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► **To cite this version:**

Ovidiu Niculae Bordean, Adrian Sonea. Student satisfaction and perceived skills: any link to employability?. Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues, 2018, 6 (1), pp.356-370. <10.9770/jesi.2018.6.1(22)>. <hal-02166785>

HAL Id: hal-02166785

<https://hal.science/hal-02166785v1>

Submitted on 27 Jun 2019

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STUDENT SATISFACTION AND PERCEIVED SKILLS: ANY LINK TO EMPLOYABILITY?*

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Received 17 May 2018; accepted 20 July 2018; published 30 September 2018

Abstract. The present study aims to determine the perceived satisfaction of students enrolled in a tourism undergraduate program and to assess the impact perceived skills have on their intentions regarding future careers. This is a quantitative study based on the analysis of primary data gathered through a questionnaire. A sample of 114 students in their second year of study from the biggest university in Romania completed the questionnaire. The data collected were analysed using descriptive analysis, ANOVA and regression analysis. An ANOVA test and post hoc Tukey test were therefore used to determine differences in the means and variance of satisfaction, with the grade levels and course attendance set as the independent variables. A regression analysis was then conducted to identify the connections between perceived skills and the future career path of tourism students. The results show that students do not perceive satisfaction differently according to their grade levels, although there may be a relationship between levels of satisfaction and class attendance. Optimism was found to predict whether students would be interested in starting a business, while attitudes towards leadership and networking were found to predict whether students wished to pursue a management career.

* This work was supported by the strategic grant "Integrated system for improving the doctoral and postdoctoral research quality in Romania and for promoting the role of science in society", POSDRU/159/1.5/S/133652, co-funded by the European Social Fund through the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013.



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

Keywords: higher education programs, student satisfaction, knowledge and skills, employability.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Bordean, O. N.; Sonea, A. 2018. Student satisfaction and perceived skills: any link to employability? *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues* 6(1): 356-370. [http://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2018.6.1\(22\)](http://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2018.6.1(22))

JEL Classifications: I23, I25, M13, M53

1. Introduction

Regardless of the specific sector of the tourism industry in which they work, managers should pay careful attention to the selection and retention of good personnel. Previous studies have shown that, in different sectors of the tourism industry, the successful recruitment and retention of high quality human resources is a critical driver for the sustainability of the business (Lockyer and Scholarios, 2004; Martin, Mactaggart, and Bowden, 2006). Consequently, many university tourism programs have developed their own career and placement services to assist students when searching for jobs. Moreover, there are several tourism companies that invest in university graduate recruitment, training and development (Doherty, Guerrier, Jameson, Lashley, and Lockwood, 2001). Chi and Gursoy (2009) argue that, for tourism students who want to work within the tourism industry, it is essential to adopt pro-active approach, such as becoming involved in diverse internship projects, taking more course work, developing network skills, and participating in extracurricular activities such as tourism student clubs/societies, fund-raising initiatives, and involvement with the local community.

Given these requirements, it is unsurprising that university tourism curricula are not sufficiently able to ensure the successful retention of students within this industry. Furthermore, an investigation into students' satisfaction towards courses, laboratories and internship projects may help to explain their personal aptitude for pursuing a career within the tourism industry.

However, research studies that explore students' satisfaction with academic and university life are scarce (Borden and Owens, 2001). A clear understanding of students' satisfaction is a good indicator of quality assurance in the higher education system. This study will contribute a new perspective to the complex relationship between satisfaction and students' knowledge and skills, and the relationship between these and students' subsequent integration into the tourism industry.

The present study therefore aims to identify the factors that increase students' level of satisfaction with academic and advisor experiences, campus facilities, courses and laboratories, and internship programs. At the same time, it will also identify whether there is any link between the perceived knowledge and skills of tourism graduate students and their future career paths. The following research questions therefore define the study:

- To what extent do tourism students feel satisfied with resources such as academic experience, campus facilities, internship opportunities, and academic advisors?
- Do satisfaction levels differ according to level of grades or class attendance?
- Does the students' perceived knowledge and skills predict the career path they will follow post-graduation?

