident amongst many Thai students.

Other factors associated with students' work experiences such as hierarchical organisational management structure, colleagues and supervisors, training programs provided by the organisation and feedback on students' performance appeared to have a significant impact on students' self-efficacy. For example one male Thai student mentioned the influence of colleagues and noted that since working in the industry he believed housekeeping was female dominated, and so he felt more comfortable working in food and beverage amongst male staff. Another Thai student indicated that he could not cope well with a long line of management staff and as a result he felt stressed at work. Some Australian students explained the impact of supervisors and training programs by noting that both provided them with opportunities to learn and develop skills relevant to their jobs but supervisors' consistent positive feedback on their performance built their confidence to progress their career in the industry. These highlight the impact of aspects of the work environment, such as colleagues, supervisors and training programs, on students' career self-efficacy. The importance of the work environment has also been recognised in previous studies. For example, Davis (2004) suggested that supervisors, co-workers and opportunities for promotion appeared to influence small business employees' job satisfaction, as well as their commitment to the organisation. Whereas Lee-Ross and Pryce (2010) have highlighted that a lack of staff training and limited career opportunities for career progress in an organisation impact on hospitality employees' career decisions.

The study also seemed to suggest that background qualifications, whether undertaking an Arts or Business degree, may impact students' self-efficacy when choosing a career after graduation. One Thai Arts student said that as English was an important skill for a career in the hospitality industry, she felt that her employment opportunities in the industry were diminished by students who graduated with an English degree. This suggests that students want their tourism and hospitality course to include more opportunities to develop English skills. One Australian Business student suggested that her degree gave her career choices after graduation because she felt competent to seek a career within or outside tourism and hospitality operations. This was because her Business degree provided her with transferable skills and these could be applied to other business sectors. These findings reflect the important relationship between the nature of a tourism and hospitality course and

employment opportunities and the way these impact on students' career self-efficacy. The finding that business students perceived that their degree provided them with valued transferable skills has also been found in other investigations of career destinations among hospitality graduates (Rudall et al. 1996). This study suggested that business degrees appeared to provide graduates with transferable skills highly valued by service business sectors outside the hospitality sector and prepared graduates to run their own business establishment. Although in the study only two students specifically emphasised the impact of their degree on their career self-efficacy and career choices after graduation, these findings, reflected the importance of the tourism and hospitality course structure and that some courses may allow students to increase their career self-efficacy and provide broader career choices than others. In this study, an Australian Business degree course appeared to provide students with broader career choices, whereas a Thai Arts degree should offer a course structure that enhances students' confidence in English in addition to knowledge and skills relevant to the tourism and hospitality industry.

Students' self-efficacy appeared to also be influenced by their cultural background. This study indicated that Australian students considered factors such as the skills and knowledge required by the job, roles of supervisors, training programs and job performance to impact on their self-efficacy. Whilst Thai students saw these to be important, they also considered other factors. These included, as has been previously discussed, a match between gender and job, parents' approval prior to career decision-making and proficiency in English, all of which appeared to have a significant impact on students' self-efficacy and their decision to apply for a certain job in the industry. Cultural differences of Thai and Australian students will be further discussed in a later section.

8.3.5 Factor 5: Outcome Expectations

In this study, students' outcome expectations appeared to be associated with two aspects of students' courses: the study experience provided by the university and work experience provided by the tourism and hospitality industry. The findings suggested that students perceived that outcome expectations played no significant role in their career interest and career decision-making. These findings were reinforced the results obtained in the quantitative study and some possible reasons for this finding are discussed below.

The research indicated that although 65 out of 88 Thai and Australian students that what they learned from the course was different from what they had previously expected, most of the students intended to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry after graduation. These findings indicate that a mismatch between students' expectations and their actual study experiences were unlikely to have a negative impact on students' decisions to enter the tourism and hospitality industry. Similar trends were also found with students' outcome expectations about their work experiences during the work-placement program. The findings indicated that among 16 students who viewed their work experiences negatively, half of these students said they were still satisfied with their work experience. On the other hand, among 67 of Thai and Australian students who were satisfied with their work experience, half of these students expressed no intention to seek similar work after graduation. These findings appeared to suggest that positive or negative outcomes of students' work experience were unlikely to predict their career interest or career decision-making. Similar findings have also been found by an investigation of career aspirations among young students (Bandura et al. 2001) suggesting that students tended to base their career choices on their perceived occupational self-efficacy rather than their academic performance. This study further suggested that young students are likely to make career decisions based on their skills or the abilities required by the tasks rather than considering their academic performance.

Although the current research indicated that outcomes of students' work experiences were unlikely to predict their career interests or career decision-making but the outcome of students' work experience was likely to influence their self-efficacy. Many students said they gained more confidence to do their jobs as a result of positive feedback on their performance and now felt more competent to make career progress in their job. The interrelationship between outcome expectations, self-efficacy and career interest supports previous research. Smith (2002) for example, investigated vocational interests in information technology and found that students with computer anxiety expressed low career interest in information technology. Therefore, providing students with a learning environment that encouraged them to learn and explore more about information technology helped students to increase their self-efficacy and career interest.

8.3.6 Factor 6: Career Interest

According to social cognitive career theory, individuals develop career interests through the interaction of their *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy* and *outcome expectations* and these subsequently influence their *career interests* and choices (Lent et al. 1994). The current findings, which have been discussed in terms of ‘Factor 3: Learning Experiences’, ‘Factor 4: Self-efficacy’ and ‘Factor 5: Outcome expectations’ appear to support the interrelationship between *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy* and *outcome expectations* and their influence on students’ *career interest* in the tourism and hospitality industry. The study also found that while learning experience and self-efficacy appear to directly impact on students’ career interest, outcome expectations more directly impact on self-efficacy than career interest. This finding supported the quantitative finding that outcome expectations did not predict students’ career interest.

The findings indicated that *learning experiences* (students’ work experience) and perceived *outcome expectations* (students’ work performance outcomes) were likely to influence students’ *self-efficacy*. For example, some Thai students learned that housekeeping was physically demanding and so students who considered that they lacked the required physical strength expressed low self-efficacy for seeking a career in housekeeping. Another example of the way the relationship between self-efficacy and outcome expectations can influence students’ career interests and build their confidence to seek a career in the industry, occurs when students receive consistent positive feedback from supervisors on their performance.

The findings also suggested that although students’ career interest is likely to be influenced by the interaction of *learning experiences*, *outcome expectations* and *self-efficacy* factors, other factors—*individual factors* (gender) and *individuals’ background contextual factors* (family background)—may also have a direct impact on students’ career interest in the tourism and hospitality industry. The study found that gender influenced career interest, especially among Thai students who had more stereotypical views of the match between gender and career than did Australian students. Family background appeared to influence students’ career interest as findings indicated by the finding that one Thai student and three Australian students enrolled in the industry because their parents had a business in the industry or family members worked in the industry and these students considered that the

course would facilitate their entry into the industry. Similar findings on the influence of family background were found in a previous study investigating the impact of family background. This research suggested that family background affected an individual's development of an enterprising personality and could be used to predict patterns of enterprising interest (Schröder & Schmitt-Rodermund 2006).

8.3.7 The Relationship between Career Interest and Career Decision-Making

The quantitative study investigated the impact of *individual factors (gender and age), individuals' background contextual factors, learning experiences, self-efficacy and outcome expectations* on students' *career interest*. The qualitative study was conducted to expand further on these quantitative findings and to explore and understand how and why these factors impact on students' career interest. In the previous sections the impact of each of these factors on students' career interest has been discussed. This section seeks to demonstrate the relationship between students' career interest and career decision-making in the industry. The findings obtained from the qualitative study suggested that career interest was likely to predict career decision-making. This finding supported the current theoretical framework—social cognitive career theory—and hypothesised that career interest was likely to predict career decision-making (Lent et al. 1994). The qualitative findings also suggested that the relationship between career interest and career decision-making develops in complex ways.

According to a total of the 88 participants interviewed (23% of the total students who had returned from work-placement), 71 of these students intended to seek a career in the industry after graduation (38 of 40 Thai Arts students or 95%; 25 of 36 Thai Business students or 69%; 8 of 12 Australian Business students or 67%). This rate is considerably higher than was found in an earlier study conducted by Jenkins. Jenkins (2001) investigated the career intentions of hospitality students from the Netherlands (n=58) and the UK (n=80) and found that approximately 44% of Dutch hospitality students and 45% of UK hospitality students expressed an intention to seek a career in the industry after graduation. It is unclear why these different results were obtained but a number of factors appear important. Firstly the research was conducted ten years earlier and in different countries. Also whilst Jenkins'

(2001) study suggested that students' work experiences influenced their intention to seek a career in the hospitality but it did not explore the way students' work experiences influenced their career decision-making and the findings may reflect upon the nature of these students' work experiences. The current study provides some support for this suggestion and found that most Thai and Australian students were satisfied with their work experience (67 of 88 students) and were likely to seek a career in the industry. This study also found that *self-efficacy* appeared to be the key factor for Thai and Australian students' *career interest* and their *career decision-making*. The findings indicated that students' perceived congruency between their self-efficacy and their career was important because they identified that they were interested in a job that fitted their personalities, interests and abilities. This was also ranked as one of the most influential factors for students' career decision-making in terms of whether or not to seek a career in the industry after graduation.

Another interesting finding from the current study was that, despite students' perceptions of pay and salary structure, location of their workplace and organisational attributes were considered more important for achieving their desired career. These factors were not, however, perceived to be the most influential factors for the career decision-making of Thai and Australian students. The findings indicated that Thai and Australian students based their decision-making on their self-efficacy (personality, personal interest and ability), job requirement, opportunities to use their knowledge and skills and their career prospects or progress. One possible explanation was that students had clear ideas of what factors were important for their desired career and these were that they would be paid in accordance with their expectations, that their workplace would be located in an area that facilitated their life style or family commitments, and that the organisation would provide them with good career opportunities or work stability. This exploration of factors associated with students' career decision-making appeared to indicate, however, that students considered it was important for them to enter the industry or continue to make career progress in the industry after graduation. Thus they decided to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry for the factors identified above and because they liked the work, felt confident to perform the job, and were comfortable with the work environment. They also sought opportunities to use their knowledge and skills and explore their career prospects or opportunities in the industry.

