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Using goal-setting theory and expectancy theory to understand career goal implementation in the hospitality industry

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ABSTRACT

Internships could influence the career goal-setting of tourism and hospitality students and their intention to stay in the industry, but there is a lack of studies examining these relationships. The purpose of this study was to assess how goal-setting among students in the hospitality education sector affects students' intention to stay in the hospitality industry. A survey instrument underpinned by Goal-setting theory and Vroom's expectancy theory was applied to examine students' goal-setting and implementation intentions prior to and after the internship. The findings confirmed that self-efficacy, goal commitment, feedback mechanism, and situational constraints, severally have predictive effects on the implementation intentions of students. In addition, industry knowledge and valence had predictive effects on implementation intention, but goal commitment and situational constraints did not record significant effects on implementation intentions after the internship. The implications of the study are discussed.

1. Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industries are among the service industries with the highest employee turnover, with annualised turnover rates of 79% in 2019 and 130.5% in 2020 (Hansen, 2022). A report from the Bureau of Labour Statistics in 2021 revealed an average turnover rate of 84.9% in the leisure and hospitality industry compared with an overall rate of 47.2% (Helloteam.com). Notably, the employee turnover rate among young adults is the highest (Tews et al., 2020). Several other studies have also indicated that many undergraduate hospitality and tourism students, over 30%, have low or no interest in pursuing careers in their fields of study (Anthony et al., 2021; Amissah et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2014). This double whammy of low interest and high turnover has contributed to the industry's growing shortage of skilled labour (Richardson, 2010; Shereni, 2019).

In light of the aforementioned problems, hospitality researchers have paid a great deal of attention to employee turnover intentions (Park & Min, 2020) and employee retention or intention to remain in the industry (Frye et al., 2020). Other studies have focused on hospitality and tourism students' career intentions (Chen et al., 2021) and examined the factors that influence their intention to stay on their programme (Bae et al., 2022) and choose a career in their programme of study (Anthony et al., 2021; Wen et al., 2018). In a study

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on students' intention to stay or not, [Chen et al. \(2021\)](#) argued that an effective internship enhances students' employability and positively influences their retention in the hospitality industry. Many studies have also traced the influence of internships on the career intention of hospitality and tourism students by arguing that it may boost their confidence ([Ko, 2008](#)) and give them a wider range of information and abilities so they can pursue professions in the sector. In a study involving more than 15,000 students from different disciplines, [Binder et al. \(2015\)](#) stated that positive associations have been found between internships and career variables and examined the academic benefits of internships on academic outcomes.

Internships may influence the career goal-setting of hospitality and tourism students and their implementation intention since it gives them first-hand experience to evaluate their career aspirations. However, there is a lack of studies examining these relationships. The paucity of research has led to a career goal intention-behaviour gap in the hospitality education literature. This gap calls for further studies on career goal-setting and goal implementation patterns, especially in a developing country context where no such studies exist ([Alawamleh & Mahadin, 2022](#); [Anthony et al., 2021](#)). Indeed, previous studies have called for further studies to highlight the relevance of mental imagery to implementation intentions in different contexts ([Scullin et al., 2017](#); [Zhou et al., 2022](#)). Thus, in response to this call, this paper argues that following an internship, students' career goal-setting will influence their goal implementation intention. Furthermore, the paper argues that enhanced industry knowledge and perceived value of the reward (i.e., valence) will positively influence implementation intention. In this regard, this study's findings will contribute to the understanding of career goal implementation and how internships help to resolve the problem of high turnover rate amongst hospitality interns. Through internships, hospitality and tourism students are able to appreciate the exigencies of the industry, vis-à-vis their personal characteristics prior to the final decision-making.

Consequently, the following questions are addressed in this study: 1) to what extent do self-efficacy, goal commitment, feedback, and situational constraints affect the career goal implementation intention of hospitality students? 2) How do 'valence' and industry knowledge, severally, along with goal-setting, affect the career goal implementation intention of hospitality students? Answers to these questions will provide evidence to develop a framework that will help bring some clarity to hospitality students' career goal-setting and motivation for implementation intention patterns. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first attempt to explore goal-setting, the value of reward, industry knowledge, and career goal implementation intention in the hospitality sector.

Career goal implementation intention is a pre-decision on when, where, and how one intends to achieve his/her career goal ([Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006](#)), and transcends 'goal intention', enhances the likelihood of goal achievement, and is likely to lead to a decision to stay in the industry. The Goal Setting Theory (GST) ([Locke & Latham, 1990](#)) will be applied in this study since this theory has been a prominent guide for research and interventions associated with goal performance and behavioural change (e.g., [Demirkol, 2020](#); [Jeong et al., 2021](#)). The GST entails four sub-constructs: self-efficacy, goal commitment, feedback, and situational constraints. These four sub-constructs have been used to determine whether learning goals would be achieved ([Locke & Latham, 2013, 2020](#)), hence a proposed association with the implementation intention of hospitality students. In addition to the GST, the 'valence' dimension of Vroom's theory of motivation will be used, given the importance of this sub-construct in determining the attractiveness of work-related rewards in the industry. In this study, industry-based knowledge is conceived as an accumulation of foundational business information and awareness of what is happening within the hospitality sector. The study's findings add to the hospitality education literature by validating a pre- and post-analysis of perceived and actual internship value within the hospitality industry and helping the drive to retain interns in the hospitality industry of developing economies.

