

The study motivations and study preferences of students majoring in hospitality and tourism management-related programs: The case of students in Jordan

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Abstract

Hospitality and Tourism Management (HTM) programs in Jordan are among the most important emerging fields of study that have been attracting increasing number of students in the last two decades. This paper aims at identifying the reasons why students in Jordan choose to major in hospitality and tourism management, and examining their intentions to pursue graduate degree in this field abroad. Preferred majors within HTM and preferred overseas study destinations were also identified. The findings suggested that job opportunity, academic success, perceived easiness of study, field attractiveness and features of the field are the motivations that explain Jordanian students' decision to major in HTM. Driven mainly by cultural motives, slightly more than 73 percent of the surveyed sample showed interest in pursuing a graduate degree in tourism abroad. Germany, Spain and England were found the most preferred overseas study destinations. Findings were discussed and recommendations to both education institutions and tourism stakeholders were offered.

Keywords: tourism education, study motivations, study preference, Jordan

Introduction

Tourism industry in Jordan was not considered an important sector before 1990's due to the priorities that country had especially in the education and health fields (Reid & Schwab, 2006), and the lack of political stability in the Middle East for decades which labeled the whole region as insecure area for any tourist activities (Alrawadieh, 2014). Later, the launch of peace process and signing the peace treaties between the Israelis and both Palestinians and Jordanians in mid-nineties helped raising the number of foreign tourist arrivals to Jordan significantly. Since then, Jordan has paid more attention about tourism and its contribution to the national economy and worked towards developing the national destinations to attract more overseas tourists (Ham, Greenway & Simonis, 2003).

Although located in a tumultuous region and suffering from shortage in natural resources, tourism receipts increased from about 1461 million JD in 2006 (MoTA, 2007a according to Central Bank of Jordan) to 2923 million JD in 2013 (MoTA, 2013a according to Central Bank of Jordan). Job opportunities created directly in the sector increased from about 31 thousands (MoTA 2007b) to more than 48 thousand jobs (MoTA 2013b) over the same period. These figures seem to encourage the Jordanian decision makers to pay special attention to the tourism sector often described by economists and officials as Jordan's Petrol (Abdulhadi, 2013; Alfani, 2014).

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The growing importance of tourism sector in Jordan has increased the demand on trained manpower to meet the needs of the labor market. The awareness of the need to provide the market with professional and trained manpower armed with knowledge led to the emergence of tourism and hospitality as a field of study in a number of higher education institutions attracting modest numbers of students. As it will be seen throughout this paper, compared to other fields of study, demand on tourism-related majors in Jordan seems to be low. The reasons beyond this low demand might be related to an “image problem” in the service sector in general and tourism in particular. In addition to that, one can suggest that the stability of tourism sector disturbed often by conflicts and wars in the neighboring countries can also be a potential reason for such low demand. It would be interesting therefore, to investigate the study motivations of those who chose to major in HTM and examine their intention to pursue graduate degree in the field abroad and their study preferences in terms of majors and study destinations. This paper attempts to provide insights in this direction to help the hospitality educators, industry and higher education decision makers understand the expectations and motivations of tomorrow’s tourism managers. Moreover, insights gained about student’s intention to major in tourism-related graduate programs abroad will help international tourism schools develop their curricula in according with students’ motivations and expectations and help them develop marketing strategies targeting Jordanian students and possibly from other Arab countries.

Tourism education in Jordan

Hospitality and Tourism Management (hereafter, HTM) programs have been amongst the most important emerging fields of study in Jordan in the last two decades with an increasing number of students joining the Jordanian institutions that offer such fields of study.

Although Jordan has witnessed a high rate of unemployment, it has not been easy to attract young Jordanians to search for jobs in tourism sector. This might have been due to some social barriers related to the culture of shame especially when it comes to serving others in hotel and restaurants, and to the cultural and religious perception of the activities exerted in tourism. In this context, tourism-related majors in the Jordanian institutions were few and not attractive for the students who pass the school exit exam (Tawjihi) along with the low tendency among those students to pursue the secondary school in the hotel education track (see table 1). It was uneasy task to convince the young people to join the academic or training programs in HTM fields probably for the insufficient texts that highlight tourism and its importance in the primary education (Badran, 2011).

