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# Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jhlste](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jhlste)

## Critical Perspectives

# Hospitality and tourism management students' study and career preferences: Comparison of three Asian regional groups

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## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 26 April 2014

Received in revised form

3 April 2016

Accepted 20 May 2016

### Keywords:

Education

Motivation

Career

Job

## ABSTRACT

This study is involved with five objectives: understanding hospitality and tourism management (HTM) students' preferences, their characteristics for future HTM career, their motivations for choosing HTM as a major, their reasons for choosing or not choosing whether to work in the hospitality and tourism industry, and the important factors that they consider when making career decisions. The responses of HTM students living in three Asian countries where HTM programs are popular were compared. Taiwanese students exhibited the highest level of motivation to study HTM and the lowest level of willingness to work in a low position at the starting of their career among the three regional groups. In contrast, Hong Kong students indicated the lowest motivation to study HTM and the most negative responses regarding welfare or working conditions in the hospitality and tourism fields as reasons for not choosing to work in the industry. Korean students showed the highest expectation of international working opportunities and a flexible organization culture, and the highest level of willingness to work in a high position at their starting career point. All of the student groups indicated the importance of practical learning or interest in employment over scholastic pursuits or intellectual interest. The results of this study are useful for HTM education stakeholders, including potential students, HTM school staff and the HT industry.

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## 1. Introduction

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2013a), the growth rate in international tourism demand is in line with its long-term outlook for tourism in 2030, with an average growth of 3.8% per year. In particular, countries in the Asia-Pacific region are expected to record the highest growth rates (UNWTO, 2013b). According to the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (ICHRIE), 127 institutions in the United States offer a hospitality baccalaureate and graduate degrees (not including certificates and diplomas). Among them, many major state universities have grown to offer large hospitality programs, some admitting more than 1000 students. Such growth indicates intense competition among hospitality programs for better quality and increased student enrollment (Lee, Olds, &

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Lee, 2010). This rapid growth should result in prosperous HTM programs capable of keeping pace with increased demand. Although the significant role of HTM education has been highlighted, research into the motivation behind actual HTM students' decisions to pursue HTM studies – at home and abroad – or to plan for a career in an HTM field is limited (Jung, Kim, & Schuckert, 2014; Kim, Guo, Wang, & Agrusa, 2007; Lu & Adler, 2009; Richardson, 2008).

The development of the HT industry has also stimulated demand for hospitality and tourism management (HTM) education and the establishment of related educational institutions. For example, in 1972, there were only 20 institutions in the UK offering HTM courses, by 2009 the number had risen to 117 (Walmsley, 2012). This growth has been particularly evident in the East Asia region. In China, the first college issuing an HTM diploma was established shortly after the “open-door policy” came into effect in 1978 and a degree program followed in 1982. Statistics show that there has been rapid growth over the past thirty years: by 2011, 1115 colleges and universities were offering HTM programs to 599,800 students (CNTA, 2012 as cited in Li & Li, 2013). In 1995, there were five 4-year colleges providing 2921 students with HTM programs in Taiwan. By 2013, 237 departments at 95 Taiwanese schools (4-year colleges and the Institute of Technology) were offering 91,889 students HTM programs (Taiwan Ministry of Education, 1997, 2013). Taiwan had only one graduate school that provided an HTM graduate program to 34 students in 1995; by 2013 a total of 68 departments were offering 3659 students an MA program and 3 departments were offering 27 students sports-, leisure-, travel-, or hospitality-related p.h. D. programs (Taiwan Ministry of Education, 1997, 2013).

There are two four-year colleges in Hong Kong with HTM programs. As of 2013, the number of undergraduate students was approximately 2000, the number of master's students about 200 and the number of doctoral students about 50. In Korea, 35 departments of 4-year colleges offered 7971 students HTM programs in 1995, whereas 80 departments offered 13,573 students HTM programs in 2013. Following the widespread popularity of HTM at the undergraduate level, graduate programs have exhibited a similar increase. In 1995, there were only 3 graduate schools providing 54 p.h. D. students with HTM doctoral programs, while in 2013, 32 departments offered 616 students HTM master's programs and 13 departments offered about 350 students doctoral programs (Korean Educational Development Institute, 2013).

Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea are very well known for the passion for higher education among students, parents, and governments (Shanny, 2013; Sharma, 2013). Higher education institutions and graduate colleges in universities continue to face increasing competition from around the world (Brown & Mazzarol, 2009; Crosling & Heagney, 2009). Universities and graduate colleges that have an HTM graduate school also are facing an increasingly challenging and competitive environment (Lee, Yuan, Hwang, & Kim, 2012). In addition, they have experienced explosive HT industry growth and a resultant increase in HTM program enrollment. Despite the popularity of HTM studies in Asian countries, research comparing Asian student groups is very limited. International students' choice to study in another country is affected by individual demand, current national educational situations, and other student-attracting circumstances (Han & Yoon, 2015; Horng & Teng, 2006; Jung et al., 2014). Hong Kong in particular has observed a rapid increase in the number of exchange students, college students, and postgraduate students from nearby Asian countries. There is thus a need to compare their preferences and wants.

Relatively few HTM education studies have explored students' preferences for majoring programs (Cothran & Combrink, 1999; Kim et al., 2007; Ma, Kim, & Lee, 2007; O'Mahony, McWilliams, & Whitelaw, 2001) and factors influencing preference for a career in the HT industry (Airey & Forntisitit, 1997; Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge, & Ogden, 2007; Cothran & Combrink, 1999; Jenkins, 2001; King, Mc Kercher, & Waryszak, 2003; Lu & Adler, 2009; Nores, 2010; O'Mahony et al., 2001; Richardson, 2008; Ros et al., 1999; Singaravelu, White, & Bringaze, 2005).

Most studies have analyzed the HTM educational issues of only one national educational system (e.g., Horng, Lee et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2010; Lo, 2006; Myung & Li, 2015). They have not incorporated diverse HTM education agendas because they only reported one nation's educational circumstances. In addition, previous studies used small samples. They avoided more practical problems faced by Asian students, such as studying abroad. Since most studies were undertaken in non-Asian countries, it is interesting to focus on Asian circumstances. Recent efforts to explore cross-national differences have been very limited. Since education is an institutional system in every country, the HTM educational system and educational culture can be different (Annaraud, 2006; Hobson, 1999; Hu, Chen, & Lin, 2006; Ineson, Rhodeb, Nita, & Alexieva, 2011). Currently, in a time when Asian HTM students study abroad in foreign countries such as the U. K., the U. S., Switzerland, Australia, and New Zealand (Jung et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2007), countries that want to recruit more Asian HTM students need to understand the characteristics and preferences of Asian students.

In response to the weaknesses of previous studies that made efforts to identify the characteristics of one national student group, this study attempted to assess cross-regional or cross-national differences by comparing the student cohorts of three regions in East Asia. This study's method involved surveys, rather than small-scale interviews, so as to include different responses from a large student population that is diverse in terms of educational level, geographical region, and major subject. To avoid sampling bias, this study collected completed surveys from 404 respondents attending six Korean colleges, 553 from respondents attending five Taiwanese colleges, and 338 from respondents attending two Hong Kong colleges.

This study has five objectives. The first is to identify students' preferences for HTM studies and characteristics through a series of chi-square analyses. The second is to understand the characteristics of students' plans for future HTM careers through a series of chi-square analyses. The third is to explore students' motivations for choosing HTM as a major and to assess students' reasons for choosing to work in the HT industry. The fourth is to evaluate students' reasons for not choosing to work in the HT industry and to analyze the important factors in making a career decision. The fifth is to compare the results of the three regional groups. Even though these three groups live in the same East Asian region, a comparison of the

three national student cohorts is assumed on the basis of difference in national or regional educational infrastructure or structure, employment conditions, and the cultural value of HTM education and preferred occupations in the relevant field. Conglomerate companies are interested in recruiting both local and global students in order to create success in regard to localization and globalization. The outcomes of this study are expected to help HTM human resources teams that wish to understand the cross-national differences of HTM students.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Preference for HTM study

The literature review was designed to identify objectives 1 and 5. Learning motivation and the expectancy-value model are theories relevant to preference in regard to HTM study. According to learning motivation theory, learning motivation can be divided into intrinsic learning motivation orientation and extrinsic learning motivation orientation (Harlen, 2012). Intrinsic orientation includes efforts to extend challenging lessons or to learn new lessons, while extrinsic orientation includes the need to pass a test, receive a good evaluation, show off to others, compete with colleagues, and possess a good reputation. For example, as Cheng, Lin, and Su (2011) indicated, students were more often motivated intrinsically to become certified, but there may also be extrinsic motivation involved past the point of simply enjoying an exercise (intrinsic motivation). Earning a certification involves significant amount of extrinsic motivation because certifications have “instrumental value” (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Learning motivation is also related to the expectancy-value model regarding achievement motivation, which indicates expectancy of performance or success and compares work value, including the cost of the effort, time, and opportunities involved.

