TPM Vol. 32, No. S5, 2025
ISSN: 1972-6325
https://www.tpmap.org/

CHOOSING HOSPITALITY: FACTORS DRIVING STUDENTS TOWARD HOTEL MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN AN EMERGING TOURISM HUB

MANISH PAUL[1], DR. MANISHA MAIDULY[2], POOJA RATHORE[3]

[1]RESEARCH SCHOLAR, SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND COMMERCE, SHRI GURU RAM RAI UNIVERSITY, DEHRADUN; UTTARAKHAND, INDIA, EMAIL paulmanishpaul@rediffmail.com
[2]RESEARCH SUPERVISOR AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND COMMERCE, SHRI GURU RAM RAI UNIVERSITY, DEHRADUN; UTTARAKHAND, INDIA
EMAIL manishamaiduly@gmail.com
[3]RESEARCH SCHOLAR, SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND COMMERCE, SHRI GURU RAM RAI UNIVERSITY, DEHRADUN; UTTARAKHAND, INDIA. EMAIL: poojarathore0803@gmail.com.

Abstract
This study investigates the reasons students in Dehradun, a tourism hub in North India, choose to pursue hotel management education. This study evaluated individual, social, and institutional factors using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). A structured survey was administered to 282 first-year students across four colleges, with 94% of responses being usable. The questionnaire assessed the participants' interests, career goals, social influences, and institutional factors. Reliability and validity were confirmed using factor analyses, and hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling (SEM) in SPSS/AMOS. The results indicate that institutional attributes, particularly placement opportunities and reputation, exert the strongest positive effect on student motivation ($\beta = .42$, $p < .001$). Individual factors, including personal interest and career goals, also had a significant impact ($\beta = .37$, $p < .001$), whereas social factors showed a weaker but still significant influence ($\beta = .12$, $p < .05$). The model explained 49% of the variance in the motivation. The findings show that institutional quality and aspirations outweigh social pressure in students' decisions. Colleges should prioritize employability, reputation, and infrastructure. By demonstrating reduced social norm effects in non-metropolitan India, this study advances the TPB and SCCT in hospitality education and guides institutions in emerging tourism economies.
Keywords: Student Motivation; Hospitality Education; Dehradun; Emerging Tourism Hub; Theory of Planned Behaviour; Structural Equation Modeling

1. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality and tourism industry has become one of the largest and fastest-growing sectors of the global economy, generating one in ten jobs worldwide prior to the pandemic and driving significant socio-economic development (UNWTO, 2021). With globalization, rising disposable incomes, and greater connectivity, the demand for skilled hospitality professionals has intensified (Baum et al. 2020). Educational institutions have responded by expanding hotel management programs to equip graduates with the managerial, technical, and intercultural competencies required across lodging, food services, events, and travel sectors (Richardson, 2010).
In India, hospitality is closely associated with tourism expansion. Initiatives such as Incredible India and state-level tourism circuits have spurred both domestic and international travel, creating sustained demand for trained professionals (Choudhary & Aggarwal, 2020). Consequently, hotel management education is increasingly viewed as a pathway to secure employment, international exposure and entrepreneurial opportunities. However, despite the proliferation of institutions, scholarly understanding of why students choose this field remains limited, particularly in regional settings outside major metropolitan areas in Brazil.
Regional educational hubs are particularly important to study. Dehradun, the capital of Uttarakhand, has emerged as a prominent destination for hotel management education because of its proximity to tourism hotspots such as Mussoorie, Rishikesh and Nainital. The city hosts a mix of public and private institutions and provides students with opportunities for internships, industry exposure, and employment. These features make Dehradun a compelling case for examining how students weigh personal aspirations, family or social influences, and institutional factors when making educational decisions.
While existing research has examined hospitality education motivations in broader national or international contexts (e.g., Richardson, 2009; Nguyen, 2021; Bhandari, 2022), relatively little is known about how these dynamics play out in smaller, emerging hubs. Few studies have explicitly addressed whether institutional dynamics, such as placement opportunities, infrastructure, and reputation, outweigh traditional social pressures in shaping student choices. This study addresses this gap by analyzing survey data from 282 students across four colleges in Dehradun, India. Specifically, it compares the relative influence of individual, social, and institutional

factors on student motivation to pursue hotel management education, thereby extending global theory to a local, non-metropolitan Indian context.

This study makes three contributions by focusing on Dehradun. First, it foregrounds an emerging tourism hub as a distinct context in which institutional and career-oriented drivers dominate conventional social influences. Second, it integrates established frameworks of career decision-making (TPB, SCCT) into hospitality education research to explain variations in students' motivation. Third, it employs a confirmatory analytic design (EFA → CFA → SEM with N = 282) to recognize a consistent hierarchy—Institutional > Individual > Social–in estimating student motivation. These findings refine career choices in hospitality education and offer workable implications for policymakers and institutions seeking to align program design with student expectations in developing tourism regions.

(Appendix A: List of Abbreviations)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Frameworks: TPB and SCCT

Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Bandura's Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) are frequently referred to in educational and career decision-making research as conceptual anchors for understanding why individuals choose specific fields of study (Ajzen, 1991; Bandura, 1986; Lent et al., 1994). The TPB proposes that students' intentions are mainly influenced by three dimensions: perceived behavioral control (belief in one's ability to succeed and access to institutional support and resources), subjective norms (the expectations of family, peers, or society), and attitudes towards the subject (e.g., enthusiasm for hospitality and perceived benefits). A large tourism body and hospitality research have confirmed that perceived control and attitudes often exert stronger effects on educational choices than social norms (Lam & Hsu, 2006).

