

**TOURISM AS A GRADUATE CAREER IN MALAYSIA:  
STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS**

by

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the perceptions of tourism as a graduate career from the view of key stakeholders of tourism – the government, industry, educators and students. It aims to understand what key tourism stakeholders in Malaysia do in promoting tourism as a graduate career, and how students perceive tourism as a career option. The literature suggests that the issue of perceptions of tourism as a career be investigated from the perspective of key stakeholders. Hence, a stakeholder-inclusive approach in tourism human resource development is suggested as a measure to address the skilled labour shortage in tourism and the needs of various stakeholders. An analytical framework has been developed in this thesis to illustrate the relationships and gaps amongst stakeholders and how they view tourism as a graduate career in Malaysia.

A total of 11 semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior officials from relevant Ministries, industry bodies, a major employer, and directors of tourism management programs at two public universities and two polytechnics in Malaysia. In addition to that, a questionnaire survey was conducted with 193 final year students of tourism management programs at the same tertiary institutions. The qualitative data was coded into prominent themes while the quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS.

This thesis found that the shortage of skilled labour is one of the issues faced by the stakeholders, due to the industry offering low level positions. The government believes that current policies in promoting tourism careers to students were adequate but the industry and educators feel that government does not provide adequate information about career paths in tourism for students. This thesis also discovered that students have generally positive perceptions of tourism as a career. Variables like level of education, willingness to choose a tourism program and overseas travel experience are significant, while the size of the employer, work experience in tourism, and the roles of family and friends working in tourism do not have an influence on students' career-related decisions. All stakeholders play a role in promoting tourism as a career to students but some measures have also been suggested to promote it more effectively.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This thesis explores how key tourism stakeholders in Malaysia perceive tourism as a graduate career. It will focus on how tourism is being promoted by the government, industry and educators and how students perceive it as a career option prior to graduation. The findings of this thesis will provide understanding of the effectiveness of current policies and measures promoting careers in tourism in Malaysia, relationships between stakeholders and perceptions of tourism as a graduate career. This thesis will also make recommendations to the stakeholders on ways to promote tourism careers more effectively.

This chapter will set the conceptual and research context by looking at global tourism, followed by an overview of Malaysia and the significance of its tourism industry. This chapter will also set the scene for human resources development in Malaysia by focusing on the tourism sector which will also lead to the main thrust of the study: the perceptions of the stakeholders - namely the government, industry, educators and students - towards tourism as a graduate career. The objectives and the key research questions will also be discussed. This chapter will conclude by outlining the structure of this thesis.

### **1.2 Research Background**

The growth of the global tourism industry is immense, with international arrivals growing by 51% percent over the last ten years, from 594 million in 1997 to an estimated 898 million in 2007 (UNWTO, 2008). In terms of tourism expenditure, a total of US\$733 billion was spent in 2006, marking an increase of US\$372 billion since 1996 (UNWTO, 2008). Based on this performance, it is forecasted that the world tourism arrivals will

continue to increase in the coming years and reach 1.6 billion tourists by the year 2020 (UNWTO, 2007).

In line with the overwhelming pace of tourism growth, tourism and hospitality have become an important source of employment for many countries, making it one of the key employers in the global economy (Baum, 2006). Employment in the world's tourism and hospitality industry in 2007 is estimated at 8.3% of total world employment, with 231 million jobs, or one in every 12 jobs worldwide (WTTC, 2007). These figures clearly indicate that the role of tourism and hospitality as a job provider is significant. With more countries, especially those at the developing stage, giving priority towards making tourism an important income generator (Liu, 2002), tourism will need a larger supply of labour. The emergence of new, exotic destinations plus changing consumer behaviour, in particular, tourists who demand more personalized service (WTTC, 2002a) also necessitate an adequate supply of skilled workers for the industry.

Tourism depends largely on human interaction (Baum, 1993). Tourism is a service-orientated industry where humans play a central role in delivering a product that will influence the overall experience of tourists. 'Moment of truths' or the contact between employees in the tourism industry with consumers (Carlzon, 1987) will determine the extent to which the service fails, meets or exceeds the expectations of tourists. Hence, the overall quality of products or experiences in tourism is influenced by competent staff, both at the front line and 'behind the scenes' (Go, Monachello, & Baum, 1996). It is therefore suggested that with such crucial roles played by the workforce, tourism employees will determine the survival of tourism industry (Amoah & Baum, 1997). This notion is supported by Swarbrooke (1995) that in the very nature of tourism business

operations, human resources often constitute the biggest portion of the budget. As such, the tourism workforce deserves attention in tourism planning and management.

It is forecast that by 2017, there will be a total of 262.6 million jobs in the tourism industry (WTTC, 2007) thus increasing the need for more workers. However, there seems to be an increasing imbalance between the global demand for and supply of tourism workers due to a lack of response from the labour market, particularly the school leavers and university graduates (Choy, 1995). Attracting people to choose tourism as a career has become a challenging task considering the negative image given to the industry. There is a common notion of tourism and hospitality being an unprofessional sector, offering low pay and few benefits, very little training and career prospects, and unsociable working hours which have collectively formed a negative image of tourism as a career (WTTC, 2002a). As a consequence, the tourism industry today faces greater challenges in attracting skilled and motivated staff than other sectors in the economy (Kelley-Patterson & George, 2001). Negative perceptions of tourism as a career have become a global phenomenon and without immediate and strategic effort, shortages of skilled workers will continue to be the one of the most crucial issues facing the tourism and hospitality industry in the near future (WTTC, 2002a).

Hence this thesis will examine stakeholders' perceptions of tourism as a graduate career. Malaysia has been chosen as the case for this thesis as it is a developing country that has put emphasis on tourism as one of the key sectors in its economy (Ministry of Tourism, 2008b). However, the country struggles in finding an adequate supply of skilled labour to correspond with the growth of the industry (Ministry of Tourism, 2002; WTTC, 2002b). This thesis will involve key stakeholders that directly affect, or are affected by, the

demand for and supply of skilled tourism employees, namely the government, industry, educators and students. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods will be used to examine the situation. To establish a better understanding of the perceptions of tourism as a career in Malaysia, a two phase approach is employed:

- i) Interviews with senior officials of the relevant government agencies, representatives of industry bodies, Tourism Malaysia and educators associated with tourism management programs at tertiary institutions of tourism.
- ii) A questionnaire survey with students in tourism management programs seeking different levels of qualifications (university and polytechnic students).

The thesis will use a framework to explain the relationships amongst stakeholders which will assist in forming a closer collaboration between stakeholders in making tourism an attractive career option for the graduates of tertiary institutions.

### **1.3 Research Context**

As discussed earlier, this thesis is concerned with perceptions of tourism as a graduate career by key stakeholders in Malaysia. Hence it is important to contextualize the research and note the significance of tourism employment in the Malaysian economy. The examination of the current situation will also be discussed to establish the extent to which the problem of labour shortages exists in the tourism industry.

#### **1.3.1 The Case Study Site: Malaysia**

Malaysia is 329,758 square kilometres in size and can be divided into two main areas. The first area is peninsular Malaysia that stretches from the border of Thailand in the state of Perlis to the southernmost tip of mainland Asia, Johore. It is separated from

Singapore by the Straits of Tebrau. Peninsular Malaysia is surrounded by the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea (Figure 1.1). Malaysia is located between 2 and 7 degrees north of the equator, hence it enjoys a tropical climate with warm weather all year round. The temperature ranges from 21 to 32 degree Celsius, with annual rainfall from 2,000 to 2,500 millimetres (Tourism Malaysia, 2008a). The capital city is Kuala Lumpur while the administrative city of Putrajaya in Selangor houses all federal government ministries.

**Figure 1.1: A Map of Malaysia**



Source: Malaysia-Maps.com (2008)

Malaysia has a population of 27 million people (Department of Statistic, 2008). The Malays are the most dominant ethnic group with 57% of the overall population, followed by the Chinese (25%) and Indians (10%) while the remaining population are the indigenous people in the state of Pahang and various ethnic groups in Sabah and Sarawak (Tourism Malaysia, 2008b).

### **1.3.2 Tourism in Malaysia**

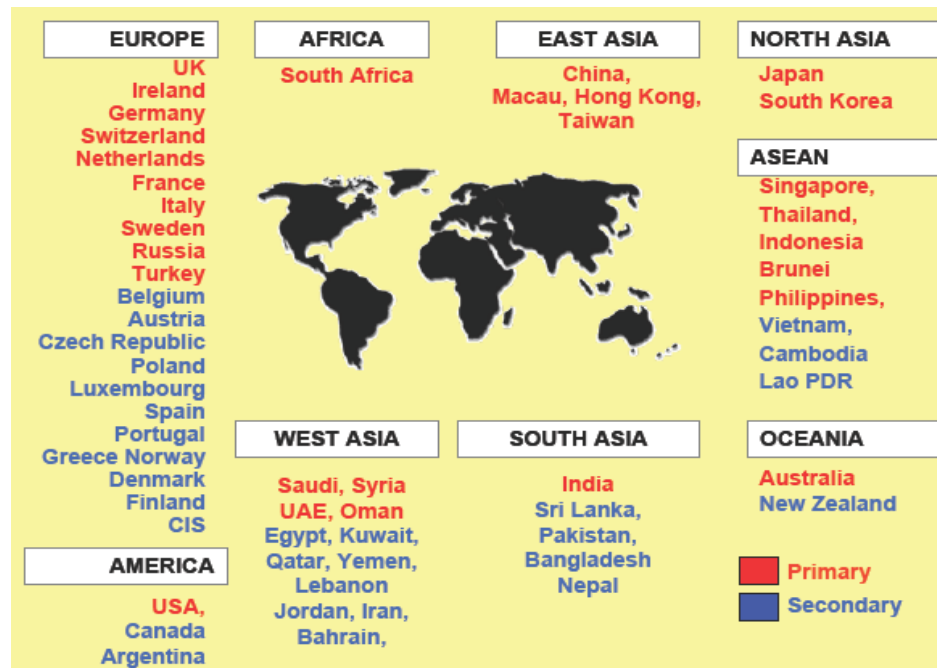
The viability and potential of the tourism sector in Malaysia was not realized before the 1970s when agriculture was the main sector in the economy (Baum, 2006). Only in 1972, serious attention was given to developing tourism as a sector of the economy, with the set up of the Tourism Development Corporation (TDC) under the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The increasing importance of tourism to the economy has led to the establishment of the Ministry of Tourism in 2004 to focus on nurturing tourism as a source of growth (Ministry of Tourism, 2008b). The Ministry of Tourism is also assisted by Tourism Malaysia, an agency solely responsible for the implementation of marketing strategies in Malaysia (Tourism Malaysia, 2008c).

The geographical characteristics of Malaysia have blessed its tourism industry with a wide range of natural attractions which include beaches and islands, mountains and hill resorts, caves, forests and nature parks (Wells, 1982). Besides that, the diversity of the ethnic groups in Malaysia also contributes to the blend of unique cultures, traditions, arts, food, festivals and crafts which are often showcased as the highlight for tourists visiting the country (Tourism Malaysia, 2008a).

In terms of its tourism marketing strategy, Malaysia utilizes a selective approach by categorizing markets into primary and secondary markets (Figure 1.2). The resources and budget give emphasis to the primary markets including Japan, China, Australia, the Middle East and Southeast Asia which promise high volumes of tourists to Malaysia. In these markets, Malaysia has set up at least one office to expedite tourism promotion activities and to act as tourist information centres. In secondary markets, marketing

activity is conducted by the nearest Tourism Malaysia overseas office to that market or by a marketing representative (Tourism Malaysia, 2007a).

**Figure 1.2: Tourism Malaysia's Marketing Focus**



*Source:* Tourism Malaysia (2007a)

The brand used in promoting Malaysia internationally is “Malaysia Truly Asia” which was introduced in 1999 and has become an internationally recognized brand (EPU, 2006). The tagline emphasizes Malaysia’s multiethnic and multicultural harmony as the selling point, by offering a diversity of tourism products that reflects the elements of Asia.

### 1.3.3 Significance of Tourism to Malaysia

Tourism is the second highest foreign exchange earner for the Malaysian economy, after manufacturing, with a total of US\$1.07 billion in 2006. The number of international tourist arrivals to Malaysia has increased from 1.1 million tourists in 1974 to 17.5 million tourists in 2006. In 2007, a special tourism campaign, ‘Visit Malaysia Year’, was



launched to celebrate Malaysia's 50<sup>th</sup> year of independence and this special event recorded a total of 20.97 million international visitors to Malaysia with tourist receipts of US\$1.35 billion (Tourism Malaysia, 2008d). It is forecasted that tourist arrivals will continue to grow at an average rate of 8.4 %, reaching 24.6 million tourists by 2010 (EPU, 2006). The main expenditures of international tourists visiting Malaysia are on accommodation (35.4% of total expenditure), shopping (25.7%), food and beverage (18.7%), transportation (10.1%) and entertainment (3.7%) (Tourism Malaysia, 2007b).

The rising significance of tourism in terms of its arrivals and receipts has motivated the government to increase its budget allocation in its five-year development programs called the Malaysian Plans. In the 8<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Plan from 2001 to 2005, the government allocated a total of RM482 million (US\$142 million) for tourism. This amount has been increased to RM1.36 billion (US\$400 million) for the 9<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Plan (2006 to 2010) to prepare the industry to be a key foreign exchange earner that contributes to growth, investment and employment (EPU, 2006).

#### **1.3.4 Tourism Employment in Malaysia**

The accommodation sector is identified as the key job provider in tourism in Malaysia. In 2001, it accounted for 70,881 jobs and was projected to reach 109,600 jobs in 2010. The tour and travel agency sector is also a significant sector which was projected to provide 18,200 jobs by 2010 (Ministry of Tourism, 2002). In 2007, the total workforce in Malaysia was 10.6 million employees while the country's unemployment rate was 3%. The tourism sector already provided a total of 1.2 million jobs, constituting 11.4% of overall employment in Malaysia (Department of Statistic, 2008). With global tourism

employment growing at 4% a year for the past 10 years, tourism is increasingly a major source of employment, both directly and indirectly (WTTC, 2007).

Although the number of jobs provided in tourism is large, it was also reported that vacancies are not adequately filled by existing labour markets. In 2007, there were 35,953 vacancies in the hotel and restaurant sector alone (Ministry of Human Resource, 2008) and this situation has created an imbalance between the supply and demand in tourism employment in Malaysia. A study of human resource development in tourism conducted in 2002 found that 30.7% of tourism operators struggled to find employees, and skilled and semi-skilled workers were identified as the critical segment (Ministry of Tourism, 2002).

In the same study, a survey of secondary school students found that although there seems to be a high awareness and interest among school graduates towards tourism as a career in Malaysia, they do not intend to make it their permanent career (Ministry of Tourism, 2002, 2008a) and this is said to be influenced by the nature of tourism jobs, particularly low pay and poor working conditions (WTTC, 2002b). At the same time, employers are often said to be unsatisfied with the level of skills and competencies of tourism graduates entering the industry, and are putting the blame on tourism educators for ignoring the industry's needs (Ministry of Tourism, 2008a). The educators, in contrast, feel that the industry does not have realistic expectations of the graduates in terms of operational skills and, at the same time, neglects the analytical skills that the graduates have acquired. The government has demonstrated interest in making tourism a key industry but there are questions about to what extent sufficient measures have been undertaken to address the

needs of the tourism workforce. Such conflicting opinions have jointly hampered the effort to increase the supply of skilled tourism workers.

The concern about labour shortages in tourism by the Malaysian government led to the formulation of strategic thrusts under the 9<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Plan which mentions the intention to enhance human resource development in this sector (EPU, 2006). Malaysia's 3rd Industrial Master Plan (IMP3) covering the period of 2006 to 2020 also stressed the importance of developing technically skilled, knowledgeable and ICT-trained human capital that matches market requirements (MITI, 2006). However, this could only be achieved if the underlying factors that affect the labour market's response to tourism employment are being identified and addressed. To date, there is dearth of research focusing on stakeholders' perceptions towards issues relating to the quantity and quality of human resources in the tourism industry in Malaysia (Ministry of Tourism, 2008a). There is a need, therefore, for a comprehensive study to encompass different stakeholders of tourism human resources in order to understand their perceptions of tourism as a graduate career in Malaysia from both the demand and supply side.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The above situation calls for a study that takes into consideration the different perspectives of stakeholders that are directly affected, namely, the government, industry, educators and students. Therefore, the objectives of this study are:

- i) to examine the current measures and future plans of the Malaysian Government in attracting more graduates to choose tourism as their career

- ii) to explore industry bodies' and a major tourism employer's perceptions of the current situation they face in terms of the quality and quantity of tourism graduates and to explore their efforts in promoting tourism as an attractive career option
- iii) to explore tourism educators' perceptions of the quality of their graduates and educators' relationships with other organizations in the promotion of tourism as an attractive career option
- iv) to understand the perceptions and expectations of tourism students from two types of tertiary institutions in Malaysia - public universities and polytechnics - about careers in tourism
- v) to develop a framework to explain relationships amongst the above stakeholders in promoting tourism as a graduate career in Malaysia.

### **1.5 Key Research Questions**

The overarching research question for this thesis is: how do key stakeholders in Malaysia promote and perceive tourism as a graduate career? To understand this, this thesis will attempt to answer the following research questions:

- i) How is the government promoting careers in tourism to the students?
- ii) What is the industry doing to promote careers in tourism to the students?
- iii) To what extent do tourism educators promote careers in tourism to students studying tourism at tertiary institutions?
- iv) What are the tourism students' perceptions of tourism as their future career?

## 1.6 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis is structured as follows:

*Chapter One*, this chapter, served as an introduction to the thesis.

*Chapter Two* will review existing research that deals with the issue of perceptions of tourism as a career from the stakeholders' points of view. An analytical framework will also be suggested to synthesize the research related to the perceptions of various stakeholders.

*Chapter Three* will discuss the methodology used in this research, including the research design, sampling, recruitment of participants and collection of the data. This chapter will also explain the method of analysis of the data and how the analytical framework is being used to guide the analysis.

*Chapter Four* will discuss the analysis and the interpretations of the data from the relationships amongst the government, the industry and the educators.

*Chapter Five* will present the results and the interpretations of the relationships amongst the industry, the educators and the students.

*Chapter Six* will discuss and conclude this thesis by answering the research questions. Based on the findings, this chapter will also make suggestions to guide the stakeholders to promote tourism as a career more effectively.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the relevant bodies of literature that relate to the main thrust of the thesis. It will set the scene by looking at human resource management in tourism with a focus on the worldwide shortage of skilled labour in the tourism industry. The nature of tourism labour markets in terms of sectors, jobs and positions will also be discussed to provide a more in-depth understanding of tourism employment. This is important to provide a basis to identify the key sectors in tourism and the extent to which different sectors and positions influence perceptions of tourism as a career. Then, this chapter will look into the stakeholder theory which will guide the identification of the key stakeholders involved with human resources in tourism and issues related to these stakeholders regarding tourism as a graduate career. Then this chapter will also look at students' perceptions of tourism as a career and the factors underlying the differences in these perceptions. Finally, this chapter will discuss models related to tourism human resource development and introduce an analytical framework developed for the examination of tourism as a graduate career in Malaysia. This chapter will conclude with a discussion about the research gap and how the literature influences this study in its research design.

### **2.2 Human Resource Management in Tourism**

A description of what human resource management involves will then lead to a discussion of human resource management in tourism. Then one key human resource issue – the shortage of skilled labour in the tourism industry – will be examined by evaluating the same issue across the globe in order to justify the importance of this problem to be further explored by this study.

### **2.2.1 Human Resource Management: An Overview**

Storey (1995:2) suggested that human resource management is a process of ‘achieving competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce, using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personal techniques’. However, finding the best definition for human resource management is difficult (Foot & Hook, 1999) because there is no single way or best practice in managing employees. Therefore, it is easier to describe, rather than define, human resource management. Swarbrooke (1995:226) described the human resource management process as ‘obtaining, organizing, training, motivating, and rewarding’ employees in order to make sure they will be able to deliver the service that meets the organization’s and customer’s need. This is summarized by Baum (1993:4) as the ‘human resource cycle’ which begins by ‘attracting, developing and maintaining an effective workforce’. Hence it can be concluded that human resource development involves a set of organizational skills to find the right workforce, providing it with the necessary skills it needs to perform the work that is desired by the organization, and retaining the workforce for the continuous success of the organization so that it meet its objectives.

### **2.2.2 The Significance of Human Resource Management in Tourism**

Tourism relies on people (Baum, 1993) as it is a service-orientated industry and employees play a central role in delivering a product that will influence the overall experience of tourists. The ‘moments of truth’ or the contacts between front-line staff in the tourism industry with consumers will determine the extent to which the service fails, meets or exceeds the expectations of tourists (Carlzon, 1987). The important role of employees determines the survival of the tourism industry (Amoah & Baum, 1997). This notion is validated by Swarbrooke (1995) that in the very nature of tourism business

operations, human resources often constitute the biggest portion of the budget. As such, effective human resource management deserves more attention in tourism planning and management (Christensen Hughes, 2002).

### **2.2.3 Labour Shortage: A Global Human Resource Issue**

One of the key human resources issues in tourism is labour shortage (TIANZ, 2006; WTTC, 2002a). There seems to be an increasing imbalance between the demand for and supply of tourism workers (Choy, 1995) and this issue, if not addressed immediately, will severely affect the sustainability of global tourism (Christensen Hughes, 2002). At the same time, the change in demography with the aging of the population and fewer younger people has also resulted in a shrinking labour pool (Baum, 1993; WTTC, 2002a). As a consequence, the tourism industry has faced problems attracting qualified, skilled and motivated labour which also forces tourism operators to compete more aggressively to make sure the potential employees will choose them over other sectors of the economy (Lucas & Jeffries, 1991).

The lack of labour supply in tourism is also a result of the negative image of the industry (TTG, 2000; WTTC, 2002a). The poor image of tourism in the eyes of potential employees was said to be the key factor preventing school leavers and university graduates from choosing tourism and hospitality as their career (Choy, 1995). The findings of Baum, Amoah and Spivack (1997) in identifying major concerns in tourism have validated this by confirming that the negative image of work in the sector is one of the main issues affecting the industry.



Tourism has long been perceived as an unattractive sector in which to work in terms of its remuneration and working conditions (Baum, 2007). Tourism jobs are often seen as low paid (Baum et al., 1997; Lucas & Jeffries, 1991; TTG, 2000), having unsociable working hours (O'Leary & Deegan, 2005), poor working conditions (Baum & Nickson, 1998; Lavery, 1988) a lack of career advancement opportunities (Getz, 1994) and requiring few skills (McGinn & Binder, 1991; Pizam, 1982; Shaw & Williams, 2002). These images have collectively affected the ability of tourism to attract and retain skilled staff compared to other sectors (Christensen Hughes, 2002; Lucas & Jeffries, 1991). These negative images of tourism are difficult to improve when the nature of the work and wages in tourism may be seen as less attractive than other sectors (Kelley-Patterson & George, 2001).

A study by McKercher et al. (1995) about perceptions of graduates in an Australian university found that less than half of the tourism management graduates are working in the industry while the rest decided to work in sectors that are not related to tourism. This situation, if it persists, will result in a waste of effort and investment in providing the knowledge and skills needed by the tourism industry when tourism graduates end up not working in tourism. Therefore, it is suggested that the effective way to manage the retention of graduates to work in tourism is by targeting the first stage in the human resource management process which is the recruitment stage (D'Annunzio-Green, Maxwell, & Watson, 2000; TTG, 2000). Therefore, future studies that attempt to understand the perceptions of the labour market towards tourism as a career could examine individuals who have yet to enter the industry and are possibly planning to do so.

#### **2.2.4 Global Efforts in Addressing Labour Shortages in Tourism**

Reacting to the alarming labour shortage in global tourism, various forums at the national and international level have been established. In 2002, the Human Resource Task Force was formed under the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). This taskforce stressed the effort to increase the awareness of the importance of tourism as a job provider, to attract and retain tourism staff, and to improve the quality of education and training in tourism. The concerns regarding human resource issues in tourism are further highlighted by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) through the Madrid Declaration on Human Resources in Tourism (UNWTO, 2002). This declaration emphasized the potential of tourism as a job creator in the coming decades and how the tourism workforce will play a major role in determining the level of quality in tourism delivery. The above are only some of many initiatives at the international level aiming to address the issue of labour shortage affecting the tourism industry around the globe.

#### **2.2.5 Summary**

People play a vital role in the delivery of tourism but the supply is not corresponding to the needs of the industry as demand for tourism continues to grow. Demographic factors including the aging population and the shrinking of the youth labour pool which has resulted in competition for labour may be apparent, but it is the negative image of the sector that impairs its ability to recruit motivated and skilled workers into the industry. This issue has triggered a global alarm for strategies to be formulated to address the issue of labour shortage in tourism. Understanding the perceptions of potential workers towards tourism as a career, hence, should be a priority to address the shortage of skilled labour in tourism.

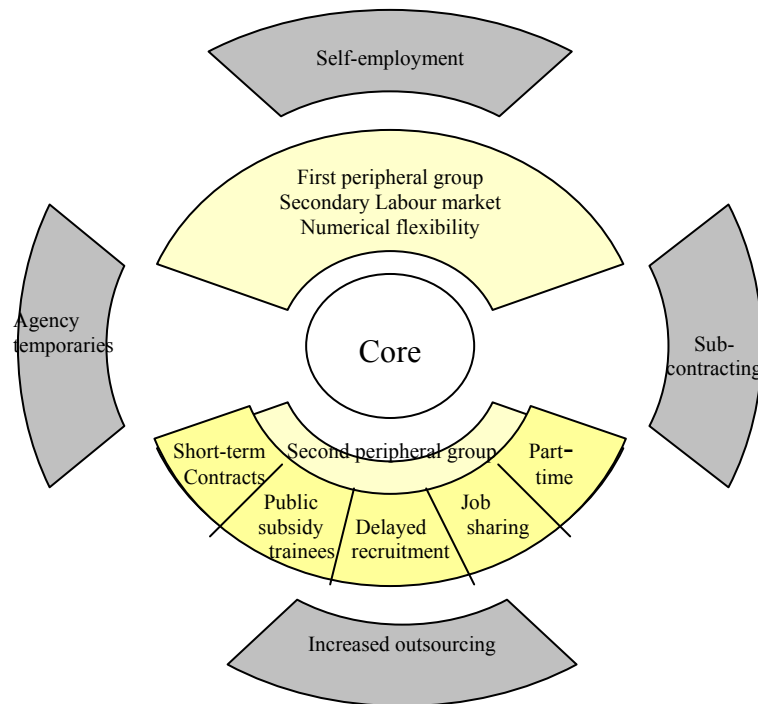
## 2.3 Tourism Labour Markets

Understanding the complexity of tourism labour markets is important due to the multiple sectors that can be considered as related to tourism. This section will introduce several models that explain the nature and composition of the tourism labour market and explain what are considered to be key tourism sectors and jobs. This will provide the basis for the identification of the key tourism sectors and jobs to be examined by this study.

### 2.3.1 Definition

According to Baum (2006), a labour market is the overall environment where decisions are made by the employer, the employee or relationships between them which will influence labour supply and demand at the local, regional, national or international level.

The functional and numerical flexibility model by Atkinson (1984) provides an explanation about the nature of the labour market environment. A labour market can be divided into the *core* and the *peripheral* groups (Figure 2.1), with the *core* group being the primary labour market, constituted by permanent and full time workers. It is also suggested that this group receives higher earnings and job security, is able to perform a wide range of tasks in the organization, possesses ‘functional flexibility’, and often holds managerial or professional positions in the workplace. The *core* group is surrounded by the *peripheral* group which the *core group* often has the authority to control. The *peripheral* group is constituted by either full-time or part-time workers who are also described as semi-skilled, earning less, having less job security, and less functionally flexible.

**Figure 2.1: The Functional and Numerical Flexibility Model**

Source: Atkinson (1984)

However, the applicability of this model to the tourism labour market is problematic because the separation of the *core* and *peripheral* workers is not clear in tourism as it is in the manufacturing sector, the sector which this model was designed for (Urry, 1990). It was argued that not all *core* workers are functionally flexible and at the same time the role of the *core* workers can also be replaced and replicated by the *peripheral* staff due to the standardized operational procedures in certain departments in tourism.

Therefore, an alternative explanation was introduced by Simms et al. (1988) by categorizing human resource into *internal* and *external* labour markets. An *internal* labour market is a group of workers from within the organizations, whereas an *external* labour market is the similar pool of labour or jobs outside of the organization (Riley,

2000). The *internal* labour market is further categorized into *strong* and *weak* internal labour markets according to how it is managed (Table 2.1). It was suggested that most tourism workers can be described as being in a *weak internal* labour market due to limited promotion opportunities, the absence of continuous staff training, and the ad hoc management style in managing human resources. However, this model requires careful application especially in the context of a developing country where although there are characteristics of *strong internal* labour market management practices, especially within multi national companies, the local employees are still poorly trained and remunerated (Baum, 2006).

**Table 2.1: The Structural Features of Strong and Weak Internal Labour Markets**

Strong Internal Labour Markets	Weak Internal Labour Markets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specified hiring standards</li> <li>• Single port of entry</li> <li>• High skill specificity</li> <li>• Continuous on-the-job training</li> <li>• Fixed criteria for promotion and transfer</li> <li>• Strong workplace customs</li> <li>• Pay differentials remain fixed over time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unspecified hiring standards</li> <li>• Multiple ports of entry</li> <li>• Low skill specificity</li> <li>• No on-the-job training</li> <li>• No fixed criteria promotion and transfer</li> <li>• Weak workplace customs</li> <li>• Pay differentials vary over time</li> </ul>

*Source:* Riley (1996)

Although tourism employees can come from various sources, it was suggested that the key labour market for tourism is students (Airey & Frontistis, 1997; Aksu & Köksal, 2005; Getz, 1994; Ross, 1992). This is because this group will form the new supply of labour upon finishing their studies and those who study tourism will possess the basic

knowledge and skills to support the needs of the industry. As such, this study will be concentrating on students as a key labour market to be explored.