Preference for a major or area of study is explained by self-determination theory (SDT), which also explains various sources of humans' motivations for learning. The motivations are influenced by multiple factors, such as extrinsic rewards, the environment, maintaining a good relationship with others, individual tendencies, individual competency, the institutionalized education system involved, competition, influence of others, and life goals (Liu, Wang, & Ryan, 2016). Therefore, preference for an HTM major is also associated with a diversity of influential factors. In particular, which major to pursue in college is one of the most significant decisions that young people face (Smitina, 2010). Understanding the motivations behind their choices is important because their choices at this point in time affect their future job choices, earnings, and opportunities to pursue advanced degrees (Arcidiacono, Hotz, & Kang, 2012; Dickson, 2010). Likewise, understanding their motivations sheds light on how students' choices influence the labor market and the perpetuation of the educational industry (Nores, 2010). Only a few studies have focused on understanding the study preferences of students who major in HTM programs (Cothran & Combrink, 1999; Kim et al., 2007; Ma et al., 2007; O'Mahony et al., 2001).

Previous studies have viewed differences in perceptions of HTM education recipients cross-nationally or cross-culturally. First, studies explored within a Western context are as follows. O'Mahony et al. (2001) found that students' decision to pursue an HTM major is based on the reputations of HTM schools and the availability of specialist courses. Their study found that, in choosing an HTM degree program, the importance of practical aspects such as internship availability and opportunities to put theory into practice were considered. Furthermore, students' preferences in choosing HTM programs are rooted in obtaining a chance to learn vocational skills and gather academic knowledge (Cothran & Combrink, 1999).

Second, most studies attempting to identify preference for HTM have been explored within the context of Asia. Ma et al. (2007) compared motivations regarding choosing HTM between mainland Chinese students and Hong Kong students. Interestingly, compared to Hong Kong students, students in China are motivated to choose HTM programs because they cannot meet college entrance test score requirements. Similarly, students who received lower scores in college entrance exams in China tend to choose an HTM program (Zhao, 1991). However, because the HT industry in China has recently surfaced as an important sector in the country's economy, obtaining an HTM degree has become recognized as an entry point into a reputable career (Ma et al., 2007).

Studies analyzing motivations to study abroad were undertaken in Asian countries (Jung, Kim, & Wang, 2011; Kim et al., 2007; Ma et al., 2007). The findings of these studies have shown a consensus that Asian students' most important motivation in studying HTM abroad is an interest in a foreign country or language, followed by better facilities and increased job opportunities. The least important motivations are an interest in studying (such as a desire to study hard in general) and the prospect of accepting a faculty position in the future. These motivations of Asian students are different from those that Western HTM students in the USA or U.K. experience. However, Hobson (1999) study compared HTM curricula among the U.S., the U.K., and Australia, and concluded that HTM programs in these three countries started from different background but their idiosyncrasy has become narrow, due to globalization. Therefore, the demands of studying abroad can be diminished, especially among countries in which the same language is spoken. In a similar vein, Hu et al. (2006) study reported similarities in curriculum design and the degree offering systems between Taiwan and the USA because Taiwanese culinary education follows that of the USA.

In summary, students' motivations for choosing HTM as a college major include individual factors (e.g., scholastic motivation and personal ability), external environmental factors (e.g., the development of a certain industry and the national economy), interest in apparently luxurious working environments, opportunities to engage with foreign cultures, and ease of study. These motivational factors seem to be different according to students' nationalities, especially between Asian and

Western countries. For example, Asian students' motivations revealed the desire to study abroad and learn foreign cultures and languages more frequently than Western students' motivations. Different cultural backgrounds and education systems will lead to different motivations regarding students choosing HTM as a college major. However, individual factors were found to be most important, regardless of students' nationality.

## 2.2. Preference for an HTM career

Preference for a career is related to implementing objectives 2, 3 and 4 of this study, while differences in preference for an HTM career among three regional groups are relevant to testing objective 5. It is pertinent to the theory of performance competence. Since the hospitality industry considers foreign tourists to be customers, this relation can be explained by cross-cultural competency (Sucker & Cheung, 2015). For example, hotels want to recruit people with cross-cultural communication skills so they are able to interact with foreign tourists from diverse cultural backgrounds (Thomas & Inkson, 2004). Therefore, HTM students need to be equipped with cultural attitudes that influence the way in which they understand global manners and lifestyles from different cultural backgrounds.

The influential factors regarding the choice of a career in the HTM field can also be different according to industrial situations or cultural distinctiveness (e.g., Airey & Frontitis, 1997; Annaraud, 2006; Cothran & Combrink, 1999; Jenkins, 2001; Kim et al., 2007; King et al., 2003; Lu & Adler, 2009; Ma et al., 2007). For example, Airey and Frontitis (1997) found that Greek students have a more positive attitude toward HT industry employment than U.K. students. This result is typically attributed to the fact that Greek students have more exposure to the HT industry than their U.K. counterparts. In the same vein, Annaraud (2006) study found a gap in assessing the importance of skills required for hospitality workers between U.S. and Russian hospitality students, faculty, and industrial people. In spite of diverse findings, Russian respondents more lowly evaluated the importance of required skills than American respondents, except for in regard to international communication, problem-solving, and computer usage.

Within the context of Asia, Lu and Adler (2009) study identified the way in which Chinese undergraduate students exhibit a strong interest in the hotel sector (54.4%), travel agencies (22.7%), conventions/events (11.3%), tourist attractions (5.8%), food and beverage (F&B) (3.2%), and tourism education (2.6%). Furthermore, Kim et al. (2007) compared the preferred job sectors of HTM undergraduate students from three Asian regions, including mainland China, Taiwan, and Korea. In their cross-regional study, the hotel and restaurant management sectors were most preferred by Taiwanese and Korean students, while the tourism management and hotel sectors were preferred by mainland Chinese students. Similarly, Ma et al. (2007) observed that students in Hong Kong and mainland China demonstrated similarities in terms of a preference for the education and hotel sectors in regard to choosing their careers. However, these results also revealed dissimilarity, in that Hong Kong undergraduate students listed the airline industry as one of their least preferred sectors, whereas mainland Chinese students showed a high preference for careers in the airline industry.

Second, the choice of a career in the HTM field is affected by individual motivational factors (Barron et al., 2007; Brown, Arendt, & Bosselman, 2014; Lu & Adler, 2009; Richardson, 2008; Ros et al., 1999). The factors motivating career choice have been associated with psychological values, including intrinsic, extrinsic, social, and prestige related pursuits (Barron et al., 2007; Chen et al., 2009). Intrinsic pursuits typically refer to students' interests, preferences, motivations, and talents, whereas extrinsic pursuits highlight salary, promotions, and job security expectations. Social pursuits refer to the importance placed on working with other people and contributing to society, while prestige pursuits indicate the importance of having a prestigious and respected occupation. Richardson (2008) indicated that the level of enjoyment taken in one's job, teamwork with colleagues, and a pleasant working environment are the three most important factors considered by students in choosing a career. Consequently, young students often believe that working in HTM fields such as hotels, cruise lines, and airlines will provide satisfactory working environments.

Third, preference for an HTM career is attributed to the recommendation of others (Cothran & Combrink, 1999; Nores, 2010; O'Mahony et al., 2001; Singaravelu et al., 2005; Wong & Liu, 2010). In Singaravelu et al. (2005) study, which considered cross-cultural differences, the influence of family was weaker for U.S. students than it was for Asian and non-Asian international students. This finding is similar to that of Wong and Liu (2010) study, which found that Asian students tend to be influenced by parental support, but this finding is also different from other studies (Cothran & Combrink, 1999; Nores, 2010; O'Mahony et al., 2001; O'Mahony et al., 2001), in that friends or reference groups are influential in choosing future careers.

The fourth influential factor is the presence of social trends that characterize the traits of "Generation Y", also known as the "Millennials"; that is, higher amounts of spending on leisure activities (Barron et al., 2007; Brown, Thomas, & Bosselman, 2015; Cothran & Combrink, 1999; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Richardson, 2008). Barron et al. (2007) reported that Generation Y workers perceive jobs in the HT industry as offering opportunities to meet people from different cultures and to work in luxurious environments. Brown et al. (2015) noted that Generation Y employees perceive the opportunity to work with people from all over the world as the most desirable aspect of the HT industry. Young students often choose a career in an HTM field for the pleasure of seeing their services being enjoyed with satisfaction (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000). Since these new trends are prevailing, regardless of nationality, preference for an HTM career may not be entirely determined by cross-national or cross-cultural differences.

In summary, students' decisions to pursue an HTM career are determined by various factors, including the recommendations of others, national situations, cultural distinctiveness, and social trends, as well as individual motivations.