2. Literature review

2.1 Student satisfaction

For many reasons (e.g. increased competition in the educational market, demographic changes, increased education costs), universities are increasingly focused on meeting or even exceeding the needs of their students (DeShields, Kara, and Kaynak, 2005). The stakeholder theory may therefore be useful in explaining the approach universities take when addressing students' satisfaction issues. Finney and Finney (2010) define this approach as the students-as-customer (SAC) model of higher education. According to this model, students are seen as important stakeholders of universities which has both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, universities will do their best to meet students' expectations as their staff will schedule classes at times that are convenient for students, schedule courses frequently to meet student demand, and offer a sufficient variety of course topics (Stafford, 1994). Moreover, it is likely there will be an increase in the number of prompt responses to students' questions and increased accessibility of staff. On the other hand, some critics argue this approach subverts academic rigor to meet students' desires, promotes grade inflation and reduces student responsibility (Franz, 1998; Hassel and Lourey, 2005).

However, quality and satisfaction are perceived as fundamentally different concepts (Gruber, Fuß, Voss, and Glaser-Zikuda, 2010), and several attempts to establish connections between the two are evident within the research literature. Thus far, there are divergent views regarding the sequential order of the two constructs. Some scholars (e.g., Cronin, Brady, and Hult, 2000; Farrell, Souchon, and Durden, 2001; Dalati and Al Hamwi, 2016) view perceived quality as an antecedent to satisfaction, whereas others (e.g., Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1998) consider customer satisfaction to be an antecedent to service quality. In the literature on higher education, Browne, Kaldenberg, Browne, and Brown (1998), and Guolla (1999) found that perceived quality of service among students is an antecedent to student satisfaction.

Student satisfaction is defined as "the favourability of a student's subjective evaluation of the various outcomes and experiences associated with education. Student satisfaction is being shaped continually by repeated experiences in campus life" (Elliott and Shin, 2002, p. 198).

Elliot and Shin (2002), citing the student satisfaction inventory developed by Noel-Levitz, identified the following dimensions of perceived importance and satisfaction: effectiveness of academic advice; campus climate; campus life; campus support services; concern for the individual; instructional effectiveness; effectiveness of recruitment and financial aid; effectiveness of registration; campus safety and security; service excellence; student centeredness.

Over the last few decades, many studies have attempted to establish why some students are more satisfied than others. Although there have been many attempts to identify the determinants of student satisfaction, Aldridge and Rowley (1998) divide them into two broad categories: (1) factors associated with teaching and learning, and (2) factors associated with the overall student experience. Initially, researchers were interested in the first category of factors (Browne *et al.*, 1998; Franklin and Knight, 1995); however, more recently there has been increasing interest in the totality of the student experience (Brown and Mazzarol, 2009; Delaney, 2005; Kuh and Hu, 2001). This change in paradigm is due to the fact that teaching and learning cannot be separated from all the other services and experiences the student encounters. Moreover, knowing and understanding all the elements that may have an influence on student satisfaction creates a valuable resource for future management interventions.

2.2 Knowledge, skills and career paths

From a historical point of view, it is possible to identify two distinct periods within the career management literature. Traditionally, companies provided tremendous support for personal career development plans as they provided graduates with steady employment. Thus, graduates were extremely motivated to pursue long-term career goals and achieve these companies that employed them (Noe, 1996). However, career development is now considered the responsibility of the individual, rather than the company (Kanter, 1989). In such circumstances, it is extremely important that students do their utmost to enhance their skills, work experience and their ability to handle projects if they are to remain employable (Hall and Mirvis, 1995). Consequently, there is now a shift from organizational career management to career self-management (Adamson, Doherty, and Viney, 1998). This has led to more individualism in careers and to the proliferation of a protean career that places responsibility on the individual. Another significant change in terms of career management is that of increased mobility and a shorter stay within a certain company (Baruch, 2004; McCabe, 2001).

