

EXTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL: TALENT ACQUISITION IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM SECTOR POST-COVID 19

Abstract

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Purpose – This paper is presented through the lens of Social Cognitive Theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 1994), and seeks to examine the role of parental influence and internship programs on Job Pursuit Intentions (JPI) in the Vietnamese Hospitality and Tourism industry.

Methodology/Design/Approach – Data were collected through a survey of fourth-year Hospitality and Tourism students at six universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Student responses to a series of prepared questions allowed structural relationships to be developed between key variables, which were illuminated through the deployment of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Smart-PLS.

Findings – The study found that parental support and internship programs significantly affect JPI. This research also revealed the potential for using SCCT in JPI examinations. Further, it indicated that the relationship between parental support and JPI and the relationship between internship programs and JPI are moderated by External Locus of Control (ELOC).

Originality of the research - This research deploys a novel application of SCCT within a collectivist society with Confucian values in the context of JPI amongst Vietnamese hospitality and tourism students. It further gives insight for human resources departments of H&T foreign brands and universities on how to better target student and graduate recruitment.

Keywords Parental Support; Internship Programs; Social Cognitive Career Theory; Job Pursuit Intention (JPI); External Locus of Control; Hospitality and Tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, employers in the Hospitality and Tourism (H&T) sector have reported significant challenges in securing appropriate levels of new talent, particularly in peak seasons. This problem has been exacerbated during the post-pandemic period, with the sector struggling to fill a range of roles, including those that are widely considered to be low-skilled and offering low rates of pay. Moreover, different segments of the sector face different challenges. For example, establishments in the luxury segment often struggle to secure personnel who can uphold stringent service standards and cater to the discerning needs of high-end clientele. On the other hand, budget hospitality faces its own hurdles, navigating the delicate balance between cost efficiency and maintaining a service quality that ensures customer satisfaction. The urban-rural divide in the tourism sector amplifies the complexity of workforce challenges. Urban tourism hubs contend with issues like heightened competition among businesses in attracting talent. In contrast, rural tourism grapples with attracting skilled personnel to areas with limited resources. In essence, the multifaceted challenges within the H&T sector extend beyond a mere scarcity of workforce and delve into the intricacies of segment-specific demands, necessitating a nuanced and adaptable approach to address the diverse needs of the industry.

Thus, to ensure the long-term sustainability and growth of the sector, greater understanding is needed to be developed around a discussion of issues which might attract individuals to seek long-term employment in the H&T sector. It has been suggested that a central issue of this industry viability question, hinges on the strategies which could be used to secure a share in the available top-level talent, thus developing a professional workforce which can provide the best possible service levels (Breen, 2002; Harris & Jago, 2001). Strengthening the hospitality and tourism industry is a vital component in the economic recovery puzzle for many countries post-COVID, as it generates jobs, foreign exchange earnings, and infrastructure development. Its resilience and adaptability, along with its potential to reduce regional disparities, make it a valuable contributor to rebuilding economies, particularly emerging economies such as Vietnam (Almeida et al., 2022).

Reviews of the H&T sector have long suggested that the industry has been based on a much maligned and often transient workforce, which has led to heightened concern about developing its professional status. In this regard, as customers' service expectations begin to rise, the sector is becoming increasingly in need of a highly skilled and talented workforce (Baldigara & Duvnjak, 2021), who are visibly passionate about customer care. Because the sector has always found it difficult to attract talented individuals, as the professional demands on the industry increase, this need for better qualified staff has multiplied. At the current time, demand for staff has overwhelmingly outstripped supply, with many enterprises within the industry resorting

to employing increasingly large numbers of young, inexperienced, low-skilled workers, with low developmental capabilities. This situation has led to a considerable degree of inefficiency within the industry (Elshaer, 2019), a factor which is beginning to threatening its sustainability levels. This is due to the H&T sector being extremely labor intensive (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Sheehan et al., 2018), being prone to rapid turnover rates, and relying almost directly on their staffs' personal abilities. It has been noted in this regard that in order to meet growing customer expectations, particularly at higher price points and in the luxury segment environment, customer satisfaction and loyalty will depend largely on the competence of the professional workforce, which in turn, is based on their displayed attitudes, skills and knowledge (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Lo, Mak, & Chen, 2014). While sectorial competitive advantage relies on an area's human capability and talent (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000), it will continue to face difficulties if it struggles to retain and attract highly skilled quality employees (Richardson & Butler, 2012; Wan et al., 2014). With the H&T sector continuing to experience high rates of employee turnover (AlBattat & Som, 2013; Grobelna & Marciszewska, 2016), this personnel loss has continued to plague human resources departments and it has been suggested that, without direct intervention, the industry will be faced with serious recruitment and retention complexities. According to Jiang and Tribe (2009), there are many career detractions currently in the front students' and parents' minds in relation to this industry, which include long working-hours, job insecurity and low pay rates, all of which detract from its image (Grobelna & Skrzyszewska, 2019). As a result, Teng (2008) and Jiang and Tribe (2009) assert that many young people have the perception that the H&T sector fails to offer real long-term career prospects, and it would seem that, without considerable investment in trying to shift these perceptions, the H&T sector will continue to struggle to attract high-level talent and fail to realise its full economic potential.

