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DETERMINANTS OF CAREER READINESS OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT STUDENTS COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected the hospitality and tourism industry, decresing the self-efficacy of hospitality and tourism management students towards their future and careers. This study aims to investigate how industrial work practices, family environment, curriculum, campus support, and self-efficacy affect the career readiness of hospitality and tourism management students. This study found that self-efficacy, perceived curriculum, and campus support significantly affect students' career readiness. Industrial work practices and family environment influence self-efficacy. This study also found that self-efficacy affects the relationship between industrial work practices and family environment on students' career readiness. The results of this study provide insight to managers and education at hospitality universities to improve the competitiveness of hospitality and tourism programs, especially in developing curricula, providing expertise support, and student self-efficacy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most challenging decisions in a student's life is choosing their future career due to the large amount of information obtained when considering potential career paths [1]. The information individuals must absorb frequently evolves rapidly and ambiguously, often being partial, fragmented, and contradicting [2]. The employment choices of many college alums often need to be revised, stemming from a deficiency of self-assurance regarding their competencies and roles within the professional sphere. An individual's inclination towards professionalism directly influences the selection of a future career and workplace. Consequently, students need to comprehend their inclinations, competencies, and capabilities, which will persist and evolve throughout their lifetimes [3]

The development of information technology today has made it easier for students to plan their future careers. However, technological changes are developing rapidly, causing students difficulty deciding their future careers. Alongside technical advancements, job decisions are also affected by unforeseen environmental alterations. One of the unpredictable environmental changes is the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously impacted the hospitality industry, affecting career decisions and students' desire to continue their studies in the hospitality field [4]. The 2022 shortfall of hospitality workers and the declining trend in national student enrollment prompts concerns over recruiting and retaining students in hospitality programs (American Hotel and Lodging Association, 2022). Consequently, higher education institutions must urgently develop pertinent academic programs that address the

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industry's and students' requirements, ensuring the production of high-caliber graduates for the hospitality sector through their selected study programs [6].

Conventional educational frameworks in higher education are predominantly in-person [7]; nevertheless, the COVID-19 epidemic has compelled some institutions to embrace alternative modalities, including virtual and hybrid learning. This transformation has elicited apprehensions regarding the quality of education despite the demonstrated flexibility and accessibility of distance learning [8]. Furthermore, hospitality management degree curricula that generally appeal to students, including experiential learning courses, field trips, and industry internships, have been canceled or postponed because of the COVID-19 epidemic [9]. Consequently, whether the revised curriculum influences hospitality students' attitudes toward their majors and their opinions of preparedness to succeed in business remains to be seen, particularly in the aftermath of COVID-19.

Prior studies indicate that a comprehensive curriculum is a crucial determinant of student happiness [8], [10]. During the COVID-19 epidemic, student expectations have evolved in conjunction with remote and hybrid learning paradigms (Hong, 2023). Consequently, numerous colleges have restructured their student support networks. Nonetheless, a limited comprehension of how campus support influences students' perceptions of career preparedness following the COVID-19 pandemic exists.

Student self-efficacy significantly impacts happiness with one's major, academic success, and job preparedness [8], [11]. Self-efficacy is students' confidence to successfully attain their objectives [12]. Self-efficacy in previous studies was influenced by experiences during industrial work practices and the family environment [13], [14]. Students who have carried out industrial work practices have high confidence in their ability to succeed and prepare for their careers (Nurlaela, 2019). In addition, support from family, such as parents and siblings, also increases their belief in their ability to succeed in their careers [13], [14].

Post-COVID-19 alterations in the tourism sector environment and market have influenced hospitality and tourist management students' thoughts on their future and careers. The alterations in the environment and market have fostered adverse perceptions among hospitality and tourism management students regarding their future despite the rapid growth of the tourism industry post-COVID-19 pandemic, prompting inquiries into potential shifts in student self-efficacy. This study seeks to examine the impact of industry work practices, family environment, curriculum, university support, and self-efficacy on the career preparedness of hotel and tourist management students. This study's findings will offer hospitality educators insights to enhance the competitiveness of hospitality programs and address the emerging issues of student recruitment and retention in the post-pandemic recovery phase.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Data collection

The sample of this study was final semester students of the hotel and tourism management study program in Indonesia. This study involved seven universities with hotel and tourism study programs in Central Java province. Universities were selected based on regional divisions: the eastern, western, northern, and southern regions. Upon receiving university authorization, the researcher disseminated a link to share the survey invitation with their students. Program faculty received two email reminders to motivate their students' participation. The online survey was conducted from July to October 2024. Out of 310 responses gathered, 11 were not qualified due to noncompliance with the established criteria. Consequently, a total of 299 responses were used for subsequent research. This study achieved the requisite sample size and validated its adequacy for structural equation modeling.