2. The hospitality industry: some insights

World Travel and Tourism Council reports that the hospitality industry employs 10% of the global workforce ([World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017](#)) and contributes considerably to the gross domestic product (GDP) of many countries. Notably, the COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating effect on the fortunes of the industry, slowing down its gains. However, the industry has been forecast to make some substantial recovery in its operation ([Gossling et al., 2020](#)). In Ghana, the hospitality sector contributes 4.8% to Ghana's GDP annually and generated \$325m to Ghana's GDP in 2019 ([International Labour Organisation, 2020](#)). This makes the hospitality industry critical for the attraction of foreign direct investments in developing economies ([Doe & Essiaw, 2021](#)). The type of skills and capabilities required to cater for tourists and travellers were described as having the 'understanding of the guest' or 'desire to please guests' to describe hospitality (e.g., [Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012](#); [Blain & Lashley, 2014](#)). This study aligns with this description, which is usually familiar to students in hospitality educational institutions.

Training and development of students and workers in the hospitality industry are among the most important aspects of retaining staff and have a direct association with employees' intentions to stay in their jobs ([Gibbs & Slevitch, 2019](#)). Hence, hospitality educational institutions have sought to develop the requisite skills of students, to meet the growing demands in the industry ([Huang et al., 2016](#)), and internship programmes form an integral part of the preparation along the career pathway. This study would therefore provide insights into a pre- and post-internship analysis of factors affecting students and how the perceived internship value influenced their readiness to pursue a career in the hospitality sector in a developing country context.

3. Literature review and hypotheses development

3.1. Theoretical underpinning

Goal-setting and Vroom's Expectancy theories are the two underlying theories for this 2-stage study in a developing country context. First, the GST was applied to gain insights into the resulting effect of students' goal-setting on implementation intention. The

second study, underpinned by VET, included an examination of the effects of industry knowledge and perceived valence on implementation intentions.

3.2. Goal-setting theory

The goal-setting theory (GST) (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002) has guided research and intervention programmes associated with goal performance and behavioural change. The concept of a goal is based on self-examination and identifying what one wants to attain (Locke & Latham, 2020). Goal-setting helps a person to focus on goal-related actions and ignore irrelevant activities, directing their effort toward the desired goal. The GST encompasses self-efficacy, goal commitment, feedback, and situational constraints (Bipp & Kleingeld, 2011; Locke & Latham, 2002). Indeed, the GST assumes that behaviour is a result of deliberate choices from alternatives aimed at maximizing pleasure and minimising pain (Osafo et al., 2021, pp. 1–13). The GST has been the most prominent theoretical framework upon which goal-setting interventions are investigated in different contexts; as a predictor of job satisfaction (Demirkol, 2020; Jeong et al., 2021), and underlying objective career success (Choi & Nae, 2022). The GST will therefore be relevant for understanding how the sub-constructs of GST affect hospitality students' intentions to stay in the hospitality industry. To achieve this study's purpose, the GST will be supported by Vroom's Expectancy theory, for holistic insights into interns' appreciation of the value of career opportunities in the hospitality industry.

3.3. Vroom's expectancy theory

Victor Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), provides a basis for explaining why individuals make choices based on reward and value. The Vroom's Expectancy theory (VET) encompasses three sub-constructs: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Expectancy explains one's perception as regards the likelihood that one's effort will lead to good performance, while instrumentality explains the idea that good performance will lead to desired outcomes. Valence refers to the value the individual personally places on the rewards. The VET assumes that behaviour is a result of deliberate choices from alternatives aimed at maximizing pleasure and minimising pain (Osafo et al., 2021, pp. 1–13). In this study, Vroom's Expectancy theory relies on the rational assumption (Chen & Klyver, 2021) to help provide helpful insights into how industry knowledge and valence influence goal-setting and implementation intentions by hospitality interns, in context.

3.4. Implementation intention

Implementation intentions involve visualising and performing the prospective memory task (Scullin et al., 2017). Implementation intentions are a self-regulatory strategy and take the form "I will do x in place y at time z", leading to a consistent change in behaviour towards the goal (Seo et al., 2017). In fact, some authors (e.g., Gollwitzer, 1999; Webb & Sheeran, 2008) have argued that implementation intentions would work because they improved the accessibility of environmental cues to act and enhance memory to perform the specified behaviour. Implementation intentions, include a structured verbal statement and mental imagery and remembering to execute delayed intentions. Therefore, implementation intentions allow behaviour to occur quickly and automatically (Prestwich et al., 2003). Consequently, we conceptualise 'implementation intention' as goal-oriented behaviour leading to a decision to pursue a career in the hospitality industry.