In summary, whilst there is a broad perception that a career choice is the sole decision of an individual, research over many decades has revealed that this may not actually be the case with decisions being influenced by a range of factors, including family, school, community, and social dynamics (Gong & Jia, 2022; Lent et al., 2001; Liu et al., 2022; Luong & Lee, 2023; Nguyen, 2023). In this respect, this paper investigates the role of Parental Influence (PI) in determining JPI within the H&T sector, anticipating that parents will play a major role in influencing their child's JPI. It is known that PI is manifest in many ways, and this includes the setting of parental expectations, the strong influence of role modelling, and the pressure for maintenance of societal and personal values, all of which are supported by the provisioning of opportunities to develop and foster strong personal relationships (Ginevra et al., 2015). Indeed, in certain cultures, PI has proven to be a strong influence, often outweighing those of respected teachers and trusted friends (Chak-keung Wong & Jing Liu, 2010; Tey et al., 2020). In this regard, in Vietnam, PI is further heightened due to their direct financial role in supporting their child's education expenses, in concert with the collectivist cultural overlay which supports a familial hierarchy based on Confucian values. Against this background, this research closely examined students' Job Pursuit Intentions (JPI) within the Vietnam H&T sector, observing the strength of External Locus of Control (ELOC) as a moderating factor. This investigation further aims to contribute to the broader conversation on how the H&T sector might begin to obtain a better share of talented job seekers, understanding the advantages that this could potentially develop. Moreover, the results aim to illuminate how the sector could begin to address the lack of students' career intentions in this area, and thus move toward the meeting of growing industry demands for increased staff numbers.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

1.1. Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

This study is based on a relatively new theory, known as Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 1994). The SCCT offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and predicting career development, according to Lent and Brown (2019). As a foundation for career coaching, the SCCT framework stands out from other career theories by providing a new perspective on how to guide adolescents in forming interests, making professional choices, and improving performance. Lent and Brown (2013) emphasize that not only does the SCCT offer valuable insights for career guidance, but it also holds potential for cross-cultural research. The SCCT has been used in this research has been used in this research to help explain and predict the ways people formulate career interests, helping to illuminating how they set career goals and why they choose to stay within a particular work environment (Jemini-Gashi et al., 2021; Liguori et al., 2019). SCCT builds on Bandura's (1989) early work and focuses on individual career development (Jemini-Gashi et al., 2021). We have recognised that to better understand barriers and support structures in the career selection area, it is imperative to look closely at personal behaviours. In this respect, Lent et al. (2001) break down contextual cognitive factors into two key choice factors, which are (i) distal supports and (ii) proximal supports. Further, these authors suggest that students, particularly at the undergraduate level, are engulfed by their immediate environment. This situation has been noted to lead to strong influences on career choices from their current financial circumstances, the nature of close friendships and parental influence (Lent et al., 2001).

1.2. Linking Parental Support and Job Pursuit Intentions

External influences in a child's career decision-making has long been recognised as a powerful antecedent to successful life outcomes in the Western world (Howard et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2020), and it is also clear that this early shaping of decisions is equally important in collectivist societies based on Confucian values (Huang & Gove, 2015; Liu, McMahon, & Watson, 2015; Wu, 2008). In Vietnam, for example, which is both a collectivist and Confucian-based society, parental influence is further shaped through their direct financial support. We suggest that these cultural characteristics combine in a powerful way to facilitate the important role that external influences play in a student's career decision-making processes and, subsequently, the choice of undergraduate specialty. We suggest that this role of parental support is often underestimated in such collective societies, and as result, large international brands within the H&T sector continuing to struggle to secure sufficient talent to meet growing consumer demand within Vietnam's burgeoning economy. This demand has been stimulated by the post-pandemic recovery, and the sector is now faced with urgently developing strategies to increase the recruitment of skilled and qualified candidates to address these vacancies.

It has been suggested that parental support on career or job pursuit decisions occur on a spectrum, with the extent of the influence varying from low to high involvement. With this understanding, whilst it is clear that there is no one homogenous or universal agreed scientific expression of parental influence, many studies have shown that it nevertheless plays a particularly important role in job pursuit intentions, especially in collective-based cultures. A number of researchers, across an array of countries including China, Vietnam, Nigerian and Mauritius, have agreed that parental influence remains one of the most important influences in determining career choice (Adekeye et al., 2017; Camarero-Figuerola et al., 2020; Fouad et al., 2016; Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017; Olaosebikan & Olusakin, 2014). Moreover, it appears that the intention to pursue jobs requiring higher competence, has been closely linked to applicants from higher income families, who ostensibly have parents with more advanced career aspirations for their children (Cistulli & Snyder, 2018; Dang & Tran, 2020).

Ferry (2006), Paloş & Drobot (2010) and Jemini-Gashi et al. (2021) promulgated that social and cultural background is a strong influencer in career choice (Ferry, 2006; Jemini-Gashi et al., 2021; Paloş & Drobot, 2010). Further, in collectivist cultures such as Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan, studies have revealed that there is increased greater parental influence and reduced individual student confidence in career choice when compared to students from more individualistic cultures (Mann et al., 1998). Indeed, Brew et al. (2001) affirmed, in their study of Chinese students, that those with collectivist cultures displayed greater avoidant, complacent and hyper-vigilant career decision-making styles than their Western counterparts. In this regard, a study conducted by Choi and Nieminen (2013) revealed the importance regarding a better understanding of the Confucian attitudes of students involved in these discussions. It is important to realise that these attitudes are often linked to family responsibilities and expectations, suggesting that if a student should not realise the lofty ambitions of their parents, a public sense of family shame may manifest. Yeh and Bedford (2004) also strongly suggest that students from Confucian-based cultures are widely judged by societal norms, and thus are more likely to obey, respect and honor their parents' wishes in order to avoid conflict and public criticism, and are thus less likely to openly disagree with their parents. Further, Lee and Morrish (2012) examined Chinese students studying abroad and found that career-decision making was heavily influenced by traditional values built on Confucian attitudes. This implies that, for any population heavily instilled with Confucian culture, parental support may influence JPI. This will clearly relate to the Vietnamese students involved in the H&T sector which is the focus of this study, therefore in this work the following hypothesis has been tested:

H1: Parental Support will positively affect Job Pursuit Intention among students.

1.3. Internship Programs and Job Pursuit Intention

Students within the H&T sector are traditionally required to undertake a mandatory internship as part of their Bachelor degree studies in Vietnam. This internship of between two and six months is normally taken in the later stages of the undergraduate program, most often in their final year. Internship opportunities are widely available, particularly given Vietnam's considerable growth in the H&T sector over recent years. Indeed, in the five years prior to 2020, the Vietnamese H&T sector has enjoyed some of the highest growth rates of any nation (Quang et al., 2022). This growth has been particularly catalysed by rapid increases in numbers of international visitors, who are recognised as being more demanding and insistent on higher levels of service quality. Chinomona and Surujlal (2012) claim that internship programs can be invaluable in closing the skills gap of students, particularly for those taking Higher Education programs. Further, internships assist in building a student's competency profile, mainly through the acquisition and development of relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes. Yet, given such positive outcomes, evidence of internship satisfaction through research within the Vietnamese sphere, has been limited.