2.2. Measurement

The measurement of industrial work practice and family environment variables was adopted from Nurlaela et al. (2021). The measurement items for perceived curriculum, campus support, self-efficacy, and career readiness were developed and modified by Hong et al. (2023). This development and modification aim to suit the context of this research. The questionnaire consists of two questions: research construction and socio-demographic information. A five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was used to measure the six components in the first part of the survey, namely industrial work practice, family environment, perceived curriculum, campus support, self-efficacy, and career readiness.

2.3. Data analysis

The employed data analysis method is PLS-SEM. This analysis is a multivariate statistical assessment that concurrently analyzes the impact of factors for prediction research, exploration, or building structural models (Hair et al., 2019). The assessment of the SEM model in PLS includes evaluating the measurement model, the structural model, and the goodness-of-fit model.

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3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Respondent profile

Based on the results of the questionnaire distribution, 299 responses were obtained, which met the criteria for using the samples in this research.

Table 1. Respondent profile

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	17 Years	32	10.7
	18 Years	127	42.5
	19 Years	95	31.8
	> 19 Years	45	15.1
Gender	Male	112	37.5
	Female	187	62.5
Plans	Career in Hospitality and Tourism	219	73.2
	Self-Employed	45	15.1
	Continue Study	35	11.7
College currently	STP Sahid Surakarta	55	18.4
	Politeknik Indonusa Surakarta	50	16.7
	STIE Pariwisata Semarang	60	20.1
	Universitas Semarang	48	16.1
	Akademi Pariwisata Eka Sakti	30	10.0
	Purwokerto	31	10.4
	Politeknik Harapan Bersama	25	8.4
	Universitas BSI Kota Tegal		

Respondents in this study were mostly 18 years old, which was 42.5%, while the gender was predominantly female, 62.5%. The plans of most respondents (73.2%) wanted to have a career in the hotel and tourism industry, and the origin of the respondents' colleges came from STIE Pariwisata Semarang, which was 20.1%.

3.2. Evaluation of measurement models

Table 2 shows the results of the measurement model evaluation

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Constructs

Variable	Items	Outer Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Industrial Work Practice (IWP)	6	0,882 – 0,906	0.946	0.957	0.787
Family Environment (FE)	6	0,910– 0,926	0.962	0.969	0.840
Self Efficacy (SE)	4	0,898 – 0,924	0.932	0.951	0.831
Perceived Curriculum (PC)	6	0,883 – 0,908	0.940	0.954	0.806
Campus Support (CS)	7	0,816 - 0,884	0.935	0.947	0.719
Career Readiness (CAR)	3	0,909- 0,841	0.921	0.950	0.864

Source: Output PLS-SEM Algorithm

Table 1 shows that the variables IWP, FE, SE, PC, CS, and CAR have indicators with an outer loading above 0.5, meaning the measurement items are valid. The level of variable reliability is acceptable, as indicated by Cornbach's alpha and composite reliability, which are above 0.70. A convergent validity level (AVE) > 0.50 meets the requirements for good convergent validity. Discriminant validity was tested using the HTMT. The results of the discriminant validity test are in Table 3.

Tabel 3. Rasio Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT)

	CAR	CS	FE	IWP	PC
CS	0.627				
FE	0.485	0.696			
IWP	0.459	0.627	0.721		

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PC	0.564	0.817	0.771	0.649	
SE	0.617	0.649	0.677	0.594	0.603

Source: Output PLS-SEM Algorithm

Discriminant validity can accepted because the HTMT value for pairing variables is below 0.90, indicating that the variable for the item whose measurement is more vital than dividing the variance into other variable items. Discriminant validity with cross-loadings shows that all measuring items have significant correlations with each variable and weak correlations with others.

3.3. Evaluation of structural model

The correlation evaluation model tests the research variables that influence the hypothesis. The structural model evaluation has three steps. First, check for multicollinearity between variables and the inner VIF measure. Inner VIF values below 5 suggest no variable multicollinearity. The second is to test the hypothesis between variables using t or p values. Third, the f square value shows the direct variables' structural level influence (f square 0.02 is low, 0.15 is medium, and 0.35 is strong) [15].

Table 4. Inner VIF

	CAR	SE
CAR		
CS	2.776	
FE	2.989	1.901
IWP	2.090	1.901
PC	3.136	
SE	1.929	

Source: Output PLS-SEM Algorithm

The evaluation results of the measurement model with Inner VIF show that the Inner VIF value between variables is smaller than 5. This value indicates no multicollinearity between variables or a low multicollinearity between variables. These results strengthen SEM PLS's robust (not biased) parameter estimation results.