### 2.3.2 Sectors and Jobs in Tourism

There seems to be no standard criteria in the literature about what forms the tourism sector because it involves many sectors which are inter-related (Baum, 2006). Nevertheless, the identification of key tourism sectors and jobs is important to guide the selection of the key sectors to be investigated by this study. One of the efforts to classify tourism sectors and jobs is by Pollock and Ritchie (1990) who categorized tourism jobs into specific sectors and occupational levels (Table 2.2). They identified eight main sectors of tourism: (1) *lodging*, (2) *transportation*, (3) *attractions and events*, (4) *outdoor recreation/activity*, (5) *tour/travel development and counselling*, (6) *conventions*, (7) *food and beverage* and (8) *government*.

The occupations within these sectors are categorized according to occupational level, namely, *frontline*, *supervisory* and *management* which are differentiated by level of responsibility. The *frontline* refers to the group of staff with very specific tasks who deal directly with the consumer. As such the skill level is low and usually performed by an entry position employee with little training. The *supervisory* level has more authority than the front line staff and deals with a wider range of tasks and has the ability to make decisions in line with the policy of the organization. Finally, the *management* level which can be further divided into *middle management* and *senior executive* is the group with the most responsibilities, which require high level of experience and knowledge as well as having the authority to plan and make organizational decisions.

The classification of tourism sectors and jobs by Pollock and Ritchie (1990) also reflect the tourism sectors and jobs available in Malaysia. However, in the Malaysian context, the *management* level is divided into *junior management* which refers to graduate's entry level positions or the promotion of internal employees from the supervisory positions, and *senior management* which typically requires extensive working experience in related fields or jobs.

Although many sectors and jobs are linked to tourism, there seems to be common agreement that the most important sectors that provide tourism jobs are the hotels (Baum, 2006) and travel agents (Airey & Frontistis, 1997) which are regarded as the 'mainstream tourism businesses'. This is also the case in Malaysia where the accommodation and the travel agency sectors are among the key tourism employers and are projected to provide 109,600 and 18,200 jobs in 2010 respectively (Ministry of Tourism, 2002). The importance of these sectors in Malaysia is the basis for examining them in this study.

**Table 2.2: Tourism Occupations by Sector and Level**

Occupational Level	Lodging	Transportation (excluding airlines)	Attractions and Events	Outdoor Recreation/ Activity Oriented	Tour Development Travel Counselling Trade	Convention Trade Shows	Food and Beverage Occupations		Government Association
							Front-Room	Back Room	
<b>Frontline</b>	Chambermaid Houseman/ janitor Maintenance Bellhop Doorman Valet Supply clerk Information clerk Concierge Desk clerk/ reservation agent	Drivers (bus, taxi) Ticket agents Reservation agents Maintenance Baggage handler Car rental clerks Passenger attendants	Ticket sales Guides Performers Security/ crowd control Maintenance/ janitorial	Ticket sales/ recreation attendants Guides/ couriers/ interpretation Instructors Lifeguards/ safety	Travel consultant Information counsellor Tour guide/ courier travel writer Reservation agent FIT/ DIT specialists Group and incentive sales	Technicians (sound and audio visual aids) Interpreters (language) Security Entertainment	Bar assistants Busyboy Waiter/ waitress Bartenders Wine waiters	Dishwasher/ pot washer Kitchen helper Kitchen steward Purchasing steward Food and beverage control Clerk Cook helpers and apprenticeships	Information Counsellors
<b>Supervisory</b>	Night auditor Supervisor baggage Security Sales representatives Accounting/ administration Purchasing	Dispatch Station managers (car rentals) Couriers/ guides/ social Sales representatives	Volunteer supervisors Security supervisors Event organizers Event promoters Sales representatives Interpretation programmer	Recreation supervisors Sales representatives	Account executive Sales representatives Information director Tour planners	Meeting planners Event organizers Sales representatives Space planners-designers	Captain waiter/ waitress Supervisor bartenders Matre d' hotel/ host/ hostess Banquet captain Cashier	First cook Chefs de Partie Executive sous-chef/ sous-chef Chef de Cuisine	Regional coordinators Planners Accommodation counsellors
<b>Management</b>	Social directors Executive housekeepers	Sales managers Operations managers General managers	Facilities design and development Sales and marketing Operations/ facilities General managers	Operations/ facilities Sales and marketing Facilities design and development General managers	Travel agency managers Information centre managers Operations managers General managers	Facilities design and development Operations/ facilities General managers	Food & beverage managers Catering, banquet managers	Executive chef	Marketing & public relations directors Tourism development officers Association executives

*Source: Pollock and Ritchie (1990)*



### 2.3.3 Summary

The discussion on tourism labour markets concluded that eight main sectors have been identified as the key sectors of tourism (Pollock & Ritchie, 1990). It would be beyond the scope of a Masters thesis to study all eight of these sectors. Therefore, a decision was made to select the hotel and travel agent sectors because they are key job providers in the tourism industry. The levels of jobs in tourism were categorized into *frontline*, *supervisory* and *management*. As such, the key sectors and the different levels of positions in tourism should be taken into consideration in the effort to understand the perceptions of tourism as a graduate career. The diversity of sectors and jobs in tourism identified by Pollock and Ritchie (1990) should not only be seen as a demonstration of its complexity, but also suggests the involvement of various stakeholders in managing other stakeholders (Baum, 2006).

## 2.4 Tourism Stakeholders

A stakeholder theory will be discussed to provide understanding of who has interest in the issue of labour shortages in tourism. From that, this study will discuss the issue of the shortage of skilled labour in tourism from the view of the relevant stakeholders. This discussion will provide the basis for the identification of stakeholders to be involved and investigated by this study.

### 2.4.1 Definition

Stakeholders can be defined as ‘any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s activities’ (Lewis, 2006:15) and qualifying as a stakeholder is an ‘automatic’ process if a group has a certain level of interest in an organization’s policies or activities (Sautter & Leisen, 1999). Stakeholder theory was

developed by Freeman (1984) in the field of management to explain and guide the operation of organizations. This theory examined the relationship between an organization with external groups that in direct or indirect ways could influence or be influenced by certain decisions made by the organization. There are *strategic stakeholders*, or those who can affect a firm, and *moral stakeholders*, or those who could be affected by the firm. Consultation with both the *strategic* and *moral* stakeholders is crucial for the organization to gain useful insights from stakeholders (Sautter & Leisen, 1999) as well as increase the chance of management decisions being supported by the groups around it (Lewis, 2006). Therefore, understanding key stakeholders will benefit the organization to implement its decisions successfully with minimal conflict.

#### **2.4.2 Stakeholders and Human Resource Management in Tourism**

The tourism industry involves a wide range of stakeholders (Baum et al., 1997). It was suggested that stakeholders include students, academics, industry, professional bodies, pressure groups, parents, the local community and the government (Cooper & Westlake, 1998). Although it is ideal for all stakeholders to be consulted in tourism human resource management decisions, it can also be resource consuming and difficult to manage (Lewis, 2006).

Hence, identification of key stakeholders is important in order to make it more effective in managing the range of interests by prioritizing those who will be more affected by a particular decision. To achieve this, Lewis (2006) suggested that groups of stakeholders can be divided into *primary* and *secondary*. The *primary* group is the one that will be directly impacted by a decision while the *secondary* group includes those who will experience an indirect impact. This is applied by Lewis (2006) in her study on the

stakeholders' involvement in tourism education in the Caribbean when she identified the *educator* as the producer of the educational experience, and the *students* as the direct consumers of tourism education, as *primary* stakeholders or those who are influenced by tourism education decisions. The *industry* and the *government* were identified as *secondary* stakeholders or those who are indirectly affected by tourism education.

The four key groups of stakeholders noted above were also prevalent in other studies discussing perceptions of tourism education. Ernawati and Pearce (2003) in their study on stakeholders' perceptions of tourism courses at tertiary institutions in Indonesia also identified the government, industry, educators and students as the core groups to tourism human resource management. This is echoed by Aksu and Köksal (2005:436) who emphasized that the 'perceptions of tourism should be investigated from the perspective of students, academics, employers, and government officials'. Therefore it is vital that the perspectives of these four stakeholders be investigated to provide a more holistic view on the perceptions of tourism as a career.

#### **2.4.2.1 The Government**

The first key stakeholder regarding labour shortage issues in tourism is the government (Lewis, 2006). Jafari (1979) noted that government plays a great role in steering human resource management in tourism and has the authority to control other stakeholders that hold the same interests. The policies formulated by the government will provide direction and address the needs of various stakeholders in tourism (Aksu & Köksal, 2005; Swarbrooke, 1999). It is suggested that in relation to the issue of labour shortages in tourism, the most relevant government bodies are the Ministry of Tourism and the

Ministry of Education (Lavery, 1988; Lewis, 2006). Therefore, these agencies will be covered by this study.

The worsening image of the tourism sector has not been remedied immediately and human resource issues are often overlooked in national tourism policies or by the relevant authorities (Baum, 2007). The absence of strategy to manage human resources in tourism often means that issues like labour shortage are addressed on an ad hoc basis (Baum et al., 1997). As such, the tourism labour market is actually being ‘administered’ rather than ‘developed’ (WTTC, 2002a) and this approach is ineffective to address the shortage of skilled labour. Without an appropriate policy direction, tourism will continue to face the severe impact of the shortage of skilled labour despite growing tourism demand (Baum et al., 1997).

This situation is even more apparent in developing countries where tourism is seen as an important sector in the absence of the appropriate policy (Ernawati & Pearce, 2003). Besides, with the lack of initiatives from the industry who are also at the building stage and more concerned about making profit, active participation by the government is vital to initiate a direction for human resource management in tourism in a developing country (Jafari, 1979). Hence, investigation of the relevant government agencies is crucial in understanding the emphasis given to the shortages of skilled labour in tourism and the extent to which policies developed respond to it.

#### **2.4.2.2 The Industry**

The industry is cited as the most important stakeholder to consult because it influences tourism education and because they are the user of the product of education – graduates –

to achieve the objectives of their organizations (Lewis, 2006). However, the research on the industry's view is limited (Aksu & Köksal, 2005; Lavery, 1988). Although there were efforts to investigate the view of this stakeholder, research has tended to focus on employers' perceptions of the education (Baum et al., 1997; WTTC, 2002a) and the quality of the graduates (Kelley-Patterson & George, 2001). However, the New Zealand Tourism Workforce Strategy 2006 sees the labour shortage in tourism as a workplace issue rather than workforce issue (TIANZ, 2006), that the lack employers' effort in making tourism jobs attractive is the key factor resulting in the lack of interest of graduates to enter the industry. This notion echoes the suggestion by Purcell and Quinn (1996) that apart from the nature of the job, the employers themselves make the image of the industry less favourable to graduates. Hence the industry's view of the labour shortage problem that they face is an important area for investigation.

As suggested earlier, the poor reputation of the industry could be attributed to the employers themselves. Past research has shown that most managers in the tourism industry do not have tertiary qualification in tourism. While circumstances may have subsequently changed, Purcell and Quinn's (1996) UK-based study found that only 10% of managers in the hotel and catering sector have higher learning qualifications, far below the average of 41% of managers having tertiary degree in other economic sectors. These managers are also said to have poor comprehension of human resource management, particularly in managing graduates as their employees (Purcell & Quinn, 1996). As a result, the expectations of graduates are often misunderstood by the employers. The misunderstanding of employees was noted by Zacarelli (1985), that the employees' problems derived from poor motivation due to lack of appreciation from and a sense of importance to the organization, and are not solely influenced by 'tangible' factors like

wages and promotional opportunities. This emphasizes that it is important for employees' motivation to be accurately understood in order to better manage the issue of labour shortage in tourism.

Besides that, the attitudes of the managers contribute to the worsening image of the industry. Managers often perceive that employees in tourism are not important and can be replaced easily, and this situation is even more apparent for front-line jobs (Go et al., 1996). As such, effective human resource management is of less priority to these managers (Purcell & Quinn, 1996). The managers also undervalue graduates' knowledge and qualifications by not providing opportunity for them to make use of their analytical and management skills in the organization (Kelley-Patterson & George, 2001). The employers often focus on the general lack of operational skills of the graduates as 'over qualified but under experienced' (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005:211) and ignore the potential contributions from the graduates. In relation to this, managers expect graduates to start at the entry level positions and do operational jobs (McKercher et al., 1995) which is not what graduates expected based on the skills and qualifications they have. To a greater extent, some managers even have reservations about employing graduates (Lavery, 1988) and this resulted in the loss of talent of tourism graduates to other sectors. This situation will persist if the industry still is not appreciating graduates the same way they appreciate their customers (Aksu & Köksal, 2005). It is also important for the industry to portray the best image of their organizations in order to attract graduates to join the industry (Jenkins, 2001). This study, therefore, is interested in understanding the values and characteristics that key tourism employers seek from graduates applying for jobs in their organizations.

#### **2.4.2.3 Educators**

Closely linked to the increasing need for skilled labour for tourism is the relevance of tourism education and training (Smith & Cooper, 2000). Education has often been blamed for not adapting to the industry's and the students' needs; however this has been measured from the perspective of students and industry but not the people who develop the curriculum (Lewis, 2006). This implies that the perceptions of the educators have been taken for granted in existing studies. The role of the educators in tourism is important to develop human resources with the skills and knowledge needed by the industry (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005) and to bridge the expectations of students towards the industry by providing the reality of the nature of tourism work and remuneration schemes (Kelley-Patterson & George, 2001; Lewis, 2006). Hence the educators' perspective is equally important when examining perceptions of tourism as a graduate career.

The most cited issue concerning the educator is the perceived mismatch between what the educator is offering and what the industry needs (Purcell & Quinn, 1996; Williams, 2005). Tourism education and training are sometimes said to be irrelevant to the needs of the employer (Ernawati & Pearce, 2003; Williams, 2005). This has contributed to the lack of qualities and competencies of graduates entering the sector (WTTC, 2002a) that influences the industry's perceptions of the quality of students as employees. The industry has always been dissatisfied with the theoretical approach in tourism education which failed to provide them with the skilled labour they need (Kaplan, 1982). The students also perceived that current tourism education did not provide them with the necessary skills that they needed to be more 'marketable' in finding jobs (Purcell & Quinn, 1996; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005).

Lewis (2006) suggested that tourism education serves various purposes and this can be explained by four main approaches. The *student-centered* approach develops the intellectual and critical ability of the student about the field of tourism. The *work-centered* approach focuses on preparing the students for employment. Next is the *society-centered* approach with the objective to improve the overall quality of life of local residents by shaping growth in human resources. Finally, the *stakeholder-inclusive* approach aims to address the needs of key stakeholders. An education that complies with the stakeholders' needs will provide students with the necessary information to shape their job expectations and to make an informed career decision (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Ross, 1992) as well as the relevant set of skills needed by the industry (McKercher et al., 1995). Therefore, educators must understand the needs of the stakeholders (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005) and address the plurality of their needs by consulting a wider group of individuals (Lewis, 2006). This includes continuous communication amongst the key stakeholders (Ross, 1992) to keep up to date with changes in the tourism industry. The *stakeholder-inclusive* approach in tourism education forms the main thrust of this study in examining relationships between key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of efforts to promote tourism as a graduate career in Malaysia.

The stakeholder-inclusive approach, although being suggested as the ideal way to increase the value of tourism education, is far from easy to implement (Williams, 2005). Stakeholders have different needs and perspectives about what should form an appropriate tourism curriculum (Baum et al., 1997; Ernawati & Pearce, 2003). Addressing the plurality and conflicting needs of the stakeholders could make the curriculum development process more resource-consuming (Smith & Cooper, 2000). As a result, the curriculum may become too complicated (Lewis, 2006; Williams, 2005) and



will put pressure on the students of having to learn too much information in such a short period (McKercher et al., 1995). At the same time, educators are also obliged to comply with certain requirements from national accreditation bodies (Smith & Cooper, 2000) which often influence curriculum design. Educators should be given freedom to design the curriculum based on what they believe education is intended for (Kaplan, 1982) which in most cases is to meet the needs of stakeholders.

#### **2.4.2.4 The Students**

It was suggested that research on students' perceptions towards jobs in the tourism industry is scarce and this is surprising when students, being direct consumers of tourism education, are suggested as the most important stakeholders as they are the ones who make up a significant proportion of the tourism labour market (Airey & Frontistis, 1997; Aksu & Köksal, 2005; Getz, 1994; Ross, 1992). At the same time, these studies are concentrated in developed countries while more studies on students' perceptions are needed from developing countries (Ernawati & Pearce, 2003) as well as from the Asia Pacific region (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005).

A comparative study about the perceptions of current students and graduates of a tourism programme by Kelley-Patterson and George (2001) who found that there are differences in perceptions and expectations of students who are already working in the industry compared to those who are still studying tourism. Lewis (2006) suggested that current students will be able to provide information on what they expect from the programme while the view from the graduates already working in the industry is also important as they are able to give views on the reality of the industry. However, since the problem of labour shortage in tourism begins at the recruitment stage, it is crucial that research is

being done on students who are yet to enter the labour market and when their interest to work in the industry is being developed (Aksu & Köksal, 2005). The critical period in career selection amongst the students is when they are still at the university where the process of career preparations will shape their perceptions even before they leave the institution (Cook, 1979; Neuman, Pizam, & Reichel, 1980). Therefore, it is important that the expectations and perceptions of these students towards tourism as a career is examined before they enter the labour market (Kelley-Patterson & George, 2001). Hence, this study will concentrate on tourism students who are yet to enter the industry and whose career perceptions are taking shape.

Students are accused as having unrealistic expectations about what they could gain from working in the industry. This includes unrealistic expectations in terms of remuneration (Kelley-Patterson & George, 2001), responsibilities in the organization (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005) and career promotion opportunities (Jenkins, 2001). It was also suggested that the perceived glamour of some tourism jobs, including the airline industry, have also given students unreasonable expectations of tourism jobs (Airey & Frontistis, 1997).

Students are also accused of being choosy in terms of the sector and department in the tourism industry that they want to work in, as well as the level of position they expect to hold in their workplace of choice. Jenkins (2001) found that the hotel sector, especially the sales and marketing and human resource departments, are perceived more favourably career wise among students. Airey and Frontistis (1997) suggested that jobs in restaurants and the catering sector are considered lowly compared to jobs with hotels and travel agents. Ross (1992) in his research on Australian school leavers found that management employment is the most popular level of employment, and the office/clerical is the least

preferred, suggesting that it is important for students that their qualifications are acknowledged by the employer. This thesis, therefore, will also investigate the sectors in tourism and the level of job positions preferred by tourism students in Malaysia.

However, some scholars have found that some students do not perceive tourism as their career choice and would choose sectors other than tourism for a career (TTG, 2000). Students who are trained to fill the needs of the sector may not see tourism as their career choice (Pollock & Ritchie, 1990) and often utilized their qualifications to find careers in other sectors (McKercher et al., 1995). This, if not being addressed, will defeat the whole purpose of tourism education when the graduates choose not to work in the sector that they are trained for. Studying this issue in the context of tourism students in Malaysia, hence, is vital to understand whether or not tourism is perceived as a good career choice and the reasons for their decisions.

#### **2.4.2.5 Summary**

There are various stakeholders concerned about the labour shortage issue in tourism but four key stakeholders have been identified as the most affected – the government, employers, educators and students. Examining the relationships between these stakeholders, as suggested in the *stakeholder-inclusive* approach in tourism education is salient in understanding the stakeholders' perceptions of tourism as a graduate career.

### **2.5 Students' Perceptions of Tourism as a Graduate Career**

Tourism as a career is perceived either positively or negatively by students. This discussion will examine the factors that may lead to the different perceptions of students of tourism as a career option once they graduate. Several variables have been identified in

the literature as influencing perceptions of tourism careers among students. These variables include gender, the importance of tourism to the economy, the size of the employer, level of education, willingness in choosing to study tourism, level of exposure to tourism including work and travel experience, and the roles of family and friends working in tourism.

### **2.5.1 Gender**

Gender was suggested as a deeply-rooted issue that influences perceptions of tourism as a graduate career and very little has been done to address this issue (WTTC, 2002a). The gender issue in tourism can be viewed from two perspectives: the ‘outside’ and the ‘inside’. From the ‘outside’ of the tourism and hospitality industry, men seem to perceive tourism jobs as women’s work, referring to tasks like cleaning, preparing and serving food, and caring for the comfort and welfare of customers that are typically associated with the household skills said to be possessed by most women (Purcell, 1997). This perception hampers the interest among males to choose tourism as a career while they seek jobs that are more skilful, challenging and masculine (McKercher et al., 1995).

However, from the ‘inside’ view of those who are already working in tourism and hospitality industry, women believe that they have limited career development in terms of promotion and responsibility and this is regarded as the ‘glass ceiling’ that invisibly deny the capability of women to climb to a higher step in their career (Li & Leung, 2001). This factor can be influenced by three factors: *internal* factors in the organization such as gender discrimination and lack of networks with male-dominated higher management, *external* factors like lack of family support and cultural pressures for woman working unsociable hours, or a combination of both *internal and external* factors which is the

work-family conflict that makes women perceive that career development in tourism is difficult to achieve, thus perceiving it more negatively.

### **2.5.2 The Importance of Tourism to the Economy**

The relative importance of tourism in a country's economy is suggested to lead to different perceptions towards tourism as a career. A comparative study between students' perceptions in the UK and Greece suggested that higher interest was shown towards careers in tourism in Greece than the UK, due to the fact that tourism employment constituted 15% of the overall employment in Greece and only 5% in the UK (Airey & Frontistis, 1997). A similar notion is suggested by Choy (1995) in his case study in Hawai'i, and Lewis and Airey (2001) in their research in Trinidad and Tobago, which showed that tourism as the major source of employment fostered positive perceptions of tourism as a career. These case studies concluded that states or countries that are more dependent on tourism as a source of income and employment tend to perceive tourism more positively than those which are less dependent on tourism. Hence, the significance of tourism in contributing to the economy and providing employment opportunities plays an important role in shaping the perceptions of tourism as a career. In the case of Malaysia, it is suggested that the importance of tourism to the Malaysian economy could influence perceptions of tourism as a career.

### **2.5.3 The Size of the Employer**

The size of the employer is suggested to play a part in shaping the perceptions of employees towards work in the tourism industry. Tourism multi-national enterprises (MNEs) with greater financial and skills resources have greater ability to provide their employees with more attractive pay and remuneration, a more systematic management

style as well as more opportunities for career advancement (Martin, Mactaggart, & Bowden, 2006). For example, a large international hotel brand like Marriott is not only capable of providing good remuneration and an excellent employee relations system but also having a large chain of hotels that enables employees to have more opportunity for career development (Marriott, 2007). On the other hand, small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMEs) have very limited resources to provide attractive job remuneration and their small organizational structure also prevents them from guaranteeing attractive career development schemes (Lee-Ross, 1999). This has resulted in tourism SMEs putting less priority towards measures to improve perceptions of the employees about pursuing careers in tourism than the MNEs (Martin et al., 2006). Overall, SMEs are in a weaker position to improve employees' perceptions due to the limited resources they have to address the issues that affect their image as an attractive employer to the graduates.

#### **2.5.4 Level of Education**

Previous studies looking at perceptions of tourism as a career have often focusing on single groups of students (Aksu & Köksal, 2005; McKercher, et al., 1995; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005) which provide conclusions according to that particular group and the area where the study was conducted. But in recent years there have been more comparative studies that provide useful findings when different groups of students were compared. A comparison between Bachelor degree and diploma students by Purcell and Quinn (1996) found that the diploma students are more industry-oriented and committed to pursuing a career in tourism than the university graduates. However, Kelley-Patterson and George (2001) noted that knowledge from the tourism degree programme is valued by graduates as it provides them with the necessary managerial skills required in the workplace. The

high specialization of skills taught in the diploma programs that are more vocational leads the students to a specific career in tourism compared to graduates who have more transferable skills and broader career opportunities. In Malaysia, there are three levels of qualification in tourism, namely, the certificate, diploma and degree programme. These qualifications are typically awarded by different types of tertiary institutions, for example the certificates are awarded by community colleges and training centres, diplomas are awarded by the polytechnics and degrees by the universities. However, this research decided to use the same approach by Purcell and Quinn (1996) by looking at only the undergraduate university students and diploma students to make the findings comparable. Also, these groups of students generally form the biggest pool of skilled workers for tourism.

#### **2.5.5 Willingness in Choosing to Study Tourism**

It was suggested by the literature that students who choose to study tourism willingly are more committed to work in tourism after graduation than those who do not (Aksu & Köksal, 2005). This is because the willingness in choosing tourism programs also reflects students' intention to qualify for careers in tourism after graduation. When applying for tertiary institutions, students in Malaysia have the option to rank up to five programs that they are interested in and qualify for. These applications will be evaluated by the Ministry of Higher Education. Only one program will be offered to each student and selection is based on academic qualification that fulfils the prerequisites of each program. However, there are instances where students were offered programs that they did not apply for. This occurs when the students were offered other programs that are still available when the programs that they applied for are full. In this case, students may not

choose to study tourism willingly; hence it is important to examine their perceptions of tourism as a career upon their graduation.

### **2.5.6 Level of Exposure Towards Tourism**

The extent to which students familiar or who have been exposed to tourism is also suggested as leading to differences in perceptions of tourism as a career and this exposure refers to their own knowledge, working experience or being a consumer of tourism (Kelley-Patterson & George, 2001; McIntosh, 1983). Ross (1992) noted that people who work in tourism perceived tourism as a career more positively than those who had no experience. Therefore, this school of thought believes that familiarity in working in tourism leads to positive evaluation of careers in tourism.

However, Getz (1994) argued that exposure to the industry would likely generate negative attitudes by referring to his study on students' perception in Spey Valley, Scotland where it was found that there is a significant drop in interest among students who have had experience working in tourism industry. In a comparative study between English and Greek tourism students, Airey and Frontistis (1997) found that English students who have more travel experience have different perceptions of the reality of the job, compared to Greek students with less travel experience who tended to have a more 'unrealistic' view about careers in tourism. This second school of thought suggests that the more exposure the students have to tourism, the less interest they have in tourism-related work (Barron & Maxwell, 1993). It can be concluded that exposure to tourism may influence students' perceptions of tourism as a career either positively or negatively which creates an area of investigation for this thesis.



### **2.5.7 Roles of Family and Friends Working in Tourism**

The role of family and friends is also significant in influencing students in their career decisions (Ross, 1992). In Hawaii, most parents who are working in the tourism sector encourage their child to study tourism management (Choy, 1995). In Turkey, having children who work in tourism is a source of family pride and also becomes an achievement to tell to relatives and friends about (Aksu & Köksal, 2005). Conversely, it is also suggested that the role of family could hinder children's interest to pursue careers in tourism. This occurs when bad experiences of family and friends working in tourism are shared with students and influence their perceptions. In Scotland, a high level of parental involvement seemed to have influenced students' perceptions of tourism jobs (Getz, 1994). Hence, the powerful role of word of mouth by the circle of people around the students plays a significant role in influencing the students' perceptions of tourism as a career (Sciarini & Woods, 1997).

### **2.5.8 Summary**

From the above discussion it can be concluded that there are various factors that lead to differences in perceptions of tourism as a career. Therefore it is vital for these factors to be considered in conducting research related to the image of the industry. This thesis will look at the Malaysian context, in terms of to what extent the perceptions of tourism as a career is influenced by these variables.

## **2.6 Stakeholder-Inclusive Approaches in Tourism Education**

It is suggested that the perfect model for tourism education does not exist and what is considered relevant is not static with rapid change in the industry (Williams, 2005). Therefore, a strong collaboration between the government, industry and educators is

crucial to ensure that education and training meet the requirements of the institution, the needs of the students and the industry, and the policy direction of the government (Smith & Cooper, 2000).

This can be done through the formation of a forum or working group for these stakeholders to discuss matters related to tourism education and training to enable the concerns of all stakeholders to be communicated on a continuous and routine basis (Lewis & Airey, 2001; Williams, 2005). By allowing this, tourism education and training will be stakeholder-informed rather than stakeholder-influenced (Lewis, 2006) by giving flexibility to the educators to cater for their academic needs but with consideration of the interests of the relevant stakeholders.

