




The moderating influence of social support on career anxiety and career commitment: an empirical investigation from India

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the linkages between anxiety, social support, and commitment of the students towards the tourism and hospitality career inter alia the moderating influence of social support between career anxiety and career commitment. The data was collected from 472 tourism and hospitality students and the findings depicted that a few of the elements of career anxiety (irrational beliefs about employment and employment environment) have a significant negative association with students' commitment. The moderating influence of social support revealed the negative relationship between anxiety and commitment was only considerable among students with low or no social support.

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Introduction

Across the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the enthusiastic soul of the tourism and hospitality education scenario (Höckert et al., 2020; Mahmud et al., 2020). During 2020, the pandemic has spread globally, forcing higher education institutions and universities into drastic measures affecting how people and students interact socially, educationally, and occupationally. The pandemic's unexpected and extensive outbreak continues its serious impact on all educational endeavors, directly affecting all students' lives (Mahmud et al., 2020). The sudden closure of airline services and the hospitality sector has created chaos not only amongst the employed individuals but job aspirants as well who search for career prospects in the tourism and hospitality industry (Menickella, 2020; Morath & Guilford, 2020). Amongst all, travel and tourism are the worst-hit segment by the global pandemic as it has put 100–120 million direct employments at risk for at least a couple of years (UNCTAD, 2020; UNWTO, 2020). For instance, World Travel & Tourism Council (2020) officially reported 1.3 to 1.4 million job losses in the Indian travel and tourism sector due to the COVID-19 pandemic and consequent economic downturn in the year 2020 (Chaturvedi, 2020; Kumar, 2021). Even after the COVID-19 pandemic, the lucrative avenues, i.e., luxury tourism, leisure, and business travel, may not be fully functional and is estimated to have a significant impact on

employment prospects in the tourism and hospitality sector comprising commercial airlines, airports, hotels, and food services (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Owing to such adverse circumstances, the educational institutions, students, and parents may bear the brunt of losing out on ample opportunities for their future career and job prospects (Darvishmotevali et al., 2017; Ross, 2005). Therefore, the current study is an initial attempt to understand the level of career anxiety, stress, job concerns, and commitment issues within the tourism and hospitality education realm.

Furthermore, notable international organizations such as World Health Organization (WHO) (2020) and American Psychological Association (2020) have declared that pandemics like COVID-19 increase psychological stress in the form of depression among individuals due to losing jobs and anxiety of not getting the same in near future. One of the prominent Indian job portal Naukri.com (2021) has reported about a 61% direct slump in the employment prospects for undergraduate and postgraduate students of tourism and hospitality programs (De Gruyter, 2020; Kumar et al., 2018). Even the transition towards other allied industries can also not be envisaged immediately after the COVID-19 crisis because of the lesser number of jobs in tourism and hospitality-related services (McKinsey & Company, 2021; Tsionas, 2020). Thus, the biggest worry is that the present uncertain environment may significantly affect students' confidence and level of professional