4. Hypotheses development

4.1. Effects of goal-setting dimensions on implementation intention

This study relies on the four GST dimensions (Locke & Latham, 2002), namely, self-efficacy, goal commitment, feedback, and situational constraints, as important variables in the goal-setting-implementation framework for investigating hospitality students' behaviour toward career goal implementation. Self-efficacy, in the first place, reflects one's belief of having the capability to accomplish a task, and this could influence goal commitment and implementation effort (Bipp & Kleingeld, 2009; Locke & Latham, 2002). In line with the study framework, self-efficacy was perceived as an important sub-construct for understanding career goal implementation intention by hospitality interns. The work of Alexakis and Jiang (2019) in the US hospitality education sector emphasised the essential competencies of communication and higher learning skills, such as critical thinking and problem-solving. Notably, hospitality professionals ought to operate with the self-belief that allows them to complete any task within the work environment (Williams et al., 2019). Meanwhile, extant kind of literature has also confirmed the impact of internships on the career intention of hospitality and tourism students by arguing that internship could boost their confidence (e.g., Ko, 2008; Shereni, 2019). In a developing country context, Anthony et al. (2021) established that having a personality fit was relevant to students' choice of a hospitality career. Consequently, we present the first hypothesis (H1) as follows.

H1. Students' self-efficacy has a direct effect on career goal implementation intention

This study also posits that goal commitment will influence career goal implementation intention in context. Goal commitment is one's determination to reach a goal (Locke & Latham, 1990), and could expand the relationship between high goals and performance. In a UK study, Clements and Kamau (2018) provided a piece of evidence that students' career goal commitment was associated with proactive career behaviours, skill development, career consultation, and network-building. Seo et al. (2017) looked into ways to have

students more committed to their own goals and implementation intents. The findings showed that implementation intentions improved goal commitment and effort, which in turn improved students' performance on self-set goals relative to assigned goals. Furthermore, [Chen et al. \(2021\)](#) studied how internships could affect the career choice of students in Taiwanese tourism and hospitality (T&H) firms. Meanwhile, [Frye et al. \(2020\)](#) established that more committed employees are less likely to have intentions of leaving an organisation than less committed employees ([Frye et al., 2020](#)), making goal commitment an important factor in hospitality interns' career decisions. Hence the second hypothesis (H2) is presented as follows.

H2. Goal commitment has a direct effect on career goal implementation intention

Furthermore, this study envisages that the feedback mechanism enhances goal implementation intention, since feedback is a necessary condition for goal-setting and performance relation ([Erez, 1977](#)). Goal setting focuses on one's own improvement by identifying goals that are meaningful, based on existing information ([Gaumer Erickson & Noonan, 2018](#)), and that will be relevant to the goal implementation process. Invariably, feedback availability regulates goal performance ([Bipp & Kleingeld, 2009](#); [Locke & Latham, 2002](#)), which established the relevance of providing an interactive mechanism for monitoring performance. In a product development process, for instance, [Liang. \(2019\)](#) discovered that job difficulty and process feedback in new product development interact to influence decision-makers' choices regarding new products. [Liang. \(2019\)](#) came to the conclusion that task complexity and process feedback could affect decision-makers' ability to make a "go or no-go" decision in the wake of receiving unfavourable performance feedback. Therefore, this study hypothesises as follows.

H3. Feedback mechanisms have a direct effect on implementation intention.

While feedback availability could influence goal performance, situational constraints could weaken the goal-performance relation and weaken performance ([Bipp & Kleingeld, 2011](#); [Locke & Latham, 2002](#)). Hence, situational constraints could create uncertainty about the effectiveness of goal setting. Ko (2008) indicated that administration and satisfactory learning opportunities during the internship were significant predictors of interns' confidence about future career decisions. However, supervision, environment, and interpersonal relations had no relation to their future career decisions. The need for further research into the nature of situational strength and its implications on other predictor-outcome linkages is highlighted by a meta-analytic analysis ([Meyer et al., 2009](#)) into the moderating effects of situational strength on the conscientiousness-performance associations. [Frye et al. \(2020\)](#), confirmed that the workplace has a substantial impact on Generation Y employees' job satisfaction, employee empowerment, remuneration, and relationships with management. According to the [Frye et al. \(2020\)](#) study, these circumstances in turn affected employee commitment and intention to stay in the hotel industry. Hence this study hypothesises as follows.

H4. Situational constraint has a direct effect on implementation intentions.

4.2. Effects of reward valence and industry knowledge

The expectancy theory is made up of two related models-the valence model and the force model. The *Valence model* was originally developed by [Vroom \(1964\)](#). It attempts to capture the perceived attractiveness, or valence of an outcome by combining the attractiveness of all associated resultant outcomes. Valence is positive when people strongly like the perceived rewards; as a result, they work harder to achieve the goals linked to these rewards ([Osafa et al., 2021](#), pp. 1–13). Nevertheless, individual preferences are not the same and could be based on the value they placed on the reward, ranging from financial returns, improved relationships, or job satisfaction. Pre-and post-analysis of perceived internship value indicated a positive expectation disconfirmation. The study by [Teeuwisse and Brannon \(2020\)](#) showed that 'positive expectation disconfirmation' has a significant direct relationship with overall satisfaction with the internship. Hence, we hypothesise as follows.

H5. The value of reward [i.e., Valence] has a direct effect on implementation intention in the hospitality industry.