Because recent internship satisfaction studies have yet to investigate the nature of workplace students' expectations, there is a hiatus in the understanding of what support is required to ensure that internship experiences are meaningful. It is recognised that numerous challenges pervade internship programs, especially those rising from the need for better understanding in required developmental attitudes. This relates not only to students, but also to supporting academics and industry supervisors (Lam & Ching, 2007). There are also challenges arising from a general ambience of poor student self-confidence (Chen et al., 2021) and a growing problem with providing quality supervision, challenges which are embedded in a background of unpopular

working hours and strained working environments (Lam & Ching, 2007). It must also be remembered that today's intern is tomorrow's practitioner, suggesting that, as a result, the negative impacts on an intern's future decision making can have profound implications for the industry. In this regard, Chen and Shen (2012) have argued that, whilst it is imperative to make the internship environment more welcoming, it needs to be egalitarian and fair, in order to assist a range of students' development of personal commitment. This action will assist in supporting this model of industry involvement, and will emphasise the underpinning importance of a fair working environment. Coupled closely with this approach, is that quality experiences in the training area will lead to a growth of personal commitment and dedication to work, with the understanding that encouragement to pursue further learning is an essential determinant within students' overall satisfaction. Given this background, this study proposes that internship programs may positively affect JPI among students. The following hypothesis is tested:

H2: Satisfactory Internship Programs will positively affect JPI among students.

1.4. The Moderating Effect of an External Locus of Control

The term 'Locus of Control' (LOC) is a personality concept that was first developed by Rotter (1966). It is defined as an understanding of the role of the environment in being responsive and controllable in the development of personal attributes. According to Rotter (1996), when studying the development of personal attributes, people may be divided into two distinct types: Internal Locus of Control (ILOC) individuals and External Locus of Control (ELOC) individuals. Those in the ILOC category believe that they can control events that influence their lives, whereas those in the ELOC category believe that they have no control over what happens, with external variables being responsible for determining the course of their lives.

Locus of control has been suggested as a moderating variable in several studies. For example, a study by Chiu et al. (2005) investigated the influence of organizational support on job satisfaction and organizational commitment, showing that it was seen to be significantly moderated by ELOC. These relationships were clearly very much stronger with individuals falling into the ELOC category, leading Chiu et al. to argue that ELOC individuals are more sensitive to organizational support since they assume that what happens to them is significantly affected by external factors. By contrast, elements related to ILOC were found to moderate the relationship between supervisor support and intrinsic motivation, and when people were shown to be in a high ILOC category, this positive relationship is weaker (Chen et al., 2016). People with high ILOC tendencies tend to attribute their personal outcomes to their own efforts and ability (Rotter, 1966) and therefore they are less likely to admit to the need for support from supervisors. This leads to the development of a low opinion regarding the effect of supervisor support on elevating intrinsic motivation, whilst ELOC individuals tend to attribute their personal outcomes to external factors such as supervisor interaction and organization support (Chen et al., 2016; Chiu et al., 2005). Further, Spokas and Heimberg (2009) revealed that ELOC people are more likely to rely on direction by powerful role models, such as their parents, in order to develop their personal outcomes. This can be understood through the lens of self-verification theory (Swann Jr, 2012), which suggests that individuals aim for coherence through preserving existing self-views rather than modifying their self-views to match changing behavior. Accordingly, it is assumed that people who have a strong ELOC may be more receptive to parental support because it supports their self-perception that the outcome of important events is reliant on external variables. It can be therefore assumed those with higher ELOC are more sensitive to parental support and will be more receptive to internship programs as it is regarded as a legitimate external organizational and institutional support activity.

As a consequence, the current research hypothesised that ELOC moderates the relationship between parental support and job pursuit intentions, and also moderates the relationship between internship programs and JPI. To be specific, the effect of parental support on JPI would be stronger for ELOC and the effect of internship programs on JPI would also be stronger for ELOC. As a result, the following hypotheses were put forward:

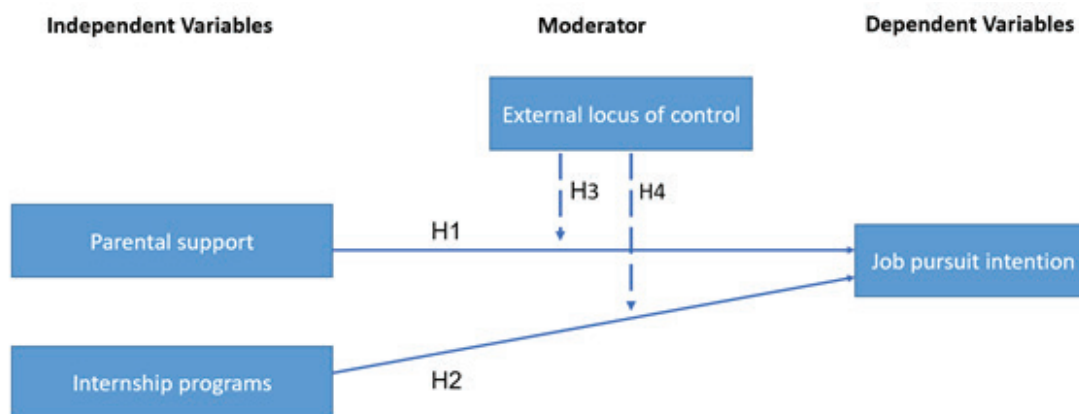
H3: ELOC will moderate the relationship between Parental Support and Job Pursuit Intentions. Specifically, this positive relationship will be stronger when students have a higher level of ELOC.