For these reasons, scholars have debated the issue of career exploration in terms of whether this is best pursued through both self-exploration and environmental exploration (Flum and Blustein, 2000). In the former, the individual will explore his or her own values and experiences to enable them to identify an appropriate career. Conversely, environmental exploration involves collecting information on jobs, organizations and industries to provide the individual with enough information to make the best career decision (Zikic and Richardson, 2007).

This paper addresses the issue of career management skills in terms of those skills that are essential in finding proper employment and further educational opportunities whilst building a career (Bridgstock, 2009). Over the last few years, career paths have been a common research topic within career management in the tourism industry, along with career choice, career commitment and career success (Kong, Cheung, and Zhang, 2010). Special attention has been paid to the hotel sector as previous studies have shown managerial skills to be the most important element for a career in hotel management (Ladkin, 2002). Table 1 highlights the main factors that shape the career path, as identified in literature on the tourism industry. The research undertaken within this field has established an intrinsic connection between the level of skills and knowledge managers have and their career paths.

Several scholars have investigated tourism students' perceptions of their future career path in different contexts. For example, Kusluvan and Kusluvan (2000) investigated undergraduate tourism students' attitudes towards different aspects of working in the tourism industry. Their sample comprised 397 third and fourth year students from seven publicly owned tourism and hotel management schools in Turkey. The survey findings showed that there were negative attitudes towards several aspects of work conditions, such as pay/benefits, physical working conditions and promotion opportunities.

Table 1. Antecedents of career paths in tourism industry

Authors	Antecedents of career paths in tourism industry
Ladkin and Riley (1996)	Job mobility
Ladkin and Juwaheer (2000)	Skills needed
Harper <i>et al.</i> (2005)	Educational background
Ladkin (2002)	Length of time to become a general manager
Nebel <i>et al.</i> (1995)	The importance of specific jobs to career development
Ayres (2006)	Opportunities provided by the industry Education and training

Source: created by authors based on literature review

Lewis and Airey (2001) conducted research with 120 secondary school students to explore their attitudes towards careers in tourism. The results showed that work values and sources of information influence attitudes towards tourism employment, as students who have an interest in self-development and work with friendly people admit that tourism can provide good career opportunities.

Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge, and Ogden (2007) conducted qualitative research consisting of focus group discussions with third and fourth year tourism students in the UK. Their aim was to explore the issues students regarded as pertinent to their expectations of a future career in the tourism industry. The findings revealed both positive and negative aspects related to the tourism industry. The students who took part in the survey highlighted its enjoyable nature, the perceived career opportunities, and their interesting experiences within this sector. The negative factors experienced by students included poor levels of pay and unsociable working hours.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Instrument and procedures

The research was conducted at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca and the sample comprised students who enrolled on the Geography of Tourism specialization in their second year of study. The data was collected during the middle of the second term of the 2012/2013 academic year (April-May). It was felt that if students were questioned during the exam sessions they would be busy, and this would probably have a negative impact on their satisfaction levels. The questionnaires were therefore administered during a Tourism Management class which was very convenient for students. The paper version of the questionnaire was used rather than the on-line version as previous studies found there to be a lower response rate when on-line questionnaires were used (Douglas and Douglas, 2006).

The questionnaire was designed to measure tourism students' satisfaction with the university and the perceived skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the tourism industry. The questionnaire comprised several parts. To measure satisfaction, students were asked to respond to ten statements using a five-point Likert scale (1 – very unsatisfied, 5 – totally satisfied). The ten dimensions of satisfaction that were measured were: (1) quality of courses; (2) quality of seminars/laboratories; (3) elective courses; (4) internship; (5) professors' willingness to answer their questions; (6) internship coordinator's answers to their questions; (7) the grades awarded for exams; (8) the grades awarded for projects; (9) faculty facilities (laboratories, library resources, dormitories, cafeteria, etc), and (10) the specialization taken.