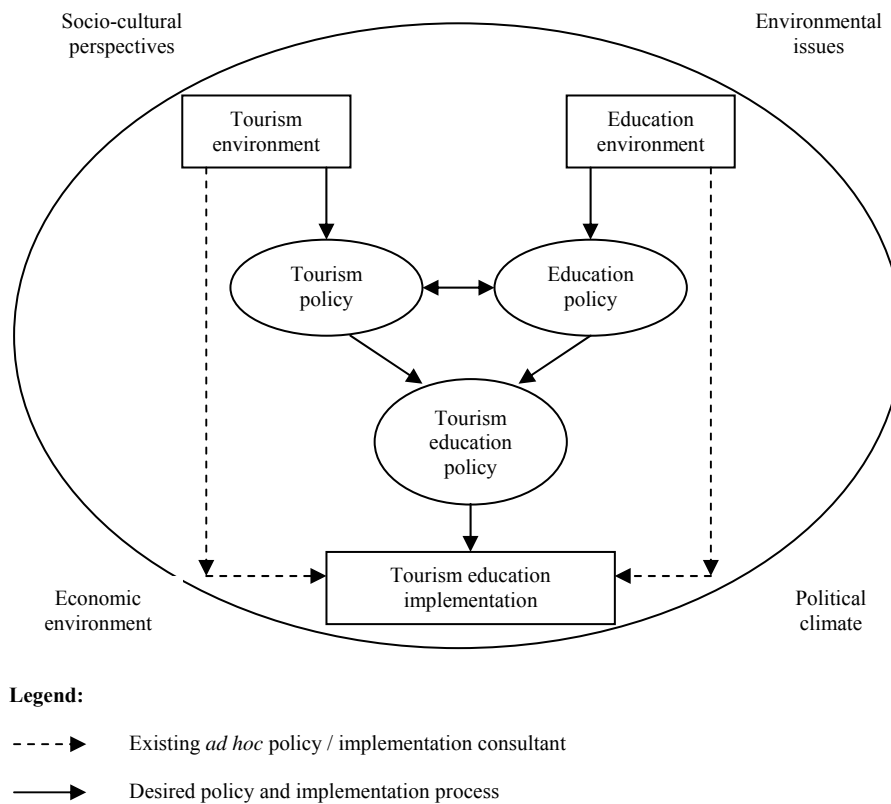
To develop this forum, the role of the government and its policies is important to lead the way (Aksu & Köksal, 2005; Swarbrooke, 1999). Government policy is significant to provide direction for the industry and stakeholders in shaping their perceptions towards what should form a tourism education (Aksu & Köksal, 2005). Thus it is important that policies are of a high standard (Swarbrooke, 1999) and informed by the needs of various stakeholders (Lewis, 2006). In a developing country, the lack of policies concerning tourism education will require a more active role by the government to bridge the differences between stakeholders of tourism education (Ernawati & Pearce, 2003).

Pollock and Ritchie (1990) in their review of tourism education development in two provinces in Canada - Alberta and British Columbia - found that these provinces have formulated a strategic approach to develop education and training in tourism. The similarity between these two provinces is the joint effort of the government with the

industry and educators in shaping tourism education. This collaboration has not only achieved the objectives of the policies set by the government but also addressed the needs of the industry while establishing a recognized tourism programme and skills standards. As a result, this also provides a clear career path for tourism students in their career decision making.

The strategy in the case study by Pollock and Ritchie (1990) is summarized by Amoah and Baum (1997) by developing the tourism education policy–tourism education implementation (TEP-TEI) framework (Figure 2.2), highlighting the importance of bridging the gap between the tourism and education environments by integrating the policies governing these environments (Baum et al., 1997). The result is a comprehensive tourism education policy that will take care of the concerns of both the industry and the educators in implementing tourism education.

**Figure 2.2: The Tourism Education Policy-Tourism Education Implementation (TEP-TEI) Conceptual Framework**



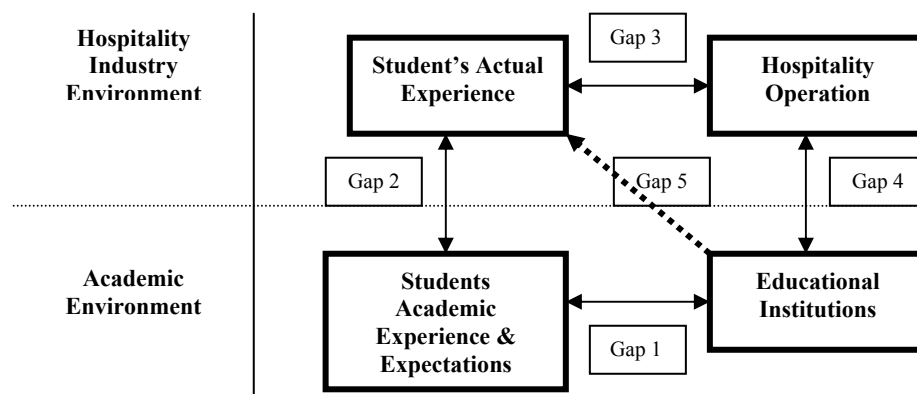
*Source:* Amoah and Baum (1997)

The above model is useful in explaining the integration between tourism and education strategy in shaping the implementation of tourism education. However, the usefulness of this model is limited to only the relationship between stakeholders in the policy making process. The model acknowledges the implementation of the policies but it is not addressed.

Zopiatis (2007) has developed a model that shows the relationships between stakeholders in the implementation of the tourism education policy called the ‘hospitality education-industry relationship: the five relationship/gap model’ (Figure 2.3). Similar to the above model by Amoah and Baum (1997), this model also acknowledges the different nature of

the hospitality (tourism) industry environment and the academic (education) environment. It is suggested that the industry and the educators are secluded in their own environments but students will get to experience both environments by being in the education environment when they are still studying tourism, and then move to the tourism environment by working in tourism. This model is not only useful to explain the different relationships between the industry, educators and the students but also to identify the gaps between them.

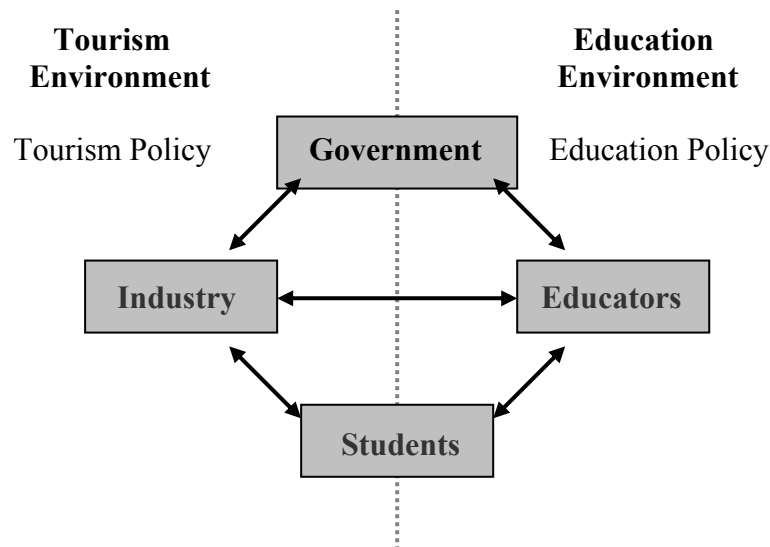
**Figure 2.3: The Hospitality Education-Industry Relationship: The Five Relationship/Gap Model**



*Source: Zopiatis and Constanti (2007)*

In order to provide a comprehensive explanation of the relationships between the four key stakeholders identified by this study, the models discussed above were merged to form a new model that incorporates both Amoah and Baum's (1997) policy perspectives with Zopiatis and Constanti's (2007) implementation perspective. The result is a model that describes relationships between different stakeholders of tourism human resource development (Figure 2.4).

**Figure 2.4: The Stakeholder-Inclusive Model in Tourism Human Resource Development**



*After: Amoah and Baum (1997) and Zopiatis & Constanti (2007)*

According to this model, the government has the power to influence both the tourism and education environments. The tourism environment is where all activities related to tourism take place, including tourism human resource management. The education environment is where curriculum is developed and learned, or in the context of this study, where students are being prepared with skills and knowledge of the industry. The industry and the educators play a significant role to link government policy with the students by implementing the policies. These relationships from these stakeholders flow downward from the government through the implementers and finally to the students, and can also be upward when what is needed by the students is being communicated by the implementers to the government to update the policy according to change in the industry. Within that, the lateral industry-educator relationship is also crucial to strengthen the supply of and demand for labour in tourism.

The above discussion showed that tourism education serves the need of various stakeholders but the conflicting interests make it difficult if not impossible for tourism education to cater to all of these needs. Therefore, a concerted effort between these stakeholders is crucial to identify the possibilities for a more integrated curriculum. Two models that explain the different nature of relationships between the stakeholders was merged into a comprehensive model that incorporates the key stakeholders in tourism. This model is suggested to provide a useful framework for integrated tourism education and for a study that addresses stakeholders' perceptions of tourism as a graduate career.

## **2.7 The Research Gap**

There seems to be a common understanding in the literature that studies about perceptions and intentions of the labour market towards tourism as a career are still scarce (Aksu & Köksal, 2005; Ross, 1992) indicating a need for such studies to be conducted.

Most studies only examine the perceptions of one stakeholder or the relationships between two stakeholders whereas Aksu and Köksal (2005:436) emphasize that the four stakeholders as identified earlier in this chapter are crucial. To date, apart from the work by Lewis (2006) on stakeholders' perceptions in the Caribbean and Ernawati and Pearce (2003) on stakeholders' perceptions in Indonesia, research that examines all four of these stakeholders is still limited. With the aim to provide a more exhaustive perspective regarding the perceptions of tourism as a graduate career in Malaysia, this study will incorporate the perspectives of the students, educators, industry bodies, a major employer and the government.

Besides that, much of the literature on perceptions of tourism education and tourism as a career has focused on developed countries and there is a lack of similar research being conducted in developing countries (Ernawati & Pearce, 2003) and the Asia Pacific region (Ross, 1992). Besides a study by Liu (2002) in comparing perceptions of tourism programs and careers between university students in Malaysia and China, there has been an overall lack of research dedicated to these topics. Therefore this study attempts to examine similar issues in the setting of a developing/Southeast Asian country which is also the fastest growing region in global tourism. Although a similar study in this region has been conducted by Ernawati and Pearce (2003) who investigated the perceptions of the stakeholders regarding tourism education in Indonesia, the central issue was the curriculum and no emphasis was given towards tourism as a graduate career.

Although research on perceptions of tourism are mainly concentrated on students, the comparison between different level of qualifications are limited (Purcell & Quinn, 1996) suggesting that the existing literature assumes that students studying for different qualifications have similar perceptions. Noting the fact that different levels of qualifications use different curricula, it is important to compare the perceptions of students from different levels of the tourism education system. This has been attempted by Purcell and Quinn (1996) by comparing degree and diploma programme in the UK which found that diploma students are more inclined to work in tourism than the degree graduates. Therefore, this study will also try to compare the perceptions of students from diploma and degree programs.



## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The primary aim of this research is to understand the perceptions of tourism as a graduate career from the perspective of various stakeholders. Hence, a suitable research methodology is important to ensure that the data collection techniques used are able to gather the information needed from these stakeholders.

This chapter discusses the methodology of this research in terms of its research design, research instruments, data collection process and the type of analysis that will be employed. It will begin by explaining the thesis's mixed-method design and its justifications to be used in this research. Then the chapter will discuss the two techniques employed for the data collection, namely the semi-structured interviews and the questionnaire survey. Each technique will be elaborated on further in terms of its appropriateness with the nature of the subject being studied, the development of the questions, the data collection, and the form of analysis used. Finally, this chapter will also discuss the limitations and challenges in the research design and during the field work, and finish with a brief explanation of the structure of the analysis chapters using the analytical framework developed for this study.

This research received approval from the Faculty of Commerce and Administration's human ethics review panel at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

### **3.2 Research Design**

As discussed, the key stakeholders identified by the literature include the government, employers, educators and students, which are different in nature. There are not many

government agencies that promote careers in tourism in Malaysia, and within these agencies not every official can provide the necessary information. The same case applies to the educators, since there are only a few universities in Malaysia that offer tourism courses. Thus, the number of educators who would be able to comment on this issue is not large. For the employers, the number of tourism companies in Malaysia is large hence focus is given to industry bodies which act as the focal point for their sectors. The researcher conducted interviews with key informants from these organizations to understand their efforts in promoting tourism as a graduate career. Tourism Malaysia, a major employer of tourism graduates, was also included in the sample.

Conversely, the students are large in number. Hence understanding the students' perceptions needs an approach that could capture a sample size that is more representative of the population. Hence, the differences in the nature of the students and the other stakeholders in this study justify the use of more than just a single method to collect data. Therefore, this research combines qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative approach is done by conducting semi-structured interviews with the relevant government officials, the industry, a major employer and the educators in Malaysia. The quantitative approach was employed through distributing questionnaires to tourism students at selected tertiary institutions.

It is suggested that a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods provides a comprehensive and important insight into a phenomenon (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001). The different strengths and weaknesses between these approaches compensate each other and can lead to a more credible result (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) provide a useful example that different methods can be employed

when examining certain phenomenon from the perspective of different groups of people who may view the issue from different standpoints, by suggesting quantitative research at the student level, and qualitative research at a macro level where informants hold positions of authority. It was also suggested that the combination of the interviews and the questionnaire, which is a main characteristic of this study, will help to gain understanding of the perspectives of different groups of people (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Hence, there is a general agreement that mixed methods are useful due to the complementarity between the techniques used to look at different perspectives of the issue more comprehensively (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

### **3.3 The Interviews**

The interviews aim to gain information about the perceptions of the stakeholders about their current and future measures, and how they perceive what other stakeholders have been doing in promoting tourism as a career to the graduates.

#### **3.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Due to the limited time, this research targets key informants from each organization. Interviews are seen as the best technique to gain information about different opinions and perceptions (Dunn, 2000). Furthermore, the number of the informants that has the necessary knowledge and expertise required by this study is small and thus demands more in-depth data collection from each informant. The one-to-one interaction between the researcher and the informant is important to understand the informant's view on certain issues. This is because interviews give opportunity to the informants to articulate their views as experts in terms of explaining the policies, positions and practices of the organization they represent. At the same time, it also gives the researcher some level of

control not just to provide clarification so that the questions are properly understood (Cavana et al., 2001) but also to ensure that the interviewees will provide the answers that are most relevant to the study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

This researcher decided to conduct semi-structured interviews. The questions were designed in a general form and so that they can be adjusted to the nature of the business of the informants (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Semi-structured interviews also enable the researcher to explore more than just the questions on the question list by capturing interesting and relevant themes or issues that may arise while conducting the interviews.

### **3.3.2 Focus of the Questions**

The interview questions were designed to capture the perceptions of the officials from various organizations on the same issue, their perceptions on the extent to which they have been promoting tourism as a graduate career. Hence similar questions will be asked to all stakeholders in order to compare their responses on how the issue is viewed from different perspectives. But it is also important to investigate how these stakeholders perceive what other stakeholders have been doing on the same issue, which will demonstrate to what extent these activities involve or benefit other stakeholders. This is an additional dimension to the stakeholder literature which tends to look at only the stakeholders' self-assessment on what they have been doing.

### **3.3.3 Development of Interview Questions**

A matrix that demonstrates the possible direct relationships between the stakeholders has been developed as a checklist in developing the interview questions (Table 3.1). The matrix is viewed by matching the stakeholders in the left-hand column with the

stakeholders across the top row. Then, the questions to be developed must be able to capture how the stakeholders in the left-hand column perceive the actions of stakeholders across the top row with respect to promoting tourism as a graduate career. If the stakeholders meet themselves across the top row, the questions will be on the stakeholders' self-assessment on what they have been doing in promoting tourism careers to graduates. As suggested by the analytical framework (due to the absence of a direct relationship between the government and the students with the intermediary roles of the employers and the educators in bringing government policies to the students) the boxes that link the students and the government were not relevant to the study.

**Table 3.1: Matrix for the Development of Interview Questions**

	a. Government	b. Industry	c. Educator	d. Student
i. Government	Self-assessment			
ii. Industry		Self-assessment		
iii. Educator			Self-assessment	
iv. Student				Self-assessment

The interview questions (Appendix 1) were ordered using a pyramid approach, by starting with easy-to-answer questions including basic information about the interviewees' organizations and their staff. This is to ease the informant into the interview and to build rapport between the researcher and the interviewee, before moving to issues that require their perceptions or opinions (Dunn, 2000). The questions then addressed the promotion of tourism as a career, beginning with the interviewees' perceptions on the measures that they have been undertaking to promote tourism as an attractive career option to the graduates. Then the questions move to perceptions of what other

stakeholders are doing in promoting graduate careers in tourism, which also captures the relationships between the interviewee and other stakeholders in undertaking activities to promote tourism as a graduate career.

### **3.3.4 Selection of Key Informants**

A sample of interviewees was identified to make data collection more achievable. A sample is a smaller group in the population that has the characteristics of the population being studied, with each individual in the sample called a subject (Cavana et al., 2001). But this research intends to look at the key informants by selecting a subject that best represents its population, based on the level of their knowledge on the key interest of this study. They are also called ‘elite interview subjects’ or experts or leaders that people ask for their opinions and thoughts (Kvale, 2007:70).

Hence for the interviews, a purposive sampling method was used, by selecting a specific person who can provide the information needed by this study (Brewer & Hunter, 2006), based on their experience or responsibilities in human resource management in their organization or sector. This method is considered efficient by accessing the person who is the most knowledgeable and most likely can provide the desired information (Cavana et al., 2001; Czaja & Blair, 2005). Therefore, the interviews were conducted with key informants deemed to be knowledgeable about graduate careers in tourism in government agencies, the industry and amongst the educators.

**The government agencies** selected for this study include the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Human Resources. The Ministry of Tourism is the key agency representing the tourism industry in Malaysia. In this ministry, the division that deals with human resource development in tourism is the Tourism

Services Division. Hence, a senior official from this division was identified to be included in this study.

This research focuses on students as one of the stakeholders so the education environment is equally important to be emphasized, particularly in looking at the extent to which tourism education meets the needs of the industry. In Malaysia, there are two ministries governing national education: the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education. As this research is looking at students at higher learning institutions, the Ministry of Higher Education is found to be more relevant. Within this ministry, two divisions are responsible in governing the different types of tertiary institutions examined in this study, the Public University Division and the Polytechnics and Community Colleges Division. A representative from each of the two divisions was interviewed.

Finally, the Ministry of Human Resources which steers the national human resource policy in Malaysia is also included in this study. The human resource policy corresponds to the needs of human resources in Malaysia which is driven by the focus of the economy and the country's objectives in the national plans. The Skills Development Department, a division that is responsible for monitoring the human resources needs of all sectors in the Malaysian economy, was targeted for the interview.

All the informants from the government were recruited by sending official letters to the secretary generals of the relevant Ministries, providing information about the thesis and its objectives. The Ministry then suggested the name of the relevant officials and the department to be contacted. The officials were then contacted by telephone and e-mail. A

copy of the interview questions was also sent to the officials for them to make the necessary preparations for the interview.

**The industry** in this thesis comprises two categories. The first one is the industry bodies or associations that represent sectors of the tourism industry. The industry bodies that have been identified are the Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH) and the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA). These associations were selected because they represent sectors that are key employers of tourism graduates in the tourism and hospitality sector in Malaysia. These associations represent the interests of the sectors so accessing them will likely provide this study with the information that, broadly speaking, represents the view of the employers (the association members) from these sectors. The associations were contacted through e-mail messages to the presidents of the associations. The presidents then suggested the contact person to be interviewed.

The researcher also interviewed the representative of a major employer, Tourism Malaysia, that plays an important role as a key employer of graduates. Tourism Malaysia is a destination marketing organization that is responsible for all tourism promotional activities inside and outside of Malaysia. This agency has 31 overseas offices and 13 state chapters nationwide and is also a key employer of university graduates, particularly from tourism-related fields.

**The educators** were identified from the higher learning institutions suggested by an official from the Ministry of Higher Education. The thesis looks at only two public universities and two polytechnics which the Ministry recommended. The institutions suggested by the Ministry include the MARA University of Technology in the state of



Selangor and the Northern University of Malaysia in Kedah, while the polytechnics are the Sabak Bernam Polytechnic in Selangor and the Merlimau Polytechnic in Malacca (Figure 3.1). These four institutions were recommended because they house the biggest tourism schools, as well as having the most established tourism programs in Malaysia. As well, all four tertiary institutions have programs that describe themselves as tourism management programs. Letters were sent to each institution asking for permission as well as to identify the key informants for the interviews. The key informants from all tertiary institutions were directors of undergraduate studies in their respective tourism management programs.

**Figure 3.1: Locations of the Selected Tourism Tertiary Institutions**



Legend:

1. Northern University of Malaysia
2. Sabak Bernam Polytechnic
3. MARA University of Technology
4. Merlimau Polytechnic

*Source:* Malaysia-Maps.com (2008)

The total number of interviews conducted was 11, including four senior officials from the government agencies, two managers from two industry bodies, a representative of a key employer, and four program directors from the tourism programs at the universities and

polytechnics. In qualitative research, the issue of the representativeness of the sample is not a concern since the emphasis is upon the in-depth analysis of the issue being investigated (Bryman & Bell, 2003; Robinson, 1998). The 11 interviews have basically captured all the key stakeholders of this research, hence the number of interviews conducted are ‘meaningfully significant rather than statistically significant’ (Brewer & Hunter, 2006:93) in understanding the issue of perceptions of tourism as a graduate career.

### **3.3.5 Conducting Interviews**

All the interviewees were given the interview questions beforehand for them to familiarize themselves with the questions and make the necessary preparations. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and tape recorded. Eight out of the 11 interviews were conducted in Malay and the other three in English. Each interview lasted for 60 to 90 minutes. All interviews were conducted at the worksite of the interviewees.

At the beginning of the interview, the interviewees were given a brief explanation on the background of the research and the objectives of the study. They were also informed that the session would be recorded, and they would have the right to view the interview transcripts before the analysis was conducted. The interviewees were asked to sign consent forms. This practice is encouraged in conducting interviews to provide the interviewees with the sufficient information and to ensure informed consent to the interview (Kvale, 2007).

The questions were asked according to the original order in the interview schedule. But in many instances the interviewees tended to answer questions that had yet to be asked while answering other questions. Hence the researcher had to adjust the order of the

questions to ensure that all questions had been answered by the interviewees. Overall, the interviewees were cooperative and seemed interested in the research topic.

The 11 interviews took a total of five weeks to be completed, between the months of June and July in 2008 and this was to accommodate the dates set by the interviewees. Most of the government agencies are located in Malaysia's administrative city of Putrajaya and the industry representatives were concentrated in the city of Kuala Lumpur, which are both easily accessible to the researcher. The tertiary institutions are located far from these cities and some travel was required.

### **3.3.6 Analysing the Interview Data**

According to Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander (1990) one way to analyse qualitative data is through the 'theme coding system' by clustering the data into the themes related to the study. The coding is done by breaking down the interview transcripts into categories followed by assigning labels or themes to the responses that are significant to the issue being studied (Bryman & Bell, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For this research, the qualitative data involves only the responses from the interviews conducted with the government, industry and the educators.

Eight out of the 11 interviews were conducted in Malay language hence the interview transcripts were translated into English for the analysis. All the interviews were then transcribed into written text and e-mailed as document attachments to all interviewees for their comments. No objections were received from the interviewees on the interview transcripts. Then the interview transcripts were categorized into several themes using Microsoft Excel to prepare an interview summary sheet. This summary sheet simplified

the transcripts into matrix form, from which the emerging themes were identified. However, full quotations from the interviewees were used for the analysis. In addition, the direct quotations were analyzed in conjunction with data gathered from the student questionnaire. This is useful in comparing the data from the stakeholders obtained using the qualitative approach with the data from the students that was collected through the questionnaire. The interviewees will not be referred to by their names, but the interviewees from the government ministries, industry bodies, and Tourism Malaysia will be described as ‘senior officials’ from these organizations. The program directors from the universities and polytechnics will simply be referred to as ‘program directors’.

### **3.4 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire sought to investigate students’ perceptions of tourism as a career during their final year of study in a tourism management program shortly before graduation, and when they are about to embark on their career path. It also intends to identify the factors underlying their decision to choose a tourism programme and their future intention to work in tourism after graduation.

#### **3.4.1 Self-Completion Questionnaire**

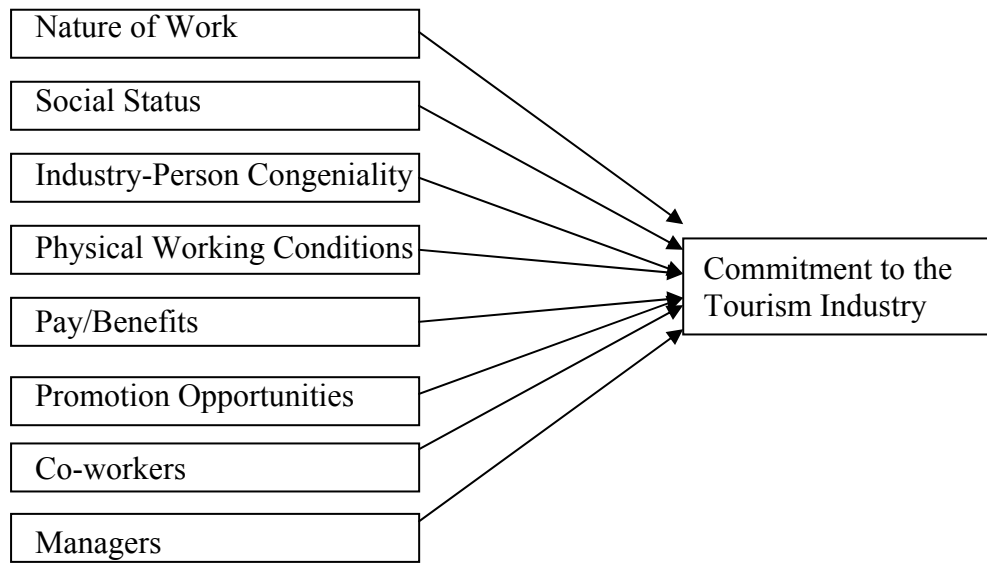
A questionnaire survey was chosen as the technique for collecting data from the students because there are a large number of students studying tourism management at these institutions. Hence the fastest and cheapest way to gather information about their perceptions is through a questionnaire (Bryman & Bell, 2003). That is why most of the earlier studies on students’ perceptions of tourism as a career also employed the same technique (Jenkins, 2001; Purcell & Quinn, 1996).

A self-completion questionnaire was selected for this study because the researcher was able to obtain access to the students in the lecture halls. Self-completion questionnaires are easy for the respondents to answer and also assist the researcher in collecting data from a large sample in a fast manner (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Furthermore, the target group for this questionnaire are students at the tertiary level of education who are able to read and answer the questionnaire by themselves, which is suitable for a self-completed questionnaire survey.

### 3.4.2 Developing the Questionnaire

In developing the questionnaire, the researcher adhered to the research questions, primarily the perceptions of tourism as a career from the students' perspective. Certain variables suggested by the literature that influence perceptions of tourism careers were used to guide the development of the questionnaire questions. In addition to this, some of the questions were borrowed from the literature. Among those questions borrowed from the literature are statements which are derived from the attitude dimensions that influence commitment to the tourism industry developed by Kusluvan and Kusluvan (2000) in their study of tourism students in Turkey (Figure 3.2). These dimensions include the *nature of work*, *social status*, *industry-person congeniality* or the suitability of one's characteristics to the nature of the industry, *physical working conditions*, *pay/benefits*, *promotion opportunities*, *co-workers* and *managers*. Apart from that, this research also adapted the variables regarding the reasons for choosing tourism programs and students' perceptions of the skills and knowledge valued by potential employers suggested by Liu (2002) who conducted a comparative study of perceptions of tourism programs and careers between university students in Malaysia and China.

**Figure 3.2: Attitude Dimensions that Determine Commitment to the Tourism Industry**



*Source:* Kusluvan & Kusluvan (2000)

Borrowing or adapting questions developed by other researchers, according to Czaja and Blair (2005), is allowed and could assist this research in many ways. This is because the questions have proven to work well in the research it was developed for, hence saving the effort for this research to test its usability. In addition to that, the findings between studies that use the same questions can be compared and thus add to the breadth of the research in the area being studied. However, as this research is also unique in its interests in the context of Malaysia, some new questions were also developed.

### 3.4.3 Types of Questionnaire Questions

The questionnaire (Appendix 2) in general has three types of questions:

The first type is questions which require “Yes” or “No” answers. This type of question is mostly used to determine intention to work in the industry, whether the respondent has

work experience in tourism, family and friends working in tourism and overseas travel experience.

The second type is questions with some answers to choose from, where the respondents were directed to choose only one answer that best describes their position. An extra answer choice of “other” was also provided with a blank space for the students to fill with answers that differed from the choices given (if necessary). This addresses the issue of limited choice of answers in the questionnaire by providing a flexibility to the respondents to provide answers other than the ones provided by the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2003) which will also suggest new ideas to the researcher. This format is mostly used to investigate factors for choosing to study tourism, sectors in tourism that the students have experience working in/intend to work in and the way in which they obtained information about tourism careers.

The third type is statements using 5-point Likert scales from the lowest point of 1= Strongly agree to 5= Strongly disagree. In the study by Kusluvan & Kusluvan (2000) and Aksu and Köksal (2005), the scale of 1= Strongly agree to 4= Strongly disagree was used. For this research, a mid-point of 3= Neutral is used to give the students the opportunity to take the position of ‘neither agree nor disagree’ to the statement. This is because a Likert scale gives more freedom to the respondents to select the desired level of agreement or disagreement towards a given statement (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2000). There are three sets of questions using this format, namely, the skills and knowledge expected from studying tourism, the skills or qualities the students perceived as important to the employer, and the perceptions of tourism as a career.

The questionnaire used close-ended questions. This design makes it easy for the respondents to answer because it is fast and does not require extensive answers from the respondents. At the same time close-ended questions ensured that responses were comparable (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The use of attitude scale questions is also appropriate to measure perceptions which is the key thrust of this study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

In total there are 21 questions in the questionnaire that is eight pages long because it is written in two languages - English and the Malay. Respondents were asked to answer questions that were relevant to them. For example, students who answered 'yes' to a question about whether they have worked in tourism before were then asked to answer questions including the total amount of time spent working in tourism and the sector that they worked in most recently. Respondents who answered 'no' to this questions could just skip to the next set of questions.