To tackle the issue, many efforts were exerted by Jordanian government through launching the necessary initiatives in order to raise the awareness for the education in those fields. The starting point was in 1980 by establishing Ammon College (now called Jordan Applied University College of Hospitality and Tourism Education) as pioneer institution for HTM education. The college, which is managed and supervised by the private sector through The Jordan Hotel Association (JHA), offers academic diplomas and vocational training in various fields related to the industry.

Sixteen diploma programs offered in 11 intermediate university colleges throughout Jordan with 634 students enrolled in 2013 (see table 2). Despite the great efforts made by government to encourage students to join HTM programs in the intermediate university colleges as part of the vocational or technical education, the share of HTM related fields in the diploma programs is still very low in comparison to other offered tracks like administrative and finance and engineering programs.

In 1995, the first bachelor degree in Hotel Management was offered by The Private Applied Sciences University. Since that, many institutions started developing their programs and

curricula to cope with the tourism labor market needs (Hejazeen, 2007). Nowadays, about 22 HTM related bachelor programs are being offered in twelve higher institutions in Jordan with more than 2252 students enrolled in HTM programs in 2013 (see table 3).

Table 1. Number of Students enrolled in General Secondary Exam (Hotel Education Track)

Year	Male	Female	Total
2006	811	17	828
2007	893	9	902
2008	763	11	774
2009	881	18	899
2010	877	20	897
2011	1293	27	1320
2012	1118	29	1147
2013	1323	38	1361
Total	7959	169	8128

Source: Ministry of Education, Statistical Report, 2012/2013.

In terms of graduate education in HTM in Jordan, there is only one master program in tourism offered in Yarmouk University in the north of Jordan since the academic year 1999/2000. Many Jordanian academics who have had the opportunity to do their PhDs abroad went for this program.

The country worked hard on providing the academic institutions with the qualified people for teaching tourism and hospitality, those who are specialized in hospitality and food and beverage are still lacking. However, the authors know about a number of Jordanian students who are reading for their Ph.D. in HTM related program abroad. While some of them are either studying on their own expenses or granted with scholarships from institutions or governmental bodies in the hosting countries, others are granted with scholarships from their home universities in Jordan. The latter are required to work for the home university upon graduation for a period that is usually a double of the study period spent abroad.

Though it is still low, the female presence in HTM related fields has increased significantly in the last few years. The percentage of female students who are pursuing their bachelor degrees in tourism and hospitality is about 32 percent in the academic year 2012/2013 and about 24.9 percent for the diploma programs for the same academic year. However, statistics released by the Ministry of Education shows that only 2 percent of students who joined the hotel education track in the secondary school are female.

Table 2. Number of students enrolled in the higher education institutions / Diploma Programs

Academic Year	Tourist Services Management		Culinary Arts		Hotel Management		Total
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	
2005/2006	109	33	0	0	294	11	403
2006/2007	93	24	0	0	283	7	376
2007/2008	119	43	0	0	383	12	502
2008/2009	182	79	0	0	454	23	636
2009/2010	198	93	0	0	420	19	618
2010/2011	130	64	0	0	401	21	531
2011/2012	213	100	108	39	382	27	703
2012/2013	330	137	0	0	304	21	634

Source: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Annual Statistical Reports 2005-2014.

Literature Review

Investigating students' motives for majoring in certain fields of study has been the focus of numerous studies (Vigild & Schwarz, 2001; Crossley & Mubarik, 2002; Wong, Fiedler & Liu, 2007; Wong, Fiedler & Liu, 2007; Gallagher, Clarke & Wilson, 2008; Dastjerdi, Mahdian, Dastjerdi & Namdari, 2012; Law & Yuen, 2012; Brooks, Korzaan & Ceccucci, 2014). In their study, Brooks et al (2014) found that love of technology, job security, gratifying work and level of income are the main reasons why U.S undergraduate students choose to major in information systems. Law and Yuen suggested that parental influence and intrinsic interest are the Hong Kong students' main motives for choosing accounting as a field of study. Dastjerdi et al. (2012) suggested that medical and dental students in Iran were motivated by six motivational factors including social and professional status, health care and people, others' recommendation, personal interest and nature of occupation, occupational experience and personal life.