SCCT builds on these insights by highlighting contextual affordances (opportunities or barriers provided by one's environment), the role of self-efficacy (confidence in one's ability), and outcome expectations (anticipated career rewards such as employability and global exposure). Students who believe they can do well in hospitality and think positively about professional outcomes are more likely to pursue these programmes (Lent et al., 1994). Recent research strengthens this link: Santos and Abad (2025), in a study of first-year hospitality management students, found that both perceived institutional support and personal interest strongly predicted enrolment decisions, validating TPB–SCCT integration. Together, these theories validate the grouping of student motivators into individual, social, and institutional domains for empirical analysis.

2.2. Individual Motivations (Intrinsic and Career Aspirations)

Career ambitions and personal interests have consistently emerged as key drivers of hospitality education. Students often describe intrinsic passion for food service, creativity, and guest interaction as decisive factors in choosing this career (Jenkins, 2001; Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000). Kusluvan and Kusluvan (2000), for example, found that the ability to satisfy personal career aspirations ranked highest among Turkish hospitality students, while Jenkins (2001) highlighted the appeal of creativity and "people work."

Recent studies have extended this understanding by emphasizing international exposure and service opportunities. Nguyen (2021) found that Vietnamese students were motivated by global career prospects and working abroad. Similarly, Liu-Lastres et al. (2023) confirmed that students' aspirations include cross-border experiences, reflecting the hospitality industry's globalization. De Carvalho and Raimundo (2025) offered a novel perspective by examining how the Japanese concept of Ikigai shapes hospitality career choices in Portugal. They argue that students are motivated not just by income or mobility but by a search for purpose and fulfilment in turbulent times. In India, Choudhary and Aggarwal (2020) found that despite the pandemic's disruptions, students continued to perceive hospitality as offering dynamic growth and international career opportunities. This suggests that intrinsic passion and aspirational goals remain central motivators in emerging economies like India, resonating with SCCT's focus on outcome expectations and personal agency.

2.3. Social Influences

In collectivist cultures, such as India, family and societal expectations have traditionally shaped educational and career choices. Guan et al. (2015) showed that parental traditionalism influences students' self-confidence and adaptability in career planning. Mishra (2019) emphasised that financial considerations and family businesses often influence students' hospitality programme choices. Jauhari (2013) noted that relatives' opinions and social prestige of hospitality careers were historically strong decision factors. However, evidence shows a generational shift in the attitudes. Altinay and Paraskevas (2008) found that younger students were more willing to prioritize personal goals over parental advice. Mishra (2019) documented weakening traditional expectations among urban Indian youth. Akosa (2025) proposed an integrative framework combining individual, organizational, and sociocultural factors, concluding that while social norms remain, they are secondary to institutional quality and individual agency. This aligns with the current study's findings in Dehradun, where institutional and aspirational drivers dominate family and societal prestige.

2.4. Institutional and Contextual Factors

Institutional attributes: programme reputation, infrastructure quality, curriculum relevance, and placement recordsconsistently emerge as decisive motivators in hospitality education. Richardson (2009) demonstrated that students worldwide pursue hospitality degrees largely for anticipated employability and career advancement.

Jenkins (2001) highlights how visible investments in training facilities enhance institutional appeal. In India, Jauhari (2013) stressed that institutional initiatives, such as industry partnerships and structured internships, are critical for attracting students to the field.

Dehradun represents an important case: as a regional hub, it combines access to popular tourist destinations (Mussoorie, Rishikesh, and Nainital) with a mix of public and private institutions. Bhandari (2022) described how Dehradun's institutional landscape has expanded in response to Uttarakhand's booming tourism economy, while Sharma and Joshi (2023) reported that students increasingly link their education to regional employment opportunities. Reinforcing this, Alharethi et al. (2025) found that internship experience significantly enhances students' role clarity and work readiness, underscoring how applied institutional attributes shape student's motivation. These findings align with the SCCT's emphasis on contextual affordances and highlight why institutional features emerged as the strongest predictors in this study's results.

2.5. Summary and Research Gap

Taken together, the literature confirms that career ambitions and intrinsic interests (Nguyen, 2021; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; de Carvalho & Raimundo, 2025), alongside institutional quality (Richardson, 2009; Jauhari, 2013; Alharethi et al., 2025), are the strongest motivators for students to enter hospitality education programs. Social influences, while still relevant (Guan et al., 2015; Mishra, 2019), appear to be declining in strength compared to earlier studies, particularly among younger cohorts in emerging economies.

However, most research has focused on Western contexts and national-level samples. Few studies have explicitly addressed regional hubs such as Dehradun, where tourism-driven growth and institutional expansion create unique motivational landscapes. By applying the TPB and SCCT to survey data from 282 students, this study addresses this gap and contributes to updated, context-specific insights. It also advances theory by documenting the reduced weight of social norms and the rising salience of institutional and career-oriented motivations in Indian hospitality education—an important generational and cultural transition with implications for both scholarship and practice.

2.6. Research Objectives

To examine the influence of individual factors (personal interest, career aspirations, etc.) on students' decision to pursue hotel management education.

To evaluate the role of social factors (family encouragement, financial considerations, and societal perceptions) in shaping students' motivation.

To assess how institutional factors (infrastructure, placements, reputation, ease of admission) affect academic choices.

To compare the relative importance of these three groups of factors in predicting overall motivation.

2.7. Hypotheses

- **H1:** Institutional factors positively predict students' motivation to pursue hotel management education.
- **H2:** Individual factors positively predict students' motivation.
- **H3:** Social factors positively predict students' motivation (expected to be weaker than H1 and H2).