H4: ELOC will moderate the relationship between Internship Programs and Job Pursuit Intentions. Specifically, this positive relationship will be stronger when students have a higher level of ELOC.

1.5. Research Framework

Based on the implications of Social Cognitive Career Theory SCCT and the outcomes of the literature review, the following research framework was proposed for this work (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Research Framework



2. METHODOLOGY

The tourism and hospitality sector makes a significant economic contribution to Vietnam by generating substantial revenue and foreign exchange earnings. The income generated, both directly and indirectly, benefits various sectors of the economy and fosters an array of employment opportunities. Given, its significant role in the economy a quantitative research approach has been used in this work to investigate the existing relationships between parental support, internship programs, ELOC and JPI. The target population of the study was fourth-year students from the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality of six universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. These universities were purposively selected as they offer dedicated Hospitality and Tourism undergraduate specialisation. The total population size is 1547 students. This population has been deliberately selected as these students are about to join the workforce following their graduation, and all of them have undergone the internship program. It is anticipated that, using this target population, the study will be able to evaluate how the internship program affects these students' intention to pursue a career in the H&T sector.

To ensure the best possibility of obtaining an unbiased response, this study has used modified probability sampling. The procedure was thus: first, a stratified random sampling was used to choose a suitable section of the available population. Subsequently, a smaller group of students, chosen from six different universities, have been identified and equal numbers from these six strata were randomly selected to ensure all groups are sensibly represented. Finally, a simple random sampling method was used to select students from each university. Data is chosen using a computer-generated list of random numbers for this purpose.

With regard to sample sizes, Hair et al. (2017) indicated that the sample size must be at least 10 times the number of items involved in carrying out the SEM. Within the scope of this research, there are a total of 30 items, which suggests that the minimum sample size should be 300. In order to circumvent the likelihood of not obtaining a full complement of adequate responses, 400 questionnaires were distributed to students. We received 305 valid responses, accounting for 76.25% of the total. Regarding measurement scales, this study uses scales obtained from previous studies in order to design the questionnaire. All measurement scales relevant to all constructs have a Cronbach Alpha (CR) greater than 0.7 (seen in Table 1).

Table 1. Measurement Scales of all Constructs

Construct	Items	CR value	Source
External Locus of Control	13	0.87	Suárez-Álvarez et al. (2016)
Parental Support	8	0.82	Lee et al. (2019)
Internship Programs	4	0.80	Pineda-Herrero et al. (2015)
Job Pursuit Intention	5	0.82	Highhouse et al. (2003)

Despite the fact that the instruments used in this research were deliberately adopted from earlier research that had a high reliability, it was considered essential to consult experts in order to modify the measure scales to suit Vietnam's particular cultural and social setting. These experts consisted of four senior managers from the H&T sector as well as six lecturers from six different Higher Education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

After receiving opinions from these experts, modifications were made to the questionnaire, which was then tested with a pilot test conducted with 15 students selected randomly from the appropriate population to ensure that the questionnaire's validity and reliability. The ultimate survey was composed of two parts: one for collecting demographic information, and the other comprised of 30 items to be answered. The students were directed to assess all the items using a Likert scale, wherein the

options ranged from strongly disagreeing (1), disagreeing (2), being neutral (3), agreeing (4), and strongly agreeing (5). After modification, the final questionnaire was then distributed to 400 students across six Universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The data was analyzed using a technique known as partial least squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The primary objective of SEM is to evaluate hypotheses which investigate relationships among variables (Hair et al., 2017). The study employed PLS-SEM to predict the effects of parental support and internship programs on JPI among students. Additionally, PLS-SEM was utilised to examine the moderating influence of ELOC. The survey data was analysed using a two-step analytical methodology through SmartPLS 4 software. In the initial phase, the measurement model was analysed in order to determine the validity and reliability of the measurements. In the following phase, the structural model was analysed to determine the significance of the proposed links among the variables.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Measurement Model Evaluation

4.1.1. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is the primary form of construct validity that aims to investigate to what degree measurement items for a specific construct measure the same construct (Hair et al., 2017). In accordance with Hair et al. (2017), existence of convergent validity is satisfactory when (i) loadings of individual items exceed 0.7, (ii) the average variance extracted (AVE) surpasses 0.5, and (iii) composite reliability as well as Cronbach's alpha of all constructs surpasses 0.7.

As shown in Table 3, all item loadings were higher than the suggested value of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017). The latent constructs had composite reliability indicators ranging from 0.83 to 0.96, and Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.73 to 0.95, all of which surpassed the advised threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017). The AVE, which assesses the variance represented by the indicators relative to measurement error, exceeded the suggested threshold of 0.5 for each construct in this study, as a result satisfying the convergent validity requirements (Hair et al., 2017). Subsequently, the AVE (which measures the variance captured by the indicators relative to measurement error) for respective constructs were above the recommended value of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017). Thus, the convergent validity criteria in this research were satisfied.

Table 2: Measurement Scales of Factors

Factor	Code	Measurement scales (observed variables)
External Locus of Control	ELC1	Whenever I face failure, there's always someone who opposes me
	ELC2	When difficulties arise, my initial reaction is to wish for the issue to resolve on its own
	ELC3	Success relies solely on luck
	ELC4	The course of my life is primarily shaped by chance
	ELC5	I cannot change my future
	ELC6	I rely on others to make decisions for me when needed
	ELC7	The individuals in my surroundings are responsible for my failures
	ELC8	The future is already decided
	ELC9	Building and maintaining valuable connections and networks is crucial for achieving success
	ELC10	Luck plays a significant role in determining my success in life
Internship Program	IP1	I have enhanced my skills and knowledge through training and workplace learning
	IP2	I have applied what I learned at the university during my workplace learning placement
	IP3	I acquired new professional skills during my work placement
	IP4	Through my workplace learning placement, I have obtained the professional skills and knowledge essential for future employment
Parental Support	PS2	My career decisions are influenced by my parents
	PS3	My parents assist me in preparing for my career
	PS4	My parents' opinions can be a challenge when I want to work in hospitality
	PS5	If I want to pursue a career in the hospitality sector, my parents would wholeheartedly support my decision
	PS6	My parents have a significant influence on my career choices
	PS7	When I'm considering a potential career, my parents give me some freedom to explore