#### **3.4.4 Structure of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is divided into four sections that seek to gather different sets of information:

##### *Section A: Tourism Education*

This section investigates the motivations of the students who choose a tourism programme, by asking whether or not tourism was their first choice when selecting a tertiary programme, whether or not they chose tourism willingly, and the factors that determined why they choose tourism. This is done in order to draw the students into the research by asking them questions about their decisions to study tourism. The students



were also asked about the skills and knowledge that they expect to acquire from studying tourism and the skills and qualities that they perceived as important to their potential employer.

#### *Section B: Perceptions of Tourism as a Career*

This is the key section in the questionnaire which aims to capture perceptions of tourism as a career, using the statements developed by Kusluvan & Kusluvan (2000). Two statements related to perceptions of careers in different sized tourism businesses - multi national organizations and small medium enterprises - were added to expand the scope of this section by examining the extent to which this factor influences students' perceptions.

#### *Section C: Exposure to Tourism*

As the literature suggests, exposure to tourism may influence students' perceptions of tourism as career. This section gathers information on various variables that may influence their perceptions including the respondents' work experience in tourism, the amount of time and the sector that they worked in most recently, having family and friends working in tourism, overseas travel experience in the past two years and the source of information that the students used to learn about careers in tourism.

#### *Section D: Demography*

This section is used to gain information about the demographic background of the respondents. However, this research only looks at the respondents' gender and ethnicity. These background questions are needed to examine the variation in responses (Czaja & Blair, 2005) that may be derived from the gender and ethnic (cultural) background. Other questions typically asked in the demography sections include age and income level.

These questions are not relevant to this thesis because the students typically fall under the same age cohort while questions about income level would be more applicable to tourism workers who earn an income rather than students who do not necessarily have jobs.

### **3.4.5 Pilot Test**

To ensure the usability of a questionnaire, it is important that it is tested with the group of people who are not in the sample but share its characteristics (Bryman & Bell, 2003). This is even more crucial when the questionnaire is to be self-completed by the respondents. Therefore, all potential mistakes need to be eliminated before it can be distributed to the intended respondents. For this reason, a pilot test was conducted in order to make sure that the instrument is able to capture the information needed as well as to identify potential problems (Bryman & Bell, 2003). According to Czaja & Blair (2005), this can be done by distributing the questionnaire to people who are comparable, but do not belong to the sample to be investigated. By doing this, the respondents of the pilot test who have no idea about the research would depend solely on the instructions and the contents to answer the questionnaire. Then the weaknesses of the questionnaire can be easily identified.

The questionnaire was pilot tested with 10 Malaysian students at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand in order to assess its readability, the clarity of the instructions and the accuracy of the translations into Malay. The pilot test found that the respondents had no difficulties understanding the questions although some minor corrections were suggested to its translations. The major comment was on the instructions to mark the selected answer, in which the pilot test respondents preferred to put a tick or checkmark (✓) into the answer boxes, rather than an (x) due to the latter being associated with 'no' or

disagreement. Taking this suggestion, the instructions in the questionnaire were changed accordingly. Respondents were therefore asked to place a tick or checkmark (✓) in the answer box that best matched their own opinion.

In general, the pilot test respondents felt that the questionnaire was easy to complete in an average time of 15 minutes. This helped the researcher estimate the time needed to be given to the respondents and the mode of distributing and collecting the data during the fieldwork.

#### **3.4.6 Questionnaire Sample**

In choosing the sample for the questionnaire survey, this research employs a non-probability approach (Bryman & Bell, 2003) by selecting only students from the same four tertiary institutions as the educators who were interviewed for this study. The four institutions were recommended to the researcher by the Ministry of Higher Education because they have sizeable tourism management programs. As discussed earlier, this research focused on only the undergraduate university students and diploma students who form the biggest pool of skilled workers for tourism, as well as to make the findings of this thesis comparable with the similar study by Purcell and Quinn (1996).

The sample was further narrowed down to look at only the final year students in tourism management programs at these institutions. This is because the final year students are at the final stage of their program and probably readying to embark upon employment after graduation. Tourism management students are chosen because the skills and knowledge from this type of program is suggested as providing skills that are more transferable

across many sectors (Purcell & Quinn, 1996), which provides the students with flexibility in choosing careers inside or outside of tourism.

The number of final year tourism management student in these tertiary institutions is as follows:

- MARA University of Technology: 117 students
- Northern University of Malaysia: 87 students
- Sabak Bernam Polytechnic: 35 students
- Merlimau Polytechnic: 64 students

Therefore, the total number of students who fulfil the criteria set by this study is 303 students, with 204 students from the two universities and 99 students from the two polytechnics.

#### **3.4.7 Data Collection**

The recruitment of the students was done with the help of the directors of the tourism management programs at the selected tertiary institutions. Courses taken by final year tourism management students were identified and permission was obtained to access the lecture halls to distribute the questionnaire.

Upon received the questionnaire, the students were given time to read the information sheet on the front cover of the questionnaire. Then they were given a short briefing by the researcher who emphasized the importance for all instructions in the questionnaire to be read carefully. The students were also reminded that all questions require only one answer that best describes their opinion. The students were also informed that their

identity as respondents is anonymous hence they were asked not to write their name on the questionnaire form or discuss the questions with other students. The presence of the researcher in the lecture halls also helped to answer questions and provide clarifications to the students, thus minimizing possible errors in answering the questionnaire questions.

Initially, the researcher intended to distribute the questionnaire to the students to be answered at their convenience, and to be collected during the course tutorials which usually follow in the same week. This was to give sufficient time to the students to answer the questionnaire at their own leisure without feeling pressured by time constraints. However, the programme coordinators allowed the questionnaire to be distributed and collected in the lecture hall on the same day, to ensure a high response rate. In doing this, this researcher was given 30 minutes to distribute the questionnaire, give the briefing and collect the questionnaire after the students had completed it. The students generally took 15 to 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire hence the time given was sufficient.

It was suggested that distributing a self-administered questionnaire to students in a classroom is a cost-effective and efficient technique especially when the lecturers allow the researcher to use their lecture time (Czaja & Blair, 2005). The support given by the lecturers from all the tertiary institutions being studied in terms of allowing the researcher to conduct the questionnaire survey in the lecture halls has assisted the study in terms of saving time and resources. It may have also had a positive impact on the response rate.

The total number of respondents to the questionnaire survey was 193 (Table 3.2) or 64 percent of the 303 eligible respondents. This number is considered adequate according to

the ‘rule of thumb’ for the sample size in questionnaire surveys, from 30 to 500 respondents (Roscoe, 1975). The proportion of both groups was almost equal with 97 students from the universities and 96 students from the polytechnics.

**Table 3.2: Response Rates from the Selected Tourism Tertiary Institutions in Malaysia**

Institution	Number of Eligible Respondents	Actual Number of Respondents	Response Rate		
MARA University of Technology	117	49	42%	97 University students	49%
Northern University of Malaysia	87	48	55%		
Sabak Bernam Polytechnic	35	35	100%	96 Polytechnic students	51%
Merlimau Polytechnic	64	61	95%		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>100%</b>

The recruitment of students at the polytechnics was easy because the curriculum has been predetermined; hence all the students were doing the same courses throughout the tourism management programs. But at the universities, the system is different. The core courses taken by all of the tourism management students are usually done during the first year. As the students approach final year, they have to choose more specialized tourism courses. Hence recruiting final year students at the universities was challenging because the researcher had to distribute the questionnaire in several lecture halls in order to capture as many of the final year tourism management students as possible. To ensure that university students did not fill out the questionnaire twice when they cross over between courses, the researcher excluded students who had answered the questionnaire by asking them to declare themselves to the researcher. The response rate for university

students was lower because the students were widely dispersed across different classes and the researcher was not able to reach all off the classes they were taking.

The data collection in all four institutions was conducted over a period of four weeks, with an average of three to four days spent to travel to, and collect data at, each institution. This was done in the months of July and August, which is the beginning of the second semester in Malaysia and also the final semester for the final year students in the tourism management programs.

#### **3.4.8 Data Analysis**

The data collected from the questionnaire were used to calculate frequencies and percentages. In the case when two variables were compared, this research used cross tabulation analysis to examine the relationships, followed by the chi-square test to examine the significance between two variables with categorical data (Clark & Randal, 2004). This test was used in testing associations between variables suggested by the literature that are believed to influence work intention in tourism after graduation including the level of education, work experience in tourism, having family and friends work in tourism and travel experience.

When analyzing the data obtained from the Likert scale questions, Kusluvan & Kusluvan (2000) analyzed their data using the ‘collapsed percentages’ technique. This is achieved by grouping the ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ into one category and ‘disagree and strongly disagree’ into another. The percentage of all respondents who selected both ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ (and both ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’) was then calculated. Although this approach simplifies the variance in the response into smaller categories,

this researcher believes that this approach is under-utilising the richness of the Likert scale data which demonstrated different levels of agreement towards certain statements. At the same time, it is also a waste of the respondent's time to answer attitudinal scale questions when the bipolar categories approach used by Kusluvan & Kusluvan (2000) can be easily examined through questions with 'yes' and 'no' answers (and a 'don't know' or 'unsure' box for those who cannot provide a definitive 'yes' or 'no' answer).

This research used mean analysis on the same Likert scale without adjusting the five levels of agreement. The mean response to each Likert Scale question was calculated. The standard deviation showed that the data was normally distributed hence enabling mean analysis to produce accurate results (Clark & Randal, 2004). As the Likert scale used in this questionnaire was ordered from the lowest point of 1= Strongly agree to 5= Strongly disagree, a lower mean should represent answers that were perceived more positively by the respondents.

The results of the questionnaire were not just interpreted exclusively, but also compared with the qualitative data to examine the similarities or differences between the perceptions of the different stakeholders. This is called 'parallel analysis' which could provide more insight into the variables and how the findings from different methods correspond to each other (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

### **3.5 Research Limitation and Challenges**

There were no major problems in collecting the data. For the government agencies, the challenge was to identify the right divisions and officials to be interviewed. Some ministries have agencies that perform overlapping roles and identifying the most



appropriate person to be interviewed took a long time. The industry bodies and Tourism Malaysia were easier to contact. However the challenge was sometimes to get hold of the person to be interviewed. This resulted in interviews being rescheduled several times in order to suit the interviewee's schedule.

The educators and the students were easily accessible and were very keen to participate in this study. Except for the challenges in distributing questionnaire to the final year students at the universities who were scattered in several lecture halls, no major problems were encountered from collecting data at the higher learning institutions.

The non-probability sampling method used in the questionnaire survey is driven by the limitation of time and money for this research. It was impossible to include all tertiary institutions in Malaysia. Therefore the research looks at only the four tertiary institutions that were recommended by the Ministry of Higher Education. Therefore, this research excludes the community colleges that offer tourism courses at the certificate level, as well as the private institutions that also play an important role in producing tourism graduates in Malaysia.

The selection of only two industry bodies and Tourism Malaysia makes the data of this thesis limited to only a few industry players. Future studies could explore the possibility of including more industry players from other sectors that are related to tourism. Future research could also investigate perceptions of each tourism employer rather than through key informants which may provide a wider range of perspectives.

Apart from that, the selection of only tourism management students ignores the students in other tourism related programs that are also likely to enter the tourism labour market after graduation. Interest towards tourism which influenced the decision to study tourism among students could also influence their perceptions of tourism as a career. Future studies could examine students across different academic programs who wish to pursue tourism as a career. Research could also expand the scope of the study to community colleges and private tertiary institutions in Malaysia.

### **3.6 Discussion and Conclusion**

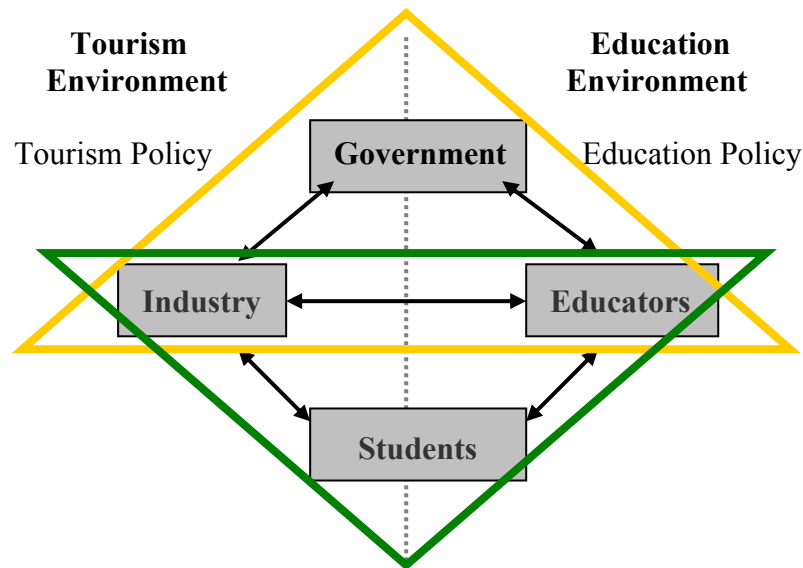
In conclusion, the mixed methods approach employed by this research is suitable to address the differences in the nature of the subjects being studied. The development of a matrix to guide the development of the interview questions, as well as adapting some questions from the existing studies for the questionnaire, was used to be able to gather the desired data.

The semi-structured interviews conducted with the senior officials from the relevant government agencies, the industry bodies, Tourism Malaysia and the educators provide this research with in-depth information about the efforts being undertaken by the stakeholders in promoting careers in tourism to the graduates. The self-completed questionnaire was useful in capturing the views of a large number of students. It provides the necessary information regarding the students' motivation for choosing a tourism management program, perceptions of careers in tourism and their intention to work in tourism after graduation.

In general, the data collection process was executed according to the research design and the support from the stakeholders enabled the data collection to be completed in a timely manner.

The flow of the analysis will be based on the relationships amongst the stakeholders as illustrated in the analytical framework of human resource development in tourism suggested in the literature review chapter. The analysis will be separated into sets of relationships in the framework (Figure 3.3).

**Figure 3.3: The Two Sets of Relationships in the Stakeholder-Inclusive Model of Tourism Human Resource Development**



*After: Amoah and Baum (1997) and Zopiatis & Constanti (2007)*

The first set of relationships is amongst the government, the industry and the educators. The data from these stakeholders are in the form of interview transcripts hence it will be analyzed qualitatively. The second set of relationships, amongst the industry, the educators and the students involves examining both interview data and questionnaire

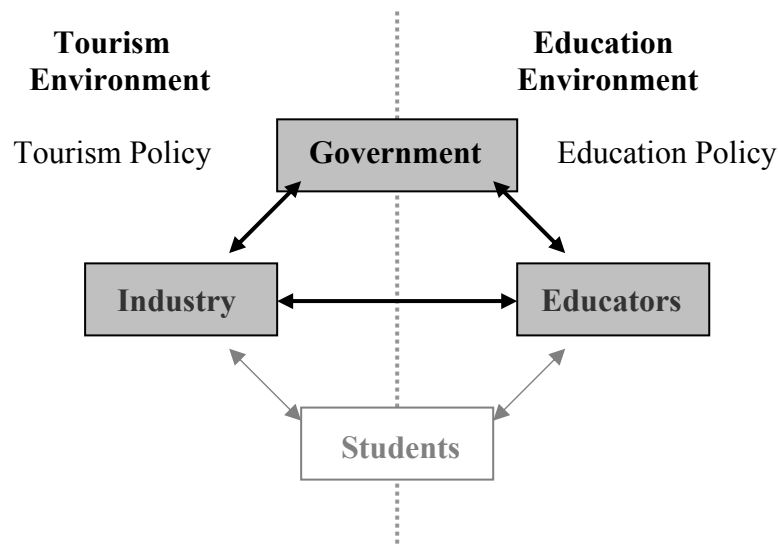
data. Therefore this part will employ ‘parallel analysis’ as described by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998). These two sets of relationships will be discussed separately in the next two chapters to assist interpretation. Chapter 4 will address the first set of relationships; chapter 5 will address the second set.

## **CHAPTER 4: HOW STAKEHOLDERS VIEW TOURISM AS A GRADUATE CAREER - GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY AND EDUCATORS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Perceptions of tourism as a graduate career as discussed in the previous chapter can be viewed from the sets of relationships that play a role in promoting tourism careers in Malaysia. This chapter will look at the first set of relationships (Figure 4.1) amongst the government, employers and the educators, particularly these stakeholders' perceptions of what they do and what other stakeholders do in terms of increasing graduates' interest in choosing careers in tourism. The next chapter will address the second set of relationships amongst the industry, the educators and the students.

**Figure 4.1: Relationships amongst the Government, Industry and Educators**



*After: Amoah and Baum (1997) and Zopiatis & Constanti (2007)*

As discussed, this model recognizes two environments: the tourism and education environments. The tourism environment is where all tourism-related policies, including tourism human resource policies, are formulated and disseminated to organizations that

implement the policies. In the education environment, the government develops tourism curricula which guide tourism education and training at learning institutions. Therefore, the government which is at the top of the analytical framework has a strong influence on both the tourism and education policies.

In the tourism and education environments, the government – possibly in conjunction with industry and educators – may formulate and implement policies that address tourism human resource development. At this stage, policies have yet to reach the students. Government, the industry and educators are well equipped, through their expertise and the roles they perform, to comment on the main human resource issues in tourism in Malaysia. Hence, key informants that represent these stakeholders were interviewed for this study. These stakeholders are able to discuss broad issues related to tourism as a graduate career. The government as the highest authority has the power to influence both the tourism and education environments through tourism and education policies from a top-down approach. At the same time the industry and educators may also provide feedback (from the bottom-up) to the government in order to ensure that policies fulfil the country's needs. Therefore, this set of relationships provides guidance to examine cooperation amongst the government, industry and educators in Malaysia in promoting tourism as a graduate career.

This chapter will present the results of the key informant interviews conducted with the three stakeholders mentioned above. It will begin by examining main human resources issues in Malaysian tourism faced by the stakeholders. Then this chapter will investigate the relationships amongst the stakeholders in promoting tourism as a graduate career. The discussion will continue by looking at measures or activities that these stakeholders have

been undertaking in promoting tourism careers to graduates, as well as the extent to which the stakeholders perceive these measures as adequate to increase students' participation in the industry. This chapter will conclude by viewing the suggestions made by the stakeholders to promote careers in tourism to graduates more effectively.

## **4.2 Main Human Resource Issue in Tourism**

The stakeholders were asked about the main human resource issues faced by the tourism industry or their own organizations and the factors underlying those issues. The key issue that emerged from this question was the shortage of skilled labour or specifically, difficulty in attracting graduates to work in tourism. Further examination found factors that resulted in the lack of attractiveness in what the industry offers to graduates.

### **4.2.1 Shortages of Skilled Labour**

Shortages of skilled labour in the tourism environment are perceived as one of the key human resource issues in tourism by the stakeholders:

“The issue is general acceptance by students of careers in tourism. They are not doing it [tourism] whole-heartedly.” (Ministry of Tourism)

“There is lack of manpower [sic]. The interest of the locals to work in the hotel sector is not there.” (Malaysian Association of Hotels)

“We have difficulty attracting new people to the industry, problems attracting those who have studied tourism at the diploma and degree level.” (Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents)

The stakeholders agreed that the issue is not just in attracting motivated workers to choose careers in tourism, but to attract quality people with the necessary knowledge and

qualifications to contribute to the industry. University and polytechnic graduates fall into this category. This echoes the finding from the research conducted by Malaysia's Ministry of Tourism (2002) by providing evidence that the challenges in attracting graduates to work in tourism in Malaysia are still unresolved.

#### **4.2.2 Factors Leading to Shortages of Skilled Labour**

The stakeholders explained that the key factor that contributes to the lack of interest among graduates to work in tourism is the unattractiveness of what the industry offers, particularly by offering low salaries which is closely linked to having to start from low positions. Two educators emphasize that pay in the tourism industry should reflect students' qualifications:

“In terms of pay, it should be according to qualifications.” (Northern University of Malaysia)

“In terms of salary, employers should pay the graduates according to their qualification. They should also offer more incentives to increase public interest to choose careers in tourism.” (Sabak Bernam Polytechnic)

This factor, according to government officials and educators, makes the students feel that their qualification is undervalued which results in negative images of tourism as an employer:

“The obvious factor is the low salary. In hotels, it doesn't matter if you have a degree in tourism management, you will still go with the 'rank and file' [jobs]. So that makes it unattractive.” (Ministry of Tourism)

“Employers take advantage by offering low pay to the students to either take it or leave it. Some students are fine with this but there are also those who are



frustrated for being asked to do jobs that are not compatible with their skills and qualification.” (Ministry of Human Resources)

The industry bodies admitted that low salaries and having to start from low positions do occur in tourism, because most tourism businesses in Malaysia are not making large profits or simply that some employers were being unfair towards the graduates. However, they also argued that graduates should not expect to be paid for their qualifications alone. They noted that working in tourism can be rewarding as long as graduates can demonstrate their capability and productivity in the workplace. Productivity is an interesting theme which emerged from the interviews with industry bodies. It was noted by industry bodies as an important criterion to determine salary to be offered to graduates. Future studies therefore could investigate ways to measure and improve graduates’ productivity in the industry.

“The majority of those who work in travel and tour companies are not well paid simply because these businesses are hardly profitable. If every person thinks about pay, this is not the area to look at. If they want to get higher pay, they have to excel in their job. They cannot expect to be paid for their degree. The sector is happy to pay them if they can produce.” (Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents)

“The hotels are not that fair too, by not paying them according to their qualifications. It is fine if you want them to start from a lower rank but in terms of salary, you need to take into consideration their qualifications. However, students also need to understand that this is one industry where if you want to be successful, qualifications are not that important. If you have a qualification it enhances us, but that is not essential.” (Malaysian Association of Hotels)

However, the situation is different in the case of Tourism Malaysia which seems to not have problems attracting graduates to join its organization, by having a surplus of job applicants from graduates in tourism because of attractive job remuneration:

“We do not have any problem related to human resources in our agency. For the graduate position, we received 7,000 applications when we only need 100 people. People used to associate us with low pay because we are a government agency. But now people are competing to join Tourism Malaysia because the salary has been revised.” (Tourism Malaysia)

This view is supported by MARA University of Technology. The undergraduate program director from the university who was interviewed stated that their graduates mostly work for government agencies in tourism and they have no issues with their salary:

“I can say that for most of our degree students, they are more interested to work for government bodies in tourism including the Ministry of Tourism, Tourism Malaysia and the State Tourism Action Councils. Reason being, students are concerned about salary. In Malaysia we do not really have large tourism companies. Most of them are small and not willing to pay more for degree graduates. But in the government agencies, the remuneration package is good.” (MARA University of Technology)

With the exception of Tourism Malaysia, there seems to be general agreement among the stakeholders that the lack of interest among graduates to work in hotels and travel agencies is because of low salary and having to start from lower positions. These issues are confirmed by the industry bodies although they argued that high salary should be justified by graduates' productivity in the workplace and not by qualifications alone.

Educators believe that in order to make tourism jobs more attractive, students should be paid according to their qualifications.

The literature suggests that another factor that may lead to a skilled labour shortage in tourism is tourism education that is irrelevant to the needs of the industry (Purcell & Quinn, 1996; Williams, 2005). The lack of certainty amongst the industry towards the relevance of tourism education may result in graduates struggling to be employed by the industry in decent jobs. To examine this, the stakeholders were asked about the extent to which they perceive education in tourism management in public universities and polytechnics in Malaysia as relevant to their needs. Generally, the tourism curriculum in public universities and polytechnics in Malaysia is perceived by educators as relevant to the stakeholders, justified by the industry's involvement in the development of the curriculum:

“I think it is relevant to the industry's needs, in fact they were involved during the development phase [of the curriculum].” (MARA University of Technology)

“During our meeting with the industry to review the curriculum, they did give some feedback. Based on that feedback we have revised our curriculum. We hope that such dialogue will ensure the relevance of the curriculum to the industry's needs.” (Northern University of Malaysia)

“For the old curriculum, I do not think so [relevant to the industry's needs] because it was more to provide students with basic knowledge. But now we can see that the industry is growing rapidly, thus we incorporated current developments in the industry into our curriculum.” (Merlimau Polytechnic)

However, there are concerns among industry bodies on the focus of the curriculum, and to what extent tourism curriculum at public institutions are benchmarked with established curriculum from international tertiary institutions:

“The tertiary institutions make use of the word ‘tourism’ to sell their tourism program but they do not sell any particular sector. As a result, students have so many things to cover so they [educators] cover it superficially.” (Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents)

“I think the private universities are maintaining high standards. The public universities are what I am worrying about [The two universities included in this study were public universities]. I am not sure whether their syllabuses are benchmarked with any foreign university.” (Malaysian Association of Hotels)

There seems to be conflicting perceptions between the industry and the educators in terms of the relevance of the tourism curriculum to the industry’s needs. This is surprising when the educators declared that tourism curriculum was developed and revised with input from industry. However, the industry bodies raised concerns about tourism curriculum in Malaysia. They believe it is too broad and they are not sure about the extent to which it is benchmarked against curriculum from international institutions.

In summary, it is evident that the key human resource issue in tourism in Malaysia is the shortage of skilled labour. The key stakeholders believe that this is a result of two main issues – low pay and low level positions offered to graduates. In terms of the relevance of tourism education in Malaysia to the industry’s needs, the industry bodies perceive that tourism education in Malaysia is too general and are not sure to what extent it is benchmarked against international institutions. However, a shortage of skilled labour is not an issue for a government organization like Tourism Malaysia that is perceived as

offering better pay to graduates. The case of Tourism Malaysia provides the basis for suggestions made by the government and educators that students' interest in working in tourism can be increased if the industry is willing to pay graduates according to their qualifications. This thesis also found productivity as an issue that is important to the industry bodies in determining salary to be given to graduates.

#### **4.3 Relationships amongst Stakeholders in Tourism Human Resource Development**

All stakeholders were asked whether or not forums exist for them and other stakeholders to discuss attracting graduates to tourism. The stakeholders' relationships investigated involve the government, industry and educators. Discussing the relationships amongst these three stakeholders enabled the researcher to gauge the extent to which these stakeholders co-ordinate their efforts and interact. This will be viewed beginning with government–industry relationships, followed by government–educator relationships and finally, industry–educator relationships.

As discussed, the relationships amongst the stakeholders occur in the tourism and education environments. In the tourism environment, the emphasis is on the formulation of policies in developing human resources in tourism and promoting tourism as a career. In the education environment, the relationships involve the development of tourism education which also leads to preparing students for jobs in tourism. Relationships between stakeholders may take place in only one environment, but in some cases across the two environments, either directly, or with a stakeholder acting as a mediator who provides the forum for the relationships to happen.

#### **4.3.1 Government–Industry Relationships**

The government agencies were asked about forums for them to meet the industry to discuss human resource issues in tourism. The University Division and the Polytechnic Division of the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Human Resources indicated that close relationships have been established with the industry, particularly on consultations about tourism education and training programs:

“The Ministry will design an education program according to input from the industry so that the program will have academic and economic value. Most of the programs involve the industry in their development and revision stage.”  
(University Division, Ministry of Higher Education)

“In designing the curriculum, we will consult the industry to ensure that the curriculum suits their needs. So I can say that the curriculum in polytechnics is academically compliant and industry-driven.” (Polytechnic Division, Ministry of Higher Education)

“The highest forum regarding training under this Ministry is the National Skill Development Council. The members of the council include representatives from the industry to discuss issues related to training in the industry.”  
(Ministry of Human Resources)

In the tourism environment, the Ministry of Tourism provides the industry with the opportunity to raise issues related to human resource management in tourism, including attracting the graduates to work in tourism:

“We have what we call the National Tourism Human Resource Development Council. This is where the industry will come and elaborate about what is needed by the industry. I think this is a good forum, because in smart

partnerships it is better to hear from the industry because they know what they want.” (Ministry of Tourism)

The industry bodies and Tourism Malaysia were asked similar questions, and also agreed that they have close cooperation with the ministries responsible for human resource development in tourism. The cooperation is in activities promoting tourism as a career (with the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Human Resources) and curriculum development (with the Ministry of Higher Education):

“We cooperate with the Ministry of Higher Education on curriculum development and revision. With the Ministry of Human Resource we discuss a lot of industry problems concerning HR issues. The Ministry of Tourism is our anchor ministry and we work very closely regarding issues about hotels including the human resources issues.” (Malaysian Association of Hotels)

“There are [relationships]. With the Ministry of Tourism, we discuss issues regarding the training of tourism personnel. With the Ministry of Education, we collaborate in the development of tourism related curriculum.” (Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents)

The relationship between the government and the industry in discussing human resource management issues in tourism in Malaysia is ongoing. Both stakeholders agreed that they have been collaborating and the key issues of discussion include tourism human resource development and tourism education.

#### **4.3.2 Government–Educator Relationships**

Mirroring the cooperation with the industry, the government representatives generally agree that they have close relationships with the educators. However, the degree of

cooperation does vary. The University and Polytechnic Divisions of the Ministry of Higher Education seem to have stronger relationships with the educators, mainly in the development of tourism curriculum. This is perhaps because the educators and this Ministry belong to the education environment.