Preference for an HTM career can be different cross-nationally as well as cross-culturally. As a result of this, since diverse factors show efficacy, it is assumed that the three regional student groups in this study will display cross-national differences between the three regional groups in regard to preferring a career in the HTM field.

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Measurement

Some of the important concepts addressed in this study include students' motivations for choosing HTM as a major, students' reasons for choosing whether to work in the HTM industry and the factors considered by HTM students in making career decisions. The instrument used to measure the motivations for choosing HTM as a major was selected from previous studies (Cothran & Combrink, 1999; Kim et al., 2007; Larson, Wu, Bailey, Borgen, & Gasser, 2010; Ma et al., 2007; Nores, 2010; O'Mahony et al., 2001; Pappu, 2004). The items included in this study represent interest in the working environment, prospect of this field, practical fields, academic pursuits, foreign cultures and expectation of monetary pursuits.

The items that elicited the respondents' reasons for choosing whether to work in the HTM industry were extracted from reviewing of various literature which was studied in different countries or educational levels (Barron et al., 2007; Jenkins, 2001; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Neuman, Pizam, & Reichel, 1980; Nores, 2010; O'Mahony et al., 2001; Richardson, 2008; Singaravelu et al., 2005; Walmsley, 2012). Items indicating reasons for choosing whether to work in the HTM industry included three factors: The first indicates personal ability and personality such as personal interest, challenge, willingness to serve others, whereas the second mentions working environment of hospitality and tourism industry such as competition, mature industry. The third factor is related to characteristics of job including salary, working condition, application of school to the field.

The items measuring the important factors considered by HTM students in making career decisions were similar to those measuring the factors considered when choosing whether to work in the HTM industry. The former are associated with the job market, job benefits and personal interests. Thus, the career decision-making items were composed based on the results of the literature review (Airey & Forntisitit, 1997; Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Littlejohn & Watson, 2004; Lu & Adler, 2009; Neuman et al., 1980; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005; Richardson, 2008). Some of the items were very similar to those of previous instruments, while others were distinct in that they reflected the contemporary characteristics sought by Generation Y, such as more leisure time, flexible working hours and non-hierarchical decision-making systems. In addition, some of the measurement items related to hospitality or international travel industry characteristics, which provide employees with more opportunities to meet foreign tourists or working partners and experience foreign culture.

The items pertaining to students choosing HTM as a major or choosing to study HTM abroad included the person who influenced the selection of HTM as a major, intention to study abroad for a graduate degree and preferred country in which to study abroad. The items that measured work fields or careers included preferred field of work, intention to work in the HTM industry, starting position, future position, size of preferred employer and the presence of a person influencing future career selection.

In this study, we compared three regional student cohorts and conducted a pilot test to investigate whether differences existed in the responses of the pilot test respondents according to different educational systems or social environments. An initial questionnaire, which was developed based on the literature, was tested using 10 students from the 3 regional groups. The responses were recorded using five-point Likert scale items and some open-ended questions. Compared with the other two groups, students in Taiwan emphasized monetary pursuits in their motivations for choosing HTM as a major. As a result, one item that directly indicated salary remuneration was added to the final questionnaire. In addition, two items were added to reinforce the internationalization construct. The final questionnaire was decided based on the amendments to the pilot-tested questionnaire. All of the items were measured by categorical variables or a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = "strongly disagree", 3 = "neutral" and 5 = "strongly agree".

#### 3.2. Data collection

One of the objectives of this study is to compare three regional undergraduate student datasets. Thus, data collection was independently conducted by teaching faculty members in the three regional areas from September 2012 to May 2013. Data collection for the Hong Kong students was conducted at the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) and the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). These colleges offer HTM programs in Hong Kong, making them appropriate data collection sites. Around 260 questionnaires were distributed to students majoring in HTM at PolyU, and 120 questionnaires were distributed to program participants at CUHK. More samples were allocated to the former college because it is bigger than the latter in terms of number of undergraduate enrollments. The survey was conducted after an explanation of its objectives was provided. Two hundred forty-six questionnaires were collected from PolyU with a response rate of 94.6% and 113 questionnaires were gathered from CUHK with a response rate of 94.2%. Eleven questionnaires were excluded because they contained insincere answers.

To collect data from Korean HTM undergraduate students, 4-year colleges offering a HTM programs in South Korea were divided into three categories according to their programs' reputation levels. Two colleges were selected in each category.

The two colleges with the largest HTM undergraduate program in Seoul were selected for the high reputation category. For the middle reputation category, two colleges were chosen, one located in Gyeonggi province in the outskirts of Seoul and the other located in Daejeon City. Two colleges were then chosen for the low reputation category (located in Gyeonggi and South Jalla provinces). All of the colleges selected for data collection offered three or more HTM majors in hotel, tourism and restaurant management. Seventy-five questionnaires were allocated to each college. The survey was administered 10 min before each class was completed by the subject lecturers. Among the 450 questionnaires distributed, 432 were returned, resulting in a response rate of 96%. After ruling out 26 questionnaires with multiple missing values and insincere answers, 406 questionnaires were used in the analysis.

A similar data collection method was employed in Taiwan. First, the Taiwanese colleges that offer an HTM program were categorized into three groups according to program reputation level. One college in Taipei City and one in Kaohsiung City were selected for the high reputation category. One college in Taipei City was chosen for the middle reputation category and one college in Taipei City and another in Hsinchu City were selected for the low reputation category. Two hundred questionnaires were distributed to the two HTM programs in the high reputation category, 159 were distributed to the HTM program in the middle reputation category and 194 were distributed among the two HTM programs in the low reputation category.

The questionnaires were delivered to each student by the subject lecturers in each class. Among the 600 questionnaires distributed, 572 were returned, yielding a response rate of 95.3%. After the removal of 19 questionnaires with incomplete or insincere responses, 553 questionnaires were deemed useable for data analysis. The high response rate for the surveys in the three regional groups was attributed to the in-class collection of the questionnaires, which was conducted by lecturers. Moreover, the questions were all specifically associated with the students' interests and concerns.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Respondent profiles

Of the 1297 respondents, 31.3% were Korean, 42.6% were Taiwanese and 26.1% were Hong Kong students. Around 72.1% were female and 27.9% were male. Approximately 28.0% were freshmen, 29.1% were sophomores, 31.3% were juniors and 11.6% were seniors. Concerning age, 57.0% were between 20 and 22 years old, 27.1% were between 17 and 19, 14.4% were between 23 and 25 and 1.5% were over 25. The comparison of age percentages among the three regional student cohorts showed similarities. First, there were more female than male respondents. Second, the three groups showed similar year-level distributions. However, the Hong Kong respondents were slightly older than those in the other two groups. The demographic profiles of the respondents are reported in [Table 1](#).

### 4.2. Preference for HTM study and characteristics

[Table 2](#) presents the descriptive results regarding the students' preferred field of work after graduation, people who influenced their selection of HTM as a major, intention to study abroad for a graduate degree and preferred country for

**Table 1.**  
Demographic profile.

Gender	Total(n =1,295)	Korea(n =404)	Taiwan(n =553)	Hong Kong(n =338)
	%	%	%	%
Male	27.9	39.1	24.4	20.1
Female	72.1	60.9	75.6	79.9
School year	Total(n =1,295)	Korea(n =404)	Taiwan(n =553)	Hong Kong (n = 338)
	%	%	%	%
First	28.0	23.3	30.6	29.6
Second	29.1	30.0	25.9	33.4
Third	31.3	35.4	24.8	37.0
Fourth	11.6	11.4	18.8	–
Age	Total(n =1,293)	Korea(n =403)	Taiwan(n =552)	Hong Kong (n = 338)
	%	%	%	%
17–19	27.1	22.6	44.2	4.4
20–22	57.0	50.6	53.1	71
23–25	14.4	22.8	2.4	24
Over 25	1.5	4	0.4	0.6