Job Pursuit Intention	JPI1	I will accept a job offer from a hospitality company
	JPI2	I will choose a hospitality company as my first choice for employment
	JPI3	I would attend a job interview if invited by a hospitality company.
	JPI4	I would significantly increase my efforts if given the chance to work for a hospitality company
	JPI5	I would strongly advise a friend to consider a career in the hospitality industry

Table 3: Results of implementing the measurement model

Construct	Item	Loading	AVE	CR	Composite Reliability
External locus of control	ELC1	0.834	0.633	0.935	0.945
	ELC2	0.872			
	ELC3	0.855			
	ELC4	0.793			
	ELC5	0.788			
	ELC6	0.794			
	ELC7	0.725			
	ELC8	0.772			
	ELC9	0.761			
	ELC10	0.750			
Internship programs	IP1	0.753	0.554	0.732	0.832
	IP2	0.704			
	IP3	0.776			
	IP4	0.742			
Parental support	PS2	0.710	0.576	0.880	0.905
	PS3	0.730			
	PS4	0.754			
	PS5	0.791			
	PS6	0.827			
	PS7	0.774			
	PS8	0.723			
Job pursuit intention	JPI1	0.904	0.755	0.917	0.939
	JPI2	0.920			
	JPI3	0.907			
	JPI4	0.880			
	JPI5	0.717			

4.1.2. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity, or as it is often referred to, divergent validity, is used to verify that measurement items do not overlap with measurement items for other variables. The discriminant validity of a factor is acceptable when the square root of the AVE value for that factor is larger than the correlation with each and every other factor (Hair et al., 2017). Table 4 shows that this criterion for acceptable discriminant validity is achieved, as the correlations for each construct have a square root value that is lower than the AVE value for indicators that measure that specific construct. Additionally, none of the bootstrap confidence intervals include the value 1, thus indicating the measurement model exhibits sufficient discriminant validity (Table 4) (Hair et al. 2017).

Table 4: Discriminant validity

	External locus of control	Internship program	Job pursuit intention	Parental support
External locus of control	0.796			
Internship program	0.512	0.744		
Job pursuit intention	0.699	0.683	0.869	
Parental support	0.406	0.431	0.624	0.759

4.1.2. Common Method Bias Assessment

The common method bias makes the assumption that a single factor explains a significant portion of the variation. The issue with common method bias is that it is a primary source of measurement error, which has a detrimental impact on the validity of the measure (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The statistical test of the full collinearity VIFs was carried out in order to address the possibility that an instrument may still face common method bias. Kock (2015) found that there is no indication of common method bias when the values of the inner variance inflation factors (VIFs) are all less than 3.3. For this study, all of the constructs evaluated in this study had VIF values that were lower than 3.3 (Table 5), thus it can be concluded that common method bias did not impact this investigation.

Table 5: Common Method Bias Collinearity Assessment

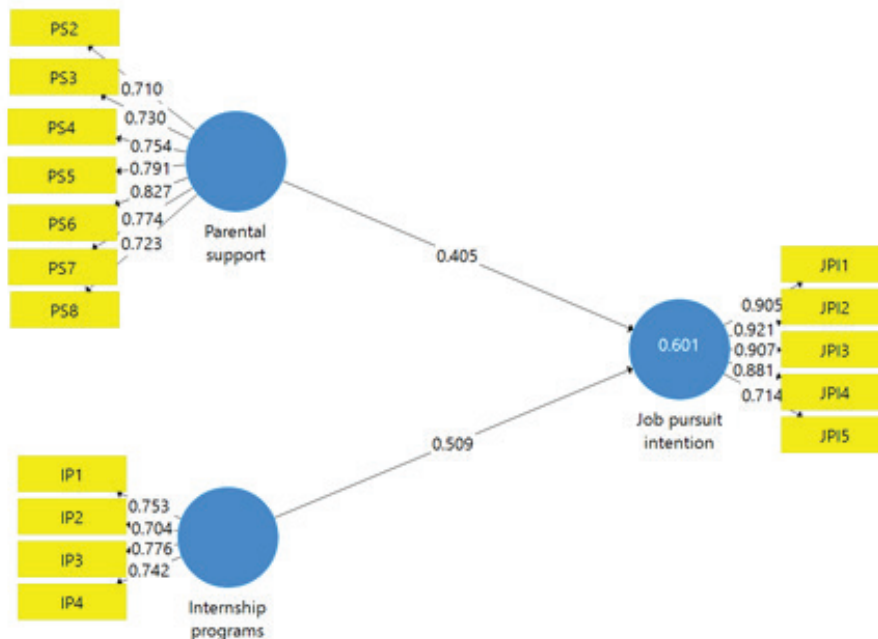
Construct	Job pursuit intention (VIF)
Job pursuit intention	
External locus of control	1.437
Internship program	1.474
Parental support	1.303

4.2. Structural Model

4.2.1. Hypothesis Testing

After assessing the reliability and validity of the measurement model, the structural model was analyzed through a bootstrapping technique, resampling a subset of 5,000 occurrences and requiring a two-tailed significance of 5%. It is evident from Figure 2 that the R^2 value demonstrated that 60.1% of the variance observed in the JPI could be accounted for by parental support and internship programs.

Figure 2: Results of path analysis (structural model)



As indicated in Table 6, the finding demonstrated that there was a significant association between parental support and JPI ($\beta = 0.405$, $t = 10.211$, $p = 0.00$), thus supporting H1. H2 was supported by the results since they illustrated a significant connection between internship program and JPI ($\beta = 0.509$, $t = 12.181$, $p = 0.000$). In order to evaluate the magnitude of the effects of each factor on JPI, the Cohen's f^2 was chosen. Cohen (1988) established that effect sizes could be categorised as small, medium, and large when $f^2 \geq 0.02$, $f^2 \geq 0.15$, and $f^2 \geq 0.35$, respectively. Following Cohen's (1988) standards, the impact of parental support on JPI is considered medium ($f^2 = 0.335 > 0.15$), whereas the influence of internship programs on JPI is considered large ($f^2 = 0.530 > 0.35$).