“The Ministry is the custodian of higher education. Therefore the educators and the Ministry have really a close relationship as there are many forums for the Ministry to convey its policy to the universities. Universities are the implementers of the policy and so far we have no problem with that. The educators themselves are public servants so they will do as directed [by the government].” (University Division, Ministry of Higher Education)

“The [education] institutions will implement anything that comes from the Ministry. Even though it is out of their capability, they will try to operationalize it the best way that they can.” (Polytechnic Division, Ministry of Higher Education)

In the case of the Ministry of Tourism, the National Tourism Human Resource Development Council (NTHRDC) mentioned earlier in the section that addresses government-industry relationship earlier was also described as a forum for the Ministry to meet the educators, particularly on the issues of tourism education. However, the Ministry believes that tourism curricula are already in place and indicated that the council is now giving more emphasis to managing human resources in tourism:

“Unfortunately, NTHRDC is very broad with a whole bunch of sectors and the issues discussed have been too wide. In terms of the concentrated focus on educators, we do not have that. If it involves the development of curriculum, usually that is when they [the educators] come in. But in most cases now, what we



are doing is the implementation because most of the curriculum is already there.”  
(Ministry of Tourism)

The above quotation indicates that the Ministry of Tourism is not involved with curriculum development. This is noted by the educators that relationships with the government (in discussing issues related to tourism education) are generally stronger with the Ministry of Higher Education than with the Ministry of Tourism:

“The direction is only one way. We educators feel that there is no bottom-up approach in this communication. The Ministry of Tourism visits us sometimes. But again when it comes to the students, I think there is lack of participation from them [the Ministry of Tourism].” (MARA University of Technology)

“With the Ministry of Higher Education the cooperation is ongoing. I am not sure to what extent we have cooperated with the Ministry of Tourism.”  
(Northern University of Malaysia)

“We do not get the opportunity to work with the Ministry of Tourism, maybe because we are under the purview of the Ministry of Higher Education. The Ministry of Tourism should look at polytechnics because the workforce for tourism comes from these institutions.” (Merlimau Polytechnics)

Although there is evidence of strong relationships between the government and educators, it is more apparent in the education environment. This is because each ministry has different functions and responsibilities and hence play a stronger role in the environment for which they are responsible. Therefore, the Ministry of Higher Education as the government body in the education environment plays a stronger role in tourism education and has stronger relationships with the educators. In the tourism environment,

the forum at the Ministry of Tourism, the NTHRDC, discusses tourism human resource management more than tourism education. This perhaps accounts for the weak relationship between the Ministry of Tourism and educators. One respondent, the program director from MARA University of Technology, did note that there was ‘no bottom up’ line of communication with the Ministry of Tourism. This comment demonstrates that interactions between stakeholders (Figure 4.1) are not always perceived as equitable and do not necessarily involve reciprocal flows of information.

#### **4.3.3 Industry–Educators Relationships**

The industry bodies and Tourism Malaysia perceived that they do not have close relationships with the educators in discussing the promotion of tourism as a career or in tourism education:

“I have been here for seven years and I never heard of anyone from the universities coming to us to discuss the curriculum.” (Malaysian Association of Hotels)

“There certainly is but I don’t think the forums are effective.” (Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents)

“As far as I am concerned, Tourism Malaysia has never been involved in any curriculum development.” (Tourism Malaysia)

The educators, however, contradict this notion by saying that they have close relationships with the industry in curriculum development:

“For curriculum reviews, we have a committee but the membership of the industry [bodies] is not permanent because sometimes the issues that we

discussed involve only some particular sectors. But overall, we meet the industry more than we meet the government.” (MARA University of Technology)

“The Curriculum Evaluation Committee at the Ministry [of Higher Education] comprises the industry [bodies’] representatives and we meet on an ad hoc basis or when there are issues.” (Northern University of Malaysia)

“This [relationship] takes place at the Ministry of Higher Education when program directors from all polytechnics sit together and develop the curriculum. Then, the industry [bodies] will be invited to contribute.” (Sabak Bernam Polytechnic)

There seem to be conflicting views between the industry and educators in terms of relationships regarding the issue of human resource management in tourism, particularly in promoting tourism as a career in Malaysia. The industry feels that the relationships between them and the educators in curriculum development are not apparent while the educators often noted that the collaborations are close with the industry during the developments and revisions of the curriculum. One possible explanation for these conflicting views is the fact that the forums where both stakeholders meet were mediated by the government. Therefore, the industry does not see a ‘direct’ relationship with the educators in curriculum development because the forums were at the Ministry of Higher Education and not at tertiary institutions. The educators who were interviewed were from public universities; hence they are also government staff members. Although the forums were mediated by the Ministry, educators possibly perceive themselves as part of the ministry and thus see the forums as ‘direct’ relationships with the industry.

Nevertheless, the government emphasized that the roles of industry and educators are important in the formulation of policies in tourism human resource development, and will ensure that such cooperation continues to happen:

“These two [industry and educators] must look at each other in the sense that they can complement each other, so that it [the cooperation] could move the government policy forward much faster. The industry knows what they want [from the education system] and the educators can provide [according to the industry’s needs]. The government will provide the environment for that to happen.” (Ministry of Tourism)

“The roles of both [industry and educators] are important and the government will make sure this is ongoing.” (Ministry of Human Resources)

The relationships and cooperation amongst stakeholders in Malaysia in promoting tourism careers exist but at different strengths. The Ministry of Education has close cooperation with both the industry and educators; however, the Ministry of Tourism cooperates more with the industry than with the educators. Therefore, the relationships between the government and both industry and educators seem stronger in the education environment than in the tourism environment where the relationship between the Ministry of Tourism and educators is perceived as weak. The weakness of the relationship between the Ministry of Tourism and educators is a reflection of the division of responsibilities between the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Higher Education. The Ministry of Tourism is not heavily involved in matters related to tourism education.

The relationships between industry and educators also exist, but are perceived differently by the stakeholders. Industry does not see direct relationships with the educators yet the

educators believe that the cooperation is ongoing particularly in tourism education. One key issue that emerged is that the government plays a mediator role in bringing all the stakeholders together by providing the forum for the employers and educators to meet and discuss issues related to tourism education and promoting tourism as a graduate career.

#### **4.4 Promotion of Tourism as a Graduate Career**

The stakeholders were asked about measures and activities that they have been undertaking in promoting tourism as a career to students. This study found that there are segmented responsibilities between the government agencies. There is a division of labour amongst them. The Ministry of Tourism focuses on activities to promote tourism careers. However, the activities are limited to only high school students; they are only conducted by one industry body, the Malaysian Tourist Guides' Council with some funding from the Ministry:

“For the time being our seminar on careers in tourism is limited to only high school students. At the same time an industry association also conducted road shows to all states about careers in their sector and this is funded by the Ministry. But so far this [the fund] is provided to only the Malaysian Tourist Guide's Council.” (Ministry of Tourism)

Conversely, other Ministries put more emphasis on promoting tourism programs than tourism careers. For example, the Polytechnic Division and the Ministry of Human Resources conduct promotional activities that only promote tourism programs at particular institutions. Nevertheless, they argue that by promoting tourism programs the students will develop their interests and be inclined to make tourism a career:

“We conduct road shows at the national level to promote programs offered by our polytechnics in all areas of study. As for the career choice, we will encourage and guide them for careers in tourism while they are still in the polytechnics but the decision rests in the graduates’ own hands once they completed the program.” (Polytechnic Division, Ministry of Higher Education)

“Our regional offices do promotion but this is being done overall regardless of the sector. For a more specialized sector like tourism, the training institutions themselves do their own promotional initiatives.” (Ministry of Human Resources)

Unlike the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Human Resources, and the Polytechnic Division of the Ministry of Higher Education quoted above who promote either tourism careers or tourism programs, the University Division of the Ministry of Higher Education does not specify any activities or plans to promote tourism. They indicate that there is no plan to add more universities offering tourism programs. This is because the Ministry do not see the need for university degree programs to produce workers for tourism industry:

“We can [promote tourism programs by] having more universities offer tourism programs but at the moment there is no plan. I am not sure whether we need [more] university programs in order to provide the sector with workers.” (University Division, Ministry of Higher Education)

From the industry’s perspectives, promoting careers in tourism is not perceived as a main priority, perhaps due to the limited financial resources for the industry to conduct promotional activities to students. However, some sectors in the industry do some promotion. Tourism Malaysia seems to do promotion but limited to only promoting

careers at their organization. The Malaysia Association of Hotels has started to do a nationwide promotion with some support from the government. Therefore, there are some activities undertaken by the industry in promoting tourism as a graduate career:

“This is an area which the [educational] institutions do very well. We can lend a helping hand but I don’t think we would want to take over their role because there must be a commercial return.” (Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents)

“We and the Ministry of Higher Education are developing slides about careers in tourism which will help our hoteliers to deliver talks to create awareness [about careers in tourism] to students. We are also putting 16 series of newspaper articles [in a local newspaper] about careers in all sectors in tourism.” (Malaysian Association of Hotels)

“When there are vacancies in Tourism Malaysia, we will advertise it in newspapers and on our website. We also promote through career talks at training institutions.” (Tourism Malaysia)

The educators, in general, are active in promoting careers in tourism to their students. These efforts can be seen from the various promotional measures within their institutions as well as outside of the institutions by taking students to visit the industry and career fairs:

“We conduct visits to the industry and invite managers to our campus to give talks. During our career fairs the industry will set up booths and promote their vacancies.” (Northern University of Malaysia)

“During lectures we provide information to our students about career prospects in the industry. We also take them to visit the industry.” (Sabak Bernam Polytechnic)

“We organize career talks and we invite people from tourism academies and job search agencies. At the same time we also take students to visit career fairs and to visit the industry to see the real work environment in tourism.” (Merlimau Polytechnic)

From the above discussion, educators seem to play an active role in promoting tourism careers to students, perhaps due to having more direct contact with the students at tertiary institutions. Industry associations do some promotions including working with the Ministry of Higher Education. However, one industry body, the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents acknowledges that educational institutions are effective promoters of tourism as a graduate career. At the government level, the Ministry of Tourism promotes tourism careers with limited reach at only secondary schools and by making use of only one industry body, the Malaysian Tourist Guides' Council. Meanwhile, other government agencies promote tourism programs but not careers. There seems to be no co-ordinated, overarching effort currently in place to promote tourism as a career (including career opportunities) to students within tourism programs or in other academic programs at tertiary institutions. This research, however, may have taken place during a period of transition since one interviewee from the Ministry of Tourism noted that new initiatives may soon be in place whereby industry bodies other than the Malaysia's Tourist Guide's Council will become involved in promoting tourism as a career.



#### **4.5 Adequacy of Policies in Promoting Tourism as a Graduate Career in Malaysia**

The government representatives were asked about their perceptions of current policies related to promoting tourism as a graduate career in Malaysia. The industry and the educators were also asked to what extent they perceive these policies as adequate in encouraging students to choose careers in tourism. This is to provide different views on the policies from the perspectives of stakeholders.

The government agencies believe that the current policy in promoting tourism is adequate in terms of creating awareness about careers in tourism. However, they were unsure to what extent it encourages the students to choose tourism as their career:

“I think it is adequate. But they [students and parents] still perceive it as a stepping stone...but at least they know. So, in terms of creating awareness it is quite effective.” (Ministry of Tourism)

“In terms of increasing the awareness to choose tourism programs, I do not see any problem. But in terms of choosing tourism as a career, I am not so sure.” (Polytechnic Division, Ministry of Higher Education)

“I don’t know. In terms of offering tourism programs according to market demand, I think we have met the need. But I do not know to what extent the programs influence students’ decisions to choose tourism as a career.”  
(University Division, Ministry of Higher Education)

However, the industry and the educators voiced the opposite view. The industry and the educators perceived the current policies as inadequate to promote tourism as a career to the graduates. The industry bodies and Tourism Malaysia feel that they do not see the outcome of these policies. The educators believe that current policies are insufficient

particularly in providing a clear career path to the students on how to get to careers in tourism:

“I am sure there are [government’s efforts to promote tourism] but I do not see the outcome.” (Tourism Malaysia)

“It [government effort to promote tourism] is not enough. There should be more direction in terms of the career path for the graduates.” (MARA University of Technology)

“I do not see what the government has done to promote careers in tourism. Many students are interested to work in tourism but they do not know how [to get there].” (Northern University of Malaysia)

Overall, there are contrasting views amongst the stakeholders on the adequacy of current policies to promote tourism as a graduate career in Malaysia. The government officials feel that current policy is adequate in terms of creating awareness about career opportunities. However, they were not necessarily sure to what extent it encourages students to choose tourism as a career. The industry and educators feel that the current policy is not enough to increase students’ interest to choose careers in tourism.

#### **4.6 What More Should Be Done?**

The stakeholders were encouraged to suggest measures to improve the government policies to better promote careers in tourism to graduates. Among the suggestions from the government: “to have a specific target for each sector in tourism to better gauge supply and demand of human resources in tourism” (Ministry of Tourism). This Ministry also intends to expand the reach of its activities in promoting career opportunities in tourism to tertiary institutions, and by making use of industry bodies to reach more students studying at all levels of the education system. Meanwhile, other government

agencies will continue to promote tourism programs which are believed to develop students' interest to work in the industry:

“This year we have proposed an extension of the [tourism career seminar] program to students in higher learning institutions. The Ministry also plans to fund industry associations to conduct road shows about careers in their sectors.” (Ministry of Tourism)

“The government noticed that in many developed countries, the services sector plays a significant role. At the moment the breakdown of our programs at public universities is 60% in science and technology and 40% in the humanities [including tourism]. But we see that this will change.” (University Division, Ministry of Higher Education)

“The government is now emphasizing the tourism sector. Hence we support more institutions to offer tourism courses. I believe this will encourage more students to work in the sector.” (Ministry of Human Resources)

The industry and educators suggest several measures that the government can undertake to attract students to choose careers in tourism. The industry urged the government to make use of the industry's expertise to help promote careers in tourism by targeting students at tertiary institutions. One respondent, the senior official from Tourism Malaysia, even noted that the government should target graduates outside of tourism programs:

“I just feel if they [the Ministry of Tourism] could promote career guidance in tourism by using media and our expertise. By doing this more students will be more interested. We are already doing it [promoting tourism careers to students], so we just want the support. Funds are always a problem for NGOs.” (Malaysian Association of Hotels)

“The Ministry should indicate more openly what various tourism industry bodies can do.” (Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agent)

“I think that the Ministry of Tourism needs to bring itself closer to the students so that the students will be aware of how interesting the tourism industry actually is. The target should be the university students regardless of their programs.” (Tourism Malaysia)

The educators generally believe that government efforts in promoting careers in tourism to students are not effective, especially that the students are not clear about the career path in tourism. The educators noted that future initiatives should provide clear directions to the students on the career path to get to the desired tourism career. This is supported by the educators that clear career directions are important to the students but lacking in current government initiatives.

“There should be more direction in terms of the career path for the graduates. We get the scope [of career opportunities in tourism] from the industry but we do not know the direction leading to them. In fact our students are wondering what the direction is. The Ministry should provide direction on where they [students] can go after graduation.” (MARA University of Technology)

“The policy is there and maybe it is understood at the higher level but at the implementation level it is not clear. What we need is career directions for students after graduation.” (Northern University of Malaysia)

“To attract students to choose a career in tourism, the Ministry of Tourism should provide information to students about the career opportunities in tourism and the appropriate channel and path to get to those careers.” (Sabak Bernam Polytechnic)

In summary, the Ministry of Tourism has developed some plans to promote tourism as a graduate career more extensively, which includes extending the career awareness seminar to students at higher learning institutions. This plan addresses the concerns among the educators that government efforts to promote tourism careers at tertiary institution is lacking. Career seminars at tertiary institutions should also be able to provide students with direction or a career path in tourism which the educators perceived as crucial to attract students to work in the industry.

In line with the expansion of this seminar to tertiary institutions, the Ministry of Tourism also plans to make more use of the industry bodies by providing funds to conduct road shows to promote careers in tourism. This matches the suggestions made by the industry that their expertise should be used by the government in reaching out to the students and attracting them to work in tourism. Based on the above, the government, particularly the Ministry of Tourism, seems to realize the weaknesses in their policy in promoting tourism careers to students, and have planned to address them according to what is being suggested by other stakeholders. It will be interesting to see what form the initiatives proposed by the Ministry of Tourism will take once they are implemented.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

This chapter found that the shortages of skilled labour in tourism in Malaysia still persist, due to the lack of attractiveness of jobs offered by the industry that undervalues graduates' qualifications by offering low pay and low positions. Close relationships exist between the key stakeholders in Malaysia, with the government playing a key role in providing the forum for industry and educators to meet and discuss measures to promote tourism as graduate career. Government ministries have different responsibilities

according to their brief: the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Human Resources play a prominent role in the education environment, the Ministry of Tourism plays a prominent role in the tourism environment. However, while the cooperation between the Ministry of Higher Education and both the industry and the educator seems strong, the relationship between the Ministry of Tourism and the educators is currently weak. This is because the Ministry of Tourism is not actively involved in matters related to tourism education.

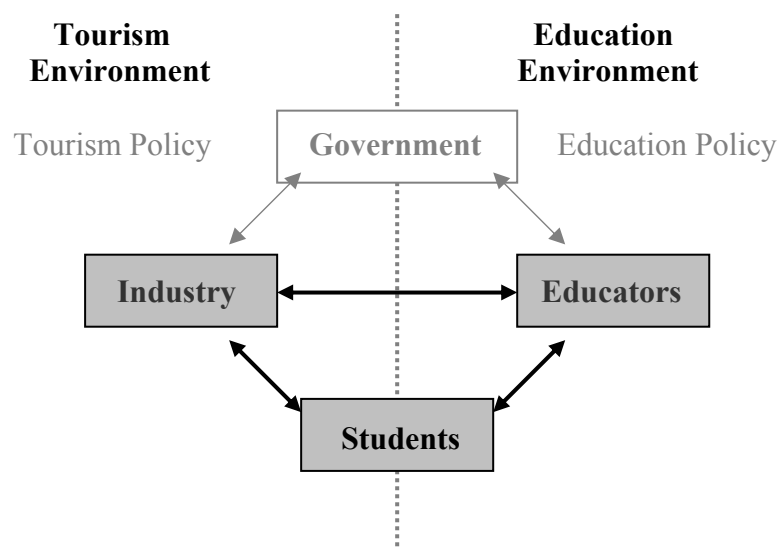
In terms of undertaking activities to promote careers in tourism, the educators seem to play an active role. The industry does certain promotional activities with some support from the government. Amongst the government agencies, tourism careers are only promoted by the Ministry of Tourism while the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Human Resources promote tourism programs. However, the current efforts by the government are perceived as inadequate by both industry and educators. It was suggested that the government should make use of industry bodies to provide more direction to a wide range of students about career paths in tourism, including those at tertiary institutions. The Ministry of Tourism seems to realize this by planning to act accordingly, by extending the implementation of career seminars to tertiary institutions and funding industry bodies to conduct career awareness programs.

## **CHAPTER 5: HOW STAKEHOLDERS VIEW TOURISM AS A GRADUATE CAREER - INDUSTRY, EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter continues to analyse and interpret the findings from an investigation of stakeholders' perceptions of tourism as a graduate career in Malaysia. The previous chapter (Chapter 4) examined the relationships amongst the government, industry and educators. This chapter will continue the discussion by focusing on the second set of relationships amongst the industry, educators and students (Figure 5.1).

**Figure 5.1: Relationships amongst Industry, Educators and Students**



*After: Amoah and Baum (1997) and Zopiatis & Constanti (2007)*

This framework suggests that industry and educators are firmly within both the tourism and education environments. In the tourism environment, the industry provides jobs opportunities and promotes tourism as a career to students. In the education environment, educators promote tourism programs and use tourism curricula developed by the

government to prepare students with the necessary skills and knowledge of the industry. The presence of the industry and educators in both sets of relationships (Chapter 4 and 5) suggests that they perform the crucial role of implementers and link government policies to students (from the top-down).

Students are the ‘users’ of these policies. They are affected by their implementation. However, students get to move across these environments by being in the education environment while studying tourism where they form their career expectations. Students move to the tourism environment when they work in the industry and gain actual experience from tourism jobs. The effect of both tourism and education policies on the students enables the industry and educators to evaluate and provide feedback to the government on the effectiveness of the policies (from the bottom-up). In Malaysia, this feedback may be delivered through multi-stakeholder forums.

This chapter will begin by understanding the background of the students from the profile of the questionnaire respondents. These students who are in the final year of their program will soon become the graduates who are hired by the tourism industry as employees. Next, the chapter will examine the perceived quality of graduates from the perspective of the industry and educators. This discussion will lead to an examination of the industry’s perceptions of qualities sought from the graduates, which will be compared with the students’ perceptions of the qualities that are sought by the industry from them. Following that, this chapter will examine the level of job positions in tourism offered to graduates. Then, the analysis will focus on the questionnaire data by investigating students’ overall perceptions of tourism as a career. This will be followed by testing the effects of factors suggested by the literature that influence students’ work intention in



tourism. Hence, this chapter deals with qualitative and quantitative data to see how the perceptions of different stakeholders either support or contradict each other.

## **5.2 Profile of Respondents**

The questionnaire data was calculated to obtain the following profile of respondents:

- Gender: Female (86%)  
Male (14%)
- Ethnicity: Malay (79.8%)  
Chinese (10.9%)  
Indian (3.6%)  
Others (5.7%)
- Tourism program as first choice:  
Yes (56.5%)  
No (43.5%)

If no, what was the first choice? Education (23.2%)  
Hotel and Catering (13.4%)  
Business Management (11%)  
Engineering (11%)  
Other Responses: Fifteen in Total (41.4%)

- Main Source of information for tourism jobs: Job search websites (39.4%)  
Newspaper (19.2)  
Lecturer (13%)  
Other Sources: Five in Total (24.8%)  
None (3.6)

The above data shows that the majority of the respondents were female (86%) and the biggest ethnic group was Malay (79.8%). It is difficult to compare the perceptions of

males and females – and Malay with other ethnic groups – because such a large proportion of the sample was female and Malay. In the overall population of Malaysia, only 57% of people are Malay. Nearly 80% of tourism students who completed the questionnaire were Malay. Further remarks about these findings will be made in the conclusion.

The percentage of students who choose a tourism program as their first choice (56.5%) is slightly higher than those who did not make it their first choice for university entrance (43.5%). Those who had a first choice other than tourism were interested to pursue tertiary qualifications in a Hotel and Catering (13.4%) program, or in fields that are not related to tourism including Education (23.2%), Business Management (11%) and Engineering (11%). Respondents were also asked to specify their most important source of information on careers in tourism. Students indicated that job search websites are their main source of information (39.4%) followed by job advertisements in local newspapers (39.4%) and lecturers at their tertiary institutions (13%).

### **5.3 Perceived Quality of Current Graduates**

The industry and educators were asked about their overall perceptions of tourism graduates from public universities and polytechnics. English language skills were discussed by some respondents as well as graduates' interest in the industry:

“We find that the quality [of graduates] has weakened over the years, especially in terms of their communication skills. The quality of recent graduates is rather poor and surprisingly some of the overseas graduates are also not that good, although they are better than local graduates in terms of communicating in English.” (Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents)

“For universities, I can see two universities that produce graduates in tourism – MARA University of Technology and Northern University of Malaysia [these two universities were featured in this research]. Here, attention is given more towards MARA University graduates because they were taught in English. For diploma students we do not have any preference as long as they can present themselves well in the interview, have a positive attitude and good knowledge in tourism. Overall, we believe that it all depends on individuals. But I can say that now we are giving attention to polytechnic students. Although they are not as proficient in English as the university graduates they have the right attitude and good quality of work and these qualities offset the lack of English proficiency.” (Tourism Malaysia)

“We believe that many of them find their way to the hospitality programme because they do not qualify for other sectors. So they fall back on tourism. Their interest is not really there. But in terms of language, I do not see it as a problem, although their English is not perfect, they can still communicate.” (Malaysian Association of Hotels)

In terms of the ability to communicate in English, there are mixed reactions amongst the industry. The travel agent association finds that the lack of English proficiency among the graduates is a problem. However, Tourism Malaysia and the Hotel Association find that English proficiency among recent graduates is not a key issue. Although Tourism Malaysia demonstrates a preference towards students coming from tertiary institutions that use English in their teaching, they do hire polytechnic students due to their positive attitude and good quality of work which compensates for their lack of English proficiency. The hotel association indicated that students’ lack of interest to work in tourism is a more serious issue than English language proficiency.

The educators generally believe that the graduates they produce are ready to enter the industry. They noted that the curriculum provides graduates with the necessary skills and

knowledge they need to perform the job. Only two educators mentioned specifically their graduates' English proficiency. MARA University of Technology is confident about the language skills of its graduates while Malacca Polytechnic acknowledges that its graduates need further improvement in terms of their language skills:

“Most of our students who have undergone practical training were offered jobs by their employers. This is an indication that they have performed well and the program has prepared them to work in the industry.” (Northern University of Malaysia)

“We provide them [students] with the communication skills, management skills, and so on so that they can fit into the industry. It is up to the students to apply the skills given to them.” (Sabak Bernam Polytechnic)

“In terms of the language proficiency of the students, our students have no problems because the language that we use here is English. The industry commented that our graduates know how to talk and present themselves in the industry. They said that there is clear difference between our students and those from other institutions in terms of the overall package of the students.” (MARA University of Technology)

“From the feedback that we received, our students can do their job because they have the basic knowledge and know the industry. But we are ‘handicapped’ in terms of [English] language so they [the industry] need to train our students in this.” (Merlimau Polytechnic)

#### **5.4 Perceived Qualities Sought from the Graduates**

In relation to the above discussion, the industry was asked about the qualities they sought from graduates to work in their organizations. The industry mentioned several criteria that they look for from a candidate applying for graduate positions in their organizations:

“Dedication. Take it as a career, not as a stepping stone. Work experience will enhance [their ability to obtain a job] but for a graduate it is not necessary.” (Malaysian Association of Hotels)

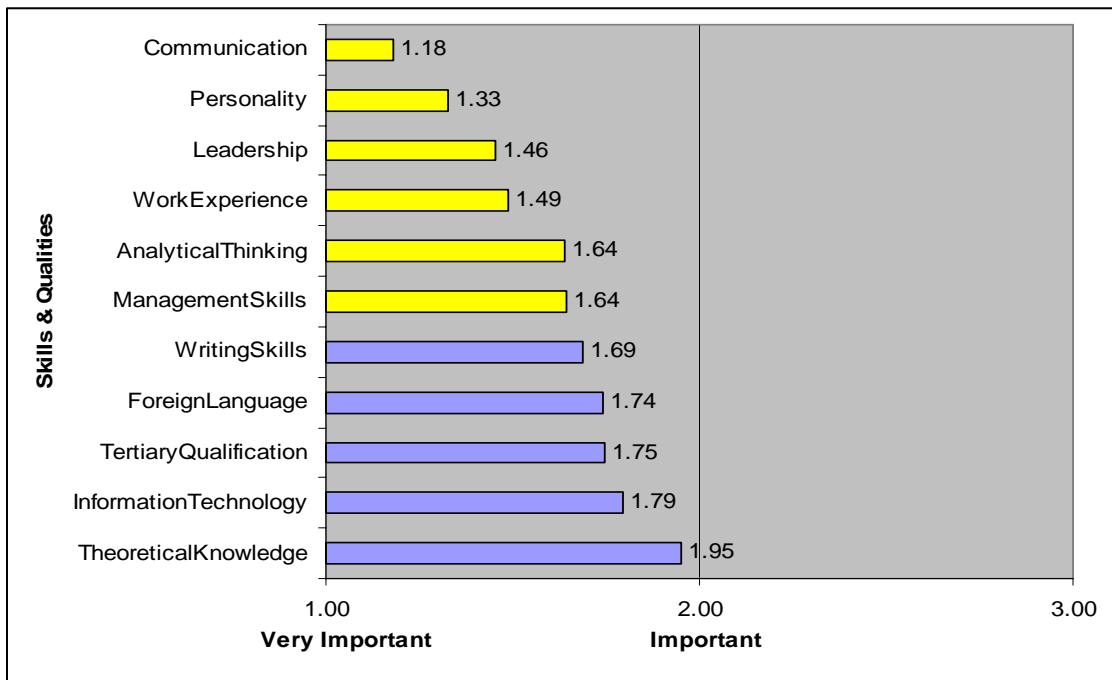
“Students have no idea what employers seek from them. Generally, employers look for five criteria: academic qualification, job experience, general knowledge, communication skills and character [respondent ranks them in order of importance]. For MATTA [Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents], the order is the reverse. Character is the most important, followed by communication skills, general knowledge, job experience and finally, academic qualification. The travel business is for those with enterprise and people skills, not academic qualifications. There are people who are successful in their career although they do not have qualifications. Academic qualifications will make us a better person than what we are before but it does not necessarily make us better than someone else.” (Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agent)

“Academic qualification, good command of English, attitude and personality. Work experience is an added value but it will not affect applications from those who do not possess it.” (Tourism Malaysia)

There are mixed responses from the industry about the qualities they seek from a graduate. The industry in general seeks behavioral aspects of the graduates including dedication, character and personality. The travel agent association and Tourism Malaysia emphasize graduates’ skills including communication and the English language. Less emphasis is given by the travel agents’ association towards academic qualifications, which Tourism Malaysia finds very important. Overall, all of the above stakeholders agree that work experience, although it will enhance a job application, is not the most important criteria expected from the graduates.

Students were asked to rank their perceptions of qualities that the employers sought from them, using the scale of 1 = 'Very important' to 5 = 'Not important at all'. The result shows that students believe that all skills and qualities listed in the questionnaire are important (Figure 5.2). Two possible conclusions can be made from this finding: either the students really perceive all attributes as important, or they have no idea of what qualities employers seek from them and therefore rate all the qualities as important. Nevertheless, among these qualities, students seem to perceive skills as the most important, including communication (mean score = 1.18), leadership (1.46), analytical thinking (1.64) and management skills (1.64). Students also perceived personality as very important (1.33). These top qualities ranked by the students seem to mirror some of the qualities noted by the industry bodies, particularly communication skills and personality. However, students believe that having work experience (1.49) in related jobs is important, while the industry did not find it very important.