**Table 2.**  
Preference for HTM study and characteristics.

Preferred field of work after graduation in HTM major	Total	Korea	Taiwan	Hong Kong
	(n = 1288)	(n = 398)	(n = 552)	(n = 338)
Education	2.6%	1.0%	2.2%	5.3%
Airline industry	15.5%	18.8%	9.8%	21.0%
Lodging industry	22.5%	14.3%	37.5%	7.7%
Travel agency	8.9%	13.1%	6.0%	8.9%
Restaurant management	13.7%	6.5%	25.4%	3.0%
Theme park management	3.1%	1.3%	1.6%	7.7%
Event management	7.7%	3.8%	1.6%	22.2%
Convention management	6.1%	8.8%	3.4%	7.4%
Casino	3.4%	5.0%	2.7%	2.7%
Tourism development	10.0%	12.6%	7.1%	11.8%
Civil servant for tourism-related public agency	5.1%	10.8%	2.7%	2.4%
Others	1.2%	4.0%	0%	0%
		$\chi^2 (22) = 501.0, p = 0.000$		
Most influential person in selecting HTM as a major	Total	Korea	Taiwan	Hong Kong
	(n = 1289)	(n = 398)	(n = 553)	(n = 338)
Self	71.7%	78.6%	66.0%	72.8%
Parents	14.4%	8.8%	21.2%	10.1%
Friends	5.4%	2.0%	5.4%	9.2%
Relatives	1.3%	1.0%	0.5%	3.0%
Teachers or professors	4.0%	6.3%	2.5%	3.6%
Acquaintance who is majoring in this field	2.2%	1.8%	3.4%	0.9%
Others	1.0%	1.5%	0.9%	0.6%
		$\chi^2 (12) = 79.8, p = 0.000$		
Intention to study abroad for a graduate degree	Total	Korea	Taiwan	Hong Kong
	(n = 1288)	(n = 398)	(n = 552)	(n = 338)
Yes	28.4%	31.7%	33.7%	16.0%
No	71.6%	68.3%	66.3%	84.0%
		$\chi^2 (2) = 35.3, p = 0.000$		
Preferred country for overseas study	Total	Korea	Taiwan	Hong Kong
	(n = 366)	(n = 126)	(n = 186)	(n = 54)
USA	27.9%	50.8%	16.1%	14.8%
Switzerland	16.7%	4.8%	22.0%	25.9%
France	13.1%	7.1%	20.4%	1.9%
Japan	10.9%	6.3%	16.7%	1.9%
UK	9.0%	9.5%	7.5%	13.0%
Australia	7.7%	4.0%	7.0%	18.5%
Others	15.2%	17.4%	10.2%	24.1%
		$\chi^2 (12) = 99.8, p = 0.000$		

overseas study. This examination was designed to achieve objective 1. Of the 1288 students who participated in this survey, 22.5% preferred to work in the “lodging industry” after graduation, followed by the “airline industry” (15.5%), “restaurant management” (13.7) and “tourism development” (10.0%). The “airline industry” was the most preferred field of work of the Korean students (18.8%), followed by the “lodging industry” (14.3%) and “travel agency” (13.1%). The “lodging industry” (37.5%) and “restaurant management” (25.4%) were the top two preferred fields of work of Taiwanese students. Hong Kong students chose “event management” (22.2%) as their most preferred field of work after graduation.

**Table 3.**  
Characteristics of future career planning.

Plan to work in HTM industry	Total	Korea	Taiwan	Hong Kong
	(n = 1262)	(n = 406)	(n = 553)	(n = 303)
Yes	75.9	75.6	83.9	58.7
No	24.1	24.4	16.1	41.3
$\chi^2(2)=72.0, p=0.000$				
Starting position at the company where you want to work	Total	Korea	Taiwan	Hong Kong
	(n = 1228)	(n = 405)	(n = 520)	(n = 303)
Front line	64.9	27.2	90.6	59.4
Supervisory	17.7	28.1	6.4	28.4
Management	14.4	37.0	1.7	11.9
Others	3.0	7.7	1.4	0.3
$\chi^2(6)=512.1, p=0.000$				
Position that you expect to reach within five years of graduation	Total	Korea	Taiwan	Hong Kong
	(n = 1226)	(n = 405)	(n = 518)	(n = 303)
Front line	4.2	9.1	2.9	0.3
Supervisory	47.3	36.5	56.4	41.9
Management	45.5	49.6	37.6	57.4
Others	3.0	4.7	3.2	0.3
$\chi^2(6)=91.8, p=0.000$				
Size of preferred company where you want to work	Total	Korea	Taiwan	Hong Kong
	(n = 1218)	(n = 405)	(n = 510)	(n = 303)
Large international corporation (10,000 employees worldwide)	26.5	31.1	17.1	40.9
Enterprise with some international relations (around 1,000 employees)	52.0	54.3	54.8	42.9
Medium-sized enterprise (around 100 employees)	16.4	13.3	19.1	14.5
Small enterprise (around 30–50 employees)	4.0	1.0	7.3	1.0
Micro enterprise (less than 10 employees)	1.0	0.2	1.7	0.7
$\chi^2(8)=100.0, p=0.000$				
Most influential person in choosing a future career	Total	Korea	Taiwan	Hong Kong
	(n = 1225)	(n = 405)	(n = 513)	(n = 303)
Self	71.1	83	69.1	59.4
Parents	12.9	7.7	18.2	8.3
Friends	7.8	1.5	9.2	13.2
Relatives	2.0	1.2	0.8	5.9
Teachers or professors	3.6	4.0	1.5	7.6
Others	2.6	2.7	1.3	5.7
$\chi^2(10)=150.8, p=0.000$				

The majority of the students chose “themselves” as the most influential person in selecting HTM as a major (71.7%), followed by their parents (14.4%). A similar pattern was observed among the three regional student groups. Regarding intention to study abroad for a graduate degree, 28.4% of the respondents intended to study abroad. Interestingly, while over 30% of the Korean and Taiwanese student groups indicated an intention to study abroad, only 16% of the Hong Kong student group exhibited such an intention. Concerning their preferred country for overseas study, the United States was the most preferred country (27.9%), followed by Switzerland (16.7%) and France (13.1%). Half of the Korean students chose the United States (50.8%) as the most preferred country, whereas Taiwanese (22.0%) and Hong Kong (25.9%) students listed Switzerland as the most preferred.

#### 4.3. Characteristics of future career plan

The results related to the respondents' future career plans are presented in Table 3. The analysis was to test objectives 2 and 5. When asked whether they planned to work for the HT industry, about 76% of the Korean and Taiwanese students answered affirmatively, but only 58.7% of the Hong Kong students answered affirmatively. In terms of the starting positions in the companies where the respondents intended to work, 90.6% of the Taiwanese and 59.4% of the Hong Kong students expected to begin their careers with front-line positions. Interestingly, 37.0% of the Korean respondents expected to start with management positions. In terms of which job position they expected to achieve five years after graduation, 49.6% and 57.4% of the Korean and Hong Kong respondents, respectively, expected to reach a management position, whereas 56.4% of the Taiwanese students expected to reach a supervisory position.

Regarding the size of the preferred company in which they would like to work, students from all three groups chose “enterprise with some international relations (around 1000 employees)” as the most preferred. “Large international corporation” (10,000 employees worldwide) was the second choice of both the Korean (31.1%) and Hong Kong (40.9%) student groups and “medium-sized enterprise” (around 100 employees) was the second preferred company size of the Taiwanese



**Table 4.**  
Factor analysis of motivations for choosing HTM as a major.

Dimension	Factor loading	Community	Eigenvalue (Variance %)Cronbach's $\alpha$
<b>Personal interest in and preference for working environment (Dimension 1)</b>			7.14(18.80%)0.96
I like to serve others.	0.81	0.79	
I enjoy doing customer service work.	0.78	0.80	
This field suits my aptitude.	0.72	0.75	
I have more interest in this field than other fields.	0.66	0.75	
Jobs in this field look attractive.	0.66	0.73	
I would like to study this field more.	0.63	0.75	
I would like to gain self-actualization.	0.59	0.72	
I can gain self-recognition working in the industry/field.	0.59	0.71	
I can gain self-recognition of my study.	0.54	0.67	
The industry is full of challenges.	0.54	0.76	
I can work both individually and in a team.	0.53	0.72	
Working in this field apparently looks good.	0.49	0.70	
<b>Foreign culture pursuits (Dimension 2)</b>			5.67(14.92%)0.93
I believe that I will have the opportunity to take more overseas business trips or meetings in foreign countries.	0.76	0.76	
I can make acquaintance with foreigners and friends.	0.73	0.70	
I like foreign languages.	0.73	0.70	
Compared with other fields, it is possible to come in contact with foreigners and foreign culture.	0.71	0.80	
I like to work with different nationalities of people.	0.70	0.82	
I would like to travel in my future career.	0.63	0.71	
I can learn interpersonal skills.	0.53	0.74	
<b>Practical pursuits (Dimension 3)</b>			5.49(14.43%)0.94
The labor demand of this industry is high.	0.65	0.79	
This program is related to my life experience.	0.62	0.73	
I believe that this field has a growing potential.	0.57	0.78	
I can have field trips/internships during my study.	0.56	0.74	
I believe that there is a variety of job opportunities.	0.56	0.74	
I believe that this field is practical rather than theoretical.	0.55	0.76	
I believe that the percentage of employment is high after graduation.	0.52	0.74	
<b>Ease of study (Dimension 4)</b>			3.52(9.27%)0.85
I think this program is easy to enter.	0.77	0.74	
My score for university entrance exam qualified me for this major.	0.72	0.62	
This program requires common sense.	0.58	0.78	
Compared to other fields, it is easy to study this field.	0.56	0.64	
I can afford to work on shift basis.	0.44	0.61	
<b>Scholastic pursuits (Dimension 5)</b>			2.99(7.87%)0.83
I would like to be an excellent scholar in this field.	0.83	0.81	
I would like to be a theoretical expert in this field.	0.82	0.81	
Compared with other fields, it is easier to get a professorship in this field.	0.60	0.64	
<b>Monetary pursuits (Dimension 6)</b>			2.96(7.80%)0.82
I believe that the level of salary is high in this field.	0.86	0.81	
I think this industry can offer stable salary.	0.60	0.64	
I think the working environment in the hotel is good.	0.51	0.64	
Compared with other fields, this field provides more opportunity to be promoted.	0.47	0.70	

KMO =0.97

Bartlett's test of sphericity:  $\chi^2=44,2590.17$  ( $p=0.000$ )

Cumulative variance: 73.09

Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.98$

students (19.1%). Overall, 78.5% of the respondents showed a preference for the two types of large international companies.

