

# Factors influencing job satisfaction among tourism and hospitality undergraduate students: A path to a sustainable tourism industry in Bangladesh

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The tourism industry in Bangladesh presents a promising avenue for economic expansion and employment generation. Many undergraduate students in Bangladesh work part-time or full-time in this field while studying. This study aims to explore the factors that determine the job satisfaction of these tourism and hospitality undergraduate students, addressing a gap in existing research.

**Research Methodology:** A convenience sample of 118 undergraduate students from five universities was surveyed using a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using SPSS 25, and multiple linear regression analysis was employed to assess the impact of various factors on job satisfaction.

**Results:** The findings reveal that compensation and benefits, communication, opportunities for growth, and the nature of the work significantly influence job satisfaction, whereas work environment and company policy have a comparatively weaker association.

**Limitations:** The small sample size and the use of a non-probability sampling method have limited the generalizability of the present study, which may not fully represent the broader student workforce in the tourism sector.

**Contribution:** This research provides actionable insights for industry leaders and HR professionals in the tourism and hospitality sector, helping them to better understand and enhance job satisfaction among student employees.

**Novelty:** This is the first comprehensive study to investigate the determinants of job satisfaction among tourism and hospitality undergraduate students in Bangladesh who are currently engaged in academic studies and employment.

**Keywords:** Bangladesh, Job satisfaction, Sustainable tourism industry, Tourism and Hospitality, Undergraduate students

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## 1. Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry is booming worldwide, with many countries unlocking their economic potential through tourism (Roy & Saha, 2021). Bangladesh is no exception. This South Asian nation boasts breathtaking natural beauty, a rich cultural legacy, and hospitable people, making its tourism industry a sector ripe for exciting growth (Hossain & Wadood, 2020). This expansion has

greatly aided the country's economic development by offering countless job opportunities and supporting several connected sectors (Khatun, Sukrana, & Jui, 2023). In Bangladesh, there has been a noticeable surge in the popularity of tourism and hospitality education. Upon finishing their higher secondary school certificate, a growing number of students opt for tourism and hospitality management as their area of study for higher education (Hoque & Ashif, 2020). Many of these students are also engaged in part-time work, while a smaller number hold full-time jobs during their graduation years. While part-time jobs for undergraduate students are common in Western countries, the trend is now increasingly visible in Bangladesh as well (Saddique, Khurshid, & Raja, 2023). Many students in Bangladesh are actively participating in various types of part-time work alongside their studies (S. Ali, Sarker, Islam, Islam, & Al Mahmud, 2021). This serves dual purposes: first, it helps them attain financial independence of their own or contribute to their family's needs, and second, before entering a full-time job, they gain a deep awareness of the job market and its conditions, which greatly raises their chances of securing a desired job once they graduate from university (Barron, 2007). These students work part-time jobs at various establishments, including hotels, motels, restaurants, movie theatres, travel agencies, tour operators, and tour guides.

Understanding how students feel about their jobs is crucial, whether they're satisfied or not and to what extent (Szromek & Wolniak, 2020). As these individuals in the tourism industry, often regarded as human capital or tourism professionals, play a leading role as the front-line representatives engaging directly with tourists. Tourist satisfaction heavily depends on the professional and cordial services these professionals provide. Consequently, their performance directly influences the success of the companies they work for (Bae, Park, & Kim, 2023). Thus, ensuring job satisfaction for undergraduate tourism students is of utmost importance. When these students have high levels of job satisfaction, they are more likely to deliver outstanding service to tourists, thereby enhancing the entire tourist experience (Dramićanin, Perić, & Pavlović, 2021). This quality service not only meets the needs and expectations of tourists but also significantly boosts the success and reputation of the companies they work for (Ghosh & Jhamb, 2021). Companies should also value their employees' job satisfaction and understand its significance. Specifically, companies must acknowledge that knowing the elements that influence the employment satisfaction of part-time tourism undergraduates is an important step toward establishing outstanding human resources (HR) (B. J. Ali & Anwar, 2021).

Considering that job satisfaction is widely recognized as a crucial aspect of work life, serving as a significant predictor of workplace performance (Inayat & Jahanzeb Khan, 2021). It plays a vital role in preserving both physical and mental well-being. Failure to achieve job satisfaction can adversely affect an employee's health and consequently, their productivity at work (Basalamah, 2021). Therefore, the core of the tourism and hospitality sectors is delivering consistent customer service, and customers are inclined to receive high-quality service when employees are satisfied with their jobs (Heimerl, Haid, Benedikt, & Scholl-Grissemann, 2020). The more satisfied employees are, the more productive, optimistic, and creative they tend to be. Employee dissatisfaction affects their ability to provide high-quality service and makes it more difficult for them to forge deep bonds with customers and co-workers (Phuong & Tran, 2020). This dissatisfaction inevitably impacts the overall performance of the organization they are part of (Inayat & Jahanzeb Khan, 2021). Furthermore, suppose job satisfaction among these part-time or full-time graduating students does not considerably increase. In that case, they will be less likely to stay in the field after completing their studies (Chen, Shen, & Gosling, 2021). This small tendency to stay leads to a high turnover rate and scarcity of experienced professionals; hence, it is one of the main challenges for the industry (Gong & Jia, 2022). Similar issues have been witnessed in many nations; the absence of attractive career opportunities and low job satisfaction has resulted in a shortage of skilled professionals (Bello & Bello, 2021). So the tourism and hospitality industry of Bangladesh must overcome these challenges in order to expand, succeed and ensure future sustainability. If employee retention is not sustained, the industry's overall sustainability will also be at risk. Therefore, Bangladeshi tourism and hospitality organizations must find out and address the factors that motivate undergraduate students and improve their job satisfaction, contributing to a more sustainable industry.