Table 6: Summary of structural model

	Path coefficient	T Values	P Values	95% Confidence Intervals	Decision	R ²	f ²
Parental support -> JPI	0.405	10.211	0.00	[0.329; 0.486]	H1: Supported	0.601	0.335
Internship program -> JPI	0.509	12.181	0.00	[0.423; 0.587]	H2: Supported		0.530

*p<0.05

Apart from R² and f², Q² was also utilised to assess the predictive relevance of the structural model. A Q² score greater than zero for a particular reflective endogenous latent variable indicates that the structural model is predictive. Failing to meet this criterion indicates that the model is not predictive (Hair et al., 2017). The results of the blindfolding demonstrated that JPI (0.44) was predictively significant.

Table 7: The predictive significance of the structural model

	SSO	SSE	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
Internship programs	1216.000	1216.000	
Job pursuit intention	1520.000	845.521	0.444
Parental support	2128.000	2128.000	

4.2.2. Moderation Effect

To analyze the moderating effect of ELOC, a two-stage PLS (Henseler and Chin, 2010) was utilised to investigate how ELOC moderates the relationship between parental support- JPI and between internship programs-JPI (all constructs were measured by reflective indicators). Parental support, internship programs, and ELOC were used as independent variables. JPI was treated as the dependent variable within the PLS path modeling (Seen in Figure 3 and Figure 4).

Figure 3: ELOC Moderates the Relationship between Parental Support and JPI

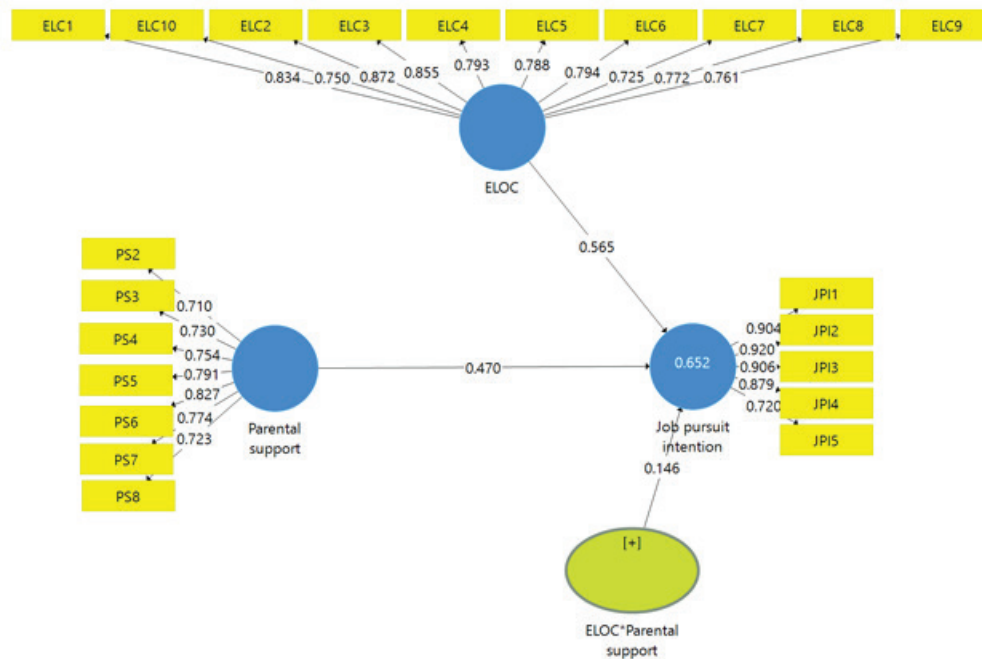


Figure 4: **ELOC moderates the Relationship between Internship programs and JPI**