With respect to the person deemed most influential in choosing a future career, 71.1% of the respondents answered “self”, followed by parents (12.9%) and friends (7.8%). Interestingly, 7.7% of the Korean and 18.2% of the Taiwanese students picked parents as the second most influential people, whereas 13.2% of the Hong Kong students chose friends as the second most influential person.

#### 4.4. Factor analysis of motivations for choosing HTM as a major

A principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to examine the underlying domains of students' motivations for choosing HTM as a major. Initially, 42 motivational items were factor analyzed; however, 3 were later ruled out due to low communality and reliability. Thirty-eight items related to the motivation for choosing HTM as a major produced six domains with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 (Table 4). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.97. The factor analysis was a useful validation of the factor model. Bartlett's test of sphericity, which evaluates all factors collectively and separately against the hypothesis without factors, was  $\chi^2=44259.17$  ( $p=0.000$ ). The results indicated that a factor structure was formulated. The factor loadings for the 39 items ranged from 0.44 to 0.86, and the reliability alpha values for all six domains ranged from 0.82 to 0.96. These factors explained 73.09% of the variance, and included: (1) “personal interest and preferences for working environment” (18.80%), (2) “foreign culture pursuit” (14.92%), (3) “practical pursuit” (14.43%), (4) “ease of study” (9.27%), (5) “scholastic pursuit” (7.87%) and (6) “monetary pursuits” (7.80%).

#### 4.5. Factor analysis of the reasons for choosing to work in the HT industry

A factor analysis using varimax rotation was performed to identify the domains of the underlying reasons for choosing to work in the HT industry. Fifteen items were factor analyzed in the initial stage of the factor analysis, which was conducted after an item with low communality and reliability was eliminated. The results of the factor analysis using 14 items yielded two domains with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.91, which confirmed that it was a useful validation of the factor model. Bartlett's test of sphericity returned a  $\chi^2$  value of 6406.98 ( $p=0.000$ ), indicating that one or more factors existed. The factor loadings on the 14 items indicated a range of 0.50–0.82. The reliability alpha values for the two domains were 0.87 and 0.84, respectively. The two domains explained 55.10% of the variance and included: (1) “personal interest and opportunity” (0.87%) and (2) “beneficial job environment” (0.84%). The results are presented in Table 5.

#### 4.6. Factor analysis of the reasons for choosing not to work in the HT industry

A factor analysis using varimax rotation was conducted to identify the domains of the underlying reasons for choosing not to work in the HT industry. The results are shown in Table 6. The analysis used 13 items, which generated 3 domains. The KMO measure with a sampling adequacy of 0.88 indicated that it was a useful validation of the factor model. Bartlett's

**Table 5.**  
Factor analysis of the reasons for choosing to work in the HT industry.

Dimension	Factor loading	Communality	Eigenvalue (Variance %) Cronbach's $\alpha$
<b>Personal interests and opportunities (Dimension 1)</b>			4.24(30.30%)0.87
More opportunities to meet and communicate with different people	0.77	0.62	
Personal interests	0.77	0.59	
Full of challenges	0.71	0.60	
Your personality	0.68	0.47	
More opportunities for overall quality enhancement	0.66	0.60	
Willingness to serve people	0.66	0.47	
Apply the knowledge learned in HTM	0.65	0.45	
More opportunity for employment and career development	0.55	0.45	
<b>Beneficial job environment (Dimension 2)</b>			3.47(24.80%)0.84
Stable jobs	0.82	0.69	
Good salary	0.80	0.65	
Good working environment	0.77	0.67	
Flexible working environment (e.g., easy schedule)	0.70	0.50	
Mature industry	0.56	0.48	
Variety of jobs	0.50	0.48	

KMO = 0.91

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity:  $\chi^2=64,060.98$  ( $p=0.000$ )

Cumulative variance: 55.10

Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.90$

**Table 6.**

Factor analysis of the reasons for not choosing to work in the HT industry.

Dimension	Factor loading	Communality	Eigenvalue (Variance %)Cronbach's $\alpha$
<b>Influence of job environment (Dimension 1)</b>			3.19(24.52%)0.81
Slow promotion	0.82	0.71	
Less flexible working hours	0.78	0.64	
Need to start with lower position	0.75	0.60	
Low salary	0.60	0.53	
High work pressure	0.60	0.44	
<b>Poor job opportunities in market (Dimension 2)</b>			2.89(22.20%)0.82
Immature industry	0.78	0.65	
Fewer job opportunities	0.75	0.58	
No challenge	0.67	0.53	
Unstable job conditions	0.65	0.50	
Low development prospects	0.56	0.60	
Disrespected by others	0.46	0.45	
<b>Low personal interest (Dimension 3)</b>			1.79(13.75%)0.78
No personal interest	0.87	0.80	
Unsuitable personality	0.85	0.79	

KMO = 0.88

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity:  $\chi^2=20,150.58$  ( $p=0.000$ )

Cumulative variance: 60.48

Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.88$ 

test of sphericity resulted in a  $\chi^2$  value of 2015.58 ( $p=0.000$ ), indicating the existence of a factor model. The factor loadings on the 13 items ranged from 0.46 to 0.87, whereas the reliability alpha values for the three domains ranged from 0.78 to 0.82. The factor model explained 60.48% of the variance, and included: (1) "influence of job environment" (24.52%), (2) "poor job opportunities in market" (22.20%) and (3) "low personal interest" (13.75%).

#### 4.7. Factor analysis of important factors in making career decisions

A factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to identify the underlying domains of the important factors in making career decisions. Nineteen items were analyzed and the results yielded four dimensions that showed eigenvalues greater than 1.0. The factor structure accounted for 65.0% of the variance. The reliability alphas in the four domains ranged from 0.79 to 0.90, and the factors included: (1) "job environment benefit" (22.25%), (2) "opportunity or chance for improvement" (17.56%), (3) "horizontal and flexible organization culture" (16.15%) and (4) "international experience" (0.94%). Table 7 shows the results.

#### 4.8. Validity check

Since this study use items of diverse HTM education concepts, it is important to guarantee validity that indicates the extent to which constructs are accurately measured. To assess accuracy of the measurement, there are major three types of validity including content, construct, and criterion (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). To guarantee content validity face validity was employed in this study through thorough literature review and pilot tests. To identify concurrent validity correlation analysis was conducted among constructs employed in this study. If a high level of correlation is found between similar constructs, a concern about a lack of concurrent validity can be alleviated. Results of conducting correlation analyses between six motivation domains for choosing HTM as a major and two domains regarding reason for choosing to work in the HTM industry indicated significance at the.001 level. Therefore, it was confirmed that concurrent validity was secured.

#### 4.9. Comparisons among the three student groups

To identify objectives 3, 4, and 5, one-way ANOVA tests were conducted to explore the significant differences among the three Asian student groups in terms of their motivations for choosing HTM as a major, their reasons for choosing whether to work in the HT industry and the important factors in making career decisions. When significant differences in the one-way ANOVA tests were observed, Duncan's multiple range tests were conducted to investigate their sources across the respondent subgroups. The results are reported in Table 8.