The second section of the questionnaire concerned the perceived knowledge and skills needed to manage a business in the tourism industry. The students were asked to state their opinion on several skills using a five-point Likert scale (1 – Highly unimportant, 5 – Highly important). This dimension comprises the following skills: leadership skills, risk-taking, task delegation, ability to make decisions, ability to create a network of relations, and optimism.

The students were then asked about their future career path in the tourism industry and were given two options: starting as entrepreneurs or following a management career. They were asked to state the probability of following one of these two career paths using a five-point Likert scale (where 1 = very improbable, 5 = most probable). Other questions included in the survey assessed their engagement with academic life and measured their grade levels and class attendance. Finally, the questionnaire included several demographic questions regarding their age, gender and income level.

3.2 Research sample

The Geography of Tourism specialization is designed for students who want to adopt a multidisciplinary approach as they will study tourism from both a social and an economic perspective. Students enrolled on the Geography of Tourism specialization must undertake an internship at different tourist facilities, for example, tourism agencies, hotels, pensions, and so on. A total of 114 students in their second year of study completed the questionnaire. The response rate was 41.07 %. In terms of gender distribution, 60 percent were female and 40 percent were male, a distribution similar to that in previous studies (Gruber *et al.*, 2010). The average age of respondents was 21.44 years with a standard deviation of 2.442. Table 2 presents selected demographic characteristics of the sample.

3.3 Data analysis

The research questions were addressed using several statistical analyses. The data gathered during the survey was coded and analysed using SPSS 16.0. The first analysis that was employed was Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient that measured the internal consistency of questionnaire items relating to *satisfaction levels* and *perceived skills*. Nunnally (1978) defined values over 0.75 as sufficient; however, Tavakol and Dennick (2011) argued that a high value of alpha (>0.90) may suggest redundancies and therefore the test length should be shortened. Our findings were highly positive for both sets of variables. For satisfaction the value of Cronbach's alpha was 0.80, whereas for perceived skills the value was 0.78. These results add validity and accuracy to the interpretation of the data.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the sample

Demographic characteristics		N	Percentage
Gender	Male	45	39.47
	Female	69	60.53
Age distribution	20-21	87	76.32
	22-23	14	12.28
	24-25	7	6.14
	26-35	6	5.26
Respondent distribution according to their grades	Between 5 and 6	3	2.60
	Between 6.01 and 7	17	14.90
	Between 7.01 and 8	48	42.10
	Between 8.01 and 9	30	26.30
	Between 9.01 and 10	16	14.00
Respondents distribution according to class attendance	One class per week	5	4.39
	Two classes per week	9	7.89
	Three classes per week	42	36.84
	Four or more classes per week	58	50.88

Source: authors' own calculations based on data gathered

Another analysis was conducted to identify the level of satisfaction among tourism students and their perceptions regarding the skills needed in the tourism industry. An ANOVA test and post hoc Tukey test were therefore used to determine differences in the means and variance of satisfaction, with the grade levels and course attendance set as the independent variables. A regression analysis was then conducted to identify the connections between perceived skills and the future career path of tourism students.

4. Results of research

An ANOVA test was conducted to identify any significant differences between the independent variables (level of grades and class attendance) and the dependent variables (the ten items related to tourism students' satisfaction). During the survey, tourism students answered questions related to the grades they obtained and the frequency of class attendance. Five groups of respondents were formed based on their levels of grades and four groups were formed based on their class attendance. Table 3 contains the results of the ANOVA test.

The results show there was a significant difference between the groups of students with different levels of grades in terms of their satisfaction towards their grades ($F_{(4-108)}=3.299$, $p=0.014$). There was also a significant difference between the groups of students regarding their attendance, their satisfaction regarding elective courses ($F_{(3-108)}=3.329$, $p=0.022$), and also their satisfaction regarding the specialization they are following ($F_{(3-108)}=3.035$, $p=0.032$).