Motivational factors explaining students' tendency to major in HTM programs were examined by a number of scholars in different geographical contexts. Purcell and Quinn (1996) found that interest in hospitality was the main reason that attracted students in United Kingdom to study for hospitality degree. Likewise, O'Mahoney, McWilliams & Whitelaw (2001) noted that Australian students are driven by the interest in hospitality through the one-year industry internship, the travel opportunities offered and the practical nature of the sector. In a more recent study, Lee, et al. (2008) found that self-actualization, job opportunity, field attractiveness, ease of study and scholastic achievement are the main motivational factors for students majoring in tourism in Hong Kong. In a cross-cultural context, Airey and Frontistis found that British students have a less positive attitude toward tourism compared to their Greek counterparts (Airey & Frontistis, 1997). In a recent study conducted to examine HTM students' study motivations in the United States of America, Lee, Old and Lee (2010)

identified six motivating factors, namely, self-actualization, job opportunity, field attractiveness, foreign experience, external influence, and ease of study. A similar research conducted by Kim, Guo, Wang and Agrusa (2007) identified six motivating factors that explain why Chinese, Taiwanese and Korean students choose to major in tourism-related undergraduate programs, these factors are job opportunity, interest in practical aspects, scholastic achievement, apparent attraction, interest in a foreign country and ease in studying. Erdinç and Kahraman (2012) found that students majoring in tourism-related programs in Akdeniz University (Turkey) are driven by 4 factors, namely status and personal relations, industrial commitment and person fit, pay and benefits, and promotion.

Table 3. Number of students enrolled in the higher education institutions/Bachelor Degree

Academic Year	Tourism Services Management		Hotel and Tourism Management		Hotel Management		Tourist Guidance		Total
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	
2005/2006	16	5	128	16	98	8	108	39	350
2006/2007	40	3	231	22	92	19	90	34	453
2007/2008	29	3	313	10	218	38	142	51	702
2008/2009	20	8	106	18	159	16	117	48	402
2009/2010	22	8	165	26	171	31	139	65	497
2010/2011	35	9	76	20	141	27	272	129	524
2011/2012	94	38	439	98	0	0	266	133	799
2012/2013	375	85	928	187	0	0	949	457	2252

Source: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Annual Statistical Reports 2005-2014.

A number of studies examined the motivations of students going abroad to major in HTM. In a study conducted in China, Zhao (1991) reported that Chinese students are interested in studying HTM abroad for the perceived high quality of tertiary education experience. Lee et al. (2008) noted that students willing to pursue an HTM graduate degree abroad are driven mainly by the desire to experience foreign culture, language and people.

Overseas study destinations preferred by HTM students were examined by a number of scholars, in a comparative study on student groups in China, Taiwan and Korea, Kim et al., (2007) found that United States of America is the most preferred study destination for those students. Similar finding was reported in the study of Lee et al. (2008). The United States of America is also reported to be the most preferred overseas destination where hospitality UK and Dutch students would like to get their first job after graduation (Jenkins, 2001). However, U.S undergraduate students were reported to choose Australia as their preferred study destination (Lee et al., 2010).

In terms of preferred areas of studies within HTM, in their comparative research, Kim et al. (2007) suggested that whereas Chinese students showed major interest in tourism

management and development, Taiwanese and Korean students were more interested in hotel management including casino and convention. Lee et al. (2010) found that the overwhelming majority of U.S undergraduate students are mainly interested in hotel /resort management, restaurant/ culinary and event planning. Lee et al. (2008) found that hospitably and tourism students in Hong Kong preferred airlines (aviation) management as an area of study.

Despite the importance of identifying the reasons why students want to major in tourism industry-related disciplines for both the hospitality industry and the higher education institutions, Research on this topic seems to be limited (Lee, Kim& Lo, 2008). Research on Jordanian students' motivations for choosing to major in HTM programs appears to have received little attention. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to provide knowledge to the decisions makers in both Jordanian higher education institutions and stakeholders in hospitality and tourism industry.