Industry knowledge is another variable that could have an effect on implementation intention. Industry knowledge competency represents the development of understanding and awareness of the nuances of what is occurring in particular sectors (Corporate Finance Institute, [[CFI, 2021](#)]). The National Research Council of Canada ([CFI, 2021](#)) explicitly discussed industry knowledge based on five major levels of industry knowledge, giving an idea of the level of industry knowledge that could be gained through an internship programme. The competency levels range from foundational, intermediate, seasoned, advanced, and mastery ([CFI, 2021](#)), from which this study draws its working definition. Hence, we conceive interns' 'industry knowledge' as an accumulation of foundational business information and awareness of what is happening within the hospitality sector.

Industry information goes beyond academic content learned in school, and acquiring such knowledge is always ongoing, especially in dynamic industries, and determines whether the interns have the requisite skill set that will keep them in the industry. From the above discussion, we present the next hypothesis as follows.

H6. Industry knowledge has a direct effect on implementation intention in the hospitality industry.

5. Method

5.1. Sample and procedure

We used a quantitative research method to conduct an empirical study among students of tourism and hospitality (T&H)

programmes in two of Ghana’s traditional and the oldest universities offering the targeted programmes. The universities were also chosen based on their track records and varied T&H specialisations. We conducted two studies: study 1 was carried out between the months of February to May 2022 and study 2 was between August to September 2022. These periods were used because the month of May ends the second semester of the academic year, and August begins a new academic year. We wanted to keep the study fresh in the minds of the participants, so we selected these short intervals to ensure that the participants could easily remember the on-going study, without taking them through any recalling exercises.

5.1.1. Study 1

In Study 1, we used the face-to-face method to sample 442 students from the selected universities using the balloting technique of the simple random sampling approach, who responded to their career goal settings and implementation intention before an internship. Three selection criteria guided the respondents to be included in this research. First, we included only third-year students on T&H programmes. Next, the participant should be adequately knowledgeable about the sector’s current or upcoming vocations, as well as the pathways for professional advancement. They should also not have ever interned or worked in any T&H institutions or affiliated institutions. Third, the participant should be willing and ready to provide a personal email address that would aid an online data collection for the 2nd Study. Being in the third year was also considered an important criterion in the selection process. This is because we intended to use the same participants in the final year after they have completed their mandatory internship requirement.

Usually, the internship takes place during the vacation of the last semester of the third year. In the final year of the first semester, the student should have completed the internship and presented their internship report to the faculty. Guided by [Krejcie and Morgan’s \(1970\)](#) sample size determination for a finite population, we estimated the appropriate sample size for Study 1. We measured career goal setting as a multidimensional construct that comprised self-efficacy ([Wright & Kim, 2004](#)), goal commitment ([Locke & Latham, 1990](#)), feedback mechanism ([Wright & Kim, 2004](#)), situational constraint ([Gibbs & Slevitch, 2019](#)) and implementation intention ([Gibbs & Slevitch, 2019](#); [Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006](#)). The students’ self-efficacy consisted of 4 items measuring students’ ability and confidence to pursue their career goal, 5-items of goal commitment explaining students’ commitment to their career goal, 4-items of

Table 1
Descriptive statistics of constructs used.

Items	Study 1 = 450		Study 2 = 396	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-efficacy (SE) (Wright & Kim, 2004)	4.62	0.74	4.56	0.74
I have the confident that I can pursue my chosen career goal	4.69	0.75	4.60	0.75
I am prepared to meet all the demands of my career goal	4.72	0.73	4.57	0.73
I have the confident to pursue my career on time	4.30	0.84	4.38	0.84
I believe in pursuing my career goal could lead me to higher results	4.76	0.64	4.71	0.62
Goal commitment (GC) (Locke & Latham, 1990)	4.47	0.81	4.46	0.81
I am committed to pursue my career goal well	4.42	0.92	4.41	0.93
I care about my career, and I am ready to give out some of my responsibilities to pursue my career goal	4.46	0.79	4.44	0.79
I get involve in things or activities or task requires leading to my career goal	4.32	0.90	4.32	0.89
I am doing everything possible to accomplish my career goal tasks	4.49	0.78	4.48	0.78
Feedback mechanism (FM) (Wright & Kim, 2004)	3.33	1.29	3.32	1.28
I get my career goal information from friends	2.79	1.32	2.78	1.31
I get my career goal information from my study mates	2.95	1.36	2.94	1.34
I get my career information from my department	3.41	1.33	3.40	1.31
I get my career strength at school	3.85	1.15	3.83	1.15
I get my career strength during internship	3.66	1.28	3.66	1.25
Situational constraint (SC) (Gibbs & Slevitch, 2019)	2.55	1.35	2.56	1.34
Other extracurricular activities may affect my ability to pursue my career goal	2.81	1.30	2.82	1.28
My family issues may affect my ability to pursue my career goal	2.68	1.39	2.69	1.39
My personal issue may affect my ability to pursue my career goal	2.56	1.30	2.56	1.29
Peer pressure may affect my ability to pursue my career goal	2.17	1.39	2.17	1.39
Implementation intention (II) [Gibbs & Slevitch, 2019; Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006]	4.31	0.84	4.06	0.93
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in the hospitality industry	4.42	0.83	4.42	0.98
I will certainly join the industry upon graduation	4.30	0.85	4.29	1.04
There will be no discrepancy between my intention and actions regarding my career decisions.	4.15	0.90	4.14	0.63
I will develop self-regulatory strategies to bridge any gap between my intentions and behaviour.	4.36	0.78	4.35	1.04
Industry knowledge (IK) [National Research Council of Canada]			4.30	0.85
I am acquainted with major industry publications/news			3.78	0.98
I am familiar with major professional standards			3.85	1.04
I am opened and interested to learn and know more about the relevant of career choice			4.69	0.63
I am familiar with current industry development (e.g., new technology use, skills required etc.)			3.92	1.03
Valence (V) (intrinsic and extrinsic) (Chiang et al., 2008)			4.53	0.71
The monetary incentives in the hospitality industry are appreciable			4.22	0.84
I will have more responsibility/control over my job			4.47	0.74
Personal growth and development will be achieved			4.68	0.64
There are opportunities for advancement/promotion			4.44	0.74
There will be full use of my skills and abilities in the hospitality industry			4.62	0.73
Work in the hospitality industry gives feelings of accomplishment			4.76	0.55