A post hoc Tukey test revealed that students with grades between 6.01 and 7 ($p=0.043$), students with grades between 9.01 and 10 ($p=0.043$), students with grades between 7.01 and 8 ($p=0.017$), and students with grades between 9.01 and 10 ($p=0.017$) exhibit different satisfaction levels regarding their exam grades. The Tukey post hoc test conducted for the other variables revealed that students who attended two classes per week had different levels of satisfaction regarding elective courses than students who attended four or more classes per week ($p=0.023$). Moreover, students who attended two classes per week had different levels of satisfaction than students who attended three classes per week ($p=0.020$) and students who attended four or more classes per week ($p=0.043$).

Table 3. ANOVA results for level of grades, class attendance and satisfaction variables

Dependent variables (satisfaction items)	Independent variables			
	Level of grades		Class attendance	
	F.	Sig.	F.	Sig.
Course quality	0.854	0.494	1.829	0.146
Seminars/laboratories	1.484	0.212	0.677	0.568
Elective courses	0.445	0.776	3.329	0.022*
Internship	1.426	0.230	1.075	0.363
Professors' answers to questions	1.195	0.317	0.694	0.558
Internship tutor's answers to questions	1.618	0.175	1.081	0.361
Grades at exams	3.299	0.014*	1.647	0.183
Grades for projects	0.610	0.656	0.572	0.634
Faculty facilities	1.345	0.258	1.018	0.388
Specialization followed	0.564	0.689	3.035	0.032*

* $p < 0.05$.

Source: authors' own calculations based on data gathered

This study also aimed to identify whether there was any statistically significant correlation between the perceived skills needed by tourism managers and the future career path these students wished to follow. The career path is represented by two variables that reflect tourism students desire to become (1) entrepreneurs, and (2) managers. The descriptive statistics and correlation results for these variables are presented in Table 4, while Table 5 presents the results of the regression analysis for the two career paths. The first model (entrepreneurial intention) accounts for 12.5% of the variance and the second model (managerial intentions) accounts for 11.3 % of the variance.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Leadership	4.33	0.702							
2. Risk taking	4.18	0.762	0.411***						
3. Task delegation	3.94	0.797	0.488***	0.493***					
4. Decision making	4.38	0.688	0.481***	0.453***	0.537***				
5. Networking	4.02	0.771	0.105	0.117	0.383***	0.412***			
6. Optimism	4.21	0.902	0.119	0.222**	0.056	0.293**	0.241**		
7. Entrepreneurs	3.10	1.057	0.187*	0.034	0.104	-0.028	0.086	0.206*	
8. Managers	3.63	1.147	0.219*	0.096	0.073	0.043	0.191*	0.108	0.543**

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

Source: authors' own calculations based on data gathered

The results in Table 4 show that optimism ($\beta=.291$, $p<0.05$) is positively related to the desire to become an entrepreneur, while risk taking skills ($\beta=-.088$, $p<0.05$) and decision-making skills ($\beta=-.452$, $p<0.05$) are negatively related to the desire to become an entrepreneur. In terms of a management career, the results show that leadership skills have a positive influence on students' desire to follow such a path ($\beta=.495$, $p<0.01$). At the same time, the ability to create networks with other people was positively related to the desire to pursue a management career in the tourism field ($\beta=.387$, $p<0.05$).

Table 5. Results of the regression analysis

Variables	Career path	
	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	1.467 (1.748)	1.249 (1.362)
Leadership	.384 (2.268)	0.495** (2.673)
Risk taking	-.088* (-0.559)	0.107 (0.626)
Task delegation	.164 (0.974)	-0.148 (-0.804)
Decision making	-.452* (-2.354)	-0.341 (-1.625)
Networking	.111 (0.749)	0.387* (2.395)
Optimism	.291* (2.501)	0.075 (0.591)
Model summary		
Model F	2.491	2.227
R ²	0.125	0.113
Adjusted R ²	0.075	0.062

Dependent variable = Model 1 (Entrepreneurs), Model 2 = Managers
*p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01 (Values in parentheses represent t values)

Source: authors' own calculations based on data gathered

5. Discussion

The results of the study are extremely illuminating. This paper was aimed to elucidate the concept of satisfaction among tourism students and the link between perceived skills and future career path. Although a small number of previous studies have investigated the perceptions of tourism students, none have done so from this perspective.