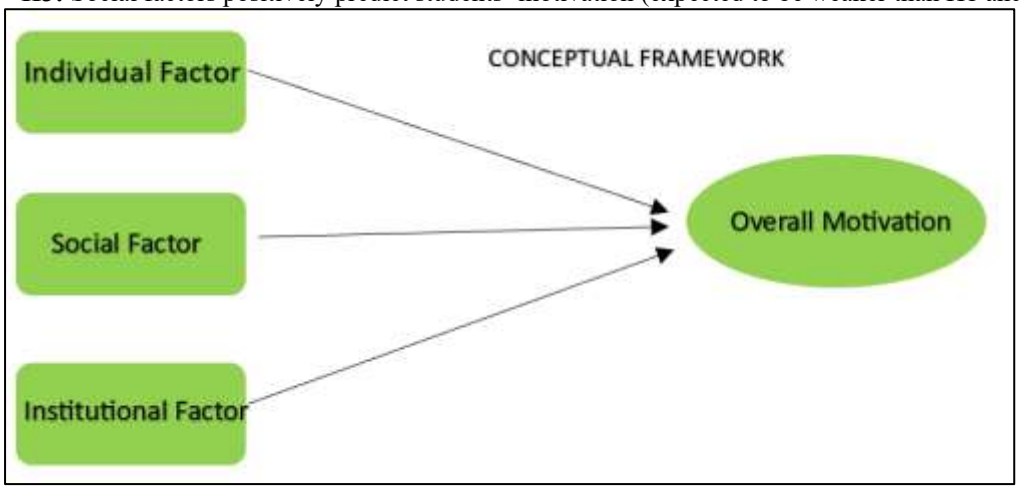

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework – illustrating how Individual, Social, and Institutional factors influence Overall Motivation to pursue hotel management.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design and Conceptual Framework

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional design to examine the determinants of students' motivation to pursue hotel management education in Dehradun, India. The conceptual model was informed by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 1994; Bandura, 1986). Together, these frameworks explain how attitudes, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and subjective norms influence educational and career choices.

Motivational determinants were grouped into three latent domains.

- Individual factors included personal interest, aspirations, preference for practical learning, and the desire to work abroad.

• Social factors included family encouragement, societal perceptions, financial considerations, and proximity to home.
• Institutional factors include reputation, placement opportunities, infrastructure, and ease of admission.

Based on the prior literature, the following hypotheses were tested:

• **H1:** Institutional factors positively predict overall motivation.
• **H2:** Individual factors positively predict overall motivation.
• **H3:** Social factors positively predict overall motivation (expected to be weaker).

3.2. Population, Sampling, and Statistical Power

The target population comprised undergraduate hotel management students enrolled in four major institutes in Dehradun, India. A stratified random sampling approach ensured representation across gender, socioeconomic background, and year of study. Within each stratum, participants were selected proportionally to the institutional enrolments.

A total of 282 valid responses were obtained, representing a 94% usable response rate. The sample included 87% male and 13% female respondents, most of whom were aged 18–21 years. The majority were residents of Uttarakhand, with some from the neighboring states.

Power analysis confirmed adequacy: with N = 282, the sample exceeded the minimum recommended threshold for SEM (10–15 cases per parameter; Hair et al., 2019) and provided a power of >.95 to detect small-to-medium effect sizes (α = .05).

3.3. Measures

A structured questionnaire was adapted from validated hospitality education scales (Jauhari, 2013; Kusluvan, 2000; Richardson, 2009). All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The construct composition and internal reliability are shown in Table 1.

Table1Constructs, Number of Items, Example Items, and Reliability Coefficients (N = 282)

Construct	No. of Items	Example Items	Cronbach's α
Individual factors	6	"I am passionate about hospitality as a career."	.81
Social factors	5	"My family supports my decision to study hotel management."	.78
Institutional factors	5	"My institute offers strong placement opportunities."	.84
Overall motivation	3	"I am motivated to pursue a hospitality career."	.85

Reliability and validity were verified using Cronbach's α, composite reliability (CR > .70), average variance extracted (AVE > .50), and discriminant validity via Fornell–Larcker and HTMT (< .85) criteria (see Appendix B for more details).

3.4. Data Collection and Ethical Compliance

Data were collected between January and March 2025, during class sessions. Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and non-incentivized. Institutional heads granted permission, and informed consent was obtained from all the participants. Although formal IRB approval was not mandatory, this study adhered to the UGC (2019) and NEP (2020) ethical guidelines for educational research.

3.5. Data Screening and Quality Assurance

Rigorous data screening preceded the analysis.

• Missing data: <5%, handled via expectation-maximization; SEM applied full-information maximum likelihood (FIML).
• Outliers: Checked using z-scores and Mahalanobis distance; none were removed as they did not affect the model fit.
• Normality: Skewness and kurtosis within ±2; robust estimators were applied for minor deviations.
• Common method bias was assessed using Harman's single-factor test (variance <50%), CFA single-factor test (poor fit), and a marker-variable approach, all confirming minimal bias.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Data were analyzed using SPSS v26 and AMOS v24, following a two-stage SEM procedure (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). (1) Measurement model validation and (2) structural model testing of the hypotheses.

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the 282 respondents. Institutional factors had the highest mean (M = 3.46, SD = 0.78), followed by individual factors (M = 3.35, SD = 0.61) and social factors (M = 3.03, SD = 0.58). Placement opportunities (M = 3.87, SD = 0.98) and prospects of working abroad (M = 3.81, SD = 1.08) emerged as the most influential motivators. Conversely, familiarity with hospitality (M = 2.20, SD = 0.75) and perceptions of the tourism industry (M = 2.32, SD = 0.81) recorded the lowest means.