feedback mechanism detailing how to get career goal information from peers, friends, relatives, study mates and department members, and situational constraints referring to challenges of pursuing their career goal. Students' intention to stay is regarded as implementation intention. The scale was anchored on a five-point measurement from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The multiple regression analysis was utilised to determine the effects of career goal setting as antecedent factors on an outcome variable of implementation intention. The pilot test was conducted by taking 10% of the total sample, that is, 45 out of 442, to check the understanding of the items used. Minor editing was done for clarity purposes. Cronbach alpha reliability test was deployed to check the internal consistency of the items of the survey instrument, where the reliability values varied from 0.818 to 0.896 (Table 2), indicating the items were reliable and consistent (Hair et al., 2014).

5.1.2. Study 2

We conducted Study 2 to address the limitations in Study 1 and to meet two objectives that focused on value of reward and industry knowledge. Participants were provided with an adapted online survey questions presented in Table 2. The survey questions were posted to google form, where 396 respondents took the survey over a week. The inclusion criteria for the selection of participants were students who had completed their internships in any T&H institutions and participated in study 1. Notably, feedback mechanism as a construct in study 2: had an additional item, "get their career strength during internship". This item was included at this stage due to the inclusion criteria. Value of reward (Vroom, 1964) was an adapted construct with three sub-variables of 4 items for intrinsic goal orientation, 3 items for extrinsic goal orientation and 5 items for task value belief. In addition, we extracted 4-items from the foundational level of the five levels of the industry knowledge competency level propounded by the National Research Council of Canada. We made the first attempt to empirically test the adapted variable "industry knowledge" in the context of the targeted participants of this study. These two constructs (valence and industry knowledge) were added to the earlier variable for online data gathering. The regression analysis also applies to Study 2.

5.1.3. Demographics

The demographics of the participants were presented. In Study 1, the descriptive result of gender showed that forty-nine per cent

Table 2
Factor analysis of the constructs used.

Variable	Study 1					Study 2				
	Loading	AVE	Reliability	CR	TVE	Loading	AVE	Reliability	CR	TVE
Self-Efficacy		0.74	0.82	0.84	13.27%		0.728	0.88	0.95	6.68%
SE2	0.84					0.87				
SE1	0.87					0.87				
SE4	0.86					0.87				
SE3	0.88					0.80				
Goal Commitment		0.70	0.82	0.86	10.33%		0.714	0.89	0.94	14.17%
GS4	0.86					0.85				
GS1	0.83					0.87				
GS3	0.88Va					0.76				
GS2	0.76					0.88				
Feedback Mechanism		0.73	0.82	0.86	5.04%		0.692	0.89	0.83	6.76%
FM2	0.86					0.77				
FM3	0.84					0.87				
FM1	0.82					0.74				
FM4	0.90					0.88				
FM5						0.89				
Situational Constraints		0.69	0.83	0.83	5.10%		0.659	0.89	0.91	6.63%
SC2	0.85					0.73				
SC3	0.74					0.88				
SC4	0.90					0.83				
Intention Implementation		0.65	0.82	0.80	23.64%		0.727	0.88	0.96	14.90%
II2	0.78					0.85				
II1	0.82					0.89				
II4	0.81					0.86				
II3	0.80					0.80				
Valence							0.673	0.88	0.960	6.38%
V4						0.87				
V6						0.86				
V5						0.86				
V3						0.76				
V2						0.86				
V1						0.75				
Industry Knowledge							0.746	0.88	0.92	6.01%
IK3						0.87				
IK2						0.86				

Note: TVE = Total Variance Explained, AVE = Average Variance Extracted, CR=Composite Reliability.