As can be seen, the relationship between career interest and career decision-making is complex. *Career interest* appears to be influenced by different individual factors (such as pay and salary that facilitate lifestyle or financial plans, family commitments and self-efficacy). Whereas career decision-making appears to be influenced by students' preferred career path, whether they seek career entry or career progress, which is likely to change according to *individuals' background contextual factors* or environmental factors, such as family obligations, the impact of job requirements and work environment on personal efficacy beliefs, employment demand, and career opportunities within an organisation or the industry. These may either support or be a barrier to career choices and are often unpredictable. As a result, the current findings suggested that students were likely to generate their career options based on their career interest, but their career decisions were likely to be made on the basis of congruency between their outcome expectations of different career paths in the industry and a variety of environmental factors associated with their career choices. This finding is similar to those found in an investigation of students' decision to enroll in a library and information science course (Moniarou-Papaconstantinou et al. 2010). This study found that many students did not select the course which was their first choice. Instead students chose a course because it provided a better chance to enter university and offered good career opportunities after graduation compared with other courses. This study suggests that obtaining entry to university was perceived to be important for these students at this stage of their life. Therefore, they applied for a course which meant they would be accepted into university, rather than a course they were more interested in but were less likely to be accepted into. An investigation of employees' decision to enter the tourism and hospitality industry in New Zealand (Brien 2004) found that many employees entered the industry because they needed a financial income while they were looking for a job they liked and it was easier to get a job in this industry than others. Thus at times it seems likely that people make career decisions based on what career options are currently available to them, and this may limit their ability to choose their preferred career.

8.3.8 Cultural Interpretation of the Thai and Australian Tourism and Hospitality Students on Career Decision-Making

It would appear that four of Hofstede's five dimensions of national culture (2001), appear to be associated with the career decision-making of Thai and Australian students. These dimensions were masculinity versus femininity, individualism versus collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance.

Masculinity versus *femininity* refers to stereotypical views of appropriate careers for men and women and was discussed in terms of 'Factor 1: Individual factors (Gender and Age)'. As was highlighted in this discussion Thai students emphasised the importance of achieving a match between gender and job. For example, men were seen to suit jobs in food and beverage and women were perceived to suit housekeeping jobs. Australian students appeared to disregard these stereotypes thus Thais tended to endorse stereotypical views of male and female behaviour more than Australians. This may be because Australians live in a society that stresses equality of career opportunities for men and women. This suggests that this dimension (Hofstede 2001) is more relevant for understanding a Thai culture than an Australian culture.

Individualism versus *collectivism* appeared to be associated with the influence of family obligations and career status on students' career decision-making. Thai students wanted their workplaces to allow them to live with their parents or be located close enough to look after their parents. They also expressed the wish that job status or career should be perceived positively by their parents or their community. Whereas, Australian students appeared to be less concerned about the image of the industry and based career decisions on their individual life style. For example, they wanted their career to allow them to balance work and family commitments or allow time after work to socialise with friends and family members. The way in which family obligations and career image impact on career decision-making were discussed in 'Factor 2: Individuals' background contextual factors', but these findings appear to support Hofstede's (2001) findings that Thais have strong family ties and opinions are predetermined by the group rather than the individual, and that Australians feel less responsibility towards family, and their personal opinions and individual needs are valued more.

Power distance appeared to be associated with the different perceptions of Thai and Australian students regarding the influence of parents' views on students' career decision-making. Thai students appeared to seek approval for their career choices from their parents prior to making a career decision, whereas Australian students made their decision based on their personal interests rather than their parents' views. These findings support Hofstede (2001) and suggest that Thai children are taught to respect parents, expected to be obedient and become independent at a later age. Thus Thai parents continue to exert a powerful influence on the career decisions their children make. Australian children, on the other hand, tend to treat parents with less respect than Thai children and are expected to become independent at a younger age and to take more responsibility for their career decisions.

Interestingly, one of the key cultural dimensions differentiating students in Thailand and Australia appears to be *uncertainty avoidance*. Hofstede (2001) research suggested that Thai employees prefer to stay with the same employer and to work for larger organisations, whereas Australians are less hesitant to change employers and less influenced by the size of an organisation. The current study did not endorse this and indicated that Thai and Australian students shared similar views and preferred to work in larger organisations. Thai students perceived that larger organisations provided higher job stability and better career opportunities, pay and incentives; whereas Australian students perceived that large organisations provided better career opportunities and enhanced their career path in the industry. These differences indicated one of the more interesting results in the current study, which was that while Thai and Australian students may make similar decisions, they make them for different reasons. Thus Thai students tend to focus on security and Australian students focus on future opportunities rather than current benefits.

The impact of the size of tourism and hospitality establishments on career decision-making also supports previous research findings. For example, Martin & Gardiner (2007) suggested that small and medium business establishments such as pubs and restaurants provide good short-term career opportunities, whereas larger business establishments provide better long-term career opportunities. This is because large business establishments tend to have well-developed human resource structures that provide employment opportunities for different aged employees. This view is consistent with the findings from an investigation by Magd

(2003) of older employees in hospitality business establishments in the UK, which found that older employees tended to be employed by large organisations with formal human resource structures. Qui and Lam (2004) has previously highlighted the importance of business establishments providing career paths in the tourism and hospitality industry in China. This study indicated that large business establishments, such as Ritz Carlton, Holiday Inn and Sheraton, were perceived by employees to provide better employment conditions such as staff training, and the opportunity to subsequently enhance their career in the industry.

These positive views of the employment opportunities provided by large business establishments suggest that the tourism and hospitality sectors in different countries operate similarly, and that large organisations can satisfy staff expectations of their career better than smaller organisations. None of these studies have, however, considered the way in which culture influences career choices and further research is needed to better understand how large or small organisations may meet employees' cultural needs. Further investigations may have useful implications for organisations and assist them to provide staff with appropriate work environments and conditions. In the current study, one Australian student who worked in the front office in a five star international hotel chain commented that staff working in hospitality come from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, and so at times it was difficult for her to fit into a work environment where she was a minority group member in the staff team. This finding indicates that even in a large organisation, which can provide better career paths in the industry, diversity of cultural groups may impact on employees' decisions regarding their organisational choices.

8.4 Contributions of Qualitative Findings to the Quantitative Study

The quantitative study highlighted that gender, individuals' background contextual factors, learning experiences and self-efficacy influenced students' career interest in the industry, whereas, age and outcome expectations had no impact on their career interest. These findings were important because they identified factors which influenced students' career interest, but they could not provide a comprehensive explanation of how these factors influence students' career decision-making process. The qualitative study, therefore, was

employed to provide context, depth and meaning to the quantitative findings and it was anticipated that the qualitative study would provide more holistic understanding of how these factors influenced career decision-making among Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students.

The qualitative study further investigated the roles and impacts of these factors on career decision-making of Thai and Australian students and the findings were consistent to the quantitative results. The qualitative findings explained the roles of gender, individuals' background contextual factors, learning experiences and self-efficacy impacting on students' career decision-making at different stages of their pathway into the industry. At the initial stage of the students' career pathway into the industry, individuals' background contextual factors, for example family, friends, school teacher and job opportunities, were perceived to impact on their decision to choose a tourism and hospitality course because they expected the course to provide them with career opportunities in the industry after graduation. Later learning experiences or students' work-placement program and self-efficacy were perceived to influence students' career decisions. The qualitative study also highlighted that a variety of issues associated with students' work-placement experiences, such as the management structure of the organisation, training programs offered, colleagues and supervisors, had an impact on the way they perceived their abilities and decided whether a match existed between themselves and jobs in the industry. The qualitative study also provide further explanation for the quantitative results that age and outcome expectation factors were appeared to have no impact on Thai and Australian students' decision to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry. The qualitative findings suggested age was not appeared to impact students' career decisions may be because most of them were young and as a result they might not be aware of age might affect their career in the future. Outcome expectations were also perceived to have little impact on students' career decision in the industry which the qualitative study highlighted that students appeared to do not base their decisions only on the outcome of their academic performance or work experiences in the industry.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the findings obtained from the qualitative study and related these findings to previous research. This discussion was organised around the factors suggested by Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1997) social cognitive career theory, which was the theoretical framework used in the current study and seen to be associated with the career decision-making process. The discussion identified a variety of influences associated with the six major factors—*individual factors* (gender and age), *individuals' background contextual factors*, *learning experiences*, *self-efficacy*, *outcome expectations* and *career interest*. The chapter also discussed the relationship between career interest and career decision-making. It described how the findings supported the theory that career interests were likely to predict students' decisions to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry but suggested that the notion of *career interest* was more complex than previously anticipated. The findings indicated, however, that career interests appeared to be limited by individual and environmental factors such as family obligations, financial plans, employment demand at tourism destinations and seasonality. The discussion of the qualitative study concluded with a consideration of the way Thai and Australian students perceived these factors from their particular cultural perspectives. The next chapter presents the conclusions of the current study and notes the implications of these findings for the provision of the tourism and hospitality courses and identifies issues for further research.

Chapter Nine

Conclusions and Implications

9.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the current investigation into what factors drive the career decision-making of Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students. The chapter begins with an overview of the study and briefly mentions why the study was initiated and how it was developed. Then it summarizes the key findings and highlights important issues relevant to career decision-making amongst Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students. This chapter also identifies the limitations of the study and includes recommendations for future research into career decision-making. On the basis of the research findings emerging from the current study, the chapter concludes with suggestions about the way an understanding of the career decision-making process can be used by universities to assist tourism and hospitality graduates to develop their career within the tourism and hospitality industry.

9.2 An overview

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. The study used a social construction framework, specifically Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) Social Cognitive Career Theory, to investigate career decision-making. This theory helps to provide guideline for the identification of factors that are seen to influence individual's career decision-making behaviour. These include individuals' different backgrounds, their learning experiences, environmental factors such as social, cultural, economic and educational conditions and an individual's cognitive learning. The current research employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to help identify a variety of factors that Thai and Australian tourism and

hospitality students perceived to influence their decision either to seek a career in the industry or to choose an alternative career and provide better understanding of the way these career decision-making factors are interpreted by Thai and Australian students.

The findings suggested that there were no simple explanations for why some students seek a career in the industry and others do not. The findings indicated that career decision-making can be influenced by a variety of factors and these tend to be interrelated. In addition to these factors, choices about career pathways in the industry and other environmental factors also impact on the way students make career decisions. The study found that students tend to choose their career pathway based on their career interest, however, environmental factors, such as job requirements and employment demand, either facilitate or limit their ability or opportunity to achieve their desired career pathway. Therefore, career decision-making is likely to be dependent on the congruence between choice of career pathway in the industry and a variety of environmental factors at the time career a decision has to be made. Nevertheless, the cultural background of students also plays an important role in their career decision-making process. The study found that although Thai and Australian students identified factors that influence their career decision-making similarly, they perceived issues associated with these factors differently. These included how they perceived a match between themselves and jobs, their perception of skills required by the job, concern about job image, and the extent to which family obligations influenced career decisions.