Research Methodology

The objectives of this paper are mainly twofold. First, it aims at identifying the study motivations and study preferences of HTM students in Jordan. The second objective consists in investigating student's intention to pursue graduate degree in HTM abroad and identifying their motivations and preferred countries. In addition to that, this paper examines the difference between female and male students concerning their motivations for studying HTM and their intention to pursue graduate degree in HTM abroad.

To answer the research's questions a self-administered questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire consists of two parts; the first one was designed to collect demographic information about respondents. In the second part, 19 items were used to identify the study motivations of students enrolled in the Tourism Management program at University of Jordan and 13 items were used to examine the motivations of students who showed intention to pursue a graduate degree in HTM abroad. Motivational items were selected based on the list of motivational statements proposed by Kim et al. (2007) in their study on Asian students. The authors decided to adopt the paper as guidance to determine motivation statements in the survey instrument. The coefficient of internal consistency of the total scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was calculated as 81 indicating a satisfactory reliability of the instrument (Nunnally, 1978). The test was also used to determine the internal consistency of each factor variable of the measurement instrument; results showed relatively accepted consistency (ranging from 81 to 57). Responses to the items were measured on a 5-point Likert where 1= strongly disagree, 3= neutral and 5= strongly agree.

The questionnaire was originally written in English then translated into Arabic by bilingual who is specialized in HTM. The Arabic translation was then checked separately by two academicians who are specialized in HTM and with full command of English. On the light of their comments and suggestions, the questionnaire was slightly modified.

The questionnaire was pre-tested to a group of 20 students enrolled in the Department of Tourism Management at the University of Jordan. Students were asked to fill the questionnaire to make sure that there was no ambiguity and that the questions were well understood. Comments made by students led to minor changes in the questionnaire in terms of wording and structures.

Following the pilot study, the final version of the questionnaire was distributed to 150 students majoring in Tourism Management at the University of Jordan. The University of Jordan was opted for this study because it is the oldest university in Jordan (Established in 1962) and for being the biggest one in terms of number of students enrolled to its faculties. The population in this study is all undergraduate students who are majoring in tourism

management program at the University of Jordan (551 students). A convenience sample of 150 students was drawn representing about 27 percent of the total number of tourism management students at the University of Jordan and about 6.5 of the total number of students currently majoring in tourism-related bachelor degree programs in the country. The students who had completed the pilot study questionnaire were excluded. Completion process was done under the supervision of one of the authors during the students' regular class schedule, which guaranteed the return of all the 150 questionnaires. The survey was filled during the summer semester of the academic year 2013/2014.

Returned questionnaires were then checked and only 4 questionnaires were excluded for the excessive amount of missing data. Therefore, 146 questionnaires were usable representing a response rate of 98 percent. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used to analyze data.

Findings

Demographic Profile of Surveyed Students

Considering the gender profile of tourism management students at the University of Jordan where 299 (54 per cent) are female and 252 (46 per cent) are male, the percentage of respondents of both gender are almost the same. Of the 146 respondents, 74 are female (50.7 percent) and 72 are male (49.3 percent). Of the 107 students who showed interest to pursue a graduate degree in HTM abroad 55 (51.4 percent) are female and 52 (48.6 percent) are male. Yet, considering that the percentage of female students majoring in HTM bachelor degrees in the whole country accounts for only about 32.4 percent, it appears to be difficult to assume tourism-related majors to be equally popular between both genders on the national level.

The bachelor degree in tourism management at the University of Jordan is a four-year program. 36.7 percent of the respondents are seniors, 30.6 percent are juniors, 21.1 percent are sophomores, and 11.6 percent are freshmen.

While 7.5 percent of respondents are coming from families that have a tourism firm as a property, 24.5 percent stated that one or more than one of their family members work directly in the tourism sector. It can be suggested that students majoring in tourism-related disciplines in Jordan are aware of this major and familiar with the sector through their families' businesses and created job opportunities. In addition to that, 11.5 percent of surveyed students have, along with their school, a part time or full time job in tourism industry. As noted by Ross (1994), the familiarity and involvement in tourism industry may lead to student's higher interest and positive evaluation of the sector.