Table2 Descriptive Statistics of Major Factors (N = 282)

Factors / Items	M	SD	Variance
Personal interest	3.74	1.12	1.26
Career aspirations	3.64	0.88	0.77
Passion for customer service	3.37	0.85	0.73
Familiarity with hospitality	2.20	0.75	0.56
Work outside India	3.81	1.08	1.18
Less study, more practical	3.35	1.02	1.06
Family encouragement	3.21	1.15	1.33
Societal perceptions	3.03	0.85	0.73
Financial considerations	3.28	1.02	1.05
Proximity to home	3.26	0.74	0.54
Perception of tourism industry	2.32	0.81	0.65
Programme offerings	3.38	1.09	1.20
Campus infrastructure	3.53	1.06	1.13
Placement opportunities	3.87	0.98	0.96
Ease of admission	3.01	1.00	1.01
Reputation of institution	3.69	0.91	0.83
Composite: Individual factors	3.35	0.61	0.38
Composite: Social factors	3.03	0.58	0.34
Composite: Institutional factors	3.46	0.78	0.61

4.2. Measurement Model

The EFA confirmed a three-factor solution, with all loadings above .60. The CFA exhibited good fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 2.14$, CFI = .93, TLI = .91, RMSEA = .056, and SRMR < .08).

Table3 Reliability and Convergent Validity of Constructs

Construct	Items	Loadings (Range)	α	CR	AVE
Individual factors	**6**	**.64–.82**	**.81**	**.84**	**.57**
Social factors	**5**	**.61–.79**	**.78**	**.82**	**.53**
Institutional factors	**5**	**.66–.85**	**.84**	**.86**	**.59**
Motivation (DV)	**3**	**.71–.88**	**.85**	**.87**	**.62**

Table4 Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

Construct	Individual	Social	Institutional	Motivation
Individual	**0.75**			
Social	**0.41**	**0.73**		
Institutional	**0.52**	**0.43**	**0.77**	
Motivation	**0.58**	**0.36**	**0.62**	**0.79**

Note. The square root of the AVE is on the diagonal line. HTMT ratios (< .85) confirmed discriminant validity.

4.3. Structural Model

Figure 2 illustrates the structural model with the standardized path coefficients.
The results demonstrated a satisfactory fit and significant relationships, as summarized in Table 5.

Table 5 Hypothesis Testing (Structural Path Coefficients)

Path	β	SE	t	p	95% CI	Result
H1: Institutional → Motivation	**.42**	**.05**	**8.21**	**< .001**	**[.33, .52]**	**Supported**
H2: Individual → Motivation	**.37**	**.05**	**7.02**	**< .001**	**[.27, .46]**	**Supported**
H3: Social → Motivation	**.12**	**.04**	**2.45**	**.015**	**[.03, .21]**	**Partially Supported**

The model explained $R^2 = .49$ of the variance in motivation.
Effect sizes (f^2) were highest for institutional factors (.19), followed by individual (.14) and social (.03) factors, with predictive relevance $Q^2 = .32$.

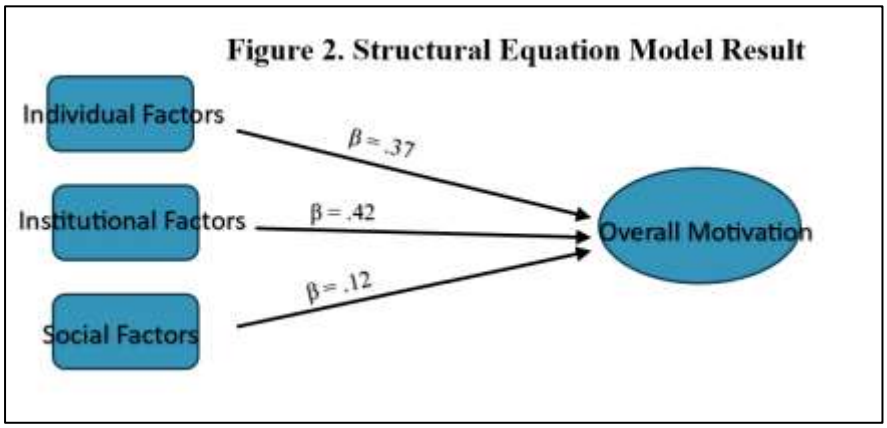

Figure 2 shows the structural model results with the standardized path coefficients.

4.4. Mediation and Moderation Analysis

Bootstrapped mediation analysis (5,000 resamples) revealed that placement opportunities partially mediated the link between institutional factors and motivation (indirect $\beta = .18$, $p < .01$).

Moderation analysis using mean-centered interaction terms indicated that students with stronger international career aspirations exhibited a stronger Institutional → Motivation relationship (interaction $\beta = .11$, $p < .05$).

4.5 Model Robustness and Invariance Testing

Multi-group CFA confirmed configural, metric, and scalar invariance across gender and region (local vs. non-local), with $\Delta CFI \leq .01$.

Including control variables (gender, age, proximity to home) did not significantly alter path estimates.