Table 5. Hypothesis test

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	**T statistics**	**P Values**	f^2	Conclusions
IWP -> SE	0.222	3.718	**0.000**	0.046	H1 accepted
IWP -> CAR	0.031	0.438	**0.662**	0.011	H2 rejected
FE -> SE	0.489	8.726	**0.000**	0.224	H3 accepted
FE -> CAR	-0.098	1.120	**0.263**	0.006	H4 rejected
SE -> CAR	0.350	5.422	**0.000**	0.111	H5 accepted
PC -> CAR	0.144	1.997	**0.046**	0.011	H6 accepted
CS -> CAR	0.310	4.236	**0.000**	0.060	H7 accepted
R Square: SE **R Square:** CAR **SRMR**	0.438 0.426 0.049				

Source: Output PLS-SEM Algorithm

The results of the hypothesis test show that seven hypotheses were accepted, and two hypotheses were rejected in this study. This means that the model used has a good or acceptable structure.

3.4. Goodness on fit model

Variance-based structural equation modeling (PLS) evaluates theoretical models for predictive research. R square, SRMR, and other measures validated the model [15]. Chin (1998) suggests this qualitative interpretation of R square values: Low impact is 0.19, moderate influence is 0.33, and significant effect is 0.66. Industrial Work Practice (IWP) and Family Environment (FE) moderately affect self-efficacy (SE) at 0.438: 43.8%. Self-efficacy (FE), perceived curriculum (PC), and campus support (CS) on career readiness (CAR) have a negligible effect (42.6%). Hair et al.

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(2021) say SRMR values < 0.08 indicate a good model. The calculated model value is 0.049, indicating a strong model fit.

3.5. Mediation analysis

The subsequent step in assessing the degree of mediation involves calculating the VAF (variance accounted for) value. A VAF value exceeding 80% signifies full mediation, whereas a VAF value ranging from 20% to 80% denotes partial mediation. A VAF value below 20% signifies the absence of mediation—the VAF is measured by dividing the indirect and total effects. Table 6 presents the results of the mediation analysis.

Table 6. Mediation Analysis

	Indirect effect	**Total effect**	**T Statistics**	**P Values**	Conclusion
FE -> SE -> CAR	0.171	0.073	4.600	0.000	Full Mediation
IWP -> SE -> CAR	0.078	0.109	3.040	0.002	Partial mediation

Source: Output PLS-SEM Algorithm

The mediation analysis results show that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between industrial work practice and the family environment. Figure 2 shows the SEM results.

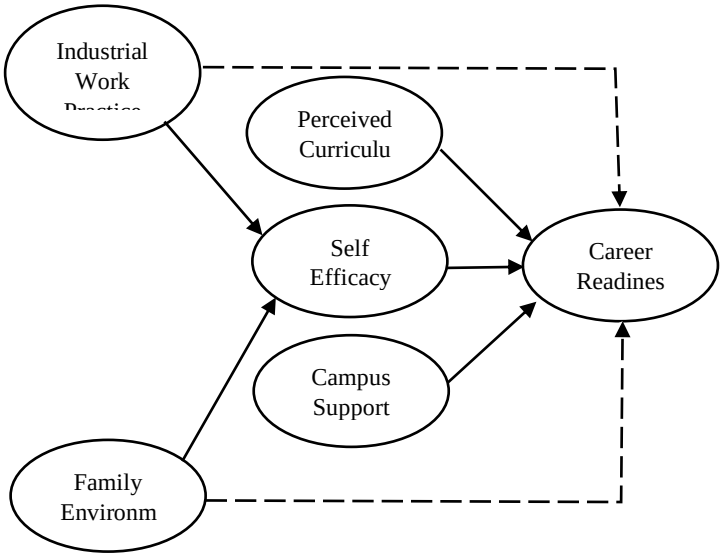

Figure 2. Research Result Model

Description:

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ not significant
———————— significant

3.6. Discussion

3.6.1. The Influence of Industrial Work Practice on Self-Efficacy and Career Readiness

Industrial Work Practice (IWP) constitutes a learning, training, and educational activity conducted within the industrial or business sector, aligning with student competencies. Prakerin serves as a crucial preparatory activity for students before entering the workforce. The advantages of industrial work practice include familiarization with the work environment, skill development and refinement, observation, and comparison with theoretical concepts learned in class, enhancement of knowledge and skills, comprehension of professional conduct, and accumulation of work experience. This study's findings demonstrate that IWP positively and significantly influences self-efficacy. This outcome indicates that IWP will enhance students' self-confidence in career preparation. The experience acquired by students during this work practice can enhance their preparedness for entering the workforce. This study's findings corroborate the research by Nurlaela et al. (2021) and Rochmah et al. (2021), which identified a positive impact of

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industrial work practice on students' self-efficacy. Other findings of this study indicate that IWP does not directly affect students' career readiness but indirectly affects students' career readiness through self-efficacy. These findings mean that experience from industrial work practice will affect career readiness if students have strong self-efficacy.