Significant differences ( $p < 0.001$ ) were found among the three groups in all six domains of motivations for choosing HTM as a major. The Hong Kong students exhibited the lowest mean scores for other domains, except the "scholastic pursuit" domain, whereas the Taiwanese students had the highest mean scores for all of the motivation domains. Regarding reasons for choosing to work in the HT industry, significant differences ( $p < 0.001$ ) were found in the "personal interest and opportunity" and "beneficial job environment" domains. The Korean students showed the lowest and the Taiwanese

**Table 7.**  
Factor analysis of important factors in making career decisions.

Dimension	Factor loading	Community	Eigenvalue (Variance %)Cronbach's $\alpha$
<b>Job environment benefits (Dimension 1)</b>			
Good salary	0.83	0.73	4.23(22.25%)0.90
Bonus and fringe benefits	0.80	0.73	
Flexible working hours	0.76	0.67	
More leisure time after work	0.72	0.59	
Job stability	0.71	0.64	
Good family policies (e.g., daycare for kids)	0.70	0.60	
<b>Opportunity or chance for improvement (Dimension 2)</b>			
Fast-track career opportunity	0.76	0.71	3.34(17.56%)0.83
Learning opportunity that can be applied later in other jobs	0.73	0.62	
Possibility for training and further education	0.72	0.67	
Job must be challenging	0.67	0.59	
Company/institution must have a good image	0.63	0.61	
Technologically advanced company/ institution	0.52	0.45	
<b>Horizontal and flexible organization culture (Dimension 3)</b>			
Good human atmosphere among employees	0.79	0.78	3.07(16.15%)0.85
Colleagues (co-workers) must be helpful and collaborative	0.75	0.73	
Acceptance of fresh ideas and suggestions	0.73	0.68	
Must be possible to make decisions and to work independently	0.57	0.48	
Open and non-bureaucratic communication	0.53	0.58	
<b>International experience (Dimension 4)</b>			
Opportunity for business travel	0.77	0.77	1.72(9.04%)0.79
International career opportunity	0.72	0.74	

KMO = 0.92

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity:  $\chi^2 = 145,220.87$  ( $p=0.000$ )

Cumulative variance: 65.00%

Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.92$

**Table 8.**  
Comparisons among the three groups of Asian students.

Motivation for choosing HTM as a major	Korea (n = 399)	Taiwan (n = 553)	Hong Kong (n = 337)	F-value	p-value
(1) Personal interest in and preference for working environment	4.90b	5.27c	3.11a	680.50***	0.000
(2) Foreign culture pursuit	5.04b	5.32c	2.93a	840.89***	0.000
(3) Practical pursuits	4.64b	5.61c	2.85a	1126.49***	0.000
(4) Ease of study	3.71b	5.31c	3.18a	760.18***	0.000
(5) Scholastic pursuits	3.28a	4.46b	3.43a	159.57***	0.000
(6) Monetary pursuits	3.77b	4.48c	3.22a	174.95***	0.000
Reason for choosing to work in the HTM industry	Korea (n = 306)	Taiwan (n = 553)	Hong Kong (n = 178)	F-value	p-value
(1) Personal interests and opportunities	5.04a	5.41b	5.08a	24.26***	0.000
(2) Beneficial job environment	4.06a	4.78b	4.77b	66.86***	0.000
Reason for choosing not to work in the HTM industry	Korea (n = 107)	Taiwan (n = 174)	Hong Kong (n = 124)	F-value	p-value
(1) Influence of job environment	4.51a	4.79a	5.08b	7.83***	0.000
(2) Poor job opportunities in market	3.73a	3.72a	4.21b	9.65***	0.000
(3) Low personal interest	3.64a	3.82a	4.24b	6.86**	0.001
Important factors in making a career decision	Korea (n = 405)	Taiwan (n = 553)	Hong Kong (n = 303)	F-value	p-value
(1) Job environment benefits	5.72c	5.57b	5.34a	12.81***	0.000
(2) Opportunity or chance for improvement	4.95a	5.41c	5.17b	43.26***	0.000
(3) Horizontal and flexible organization culture	5.86b	5.81b	5.44a	26.80***	0.000
(4) International experience	5.50b	5.39ab	5.25a	4.38	0.013

Note: a, b, and c indicate a source of significant differences ( $a < b < c$ ).

\*  $p < 0.05$ ,

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ ,

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

**Table 9.**  
Comparison by gender.

Motivations for choosing HTM as a major	Korea (n = 397)			Taiwan (n = 553)			Hong Kong (n = 338)			Total (n = 1288)		
	M(n=156)	F(n=241)	t	M(n=135)	F(n=418)	t	M(n=68)	F(n=270)	t	M(n=359)	F(n=929)	t
(1) Personal interest in and preference for working environment	4.80	4.96	-1.80	5.37	5.24	1.35	3.26	3.07	1.83	4.73	4.54	2.46*
(2) Foreign culture pursuits	4.87	5.15	-2.70**	5.33	5.31	0.23	3.03	2.90	1.16	4.70	4.57	1.59
(3) Practical pursuits	4.59	4.68	-0.91	5.70	5.58	1.28	2.87	2.85	0.24	4.68	4.55	1.49
(4) Ease of study	3.83	3.64	1.85	5.32	5.30	0.19	3.34	3.14	1.94	4.30	4.24	0.66
(5) Scholastic pursuits	3.16	3.37	-1.49	4.56	4.43	1.20	3.44	3.42	0.15	3.74	3.86	-1.48
(6) Monetary pursuits	3.74	3.80	-0.50	4.54	4.46	0.78	3.29	3.21	0.70	3.95	3.92	0.44
Reason for choosing to work in the HTM industry	Korea (n = 307)			Taiwan (n = 553)			Hong Kong (n = 178)			Total (n = 1044)		
	M(n=108)	F(n=199)	t	M(n=135)	F(n=418)	t	M(n=42)	F(n=136)	t	M(n=282)	F(n=762)	t
(1) Personal interest and opportunity	5.09	5.02	0.71	5.52	5.38	1.61	4.99	5.10	-0.92	5.27	5.24	0.67
(2) Beneficial job environment	3.98	4.11	-1.08	4.85	4.76	0.92	4.73	4.78	-0.49	4.50	4.60	-1.39
Reason for choosing not to work in the HTM industry	Korea (n = 107)			Taiwan (n = 174)			Hong Kong (n = 124)			Total (n = 409)		
	M(n=54)	F(n=53)	t	M(n=35)	F(n=139)	t	M(n=42)	F(n=82)	t	M(n=135)	F(n=274)	t
(1) Influence of job environment	4.41	4.62	-0.87	4.79	4.79	0.04	5.02	5.10	-0.49	4.71	4.85	-1.23
(2) Poor job opportunities in market	3.81	3.63	0.92	3.78	3.70	0.37	4.33	4.15	0.97	3.97	3.82	1.31
(3) Low personal interest	3.65	3.63	0.05	3.88	3.81	0.25	4.42	4.15	1.04	3.96	3.88	0.52
Important factors in making career decisions	Korea (n = 405)			Taiwan (n = 553)			Hong Kong (n = 303)			Total (n = 1260)		
	M(n=158)	F(n=247)	t	M(n=135)	F(n=418)	t	M(n=85)	F(n=218)	t	M(n=395)	F(n=972)	t
(1) Job environment benefits	5.68	5.75	-0.76	5.51	5.59	-0.73	5.34	5.34	-0.10	5.54	5.57	-0.54
(2) Opportunity or chance for improvement	5.05	4.89	2.00*	5.54	5.37	2.09*	5.32	5.11	2.63**	5.29	5.19	2.14*
(3) Horizontal and flexible organization culture	5.73	5.95	-2.60*	5.86	5.79	0.79	5.52	5.40	1.31	5.74	5.74	-0.17
(4) International experience	5.42	5.56	-1.24	5.41	5.39	0.17	5.19	5.27	-0.68	5.37	5.41	-0.60

Note:

\*  $p < 0.05$ .

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

students the highest mean scores for both domains. Regarding reasons for choosing not to work in the HT industry, the Hong Kong students had the highest and the Taiwanese and Korean students the lowest mean scores for all three domains. Concerning the important factors considered by students in making career decisions, the Hong Kong students had the lowest mean scores for all domains except for the “opportunity or chance for improvement” domain. The Korean students had the highest mean scores for all domains except for “opportunity or chance for improvement.”

#### 4.10. Comparison by gender

To assess objectives 3, 4, and 5, *t*-tests were conducted to assess significant differences between the male and female students. Significant differences were found for only one domain in choosing HTM as a major and two domains in the important factors in making career decisions (Table 9). With respect to motivations for choosing HTM as a major within the Korean group, a significant difference ( $p < 0.01$ ) was noticed for “foreign culture pursuit.” The Korean female respondents showed a higher level of motivation than their male counterparts, reporting higher mean scores for “personal interest and preference for working environment.”

Regarding the important factors considered in making career decisions within the three respondent groups, significant differences ( $p < 0.05$  or  $p < 0.01$ ) were observed between males and female respondents for the “opportunity or chance for improvement” domain, with the male respondents reporting higher mean scores than the female respondents. As Table 9 shows, the Korean female students had higher mean scores than their male counterparts in the “horizontal and flexible organization culture” domain.

#### 4.11. Comparison by school year

A series of *t*-tests were also conducted to identify the significant differences between junior and senior students. Results of this analysis are conducive to investigating objectives 3, 4, and 5. The results are presented in Table 10. In terms of motivations for choosing HTM as a major among the Korean students, the Korean juniors showed higher mean scores than the Korean seniors for “practical pursuits,” “ease of study” and “scholastic pursuits.” The Taiwanese juniors showed higher mean scores than the Taiwanese seniors for “personal interest and preference for working environment,” “scholastic pursuit” and “monetary pursuit.” No significant difference was found between the Hong Kong juniors and seniors. Overall, the juniors had higher mean scores than the seniors for “scholastic pursuits” and “monetary pursuits.”