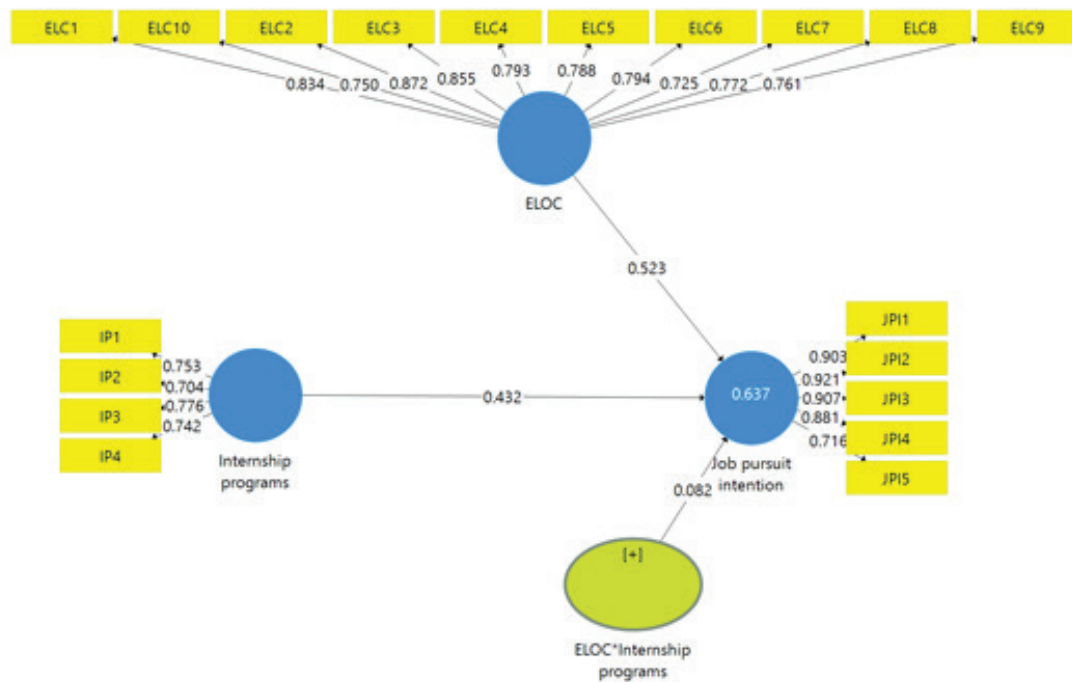


Table 7 indicated that both H3 and H4 are supported. The association between parental support*ELOC on JPI showed a significant interaction ($\beta=0.146$, $p=0.000<0.05$). Moreover, the research findings demonstrated that the association between internship programs*ELOC on JPI also had a significant interaction ($\beta=0.082$, $p=0.049<0.05$). In this regard, both Figure 3 and Figure 4 show that both interaction terms of ELOC*Parental support and ELOC*Internship programs are positively related to JPI.

In order to identify and quantify the degree of the moderating impact of ELOC, the effect size criteria established by Cohen (1988) has been employed. According to Chin et al. (2003), moderating effects are considered weak if the effect size is 0.02, moderate if it ranges from 0.15, and strong if it exceeds 0.35. The effect sizes for parental support and internship programs were 0.221 and 0.0231, respectively. The moderating effect of ELOC on the relationship between parental support and JPI is medium ($f^2=0.221$). The moderating effect of ELOC on the correlation between internship programs and JPI is deemed weak based on a low effect size of $f^2=0.023$. However, Chin et al. (2003) explain that an effect size (f^2) that is low does not necessarily signify the insignificance of the moderating effect. They argued that “even a small interaction effect can be significant under extreme moderating conditions. Thus, if the changes produced in beta values are meaningful, it is important to consider such conditions (Chin et al., 2003, p. 211)”. The findings clearly support the moderator hypotheses, postulating that the high level of ELOC systematically amplifies the positive correlation between parental support and JPI and similarly the high level of ELOC systematically amplifies the positive correlation between internship programs and JPI.

Table 8: **Summary of the interaction effect on JPI**

Relationship	Path coefficient	t-value	p-value	Decision	f^2
Parental support*ELOC→JPI	0.146	5.486	0.000	Supported	0.221
Internship programs*ELOC→JPI	0.082	1.967	0.049	Supported	0.023

* $p<0.05$

4. DISCUSSION

The research found that parental support is significantly related to JPI among students, a finding which is supported by earlier studies (Afzal Humayo et al., 2018; Fouad et al., 2016; Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017) that have examined the role of parents in their children’s lives. Ginevra et al. (2015) asserted that parents commonly pre-determine careers for their wards, and work to steer them in that direction. In other research, it was found that the attitude of parents and the influence of the home environment combine to influence a child’s career decision making. In collectivist countries, family influences are strongly emphasised (Oettingen & Zosuls, 2006). Confucian cultures are characterised by collectivism, in which decisions are centred on group priorities, such as family desires, rather than individual interests and concerns. In Vietnamese culture, the family is one of the

most significant factors in guiding decisions (Patel et al., 2008). It affects the decision-making processes that contribute to how career choices are made. In this respect, Hughes and Thomas (2005) suggested that collectivism has an effect on self-concept, the career counselling processes, career maturity and career interests. In the study of Mate et al. (2017), the involvement of parents is discovered to be inextricably linked to career identity and, as a result, career decision-making processes and career choice. Confucian beliefs include a strong appreciation for the family's elders, which encompasses parents, grandparents and great grandparents. In this regard, parents can be the most dominant members because they directly impact shaping children's attitudes and perceptions, especially during the period when young people are discovering who they are and what they wish their future to look like (Maheshwari et. al, 2023 Wang, 2023). Family members will have different perspectives on successful career choices, and students will be continually exposed to their influence. Since parent have the most significant impact on their children, they are viewed as key role models and facilitators in the Vietnamese context, and it is agreed that their support of students' intention to pursue a job in the H&T sector would be very important. Another traditional value that is commonly seen to have a significant impact on the Vietnamese family is filial piety, which grants parents the ultimate authority to bring up their children precisely in accordance with their own dictates. Therefore, it is reasonable to draw the conclusion that H&T graduates in Vietnam may exhibit a willingness to seek counsel from their parents, particularly when they need to make career choices.

The study's findings also indicated that there is a significant relationship between internship programs and JPI, a result which is consistent with results of prior studies (Francis & Alagas, 2017; Rothman & Sisman, 2016; Schnoes et al., 2018). Internship programs provide significant benefits to both students and hosting organizations. According to Francis and Alagas (2017), students enrolled in H&T programs may have increased confidence and greater inclination to work in the H&T sector as a result of their internship experience. Whilst the experience gained by students during their internship is a strong influence on their decision to continue in the industry, it was also noted that the initial experience is often perceived adversely by interns, and this can translate into a key decision (whether to work or not) within the H&T sector after graduating. It is clear that in order to encourage students to continue to pursue jobs in the H&T sector, both universities and organizations need to deliberately build up effective job-related strategies.