9.3 The Key Findings

The current study endeavoured 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. Despite, the quantitative and qualitative results that identified the factors influencing career decision-making of Thai and Australian students with more in-depth explanations for the roles and impacts of these factors play on the students' career intention in the tourism and hospitality industry. The study also highlighted several key findings.

The first key finding emerged from the fact that several factors were perceived to influence the career decision-making process of Thai and Australian students and these factors were likely to be interrelated which could significantly impact students' career decisions either positively or negatively. For example, in terms of the impact of the relationship between learning experiences and self-efficacy the study found that some students gained more confidence to continue working in the industry because they received consistent positive feedback from their supervisors during the work-placement. Another example shows the interrelationship between gender, learning experiences and self-efficacy. Thus, a Thai male student after his work placement commented that he perceived that housekeeping was predominantly a female job. As a result, he did not intend to seek a career in this area as he lacked the confidence needed to work with female colleagues. These findings, therefore, highlighted that students tended to make career decisions based on several factors and the way they perceive the interactions of different factors impacted on their career choices.

Next key finding is based on the observation that several factors were perceived to influencing career decision-making. However, these factors tended to impact differently on students' career decision-making during their educational pathway into the industry. The study suggested that individuals' background contextual factors such as family background, friends, school teachers, employment opportunity in the industry and self-efficacy (the likelihood of being accepted into the course) were perceived to play an important role in students' decision to choose a tourism and hospitality course, whereas gender and learning experiences (previous work experience in the industry) were perceived to have little impact on course selection. On the other hand, learning experiences and self-efficacy became the most influential factors on students' career decision during the final year of their course because students had the opportunity to explore jobs and career paths in the industry and ascertain whether a match existed between themselves and tourism and hospitality jobs or careers. The different impacts of the identified factors on students' career decision-making process, therefore, highlighted that several factors can impact on students' career decision-making, but students tend to base their career decisions on specific factors at particular stages of their careers.

Another key finding derived from the observation that the students' career pathway in the industry also has important implications for career decision-making. The study found that students' preferred a career path—whether they seek career entry or career progress—which was likely to change according to other environmental factors (i.e. the impact of job requirement and work environment on personal efficacy beliefs, employment demand, and career opportunities within an organisation or the industry). These may either support or be a barrier to their career choices and are often unpredictable. Career decisions were, therefore, likely to be made on the basis of the congruence between students' expectations of different career paths in the industry and a variety of environmental factors associated with their career choices. This finding emphasised the important role of unpredictable environmental factors that can either have positive or negative impact on students' abilities to make career decisions after they graduate.

Final key finding emerged from the way Thai and Australian students approach their career decision-making. The research indicated that Thai and Australian students perceived the impact of the identified factors on their career decision-making differently and the differences influenced by three cultural dimensions: masculinity versus femininity, individualism versus collectivism and power distance. The study found that whilst the career decision-making of Thai students were influenced by stereotypical views about a match between gender and job, job status as viewed by family and community and some indicated that they required parental approval for their career decisions. These were viewed as less relevant for Australian students with their career decision-making being based instead on opportunities to develop their skills and career prospects in the industry. These highlighted that cultural environment can either encourage or be barrier to tourism and hospitality students to make their career entry to the tourism and hospitality industry.

9.4 Contribution to Knowledge

The previous sections have summarised the research findings to provide a better understanding of career decision-making among Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students and highlighted the way Thai and Australian students perceive a variety of factors, which influence their decision to pursue a career in the industry. The study also has valuable

implications for three major perspectives: theory and research in career decision-making perspectives, tourism and hospitality industry perspectives, and cultural perspectives.

9.4.1 Theory and Research in Career Decision-Making Perspectives

One of the key findings in this study is that several factors were perceived to influence the career decision-making process of Thai and Australian. Thus, the findings indicated that Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students perceived individual factors (gender and age), individuals' background contextual factors, learning experiences and self-efficacy to play a major role in their career decision-making. The current study, therefore, has contributed to the knowledge of career decision-making theories by supporting Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory as a precursor to the notions of Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994), that family members, school teachers, friends and career opportunity influence on students' career interest and career choice. Significantly, the study has strengthened the notion of Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive career theory that people make career decision based on several factors—individual factors, individuals' background contextual factors, learning experiences, self-efficacy, outcome expectations and interest. Hence, the theory is applicable for further investigation of career decision-making within the Western context and also beyond. In addition, the current research supports the theory that several factors associated with individuals' career decision-making are likely to be interrelated which could impact the way individuals make their career decision positively or negatively. Cultural environment, for example, it may be perceived as more or less important by people from different cultures. As the study showed Thai and Australian students based their career decision-making on similar factors but they perceived these factors differently. For example, Thai and Australian students perceived that the work-placement component of their course played an important role in their future career development. Thai students, however, valued the work-placement as important because it allowed them to explore career opportunities in the industry. Whereas Australian students saw their work-placement as a chance to start their career and make faster career progress after graduation. The study, therefore, underlies that people from different cultures may recognise the importance of similar factors but have their own interpretation of factors influencing career decision-making.

In addition, the current study used a questionnaire survey which was developed from factors identified by previous studies in tourism and hospitality industry which were combined with two previous validated career inventories; Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (CDMSE-SF) and Schein's Career Anchors. Specifically, previous studies had used these career inventories separately and hence relied predominantly on quantitative analysis to determine the impacts of self-efficacy and career expectation on the way individuals make career decisions. The results of this study have shown that the combination of the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (CDMSE-SF) with Schein's Career Anchors, further supported by a number of additional influential factors found within the literature, has proven to be a valuable research instrument, that could be used effectively in future studies of this nature. Moreover, the collection of additional qualitative data within this mix methods approach has ensured that the results were both comprehensive and meaningful. Subsequently, this thesis has enhanced previous methods similar types of studies by developing a comprehensive instrument supported by a qualitative research process designed to gain a deeper understanding of these issues. As a result, this innovation has provided a deeper and more meaningful assessment of factors influencing career decision-making among tourism and hospitality students. Particularly, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (CDMSE-SF) and Schein's Career Anchors can be useful career inventories to provide further career study for wider group of students in Thailand or elsewhere.

9.4.2 The Tourism and Hospitality Industry Perspectives

The current study provided an insight into students' career decision-making process and its findings have contributed to a better understanding of career decision-making in the industry, which is applicable to both tourism and hospitality educational providers and industry practitioners.

For tourism and hospitality educational providers

The current study highlights one of the key findings that although Thai and Australian students perceived several factors impacting their career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry. However, these factors tended to impact differently on students' career

decision-making during their educational pathway into the industry. The current study provided a structured model to demonstrate how students develop their career interest and make their career decision and identified the complex range of factors associated with students' decisions. These included the structure of their course, their work experiences, family background, work-placement experiences and cultural values associated with job and career pathways in the industry and other environmental factors (i.e. job requirements and employment demand) can undermine students' ability to make the desired career decisions. All these factors exert an influence on students and the decisions they make. These findings have contributed to the existing literature that it is important for tourism and hospitality educational providers to recognise a variety of factors and the roles they play on students' career pathway in the industry.

Specifically, the key findings highlighted in the current study also can be useful for tourism and hospitality educational providers to help tourism and hospitality students develop satisfying career in the industry by focusing on structure of the course and work-placement program. As the research suggested tourism and hospitality courses impact on students' intentions to seek a career in the industry. The study found that the structure of a course—whether an 'Arts' or 'Business' degree—was likely to influence the way students perceived their ability to achieve their career choices. For example, Thai Arts students indicated that their course should provide better English skills as they saw fluency in English as a basic requirement for career entry to the tourism and hospitality industry and students with better English language backgrounds from other degrees undermined their career chances. Whilst Thai Arts students were concerned about their ability to enter the industry, Australian Business students seemed confident about securing a suitable job after graduation because they believed that their course provided them with skills and knowledge which were transferable to a wide range of service businesses. As the results indicated Thai Arts students expressed low self-efficacy in terms of their ability to compete with students more proficient in English to gain an entry level position in the industry, whereas Australian Business students expressed high self-efficacy to seek a career either within or outside the industry. As can be seen whether self-efficacy is high or low, it affects the career intentions of tourism and hospitality students. Therefore, whether it is a Thai Arts degree or other tourism and hospitality course providers in Thailand need to recognise the important role

language skills play in facilitating students' career within the industry. Providers of Australian Business degrees or other tourism and hospitality courses in Australia should encourage their students to see the benefits of having a long-term career in the industry because employees with relevant qualifications and work experience are likely to advance their career path in the industry more effectively and receive higher pay than those without (Hjalager & Anderson 2001).

In addition, whilst the current study supported previous research indicating that work-placement plays an important role in students' career decisions, the study also found that the relationship between work-placement and students' career decision-making appears to be connected to students' perceived self-efficacy. Previous studies suggested that work-placement programs provide students with an opportunity to experience the actual work environment and achieve a better balance between students' expectations and the reality of their work experience. It has been suggested that this work experience caused many students to decide not to seek a career in the industry (Jenkins 2001; Littlejohn & Watson 2004; McMahon & Quinn 1995; Raybould & Wilkins 2005). The fact that work-placement provides an opportunity for students to experience the actual work environment, was also found to be relevant in the current study but it was regarded positively by most students. The current study found that the work-placement program was also seen by Thai students, without prior work-experience in the industry, as an opportunity to explore different jobs or career paths within the organisation. For Australian students, the work-placement program was seen as their entry to the industry and therefore enabled them to make better career progress in the industry prior to graduation. These findings highlighted that students commence their work placement with different goals and these goals tend to have a more powerful impact on their career decisions than the perceived match between their expectations of the industry and learning experiences provided by their organisation.