5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Overview of Findings

This study set out to examine the factors influencing students in Dehradun to pursue hotel management education, using a structured dataset (N = 282) and testing hypotheses derived from established frameworks such as the Theory of Planned **Behavior** (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Bandura, 1986). Descriptive results revealed that students rated institutional factors the highest (M = 3.46), followed by individual factors (M = 3.35) and social factors (M = 3.03). Regression and structural **modelling** confirmed that institutional factors were the strongest predictors of students' motivation ($\beta = .42$, $p < .001$), with individual factors also having a strong positive effect ($\beta = .37$, $p < .001$). Social factors were weaker but still significant ($\beta = .12$, $p < .05$).

These findings suggest that institutional excellence and personal aspirations drive student choices, while traditional social pressures, such as family encouragement or societal perceptions, play a secondary role in today's hospitality education environment.

The results support the empirically hypothesized relationships, consistent with the TPB and SCCT frameworks.

5.2. Individual Factors and Career Aspirations

Students confirmed high levels of personal interest (M = 3.74), career aspirations (M = 3.65), and desire to work outside India (M = 3.80). These findings align closely with the SCCT's emphasis on self-efficacy and outcome expectations. In line with Bandura (1986), students who perceive clear professional opportunities and global mobility are more likely to pursue hospitality education.

Notably, the relatively moderate scores for familiarity with hospitality (M = 2.20) suggest that many students enter **programs** without strong prior industry exposure. Instead, their decision is motivated by perceived opportunities rather than deep prior knowledge, indicating a "future-oriented" choice rather than an "experience-driven" choice.

5.3. Social Factors and Changing Career Norms

Contrary to earlier findings in collectivist societies, where family encouragement and societal perceptions strongly dictate career paths (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008), the present results show weaker effects. Family encouragement (M = 3.21) and societal perceptions (M = 3.03) had limited predictive value.

This indicates a shift from collectivist to individualistic motivations in developing regions such as Dehradun, where students increasingly value personal aspirations and job market outcomes over traditional family influence. This echoes the TPB's argument that while subjective norms are relevant, their influence is contingent on the salience of personal attitudes and perceived **behavioural** control.

5.4. Institutional Factors as the Dominant Influence

Institutional dimensions were rated the highest among the three. Placement opportunities (M = 3.87) and institutional reputation (M = 3.69) were particularly influential factors. Students see these as guarantees of employability, reinforcing TPB's central idea that **behavioral i**ntentions are shaped by the anticipated outcomes of actions.

Infrastructure (M = 3.52) and **program** offerings (M = 3.38) also contributed positively, highlighting the importance of visible institutional investments. These findings confirm H1, which predicted that institutional factors would most strongly predict motivation, and align with the global hospitality education research (Brownell & Chung, 2001; Li & Leung, 2020).

Comparative Strength of Factors

The model revealed the following results:
Institutional factors were the most influential (β = .42).
Individual factors followed closely (β = .37).
Social factors had the weakest but significant effect (β = .12).
This suggests that students in Dehradun are primarily opportunity-driven (seeking strong institutions with clear career pathways), followed by self-driven (personal passion and aspirations), with social approval being a relatively minor concern.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the theoretical advancement of motivation and career choice research in hospitality education by integrating the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 1994). The findings extend and refine these frameworks in the context of emerging economies.

Extension of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The strong influence of institutional and individual factors reinforces the TPB's central premise that attitudes and perceived behavioral control are more predictive of behavioral intentions than subjective norms. In this study, institutional quality indicators (e.g., placements, infrastructure, reputation) and individual aspirations (interest, global career intent) dominated motivational outcomes, whereas social pressures (e.g., family or societal approval) were comparatively weaker. This finding empirically supports TPB's hierarchical structure of predictors of the TPB in non-Western educational settings, confirming that intention formation in hospitality education is increasingly autonomy-driven.

Validation of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

The robust effect of personal aspirations and outcome expectations corroborates Bandura's (1986) emphasis on self-efficacy and perceived outcome attainability. Students' motivation to pursue hotel management was shaped less by past exposure and more by future-oriented self-beliefs, a pattern that aligns with SCCT's mechanism of goal-directed agency. This indicates that in hospitality education, self-efficacy and anticipated career rewards exert a stronger influence than do normative pressures.

Contextual Shift in Career-Choice Paradigms

These findings signal a contextual transition in Indian hospitality education. In emerging hubs such as Dehradun, the traditional family centric and collectivist decision-making model is gradually being replaced by opportunity-based and self-directed motivation. This shift suggests a generational reorientation towards employability, international mobility, and institutional credibility, aligning India's hospitality education landscape more closely with globalized behavioral patterns. Thus, this study contributes to the cross-cultural validation of the TPB and SCCT in the South Asian context.

6.2 Practical Implications and Recommendations

The results of this study have wide-ranging practical implications for hospitality institutions, policymakers, families, students, educators and industry stakeholders. By highlighting the pre-eminence of institutional and individual factors, alongside the declining weight of social influence, this study offers actionable insights for improving the quality, appeal, and strategic positioning of hotel management education in emerging tourism hubs, such as Dehradun.

Implications for Hospitality Institutions

Institutions must recognize that **placement opportunities, institutional reputation, and learning infrastructure** are the strongest determinants of student motivation and enrolment decisions.

- **Strengthening Industry Placements:** Developing dedicated placement cells and cultivating formal partnerships with global hotel chains. Transparent reporting of placement statistics and alumni success stories enhances institutional credibility and student's trust.
- **Reputation and Branding:** Institutions should strategically highlight their industry collaborations, international linkages, accreditations, and faculty credentials. Case-based alumni profiles can be powerful branding narratives.
- **Infrastructure and Experiential Learning:** Investments in modern training kitchens, mock front offices, and digital hospitality laboratories are essential to signal institutional quality. Virtual campus tours can expand recruitment beyond the regional boundaries.
- **Personalized Learning Pathways:** Offering specialized tracks (e.g., culinary arts, event management, tourism entrepreneurship) enhances perceived value and accommodates diverse career interests.