This study clearly showed that ELOC acts as a moderating influence to enhance the relationship between parental support and JPI, and also the relationship between internship programs and JPI. Individuals with high ELOC generally hold the belief that external factors such as luck, fate, or authority figures are responsible for the outcomes they experience. Therefore, they are more receptive to parental support and institutional support (internship programs) in making their career choices. The results are also consistent with previous studies such as the studies of Chen et al. (2016), Chiu et al. (2005) and Spokas and Heimberg (2009). The outcomes of this study add to the principles of self-verification theory and are consistent with the results of the literature review which emphasise the key role of ELOC as a moderating influence.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Based on these research findings, a series of recommendations can be given both to the H&T sector and to educators. Firstly, the findings of this empirical study provide additional support for the applicability of SCCT as the foundational framework for examining the influence of contextual factors on JPI among senior students in a collectivist nation such as Vietnam. While SCCT is commonly employed to study career choices in individualistic settings, its utilization in research within collectivist cultures has been notably scarce. Consequently, the outcomes of this research make a valuable contribution to extending the validation of SCCT into diverse cultural contexts. Secondly, this study expands upon the relatively small body of research that has employed SCCT to investigate the determinants of job pursuit intention among students in the hospitality field, offering a psychological viewpoint. Many studies related to job intention and career choice predominantly rely on Ajzen's theory of planned behavior and signaling theory. However, it's important to note that Ajzen's theory of planned behavior is constrained by its exclusive emphasis on just four explanatory factors, including attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and intention. On the other hand, signaling theory primarily addresses organizational aspects, such as the organizational attributes that students prioritise when seeking employment. Both theories fall short in elucidating the cognitive processes that underlie students' intentions to pursue specific careers. Consequently, this research makes a substantial contribution to the field of job pursuit intention literature by providing insights from a psychological perspective. Thirdly, this study contributes to confirming the role of ELOC as a moderating variable in the relationship between parental support, internship programs, and job pursuit intention. These findings align with the self-verification theory, which posits that individuals seek to maintain consistency in their self-views rather than immediately altering those views to align with their behavior.

In this regard, in order to enhance the possibility for garnering parental support for encouraging their children to pursue a career in the H&T sector, it is necessary for H&T sector and universities to collaborate in raising parents' awareness of the opportunities which exist within the industry. In particular, the H&T sector needs to endeavour to establish a more attractive image in order to change the perspectives of students and parents about the industry. There are several initiatives that the sector could potentially deploy in this regard to develop more favourable perceptions among students and parents, including (i) the organisation of seminars or career lectures for both students and their parents to help them learn more aware about the industry, (ii) collaborating with H&T educators to recruit promising students, and (iii) providing students with more hands-on exposure to the industry via opportunities like field trips, internships and part-time employment. Recent H&T graduates working in H&T

sector could be encouraged to lead these seminars, as they will provide positive role models. Parents should also be encouraged to attend these seminars so that they may voice their thoughts about their children seeking a career in H&T, and they also can have any doubts or uncertainties dealt with.

In addition, both the H&T sector and universities must collaborate more effectively to ensure that students will gain valuable and attractive internship experiences. It is known that many students use their internships to judge the suitability of the area for their future profession, thus depending on their internship experiences, they may opt not to join the H&T sector. Therefore, it is essential to create a favourable internship experience if the industry wants to recruit and keep talented students. An effective internship program is clearly essential in this respect. Lam and Ching (2007) suggested that an effective internship program should comprise of three stages, namely: (i) providing support prior to the internship, (ii) ongoing communication and guidance, and (iii) assessment following the completion of the internship. Pre-internship supports include the sharing of experiences, developing mental preparedness and organising introductions to operators in the field. Ongoing consultation consists of arranging peer relationships, developing good interpersonal relationship skills, building a confident management style, ensuring a supportive working environment and practicing internship report writing. The post-internship evaluation concludes the program with an assessment of the industry operator, an evaluation of the students' satisfaction with the internship program, and an open discussion regarding career planning. Universities can also provide post-internship seminars since they enable first, second and third-year students to (i) learn about the internship experience, (ii) understand what they must do during internship, and (iii) develop the skills required to work in the H&T sector. These skills will enable students to more effectively prepare for internships, which might result in more positive internship experiences. Supported in this way, students will be able to make a seamless and smooth transition into the H&T profession, which will enhance their professional growth and career ambitions. At the same time, universities and industry trainers will be able to accomplish their objectives regarding training and developing the competent students who can fulfil the required demands of the industry.

In addition, universities should keep in mind that education is an ever-evolving field, thus it is recommended that curriculum development be constantly carried out so that it can align with the developing requirements of the industry. By regularly evaluating the suitability of the curriculum and integrating the feedback information obtained from students, professionals in H&T sector and educators, it will be possible to make the curriculum increasingly applicable and effective. An industry-driven course framework will substantially assist students in becoming industry-ready, which will contribute to facilitating a seamless transfer to the workplace.

Finally, based on the observation that an ELOC orientation amplifies both the relationship between parental support and JPI and the relationship between internship programs and JPI, it is suggested that universities and H&T sector should provide more support to ELOC students. By utilizing the Rotter scale, universities can easily determine whether their students have a more internal or external locus of control. This will enable the implementation of policies and provision of experiences that are better suited to support different students.

CONCLUSION

This research has clearly revealed that parental support and internship programs are positively related to JPI among students. It has also indicated that the relationship between parental support and JPI and the relationship between internship programs and JPI are moderated by a student's External Locus of Control. Notwithstanding these observations, it is likely that there are many other contextual factors affecting Job Pursuit Intention among Hospitality and Tourism students which this study was not able to examine. Further research in this respect may determine other contextual factors which may affect the Job Pursuit Intentions of this student cohort. The authors however contend that this study has broader practical implications, particularly for collectivist societies, where family influences play a significant role in career decisions. Additionally, beyond the borders of Vietnam, this investigation also serves to better understand talent acquisition and management challenges faced by the H&T sector post Covid-19 recovery. This is of specific relevance to the H&T sector globally, as it has been one of the hardest impacted by the pandemic. As such, understanding factors that influence the career intentions of future professionals is crucial for the H&T sectors recovery and growth. This study also provides valuable insights into cultural and psychological factors influencing career intentions, which can be used by industry and academia for better talent development and strategic planning. Furthermore, this study focuses on Vietnam, a country with specific cultural and economic characteristics. While this analysis provides significant depth, it also means that the findings may not be easily generalizable to other cultural contexts. To address this limitation, further research in different countries and comparing the results across various cultural settings would be beneficial. In this regard, a cross-comparison of students' Job Pursuit Intention might also be undertaken to reveal whether results differ significantly from city to city within Vietnam. Additionally, the data was restricted to fourth-year students with first, second and third year students being excluded from this study on the grounds of practicality of resources. Thus, it was uncertain whether there was any development of differences between students as they mature through their course.

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