The study also suggested that there are other issues associated with students' work-placement experience which could impact their decisions whether to seek a career in the industry. These include organisation's management, work-placement programmed provided by the organisation, supervisors and colleagues play significant roles on students' work experience. Most students, however, intended to work in the industry: they basically liked

the nature of the job (for example, they enjoyed meeting and working with people), they considered that they had the ability to do the job and were familiar with the work environment (for example, they liked people whom they worked with and they knew how daily work routines operated and they liked the work atmosphere). In other words, they based their career decision-making on there being a match between their self-efficacy, the job and, as previously mentioned, students developed and enhanced their self-efficacy during work-placement. Therefore, work-placement helps students to find the job that matches their personal interests and that they have the ability to do well. This may also explain why some students, who intended to work in the industry, did not wish to apply for the same job as they had during their work placement. These students lacked the confidence to perform the job they did but because they enjoyed meeting and working with people and liked the work environment they intended to stay in the industry but to look for an alternative job or career within the industry. This implies that those students who decide not to seek a career in the industry may do so either because they perceived that they were not competent to perform the job or simply because they did not like the job or working in the industry. Therefore, it is important for tourism and hospitality educational providers to develop a meaningful work-placement program and provide strategies that enable students to obtain and regain their confidence to achieve their career goals in the industry.

For tourism and hospitality industry practitioners

The study provided some support for previous studies have suggested that many people leave the industry because they do not like irregular work hours, long work hours and uncertain work shifts required by the industry (Boella & Goss-Turner 2005; O'Leary & Deegan 2005). As the study suggested the industry is predominantly female as demonstrated by the fact that about 80% of Thai and Australian students participating in the study were female. The study also found that some female students indicated that physically they could not cope with their irregular and long work hours in food and beverage and front office areas. These findings may explain results reported in previous studies suggesting that male employees tend to better develop their career path in food and beverage whereas female employees chose housekeeping, sales and marketing (Li & Leung 2001; Wood 1997) and administration (Hjllager & Anderson 2001) positions. The current study implied

that female employees, especially in the hotel sector, may be unable to compete with male food and beverage employees because they physically cannot cope with sustained irregular and long work hours. Thus, these findings could be useful for tourism and hospitality practitioners to improve working conditions and staff training programs to facilitate female employees to manage daily operations and achieve career progress in the organisation. For example, if organisations wish to retain female employees in food and beverage areas, the management may need to improve staff rosters by focusing on the number of work hours and time of the work shift to allow female staff to physically cope and also to manage their family commitments. These strategies could subsequently allow female employees to balance their responsibilities between work and family life and manage a physically demanding job.

The current study found that for some employees they value other issues to be more influential in determining their career decision than the negative natures of work in the industry. These are associated with several aspects of the work environment including line of management, supervisors and colleagues can have positive or negative impacts on their abilities and confidence to continue their career in the industry. These findings imply that at an operational level, staff perceived that line management, their supervisors and colleagues have important implications for the outcome of their daily performance and their career commitment in the organisation. For example, a long line of hierarchical management in the organisation may cause higher stress among operational staff as they are unclear about whom they report to or which supervisor or manager might help them to handle guests. Supervisors with helpful characteristics are perceived to have a positive impact on employees' task performance. It was also suggested that some employees may be less enthusiastic about work when they represent a cultural minority within the team. These findings have provided additional issues that appear to be associated with employees' perceptions of the work environment at operational level. Tourism and hospitality practitioners, therefore, could use this knowledge to create a more positive work environment for their staff and encourage them to commit to a long-term career in the organisation. For example, operational managers need to provide employees with clear instructions about who their supervisor is and which manager they report to and clear

guidelines for dealing with guests. These strategies help staff to perform their daily tasks more effectively, make employees' work life less stressful and develop their confidence. Subsequently, these strategies enable staff to deal with problems that occur in frontline service and they know exactly whom they can approach for assistance regarding further actions.

Another interesting finding related to the industry's pay structure as perceived by Thai and Australian students. Previous studies suggested that tourism and hospitality employees often received lower pay, in the hotel sector particularly, compared with other industries (Kelley-Patterson & George 2001; Wong 2004). This finding was supported by Australian students but not by Thai students. The qualitative findings revealed that a quarter of Australian students did not seek a career in the industry after graduation because they considered the pay in the industry to be relatively low. One Australian student who worked in a five star hotel stressed that employees seemed to be underpaid. In contrast Thai students had positive perceptions about pay in the industry. They commented that as new graduates the industry provided relatively good pay. Thai students identified that the pay structure especially in the hotel and resort sectors, to be satisfactory since as well as their salary they also receive free meals (staff in some organisations are in fact provided with two free meals—before and after their work shift) and some hotels and resorts also provide free accommodation for employees. In addition to these benefits, employees also receive a 'service charge' which is basically a commission of the room sale revenue that the hotel or resort gives to all employees every month. All these benefits make the pay structure of the industry appealing to Thai students and encourage them to initially seek work in the hotel and resort sectors. However, service charges and free accommodation were not mentioned by Australian students as incentives. These findings demonstrate that the pay structure of the industry varies in different countries and this can have either a positive or negative impact on employees' career decisions regarding the industry. It would also suggest that the tourism and hospitality industry in Australia could consider the use of other benefits to compensate employees for their relatively low pay.

Finally, the study found a relationship between organisational attributes and career decision-making in the industry. Previous research suggested that organisational attributes including,

location, size and management practices can have significant implications for employees seeking to develop a career in the industry (Qiu & Lam 2004; Riley et al. 2002). The present study also found that organisational attributes, especially location and size of the organisation were perceived to have important implications for both Thai and Australian students. In terms of location, Thai students perceived that popular tourist destinations provided employees with more career opportunities and better pay whereas Australian students valued the location of their workplace to satisfy their lifestyle and financial plans. The size of an organisation was seen by both Thai and Australian students as important with larger organisations being perceived to facilitate career success and satisfy employees' career expectations better than smaller organisations. These students also indicated that larger organisations provided better employment conditions in terms of pay, training for employees, employment stability and their career development in the industry. The present study, therefore, has indicated that business establishments in the tourism and hospitality industry appear to operate similarly in Thailand and Australia with larger organisations, compared with small organisations, providing better work conditions for employees and being more willing to enhance employees' abilities and assist them to develop their long-term career and success in the industry.

9.4.3 Cultural Perspectives

The current study has strengthened the notion of the relationship between career decisions and culture that are closely interrelated, because culture underpins fundamental judgments made by individuals and influences their behavioural intentions, expectations and outcomes relevant to a particular career (Hofstede 2001). The findings indicated that Thai and Australian culture had important implications for students' judgments regarding their career interest and career decision. For example, Thai students expressed more concern over the gender appropriateness of a job (i.e. "Food and beverage is a man's job whereas housekeeping is a woman job"), but Australian students were less concerned about the match between gender and job. These findings demonstrate that culture influences individuals' judgment about job selection and may influence line management in the organisation. As a result, it can be expected that in a Thai context, food and beverage is likely to be a predominantly male domain whereas housekeeping is likely to be predominantly female.

The study also highlighted that Thai students, their career choices and career decision were based not only on their own judgments and wishes, but needed to take account of their family and community. For example a Thai student suggested that he did not intend to seek a career in the industry because his parents advised him that since he has a university degree, he should find a better and higher status job than as a frontline staff member in the tourism and hospitality industry. Whereas Australian students appeared to indicate that they had more control over their career choices and career decisions and it is likely that their culture, as mediated by parents, family and peers, encourages them to do this. In addition, the current study suggests that some cultures may provide greater opportunities for individuals to gain and express their self-efficacy than others. The current findings relating to these two cultural dimensions demonstrate that Thai students' self-efficacy to make career decisions appeared to be limited by stereotypical views about gender roles as well as by the perceptions of their family and community towards a career in the industry. The culture of Australian students on the other hand, allows them greater opportunities to exercise their self-efficacy when making career choices and career decisions. Accordingly, the study provides a better understanding of how the cultural interpretations of career decision-making are perceived by tourism and hospitality students from Eastern and the Western backgrounds. Specifically, it should also be useful for providing an in-depth understanding of career decision-making relevant to tourism and hospitality within Thailand and Australia.

9.5 Limitations of the study and Recommendations for future research

Although the findings from the study have extended knowledge and provided insights into career decision-making in a Thai and Australian context, it is important to understand the limitations of the current study. These concerned three major issues and these are discussed below.

The first limitation relates to the nature of the methodology and the sample size of participants in the current study. The study used a case study approach to investigate factors influencing the career decision-making process which its empirical results are obtained from a selection of specific groups or a small number of individuals (Robson 2002). Thus, the current findings provide detailed information about tourism and hospitality students

attending three specific universities but they cannot be generalised to other Thai or Australian tourism and hospitality universities. In addition, the sample size of Australian students was smaller than that of Thai students. As a result, some statistical technique could not be used to differentiate between the two groups. Despite, these two limitations, however, the study does provide an understanding of how these three groups of students make career decisions. This information can be used to guide future research in these two countries to determine the applicability of the current findings on the way tourism and hospitality students in a Thai and/or Australian context make career-decisions and how these are influenced by their cultural interpretations. For future research into career decision-making, students need to be selected from different universities in Thailand and Australia, so that the findings of the present study can be compared with other empirical results (Yin 1994). Then the new findings can be used to validate the current findings and lead to the development of a general career decision-making model that is suitable for tourism and hospitality students in Thailand and Australia.

The next limitation concerned the fact that the research timelines impacted on the sample size of the Australian students returning from their work-placement program. Since this group of Australian students completed a ten month work-placement program the researcher could only collect data from this group once a year. As a result, the sample size of these Australian students who had returned from their work-placement program and completed the questionnaire was smaller and less representative of the total population (n=70) and the number of students completing the semi structured in-depth interviews (n=12) was relative small compared to the other two Thai universities. Although, these students appeared to provide meaningful data a larger sample size might have led to a broader range of issues being raised in connection with their career decision-making. Therefore, it is suggested that this study should be seen as providing a template for future investigations of the career decision-making of Australian tourism and hospitality students. These new findings would allow a greater in-depth understanding of the career decision-making of Australian students.