Implications for Policymakers and Regulators

Dehradun's growing reputation as an educational and tourism hub provides policymakers with a unique opportunity to position it as a **national center of hospitality education**.

- **Strategic Positioning:** Government and educational bodies should leverage Dehradun's geographic and tourism advantages to brand it as India's "Hospitality Education Capital."

• **Internationalization and Partnerships:** Encourage cross-border academic collaborations, faculty exchange programmes and dual-degree arrangements to align local curricula with global standards.
• **Financial Accessibility:** Scholarships, targeted subsidies, and transparent communication about career returns (ROI) can reduce financial barriers for students from semi-urban and rural regions.
• **Accreditation and Quality Assurance:** Establishing national frameworks for programme accreditation will ensure standardization and enhance India's global competitiveness in hospitality education.

Implications for Families and Guardians

While social influence on student motivation has weakened, **family support remains pivotal in the decision-making stage**.

• **Align Aspirations and Opportunities:** Parents should encourage career paths that match students' passions (e.g., culinary arts, international placements) rather than imposing conventional career norms.
• **Awareness Building:** Institutions can organize parental orientation sessions to highlight hospitality's dynamic career potential, thereby reshaping perceptions of it as a low-status field.

Implications for Students

Students can leverage the findings of this study to make more **informed, self-determined career decisions**.

• **Institutional Evaluation:** Prospective students should assess institutions based on placement outcomes, infrastructure quality, and international exposure opportunities.
• **Career Self-Awareness:** Mapping personal interests and strengths against institutional specializations can enhance satisfaction and academic engagement.
• **Global Preparedness:** Given their strong aspirations for international careers, students should prioritize institutions with active global networks, internships, and alumni abroad.

Implications for Career Counsellors and Educators

Career counsellors and educators are crucial in **bridging the gap between student aspirations and institutional realities**.

• **Evidence-Based Counselling:** Career guidance should emphasize institutional quality, placement outcomes, and alignment with students' individual goals rather than being driven by prestige or societal expectations.
• **Curriculum Innovation:** Embedding global hospitality case studies, problem-based learning, and digital skill modules can better align curricula with student motivation profiles.
• **Awareness Campaigns:** Conducting school-level outreach programs can increase pre-entry awareness of the breadth of hospitality careers, addressing the currently low familiarity (M = 2.20) observed in this study.

Implications for Industry and HR Managers

Hospitality industry stakeholders can utilize these findings to improve **talent development and retention**.

• **Industry–Academia Linkages:** HR managers should collaborate with academic institutions to co-design curricula that reflect contemporary workplace skills, such as digital hospitality tools, service innovation, and cross-cultural communication.
• **Internship and Mentorship Programs:** Structured internships and mentorship schemes can strengthen practical exposure, aligning with students' preference for experiential learning (M = 3.35).
• **Talent Retention Strategies:** Understanding motivational drivers—particularly placements, passion, and global exposure—can help design onboarding and professional development programs that enhance employee commitment and reduce attrition.

Societal and Regional Implications

At the macro level, this study offers implications for **regional development and workforce transformation**.

• **Enhancing Graduate Employability:** Aligning educational offerings with student motivations and industry needs will produce more competent and adaptable graduates.
• **Regional Economic Growth:** Strengthening Dehradun's hospitality education ecosystem reinforces its role as a **skills and innovation hub**, contributing to Uttarakhand's tourism-driven development.
• **Empowered Career Decision-Making:** As students make more autonomous, passion-driven career choices, the hospitality workforce will become increasingly professionalized, resilient, and globally competitive.

6.3 Synthesis of Implications

In summary, the findings highlight a paradigm shift in hospitality education motivationfrom **socially influenced choices** to **institutionally and individually driven decisions**. For theory, this reaffirms the predictive strength of attitudes and perceived behavioral control (TPB) and the centrality of self-efficacy and outcome expectations (SCCT). For practice, this underscores the need for institutions to invest in placement credibility, learning infrastructure, and personalized pathways that mirror evolving student motivations. Policymakers and industry stakeholders should focus on strategic collaboration, financial inclusivity, and outcome transparency to attract, nurture, and retain globally competent hospitality talent.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the factors influencing students' motivation to pursue hotel management education in Dehradun, India, which is an emerging tourism hub. Using survey data from 282 students and a confirmatory SEM approach, the analysis demonstrated a clear hierarchy of influences: institutional factors exerted the strongest

effect, followed by individual aspirations, and social factors, though significant, played a considerably weaker role.

The findings extend the TPB by confirming that attitudes and perceived **behavioural c**ontrol (institutional reputation, placements, and resource access) are stronger predictors of intentions than subjective norms. They also reinforce SCCT's emphasis on self-efficacy and outcome expectations by showing that students' personal interests and international career aspirations drive their choices.

A key contribution of this study is the evidence of a decline in the influence of social norms on career decisions in hospitality education. Earlier Indian studies **emphasized** family encouragement and societal prestige as major drivers; however, our results reveal that these factors now play only a supportive role. This shift reflects a generational transition in which Indian students are increasingly aligning with **globalized** and individualistic motivations, **prioritizing** employability outcomes, international exposure, and institutional quality over social approval of their choices.

Practically, the results suggest that institutions and **policymakers** should highlight placements, infrastructure, and career pipelines when attracting students, while **recognizing** that social encouragement remains relevant but no longer decisive. For families and **counsellors**, the findings underscore the need to support students' career-oriented aspirations rather than imposing traditional, prestige-based expectations on them.