The findings will be useful for key decision makers in academia and for managers that work in the tourism industry.

The focus of the research throughout was on tourism students. We believe they should be treated as equal partners by universities because they act as key stakeholders. Furthermore, some scholars (e.g., Finney and Finney, 2010) have developed the theory of students-as-customers to highlight the importance of students, both for universities and the companies in which they will work.

The issue of student satisfaction has been investigated by scholars using a variety of different methods (Brown, 1976; Marsh, Overall, and Thomas, 1976). The current study looked at satisfaction from a broader perspective, as it took into consideration several elements that contribute to the overall student experience. For example, the ANOVA results revealed significant differences between the mean scores of satisfactions regarding their grades, and such differences were related to exam performance. This suggests that students with higher grades will be more interested in how they perform during the exams which could affect their satisfaction towards their grades. From a theoretical point of view, the results diverge from those in previous studies that have found little or no relationship between grades and student satisfaction (Hildebrand, Wilson, and Dienst, 1971). Thus, as Howard and Maxwell (1980) noted, the question of whether student grades impact satisfaction cannot be answered in a simple yes/no manner. On the other hand, there is enough evidence that points towards a strong relationship between students' grades and their academic performance (Sulphey, AlKahtani, and Abdul Malik Syed, 2018).

A more noteworthy result was obtained when a one-way ANOVA was performed for satisfaction items and class attendance. Differences in perceived satisfaction were revealed regarding the elective courses and specialization followed. According to Astin (1999), students' attendance at classes is more strongly related to satisfaction than any other type of involvement. The ability of key academic decision makers to encourage students' involvement with faculty can therefore prove to be a highly productive activity in most campuses.

During the survey, students were asked about their intentions regarding their future career paths. Empirical evidence was provided for these career traits and the perceived skills needed for a management career in tourism. Tourism students who consider leadership skills to be important for tourism managers are more likely to work as managers in the tourism industry, while those who see relationship networks as essential for a future management career are more likely to work as managers. The intrinsic relationship between leadership skills and relationship networks is one of the most extensively researched topics in management science. Hogan and Warrenfeltz (2003), for example, argue that leadership skills are primarily related to building and maintaining effective teams. Leaders are not only responsible for the relations between their employees, but also for their relations with other leaders. A network of relationships may prove to be very efficient when managing a tourism business. The relationship between networking and new venture creation among students has also been addressed in previous studies. Mushtaq, Hunjra, Niazi, Rehman, and Azam (2010), for example, argue that networking enables young graduates to access information and other important assets that will increase their chances for starting a new business. Furthermore, the existence of networks is considered to influence small firm creation and, to some extent, new firm performance (Dubini and Aldrich, 1991). For a successful management career, students should demonstrate abilities to create and maintain tight networks with various stakeholders; however, this is not an easy task, as it takes time to build and develop appropriate networks.

From a theoretical point of view, our findings offer support for the optimism and chance theory (Storey, 2011). According to this theory, optimism is incorporated into various entrepreneurship models (Hmieleski and Baron, 2009; Simon, Houghton, and Aquino, 2000). Previous studies proved that optimistic individuals are more likely to follow an entrepreneurial path (Cassar, 2010; Cassar and Craig, 2009). The entrepreneurs are people who wish take risks and start their own business. One trait entrepreneurs possess is their ability to pursue a certain vision

and benefit from an existing business opportunity. Therefore, it makes sense for them to feel positive about their business and to not be disappointed by potential failures. As other scholars have observed, employees aspiring to start their own business often possess above average levels of optimism, which suggests that optimism has a causal influence on entrepreneurship (Dawson, De Meza, Henley, and Arabsheibani, 2012). Optimism is a very important personality trait for entrepreneurs. Recent studies showed that personality factors along with behavioral factors can explain the intention to be involved in an entrepreneurial activity (Naushad, 2018).