**Figure 5.2: Students' Perceptions of Qualities Sought by Employers**



### 5.5 Positions Offered to the Graduates

As discussed in the literature review chapter, there are generally three levels of positions in tourism - *frontline*, *supervisory* and *management* (Pollock & Ritchie, 1990). The *frontline* employees or junior staff members have low skill levels, are responsible for specific tasks and require very little training. The *supervisory* roles deal with a wider range of tasks, have control over the *frontline* staff and have the ability to make decisions in line with the policies of the organization. The *management* level comprising the *junior management* and *senior management* require high level of experience and knowledge and has the most responsibilities and authority to plan and make organizational decisions.

Low level entry positions for graduates were suggested by the government and educators as one of the reasons that affect the attractiveness of careers in tourism. This thesis examined this by looking into the jobs offered to students from the industry's perspective,

the job positions obtained by students from the educators' perspective, and the entry level job positions expected by students if they chose to work in tourism.

The industry bodies generally admitted that graduates who joined their organizations will have to start at a lower position. This supports the earlier notion by the hotel and travel agents' associations that graduates' qualifications have no influence in determining job positions during the recruitment of graduates in their organizations:

“[We offer] [S]upervisory level [entry positions] but they [graduates] have to start slightly lower.” (Malaysian Association of Hotels)

“[The position is] the same as school leavers. Graduates will find their academic qualification rather useless. There is no real advantage for graduates.” (Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents)

The responses by the industry bodies above confirmed the notion by Kelley-Patterson and George (2001) that employers in tourism undervalue graduates qualification, and the suggestions made by McKercher et al. (1995) that managers in tourism expect graduates to start at low positions. However, Tourism Malaysia seems to offer graduate positions in its organization to graduates who have degree and diploma qualifications:

“We offer positions like Assistant Director [a managerial level position] for [university degree] graduates and Tourism Officer [a supervisory level position] for diploma holders.” (Tourism Malaysia)

The fact that the industry bodies do not take into consideration academic qualifications for jobs is supported by the educators who also agree that their graduates in the industry were required to start with low positions:



“We produce managers but the industry asks them to start with lower positions.” (Northern University of Malaysia)

“Students often complain about low positions. Polytechnics prepare students for supervisory positions in the industry.” (Malacca Polytechnic)

“Some of our students who work with the government agencies related to tourism are already climbing up the career ladder.” (MARA University of Technology)

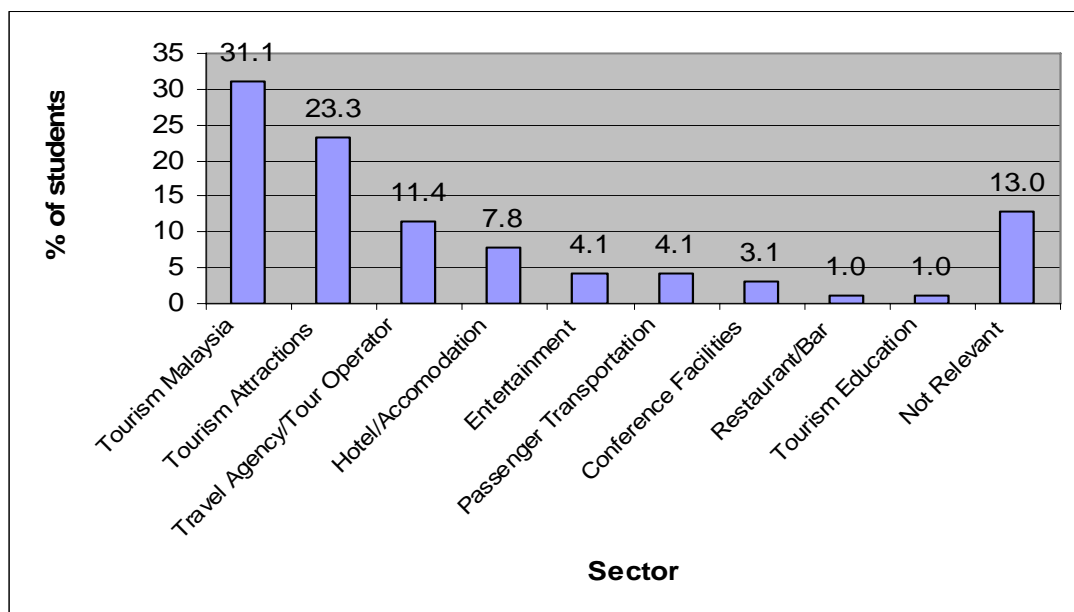
Although graduates from other institutions were offered low positions in the industry, MARA University of Technology noted that its students who work with Tourism Malaysia are advancing in their career. This is consistent with the claim by Tourism Malaysia that graduates with tertiary qualifications were offered positions well above the lowest level at their organization.

From the students' perspective, data from the questionnaires were analyzed using cross-tabulation and the results showed that most university students ( $n = 97$ ) expected to hold managerial positions, mainly at the junior management (42.3%) and senior management (17.5%) levels upon graduation. Meanwhile, many polytechnic students ( $n = 96$ ) expect to hold junior management (25%) and supervisory (18.8%) positions. Overall, this data suggested that a considerable number of students from both institutions in general expect to be given either supervisory or managerial positions which are perceived as compatible with their qualifications. This finding echoes the suggestion by Ross (1992) that students favour work at management positions in the industry.

Students ( $n = 193$ ) were also asked about their preferred sector for employment in the tourism industry. The data (Figure 5.3) shows that Tourism Malaysia topped the list with

31.1% of university and polytechnic students choosing it as a preferred employer, followed by tourism attractions (23.3%). The travel agents (11.4%) and the hotel industry (7.8%) were rated lower which may provide evidence that low positions offered by these sectors have influenced students' perceptions of the careers they offer. These results contradict the findings by Jenkins (2001) in his comparative study in the UK and the Netherlands that the hotel sector is perceived more favourably by students. The 'not relevant' response of 13% simply refers to students who do not intend to work in tourism after graduation.

**Figure 5.3: Preferred Sector for Employment in Tourism**



Overall, the hotel and travel agent sectors would appear to offer low level entry positions to university graduates and diploma holders and this makes students perceive careers in these sectors as unattractive. Most of the students would prefer to work with Tourism Malaysia due to it recognizing graduates' academic qualifications by offering supervisory and managerial positions to diploma and degree holders respectively. It can therefore be

summarized that students expect their qualifications to be valued by the employers through the type of positions they are able to obtain.

### **5.6 Students' Perceptions of Tourism as a Graduate Career**

Students' perceptions of tourism as a career were measured using statements related to the variables suggested by Kusluvan and Kusluvan (2000) that influence commitment to work in tourism. A total of 31 statements were used and students were asked to rate these statements according to their perceptions using a Likert scale from 1 = Strongly agree to 5 = Strongly disagree. The data were analyzed using mean analysis, and standard deviations were calculated. The results were ordered from the lowest mean to the highest mean scores to demonstrate the agreement and disagreement towards the statement (Table 5.1):

**Table 5.1: Perceptions of Tourism as a Career: Mean Scores**

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. I find jobs in the tourism industry interesting	1.4	0.59
2. I like the opportunity to meet new people	1.6	0.73
3. I can use my knowledge and skills in tourism jobs	1.6	0.66
4. I will enjoy working in the tourism industry	1.7	0.85
5. I am very pleased to choose tourism as a career path	1.7	0.86
6. I think work experience is taken into account in promotion decisions	1.8	0.80
7. I feel proud to tell my relatives and friends about my career in the tourism industry	1.9	0.93
8. Many of those who are working in the tourism industry are motivated and enthusiastic about their jobs	2.2	0.88
9. Working conditions in the tourism Industry are good	2.3	0.82
10. Managers do provide vocational training when necessary in the tourism industry	2.3	0.83
11. My family will be proud if I work in the tourism industry	2.4	0.89
12. Seasonality makes it difficult to find a stable job in the tourism industry	2.5	1.05
13. Promotion opportunities are satisfactory in the tourism industry	2.6	0.86
14. It is very difficult to get promoted if you do not "have an uncle in the court" in the tourism	2.6	1.12

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation
industry		
15. Working in the tourism industry is a respected vocation in Malaysian society	2.7	0.75
16. Jobs in tourism have heavy workloads	2.7	0.91
17. Many of my co-workers would have a tourism qualification	2.7	0.89
18. Working hours in the tourism industry are not suitable for a normal life	2.8	1.10
19. I find the fringe benefits (holidays, meals, bonuses, etc.) sufficient in the tourism industry	2.9	0.89
20. I think that the salary for most tourism jobs is sufficient.	3.0	1.03
21. I think that employees without tertiary qualification are jealous of graduate counterparts	3.0	0.98
22. Managers do not expend much in terms of the organizational commitment of employees in the tourism industry	3.0	1.01
23. Most managers in the tourism industry do not have a qualification in tourism management	3.1	1.04
24. I will work in the tourism industry after graduation provided that I become a manager or department head	3.4	1.08
25. I do not like to serve people while they are on holiday and enjoying themselves	3.5	1.05
26. There is a high risk of work accidents in the tourism industry	3.5	0.95
27. It is definite that I will not work in the tourism industry after graduation	3.6	1.07
28. I only want to work in a multi national tourism organization	3.6	0.96
29. I am not interested to work in a small tourism company	3.7	1.09
30. I will feel like a servant when working in the tourism industry	3.9	0.95
31. It was a big mistake to choose tourism as a career path	4.4	0.74

**Table 5.2: Perceptions of Tourism as a Career: Top 5 Mean Scores**

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. I find jobs in the tourism industry interesting	1.4	0.59
2. I like the opportunity to meet new people	1.6	0.73
3. I can use my knowledge and skills in tourism jobs	1.6	0.66
4. I will enjoy working in the tourism industry	1.7	0.85
5. I am very pleased to choose tourism as a career path	1.7	0.86

**Table 5.3: Perceptions of Tourism as a Career: Bottom 5 Mean Scores**

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
27. It is definite that I will not work in the tourism industry after graduation	3.6	1.07
28. I only want to work in a multi national tourism organization	3.6	0.96
29. I am not interested to work in a small tourism company	3.7	1.09
30. I will feel like a servant when working in the tourism industry	3.9	0.95
31. It was a big mistake to choose tourism as a career path	4.4	0.74

From the above results, it can be summarized that students who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they have positive perceptions of tourism. This is demonstrated when they showed agreement (low mean scores) to most statements about tourism. The top five responses (Table 5.2) include the nature of tourism jobs that students find interesting. As well, students indicated that they viewed work as an opportunity to meet new people and use their knowledge and skills. They would also enjoy working in the industry and were pleased to choose tourism as a career. Students therefore have positive perceptions of a future working in the tourism industry. Disagreement was expressed towards statements that expressed a negative view of the tourism industry (Table 5.3). Few had regrets about choosing tourism as a career. This finding contradicts the notion by Pollock & Ritchie (1990) that tourism students often do not view tourism as a career choice.

One conclusion that can be arrived at from the bottom five mean results is that the size of the employer is not an issue for the students in choosing employers in tourism. This is in contrast to the suggestion by Martin et al. (2006) that small and medium sized enterprises in tourism may face more challenges in attracting graduate workers than multi-national companies. One more finding that is important to note is that students neither agreed nor disagreed with statements that salaries in tourism are sufficient (3.0). Two conclusions

can be suggested for this finding. It either means that the students do not have strong views about its sufficiency or they were simply unsure about the statement due to not having experience being paid by a tourism employer.

The above result was difficult to compare with the findings by Kusluvan and Kusluvan (2000) in Turkey (from which most of the statements were adapted in this thesis) due to the different approach to analysis employed by both researchers. Kusluvan & Kusluvan (2000) analyzed their data using the ‘collapsed percentages’ technique by grouping the ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ into one category and ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ into another. In this research, five categories from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’ with a mid point of ‘neither agree nor disagree’ were merged into only three categories: ‘strongly agree and agree’, ‘neither agree nor disagree’ and ‘disagree and strongly disagree’. Finding this as under-utilising the richness of Likert scale data, this thesis used mean analysis on the same Likert scale without adjusting the five levels of agreement, from which the mean response to each Likert scale question was calculated. The responses were then rank ordered from the lowest mean scores (of ‘strongly agree’) to the highest score (of ‘strongly disagree’) from which top five and bottom five responses were identified.

Some apparent themes were identified from the responses of the students in Turkey. Students ranked high those statements related to the experience of meeting tourists, satisfactory pay in tourism, tourism as an interesting job and the opportunity to learn new skills. Statements that were rated low include long working hours, unsatisfactory working conditions, and the nature of work that affect employees with family. However, students in Turkey generally perceive careers in tourism negatively as almost all variables that

measured students' commitment were ranked low. Some similarities were demonstrated by students in Malaysia when they also agree that jobs in tourism are interesting and they enjoy meeting tourists. However, in general, tourism careers were perceived positively by students in Malaysia compared to those in Turkey.

The generally positive perceptions among Malaysian students' of tourism as a career demonstrated above may be related to the significance of tourism as the second biggest contributor to the Malaysian economy. Hence, these results are consistent with the notion by Airey and Frontistis (1997) and Lewis and Airey (2001) that the importance of tourism to a country's economy may bring about more positive perceptions of tourism careers.

### **5.7 The Effect of Variables that Influence Intention to Work in Tourism**

From the statements on perceptions of tourism as a graduate career discussed above, it was suggested that careers in tourism are perceived very positively by students in public universities and polytechnics in Malaysia. Percentage analysis also shows that most of the respondents indicated their intention to work in tourism after graduation (86.5%). But it is important to note that the sample is not homogeneous. It is therefore important to conduct a more in depth examination of the data with particular attention to variables that may influence students' perceptions.

Several variables were suggested by the literature as influencing students' commitment or intention to work in the tourism industry after graduation. This thesis will examine to what extent these variables affect career intentions among students in Malaysia. The variables which were discussed in the literature review include *level of education*,

*willingness in choosing to study tourism management, work experience in tourism, travel experience, and roles of family and friends working in tourism.* For each question linked to the variables above, students were asked to respond “yes” or “no”. For example, on the question about willingness of choosing to study tourism, respondents who answered “yes” indicated that they chose to study tourism willingly, and those who responded “no” indicated that they chose to study tourism unwillingly. As mentioned earlier, some students were assigned to a tourism program even though they may not have selected it.

A dependent variable, intention to work in tourism, was tested against the independent variables (*level of education, willingness in choosing to study tourism management, work experience in tourism, travel experience, and roles of family and friends working in tourism*) listed above. Cross-tabulation was conducted, followed by a series of chi-square tests using a .05 significance level (Lind, Marchal, & Wathen, 2005) to examine the significance of differences between the variables. The complete results of these analyses are presented in Table 5.4 below:



**Table 5.4: Cross Tabulation and Chi-Square Test: Variables Influencing Intention to Work in Tourism**

	Intention to Work in Tourism		Chi-square		
	Intend to Work in Tourism (%)	Do not Intend to Work in Tourism (%)	$\chi^2$	df	Sig.
<b><u>Variables</u></b>					
<b>1) Level of Education (n = 193)</b>					
<i>Diploma (n = 97)</i>	37.8	11.9	18.021	1	.000
<i>Degree (n = 96)</i>	48.7	1.6			
<b>2) Willingness in Choosing to Study Tourism Management (n = 193)</b>					
<i>Chose Willingly (n = 173)</i>	80.3	9.3	13.471	1	.000
<i>Did Not Choose Willingly (n = 20)</i>	6.2	4.1			
<b>3) Work Experience in Tourism (n = 193)</b>					
<i>Have Experience (n = 126)</i>	55.4	9.8	.805	1	.370
<i>No Experience (n = 67)</i>	31.1	3.6			
<b>4) Overseas travel experience in the past two years (n = 193)</b>					
<i>Have Travel Experience (n = 36)</i>	18.1	0.5	4.342	1	.037
<i>No Travel Experience (n = 157)</i>	68.4	13			
<b>5) Have Family and Friends Working in Tourism (n = 193)</b>					
<i>Have (n = 82)</i>	37.8	4.7	.762	1	.383
<i>Do Not Have (n = 111)</i>	48.7	8.8			

### 5.7.1 Level of Education

The questionnaire respondents are seeking two types of qualifications – diplomas (n = 96) and university degrees (n = 97). Cross tabulation found that regardless of the level of qualification, a large number of diploma and degree students demonstrate an intention to work in tourism after graduation, although the percentage of degree students who are committed is higher (48.7%) than diploma students (37.8%) (Table 5.4). The result is validated using a chi-square test which found that the degree students are more likely to intend to work in tourism after graduation than diploma students ( $\chi^2 = 18.021$ , sig = .000). This result contradicts the findings by Purcell & Quinn (1996) in the UK that diploma students are more committed to work in the industry than the degree students.

However, what these data does not show, which is worth noting, is the sectors that the students go to after graduation. The educators indicated:

“Most of our students are inclined to work with government agencies related to tourism.” (MARA University of Technology)

“Mostly [our students work] in tourism particularly in the hotel and travel agents sectors. Some work outside of tourism and I do not know why.” (Northern University of Malaysia)

The above responses showed that most graduates from MARA University work for government sectors in tourism after graduation. While graduates from Northern University seem to end up in the hotel and travel agent sectors. The data (Table 5.4) above also shows that diploma students have a lower intention to work in tourism than the degree students. However, the following responses by educators from the polytechnics provide one possible explanation for this result, that diploma students may pursue higher education by using their diploma qualification to get into tourism degree programs at universities.

“Mostly [our students] use their diploma to pursue a tourism degree.” (Sabak Bernam Polytechnic)

“Most of our students pursue degrees at universities.” (Merlimau Polytechnic)

Therefore, some of the diploma students, rather than seeking work after graduation, were seeking to continue their studies at a university.

### **5.7.2 Willingness in Choosing to Study Tourism**

Students were asked whether or not they decided to study tourism willingly. A high percentage of all the students in the sample (89.6%) chose to study tourism willingly because they find the program interesting (47.1%), it leads them to their desired career (32.6%) and makes it easy for them to find job after graduation (11.6%). Hence, students choose to study tourism due to two factors – due to the nature of the program and where studying tourism might lead after graduation. Students who do not study tourism willingly said they ended up studying tourism because their qualifications were insufficient to qualify them for academic programs that they wanted (43.5%). Others were offered a tourism program that they did not apply for (21.7%) when the programs that they applied for were full. Therefore, they were offered other programs (such as tourism) that were still available.

Cross-tabulation results show that 80.3% of the students sampled chose to study tourism willingly and intend to work in tourism after graduation compared to 6.2% who did not choose it willingly and intend to work in tourism (Table 5.4). A chi-square test demonstrated that students who choose tourism programs willingly are more likely to express an intention to work in tourism after graduation ( $\chi^2 = 13.471$ , sig = .000). This result supports the findings by Aksu and Köksal (2005) in Turkey that students' interest in studying tourism leads to a favourable work motivation in the same field.

### **5.7.3 Work Experience in Tourism**

As suggested by the literature, work experience in tourism may influence students' perceptions of tourism as a career either positively or negatively. A small majority of the questionnaire respondents indicated that they have work experience in tourism (65.3%).

Of those who had work experience in tourism, 66.3% spent between three to six months and 13.5% spent less than three months in the industry. This is perhaps the practical training these students undergo while still studying tourism, as it reflects the same the amount of time for practical training indicated by the educators:

“For our degree program, the practical training is for two months.” (MARA University of Technology)

“Our final semester students are required to undergo practical training to complete their certification. They will go for four months [internship] at both public and private sectors.” (Northern University of Malaysia)

“Our practical training is for one semester or for a period of six months during the fourth semester.” (Sabak Bernam Polytechnic)

“Each of our tourism management students needs to undergo practical training for six months in the industry.” (Malacca Polytechnic)

Cross tabulation found that 55.4% of the students sampled have work experience and intend to work in the industry compared to 31.1% who had no experience and intend to work in the industry (Table 5.4). Looking at this result alone, more students who had worked in tourism seem to show an interest to work in tourism. However, it is important to note that these work experiences possibly refer to their practical training internship in the industry. Work experience as an intern (for example, practical training) in Malaysia is different from an actual job. Therefore students may not have the ‘real’ employee experience as they were not paid by the employer and do not have expectations for career promotion.

The chi-square test supports the notion that there is no significant difference in the proportion of Malaysian students who have or do not have work experience in tourism and intention to work in tourism ( $\chi^2 = .805$ , sig = .370). This result contradicts the suggestion of previous research that work experience influences students' perceptions of tourism jobs (Kelley-Patterson & George, 2001; McIntosh, 1983) either positively (Ross, 1992) or negatively (Getz, 1994). This research found that work experience does not influence students' perceptions of tourism as a career.

#### **5.7.4 Overseas Travel Experience**

Another variable tested against the intention to work in tourism after graduation is the students' experience being a consumer of tourism. This is examined through recent overseas travel experience (Airey & Frontistis, 1997). The students were asked whether or not they have travelled overseas in the past two years, because this period of time is recent enough to enable students to recall their experiences. Most of the students have not have not travelled overseas in the past two years (81.3%).

The cross tabulation found that 68.4% of the students sampled have no overseas travel experience and intend to work in tourism while 18.1% have overseas travel experience and intend to work in tourism (Table 5.4). However, it is difficult to draw, from this result, a conclusion about whether or not recent travel experience influences students' work intention since most students do not have recent overseas travel experience. Therefore, a chi-square test was conducted and found that students who have not travelled overseas in the last two years were more likely to express an intention to work in tourism after graduation than those who have overseas travel experience ( $\chi^2 = 4.342$ , sig = 0.37). This finding supports the suggestion by Airey and Frontistis (1997) in their

comparative study between the UK and Greece that students with no travel experience will perceive tourism jobs positively due to lack of exposure that leads them to have unrealistic views of tourism jobs.

#### **5.7.5 Roles of Family and Friends Working in Tourism**

The role of family and friends was suggested as influential towards students' perceptions of tourism careers. A small majority of the questionnaire respondents indicated that they do not have family and friends working in tourism (57.5%). The cross tabulation found that 48.7% of the students sampled intend to work in tourism and do not have friends and family working in tourism while 37.8% of the sample intend to work in tourism and have friends and family working in tourism (Table 5.4). However, a chi-square test found that there is actually no significant differences between Malaysian students who have friends and family working in tourism and those who do not, in terms of their intention to work in tourism ( $\chi^2 = .762$ , sig = .383). In other words, the role of family and friends in tourism is not apparent in Malaysian students' intention to work in tourism, and hence contradicts the findings Aksu and Köksal (2005) in Turkey that students can be influenced by family and friends' experiences working in the industry.

#### **5.7.6 Summary**

The investigation of variables that influence Malaysian students' perceptions of tourism as a career examined above provided mixed results. Some findings mirror the suggestions made by the literature while others provide new perspectives to the study of perceptions of tourism as a career.

This thesis found that in Malaysia, degree students are more committed to work in tourism after graduation than diploma students. Some diploma students, according to educators at the polytechnics, may use their qualification to pursue university degrees in tourism. Students who choose to study tourism willingly, due to having an interest in the subject, seem to have more of an intention to pursue careers in tourism. Work experience in tourism does not seem to be playing a significant role in influencing students' perceptions when most students intend to work in tourism regardless of having or not having work experience in tourism. However, work experience in this context may not represent the 'real' employee experience as students' were possibly involved with practical training or internships, and an internship position in Malaysia has characteristics that make it different from an actual job. The roles of family and friends were not apparent in students' career decisions. In contrast, recent overseas travel experience influences students' perception as Malaysian students who have not travelled overseas are more likely to want to work in tourism after graduation than those with travel experience.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

Industry bodies question the quality of recent graduates, particularly in terms of their interest to work in tourism while some issues with English language skills were also mentioned. They indicated some qualities that they sought from the graduates which included behavioural aspects (commitment and character) and skills (communication and language). Students are aware of these qualities. The only mismatch in terms of the students' qualities is the emphasis on work experience by students which was of not that important to the industry. Educators generally believe that their students are prepared with the necessary skills to perform in the industry, although one educator affiliated with

a polytechnic acknowledges that the lack of language skills (in particular, English) amongst its students is an issue.

The industry bodies admit to the criticisms made by the educators that tourism graduates were offered low positions in the industry. These types of jobs are incompatible with students' expectations for jobs that value their qualifications, particularly at the supervisory and management level. However, the situation is different in Tourism Malaysia which offers jobs well above the lowest tier to recent graduates, and hence explains the high interest among students to work for Tourism Malaysia after graduation which is evident through the responses from the students and Tourism Malaysia.

This chapter also found that some determinants thought to influence students' perceptions of tourism as a career played significant roles towards Malaysian students' career decisions while others were not as significant. However, in general, Malaysian students have very positive perceptions of careers in tourism and intend to pursue it as a career after graduation. Students who choose tourism willingly seem to have more of an intention to pursue careers in tourism. Perhaps one means of getting more students to choose tourism programs willingly is to promote tourism as a graduate career more aggressively. Such a promotional effort could focus on ways of showcasing the more positive attributes of tourism work and careers.



## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This thesis has examined the issue of tourism as a graduate career from the perceptions of key stakeholders in Malaysia. Tourism is the second largest contributor to the Malaysian economy and is in need of skilled labour to support the growth of the industry. Malaysian students, although they had positive perceptions of tourism as a career, expressed concerns about wages and level of positions offered by hotels and travel agents. The literature suggests that these may affect graduates' interest to join the tourism workforce. However, research on perceptions of tourism as a career has been concentrated in developed countries (Ernawati & Pearce, 2003). This thesis therefore responds to gaps in the literature by looking at shortages of skilled labour in a developing country like Malaysia that emphasizes tourism as a significant industry to the economy. Key stakeholders concerning this issue have been identified: the government, industry, educators and students. Mixed methods have been employed to collect data from these stakeholders through conducting face-to-face interviews with key informants from the relevant government ministries, key industry bodies, an important employer, and educators at two public universities and two polytechnics. Questionnaires were also distributed to final year tourism management students at the same universities and polytechnics who were about to graduate. The data were analyzed using the appropriate analyses and the results have been discussed.

As noted in the first chapter, the research objectives of this thesis are to investigate what key tourism stakeholders in Malaysia have been doing in promoting tourism as a graduate career, to examine how students perceive tourism as a career option, and to develop a framework to explain the relationships among these stakeholders with respect to tourism

as a graduate career in Malaysia. This thesis has achieved these objectives by explaining the promotional activities undertaken by the stakeholders, relationships among them, and gaps that still exist. Students' perceptions of careers in tourism and factors leading to these perceptions have also been identified. An analytical framework that outlines a stakeholder-inclusive approach in tourism human resource development has been developed to illustrate the relationships amongst these stakeholders in the promotion of tourism as a graduate career in Malaysia.

This chapter will begin by first looking at the analytical framework developed by this thesis in order to provide a general view on relationships amongst stakeholders in promoting tourism as a graduate career in Malaysia. This framework will lead to an evaluation of the promotional activities undertaken by the government, industry and the educators to promote careers in tourism to students. This will be followed by a discussion of Malaysian students' perception of careers in tourism. Based on the findings of how tourism careers are being promoted and perceived by stakeholders in Malaysia, some recommendations will be made to these stakeholders on ways to promote tourism as a graduate career more effectively. This chapter will also provide some suggestions for future studies on stakeholders' perceptions of tourism as a graduate career.

## **6.2 Stakeholders Relationships in Promoting Tourism as a Graduate Career in Malaysia**

The relationships between key stakeholders in Malaysia were illustrated in this thesis by an analytical framework that depicts a stakeholder-inclusive approach in tourism human resource development. Applying this framework to the context of Malaysian tourism has enabled this thesis to identify promotional activities undertaken by the government,

industry and educators. Students' perceptions of tourism as a career and factors influencing their perceptions have also been discussed.

#### **6.2.1 The Analytical Framework: A Stakeholder-Inclusive Model in Tourism Human Resource Development**

The analytical framework used in this research was carefully developed by combining existing models that deal with different stages of tourism education and human resource management in tourism. This model has proven its applicability in this thesis by guiding the identification of the key stakeholders related to the promotion of tourism as a graduate career and relationships between them. This framework suggested two environments in which these relationships occur, namely the *tourism environment* and the *education environment*. Key stakeholders that belong to these environments have also been identified. The Ministry of Tourism governs the tourism environment while the Ministry of Higher Education is the highest and the most relevant authority in the education environment. As this subject is related to human resource management, the Ministry of Human Resources which oversees overall human resource issues in Malaysia was found to be relevant as it co-exists in both environments.

Next is the industry and educators. The industry belongs to the tourism environment and refers to tourism related businesses that operate and form the overall tourism industry. In this thesis, the industry comprises two industry bodies, the Malaysian Association of Hotels and the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents, and a major employer, Tourism Malaysia. The two associations represent sectors that are important employers in the Malaysian tourism industry while Tourism Malaysia is an important employer and Malaysia's destination marketing organization. Educators belong to the education environment and refer to tertiary institutions that provide education and skill training in

tourism. In the context of this study, the tertiary institutions include two public universities, the MARA University of Technology and Northern University of Malaysia, and two polytechnics, Sabak Bernam Polytechnic and Malacca Polytechnic. These four tertiary institutions have the most established tourism programs in Malaysia with sizeable numbers of students. These programs are tourism management programs.

The analytical framework also suggests two sets of relationships amongst the stakeholders. The first set is amongst the government, the industry and the educators. These relationships are when the stakeholders discuss and formulate policy related to tourism human resource development. The second set of relationships is amongst the industry, the educators and the students. These stakeholders are influenced by policies that are implemented. Government, industry and educators co-operate from the top down when policies are made known to industry and educators and from the bottom up when input from industry and educators is used to formulate and revise policy. A similar situation applies when industry and educators interact with students. From the top down, the industry provides job opportunities to students while the educators prepare students for these jobs through relevant education and training. Students will shape their career expectations while studying tourism and gain actual experience when they enter the industry after graduation. Students' interest to work in tourism provides an indicator for the effectiveness of promotions of tourism as a career (from the bottom-up).