Students' motivations for choosing to major in HTM programs

Principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation of 19 motivation items produced five factors representing the main reasons why students in Jordan choose to major in HTM. As illustrated in table 4, Jordanian students are more likely to prefer tourism-related programs as their field of study for the job opportunities offered in the industry, desire for academic success, perceived ease of study, attractiveness of the industry, and features of the field.

T-test was conducted to determine any significance difference between female and male students in the five motivational factors. The test's results indicated *p*-value to be higher than 0.05 for all factors, which means that no statically significant difference was found.

Table 4. Study motivations of tourism students in Jordan

Motivational items	Means	SD
Job opportunity (Alpha Cronbach= .81)		
I believe that the percentage of employment is high after graduation	3.23	1.18
I believe that this field has a growing potential	3.73	1.06
I believe that there are a variety of job opportunities	3.14	1.02
Compared to other fields, this field provides more opportunity to be promoted	3.61	1.01
This field suits my aptitude	4.00	.882
Academic success (Alpha Cronbach= .79)		
I would like to be an excellent scholar in this field	3.90	.984
I would like to be a theoretical expert in this field	3.86	.914
I would like to study more in this field	3.98	.946
I have more interest in this field, compared to others	3.84	.944
Ease of study (Alpha Cronbach= .66)		
Compared to other fields, it is easy to study this field	3.25	1.13
Compared to other fields, it is easier to get good grades in this field	3.15	1.19
My score for university entrance exam qualified me for this major	3.69	1.21
Field attractiveness (Alpha Cronbach= .61)		
Scenes or pictures of the hospitality industry appearing in movies/TV look attractive	3.86	.934
Jobs in this field look attractive	3.95	.934
Working in this field apparently looks good	4.30	.746
Features of the field (Alpha Cronbach= .57)		
I believe that the level of salary is high in this field	3.54	1.11
This field was recommended by others (e.g. parents, friends or teachers)	3.06	1.26
I believe that this field is practical rather than Theoretical	4.25	.892
I believe that i can have many opportunities to take more overseas trips	3.84	1.04

Table 5. Preferred area of study

Preferred field of study	Female HTM student (No = 74)		Male HTM student (No = 72)		Total HTM students (No=146)	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Tourism Management and Development	31	41.9%	28	38.9%	59	40.4%
Tourism Travel Agency Management	27	36.5%	18	25%	45	30.8%
Hotel Management	11	14.9%	16	22.2%	27	18.5%
Restaurant Management	1	1.4%	4	5.6%	5	3.4%
Airline Management	1	1.4%	0	0%	1	0.7%
Tour guidance	1	1.4%	0	0%	1	0.7%
Other	2	2.7%	6	8.3%	8	5.5%

Preferred areas of study within HTM

As exhibited in table 5, tourism management and development was found the most preferred area of study within HTM followed by tourism travel agency management and hotel management. Combined, these top three areas of study accounted for about 90 percent of student's choices. Unsurprisingly, whereas tourism management and development, and tourism travel agency management seem to be more popular among female students, hotel management and restaurant management were found more popular among male students. This goes in direct harmony with the current figures related to the demographic distribution of the tourism labor market in Jordan where female presence accounts only for 8 percent in hotels and only about 8.3 percent in tourism restaurants (MoTA 2013c). It can be proposed that jobs in hospitality industry, particularly hotels and restaurants are more likely to be perceived less appealing for Jordanian women. This could be due to the nature of these jobs that require long working hours, urgently exchanging shifts, and working at night, holydays and weekends. In addition to that, one can suggest that the social and cultural barriers in many Middle Eastern countries prevent women's equal involvement in tourism and hospitality industry.

