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| RGC Ref. No.: UGC/FDS25/H02/20 <p>(please insert ref. above)</p> |
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**RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR**

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)

Completion Report
(for completed projects only)

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| <p><u>Submission Deadlines:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Auditor's report with unspent balance, if any: within <u>six</u> months of the approved project completion date. 2. Completion report: within <u>12</u> months of the approved project completion date. |
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Part A: The Project and Investigator(s)

1. Project Title

Identifying Supply and Demand Gaps that Influence Employability and Sustainability in the Hospitality Industry

2. Investigator(s) and Academic Department(s) / Unit(s) Involved

| Research Team | Name / Post | Unit / Department / Institution |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Principal Investigator | CHOY Monica Wai-Chun/Assistant Professor | Hotel Operations Management/Faculty of Management and Hospitality/THEi |
| Co-Investigator(s) | Professor YEUNG Alexander See-Shing/Deputy Director | Institute for Positive Psychology and Education/Australian Catholic University |
| Others | N/A | N/A |

3. Project Duration

| | Original | Revised | Date of RGC / Institution Approval (must be quoted) |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|---|
| Project Start Date | 1 Jan 2021 | N/A | N/A |
| Project Completion Date | 31 Dec 2022 | 30 Jun 2023 | Approved by institution for 6 months extension to end on 30 Jun 2023 on 29 Sep 2022 |

| | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-----|
| Duration (<i>in month</i>) | 24 | 30 | N/A |
| Deadline for Submission of Completion Report | 31 Dec 2023 | 30 Jun 2024 | N/A |

4.4 Please attach photo(s) of acknowledgement of RGC-funded facilities / equipment.

N/A

Part B: The Final Report

5. Project Objectives

5.1 Objectives as per original application

1. *To identify the needs of undergraduates undertaking VPET in the industry.*
2. *To identify discrepancies in expectations between employers and potential Generation Z employees.*
3. *To elucidate supply and demand gaps to discover strategies to improve VPET programmes for the industry.*
4. *To compare perceptions of practitioners in various roles and stages of professional development to recommend employment strategies, and developmental pathways to facilitate sustainable quality of the industry.*

5.2 Revised objectives

Date of approval from the RGC: N/A

Reasons for the change: N/A

N/A

5.3 Realisation of the objectives

(Maximum 1 page; please state how and to what extent the project objectives have been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

The aim of this research is to identify, in the hospitality and tourism industry, existing supply and demand gaps that may influence new recruits' employability and the industry's sustainable quality. The objectives of the research are:

1. To identify the needs of undergraduates undertaking VPET in the industry.
2. To identify discrepancies in expectations between employers and potential Generation Z employees.
3. To elucidate supply and demand gaps to discover strategies to improve VPET programmes for the industry.
4. To compare perceptions of practitioners in various roles and stages of professional development to recommend employment strategies, and developmental pathways to facilitate sustainable quality of the industry.

All the aforementioned four objectives have been successfully achieved through quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Data collection were conducted in 2021. To achieve research objective 1 to 3, data from 872 surveys were analyzed by Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM). Additionally, 90 semi-structured interviews were conducted and were analyzed by content analysis to understand the needs of undergraduates undertaking VPET in the industry (Objective 1), elucidate supply and demand gaps (Objective 3), compare perceptions of industry practitioners in different roles and stages of professional development to recommend employment strategies, and develop pathways to facilitate sustainable quality of the industry (Objective 4).

5.4 Summary of objectives addressed to date

| Objectives <i>(as per 5.1/5.2 above)</i> | Addressed <i>(please tick)</i> | Percentage Achieved <i>(please estimate)</i> |
|---|--|--|
| 1. To identify the needs of undergraduates undertaking VPET in the industry. | ✓ | 100 |
| 2. To identify discrepancies in expectations between employers and potential Generation Z employees. | ✓ | 100 |
| 3. To elucidate supply and demand gaps to discover strategies to improve VPET programmes for the industry. | ✓ | 100 |
| 4. To compare perceptions of practitioners in various roles and stages of professional development to recommend employment strategies, and developmental pathways to facilitate sustainable quality of the industry | ✓ | 100 |

6. Research Outcome

6.1 Major findings and research outcome

(Maximum 1 page; please make reference to Part C where necessary)

The paper titled “Tourism Vocational Education: Relations of Input and Output” indicated that positive attitude is related significantly to resilience. Self-efficacy of relevant skills is related significantly to lifelong career choice. Students’ interest in tourism is the strongest predictor of lifelong career choice amidst the unfavourable industry environment of Covid-19.

The paper titled “Person-environment fit: Does it matter for tourism students’ career outcomes in an era of crisis?” showed that among tourism and hospitality students, personal interest strongly predict intent to join tourism and hospitality (T&H) industry, lifelong commitment to T & H industry, leadership self-efficacy, and resilience, while work environment (i.e., pandemic, social unrest and international disputes) strongly predicted Anxiety.