(49%) were males and 51% were females; whereas in Study 2, fifty-two percent (52%) were females and 48% represented males. This shows a slight difference between genders, which signifies that the T&H sector welcomes both males and females as potential sources of employment for the industry. Table 1 shows the average values for each of the constructs in the paper-based and online surveys. Utilising cross-sectional data, we performed the common method bias (CMB) study where we simultaneously loaded all the items in a principal component analysis that yielded a total variance of 29.45% and 28.67%, respectively in Study 1 and 2. This implies that the results are within the acceptable threshold that is less than the threshold of 50%, indicating no possibility of CMB (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Also, we accounted for missing data using the mean substitution method as suggested by Hair et al. (2014).

5.2. Factor analysis

Furthering, the principal axis factorial (PAF) with the varimax rotation method was applied where Study 1 reported a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett’s test of sphericity of $KMO = 0.889, x^2 = 3653.099, df = 231, p < 0.001$ and Study 2 produced $KMO = 0.819, x^2 = 5372.822, df = 496, p < 0.001$ to confirm and identify the factor structure of the adapted variables used for this study. According to Hair et al. (2010), the PAF approach is usually useful for adapted items, hence the choice of this approach is appropriate for this analysis. In Study 1, five unidimensional factors were identified with nineteen (19) out of twenty (20) items loaded which resulted in a total variance of 57.38% (See Table 2) Notably, one item “Other extracurricular activities may affect my ability to pursue my career goal” of situational constraints was dropped. This is because it did not meet the threshold of 0.50 and above of the factor loading.

In Study 2, seven unidimensional factors were identified with 28 items loaded above the threshold of 0.50 out of the 31 items. Three items were dropped of which one item was from situational constraints “Other extracurricular activities may affect my ability to pursue my career goal” and two items from Industry knowledge “I am acquainted with major industry publications/news” and “I am familiar with current industry development (e.g., new technology use, skills required etc.)”, signifying that these items were deleted from the factors prior to the regression analysis.

Also, we used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to examine the validity of the adapted variables used in context. In Study 1 and Study 2 the initial measurement models produced an acceptable fit indices. Study 1 presents $x^2 = 3749.209, df = 275, GFI = 0.932, CFI = 0.951, NFI = 0.942$ and $RMSEA = 0.06$. Study 2 produces $x^2 = 247.338, df = 244, GFI = 0.944, CFI = 0.945, NFI = 0.947$ and $RMSEA = 0.06$. Notably, all the regression weights were significant at 0.01. Based on these results the two initial measurement models were not modified. Following, the AVE scores for all the variables were higher than 0.50, and the composite reliability (CR) figures were also above 0.80 as the threshold for establishing convergent validity. We adapted the suggestion of Fornell and Larcker (1982) to examine the discriminant validity, the square of average of AVEs were greater than the inter-factor correlation values (see Table 3). Finally, the multiple regression analyses (see: Figs. 1 and 2) were conducted to examine the effect of the explanatory variables on response variable in context.

Prior to the regression analysis, we tested and confirmed the following assumptions.

1. We used the scatter plot analysis to test for a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This assumption was established as shown. Study 1 results are presented [scatter plots: self-efficacy ($y = 1.048x$), goal commitment ($y = 1.027x$), feedback mechanism ($y = 0.767x$), and situational constrains ($y = 1.477x$)]. In Study 2 the results showed [scatter plots: self-efficacy ($y = 1.050x$), goal commitment ($y = 1.026x$), feedback mechanism ($y = 0.766x$), situational constrains ($y = 0.581x$), valence ($y = 1.025x$) and industry knowledge ($y = 1.045x$)].
2. We used inter-factor correlation matrix analysis to test the multi-collinearity of the dataset. The results of Study 1 and Study 2 evidenced in Table 3 were below 0.80 as indicated by (Hair et al., 2014), signifying that there is no serious multi-collinearity problem in the dataset.

Table 3
Inter-factor correlation matrix of studied Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Study 1							
Self-efficacy							
Goal commitment	.753**						
Feedback mechanism	.320**	.331**					
Situational constraint	-.040	-.064	.198**				
Implementation Intention	.572**	.573**	.359**	.071			
Study 2							
Self-efficacy							
Goal commitment	.757**						
Feedback mechanism	.314**	.337**					
Situational constraint	-.057	-.070	.189**				
Valency	.616**	.613**	.289**	-.039			
Industry knowledge	.509**	.535**	.349**	.093	.571**		
Implementation Intention	.576**	.566**	.374**	.074	.682**	.638**	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

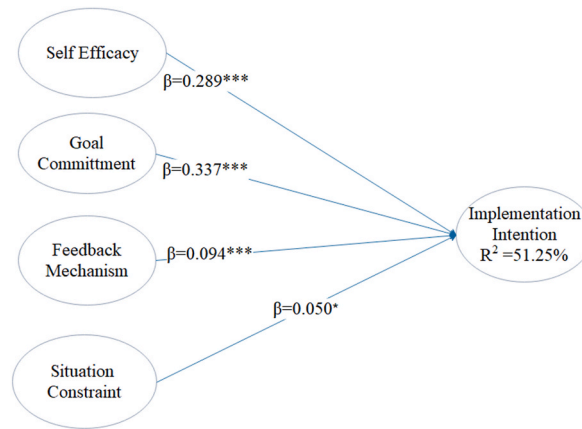


Fig. 1. Tested Model 1 for Study 1 of Career Goal Setting
Notes: Unstandardized coefficient beta *** $p \leq 0.001$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, * $p \leq 0.05$, .