According to the *t*-test results, significant differences ( $p < 0.001$  or  $p < 0.01$ ) were also found in the reasons for choosing to work in the HT industry. The Taiwanese juniors reported higher mean scores than the seniors for both “personal interest and opportunity” and “beneficial job environment.” However, no significant differences were found between the Hong Kong juniors and seniors.

In terms of the reasons for choosing not to work in the HT industry, “influence of job environment” and “poor job opportunities in market” produced significant differences ( $p < 0.01$  or  $p < 0.05$ ) between the juniors and seniors in the Korean, Taiwanese and total student groups. All of the seniors had higher mean scores than all of the juniors regarding the reasons for choosing not to work in the HT industry.

Concerning important factors considered by students in making career decisions, the Hong Kong juniors and seniors showed significant differences ( $p < 0.01$  or  $p < 0.05$ ) on “opportunity or chance for improvement” and “horizontal and flexible organization culture.” The Hong Kong seniors had higher mean scores than the Hong Kong juniors while the Korean seniors only had higher mean scores than the Korean juniors for “opportunity or chance for improvement.”

## 5. Discussion

Based on the findings, some important findings and implications are as follows. First, regarding the respondents' preferred fields of work after graduating with an HTM major, Korean students preferred the “airline industry”, “lodging industry”, and “travel agency”, while Taiwanese students showed the highest preference for the “lodging industry” and “restaurant management”. Hong Kong students indicated the highest preference for the “airline industry” and “event management”. These results are similar to those of previous studies (Kim et al., 2007; Ma et al., 2007), in that Taiwanese students most preferred the “lodging industry” and “restaurant management”. The findings were generated to implement to objectives 1 and 5.

To test objective 5, the results for the analysis of the preferred field of work after graduation showed that the HTM students were affected by social trends or countries' industrial structures. For example, Hong Kong has become a globalized and popular tourism destination through a rapid increase in tourism demand. Consequently, Hong Kong students showed a higher level of preference for the “airline industry” and “event management”. A reason why the Taiwanese students preferred to work in the restaurant industry, compared with the other regional groups, is rooted in the high demand for eating out in Taiwanese dining customs. These results are also similar to those of other studies that have noted how decisions about HTM careers vary according to national situations or cultural differences (Airey & Forntisitit, 1997; Annaraud, 2006; Jenkins, 2001; King et al., 2003; Lu & Adler, 2009; Neuman et al., 1980; Nores, 2010; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005).

Second, the three groups were distinctive in their desire to study abroad for a graduate degree. The Korean and



**Table 10.**  
Comparison by school year.

Motivations for choosing HTM as a major	Korea (n = 398)			Taiwan (n = 553)			Hong Kong (n = 337)			Total (n = 1288)		
	J(n=215)	S(n=183)	t	J(n=312)	S(n=241)	t	J(n=212)	S(n=125)	t	J(n=739)	S(n=549)	t
(1) Personal interest in and preference for working environment	4.94	4.84	1.10	5.39	5.11	<b>3.34**</b>	3.12	3.10	0.19	4.61	4.56	0.62
(2) Foreign culture pursuits	5.03	5.04	-0.16	5.36	5.27	1.26	2.98	2.84	1.71	4.58	4.64	-0.78
(3) Practical pursuits	4.78	4.48	<b>3.43**</b>	5.66	5.55	1.47	2.87	2.81	0.70	4.60	4.57	0.43
(4) Ease of study	3.84	3.57	<b>2.72**</b>	5.31	5.31	-0.09	3.13	3.25	-1.59	4.26	4.26	-0.05
(5) Scholastic pursuits	3.39	3.15	1.73	4.60	4.28	<b>3.55***</b>	3.39	3.50	-1.18	3.90	3.73	<b>2.48*</b>
(6) Monetary pursuits	4.07	3.41	<b>5.85***</b>	4.71	4.18	<b>6.51***</b>	3.23	3.21	0.20	4.10	3.70	<b>6.48***</b>
Reason for choosing to work in the HTM industry	Korea (n = 306)			Taiwan (n = 550)			Hong Kong (n = 178)			Total (n = 1034)		
	J(n=178)	S(n=128)	t	J(n=358)	S(n=192)	t	J(n=130)	S(n=48)	t	J(n=671)	S(n=372)	t
(1) Personal interest and opportunity	5.01	5.08	-0.75	5.48	5.29	<b>2.44*</b>	5.07	5.10	-0.35	5.27	5.19	1.61
(2) Beneficial job environment	4.24	3.82	<b>3.61***</b>	4.92	4.54	<b>4.68***</b>	4.80	4.68	1.14	4.71	4.31	<b>6.63***</b>
Reason for choosing not to work in the HTM industry	Korea (n = 107)			Taiwan (n = 176)			Hong Kong (n = 125)			Total (n = 408)		
	J(n=46)	S(n=61)	t	J(n=69)	S(n=107)	t	J(n=77)	S(n=48)	t	J(n=194)	S(n=216)	t
(1) Influence of job environment	4.18	4.76	<b>-2.43*</b>	4.51	4.97	<b>-2.67**</b>	4.98	5.24	-1.63	4.62	4.97	<b>-3.23**</b>
(2) Poor job opportunities in market	3.49	3.92	<b>-2.23*</b>	3.29	3.98	<b>-4.34**</b>	4.17	4.27	-0.56	3.69	4.03	<b>-3.26**</b>
(3) Low personal interest	3.72	3.57	0.57	3.61	3.96	-1.85	4.30	4.16	0.57	3.91	3.90	0.11
Important factors in making career decisions	Korea (n = 403)			Taiwan (n = 553)			Hong Kong (n = 303)			Total (n = 1259)		
	J(n=214)	S(n=189)	t	J(n=312)	S(n=241)	t	J(n=207)	S(n=96)	t	J(n=816)	S(n=550)	t
(1) Job environment benefits	5.78	5.66	1.46	5.53	5.63	-1.01	5.30	5.43	-1.43	5.54	5.60	-1.13
(2) Opportunity or chance for improvement	4.87	5.04	<b>-2.26*</b>	5.46	5.34	1.74	5.07	5.38	<b>-4.05**</b>	5.20	5.24	-0.90
(3) Horizontal and flexible organization culture	5.85	5.88	-0.36	5.84	5.76	1.23	5.38	5.56	<b>-2.04*</b>	5.73	5.76	-0.77
(4) International experience	5.51	5.49	0.15	5.42	5.36	0.64	5.28	5.18	0.92	5.41	5.37	0.57

Note: J indicates a group of junior students, whereas S indicates a group of senior students

\*  $p < 0.05$ .

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

Taiwanese students indicated a greater preference for studying overseas than the Hong Kong students, perhaps because Hong Kong society is already internationalized, leaving Hong Kong students less interested in studying abroad. With regard to preferences for the country in which to study abroad, the Korean students had a stronger preference for the United States than the other two student groups. The Hong Kong and Taiwanese respondents showed a greater preference for Switzerland than the Korean students. The expectation is that Taiwanese and Hong Kong students would choose Switzerland as the country in which to achieve a graduate degree. Through the results objectives 1 and 5 of this study were identified.

This result corresponds with that of other studies (Jung et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2007) that have identified Switzerland as a preferred destination for HTM study abroad among Hong Kong and Taiwanese students. Surprisingly, France was regarded as a preferred country for overseas study by the Taiwanese respondents, perhaps because it is recognized as the most appropriate country in which to learn about being a wine sommelier, baking, and French cuisine, all topics of growing interest in Taiwan due to TV dramas, TV travel channels, and movies (CampusFrance Taiwan, 2012; Yao, 2008). These trends correspond to the globalization of Western HTM education and are also supported by the performance competence model, which explains the competency needed by HTM staff. That is, since hospitality businesses accommodate tourists, staff should know foreign languages and cultures. In a similar manner, learning motivation theory indicates a need of intrinsic motivation to challenge and learn new knowledge.

Third, to identify objectives 3, 4, and 5, three groups were compared. Compared with the other groups, the Hong Kong respondents showed a higher level of intention to work in the HT industry, which is similar to the findings of previous studies that have noted existence of good job opportunities in the HT industry in Hong Kong. As the Taiwanese students revealed their intentions to start their careers in low-ranking posts, they are more likely to show a higher satisfaction level than the other two groups. In particular, the Korean students indicated great dissonance between their ideal and realistic working posts after graduation, with a high percentage of Korean students identifying higher management-level positions as their ideal. Regarding the size of their preferred employer, the Korean and Hong Kong students demonstrated greater intentions to work for larger companies than the Taiwanese students. These findings are understandable, as many international hospitality and tourism brands are based in Hong Kong and Korea, whereas the Taiwanese HT industry is only now booming thanks to an increase in the mainland Chinese tourism market.