The last limitation concerned the proportion of male and female participants. As has been discussed the research included quantitative and qualitative studies. For the quantitative study, the majority of students who participated in this study were female (n=818, 667

students or 80%). This proportion reflects the nature of the tourism and hospitality course as a higher number of females were enrolled into the courses than males. For the qualitative study there were also a relatively small number of male students (8 Thai and 5 Australian students) compared to female students (75 students) participating in the interviews but these proportions are not dissimilar to the proportions of males enrolled in the tourism and hospitality courses. Although these male students raised important issues associated with career decision-making from a male student's perspectives, it remains a concern that the size of the sample makes the views of the males less representative than those of the females. A larger number of male students participating in the qualitative study would have given the researcher more confidence that the issues raised by these male students covered those relevant to the present study. It is suggested that future research uses the current findings as a framework for investigating career decision-making within Australian tourism and hospitality students with larger sample sizes for both the questionnaires and interviews. The new findings would indicate whether the current findings are supported and provide a better understanding of the career decision-making of Australian students. In addition, the current study appears to indicate that gender has important implications for career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry because the findings suggested that male and female students seem to choose their career pathways and perceive their career development in tourism and hospitality industry differently. Further study may either confirm the findings of the current study or provide additional information regarding the career decision-making of male and female employees in tourism and hospitality industry. These additional findings would demonstrate to what extent the information obtained in the current study can be used to help their employees to satisfactorily develop their careers in the organisation.

9.6 Looking Forward

The present study has provided a detailed understanding of the career decision-making of Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students enrolled in three specific universities. During the course of the study several questions emerged in terms of the way tourism and hospitality educational providers prepare students for their future after graduation.

Some questions derived from the suggestion that tourism and hospitality educational providers have sought to develop subjects and a learning environment that equips students with the skills and knowledge that industry demands. The qualitative findings, however, indicated that this provides challenges to these universities as nearly one fourth of students (n=88) had no idea what job or career they wanted after graduation. Therefore the current research indicates that teaching staff at these universities should consider how they can prepare their students for their future career, when a significant minority is unsure what type of tourism and hospitality career they wish to pursue. Some students in Thailand and Australia indicated that they valued generic skills such as languages or general business skills and the advantages of these subjects is that they prepare students for a wide variety of careers. The findings also indicate that it would be useful for many students if these universities introduced a career development subject. This subject could provide students with the opportunity to explore different career options prior to graduation and consider how their values, abilities and personalities fit with these careers.

It should also be noted that whilst the findings obtained from questionnaires and the interviews revealed that the majority of students intended to seek a career in the industry this was not always because of their commitment to a career in tourism and hospitality. For example, the qualitative findings indicated that about one fourth of students intending to work in the industry said they wanted to utilise or develop their knowledge and skills. These students were not necessarily indicating a long-term commitment to the industry and one student said that if she had more choices she would prefer to work outside the industry. This issue raises questions about whether other students are in a similar situation and indicates the importance of these educational providers giving help to students to enable them to understand their career choices or achieve their career goals.

Furthermore, the qualitative study revealed that nine out of the 17 students who did not intend to work in the industry indicated that this was because they did not like the nature of the industry, such as shift work, uncertain working routines and working during holiday seasons. This implies that, whilst the educational providers sought to provide a meaningful work-placement program for these students they were unlikely to enjoy their placement as the characteristics they disliked about the industry are an integral part of most tourism and

hospitality work. This group of students even if they initially enter the industry seems to be unlikely to commit to a long-term career in tourism and hospitality after graduation. The important question these universities need to consider is whether they need to provide their students with a better understanding of the realities of tourism and hospitality work early on in their course. They may also decide to investigate strategies educational providers could use to help students who do not intend to make a career in the industry with alternative careers.

Therefore, gaining an understanding of students' career decision-making is important for both universities and their students. It provides an opportunity for the tourism and hospitality educational providers of the students in the current study and others to consider the implications of these findings and use them to develop a curriculum that prepares students for their future careers. This may involve helping students to make appropriate career decisions based on understanding the career decision-making process or to assist them to recognise how the industry can help them achieve their career choices.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Questionnaire Survey (English Version)

Appendix B: The Questionnaire Survey (Thai Version)

Appendix C: Students' work-placement information

Appendix D: Questions for the Semi Structured In-depth Interview (English Version)

Appendix E: Questions for the Semi Structured In-depth Interview (Thai Version)

Appendix A: The Questionnaire Survey (English Version)



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW
SCHOOL OF
THOUGHT**

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
School of Hospitality, Tourism and Marketing
Faculty of Business and Law

Research Title:

Factor Influencing Career Decision-Making: A Case Study of Thai and Australian Tourism and Hospitality Students

Information for participants in Questionnaire Survey

This research is being carried out by Miss Siriwan Ghuangpeng, a PhD candidature at Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia

Purpose of Research

You are being asked to participate in a research study to understand decision of tourism and hospitality students in seeking a career in the industry after graduation. The findings from this study will help tourism and hospitality educational providers to understand the contribution of the various factors on students' career decision and should assist them to design future strategies that would encourage the students to seek a career in the industry after graduation.

Confidentiality

Please be informed that all information provided by yourself and the results of this project will be treated as strictly confidential. Participants should also be aware that the findings will be used only for the purposes of this study in order to develop an understanding of career decision-making of Thai and Australian students.

Participation

Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the research study at anytime, or decline to participate with no penalty. Just don't respond or inform the researcher that you wish to stop or are feeling uncomfortable with the questions. All information will be kept confidential and retained by Victoria University for five years. Any queries concerning the research project, please contact me on Tel: 61 3 9919 5228 or my supervisor: Dr. Susan Gillet ph. 61 3 9919 4623). If you have any queries of complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, Vitoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 ph. 61 3 9919 4710.

Section A: Student's demographic information

1. Gender: Male / Female
2. University: _____
3. What was your highest level of education prior to enrolling in your current course?
 - High School
 - Diploma or Advance Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Courses
 - Diploma or Advance Diploma in (please specify _____)
 - Others (please specify _____)
4. Have you had any previous work experience?
 - Yes (please complete Question 5)
 - No (please go to Question 6)
5. Have you worked in tourism and hospitality industry?
 - Yes No
6. Do your parents work, or have they worked, in the tourism and hospitality industry?
 - Yes: both of my parents
 - Yes: but only my father / mother
 - No
7. Your age: _____

Section B: Factors associated with student's career learning

8. What motivated you to enrol in a tourism and hospitality course? Please rate each of the following in terms of their importance to you:

1 = Not Important At All: 5 = Very Important

Your Tertiary Entry Rank (TER)	1	2	3	4	5
Working experience in the industry	1	2	3	4	5
Personal career ambitious	1	2	3	4	5
Family	1	2	3	4	5
Friends	1	2	3	4	5
School teachers or counsellors	1	2	3	4	5
Word of mouth from tourism and hospitality students or graduates	1	2	3	4	5
The industry profile reported by the medias	1	2	3	4	5
Good opportunities for career advancement	1	2	3	4	5
The industry's workplace environment	1	2	3	4	5
Job characteristics such as working hours, salary, wages, allowance and incentive, and work being involved with people etc.	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of jobs in the industry	1	2	3	4	5

9. Has what you have learned during the course changed your previous perception of the tourism and hospitality industry?

Yes No

10. Please rate each of following factors that have had a positive impact on your study.

1 = Not At All Positive: 5 = Very Positive

Your academic performance	1	2	3	4	5
Career ambitious	1	2	3	4	5
Family	1	2	3	4	5
Friends	1	2	3	4	5
Lecturers	1	2	3	4	5
Course structure/ content	1	2	3	4	5
Learning/ teaching environment	1	2	3	4	5
University facilities/ supports	1	2	3	4	5
Career opportunity in the workforce	1	2	3	4	5
Working experience in the industry	1	2	3	4	5

11. Which of these is your most common grade?

- Pass
 Credit
 Distinction
 High Distinction

12. Please select one of the following

- I've applied for work placement in the next semester. (Please go to Section C)
 I've just returned from my work placement (Please answer Question 13 and 14)

13. Describe the organization, area and type of jobs(s) you had during your work placement program

Job Title:

.....

Area:

.....

Organisation:

.....

14. Which one of the following describes your work placement experience? Please tick one

- Satisfied
 Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied
 Dissatisfied

Section C: Student's Career Profile

This section consists of two career inventories.

1. *Career Decision Making Scale (Short-Form)* which asks questions about your work behaviour.
2. *Career Anchors*² which relates to your career interest.

Please be reminded that, there is no right or wrong. These career inventories are just a short test to see how you orient your career decision. Again, your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale (Short Form)

For each statement in the “Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale” indicate how confident you are to use this information to make a career decision by circling the appropriate number.

1 = No Confidence at All

5 = Complete Confidence

1. Find information in library about occupations you are interested in	1	2	3	4	5
2. Select one career from a list of potential careers you are considering	1	2	3	4	5
3. Make a plan of your goals for the next 5 years	1	2	3	4	5
4. Determine the steps to take if your are having trouble studying for part of your chosen career	1	2	3	4	5
5. Accurately assess your abilities	1	2	3	4	5
6. Select one occupation from a list of potential occupations you are considering	1	2	3	4	5
7. Determine the steps you need to take to successfully attain your chosen career	1	2	3	4	5
8. Persistently work at your career goal even when you get frustrated	1	2	3	4	5
9. Determine what your ideal job will be	1	2	3	4	5
10. Find out the employment trends for an occupation over the next 10 years	1	2	3	4	5
11. Choose a career that will fit your preferred lifestyle	1	2	3	4	5
12. Prepare a good resume	1	2	3	4	5
13. Change careers if you did not like your first choice	1	2	3	4	5
14. Decide what you value most in an occupation	1	2	3	4	5
15. Find out about the average yearly earnings of people in an occupation	1	2	3	4	5
16. Make a career decision and then not worry about whether it was right or wrong	1	2	3	4	5
17. Change occupations if you are not satisfied with in one you enter	1	2	3	4	5
18. Figure out what you are and are not ready to sacrifice to achieve your career goals	1	2	3	4	5
19. Talk with a person already employed in the field you are interested in	1	2	3	4	5
20. Choose a career that will fit your interests	1	2	3	4	5
21. Identify employers, firms institutions relevant to your career possibilities	1	2	3	4	5
22. Define the type of lifestyle you would like to live	1	2	3	4	5
23. Find information about universities and colleges	1	2	3	4	5
24. Successfully manage the job interview process	1	2	3	4	5
25. Identify some reasonable career alternatives if you are unable to get your first choice	1	2	3	4	5

Section D: Factors associated with student's career decision making and choices

15. Please rate each of the following factors in terms of their importance for you to achieve your job satisfaction

1 = Not Important At All; 5 = Very Important

Job that is gender appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
Job that fits my age	1	2	3	4	5
Job that fits my personality, abilities, and interests	1	2	3	4	5
Job that fits my educational qualification/ experience	1	2	3	4	5
Job that provides for my financial needs	1	2	3	4	5
Job that fits my lifestyle	1	2	3	4	5
Job that is positively viewed by my family, friends and community	1	2	3	4	5
Family connections	1	2	3	4	5
Good contacts in the workforce	1	2	3	4	5
The nature of the job	1	2	3	4	5
Career incentives (eg. Salary, allowances, and working conditions)	1	2	3	4	5
Career prospects/ advancement	1	2	3	4	5
Career status	1	2	3	4	5
The availability of any type of jobs in the labour market	1	2	3	4	5
Location of organization/company	1	2	3	4	5
Organization's profile (eg. size, status, and image)	1	2	3	4	5

16. If you were to select a job in tourism and hospitality industry which of the following areas and positions would be the most likely for you to choose? Please select one of the eight areas

- Front Office
- Food and Beverage
- Housekeeping
- Marketing
- Human Resources
- Travel Businesses
- Events and Conventions
- Other (please specify)

.....