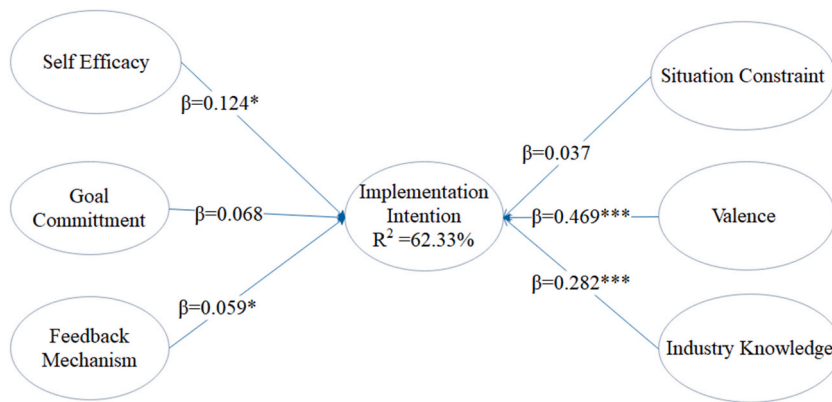


Fig. 2. Tested Model 2 for Study 2 of Career Goal Setting
Notes: Unstandardized coefficient beta *** $p \leq 0.001$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, * $p \leq 0.05$, .

3. The Durbin-Watson test was utilised to check for autocorrelation in the dataset. Hence, the statistics showed a value of 1.876 for Study 1 and 1.745 for Study 2 which were within the recommended threshold of 1.5–2.5 (Hair et al., 1998) inferring the concept of independence of errors was not present in the dataset.
4. The homoscedasticity assumption was tested and the results showed a probability value of 0.09 in Study 1 and 0.10 in Study 2 which are higher than the threshold of 0.05, meaning there is no problem of homoscedasticity in the data.
5. The Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to establish the normal distribution of the independent variables. The results showed that all the probability values for Study 1 and Study 2 respectively were above 0.05, showing no deviation from normality (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012).
6. We calculated the outliers using Mahalanobis distance test. No outliers were estimated as shown in Study 1: (Mahalanobis $D(4) 75.821, p < 0.05$) and Study 2: (Mahalanobis $D(6) 88.592, p < 0.05$), which confirmed that the data did not suffer from outliers (Hair et al., 2013).

5.3. Regression analysis

In Study 1, the regression results showed SE ($\beta = 0.289, t = 4.603, \rho < 0.001$), GC ($\beta = 0.337, t = 5.540, \rho < 0.001$), FM ($\beta = 0.094, t = 3.376, \rho < 0.001$), SC ($\beta = 0.050, t = 1.978, \rho < 0.05$) were found to be significant predictors of implementation intention of career goal, supporting H1-H4 (Fig. 1). Collectively, the four variables explained intention implementation by 51.25%. In Study 2, the findings showed that SE ($\beta = 0.124, t = 2.169, \rho < 0.05$), FM ($\beta = 0.059, t = 2.391, \rho < 0.05$), valence ($\beta = 0.469, t = 8.344, \rho < 0.001$) and IK ($\beta = 0.282, t = 6.790, \rho < 0.001$) were significant predictors of intention implementation of career goal, supporting H1-H4 (Fig. 2). However, GC ($\beta = 0.068, t = 1.192, \rho > 0.05$) and SC ($\beta = 0.037, t = 1.692, \rho > 0.05$) did not have significant effects on intention implementation in Study 2. In all, the six variables explained intention implementation by 62.33%.

6. Discussion and implications

Goal-setting in the hospitality industry has become a subject of interest among hospitality interns due to expected employment opportunities in the industry. Hence, this paper sought to explore the effects of self-efficacy (SE), goal commitment (GC), a feedback mechanism (FM), and situational constraints (SC) on the intentions to stay in the hospitality industry (i.e., implementation intentions), prior to a level of experience through an internship (Study 1). Furthermore, we sought to establish how the expected value available in the industry (i.e., valence), and industry knowledge would affect students' intentions to stay in the industry (i.e., implementation intention), after the internship (Study 2). The findings in study 1, guided by four hypotheses (H1-H4) regarding the sub-constructs of the goal-setting theory: self-efficacy, goal commitment, feedback mechanism, and situational constraints, were severally affirmed to have predictive effects on implementation intentions. In similar investigations regarding the self-efficacy of students Alexakis and Jiang, (2019) and Williams et al. (2019) found that soft skills, such as problem-solving skills, and communication skills were predictors of hospitality students' desire to reach the management level. Significantly, Anthony et al. (2021) confirmed that personality fit was important for hospitality students, in a Ghanaian context. These findings mean that such students who have the drive for learning are likely to achieve the intended goals of staying in the hospitality industry. This study's findings also affirm the predictive effect of goal commitment on implementation intentions. This finding is consistent with the work of Clements and Kamau (2018), which showed the importance of proactive career-oriented behaviour and the quest for skill development. Also, in this study, feedback mechanism had a direct effect on implementation intentions. In a similar work, Liang (2019) established that process feedback and task complexity could influence decision-makers in taking a firm decision based on available information, through a monitoring regime. Hence, feedback on teaching and learning will help both educators and students to make the necessary adjustments and variations in teaching and learning styles, toward achieving the intended goals. Situational constraints (SC) embody extracurricular activities, as well as family and personal matters that confront students. This study's findings reveal that situational constraints have a predictive effect on implementation intentions, in context. This finding is consistent with similar studies (Frye et al., 2020) where the work environment influenced employees' intentions to stay in the hospitality industry.