Fourth, a greater number of Taiwanese students listed their parents as most influential in their selection of HTM as a major than in the other two groups, which is consistent with studies that have indicated the importance of recommendations made by others when making career decisions (Cothran & Combrink, 1999; Nores, 2010; O'Mahony et al., 2001; Singaravelu et al., 2005; Smitina, 2010). Thus, inviting both HTM students and their parents to job career exhibitions, corporate seminars or consultations when recruiting Taiwanese students would be effective. This Taiwanese case differs from Western countries, where a student's free will in selecting a job is considered to be of ultimate importance (Airey & Frontistis, 1997; Barron et al., 2007; Chen, Chu, & Wu, 2000; Jenkins, 2001; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Richardson, 2008). They address results of analyzing objectives 1 and 5 of this study.

Fifth, Taiwanese students had the highest and Hong Kong students the lowest mean scores for all of the HTM study motivation dimensions, consistent with previous studies (Kim et al., 2007; Ma et al., 2007), which compared the motivations of Asian HTM students. Likewise, the Taiwanese students indicated the highest mean values for personal interest, opportunities, and beneficial job environment as reasons for choosing to work in the HT industry, because job opportunities in the HT industry are gaining in popularity among high school students. This reflects the rapidly increasing number of enrollments in Taiwanese HTM programs and, thus, the need for increased human resource support in the HT industry. Based on an expectancy-value model for motivation, the education motivation of HTM students was found to be affected by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Since HTM is a practice major, HTM students showed a high score in regard to extrinsic motivation. Therefore, respondents generally expected a high level of importance on opportunity select a job after graduation. They indicate outcomes of assessing objectives 1 and 5 of this study.

Sixth, as results of an effort to understand objectives 4 and 5, the Hong Kong respondents gave the most negative responses regarding their reasons for choosing not to work in the HT industry; namely, an unstable job environment, poor job opportunities in the market, and low personal interest. As Hong Kong is an international city with many job opportunities in the HT industry, HTM students were more likely to be dissatisfied with unfavorable working environments. As a result of this, bleak working situations produced low levels of motivation to study HTM. These results correspond with those of previous studies, in which students tended to be sensitive to current issues or realities in choosing a career, such as the flexibility of the labor market, salary level, prestige of the occupation, and expected earnings (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Pulver & Kelly, 2008; Richardson, 2008; Smitina, 2010; Walmsley, 2012; You, Yamashita, & Kono, 2004).

Seventh, the Korean students demonstrated the highest mean scores for "job environment benefit", "horizontal and flexible organization culture", and "international experience" in terms of the important factors that a student considers when making career decisions. Among the three groups, the Korean students were the most particular in choosing a job because they required good work conditions and high level starting posts; that is, their expectations for the HT industry were very high, despite exhibiting low levels of motivation to work in the HT industry. Among the three cohorts, the Taiwanese students were the most easily satisfied, because they showed the highest levels of study motivation, required a low starting position, wanted to work for a relatively small organization, and exhibited less strict conditions when making career decisions. These findings are similar to those of previous studies, which discussed the work values and study motivations of Taiwanese students (Chen et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2007). The findings were expected to explore objectives 1 and 5 of this study.

Eighth, the results of the comparison between male and female students' motivations in regard to choosing HTM, their reasons for whether or not to work in the HT industry, and the important factors they consider when making career decisions showed almost no differences across the three student datasets, unlike previous studies, which have indicated differences in motivations for choosing a major according to demographic characteristics (Dickson, 2010; Larson et al., 2010; Nores, 2010; Zhao, 1991). Additionally, the findings are different from studies of goal-content theory and basic psychological need theory, which indicate the effects of learners' attitudes, psychological needs, or social relations on learning motivations. The reason is attributed to a feature of HTM as a major; that is, practicality. HTM learners demonstrate a strong desire to prepare for getting a job. They report results of exploring objectives 1 and 5 of this study.

However, Korean and Taiwanese seniors' and juniors' perceptions of their own motivations for choosing HTM as a major and their own reasons for choosing to work in the HT industry were different. The consistent results were that seniors revealed a lower level of motivation in regard to choosing HTM as a major and reasons for choosing to work in the HT industry, compared with the juniors. This suggests that, as students enter higher grades, their interest in working in the HT industry deteriorates. Compared with the Hong Kong juniors, the Hong Kong seniors tended to perceive welfare or working conditions as more important when making career decisions. These findings indicate that the Hong Kong seniors tended to place importance on more realistic and practical factors when deciding on a career. In all of the datasets, the seniors tended to be more dissatisfied with working in the HT industry than the juniors because they had begun to recognize that HT work environments have an unfavorable industry image in regard to low pay, night shifts, and non-professional workers (Jung & Yoon, 2013; Kong, Cheung, & Song, 2012; Richardson, 2008). These results are consistent with those of past studies, which have noted how students choose jobs with more realistic criteria at the time in which they advance into society (Airey & Forntisitis, 1997; Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Jenkins, 2001; Kim et al., 2007; Lu & Adler, 2009; Ma et al., 2007; O'Mahony et al., 2001; Pulver & Kelly, 2008).

## 6. Conclusions

Most HTM education studies have explored one nation's HTM educational issues, even though previous studies have implied that HTM students' motivations or career preferences will be different among different countries indicate the way in which the discrepancy will be wider in case of a cross-cultural gulf existing. Results of this study confirmed national or regional differences in HTM education raised as objectives 1-5. For example, perceptions of motivations and career preferences were distinctive among Asian HTM students. Their different perceptions can be explained by learning motivation theories and the cross-cultural competency model in the HT industry, which requires an understanding of foreign languages and cross-cultures (Sucker & Cheung, 2015).

The results of this study attract interest from various HTM education stakeholders, including potential HTM students, foreign students who wish to study in Asia, college HTM administrative staff members tasked with recruiting students and developing curricula, and HTM academic staff members who teach students and understand the characteristics of Generation Y and the HT businesses that recruit such students.

Overwhelmingly, the respondents' motivations for studying HTM as a major were based on very practical factors, such as working environment and interest in other countries and their cultures, rather than just scholastic pursuits or intellectual ability. This means that HTM students are keenly interested in acquiring practical knowledge, in addition to employment. A good college education is about more than giving a satisfactory lecture and offering acceptable study facilities; it also involves giving effective career advice to students, in order to help them contribute to society (Hsu, 2005; Littlejohn & Watson, 2004).

### 6.1. Implications

This study has a merit in that it is extended to a comparison of three regional student groups in the East Asian region, where HT industry is the fastest growing, in view of the demands of international inbound and outbound tourism. Thus, international HTM academics are greatly interested in this region's education system and end-users. Adopting the four perspectives of globalization suggested by Lechner and Boli (2003), world culture theory can be helpful in explaining the globalization of HTM education. That is, the globalization of education is a process whereby the world is considered to be a single entity, but cultures are still multiple and hybrid (Lechner & Boli, 2003; Robertson, 1992). Therefore, HTM education is a particular vehicle in each country through a successful localization process, where it can be generalized as a popular resource. Since HTM education can be regarded as an object for globalization, the results of this study are useful for foreign educational institutions that which to recruit Asian students.

The results of this study can be used for curriculum development because educational programs should be oriented toward educating students, in order to keep pace with societal demands and social trends. For example, a high percentage of the three Asian HTM student groups wanted to study abroad in the United States, Switzerland, or France. In the latter case, it is believed that the desire of these students is to learn about wine, baking, and French cuisine. Thus, educational institutions need to revamp their traditional curricula and lecturing styles by providing specialized education programs or practical lab education that reflect realistic needs. An internship program that sends students into the domestic or overseas HT industries during their college studies would also be effective (Ko, 2008).

## 6.2. Limitations and suggestion for future studies

This study has some limitations. First, this study did not identify reasons or factors influencing differences in motivations or career preferences among the three regional student groups. Thus, a future study is required to investigate influential determinants incurring these differences. Second, this study focused on comparing HTM students of three East Asian countries but did not test their differences in regard to the influence of socio-demographic variables. A future study is expected to identify whether or not the differences exist according to socio-demographic variables. Third, this study was limited to investigating a comparison of three East Asian HTM student groups. Therefore, future research is needed to investigate and interpret the learning attitudes of HTM students and their preferences for jobs, from different angles. For example, a future study is needed to apply a theory of cultural factors, such as collectivism-individualism or verticalness-horizontality (Annaraud, 2006). Fourth, since this study employed an approach involving a survey, future research is required to compare the outcomes of survey results and qualitative research based on group interviews. Last, in terms of the ratio of gender, the percentage of female respondents was, on average, 72%. However, since the percentages are consistent with gender ratios in Asian HTM education institutions, this imbalance of respondents according to gender does not lead to any concern.

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