17. Do you intend to seek a career in the tourism and hospitality industry after graduation?

- Yes No

18. Your contact (This is optional)

Phone No:

E-mail:

© Thank you for your participation ©

Appendix B: The Questionnaire Survey (Thai Version)



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ข้อเสนอแนะสำหรับผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม

ขอเชิญนักศึกษาร่วมเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของงานวิจัย หัวข้อ “การศึกษาเชิงเปรียบเทียบของนักศึกษาไทยและออสเตรเลียเกี่ยวกับปัจจัยในการตัดสินใจเลือกประกอบอาชีพในอุตสาหกรรมท่องเที่ยวและการบริการ” จัดทำโดยนางสาว ศิวรรณ กวางเพ็ง นักศึกษาระดับปริญญาเอก มหาวิทยาลัยวิคตอเรีย นครเมลเบิร์น ประเทศออสเตรเลีย

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการตัดสินใจเลือกประกอบอาชีพของนักศึกษาสาขาการท่องเที่ยว และการบริการ ข้อมูลที่ได้จากนักศึกษามีความสำคัญอย่างยิ่งในการบ่งชี้ปัจจัยที่ส่งเสริมการตัดสินใจเลือกอาชีพในอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยว และการบริการ ซึ่งผลการวิจัยที่ได้ จะถูกนำมาใช้เป็นแนวทางในการพัฒนาการเรียนการสอนในหลักสูตรการท่องเที่ยว และการบริการ ที่สามารถกระตุ้นให้นักศึกษามีความสนใจที่จะประกอบอาชีพในอุตสาหกรรมนี้ เมื่อสำเร็จหลักสูตรจากมหาวิทยาลัย

การรักษาความลับของข้อมูล

ข้อมูลและผลการวิจัยจะถูกเก็บเป็นความลับและจะใช้สำหรับการวิจัยเพื่อสร้างความเข้าใจถึงการตัดสินใจเลือกอาชีพของนักศึกษาไทยและออสเตรเลียเท่านั้น เนื่องจากกรเก็บข้อมูลในงานวิจัยจะแบ่งเป็น สองส่วน คือ การใช้แบบสอบถามสำหรับนักศึกษา และ การสัมภาษณ์นักศึกษาหลังสำเร็จโปรแกรมการฝึกงาน ดังนั้นผู้วิจัยขอความร่วมมือนักศึกษานในการกรอก หมายเลขโทรศัพท์ หรือ อีเมลล์ เพื่อประโยชน์ในการจัดเก็บข้อมูลงานวิจัยต่อไป ข้อมูลที่ได้นี้จะถูกเก็บเป็นความลับอย่างยิ่ง

การเข้าร่วมงานวิจัย

การตอบแบบสอบถามของนักศึกษานี้ถือเป็นความสมัครใจ หากนักศึกษารู้สึกไม่สบายใจในการตอบคำถามข้อใด หรือ ต้องการหยุดทำแบบสอบถาม นักศึกษาสามารถทำได้ทุกเมื่อ โดยแจ้งให้ผู้วิจัยทราบ การตัดสินใจดังกล่าวจะไม่ส่งผลกระทบต่อกับนักศึกษาทั้งสิ้น ทางผู้วิจัยขอยืนยันว่าข้อมูลที่นักศึกษาคอมในแบบสอบถามนี้จะถูกเก็บเป็นความลับโดยมหาวิทยาลัยวิคตอเรียเป็นเวลา 5 ปี หากมีข้อสงสัยเกี่ยวกับงานวิจัย กรุณาติดต่อผู้วิจัย ได้ที่เบอร์โทรศัพท์ +61 3 9919 5228 หรือ อาจารย์ผู้ควบคุมงานวิจัย Dr. Susan Gillet โทร +61 3 9919 4623 และหากนักศึกษามีข้อสงสัยหรือข้อข้องใจเกี่ยวกับวิธีปฏิบัติของผู้วิจัยต่อนักศึกษา กรุณาติดต่อ The Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 โทร +61 3 9919 4710.

ส่วนที่ 1 ข้อมูลส่วนตัวของนักศึกษา

1. เพศ ชาย หญิง
2. มหาวิทยาลัย _____
3. วุฒิการศึกษาสูงสุดก่อนเข้ารับการศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยที่กำลังศึกษาอยู่นี้
 - มัธยมศึกษา
 - ปวช / ปวส ในหลักสูตรที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการท่องเที่ยวและการบริการ เช่น การจัดการการท่องเที่ยว การจัดการโรงแรม ที่พัก อาหารและเครื่องดื่ม
 - ปวช / ปวส ในหลักสูตรที่ไม่เกี่ยวข้องกับการท่องเที่ยวและการบริการ (โปรดระบุชื่อวุฒิ _____)
 - วุฒิการศึกษาอื่นๆ (โปรดระบุชื่อวุฒิ _____)
4. นักศึกษามีประสบการณ์ทำงานหรือไม่?
 - มี (โปรดตอบคำถามข้อ 5)
 - ไม่มี (โปรดข้ามไปตอบคำถามข้อ 6)
5. งานที่นักศึกษาเคยทำ หรือ กำลังทำอยู่ เป็นงานในอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวและบริการหรือไม่?
 - ใช่ ไม่ใช่
6. บิดามารดา ของนักศึกษากำลังทำงาน หรือ เคยทำงานในอุตสาหกรรมท่องเที่ยวและบริการ หรือไม่?
 - ใช่ ทั้งบิดา และ มารดา
 - ใช่ แค่ บิดา หรือ มารดา เท่านั้น
 - ไม่ ทั้งบิดา และ มารดา
7. ปัจจุบันนักศึกษามีอายุ _____ ปี

ส่วนที่ 2 ปัจจัยที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการเรียนรู้หรืออาชีพของนักศึกษา

8. อะไรคือแรงจูงใจให้นักศึกษาเลือกเรียนในหลักสูตรการท่องเที่ยวและการบริการ? โปรด X ระดับความสำคัญของปัจจัยต่อไปนี้ที่ตรงกับความคิดเห็นของนักศึกษา

1 = ไม่ค่อยสำคัญเลย 5 = เป็นปัจจัยที่สำคัญอย่างมาก

ลำดับคะแนนของคณะที่เลือกตอนสอบเข้าหรือคะแนนสะสมเฉลี่ย (GPA) ที่เหมาะสมกับตนเอง	1	2	3	4	5
ประสบการณ์ทำงานในอุตสาหกรรมท่องเที่ยวและการบริการ	1	2	3	4	5
ความสนใจส่วนตัวในอาชีพสายงานการท่องเที่ยวและบริการ	1	2	3	4	5
คำแนะนำของครอบครัว	1	2	3	4	5
คำแนะนำของเพื่อนๆ	1	2	3	4	5
คำแนะนำของคุณครูแนะแนวที่โรงเรียน	1	2	3	4	5
ชื่อเสียงของหลักสูตรนี้ที่ได้ยินจากญาติหรือศิษย์เก่า	1	2	3	4	5
ภาพลักษณ์ของอุตสาหกรรมนี้ที่ได้ยินจากสื่อต่างๆ	1	2	3	4	5
โอกาสการทำงานในอนาคต	1	2	3	4	5
พึงพอใจกับสภาพแวดล้อมของการทำงานในอุตสาหกรรมนี้	1	2	3	4	5
ลักษณะงาน หรือ ผลตอบแทน เช่น ชั่วโมงการทำงาน เงินเดือน สวัสดิการ หรือ การทำงานที่เกี่ยวข้องกับผู้อื่น เป็นต้น	1	2	3	4	5
อัตรา หรือ จำนวนตำแหน่งงานในอุตสาหกรรม	1	2	3	4	5

9. สิ่งที่นักศึกษาได้เรียนรู้ในหลักสูตรตั้งแต่ชั้นปีที่ หนึ่ง จนถึงปัจจุบันได้เปลี่ยนความคิดหรือความรู้สึกของนักศึกษาที่มีต่ออุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวและการบริการไปจากเดิมก่อนที่จะเข้าเรียนในหลักสูตรนี้หรือไม่?

เปลี่ยนไปจากเดิม ไม่เปลี่ยนไปจากเดิม

10. ข้อต่อไปนี้คือปัจจัยที่ส่งเสริมการเรียนรู้ของนักศึกษา โปรด X ระดับความสำคัญของปัจจัยต่อไปนี้ที่ตรงกับความคิดเห็นของนักศึกษา

1 = ไม่มีส่วนส่งเสริมการเรียนรู้เลย 5 = ส่งเสริมการเรียนรู้เป็นอย่างดี

ผลการศึกษาสะสมตลอดหลักสูตรที่ผ่านมา	1	2	3	4	5
ความถี่ที่กินในอาชีพ	1	2	3	4	5
ครอบครัว	1	2	3	4	5
เพื่อนๆ	1	2	3	4	5
อาจารย์ผู้สอน	1	2	3	4	5
เนื้อหาของแต่ละรายวิชา/ โครงสร้างรายวิชาในหลักสูตร	1	2	3	4	5
การจัดสภาพแวดล้อม และ กิจกรรมการเรียนการสอน	1	2	3	4	5
การสนับสนุนสิ่งแวดล้อมทางการศึกษาของมหาวิทยาลัย เช่น อุปกรณ์การเรียนการสอน เจ้าหน้าที่ อาคาร สถานที่	1	2	3	4	5
โอกาสการทำงานในอนาคต	1	2	3	4	5
ประสบการณ์การทำงานในอุตสาหกรรมท่องเที่ยวและบริการ	1	2	3	4	5

11. ผลการเรียนที่ผ่านมา นักศึกษามีจำนวนของเกรดใดต่อไปนี้มากที่สุด โปรดวงกลมตัวเลือก

- เอ
 บี
 ซี

12. โปรดเลือกหนึ่งในตัวเลือกต่อไปนี้

- ฉันได้แจ้งความประสงค์ที่จะไปฝึกงานในภาคการศึกษาหน้ากับทางคณะแล้ว (กรุณาข้ามไปตอบคำถามในส่วนที่ 3)
 ฉันได้เสร็จสิ้นการฝึกงานแล้ว (กรุณาตอบคำถามที่ 13 และ 14)

13. นักศึกษาเข้ารับกรฝึกงาน ในหน้าที่ แทนก และ หน่วยงานใด?