Future research should explore whether this reduced weight of social influence is consistent across other regional hubs and metropolitan contexts and whether it deepens over time as hospitality education continues to **globalize.**

Limitations and Future Research

Although comprehensive, this study has some limitations. Its focus on Dehradun limits the generalizability of the results to other regions with different **socioeconomic** or cultural contexts. Furthermore, the study employed a cross-sectional design; motivations may evolve over time as students gain exposure to internships and the industry. Finally, while quantitative measures provide valuable insights, incorporating qualitative perspectives (e.g., interviews with students, parents, and recruiters) could add depth to the understanding of career motivation.

Therefore, future research should focus on the following:

1. Conduct comparative studies across multiple cities or countries to test whether these motivational patterns hold in diverse contexts.
2. Longitudinal studies should be conducted to track how motivations translate into actual career outcomes post-graduation.
3. Exploring the influence of international accreditation and industry partnerships on student motivation and employability perceptions.
4. Investigate gender and **socioeconomic** differences in motivational structures to design more inclusive policies and curricula.

Final Synthesis

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the decision to pursue hotel management education in Dehradun is primarily shaped by institutional excellence and personal aspirations, with social factors playing a secondary role. By aligning with the TPB and SCCT, this study bridges global theoretical frameworks with regional realities, offering academic contributions and practical strategies.

Ultimately, this study affirms that the future of hospitality education lies in creating institutions that deliver employability, global relevance, and **personalized** learning pathways. For students, this means opportunities aligned with aspirations; for institutions, it means credibility and branding; and for society, it signals the growth of a professional and globally competitive hospitality workforce.

REFERENCES

Journal articles

1 Ajzen, I. (1991) 'Theory of planned behaviour', Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes, 50(2), pp. 179–211. https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T

2 Al Busaidi, M., Bose, S. and Claereboudt, M. (2019) 'Sea turtles tourism in Oman: Current status and future prospects', Tourism and Hospitality Research, 19(3), pp. 321–336. https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358417751026

3 Baum, T. (2019) 'Hospitality employment 2033: A backcasting perspective', International Journal of Hospitality Management, 76, pp. 45–52. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.06.027

4 Baum, T., Mooney, S.K.K., Robinson, R.N.S. and Solnet, D. (2020) 'COVID-19's impact on the hospitality workforce – New crisis or amplification of the norm?', International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 32(9), pp. 2813–2829. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-04-2020-0314

5 Bhandari, R. (2022) 'Regional hubs and the growth of hospitality education in North India: A case of Dehradun', Tourism and Hospitality Management, 28(2), pp. 325–340. https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.28.2.6

6 Brownell, J. and Chung, B.G. (2001) 'The management development of college students: A field experiment', International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 13(1), pp. 16–23. https://doi.org/10.1108/09596110110365623

7 Choudhary, S. and Aggarwal, P. (2020) 'Hospitality education in India: Emerging trends and challenges', Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism, 21(5), pp. 555–572. https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2020.1769529

8 de Carvalho, A.F. and Raimundo, R. (2025) 'Career decision-making in hospitality: Insights from emerging economies', Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2025.xxxxxx
9 Guan, Y., Capezio, A., Restubog, S.L.D., Read, S. and Lajom, J.A.L. (2015) 'The role of traditionality in the relationships among parental support, career decision-making self-efficacy, and career adaptability', Journal of Vocational Behavior, 86, pp. 145–153. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2014.10.002
10 Jauhari, V. (2013) 'Employability in the hospitality sector in India: The need for institutional initiatives', Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes, 5(3), pp. 217–225. https://doi.org/10.1108/WHATT-03-2013-0014
11 Jenkins, A.K. (2001) 'Making a career of it? Hospitality students' future perspectives: An Anglo-Dutch study', International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 13(1), pp. 13–20. https://doi.org/10.1108/09596110110365614
12 Jiang, L. and Alexakis, G. (2017) 'Comparing students' and managers' perceptions of essential entry-level management competencies in the hospitality industry: An empirical study', Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education, 29(3), pp. 156–168. https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2017.1336097
13 Kim, K., Guo, Y., Wang, H. and Agrusa, J. (2007) 'The study motivations and preferences of student travelers in the United States', Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 21(2–3), pp. 107–117.