3.6.2. The Influence of Family Environment on Self-Efficacy and Career Readiness

The family environment is one of the important external factors. In addition, the family environment also significantly contributes to preparing students to choose their future careers [13]. Parents are considered the leading agents in shaping their children's attitudes while protecting them [17]. In this case, the family is initially responsible for the children's education, so the family is the foundation for educating children's behavior and personal development. The findings in this study indicate that the family environment has a positive and significant effect on fostering self-efficacy but does not significantly affect career readiness. This result means that the greater the support from the family, the more self-efficacy will increase in students, and this increase will also indirectly affect students' career readiness. The family environment is the first and foremost environment that teaches good attitudes and values . The world of work is closely related to the environment, relationships, and work tasks that require good physical, psychological, and mental readiness, communication skills, and other things that require seriousness and special abilities. In particular, mental ability and readiness are special abilities that prospective job seekers must possess. Those with good mental maturity will be able to increase self-efficacy or self-confidence in facing new environments in the workplace. The results of this study support the studies conducted by Nurlaela et al. (2021) and Rochmah et al. (2021), which found that the environment has a significant effect on students' self-efficacy and has an indirect effect on students' career readiness.

3.6.3. The Influence of Self-Efficacy on Career Readiness

In this study, self-efficacy is students' belief in their ability to plan and execute the necessary actions to study, complete tasks, and achieve satisfactory outcomes. Students exhibiting high self-efficacy can maintain a calm demeanor and mindset, enabling them to navigate challenging situations effectively. They are also more inclined to make decisions grounded in the belief that they can accomplish any task [8], [18]. This study's findings demonstrate that self-efficacy positively and significantly influences students' career readiness. Higher levels of self-efficacy among students correlate with increased preparedness in career planning.

The relationship between students' self-efficacy and career readiness is significant, as self-efficacy enables students to assess their career-related competencies, including knowledge, planning skills, and problem-solving abilities. Conversely, students exhibiting lower self-efficacy have experienced a need for more skills and confidence regarding their careers [18]. This study's results corroborate earlier research indicating that students' self-efficacy positively impacts their career readiness [8], [19]. In the hospitality context, Guo and Ayoun (2022) and Hong et al. (2023) demonstrated that individuals with high self-efficacy, primarily developed through prior education and industry work experience, are more willing to engage in the hospitality sector.

3.6.4. Perceived Influence of Curriculum on Career Readiness

Higher education institutions invest significant resources in curriculum development to address students' needs and preferences [20]. The primary objective of students is to secure employment in their chosen field; thus, educational institutions must effectively prepare and train students for their future careers. A high-quality curriculum enhances students' perceptions of their career readiness [21], [22]. An effective curriculum incorporates advanced academic, technical, and problem-solving skills to improve students' career readiness (Lee et al., 2022). Courses encompass foundational knowledge and enhance various skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and written and oral communication [23]. This study's results indicate that the perceived curriculum positively influences students' career readiness. The results indicate that higher curriculum quality correlates with increased student confidence in career readiness. The study's results corroborate the findings of Lee et al. (2022) and Hong et al. (2023), indicating that the perceived curriculum positively influences students' career readiness.

3.6.5. The Influence of Campus Support on Career Readiness

Higher education institutions provide diverse services and resources facilitating students' personal, academic, and professional development. This study's results indicate that campus support positively influences students' career readiness. A positive correlation exists whereby increased campus support for students enhances their career readiness. Prior research highlights the significance of campus support in students' career decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic [8], [9]. Zhong et al. (2021) demonstrated that campus support services enhance the psychological well-being of hospitality and tourism students, thereby facilitating the establishment of clear career goals and pathways, even in adverse circumstances. Guo and Ayoun (2022) posited that campus support is crucial for hospitality students, as they significantly depend on faculty experience and guidance for career decisions, suggesting that students view campus support as their primary information source. According to the studies conducted by Guo and Ayoun (2022) and Hong et al. (2023), hospitality management students require institutional support to prepare for their future careers

effectively. Campus supports such as guidance, counseling, and training can enhance students' mental preparedness and competencies.

4. CONCLUSION

Post-COVID-19 alterations in the environment and tourism business have influenced hospitality and tourist management students' ideas regarding their future and careers. This study's results indicate that self-efficacy, perceived curriculum, and campus support significantly influence students' career readiness. Self-efficacy is affected by occupational practices and familial surroundings. This study's results indicate that self-efficacy affects the interaction between industrial work practices and family environment regarding students' career preparation.

This study has drawbacks, including: It is cross-sectional, so it does not adhere to university strategies and policies that may evolve in the forthcoming years. Consequently, longitudinal research is preferable as it offers a more profound insight into the evolution of student career readiness across multiple years. This survey assesses perceived professional preparation rather than subjective knowledge and skills. The outcomes may vary if career preparedness is assessed using objective knowledge and abilities.

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