หน้าที่.....
แทนก.....
หน่วยงาน.....

14. นักศึกษารู้สึกอย่างไรกับประสบการณ์และการเรียนรู้ที่ได้รับจากการฝึกงานที่ผ่านมา

- พึงพอใจกับการฝึกงานที่ผ่านมา
 รู้สึกเฉยๆ กับกรฝึกงานที่ผ่านมา
 ไม่พึงพอใจกับการฝึกงานที่ผ่านมาเลย

ส่วนที่ 3 ข้อมูลพื้นฐานทางอาชีพของนักศึกษา

ในส่วนี้ประกอบด้วยแบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับพื้นฐานทางอาชีพของ นักศึกษา ซึ่งมี 2 ชุด คือ

1. แบบสอบถามพฤติกรรมการตัดสินใจเลือกอาชีพ
2. แบบสอบถามเพื่อค้นหาอาชีพที่เหมาะสม

แบบสอบถามทั้ง 2 ชุดนี้เป็นแบบสอบถามเพื่อศึกษาพฤติกรรมการตัดสินใจเลือกอาชีพของนักศึกษา ไม่มีคำตอบที่ถูกต้องหรือผิด แต่ขอให้นักศึกษา

เลือกคำตอบให้ตรงกับพฤติกรรม หรือ ความรู้สึก ของตนเองให้มากที่สุด คำตอบในแบบสอบถามของนักศึกษาจะถูกเก็บเป็นความลับ และใช้เพื่องานวิจัยเท่านั้น

แบบสอบถามพฤติกรรมการตัดสินใจเลือกอาชีพ (Career Decision-Making Scale -Short Form)

ข้อความต่อไปนี้ เป็นข้อความที่ใช้วัดพฤติกรรมการตัดสินใจเลือกอาชีพของนักศึกษา

โปรด X ตัวเลขที่นักศึกษามั่นใจว่าตรงกับพฤติกรรม หรือ ความคิดเห็นของนักศึกษามากที่สุด

1 = ไม่ใช่พฤติกรรมของตนเองเลย

5 = ตรงกับพฤติกรรมของตนเองที่สุด

1. ฉันทำการค้นคว้าเกี่ยวกับงานหรืออาชีพที่สนใจในห้องสมุด	1	2	3	4	5
2. ฉันรวบรวมข้อมูลต่างๆ เกี่ยวกับอาชีพที่สนใจ ก่อนการตัดสินใจว่าจะเลือกทำอาชีพอะไร	1	2	3	4	5
3. ฉันได้มีการวางแผน และ กำหนดเป้าหมายสำหรับระยะ 5 ปีข้างหน้า	1	2	3	4	5
4. ฉันมีแผนที่ชัดเจนแล้วว่า ฉันจะต้องทำอะไรบ้างเพื่อรวบรวมข้อมูลต่างๆ เกี่ยวกับอาชีพที่สนใจ	1	2	3	4	5
5. ฉันสามารถประเมินความสามารถของตนเองอย่างถูกต้อง	1	2	3	4	5
6. ฉันสามารถทำข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับตำแหน่งงานที่สนใจไว้หลายตำแหน่งก่อนการตัดสินใจว่าจะเลือกทำงานตำแหน่งอะไร	1	2	3	4	5
7. ฉันมีแผนที่ชัดเจนแล้วว่าต้องทำอะไรบ้างเพื่อให้ได้ทำงานตามที่มุ่งหวังเอาไว้	1	2	3	4	5
8. แม้ฉันจะรู้สึกเครียดกับงานแต่ก็จะพยายามทำงานให้บรรลุเป้าหมายที่ได้ตั้งเอาไว้	1	2	3	4	5
9. ฉันรู้ชัดเจนแน่นอนแล้วว่างานที่อยากจะทำคืออะไร	1	2	3	4	5
10. ฉันค้นหาว่าอีก 10 ปีข้างหน้าแนวโน้มของจำนวนจ้างงาน หรือ ตำแหน่งงาน ที่ฉันสนใจอยู่นั้นจะเป็นอย่างไร	1	2	3	4	5
11. ฉันจะเลือกอาชีพที่เข้ากับวิถีชีวิตที่ฉันชอบ	1	2	3	4	5
12. ฉันเตรียมประวัติและเอกสารสมัครงานได้เป็นอย่างดี	1	2	3	4	5
13. ถ้าฉันไม่ชอบงานในสายอาชีพที่กำลังทำอยู่ ฉันก็จะลาออกเพื่อไปเริ่มต้นทำงานในสายอาชีพใหม่	1	2	3	4	5
14. ฉันรู้ว่าคุณค่าของงาน หรือ อาชีพ ที่ฉันสนใจนั้น คืออะไร	1	2	3	4	5
15. ฉันค้นหาข้อมูลว่าคนที่ทำงานในสายอาชีพที่ฉันสนใจนั้น มีรายได้เท่าไรต่อปี	1	2	3	4	5
16. เมื่อได้ตัดสินใจแล้วว่าเลือกทำอาชีพอะไร ฉันก็จะไม่วิตกกังวลว่าสิ่งที่ตัดสินใจไปแล้วนั้น ถูก หรือ ผิด	1	2	3	4	5
17. ฉันจะเปลี่ยนงานถ้ารู้สึกไม่พึงพอใจกับงานที่ทำอยู่	1	2	3	4	5
18. ฉันสามารถบอกตัวเองได้ว่า ฉันพร้อมที่จะทุ่มเทได้มากน้อยแค่ไหน เพื่อให้บรรลุเป้าหมายในอาชีพของฉัน	1	2	3	4	5
19. หาข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับงานที่ฉันสนใจจากการที่ได้พูดคุยกับคนที่ทำงานในสายงานนั้น	1	2	3	4	5
20. ฉันจะเลือกอาชีพที่ฉันสนใจจริงๆ	1	2	3	4	5
21. ฉันรู้ว่าแหล่งงานของฉันเกี่ยวข้องกับองค์กร หรือ บริษัท ลักษณะใด และฉันจะค้นหาองค์กร หรือ บริษัทเหล่านั้นได้ที่ไหน	1	2	3	4	5
22. ฉัน สามารถบอกได้ว่าวิถีดำเนินชีวิตอย่างไรที่ฉันชอบ	1	2	3	4	5
23. ฉันได้ทำการค้นคว้าหาข้อมูลและ รายละเอียดเกี่ยวกับมหาวิทยาลัยแห่งนี้ก่อนเข้าศึกษาต่อ	1	2	3	4	5
24. ฉันเชื่อมั่นว่าสามารถเตรียมตัวเพื่อให้ผ่านการสัมภาษณ์งานได้	1	2	3	4	5
25. ฉันได้วางแผนแล้วว่า ถ้าฉันไม่ได้ทำงานที่ฉันอยากทำมากที่สุด ฉันจะหางานอะไรทำต่อไป เป็นตัวเลือกที่ สอง สาม สี่ ร้องลงมา	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C: Students' Work-placement Information

Table 6.1 Students' work places

Type of Tourism and Hospitality Operations	Thai Arts Students		Thai Business Students		Australian Business Students		Total	
	(n=206)	(%)	(n=113)	(%)	(n=70)	(%)	(n=389)	(%)
1. Hotel	93	45.1	45	39.8	41	58.6	179	46.0
2. Resort	82	39.8	33	29.2	0	0.0	115	29.6
3. Travel agent or tour operator	12	5.8	13	11.5	5	7.1	30	7.7
4. Airport/Airline office	6	2.9	11	9.7	1	1.4	18	4.6
5. Event or Convention operator or organiser	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	12.9	9	2.3
6. Hotel or Resort and spa	1	0.5	6	5.3	1	1.4	8	2.1
7. Foodservice operation	2	1.0	2	1.8	1	1.4	5	1.3
8. Club and entertainment operations	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	4.3	3	0.8
9. Government or state tourism office or information centre	1	0.5	0	0.0	1	1.4	2	0.5
10. Service apartment	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.9	2	0.5
11. Organisation unrelated tourism and hospitality operations	1	0.5	0	0.0	4	5.7	5	1.3

*13 questionnaires unanswered (3.3%)

Table 6.2 Students' job position during work-placement program

Job positions	Thai Arts Students		Thai Business Students		Australian Business Students		Total	
	(n=206)	(%)	(n=113)	(%)	(n=70)	(%)	(n=389)	(%)
1. Waiter/ Waitress	62	30.1	29	25.7	21	30.0	112	28.8
2. Kitchen hand / Cook	51	24.8	9	8.0	0	0.0	60	15.6
4. Administrative staff	21	10.2	10	8.8	3	4.3	34	8.9
5. Front Office staff	7	3.4	6	5.3	10	14.3	23	6.0
6. Guest relation staff	9	4.4	8	7.1	6	8.6	23	6.0
7. Tour operators or coordinators	8	3.9	4	3.5	3	4.3	15	3.9
8. Reservation	5	2.4	4	3.5	5	7.1	14	3.6
9. Ground service staff	2	1.0	6	5.3	0	0.0	8	2.1
10. Event coordinator	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	10.0	7	1.8
11. Restaurant hostess	3	1.5	2	1.8	2	2.9	7	1.8
12. Sale and ticketing staff	0	0.0	4	3.5	3	4.3	7	1.8
13. Cleaning and Linen Staff	0	0.0	6	5.3	0	0.0	6	1.6
14. Bar attendant	1	0.5	3	2.7	1	1.4	5	1.3
15. Recreation staff	1	0.5	4	3.5	0	0.0	5	1.3
16. Banquet staff	1	0.5	1	0.9	2	2.9	4	1.0
17. General assistance staff	0	0.0	4	3.5	0	0.0	4	1.0
18. Bakery staff	0	0.0	2	1.8	0	0.0	2	0.5
19. Florist staff	0	0.0	2	1.8	0	0.0	2	0.5
20. Inventory staff	0	0.0	2	1.8	0	0.0	2	0.5
21. Front office manager	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.4	1	0.3
22. Online marketing officer	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.4	1	0.3
23. Restaurants manger	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.4	1	0.3
24. Sale manager	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.4	1	0.3