The present study incorporates some contradictory results. Traditionally, it was believed that human decision makers are risk averse. For managers, it is hard to establish a positive correlation between risks and return (March and Shapira, 1987). Nowadays, when the competition in the tourism industry is becoming fiercer every day, and tourists becoming more demanding, it is imperative for managers to gamble from time to time. To a certain degree, the success of a company may be influenced by various stakeholders. The relationships that managers develop with these stakeholders is therefore of great importance. However, students perceive risk taking and decision-making abilities to have a negative impact on their desire to become entrepreneurs. The latter skill can be shaped during business classes and training programs; however, the former is a personality trait that people either have or do not. Even though, students in our sample see optimism as an important element for an entrepreneurial path, they are not fully aware of some other traits that had been appointed as main determinants for entrepreneurship, such as risk taking attitude (Naldi, Nordqvist, Sjöberg, and Wiklund, 2007) or decision making ability.

6. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was twofold. Firstly, it addressed the issue of student satisfaction with university and, secondly, it explored the relationship between perceived skills and career path in a sample of tourism students studying at a large university in Romania. The present study highlights that fact the education process is complex and must be addressed with great care by decision makers. This study makes an important contribution to the existing literature on student career paths as it identifies skills that predict future entrepreneurial and managerial intentions within the tourism industry.

The results of the study could provide concrete guidelines for key decision makers within universities. A first practical implication refers to the importance of recognising those elements that contribute to students' satisfaction. Given these requirements, it is crucial that universities take into consideration the factors that create satisfaction among students. This could form part of a quality assurance process or it may be a proactive investigation conducted by the university. Whichever is the case, both students and the university could benefit. The universities should consider a broader spectrum of elements that are responsible for increased levels of student satisfaction. By approaching this issue only from a teaching point of view will not be enough to stimulate students.

Second, universities should become more responsible about the future career path of their graduates. This could imply early involvement of students in successful internships, field study programs and the strengthening of relationships with business. Moreover, we consider that universities should improve the learning process to help their tourism students succeed in their entrepreneurial or managerial future careers.

Teaching is an art and, like many other forms of art, can be compromised if the artist focuses exclusively on the technique. In this respect, instructors need to concentrate more on the pedagogical effects, which are partly enshrined in student satisfaction. For key decision makers in tourism programs this would be very useful, as actions could be undertaken to design courses that will allow training students to self-regulate their optimism so that they will be able to either constrain or emphasize their enthusiasm.

Like many previous studies, the present research nevertheless has some limitations. The first limitation of the study concerns the geographical range of the sample. The sample consists of students from one university in the North Western part of Romania to whom we had easy and direct access. These findings cannot be extrapolated to all Romanian students following a tourism specialization as results may vary from one region to another. Thus, future research should seek to recruit a nationwide sample. Other limitation of the study is that it measured tourism students' satisfaction levels based on predefined criteria. Consequently, in future research it may be useful to include other factors that have been pinpointed as essential for student satisfaction, such as socialization among students, professors' communication skills, and group work. Finally, the present study addressed students' entrepreneurial intention through attitudes, aspirations, personality traits, and willingness to network. The entrepreneurship literature may benefit if future studies focus on other factors that have been proved to influence the desire to become an entrepreneur, such as opportunity recognition, financial constraints, and previous work or entrepreneurial experience.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by the strategic grant "Integrated system for improving the doctoral and postdoctoral research quality in Romania and for promoting the role of science in society", POSDRU/159/1.5/S/133652, co-funded by the European Social Fund through the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013.



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

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