Motivations for pursuing a graduate degree in HTM abroad

Of the 146 students participating in this survey, 107 students (73.3per cent) were found to be interested to pursue graduate degree in HTM abroad, this high percentage is not surprising if we consider that academic success is one of the main study motivations for those students in their current undergraduate program. In addition to that, this high percentage can also be due to the lack of graduate program in HTM related programs in Jordan. As it can be seen in table 6, statements like "I would like to have an opportunity to learn a foreign language", "I would like to develop relationships with foreign professors and friends" "I would like to experience a new culture in the foreign country" have received the highest mean scores. It can be suggested that Jordanian HTM students are generally driven by the desire to explore different cultures, learning foreign languages and building relationships with new people.

The independent Samples T-test was conducted to decide whether there is a significant mean difference between female and male students concerning their motivations to pursue graduate degree abroad, The result of the test shows that there is no mean significant difference between female and male students ($p= .380$). In addition to that, no statically significant difference was found between female and male students in their motivations (see table no. 6). Yet, in most items, male students showed slightly stronger motivation to travel abroad for a graduate degree; this is probably due to the conservative nature of a large part of the Jordanian society resulting in more travel opportunities for male than females.

Table 6. Motivations for pursuing a graduate degree in HTM abroad

Motivation Item	Mean (N=107)	Female (N=55)	Male (N=52)	P-value
I would like to have an opportunity to learn a foreign language	4.70	4.67	4.73	550
I would like to develop relationships with foreign professors and friends	4.63	4.60	4.67	512
I would like to write a thesis or dissertation of higher quality	4.18	4.25	4.11	365
I would be able to attain a teaching position easily in my country when I return	3.89	3.76	4.03	093
There are more famous professors, compared to domestic professors	3.68	3.49	3.88	019
I would like to have more opportunities to publish papers for famous journals	3.74	3.74	3.75	977
I would like to live in a country that is not familiar to me	3.70	3.65	3.75	704
I would like to get a better job or position in my country when I return	4.40	4.36	4.44	623
The foreign country has a higher educational level than my country in this field	4.28	4.29	4.28	990
The foreign country has better facilities than my country	4.11	4.16	4.05	607
I would like to gain a job in the foreign country after I gain a graduate diploma	3.69	3.69	3.69	995
I would like to learn more practical than theoretical perspectives for my career	4.50	4.45	4.55	368
I would like to experience a new culture in the foreign country	4.55	4.47	4.63	270

In terms of preferred countries to pursue graduate degree in HTM related programs, it was found that tourism management students in Jordan are generally more likely to prefer European countries. As it is depicted in table7, Germany is the most preferred country to pursue graduate degree in HTM. Half of the students who preferred Germany were motivated by the opportunity of gaining scholarship, 30 percent were motivated by the desire of learning a new language and 20 percent were motivated by the good reputation of education. It also can be assumed that respondents are more likely to prefer Germany as they are influenced by the presence of The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) represented by a German professor and faculty member.

Table 7. Preferred countries to pursue a graduate degree in HTM

Preferred country	Female student (No = 55)		Male student (No = 52)		Overall HTM students (No=107)	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Germany	19	34.5%	11	21.2%	30	28%
Spain	13	23.6%	8	15.4%	21	19.6%
England	8	14.5%	6	11.5%	14	13.1%
France	3	5.5%	7	13.5%	10	9.3%
USA	3	5.5%	3	5.8%	6	5.6%
Italy	2	3.6%	5	9.6%	7	6.5%
Australia	3	5.5%	3	5.8%	6	5.6%
Switzerland	1	1.8%	1	1.9%	2	1.9%
UAE	1	1.8%	1	1.9%	2	1.9%
Netherlands	1	1.8%	1	1.9%	2	1.9%
Sweden	0	0.0%	2	3.8%	2	1.9%
Canada	0	0.0%	1	1.9%	1	0.9%
Qatar	0	0.0%	1	1.9%	1	0.9%
Denmark	0	0.0%	1	1.9%	1	0.9%
Thailand	1	1.8%	0	0.0%	1	0.9%
Malaysia	0	0.0%	1	1.9%	1	0.9%

19.6 per cent of the respondents preferred Spain for the desire of learning a new language (71 per cent) and the opportunity of gaining a scholarship (29 percent).England was found preferred by about 13 percent of the respondents for the desire of learning a new language (36 percent),the good reputation of education (36 percent) and the opportunity of gaining a scholarship (28 percent).The popularity of European countries as study destination for HTM students is confirmed by a number of studies (Lee et al., 2010). On the contrary of what

reported in a number of studies that identified the United States of America to be the tourism students' most preferred overseas destination (Jenkins, 2001; Kim et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2008), it is interesting to find that the U.S.A is ranked the fifth in Jordanian students' overseas study destinations preferences list (see table 7).