*4 questionnaires unanswered (1%)

Table 6.3 Students' work-placement satisfaction

Work-placement Satisfaction	Thai Arts Students		Thai Business Students		Australian Business Students		Total	
	(n=206)	(%)	(n=113)	(%)	(n=70)	(%)	(n=389)	(%)
Satisfied	193	93.7	89	78.8	57	81.4	339	87.1
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7	3.4	20	17.7	9	12.9	36	9.3
Dissatisfied	3	1.5	3	2.7	3	4.3	9	2.3

*5 questionnaires unanswered (1.3%)

Table 6.4 Students' career profiles

Profiles	Thai Arts Students		Thai Business Students		Australian Business Students		Total	
Level of Academic performance	(n=400)	(%)	(n=223)	(%)	(n=195)	(%)	(n=818)	(%)
Pass (50-59%)	2	0.5	9	4.0	14	7.2	25	3.1
Credit (60-69%)	152	38	67	30.0	73	37.4	292	35.7
Distinction (70-79%)	212	53	122	54.7	91	46.7	425	52.0
High Distinction (80% up)	7	1.8	19	8.5	12	6.2	38	4.6
*38 questionnaires unanswered (4.6%)								
Work experiences	(n=400)	(%)	(n=223)	(%)	(n=195)	(%)	(n=818)	(%)
Work experience related tourism and hospitality industry	168	42.0	124	55.6	162	83.1	454	55.5
Work experiences unrelated tourism and hospitality industry	28	7.0	29	13.0	13	6.7	70	8.6
No work experience at all	195	48.8	63	28.3	19	9.7	277	33.9
*17 questionnaires unanswered (2.1%)								
Students' perception on the industry	(n=400)	(%)	(n=223)	(%)	(n=195)	(%)	(n=818)	(%)
changed from what had previously expected	292	73.0	158	70.9	150	76.9	600	73.3
unchanged from what had previously expected	98	24.5	62	27.8	44	22.6	204	24.9
*12 questionnaires unanswered (1.5%)								
Job interest in the industry	(n=400)	(%)	(n=223)	(%)	(n=195)	(%)	(n=818)	(%)
Food and Beverage	154	38.5	46	20.6	26	13.3	226	27.6
Travel Business	74	18.5	62	27.8	28	14.4	164	20.0
Front Office	68	17.0	31	13.9	40	20.5	139	17.0
Event and Conventions	5	1.3	14	6.3	45	23.1	64	7.8
Human Resource	25	6.3	9	4.0	22	11.3	56	6.8
Marketing	12	3.0	11	4.9	24	12.3	47	5.7
Housekeeping	20	5.0	3	1.3	1	0.5	24	2.9
Others	22	5.5	42	18.8	7	3.6	71	8.7
*27 questionnaires unanswered (3.3%)								
Career decision in the industry	(n=400)	(%)	(n=223)	(%)	(n=195)	(%)	(n=818)	(%)
Yes	365	91.3	178	79.8	179	91.8	722	88.3
No	13	3.3	42	18.8	15	7.7	70	8.6
*26 questionnaires unanswered (3.2%)								

Appendix D: Questions for the Semi Structured In-depth Interview (English Version)



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
School of Hospitality, Tourism and Marketing
Faculty of Business and Law

My name is Siriwan Ghuangpeng and I would like you to take part in my research that seeks to identify factors, which influence career learning and decision-making of Thai and Australian tourism and hospitality students.

Your participation in a semi structured in-depth interview will provide useful information to understand how tourism and hospitality students make decision about their career.

Your views will be sought on:

- The impact of a work-placement on students' interest in a career in tourism and hospitality industry after graduation.
- The identification of factors that influence students' career decision-making in the tourism and hospitality industry.

The information given by you will be treated as strictly confidential. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the research study at anytime, or refuse to participate with no penalty. Just inform the researcher that you wish to stop or are feeling uncomfortable with the questions. All information will be kept confidential and retained by Victoria University for five years. Any queries concerning the research project, please contact me on Tel: 61 3 9919 5228 or my supervisor: Dr. Susan Gillet ph. 61 3 9919 4623). If you have any queries of complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 ph. 61 3 9919 4710



Questions for the Semi Structured In-depth Interview

University: _____

Name of Respondent: _____ Gender: M / F

Date: _____ Time (start) _____ (finish) _____

1. What were the reasons for you to choose a tourism and hospitality course?
2. Has what you have learned during the course changed your previous perception of the tourism and hospitality industry?
3. Where did you undertake your work-placement, what was your job was and what was your work experience like?
4. How important was work-placement experience to you?
5. Which one of the following describes your work-placement experience: Satisfied/ Dissatisfied/ or Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied and please provide explanation for it?
6. Do you have an ideal job or career and what is it?
7. If you were looking for a job in the tourism and hospitality industry, would you seek a position that was similar to the one undertaken as part of the work-placement program? and Why?
8. What are three most important factors for you when selecting a job and why?
9. Do you intend to work in the industry after graduation? and Why?

Appendix E: Questions for the Semi Structured In-depth Interview (Thai Version)



มหาวิทยาลัยวิกตอเรีย
ภาควิชา การบริการ การท่องเที่ยว และ การตลาด
คณะ ธุรกิจ และ กฎหมาย

ข้อเสนอแนะสำหรับให้สัมภาษณ์

ขอเชิญนักเรียนร่วมเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของงานวิจัยหัวข้อ“การศึกษาเชิงเปรียบเทียบของ นักศึกษาไทยและออสเตรเลียเกี่ยวกับปัจจัยในการตัดสินใจเลือกประกอบอาชีพในอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวและบริการ” จัดทำโดย นางสาว ศิริวรรณ กวงเพ็ง นักศึกษาปริญญาเอก มหาวิทยาลัยวิกตอเรีย นครเมลเบิร์น ประเทศออสเตรเลีย

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการตัดสินใจเลือกประกอบอาชีพของนักศึกษาสาขาการท่องเที่ยวและบริการ การสัมภาษณ์ครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อค้นหาปัจจัยต่างๆที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการตัดสินใจเลือกประกอบอาชีพของนักศึกษาสาขาการท่องเที่ยวและบริการ โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งผลกระทบของภารกิจงาน ต่อการตัดสินใจเลือกประกอบอาชีพในอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวและบริการ หลังจากที่นักศึกษาสำเร็จจากหลักสูตรนี้ไป

การสัมภาษณ์นักศึกษาครั้งนี้ถือเป็นความสมัครใจ หากนักศึกษารู้สึกไม่สบายใจในการตอบบางคำถามข้อใด หรือ ต้องการหยุดทำแบบสอบถามนักศึกษาสามารถทำได้ทุกเมื่อ โปรดแจ้งให้ผู้วิจัยทราบ โดยการตัดสินใจดังกล่าวจะไม่มีผลกระทบต่อนักศึกษาทั้งสิ้น ทางผู้วิจัยขอยืนยันว่าข้อมูลและผลการวิจัยจะถูกเก็บเป็นความลับ และจะใช้สำหรับการวิจัยเพื่อสร้างความเข้าใจถึงการตัดสินใจเลือกอาชีพของนักศึกษาไทยและออสเตรเลียเท่านั้น

หากมีข้อสงสัยเกี่ยวกับงานวิจัย กรุณาติดต่อผู้วิจัยได้ที่เบอร์โทรศัพท์ +61 3 9919 5228 หรือ อาจารย์ผู้ควบคุมงานวิจัย Dr. Susan Gillet โทร +61 3 9919 4623 หากนักศึกษามีข้อสงสัยหรือข้อร้องเรียนเกี่ยวกับวิธีปฏิบัติของผู้วิจัยต่อนักศึกษา กรุณาติดต่อ The Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 โทร +61 3 9919 4710.

คำถามในการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก

มหาวิทยาลัย.....

ชื่อผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ เพศ ชาย / หญิง.

วันที่สัมภาษณ์ เวลาเริ่มสัมภาษณ์..... เวลาสิ้นสุด

1. เหตุผลใดที่ทำให้นักศึกษาตัดสินใจเลือกเรียนสาขาการท่องเที่ยว และ โรงแรม
2. สิ่งที่นักศึกษาได้เรียนรู้ในหลักสูตรตั้งแต่ชั้นปีที่ หนึ่ง จนถึงปัจจุบัน ได้เปลี่ยนความคิดหรือความรู้สึกของนักศึกษาที่มีต่ออุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวและการบริการ ไปจากเดิมก่อนที่จะเข้าเรียนในหลักสูตรนี้ หรือไม่ และ อย่างไร
3. นักศึกษาศึกษาการทำงานที่ไหน และมีตำแหน่งและหน้าที่อะไรบ้าง
4. นักศึกษาคิดว่าประสบการณ์ และการเรียนรู้ที่ได้รับจากการศึกษาที่ผ่านมา มีความสำคัญต่อนักศึกษาอย่างไร
5. นักศึกษารู้สึกอย่างไรกับประสบการณ์และการเรียนรู้ที่ได้รับจากการศึกษาที่ผ่านมา ฟังพอใจ / ไม่พอใจ / ไม่ฟังพอใจ เพราะเหตุใด
6. ขณะนี้นักศึกษาฝึกงาน หรือ อาชีพที่อยากทำหลังจากสำเร็จการศึกษาหรือไม่ และ ถ้ามีคืองาน หรือ อาชีพ อะไร
7. ถ้านักศึกษามีความประสงค์ที่จะสมัครงานในอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวและบริการ นักศึกษาจะมีความสนใจที่จะทำงานในตำแหน่งและตำแหน่งเดียว หรือ ใกล้เคียง กับงานที่นักศึกษาทำในช่วงศึกษาหรือไม่? เพราะเหตุใด?
8. นักศึกษาคำนี้ถึงสิ่งใดเป็นสำคัญในการเลือกงาน หรือ อาชีพ? โปรดระบุมา 3 ข้อ
9. ในตอนนี้ นักศึกษาคิดว่าต้องการทำงานในอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวและบริการ หลังจากจบการศึกษาแล้ว หรือไม่? งานอะไร และ เพราะเหตุใด?