The paper titled “Career choice of tourism students in a triple-whammy crisis” suggested that a positive correlation between affect (an intrinsic, motivating factor) and extraneous events such as outbreak of Covid-19, social unrest and Sino-US trade war (an extrinsic, demotivating factor), indicating that motivation and demotivating factors may co-exist. In face of career shock arising from extraneous events, tourism students still tend to have a strong intent to join the workforce, take it as a lifelong career, and remain resilient despite the hardship. However, the career shock was a greater concern for those in hotel-related disciplines and for students aged over 20 than younger ones.

The paper titled “Higher vocational education tourism students’ career choice in a crisis era” suggested that career choice outcomes (Intent to join tourism and hospitality (T&H) industry, lifelong commitment to T & H industry and resilience) were positively correlated but clearly differentiable. Among tourism and hospitality students, male were more likely to make a lifelong career choice. Sub-degree students were more positive in Affect and more resilient, while hotel-related students had stronger concerns about extraneous factors and were lower in their intent to join the workforce, but no significant age difference was found.

The paper titled “Cognitive and affective academic self-concepts: Which predicts vocational education students’ career choice?” indicated that the sense of competence, specifically in terms of cognitive abilities, is strongly associated with competence and performance-based outcomes in tourism students. This includes their operational capability and resilience in the workplace. However, for non-tourism students, the sense of competence is more closely linked to competition. Liking of the vocation (i.e., Affective) is more related to educational aspiration for non-tourism students than is the cognitive component.

The paper titled “A study of hotel workers’ expectations of new recruits: Implications for tourism educators” suggested that hotel industry practitioners have high expectations of new recruits’ competences in terms of attitude being maintaining professional morals and ethics in tourism, skills being operational skills in tourism, and knowledge being tourism-specific occupational knowledge.

The paper titled “Vocational education input for a sustainable hospitality industry” showed that among vocational education’s competence and affect inputs, students’ affect toward the discipline was the strongest driver of vocational resilience and lifelong career choice, which are presumably the main contributors of the industry’s sustainability

6.2 Potential for further development of the research and the proposed course of action (Maximum half a page)

The project team has identified the following research opportunities:

- Given tourism in Mainland China is seemingly recovering swiftly from Covid-19 with its domestic demand, researchers may consider 1) replicating the present study using P-E fit theory and add more motivational and behavioral constructs to test the differential prediction hypothesis in Mainland China, and 2) comparing the career choice of Gen Z in Mainland China with Hong Kong or other countries.
- Examine employees' intention to (re-) enter the industry among current and past generations (e.g., baby-bloomers, Gen X and Y)
- Investigate the predictability of cognitive and affective academic self-concepts in relation to vocational education students' education and career choice by comparing different professions and specializations in the same industry or conduct a pan-industry comparisons.

A feasibility studies to assess the practicality and viability of the identified research opportunities will be conducted in 2024.

7. Layman's Summary

(Describe in layman's language the nature, significance and value of the research project, in no more than 200 words)

To meet the growing demand for trained manpower in the tourism and hospitality industry in the post Covid era, Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) missioned to secure a sustainable and high-quality workforce by providing industry-desired curriculum and training. Recruiting new talent and retaining existing staff are crucial for sustainable organizational development in the industry. This research project contributes to the existing literature and guide future research in this important and contested research area by generating evidence-based knowledge. The findings will not only establish theoretical models of success but also provide practical implications for VPET education providers in formulating effective curriculum and training programs that align with the projected manpower needs. Additionally, the research findings help industry practitioners in developing appropriate employment strategies to enhance and sustain industry quality. Specifically, this study seeks to evaluate the short and long-term outcomes of VPET, including students' ability to face challenges, career intentions, lifelong career choices, resilience, and the potential negative impact of anxiety on professionalization. This research is significant due to the industry's vital role in Hong Kong's economy, as it offers numerous job opportunities and contributes to the city's overall economic growth.

Part C: Research Output**8. Peer-Reviewed Journal Publication(s) Arising Directly From This Research Project**

(Please attach a copy of the publication and/or the letter of acceptance if not yet submitted in the previous progress report(s). All listed publications must acknowledge RGC's funding support by quoting the specific grant reference.)