https://doi.org/10.1300/J073v21n02_09
14 Kusluvan, S. and Kusluvan, Z. (2000) 'Perceptions and attitudes of undergraduate tourism students towards working in the tourism industry in Turkey', Tourism Management, 21(3), pp. 251–269.
15 https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(99)00057-6
16 Lam, T. and Hsu, C.H.C. (2006) 'Predicting behavioral intention of choosing a travel destination', Tourism Management, 27(4), pp. 589–599. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2005.02.003
17 Lent, R.W., Brown, S.D. and Hackett, G. (1994) 'Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance', Journal of Vocational Behavior, 45(1), pp. 79–122. https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1994.1027
18 Li, L. and Leung, R. (2020) 'Exploring student motivation in hospitality education: A case from China', Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 27, 100271. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2020.100271
19 Liu-Lastres, B., Xu, Y. and Hu, X. (2023) 'Hospitality and tourism education in a post-pandemic era: Students' career intentions and perceptions', Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 33, 100413. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2023.100413
20 Mishra, P. (2019) 'Socio-cultural determinants of career choices: An Indian hospitality perspective', Journal of Tourism Futures, 5(3), pp. 281–295. https://doi.org/10.1108/JTF-07-2018-0038
21 Nguyen, T.T. (2021) 'Factors influencing students' choice of hospitality education in Vietnam', Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education, 33(2), pp. 89–98. https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2021.1881234
22 Rahman, M.M. and Hossain, M.I. (2020) 'The role of internships in developing career readiness among hospitality students: Evidence from South Asia', Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education, 32(4), pp. 247–258. https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2019.1654886
23 Richardson, S. (2009) 'Student motivations for choosing hospitality management programs', International Journal of Hospitality Management, 28(2), pp. 245–253. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2008.07.003
24 Richardson, S. (2010) 'Tourism and hospitality students' perceptions of a career in the industry: A comparison of domestic (Australian) and international students', Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education, 22(1), pp. 39–49. https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2010.10696983
25 Santos, J. and Abad, M. (2025) 'Motivational determinants of hospitality program enrollment: Evidence from first-year students', Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Management, 55, 101088.
26 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2025.101088
27 Sharma, D. and Joshi, P. (2023) 'Tourism in Uttarakhand: Challenges, prospects and remedies', International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Systems, 16(1), pp. 50–58.
28 Uchiyama, H. and Koide, M. (2017) 'Insight into global hospitality management education', International Journal of Hospitality Management, 64, pp. 13–20. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2017.02.004
29 Yu, X. and Lyu, S. (2024) 'Evolving motivations of hospitality students: A post-pandemic perspective', International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 36(1), pp. 201–220. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-07-2023-0748
30 **Books and book chapters** Bandura, A. (1986) Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory. Prentice-Hall.
31 Hair, J.F., Black, W.C., Babin, B.J. and Anderson, R.E. (2019) Multivariate data analysis (8th edn). Cengage Learning.
32 Hall, C.M. and Jenkins, J. (2004) 'Tourism and public policy', in Lew, A., Hall, C.M. and Williams, A. (eds.) A companion to tourism. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, pp. 425–540.
33 **Internet sources** World Tourism Organization (2017) Tourism highlights: 2017 edition. Available at: http://publications.unwto.org/publication/unwto-tourismhighlights-2017-edition-0 [Accessed 4 March 2017].

34 World Tourism Organization (2021) International tourism highlights: 2020 edition. UNWTO. https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284422456

Appendix A

List of Abbreviations

TPB – Theory of Planned Behavior
SCCT – Social Cognitive Career Theory
SEM – Structural Equation Modeling
EFA – Exploratory Factor Analysis
CFA – Confirmatory Factor Analysis
AMOS – Analysis of Moment Structures (statistical software for SEM)
SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
AVE – Average Variance Extracted
CR – Composite Reliability
HTMT – Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio of Correlations
IRB – Institutional Review Board
FIML – Full Information Maximum Likelihood
KMO – Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (Measure of Sampling Adequacy)
SD – Standard Deviation
CI – Confidence Interval
DV – Dependent Variable
UNWTO – United Nations World Tourism Organization

Appendix B

Survey Items and Constructs

All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Individual Factors (α = .81; CR = .84; AVE = .57)

1. I have a personal interest in the hospitality industry.
2. A career in hospitality aligns with my aspirations.
3. I am passionate about hospitality as a career.
4. I am familiar with hospitality as a field of study and career.
5. I would like to work in hospitality outside India.
6. I prefer a course with more practical exposure than theoretical study.

Social Factors (α = .78; CR = .82; AVE = .53)

1. My family encouraged me to pursue hotel management.
2. Societal perceptions of hospitality as a career influenced my choice.
3. Financial considerations influenced my decision.
4. I chose hospitality because the program was close to home.
5. I perceive tourism and hospitality as a strong industry in India.

Institutional Factors (α = .84; CR = .86; AVE = .59)

1. The variety of program offerings influenced my choice.
2. The quality of campus infrastructure attracted me to this course.
3. The institution's placement opportunities influenced my decision.
4. The ease of admission affected my choice.
5. The institution's reputation strongly influenced my enrollment decision.

Motivation (Dependent Variable) (α = .85; CR = .87; AVE = .62)

1. I am motivated to study hotel management as a step toward my career goals.
2. I intend to complete this program successfully.
3. I see this course as essential for achieving my long-term professional objectives.

Appendix C

Data Screening and Quality Diagnostics

Prior to hypothesis testing, several diagnostic checks were conducted to ensure data quality and robustness.

1. Missing Data

- Overall missing values were < 5%.
- Expectation–Maximization (EM) imputation was applied to item-level data.
- For SEM, Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) estimation was used to handle any remaining missingness.

2. Outliers

- Univariate outliers: Examined using standardized z-scores; all values fell within ±3.29.
- Multivariate outliers: Mahalanobis distance ($p < .001$ criterion) was computed; no cases exceeded the critical threshold.
- No data points were removed.

3. Normality

- Skewness ranged from –0.82 to +1.12 and kurtosis from –0.91 to +1.21 across all items.
- These values fell within the recommended ±2 thresholds (Kline, 2016).

- Non-normality concerns were further addressed by applying robust estimators during SEM analysis.

4. Common Method Bias

- Harman's single-factor test: The first factor accounted for 28.7% of variance, below the 50% threshold.
- Single-factor CFA: A one-factor model showed poor fit (χ^2/df = 8.41; CFI = .54; RMSEA = .14), confirming that common method variance was not a serious concern.
- Marker variable test: An unrelated marker item showed negligible correlation (< .10) with main constructs, further supporting low risk.

5. Sampling Adequacy

- Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) = .87, indicating "meritorious" sampling adequacy.
- Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (χ^2 = 1,045.36, df = 190, p < .001), supporting the factorability of the data.