That employers and educators serve as a crucial link between the government and students suggests that the industry and educators play a role in developing and implementing policy, which also explains the absence of direct contact between the government and students in this framework. The employers and educators link the

government and the students through contributing to the formulation of policy and then implementing it to the students. The feedback received from implementing the policy may then be channelled back to the government in order to ensure they meet the objectives for which it was developed, and for continuous improvement. As such, the roles of the employers and educators are a crucial component in the formulation and implementation of policies related to human resource development in tourism.

The stakeholder-inclusive model in tourism human resource development discussed above provides useful structure and illustration of the relationships and gaps amongst stakeholders in promoting careers in tourism to students in Malaysia. It is trusted that this model would also provide a useful framework for future research examining stakeholders' perceptions of tourism as a graduate career.

### **6.2.2 Promotion and Perceptions of Tourism as a Graduate Career in Malaysia**

The main research question addressed by this thesis was: how do key stakeholders in Malaysia promote and perceive tourism as a graduate career? Different stakeholders have different perceptions with respect to tourism as a graduate career. This thesis found that there were various types of promotional activities undertaken by the stakeholders at different degrees. It was also suggested that there were different types of promotion, namely, promotion of tourism programs and tourism careers. Both were suggested by the stakeholders to encourage students to choose tourism as their career after graduation. This thesis also identified Malaysian students' perceptions of tourism as a career and factors that influence these perceptions. This section of the conclusion addresses each of the four research questions that relate to each of the four stakeholders: the government, industry, educators and students.

Research Question 1: *How is the government promoting careers in tourism to the students?*

The government has segmented efforts in promoting tourism as a graduate career, driven by different areas of responsibility held by each ministry. The Ministry of Higher Education, which belongs to the education environment, promotes tourism programs at public universities and polytechnics, which they also perceive as promoting tourism careers by bringing students to the tourism career path through knowledge and skills training in tourism. The ministry contends that they promote tourism careers through the promotion of tourism programs. The Ministry of Human Resources which belongs to both the education and tourism environments by overseeing human resource development in Malaysia, also promotes tourism programs rather than careers. The Ministry of Tourism which governs the tourism environment promotes tourism as a graduate career, however the reach is limited. Tourism career seminars reach only secondary school students and at the moment only the Malaysian Tourist Guide's Council was used to help promote careers in tourism. The Ministry of Tourism plans to expand its efforts and promote tourism careers to students at tertiary institutions by collaborating with more of the industry bodies in Malaysia.

The industry and educators believe that current policies by the government in promoting tourism as a graduate career are inadequate and the outcome is not apparent in addressing the skilled labour shortage issue in Malaysia. What is suggested as lacking in the policies is a clear career path to the students on how to get to careers in tourism. The conflicting views amongst the stakeholders imply that effective two-way communication is missing from the government–industry/educators relationships. This situation may result in tourism human resource in Malaysia is being ‘administered’ (managed from the top down

without input from other stakeholders) rather than ‘developed’ (through consultation and participatory management).

Research Question 2: *What is the industry doing to promote careers in tourism to the students?*

The promotional activities undertaken by the industry are limited and they believe educators are better promoters of tourism careers. Nevertheless, there is evidence of some promotion, either by the industry to promote careers in their own sectors/organizations like the newspaper and website advertisement regarding vacancies in Tourism Malaysia, or a larger scale promotion in the case of the hotel association’s cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education in publishing newspaper articles about career opportunities in tourism. This industry-government relationship also implies that a lack of financial resources is an issue for the industry to conduct more aggressive promotion of tourism careers, hence calls for support from the government. Industry bodies argue that they lack the resources but not the willingness to promote tourism as a graduate career.

Other stakeholders, the government and educators , believe that the industry offers low salaries which make careers in tourism appear unattractive to students. The industry was also said to not recognize graduates’ academic qualifications and insists that they start from low level positions. As a result, graduates of tourism, according to some stakeholders, decide to choose other sectors that provide them with better remuneration that is compatible with their academic qualifications.

Research Question 3: *To what extent do tourism educators promote careers in tourism to students studying tourism at tertiary institutions?*

The educators play an active role in promoting tourism careers by conducting internal promotion like providing careers opportunities through lectures, invited speakers and career fairs, as well as external promotion by visiting the industry and developing student placement in the industry through practical training. Educators have direct contact with students at the higher learning institutions throughout the period of tourism programs, and are also a trusted source of information for students regarding career advice. Hence, the educators' role is very important to shape students' career expectations and decisions before they enter the labour market. The role of educators as effective promoters of tourism is also recognized by the industry bodies.

Research Question 4: *What are the tourism students' perceptions of tourism as their future career?*

This thesis found that Malaysian students generally have positive perceptions of tourism as a career. Students responded very favourably to Likert scale questions about enjoying work in the tourism industry and choosing tourism as a career. They also believe all qualities and skills listed by the questionnaire as important showing that they perceive that one has to be an 'all-rounded' skilled candidate to work in the industry. However, work experience that students perceive as important is not the most important criteria to the industry.

In terms of jobs in tourism, students expect to be offered graduate positions, specifically at the supervisory level (for diploma students) and the managerial level (for degree students). As such, students expect their tertiary qualifications to be valued by their



employers. However, the findings from the interviews with the educators suggested that students are discouraged from choosing tourism as a career in the hotel and travel agent sector because of having to start from low-level entry positions. Thus, there is a mismatch between the positions offered to the graduates by the industry bodies and what the students expect, which are positions that are lower than managerial and supervisory positions desired by degree and diploma students respectively.

It is important to note that although the general perception of tourism as a graduate career is positive, Tourism Malaysia was the most preferred employer among the students. This suggests that the attractiveness of careers in hotels and travel agencies is still lacking compared to what is offered by Tourism Malaysia, which this thesis found, is the recognition of graduates' degree and diploma qualifications through offering them positions at the supervisory and managerial level.

Several variables influence students' career intentions. The importance of tourism in the Malaysian economy may influence the overall positive perceptions of the questionnaire respondents towards careers in tourism. In terms of the level of education, university degree students are more likely to work in tourism after graduation while some diploma students use their qualification to pursue a tourism degree. Students who choose to study tourism willingly were more likely to express an intention to work in tourism after graduation than those who did not choose to study tourism willingly. Students with no overseas travel experience in the past two years were seen as lacking experience in being a consumer of tourism, an assumption also made by Airey and Frontistis (1997). Students with no overseas travel experience were more likely to express an intention to work in tourism after graduation than those students with overseas travel experience.

While the above variables play some role in shaping Malaysian students' perception of tourism as a career, other variables including the size of employer, work experience in tourism, and the roles of family and friends working in tourism do not seem to influence students' career decisions. Gender, due to the overwhelming number of female respondents relative to males in the sample, makes it difficult for comparison to be made with this variable (intention to work in the tourism industry). The sample suggests that tourism programs in Malaysia attract more female than male students, and predominantly from the Malay ethnic group. Perhaps stakeholders need to consider ways of attracting more men to tourism programs and tourism careers. As well, there may be a need to promote greater ethnic diversity within the industry.

### **6.3 Implications and Recommendations**

This thesis has provided some insights on the relationships amongst key tourism stakeholders in promoting tourism as a graduate career in Malaysia. From the findings, different strengths of relationships and gaps have also been identified.

This thesis also supports the findings of research conducted by the Ministry of Tourism in Malaysia (2002) and Liu (2002) that shortages of skilled labour is one of the challenges faced by the tourism industry in Malaysia. From the interviews conducted with the Ministry of Tourism and both the industry bodies, this thesis confirmed that the difficulty in attracting skilled labour to the Malaysian tourism industry is still an unresolved issue. Factors related to this problem have been identified and the following recommendations are suggested to guide key stakeholders in Malaysia to possible measures to be undertaken to attract more skilled workers into tourism.

### **6.3.1 Recommendations for the Government**

As discussed, the government seems to have fragmented efforts in promoting tourism as a graduate career due to the different responsibilities of the various government agencies. The Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Human Resources are focusing on promoting only tourism programs. Promoting tourism programs is one way to promote tourism careers. However, there may also be a need to promote career opportunities to students already in tourism programs, especially students in the final year of their programs. The Ministry of Tourism could take a lead role in promoting tourism careers in this fashion in association with a number of industry bodies. The research interview with the senior official from the Ministry of Tourism indicated that just such initiatives may soon be implemented. This is crucial to complement the efforts by other ministries in promoting tourism programs to attract students into the field of tourism. In order to undertake a more effective promotion of tourism careers to the students, all relevant ministries could work on a more integrated approach in promoting both tourism programs and tourism career promotion so that a more consistent message is conveyed to the students.

This thesis also found that different forums have been established at the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Higher Education in Malaysia. A forum at the Ministry of Higher Education focuses on tourism curriculum development whereas a forum at the Ministry of Tourism looks at a broader issue of human resources development in tourism. Hence it is suggested that that these forums need to be linked and integrated so that all relevant stakeholders will be better informed on policies to promote tourism as a graduate career, and the issues discussed would include the interests of all stakeholders in both the tourism and education environments. Approaches to curriculum development and human

resource development could benefit from being integrated; separate government forums could be combined or could collaborate. The Ministry of Tourism, through its National Tourism Human Resource Development Council (NTHRDC) which captures the broader issue of human resource development in tourism should play a more aggressive role. Attracting students to choose careers in tourism should be a topic of importance to this council. The relevant stakeholders suggested by this thesis should be included and consulted. At the moment, the educators are not included in this council. Therefore, the council need to get them on board to capture tourism education issues. Only with the involvement from all these key stakeholders will human resource management in tourism in Malaysia will be stakeholder informed rather than stakeholders influenced. Therefore, strengthening the NTHRDC with the inclusion of the relevant stakeholders to discuss an integrated strategy to promote both tourism programs and careers in Malaysia is an area that is crucial for the Ministry of Tourism to consider.

In this thesis, the industry and educators believed that current policies to promote tourism as a graduate career in Malaysia are inadequate to increase students' interest to choose careers in tourism. They suggested that the students need clear directions on the career path in tourism. The Ministry of Tourism has indicated its plan to expand the reach of tourism career promotional activities to reach more students studying at all levels of the education system. If this is implemented, the Ministry of Tourism alone, to ensure the reach of its promotional program to all students in Malaysia, will face a challenging task. At the same time, the industry bodies have indicated their willingness to provide assistance through their expertise and members all over the country, but they call for financial assistance from the government to fund this effort. Therefore, the Ministry of Tourism should take advantage by collaborating with more industry bodies to help

promote tourism careers and assist them with the necessary resources to ensure wider reach of the promotion of tourism careers. From the questionnaire, students indicated that their preferred sources of career information are the internet and newspapers. Therefore, government and industry bodies should also consider making more use of these preferred channels more effectively. For example, the Ministry of Tourism could develop a careers website that provides information about careers in tourism where tourism operators can advertise their vacancies and practical training opportunities. In addition to that, the Ministry could also produce more newspaper articles and supplements related to careers in tourism.

### **6.3.2 Recommendations for the Industry**

In this research, the industry bodies believed that educators are better promoters of tourism careers. Nevertheless, they are willing to lend a helping hand. This is demonstrated by their readiness to assist the government in conducting promotional activities through their members all over Malaysia provided that the necessary financial support is made available.

It is important to note that promotion alone will not ensure students' interests could be increased by the industry bodies. As discovered by this thesis, students' lack of interest to work in the hotel and travel agent sectors are a result of the negative perceptions of having to start from low positions. This is a really important issue that the hoteliers and travel agencies need to be aware of and address immediately. Industry bodies may argue that the quality of students did not meet their expectations but they must also realize that quality candidates would prefer to work for employers who recognize their qualifications. Decent pay attracts quality job candidates who can add value to private sector

organizations. Tourism Malaysia (a government-funded organization) is perceived as a preferred employer by tourism graduates because it recognizes students' qualifications and offers positions and salary according to their qualification. This practice should be viewed as an example by the hotel and travel agent sectors if they wish to change the negative images given to them. Only by doing this, the hotel and travel agent sectors will be able to attract graduates to choose them over other sectors.

In relation to the above, future promotions should focus on not just promoting tourism as a career, but as a rewarding career. Students need to be informed on why tourism should be their top career choice and this can be achieved by creating awareness about opportunities and attractive perks that they will enjoy by choosing tourism. Government may be able to provide the funds for more promotional activities to take place, but only the industry that can make tourism jobs more appealing with attractive perks and career advancement opportunities. Although offering better remuneration to graduates may involve higher operational costs, industry must think about ways to make better use of skilled workers to add value to their businesses and achieve higher yields and profit.

This thesis also found that there are conflicting perceptions between the industry and the educators in terms of the relevance of the tourism curriculum to the industry's needs. The educators perceived curricula at public universities and polytechnics as relevant but the industry bodies have doubts about to what extent these curricula are benchmarked with international institutions. One of the concerns raised by the industry bodies is the lack of English proficiency of graduate's at the workplace. Although this should be addressed by the educators while students are at the tertiary institutions, the industry can also contribute to the development of better quality graduates by providing English training

programs at the workplace during the practical training period that students spend at their organizations. Apart from that, industry can also communicate more clearly the qualities that they expect from graduates to other stakeholders through the NTHRDC and suggest areas of competencies they expect graduates holding supervisory and managerial positions to be equipped with. Such information will assist the government and the educators to adjust their policies and training approaches accordingly, and produce graduates that fulfil the needs of the industry. Only with such initiatives, students can be better informed about what is important and what is not important in terms of qualities they need to make their way to careers in tourism.

### **6.3.3 Recommendations for the Educators**

Educators in this thesis have played a significant role in terms of educating and training students and encouraging them to pursue it as a career upon graduation. Lecturers, being a trusted reference for students at tertiary institutions and ranked by the questionnaire respondents as one of the most important sources of information on careers in tourism, should continue to provide career information and motivation to students regarding the vast potential and opportunities in this industry. The provision of tourism career information to students by the lecturers should continue; they provide tourism students at tertiary institutions with updates and opportunities available to them in the industry. Therefore, lecturers should constantly gather the most up to date information on the current trends and changes in the industry as well as career opportunities in tourism so that these can be communicated to students.

Educators undoubtedly are the key stakeholders that can have a massive influence on students' career decisions through having direct contact with students throughout their

tourism programs which also function as career preparatory programs. However, what is still lacking in terms of the promotion by the educators is the general absence of career centres at tertiary institutions to provide students with information about careers in tourism or other sectors. From the interviews with the educators, only one institution has a career centre that provides information on careers in tourism whereas others do not have such facility. The fact that students make more use of external resources like internet and newspapers to find information about careers in tourism perhaps also suggests the lack of information they could access at tertiary institutions. Although the existing efforts by educators are useful and beneficial to students, a career centre on campus could assist educators to promote tourism careers to students more effectively. Therefore, the setting up of career centres at tertiary institutions should be an immediate strategy by the educators to provide students with information on career opportunities in tourism. This effort can be supported by the government and industry through providing adequate career information materials, publications and job opportunity advertisements which will assist students in gathering information about job opportunities in tourism while at tertiary institutions.

There are also areas for further improvement in tourism curriculum that the educators can look at. Industry players investigated by this thesis indicated their preference towards institutions that taught their students in English, with the perception that it provides the students with language and communication skills that are needed in the industry. Tourism, by nature, is an industry that deals with people from various backgrounds. Hence, language skills, particularly English is essential in the context of Malaysian tourism. Tourism programs at tertiary institutions, therefore, could be taught in English to provide students with the language and communication skills that they would need the



most when working in the industry. At least, tourism programs should offer a course titled “English for Business and Tourism” if they do not already do so to provide students with the basic communication skills they need to work in the industry.

This thesis also found that some students in the polytechnics complete their diploma program and then move onto universities where they complete a degree. Perhaps there is a need for educators to assess whether this route produces well-rounded job candidates with solid skills and a good knowledge base in tourism. Educators must also identify the level of tourism education that produces employees who possess the skills needed by the industry, and manage the enrolments into that program accordingly.

#### **6.4 Suggestions for Future Research**

As discussed in the methodology chapter, this thesis acknowledges its limitations. Therefore, some considerations for future research are suggested to guide other research examining stakeholders and perceptions of tourism as a career.

Future research could expand the scope of this thesis to include more tertiary institutions like public community colleges which offer tourism programs at the certificate level, as well as private tertiary institutions which also provide the tourism industry with graduate workers. This will enable a more comprehensive review of perceptions of tourism students to be investigated to better represent all tourism students in Malaysia.

This research is also limited to only three sectors of tourism – hotels, travel agencies and a destination marketing organization (Tourism Malaysia). Future studies could involve more sectors that are related to tourism, for example, tourism attractions, passenger

transportation, restaurants and bars, and tourist guiding activities. The research design could also be expanded by investigating the perceptions of each operator rather than industry bodies, in order to capture the different views of operators within one sector.

Students involved in this thesis are only tourism management students at universities and polytechnics in the final year of their studies. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize its findings to students studying in other academic programs. Hence, future studies may wish to study subjects or disciplines other than tourism that might have some connection or link with the tourism industry. Apart from that, it will also be useful to compare students' perceptions when they just enter tourism programs and when they are about to finish their studies, to investigate gradual changes in students' perceptions of tourism programs before and after they were provided with skills and knowledge of tourism. Such a study could be a longitudinal one that tracks the perceptions of the same students over several years.

Finally, this thesis found that the issue of productivity is perceived by the industry bodies as closely linked to determining wages in tourism. The industry bodies believe that qualification alone is not the only determinant to justify high salary, but students must be able to demonstrate productivity at the workplace. Hence, researchers could possibly design a research project that is able to measure the contributions of university and polytechnic graduates to firm productivity in order to better understand the value of tourism graduates to firms. The Ministry of Tourism indicated that some new initiatives have been planned to expand tourism career promotion to tertiary institutions. These initiatives will involve more industry bodies. Future research might entail an assesment

of these initiatives. Will they be effective? If so, how long will it take for their impact to be felt?

Nevertheless, this thesis has provided another dimension to the breadth of existing studies on tourism as a graduate career from the context of a developing country, Malaysia, where tourism is the second biggest contributor to the economy. The investigation of key tourism stakeholders has provided this thesis with some understanding of how stakeholders play their roles in promoting tourism careers to students, thus adding some interesting findings to the literature on stakeholders and perceptions of tourism as a career. The key stakeholders identified by this thesis – the government, industry, educators and students – should continue to be investigated in future research to ensure the findings benefit all stakeholders involved in tourism human resources development. This thesis has also contributed to the literature by providing an example of where students actually have positive perceptions of careers in tourism, and how different variables have or have no influence on students' perceptions of careers in tourism.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This thesis confirms that a shortage of skilled workers in tourism in Malaysia is an issue that the country struggles to address. Such a situation, if allowed to persist, will hamper the country's objective to develop skilled workers for services sectors including tourism as stipulated in the 9<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Plan and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Industrial Master Plan. The investigation of the key stakeholders' perceptions found that each stakeholder has to make some improvements in the way they promote tourism to students. The government initiatives are segmented due to different responsibilities. However, there is lack of activities targeted at students at tertiary institutions who are the potential source of

tomorrow's workforce in the tourism industry. The lack of attractiveness of tourism jobs offered by the hotel and travel agent sectors affects graduates' interest in choosing them as their career. Educators, although playing an active role in educating and promoting tourism to their students, needs help from the industry to provide students with skills that the industry needs. Malaysian students, in general, perceive tourism careers positively but emphasized that their qualifications should be recognized by the employers through compatible positions and wages.

What is needed now is for the above stakeholders to address the above issues associated with them. Concerted efforts including more integrated forums and stronger collaboration amongst the stakeholders are the essence of the recommendations made by this thesis to ensure a more successful promotion of tourism as a graduate career. The positive perceptions of tourism careers among tourism students in Malaysia is a good sign, hence should be taken advantage by other stakeholders by providing them with the necessary information on career opportunities, the skills they need to excel in the industry, as well as positions and wages that are compatible with their qualifications. Only by doing this, tourism stakeholders in Malaysia could ensure that students will have positive perceptions of tourism as a career, which will be translated into practice through higher participation of tourism graduates in tourism in the future.

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## APPENDIX 1: Interview Questions



**To:**

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Rudy Khairudin and I am a Master of Tourism Management student at Victoria University of Wellington. As a part of this Masters programme, I am undertaking this research project to investigate stakeholders' perceptions of tourism as a career in Malaysia. These stakeholders include the students, educators, industry bodies/employers and the government.

The government/industry/educators are key stakeholders in this study. Therefore, I am inviting you to be a key respondent to this study. This letter is a follow-up to our e-mail exchange in March 2008 when we discussed the interview. The interview will take approximately one hour. I will gladly send you a copy of the interview questions in advance if you wish.

The data collected from this interview will be used for my research project and will be put into a written thesis. A copy of the thesis will also be given to Public Service Department of Malaysia and the Ministry of Tourism in Malaysia. It is intended that one or more articles will be submitted for publication in academic journals. The record of the interview notes will be destroyed two years after the end of the project.

Please understand that the information or opinions given by you in this research will be attributed to your organization. You will be referred to as the 'programme director' in my thesis. Therefore you will have the right to check and verify the interview notes and have an opportunity to withdraw from this study within three weeks after the interview.

If you need further information about the project, do not hesitate to contact me by telephone at **019-2182588**, by e-mail [rudy.mohdnor@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:rudy.mohdnor@vuw.ac.nz) or by mail at Tourism Management Group, Victoria Management School, Victoria University of Wellington, P.O. Box 600, Wellington. You are also welcome to contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Adam Weaver, by e-mail at [adam.weaver@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:adam.weaver@vuw.ac.nz)

Thank you

Rudy Khairudin (Signed)



## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Project:

**“Tourism as a Career in Malaysia: Stakeholders’ Perceptions”**

I hereby agree to take part in this research project. ☐

I have been given a clear description of this research project. I have understood the description of the research project that has been given to me. ☐

In this thesis, I am comfortable being referred to as the ‘senior official’ of my organization. The information and opinions I provide will be attributed to my organization. ☐

I **would / would not** (circle one) like to check the transcripts of the interview before analysis. ☐

I **would / would not** (circle one) like to receive a copy of the research when it is completed. ☐

I understand that the information I have provided will be used only for this research project and that any further use will require my written consent. ☐

I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information I have provided) from this project within **three weeks** after the interview. ☐

I understand that if I withdraw from the project, any data I have provided will be destroyed. ☐

**Name:** .....

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

## Interview Questions – Government's Perceptions

The questions below are for the senior officials from the relevant government agencies. The objective is to gain some insight into their perspectives regarding the current policy in promoting tourism as a career to students and their perspectives regarding to what extent other stakeholders implement the policy.

*Soalan-soalan berikut ditujukan kepada pegawai daripada agensi kerajaan yang berkaitan. Objektifnya ialah untuk memahami perspektif mereka berkenaan dasar sedia ada dalam mempromosikan kerjaya dalam bidang pelancongan kepada pelajar, dan sejauh manakah stakeholder lain melaksanakan dasar tersebut.*

### **Section A = Policy**

1. Could you tell me, in general, what activities your organization is engaged in?  
*Bolehkah anda jelaskan serba ringkas mengenai aktiviti yang dilaksanakan oleh organisasi anda?*
2. What are the main tourism human resources issues faced by your sector?  
*Apakah isu sumber manusia utama yang dihadapi oleh sektor anda?*
3. What policies relate to developing human resources in tourism?  
*Apakah dasar anda yang berkaitan dengan pembangunan sumber manusia dalam bidang pelancongan?*
4. How do you implement these policies? How do you keep track of the implementation? Do you encounter any problem in implementing the policy?  
*Bagaimanakah anda melaksanakan dasar ini? Bagaimanakah anda memantau pelaksanaannya? Adakah anda menghadapi sebarang masalah dalam melaksanakan dasar tersebut?*
5. How often the policy is being evaluated and revised?  
*Berapa kerapkan dasar ini dinilai dan disemak semula?*
6. What are the role of the industry and the educators in the formulation and implementation of this policy?  
*Apakah peranan pihak industri dan pendidik dalam pembangunan dan pelaksanaan dasar ini?*
7. Do you think the current policy is adequate to address issues affecting graduates interest to choose tourism as a career?  
*Adakah anda berpendapat bahawa dasar sedia ada ini mencukupi untuk menangani isu yang menjejaskan minat graduan untuk memilih kerjaya dalam bidang pelancongan?*

### **Section B = Students**

8. What are the measures undertaken by you to promote tourism as a career to tourism graduates?  
*Apakah usaha-usaha yang telah anda ambil untuk mempromosikan bidang pelancongan sebagai kerjaya kepada graduan pelancongan?*

9. Has this been effective? If yes, to what extent is it effective? If no, why is it not effective?

*Adakah ini berkesan? Jika ya, sejauh mana ia berkesan? Jika tidak, mengapa ia tidak berkesan?*

10. What are your future plans to further promote tourism as a career to the tourism graduates?

*Apakah perancangan masa hadapan untuk mempromosikan bidang pelancongan sebagai kerjaya kepada graduan pelancongan?*

### **Section C = Education**

11. Is there a forum for your organization and educators to meet and discuss issues about attracting graduates to choose tourism as a career? If yes, how frequently is it being done?

*Adakah sebarang platform untuk organisasi anda dan pihak pendidik berjumpa dan berbincang mengenai isu untuk menarik graduan memilih kerjaya dalam bidang pelancongan? Jika ya, berapa kerapkah ia diadakan?*

12. To what extent do you feel that the educators have implemented your policy related to developing human resources in tourism?

*Sejauh manakah anda berpendapat bahawa pihak pendidik telah melaksanakan dasar anda yang berkaitan dengan pembangunan sumber manusia dalam bidang pelancongan?*

### **Section D = Employers**

13. Is there a forum for your agency and the industry to meet and discuss issues about tourism training/ tourism human resource development? If yes, how frequently is it being done?

*Adakah sebarang platform untuk organisasi anda dan pihak industri berjumpa dan berbincang mengenai latihan pelancongan/pembangunan sumber manusia dalam bidang pelancongan? Jika ya, berapa kerapkah ia diadakan?*

14. To what extent do you think the industry has implemented the policies set up by the government to employ graduates or encourage graduates to choose tourism as a career?

*Sejauh manakah anda berpendapat bahawa pihak industri telah melaksanakan dasar anda yang berkaitan dengan mengambil graduan bekerja atau menggalakkan graduan untuk memilih bidang pelancongan sebagai kerjaya?*

## Interview Questions – Industry Bodies'/Employer's Perceptions

The questions below are for the senior officials from the employers and industry bodies. The objective is to gain some insight into their perspectives regarding the quality of the graduate supply to the industry, particularly from the universities and polytechnics. This interview also attempts to understand how their activities relate to the activities of other stakeholders regarding the promotion of tourism as a career.

*Soalan-soalan berikut adalah ditujukan kepada pegawai daripada pihak majikan dan wakil industri. Objektifnya adalah untuk mendapatkan pemahaman mengenai kualiti pelajar yang dibekalkan kepada industri, khususnya daripada universiti dan politeknik awam. Temubual ini juga bertujuan untuk memahami bagaimana aktiviti majikan berkaitan dengan aktiviti yang dijalankan oleh stakeholder lain dalam mempromosikan bidang pelancongan sebagai kerjaya.*

### **Section A = Industry**

1. Could you tell me, in general, what activities your organization is engaged in?

*Bolehkah anda jelaskan secara ringkas mengenai aktiviti organisasi anda?*

2. What are the main human resources issues faced by your sector or organization?

*Apakah masalah sumber manusia yang dihadapi oleh sektor atau organisasi anda?*

### **Section B = Students**

3. What is your overall perception of tourism graduates from universities and polytechnics?

*Apakah persepsi keseluruhan anda mengenai graduan pelancongan daripada universiti dan politeknik awam?*

4. What characteristics should tourism graduates have?

*Apakah ciri-ciri yang perlu ada pada graduan dalam bidang pelancongan?*

5. What level of qualifications and experience should tourism graduates have?

*Apakah tahap kelulusan dan pengalaman yang perlu dimiliki oleh graduan dalam bidang pelancongan?*

6. Do you think university and polytechnic graduates have a positive view of careers in tourism?

*Adakah anda berpendapat bahawa universiti dan politeknik mempunyai tanggapan yang positif mengenai kerjaya dalam bidang pelancongan?*

7. What have you done to promote tourism careers in your sector/organization to the graduates?

*Apakah yang telah anda lakukan untuk mempromosikan kerjaya dalam sector/organisasi anda kepada graduan dalam bidang pelancongan?*



8. Much research suggests that issues like low pay, unsociable working hours and lack of promotion opportunities have a negative impact on how tourism graduates view a career in tourism. To what extent do you agree with these perceptions with regard to your sector/organization and how do you respond to these perceptions?

*Banyak kajian menunjukkan bahawa isu seperti gaji yang rendah, waktu kerja anti-sosial dan kekurangan peluang peningkatan kerjaya mempunyai kesan negative kepada pandangan graduan terhadap kerjaya dalam bidang pelancongan. Sejauh mana anda bersetuju dengan persepsi ini, khususnya berkaitan sector/organisasi anda dan bagaimanakan anda bertindak balas kepada persepsi sebegini?*

### **Section C = Education**

9. What is your perception of the quality of tourism education at universities and polytechnics in Malaysia?

*Apakah persepsi anda mengenai kualiti pendidikan dalam bidang pelancongan di universiti dan politeknik di Malaysia?*

10. What is your perception of the quality of tourism courses in the universities and polytechnics?

*Apakah persepsi anda mengenai kualiti kursus pelancongan di universiti dan politeknik di Malaysia?*

11. How do you think current tourism programmes in Malaysia could be improved?

*Pada pandangan anda, bagaimanakah program pelancongan di Malaysia sekarang boleh diperbaiki?*

12. Would you like a greater role in shaping tourism curriculums at universities and polytechnics?

*Adakah anda ingin peranan yang lebih besar dalam membentuk kurikulum pelancongan di universiti dan politeknik?*

13. Is there a forum for the industry and the universities/polytechnics to meet and discuss the curriculum? If yes, how frequently is it being done?

