

# Factors Influencing the Career Choice of Tourism Major Students in Southwest China

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**Abstract:** With the development of tourism in China, related study programs became a popular major in most colleges and universities to attract students to join this growing sector. Although tourism majors would consider certain advantages in the market, there were still many factors that could have influential conditions for students to consider for their career development. Three objectives were set to find the impacts between student expectation and career motivation; key influence factors of professional suitability, professional reputation, and working environment for the students' desire for career advancement; and propose the improvement of study programs to attract more talented students the industry.

**Keywords:** Career Choice; Tourism Major Students; Southwest China

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism is an important industry that brings foreign exchange to a country's economy. For this reason, many countries are working to increase their share of the tourism market. One of the most critical efforts in this regard is education. Increasing the significance of an organization's activities by having qualified personnel is an essential measure of this effort. A country can have a talented workforce due to good education. This situation provides tourism destinations with significant advantages in diversifying tourism products and competitiveness in difficult competitive conditions. Therefore, tourism education aims to provide trained personnel to work in the industry, instill awareness and understanding of tourism, provide management experience in the educational process, and help develop tourism specialists to build various skills and knowledge. We need to adapt to change and modernization. In this sense, tourism practitioners are of great significance to the tourism industry and require a solid educational foundation. Although a qualified workforce is essential to the tourism industry, people tend not to work in the relevant sectors of the industry (accommodation, transport, food, and beverage) due to the poor personal rights of workers in the industry.

## 2. Theoretical Basis

### 2.1 Studies on personal suitability career expectation

Chu (2021)<sup>[1]</sup> pointed out that personal suitability affects career motivation, while habits, self-efficacy, and competence perception can affect individual suitability. (1) Habits "consist of physical tendencies and cognitive templates" associated with career decision-making and development. Essentially, habits allow for demonstrating "correct" and "appropriate" behaviors and practices according to the domain's roles and rules, without the need for conscious adaptation. (2) Self-efficacy - self-efficacy may be an essential antecedent for career choice. (3) Competence awareness - regarding the definition of competency, whether competency should be considered an outcome or performance criterion.

### 2.2 Studies on the professional reputation and career expectation

Bartz: & Brink. (2017)<sup>[2]</sup> pointed out that the teaching method of curriculum setting and teaching environment will affect the professional reputation and affect the professional motivation of students. The quality of education in tourism is an essential factor influencing the choice of courses for hotel students.

### 2.3 Studies on work environment career expectations

Bolino: et al. (2014)<sup>[3]</sup> believed that the working environment would impact the employment of college students. Especially after the novel coronavirus, the global tourism industry is sluggish, which will create pessimism for students about jobs in the tourism industry.

## 3. Understanding the Factors Influencing the Career Choice of Tourism Major Students in Southwest China

### 3.1 Social Cognitive Career Theory

Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent: et al. 2008)<sup>[4]</sup> was considered in this study as a relevant theory for understanding the factors that influence students' career choices. SCCT emphasizes cognitive-person structures, such as self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals.

### 3.2 Tourism overview

Tourism practitioners are defined as "professionals who frequently interpret the cultural and natural heritage and travel professional

groups (and sometimes individuals) to visit places or places such as natural sites, historic buildings, sites and landscapes” (Li, 2021)<sup>[5]</sup>.

### **3.3 Overview of career expectations**

Researchers studying the transition from adolescence to adulthood have explored young people’s expectations for future careers. Still, many have focused on whether people believe age norms exist for educational and career transitions.

### **3.4 The theory of planned behavior (TPA)**

According to Du, the theory of planned behavior suggests that people are more likely to perform certain behaviors when they feel they can complete them. (2021)<sup>[6]</sup> study. The performer of the film theme could have their strong belief in a good performance that will connect to the audience’s acceptance who focus on enjoying travel based on the performance and word-of-mouth in the context.

## **4. The Conceptual Framework for the Research Study**

First There is a positive linear relationship between students’ career expectations and their motivation to pursue careers after graduation. In this case, students increased professional expectations make them more motivated in their future jobs. Georgiou also obtained findings supporting these results. According to reports, tourism practitioner students have a positive attitude towards their careers and are motivated to continue after graduation. There is a strong correlation between professional expectations identified within the scope of the study. The career expectation most closely related to a student’s career motivation is reputation, and another career expectation closely related to career motivation is whether the career is right for them.

Second Arguably, many factors determine the expectations of students in their education as tourism practitioners. It is essential to set expectations, not only for students of tourism practitioners but for all students. This allows for early detection of whether students are happy or unhappy in their future careers. Countries that take precautions based on these expectations can increase productivity through a more productive workforce. According to the results of this study, the career expectations of tourism practitioner students include aspects such as career reputation, personal fitness, and working conditions. Students have essential expectations of social respect for the profession of tourism practitioners.

## **5. The Countermeasures for the Factors Influencing the Career Choice of Tourism Major Students in Southwest China**

### **5.1 Career choice**

The selection of a particular path or vocation in terms of career. This usually influences parental guidance, vocational counseling, and training opportunities. It is also affected by personal preference and identification with figures and role models.

### **5.2 Personal suitability career expectation**

A suitability statement, or personal statement, is used to depict the reasons you believe yourself to be a suitable candidate for a job role.

### **5.3 Professional reputation and career expectations**

Professionalism is the conduct, behavior, and attitude in a work or business environment. A person doesn’t have to work in a specific profession to demonstrate the essential qualities and characteristics. Professionalism leads to workplace success, a solid professional reputation, and a high work ethic and excellence.

## **6. Conclusion**

Schools can help students with career planning. Most colleges and universities offer career planning courses, but most of these courses do not assist students in making career planning. Many students are still confused and do not have a clear direction when they graduate. Career planning courses should be offered according to different majors and different grades, and the focus of career planning for each step is different. Tourism enterprise managers can also be hired to introduce tourism jobs in detail and inspire students to make career plans by inviting outstanding alumni to come back for experience sharing, etc., which will be helpful for students’ career planning.

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