The second study (post internship) includes an inquiry into the predictive effects of valence and industry knowledge (H5 and H6). As was expected, industry knowledge had a positive effect on the implementation intentions of the hospitality interns. This finding affirms other study findings (e.g., Lee, 2008), supporting the position that knowledge of specific cultures in an organisation could help interns in the goal-setting and decision-making process. In this regard, the interns might have found industry-relevant personality fit and skills that would make them ready and prepared for the career pathway in the industry. In addition, the findings revealed the importance of 'valence' to the interns' decision to remain in the hospitality industry. Meanwhile, Osafo et al. (2021, pp. 1–13) affirmed that 'valence' was positive when individuals had a strong preference for the perceived rewards in an industry. This meant that interns were more likely to make the decision to stay in the hotel business if they were aware of how tempting the benefits were. However, in this second study, situational constraints and goal commitment did not severally reveal any relevance to interns with regard to implementation intentions. It is unclear why extracurricular, family, and personal issues have no significant association with implementation intention, nor did goal commitment affect the decision-making. Could it be that the students might need other goal-commitment activities besides those directly related to learning, such as involvement in practical sessions and job enhancement exercises that may improve the interns' employability skills. These findings call for further investigations.

6.1. Theoretical contribution

The main objective of this study was to shed light on the effects of goal-setting elements on hospitality students' implementation intentions. Previous knowledge was extended by undertaking two-staged studies among hospitality interns pre/post-internship in the hospitality industry. This provides a further understanding of the factors influencing hospitality students' career-oriented decisions in different contexts. This study's theoretical contribution is three-fold. First, this study adds to the hospitality education literature by its focus and findings, in that industry knowledge and valence have not been investigated collectively in the hospitality literature. Hence, the study justifies a new direction of study that encourages thought-provoking inquiry on career-oriented decision-making by the alignment of the dimensions of Goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990) and the Vroom theory of motivation (Vroom, 1964), in other contexts. Furthermore, the use of a two-staged study in this study is innovative and offers a framework for future discussion and other studies in different fields and study situations. This direction of study will enhance investigations on the associations between higher education and career decisions and help address the academic-industry practice gap in the hospitality sector. Moreover, our study's instrumentation procedure constitutes an important step in building a cross-cultural predictive validity of the goal-setting items for different contexts by combining adapted versions of items that encompass the sub-constructs of goal-setting theory from various studies (Bipps & Kleingeld, Locke & Latham, 1990; Wright & Kim, 2004). This makes the goal-setting instrument applied in this study more robust, beyond the much-utilised German version of the goal-setting instrument of Bipp and Kleingeld (2011).

6.2. Managerial implication

The findings of this study have managerial implications for tourism and hospitality educational institutions, students, and hospitality and tourism businesses. For educational institutions, two implications, relating to curriculum design and teaching, are identified. Tourism and hospitality educational institutions that do not emphasise internships must redesign their curriculum to integrate internships. Industry partnerships must also be established to support students' internships. Pedagogically, students should be encouraged to show commitment to their goals by engaging in supportive learning activities, including extended hours of learning that

directly influence their academic output. Managers and heads of hospitality educational institutions should encourage students to set short-term and long-term career goals, as well as managers helping to put in place monitoring and counselling measures, and to assist students in developing the requisite skills and making informed career-oriented decisions.

Managers of hospitality facilities or businesses where interns are engaged will have to educate and inform interns on industry standards, the prospects of the industry and the need to enrol in industry-oriented training packages to improve their employability. The managers should be encouraged to give appropriate feedback to the interns to influence their implementation intentions. Besides, the hospitality education programme should include a reasonable number of official engagements with renowned industry players to provide regular insights into the current development and the futuristic position of the hospitality industry. This will help students to deploy more efforts in developing their skills-set and prepare for the demands of the sector.

6.3. Limitations and further studies

Several limitations suggest that our results need to be interpreted with caution. First, relying solely on self-reported data opens the possibility of various distortions, such as possible subjective measurement methods inherit a series of potential problems. For instance, different subject interpretations of the same things, a propensity for socially acceptable responses, or a means of indirect or objective measuring. In this study, it is unclear why situational constraints and goal commitment were not relevant to the implementation intentions of interns. Further studies through a qualitative inquiry may provide further insights into understanding the role that environmental factors play in career decisions in the hospitality industry. In addition, a full complement of the dimensions of the VET (expectancy, instrumentality, and valence) may be undertaken in any further studies to understand the motivational dimensions of the various stages in the career decision-making process, in context.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare no competing interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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