*Adakah sebarang platform untuk pihak industri dan universiti/politeknik berjumpa dan berbincang mengenai kurikulum? Jika ya, berapa kerapkah ia dilakukan?*

14. Does your sector/organization provide internships for students during their studies?

*Adakah sektor/organisasi anda menyediakan peluang penempatan kepada pelajar sewaktu pengajian mereka?*

15. Do you conduct in house training in your sector/organization? Why do you find it important?

*Adakah anda menganjurkan sebarang latihan dalaman bagi sector/organisasi anda? Mengapakah anda berpendapat ia penting?*

16. What sort of jobs does your sector/organization offer to recent graduates of tourism programmes at university or polytechnics?

*Apakah jenis pekerjaan yang sektor/organisasi anda tawarkan kepada graduan pelancongan dari universiti dan politeknik?*

**Section D = Government**

17. Is there a forum for the industry and government to meet and discuss issues about tourism training/tourism human resource development? Is yes, what and how often is it being done?

*Adakah sebarang platform untuk pihak industri dan kerajaan berjumpa dan berbincang mengenai latihan pelancongan/pembangunan sumber manusia dalam bidang pelancongan? Jika ya, berapa kerapkan ia dilakukan?*

18. To what extent do you think the industry is implementing the policies set up by the government to employ graduates/encourage graduates to choose tourism as a career?

*Sejauh manakah and berpendapat bahawa pihak industri mengimplementasikan dasar-dasar yang telah dibuat oleh kerajaan untuk mengambil graduan bekerja/menggalakkan graduan memilih kerjaya dalam bidang pelancongan?*

19. What is your perception of the current policies and activities by the government, related to encouraging graduates to choose tourism as a career? Is it adequate? If no, what else needs to be done?

*Apakah persepsi anda mengenai dasar dan aktiviti sedia ada oleh pihak kerajaan yang berkaitan dengan menggalakkan graduan untuk memilih kerjaya dalam bidang pelancongan? Adakah ia mencukupi? Jika tidak, apakah yang masih boleh dilakukan?*

## Interview Questions – Educators' Perceptions

The questions below are for the directors of tourism management programmes in both universities and polytechnics. The objective is to gain some insight into their perspectives regarding their tourism management programme, and how their activities relate to the activities of other stakeholders regarding the promotion of tourism as a career.

*Soalan-soalan berikut ditujukan kepada pengarah atau penyelia program pengurusan pelancongan di Universiti dan Politeknik. Objektifnya ialah untuk mendapatkan pemahaman mengenai perspektif pengajar mengenai program pengurusan pelancongan mereka dan bagaimana aktiviti mereka berkaitan dengan stakeholder lain dalam mempromosikan bidang pelancongan sebagai kerjaya.*

### **Section A = Education/Pendidikan**

1. Could you tell me about your teaching staff? How large is the teaching staff? What is their background?  
*Bolehkah anda jelaskan mengenai tenaga pengajar di institusi anda? Berapakah bilangan mereka? Apakah latar belakang mereka?*
2. Who developed the Tourism Management curriculum that you are using?  
*Siapakah yang membangunkan kurikulum pengurusan pelancongan yang sedang anda gunakan?*
3. What is the focus of the curriculum and what are the key components?  
*Apakah fokus kurikulum tersebut dan apakah komponen utamanya?*
4. Describe the practical training component in your programme (if there is one).  
*Sila jelaskan mengenai komponen latihan praktikal dalam program anda (jika ada).*
5. Do you think that the curriculum is relevant to the needs of employers?  
*Adakah anda berpendapat bahawa kurikulum tersebut relevan dengan kehendak majikan?*

### **Section B = Students/Pelajar**

6. How is the selection of tourism management students being conducted? (Process and criteria).  
*Bagaimanakah pemilihan pelajar pengurusan pelancongan dibuat? (Proses dan criteria)*
7. To what extent do you think that your programme prepares students to meet the industry's needs?  
*Sejauh manakah anda berpendapat bahawa program anda mempersiapkan pelajar untuk memenuhi keperluan pihak industri?*
8. How are your students different from the graduates of other tourism programmes (at university or polytechnics)?

*Bagaimanakah pelajar anda berbeza dengan pelajar program pelancongan di universiti / politeknik lain?*

9. Is there any way students can get information about career opportunities in tourism while they are still at university (or at the polytechnics)?

*Adakah cara untuk pelajar mendapatkan maklumat mengenai peluang kerjaya dalam bidang pelancongan sementara mereka masih berada di universiti (atau politeknik)?*

10. What is being done by your programme to promote tourism as a career to your students?

*Apakah yang sedang program anda lakukan untuk mempromosikan kerjaya dalam bidang pelancongan kepada pelajar anda?*

11. What sorts of jobs do your graduates obtain? How would you describe their careers in the tourism industry?

*Apakah jenis pekerjaan yang dicapai oleh graduan anda? Bagaimanakah anda menggambarkan kerjaya mereka dalam industri pelancongan?*

### **Section C = Employers**

12. To what extent has the industry been involved in the development of your tourism curriculum?

*Sejauh manakah pihak industri terlibat dalam pembangunan kurikulum pelancongan anda?*

13. Is there a forum for the universities/polytechnics and industry to meet and discuss the tourism curriculum? How frequently is it being done?

*Adakah sebarang platform untuk universiti/politeknik anda dan pihak industri bertemu dan berbincang mengenai kurikulum? Berapa kerapkah ia dilakukan?*

14. Are there any arrangements between the universities/polytechnics and tourism employers to receive students for practical training or employment?

*Adakah sebarang persetujuan antara pihak universiti/politeknik anda dengan majikan dalam sektor pelancongan untuk menerima pelajar bagi latihan praktikal atau pengambilan kerja?*

15. What is your perception of the provision of in-house training by the employers? Do you perceive it as an indication that the education provided by the universities/polytechnics is not sufficient?

*Apakah persepsi anda mengenai penyediaan 'latihan dalam pekerjaan' oleh majikan kepada pekerja mereka? Adakah anda melihat ini sebagai menggambarkan bahawa latihan yang diberikan oleh universiti/politeknik tidak mencukupi?*

16. What do you think could be done by the industry to improve the quality of tourism careers?

*Pada pandangan anda, apakah yang boleh dilakukan oleh pihak industri untuk meningkatkan kualiti kerjaya dalam bidang pelancongan?*

**Section D = Government**

17. Is there a forum for the university/polytechnic and the government to meet and discuss tourism education? If yes, what and how often is it done?

*Adakah sebarang platform untuk pihak universiti/politeknik dan pihak kerajaan berjumpa dan berbincang mengenai pendidikan pelancongan? Jika ya, berapa kerapkah ia dilakukan?*

18. To what extent do you feel that the university/polytechnic is implementing the policies set up by the government in encouraging students to choose tourism as a career?

*Sejauh manakah anda merasakan bahawa universiti/politeknik sedang mengimplementasikan dasar-dasar yang telah ditetapkan oleh pihak kerajaan dalam menggalakkan pelajar untuk memilih bidang pelancongan sebagai kerjaya?*

19. What is your perception of the current policies and activities by the government to encourage students to choose tourism as a career? Is it adequate? If no, what else needs to be done?

*Apakah persepsi anda mengenai dasar sedia ada dan aktiviti kerajaan dalam menggalakkan pelajar untuk memilih bidang pelancongan sebagai kerjaya? Adakah ia mencukupi? Jika tidak, apakah yang masih perlu dilakukan?*

## APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire



### ***"Tourism as a Career in Malaysia: Stakeholders' Perceptions"***

Hello! My name is Rudy Khairudin and I am a Master of Tourism Management student at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. As a part of this Masters programme, I am undertaking this research project to investigate stakeholders' perceptions of tourism as a career in Malaysia. These stakeholders include the students, educators, industry bodies and the government.

Students are key stakeholders in this study. Therefore, I am inviting you as final year students in a Tourism Management programme to participate in this study. This questionnaire is easy to complete and will only take about 15 minutes. You could take this home to complete it and return it to me in your next tutorial or class.

**Please do not write your name on the questionnaire.** The responses collected from this questionnaire will be used for my research project on an anonymous basis. Only myself and my thesis supervisor will have access to the collected data. A copy of the results will be given to organizations participating in this research. One outcome of this research may be the preparation of an article submitted for publication in an academic journal. This questionnaire will be destroyed two years after the end of the project.

Your decision to complete this questionnaire will be interpreted as an indication of your consent to participate.

If you need further information about the project, do not hesitate to contact me by telephone at 019-2182588, by e-mail [mohdnomuha@student.vuw.ac.nz](mailto:mohdnomuha@student.vuw.ac.nz), or by mail at Tourism Management Group, Victoria Management School, Victoria University of Wellington, P.O. Box 600, Wellington. You are also welcome to contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Adam Weaver, by e-mail at [adam.weaver@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:adam.weaver@vuw.ac.nz)

### **Thank you for your participation!**

Saya Muhammad Rudy Khairudin Mohd Nor ialah seorang pelajar Sarjana Pengurusan Pelancongan di Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Saya sedang menjalankan kajian untuk mengenalpasti persepsi *stakeholder* mengenai pelancongan sebagai kerjaya di Malaysia. *Stakeholder* yang dimaksudkan merangkumi pelajar, pengajar, pihak industri dan kerajaan.

Pelajar adalah *stakeholder* utama bagi kajian ini. Sehubungan itu saya ingin menjemput pelajar tahun akhir bagi program Pengurusan Pelancongan untuk mengambil bahagian dalam soalselidik ini. Borang soalselidik ini mudah diisi dan mengambil masa kira-kira 15 minit. Anda boleh membawa pulang borang soalselidik ini dan mengembalikannya kepada saya sewaktu kelas/tutorial akan datang.

**Sila jangan tulis nama anda di dalam borang soalselidik ini.** Maklumat yang dikumpulkan akan digunakan di dalam kajian saya dan identiti anda akan dirahsiakan. Hanya saya dan penyelia tesis saya sahaja yang akan mempunyai akses kepada data yang dikumpul. Satu salinan keputusan soalselidik ini akan diberikan kepada organisasi yang terlibat. Selain itu juga, hasil kajian ini akan diterbitkan dalam bentuk artikel ilmiah di dalam jurnal akademik bagi bidang berkaitan. Borang soalselidik ini juga akan dihapuskan selepas dua tahun kajian ini dijalankan.

Keputusan anda untuk melengkapkan borang soalselidik ini akan dianggap sebagai persetujuan anda untuk mengambil bahagian.

Sekiranya anda memerlukan maklumat lanjut mengenai kajian ini, sila hubungi saya melalui telefon di 019-2182588, melalui e-mel [mohdnomuha@student.vuw.ac.nz](mailto:mohdnomuha@student.vuw.ac.nz), atau melalui pos di alamat Tourism Management Group, Victoria Management School, Victoria University of Wellington, P.O. Box 600, Wellington. Pertanyaan juga boleh diajukan kepada penyelia tesis saya Dr. Adam Weaver, melalui e-mel di [adam.weaver@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:adam.weaver@vuw.ac.nz)

### **Terima kasih atas kerjasama anda!**

**"Tourism as a Career in Malaysia: Stakeholders' Perceptions"**  
**"Pelancongan sebagai Kerjaya di Malaysia: Persepsi Stakeholder"**

**Section A: Tourism Education / Bahagian A: Pendidikan Pelancongan**

**Place a '✓' or checkmark in the appropriate box.**

**Sila tandakan '✓' di kotak yang bersesuaian.**

1. Was tourism your first choice when selecting a tertiary programme?

*Adakah Pelancongan pilihan pertama anda sewaktu memilih program pengajian tinggi?*

☐ Yes / Ya

☐ No (go to question 2) / Tidak (pergi ke soalan 2)

2. If not, what was your first choice? : \_\_\_\_\_

*Jika tidak, apakah pilihan pertama anda?*

3. Did you choose the tourism programme willingly?

*Adakah anda memilih program pelancongan ini dengan rela hati?*

☐ Yes (go to question 4)

*Ya (pergi ke soalan 4)*

☐ No (go to question 5)

*Tidak (pergi ke soalan 5)*

4. If 'Yes', why? **Tick the one answer that best applies to you**

*Jika 'Ya' mengapa? **Tandakan satu jawapan sahaja***

☐ I heard the programme was interesting

*Saya dengar program ini menarik*

☐ The programme will lead me to the career I want

*Program ini akan membawa saya kepada karier yang saya inginkan*

☐ I heard the programme was easy

*Saya dengar program ini mudah*

☐ It is easy to get a tourism job

*Mudah dapat kerja dalam bidang pelancongan*

☐ I heard tourism jobs were glamorous

*Saya dengar kerja dalam bidang pelancongan sangat 'glamor'*

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Lain-lain:*

5. If 'No', why? **Tick the one answer that best applies to you**

*Jika 'Tidak' mengapa? **Tandakan satu jawapan sahaja***

☐ My qualification was not good enough to apply for other programmes that I wanted

*Kelulusan saya tidak cukup untuk memohon program yang saya inginkan*

☐ I followed a friend

*Saya mengikut kawan*

☐ My parents made the decision for me

*Keputusan dibuat oleh ibubapa saya*

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Lain-lain:*

6. Do you think that studying tourism will provide you with the skills required by your future employer in tourism?

*Adakah anda rasa belajar bidang pelancongan akan memberi anda kemahiran yang dikehendaki oleh bakal majikan anda?*

☐ Yes / Ya

☐ No / Tidak

☐ I do not know / Tidak tahu

**Please circle the number that best reflects your answer.**

**Sila bulatkan nombor yang mewakili jawapan anda**

7. What knowledge or skills do you expect to obtain from studying tourism? Please rank your expectations on a scale of 1 to 5 (**1= highly expected, 5= not expected at all**)

*Apakah pengetahuan atau kemahiran yang anda harapkan akan diperolehi dengan mengikuti program Pelancongan? Skala jawapan 1 hingga 5 (**1 sangat diharapkan, 5 tidak diharapkan langsung**)*

	Skill/Knowledge <i>Kemahiran/Pengetahuan</i>	Highly expected <i>Sangat diharap- kan</i>	Expected Diharap- kan	Neutral	Not expected <i>Tidak diharap- kan</i>	Not expected at all <i>Tidak diharap- kan langsung</i>
i.	Operational knowledge about the tourism industry <i>Pengetahuan operasi industri pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
ii.	Business management <i>Pengurusan perniagaan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
iii.	Tourism entrepreneurship <i>Keusahawanan pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
iv.	Marketing <i>Pemasaran</i>	1	2	3	4	5
v.	Finance and accounting <i>Perakaunan dan kewangan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
vi.	Tourism planning and resource management <i>Perancangan dan pengurusan sumber</i>	1	2	3	4	5
vii.	Relevant regulations and profession ethics <i>Undang-undang dan etika berkaitan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
viii.	Communication skills <i>Kemahiran komunikasi</i>	1	2	3	4	5
ix.	Learning a foreign language <i>Belajar bahasa asing</i>	1	2	3	4	5
x.	Computer knowledge and skills <i>Pengetahuan dan kemahiran komputer</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xi.	Relevant case studies <i>Kajian kes berkaitan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xii.	Practical training <i>Latihan praktikal</i>	1	2	3	4	5

**Please circle the number that best reflects your answer.**

***Sila bulatkan nombor yang mewakili jawapan anda***

8. If you are applying for a job in tourism, how important do you think each of the following skills or qualities would be to your potential employer? Please circle the number that best reflects your opinion on the scale of 1 to 5 (**1= very important, 5= not important at all**)

*Jika anda memohon pekerjaan dalam bidang pelancongan, berapa pentingkah anda rasa kemahiran atau kualiti berikut kepada bakal majikan anda? Skala jawapan 1 hingga 5 (1 sangat penting, 5 tidak penting langsung)*

	Criteria <i>Kriteria</i>	Very Important <i>Sangat penting</i>	Important <i>Penting</i>	Neutral	Not Important <i>Tidak penting</i>	Not important at all <i>Tidak penting langsung</i>
i.	Your tertiary qualification <i>Kelulusan pengajian tinggi</i>	1	2	3	4	5
ii.	Relevant work experience <i>Pengalaman kerja berkaitan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
iii.	Personality <i>Personaliti</i>	1	2	3	4	5
iv.	Communication skills <i>Kemahiran komunikasi</i>	1	2	3	4	5
v.	Foreign language skills <i>Kemahiran bahasa asing</i>	1	2	3	4	5
vi.	Writing skills <i>Kemahiran menulis</i>	1	2	3	4	5
vii.	Leadership <i>Kepimpinan</i>	1	2	3	4	5



viii.	Management skills (e.g. finance, information technology, personnel, marketing) <i>Kemahiran pengurusan (kewangan, teknologi maklumat, sumber manusia, pemasaran)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
ix.	Analytical thinking (e.g. business strategy, problem- solving) <i>Pemikiran Analitikal (strategi perniagaan, penyelesaian masalah)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
x.	Theoretical knowledge <i>Pengetahuan teori</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xi.	Knowledge of information technology <i>Pengetahuan teknologi maklumat</i>	1	2	3	4	5

**Section B: Perceptions of Tourism as a Career / Bahagian B: Persepsi terhadap Pelancongan sebagai bidang kerjaya**

**Please circle the number that best reflects your answer.  
Sila bulatkan nombor yang mewakili jawapan anda**

9. On a scale of 1-5 (**1=strongly agree, 5= strongly disagree**) please circle the appropriate category which indicates your perception of a career in tourism.

*Dengan menggunakan skala 1-5 (1= sangat setuju, 5= sangat tidak setuju) sila bulatkan jawapan yang menggambarkan pendirian anda mengenai karier dalam bidang pelancongan.*

	Statement <i>Kenyataan</i>	Strongly Agree <i>Sangat setuju</i>	Agree <i>Setuju</i>	Neutral	Disagree <i>Tidak setuju</i>	Strongly Disagree <i>Sangat tidak setuju</i>
i.	I find jobs in the tourism industry interesting <i>Saya rasa kerja dalam bidang pelancongan menarik</i>	1	2	3	4	5
ii.	I like the opportunity to meet new people <i>Saya suka peluang berjumpa orang ramai</i>	1	2	3	4	5
iii.	Working hours in the tourism industry are not suitable for a normal life <i>Waktu kerja dalam bidang pelancongan tidak sesuai untuk kehidupan biasa</i>	1	2	3	4	5
iv.	Seasonality makes it difficult to find a stable job in the tourism industry <i>Peluang kerja bermusim menyebabkan sukar mencari kerja tetap dalam bidang pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
v.	Working in the tourism industry is a respected vocation in Malaysian society <i>Bekerja dalam bidang pelancongan adalah dihormati oleh masyarakat Malaysia</i>	1	2	3	4	5
vi.	My family will be proud if I work in the tourism industry <i>Keluarga saya bangga jika saya kerja dalam bidang pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
vii.	I feel proud to tell my relatives and friends about my career in the tourism industry <i>Saya bangga untuk beritahu saudara-mara dan rakan-rakan tentang kerjaya saya dalam bidang pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
viii.	I will enjoy working in the tourism industry <i>Saya akan gembira bekerja dalam bidang pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
ix.	I do not like to serve people while they are on holiday and enjoying themselves <i>Saya tidak suka melayan orang ketika mereka sedang bercuti dan bergembira</i>	1	2	3	4	5
x.	I can use my knowledge and skills in tourism jobs <i>Saya boleh menggunakan pengetahuan dan kemahiran saya dalam kerja-kerja pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5

xi.	I will feel like a servant when working in the tourism industry <i>Saya rasa seperti orang suruhan bila bekerja dalam bidang pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xii.	There is a high risk of work accidents in the tourism industry <i>Risiko kemalangan di tempat kerja adalah tinggi dalam industri pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xiii.	Working conditions in the tourism Industry are good <i>Keadaan kerja dalam industri pelancongan adalah baik</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xiv.	I think that the salary for most tourism jobs is sufficient. <i>Saya rasa gaji bagi kebanyakan kerja pelancongan adalah mencukupi</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xv.	Jobs in tourism have heavy workloads <i>Beban kerja adalah berat dalam bidang pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xvi.	I find the fringe benefits (holidays, meals, bonuses, etc.) sufficient in the tourism industry <i>Saya rasa faedah sampingan (cuti, makanan, bonus dsb) adalah mencukupi dalam bidang pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xvii.	I think work experience is taken into account in promotion decisions <i>Saya rasa pengalaman kerja diambilkira dalam pertimbangan kenaikan pangkat</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xviii.	Promotion opportunities are satisfactory in the tourism industry <i>Peluang naik pangkat adalah memuaskan dalam industri pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xix.	It is very difficult to get promoted if you do not "have an uncle in the court" in the tourism industry <i>Sukar untuk naik pangkat dalam industri pelancongan jika tidak ada "orang dalam"</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xx.	I think that employees without tertiary qualification are jealous of graduate counterparts <i>Saya rasa pekerja yang tidak ada kelulusan pengajian tinggi cemburu dengan saya</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xxi.	Many of my co-workers would have a tourism qualification <i>Kebanyakan daripada rakan kerja saya akan ada kelayakan dalam bidang pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xxii.	Many of those who are working in the tourism industry are motivated and enthusiastic about their jobs <i>Ramai yang bekerja dalam bidang pelancongan sangat bermotivasi dan bersemangat dengan kerja mereka</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xxiii.	Managers do not expend much in terms of the organizational commitment of employees in the tourism industry <i>Pengurus tidak berusaha dalam meningkatkan komitmen pekerja dalam bidang pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xxiv.	Managers do provide vocational training when necessary in the tourism industry <i>Pengurus menyediakan latihan yang diperlukan dalam industri pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xxv.	Most managers in the tourism industry do not have a qualification in tourism management <i>Kebanyakan pengurus dalam bidang pelancongan tidak memiliki kelulusan dalam pengurusan pelancongan</i>	1	2	3	4	5

xxvi.	I am very pleased to choose tourism as a career path <i>Saya gembira untuk memilih pelancongan sebagai kerjaya</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xxvii.	It is definite that I will not work in the tourism industry after graduation <i>Saya pasti tidak akan bekerja dalam bidang pelancongan selepas tamat belajar</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xxviii.	I will work in the tourism industry after graduation provided that I become a manager or department head <i>Saya hanya akan bekerja dalam bidang pelancongan selepas tamat belajar jika menjadi pengurus atau ketua bahagian</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xxix.	It was a big mistake to choose tourism as a career path <i>Adalah satu kesilapan besar kalau memilih pelancongan sebagai kerjaya</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xxx.	I only want to work in a multi national tourism organization <i>Saya hanya ingin bekerja di organisasi pelancongan yang bertaraf antarabangsa</i>	1	2	3	4	5
xxxi.	I am not interested to work in a small tourism company <i>Saya tidak berminat untuk bekerja di syarikat pelancongan yang kecil</i>	1	2	3	4	5

**Place a '✓' or checkmark in the appropriate box / Sila tandakan '✓' di kotak yang bersesuaian.**

10. Do you intend to work in the tourism industry after graduation?

*Adakah anda bercadang untuk bekerja dalam bidang pelancongan selepas tamat pengajian?*

☐ Yes (go to question 11 & 12)  
*Ya (pergi ke soalan 11 & 12)*

☐ No (go to question 13)  
*Tidak (pergi ke soalan 13)*

11. Which part of the industry would you like to work in the most? **Tick the one answer that best applies to you**  
*Sektor manakah dalam industri pelancongan yang anda paling berminat untuk bekerja? **Tandakan satu jawapan sahaja***

☐ Hotel/accommodation  
*Hotel/penginapan*

☐ Restaurant/bar  
*Restoran/bar*

☐ Travel agency/ Tour operator  
*Agensi pelancongan & pengembaraan*

☐ Tourism attractions  
*Kawasan pelancongan*

☐ Entertainment  
*Hiburan*

☐ Tourism Malaysia

☐ Passenger transportation  
*Pengangkutan penumpang*

☐ Conference facilities  
*Kemudahan persidangan*

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Lain-lain:*

12. What type of position do you expect to obtain? **Please tick only one box**

*Apakah jawatan yang anda jangkakan? **Tandakan satu jawapan sahaja***

☐ Junior staff member  
*Kakitangan bawahan*

☐ Junior manager  
*Pengurus*

☐ Owner (self-employed)  
*Pemilik (perniagaan sendiri)*

☐ Supervisor  
*Penyelia*

☐ Senior manager  
*Pengurus Atasan*

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Lain-lain:*

13. If you do not expect to work in the tourism industry after graduation, why? **Tick the one answer that best applies to you**

*Jika anda tidak bercadang untuk bekerja dalam industri pelancongan selepas tamat belajar, mengapa? **Tandakan satu jawapan sahaja***

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor pay and benefits<br><i>Gaji dan faedah kurang</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of promotional opportunities<br><i>Kurang peluang naik pangkat</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Bad experience in the past<br><i>Pengalaman buruk sebelum ini</i>    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low status<br><i>Status rendah</i>                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of training opportunities<br><i>Kurang peluang latihan</i>         | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of tourism job opportunities<br><i>Kurang peluang pekerjaan</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family factors<br><i>Faktor keluarga</i>               | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsociable working hours<br><i>Waktu kerja yang antisosial</i>          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of job security<br><i>Tiada jaminan kerja</i>     | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor physical work conditions<br><i>Keadaan kerja yang teruk</i>        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____<br><i>Lain-lain:</i>                                    |

### **Section C: Exposure to tourism / Bahagian C: Pendedahan kepada pelancongan**

**Place a '✓' or checkmark in the appropriate box / *Sila tandakan '✓' di kotak yang bersesuaian.***

14. Do you have any work experience in the tourism industry?

*Adakah anda mempunyai pengalaman kerja dalam bidang pelancongan?*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Go to question 15 and 16)<br><i>Ya (pergi ke soalan 15 dan 16)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No (Go to question 17)<br><i>Tidak (pergi ke soalan 17)</i> |
|--|--|

15. If 'Yes', what is the total amount of time you have spent working in tourism industry?

*Jika 'Ya', berapa lamakah tempoh masa anda berkerja dalam bidang pelancongan?*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 3 months / <i>Kurang 3 bulan</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> 7-12 months / <i>7-12 bulan</i>                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3-6 months / <i>3-6 bulan</i>              | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 12 months / <i>Lebih daripada 12 bulan</i> |

16. If 'Yes', what type of tourism related business did you work in most recently? **Tick the one answer that best applies to you**

*Jika 'Ya', di bidang manakah kerja terakhir anda dalam bidang pelancongan? **Tandakan satu jawapan sahaja***

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel/accommodation<br><i>Hotel/penginapan</i>            | <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant/bar<br><i>Restoran/bar</i>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel agency/ Tour operator<br><i>Agensi pelancongan &amp; pengembaraan</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism attractions<br><i>Kawasan pelancongan</i>         | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment<br><i>Hiburan</i>                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism Malaysia   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passenger transportation<br><i>Pengangkutan penumpang</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Conference facilities<br><i>Kemudahan persidangan</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____<br><i>Lain-lain:</i>  |

17. Do you have any family members or friends who work in the tourism industry?

*Adakah anda mempunyai ahli keluarga atau rakan yang berkerja dalam bidang pelancongan?*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <i>Ya</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No / <i>Tidak</i> |
|--|--|

18. Have you traveled overseas in the past two years?

*Pernahkah anda melancong ke luar negara dalam tempoh 2 tahun lalu?*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <i>Ya</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> No / <i>Tidak</i> |
|--|--|

19. Which source of information did you use the most to learn about a career in tourism? **Tick the one answer that best applies to you**

Apakah sumber maklumat yang paling kerap anda gunakan untuk mengetahui tentang kerjaya dalam bidang pelancongan? **Tandakan satu jawapan sahaja**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> TV<br>TV                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends and Family<br>Rakan dan keluarga | <input type="checkbox"/> Handbook/Brochure<br>Buku panduan/Risalah         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radio<br>Radio           | <input type="checkbox"/> Employer's Website<br>Laman web majikan  | <input type="checkbox"/> Job Search Website<br>Laman web mencari pekerjaan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper<br>Suratkhabar | <input type="checkbox"/> Career Advisor<br>Penasihat kerjaya      | <input type="checkbox"/> Lecturer<br>Pensyarah                             |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> None<br>Tiada sumber maklumat            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____<br>Lain-lain:                        |

**Section D: Demography / Bahagian D: Demografi**

The following information would be useful for this study. **Place a '✓' or checkmark in the appropriate box.**  
Maklumat berikut amat berguna untuk kajian ini. **Sila tandakan '✓' di kotak yang bersesuaian.**

20. Gender / Jantina

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male / Lelaki | <input type="checkbox"/> Female / Perempuan |
|--|---|

21. Ethnicity / Etnik

- |   |   |                                       |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Malay / Melayu | <input type="checkbox"/> Indian / India | <input type="checkbox"/> Kadazan      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese / Cina | <input type="checkbox"/> Iban           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

**Please submit this questionnaire to me during your next tutorial or class.**  
**Sila pulangkan borang soalselidik ini kepada saya semasa tutorial atau kelas akan datang.**

**Thank you.**  
**Terima kasih.**