| The Latest Status of Publications | | | | Author(s) (denote the corresponding author with an asterisk*) | Title and Journal / Book (with the volume, pages and other necessary publishing details specified) | Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report) | Attached to this Report (Yes or No) | Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No) | Accessible from the Institutional Repository (Yes or No) |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| Year of Publication | Year of Acceptance (For paper accepted but not yet published) | Under Review | Under Preparation (optional) | | | | | | |
| | | | ✓ | *CHOY Monica; YEUNG Alexander | Higher education input for a sustainable hospitality vocation: Perceptual difference between Manager, Educator and Student | No | No | Yes | N/A |
| | | ✓ | | *CHOY Monica; YEUNG Alexander | Hotel industry workers' commitment and expectations of new recruits' attitude, skills, and knowledge: do professional status and qualification matter? | No | No | Yes | N/A |
| 2024 | 2024 | | | *CHOY Monica; YEUNG Alexander | Tourism Vocational Education: Relations of Input and Output/ Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sports and Tourism Education, 34, 100479. | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 2024 | 2023 | | | *CHOY Monica; YEUNG Alexander | Vocational Education Input for a Sustainable Hospitality Industry/ In W. W. K. Ma (Eds.) | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |

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|------|--|--|--|-------------------------------|---|----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | | Engaging Learning and Innovative Teaching in Higher Education, Lecture Notes in Educational Technology (LNET) Series. Singapore, Springer. | | | | |
| 2023 | | | | *CHOY Monica; YEUNG Alexander | Person-environment fit: Does it matter for tourism students' career outcomes in an era of crisis? / Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sports and Tourism Education, 32, 100414. | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 2023 | | | | *CHOY Monica; YEUNG Alexander | Person-Environment Fit: implications for vocational students' career in the era of crisis./ In C. Hong and W. W. K. Ma (Eds.), Applied Degree Education and the Shape of Things to Come, Lecture Notes in Educational Technology (LNET) Series. Singapore, Springer. DOI : 10.1007/978-981-19-9315-2. | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 2022 | | | | *CHOY Monica; YEUNG Alexander | Career choice of tourism students in a triple-whammy crisis, /PLOS ONE, 17(12), e0279411 | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 2022 | | | | *CHOY Monica; YEUNG Alexander | Cognitive and affective academic self-concepts: Which predicts vocational education students' career choice? / International | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |

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|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | Journal of Educational Research Open, 3 (2022) 100123. | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|

9. Recognized International Conference(s) In Which Paper(s) Related To This Research Project Was / Were Delivered

(Please attach a copy of each conference abstract)

| Month / Year / Place | Title | Conference Name | Submitted to RGC <i>(indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)</i> | Attached to this Report <i>(Yes or No)</i> | Acknowledged the Support of RGC <i>(Yes or No)</i> | Accessible from the Institutional Repository <i>(Yes or No)</i> |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| 15 to 17 Nov 2023 | Vocational Education Input for a Sustainable Hospitality Industry | International Conference on Engaged Learning & Innovative Teaching in Higher Education (ELITE2023) | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| 11 Mar 2023 | A study of hotel workers' expectations of new recruits: implications for tourism educators | The 2nd International Conference on Quality in Self-financed Higher Education: Connecting Local and Global | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| 6 to 9 Jun 2022 | Higher Vocational Education Tourism Students' Career Choice in a Crisis Era | The 10th SELF International Conference | No | Yes | Yes | No |

10. Whether Research Experience And New Knowledge Has Been Transferred / Has Contributed To Teaching And Learning

(Please elaborate)

The PI and Co-I have gained a lot of valuable experience in research, especially in the area of tourism and hospitality-related vocational and professional education and training (VPET). This funded project generated 8 journal papers/book chapters (6 were published, 1 under preparation, 1 under reviewed). The key findings of the project have been presented in 3 international conferences. Full paper/ summaries of findings were made available through our institute's websites, shared with participating education providers and industry practitioners. In addition, a webinar entitled "Cognitive and affective academic self-concepts: Which predicts vocational education students' career choice?" was held on 26 April 2022 to bring together key industry stakeholders and educators to communicate and disseminate the key findings and recommendations. The webinar was attended by 51 participants from Hong Kong, U.K. and Australia. Among the audience were students and teachers, as well as guests from the tourism and hospitality industry. The presentation was well received, and was

followed by various interesting questions about the topic from the audience. Besides, the key findings were shared with students by integrating them into the PPT and lecture in relevant modules.

11. Student(s) Trained

(Please attach a copy of the title page of the thesis)

| Name | Degree Registered for | Date of Registration | Date of Thesis Submission / Graduation |
|------|-----------------------|----------------------|--|
| | N/A | | |
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12. Other Impact

(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, technology transfer, teaching enhancement, etc.)

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| Nil |
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13. Statistics on Research Outputs

| | Peer-reviewed Journal Publications | Conference Papers | Scholarly Books, Monographs and Chapters | Patents Awarded | Other Research Outputs (please specify) | |
|--|--|-------------------|--|-----------------|---|-----|
| No. of outputs arising directly from this research project | 4 (published), 1 (under review), 1 (under preparation) | 3 | 2 | N/A | Type | No. |
| | | | | | Webinar | 1 |

14. Public Access Of Completion Report

(Please specify the information, if any, that cannot be provided for public access and give the reasons.)

| Information that Cannot Be Provided for Public Access | Reasons |
|---|---------|
| No | N/A |