Discussion and conclusion

This paper attempted to provide insights into the reasons why Jordanian students choose to major in hospitality and tourism management (HTM) programs and to investigate their intention to enroll to a graduate program in HTM abroad. Preferred majors within HTM and preferred overseas study destinations were also examined. Job opportunity, academic success, perceived easiness of study, field attractiveness and features of the field are the motivations why students in Jordan choose to major in HTM. About three-fourths of surveyed respondents showed willingness to pursue a graduate degree in HTM abroad driven mainly by cultural motives. This high percentage is not surprising as the general social perception of success in Jordan, like many Arab countries, is more likely to be connected to the academic degree obtained. Moreover, this high percentage can be interpreted as a result of the limited number of higher education institutions offering graduate degree in tourism-related fields (currently one school). In terms of preferred field of study within HTM, the majority of respondents (40.4 percent) showed interest in tourism management and development. A good proportion (30.8 percent) preferred tourism travel agency management while a slightly more than 18 percent showed interest in hotel management. With regard to preferred study destinations, Germany was found the most preferred study destination followed by Spain and England.

Insights gained from this paper are expected to help decision makers within the Jordanian education system and universities to better understand the motivations beyond the demand on tourism related programs and therefore design programs and develop strategies to attract potential numbers of students. In addition to that, this study provides knowledge to the hospitality industry about the expectations and motivations of the future tourism managers and manpower in the sector. Considering the perceived high possibility of getting job after graduation being one of Jordanian students' study motivations, students majoring in HTM programs in Jordan seem to be aware of the increasing demand on trained professionals to fill job positions in tourism industry. Universities offering HTM undergraduate programs should therefore, build stronger relations with the industry. Experienced professionals should be invited to give seminars to help students be more familiar with the sector and to introduce them to the labor market. On the other hand, universities should provide the industry with their up-to-date research findings (Kozak & Kozak, 2014). A compulsory work experience should be applied for tourism students to enable them put in practice what they learn in class and facilitate their involvement in the tourism market labor. Practitioners in the industry (e.g. hotels, tour operators) should also take initiatives to benefit and be of benefit for tourism students through providing practical training opportunities within their business. It is interesting to mention that ten students of the surveyed sample left a note in the questionnaire highlighting the need to focus on practical aspects of tourism in their courses.

As all research, this paper has a number of limitations. First, the number of motivational items for choosing to major in HTM program used in the survey is limited. The authors admit that a much more deeper and comprehensive reading of the existing literature and a qualitative data collection method should have been conducted to gain insights into the principle study motivations before determining the final version of the questionnaire. This paper, therefore, is an initial effort to investigate students' motivations to enroll in an HTM program in Jordan. Another major limitation of this paper pertains to the sampling. Respondents were chosen from one university among twelve institutions in Jordan offering a B.A degree in HTM. The sample size (N=146) accounts for about 6.5 percent of the total number of students currently

enrolled in tourism related bachelor degrees in Jordan. To validate the findings of this study, it would be necessary to conduct similar research in different institutions and different geographical contexts with more or less exposure to tourism activities (e.g. Petra and Aqaba).

Although surveyed sample enjoys a good level of familiarity and involvement in the tourism sector through employment and family's tourism business properties, yet, unlike tourism students in most western countries and some developing countries like Turkey, Jordanian tourism students are not required to spend a supervised work experience in tourism industry. It would be interesting to carry out a cross-sectional study to investigate and compare the attitudes of both students majoring in tourism-related program and those who are involved directly in the industry. Career perception of hospitality students in Jordan is also an area that is worth further examination.

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