Despite the enormous volume of research into job satisfaction, little has been focused on job satisfaction in the tourism and hospitality industry within Bangladesh. Furthermore, there is no research available on the topic of job satisfaction among undergraduate part-time and minimum full-time tourism and hospitality students of Bangladesh. This paper contributes valuable insights into this specific topic to fill this gap. The following objectives are addressed in this paper as a means of filling the research gaps mentioned above:

RO1. To investigate the factors affecting job satisfaction among undergraduate tourism and hospitality students.

RO2. To recommend how HR professionals in the tourism and hospitality sector can effectively support and retain these students, helping to advance and sustain the industry.

## **2. Literature review**

Job satisfaction in the tourism and hospitality sector has been a focus of important academic interest. Several factors contribute to job satisfaction; these may vary based on geographical and cultural contexts. In Bangladesh, with its flourishing tourism and hospitality industry, there is an urgent need to understand those factors in relation to job satisfaction, especially among undergraduates in the fields of tourism, in order to align education outcomes with industry needs.

### **2.1 Job Satisfaction (JBS)**

The determinants of job satisfaction among undergraduate students in tourism and hospitality studies are influenced by work environment, compensation and benefits, career prospects, opportunities, and job autonomy, among many others (Vinh, Hien, & Do, 2022). In addition, globalization has made the tourism and hospitality industry one of the most diverse industries, with different sectors offering a wide range of jobs, such as the hotel industry, tour operators, travel agencies, event management, and food services (Gursoy, Malodia, & Dhir, 2022). Studies highlight that satisfaction levels vary significantly based on the specific role within the industry and organizational culture (Amegayibor, 2023). For instance, front-line service roles may provide immediate customer interaction but can also be demanding and stressful, affecting overall job satisfaction (Kusluvan, 2020). Furthermore, high turnover is often attributed to job dissatisfaction stemming from long working hours, low pay relative to workload, and limited opportunities for career advancement (Deery & Jago, 2015). Therefore, the following variables are noteworthy predictors of job satisfaction.

### **2.2 Work Environment (WE)**

A positive work environment, including teamwork, inclusivity, and support from colleagues as well as supervisors, creates a feeling of belonging and job satisfaction (Nimtur, Kusa, & Olanrewaju, 2023). On the contrary, a negative or unhealthy work environment relates to stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction (Salubre, Bahalla, & Almagro, 2024). In that regard, Ichdan (2024) notices that organizational culture is a good predictor of the job satisfaction of hospitality workers by showing an enabling and supportive work environment. Andriani, Disman, Ahman, and Santoso (2023) demonstrate that in the hotel industry, there is a strong relationship between work environment and employee job satisfaction. Furthermore, an increase in the satisfaction level of employees decreases turnover intention and motivates the workers more.

Students often have to tolerate a heavy work schedule, irregular hours of work, and high levels of job stress, which cannot positively influence their job status and satisfaction (Saddique et al., 2023). Studies have indicated that organizations prioritizing work-life balance endeavors, such as flexible scheduling and telecommuting options, often exhibit greater employee satisfaction and retention (Amegayibor, 2023). Researchers have found that students with ample career advancement and skill development opportunities are more likely to be satisfied and committed to their jobs (Ichdan, 2024). Providing training courses, mentorship opportunities, and defined career pathways can contribute to a positive work environment and enhance job satisfaction for students entering the industry. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

**H1:** Work Environment has a positive and significant influence on the job satisfaction of tourism and hospitality undergraduate students.

### **2.3 Compensation & Benefits (COB)**

Compensation reflects the areas of financial reward and non-monetary benefits, which together play a crucial role in influencing employee satisfaction and motivation (Kisanyanya, 2020). In the context of the tourism and hospitality sector, where employees often face demanding and dynamic work environments, fair and competitive compensation is linked to increased job satisfaction (Koo, Yu, Chua, Lee, & Han, 2020). In fact, it has been affirmatively proven that employees who perceive their pay as fair and reflective of the going rate for their industry are more satisfied with their jobs and more committed to their organization (Hawllader, Rana, Kalam, & Polas, 2022). Additionally, compensation affects job satisfaction by influencing individuals' perceptions of their value within the organization. Companies offering extensive benefits packages, including health care, paid leave, and professional development, generally report higher employee satisfaction (Davison & Blackburn, 2023). Darko, Bans-Akutey, Amoako, and Affum (2024) found that fair compensation practices provide a beneficial organizational climate, fostering employees' sense of security and belonging. Hence, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

**H2:** Compensation has a positive and significant influence on the job satisfaction of tourism and hospitality undergraduate students.

### **2.4 Communication (COM)**

Communication is vital in shaping job satisfaction for undergraduate students entering this field (Mutanga, Piyose, & Ndovela, 2023; Shi, 2023). There has been consistent research showing that communication impacts job performance, organizational commitment, and overall job satisfaction in the workplace (Enyan, Bangura, Mangu, & Abban, 2023; Hidayat & Tannady, 2023). Communication in the tourism and hospitality industry encompasses interactions with colleagues, customers, and management. Transparent and fearless communication has been associated with meaningful work, notably contributing to job satisfaction (Singha, 2024). In a study by Bae et al. (2023), effective communication was identified as one of the prime factors in reducing job-related stress among hospitality employees, thereby contributing to higher job satisfaction. In Bangladesh, Khaliq, Kayani, and Mir (2020) found that the tourism industry is heavily reliant on teamwork and customer interaction, strong communication skills among staff can lead to better service delivery, enhancing job satisfaction. Furthermore, customer service roles require excellent communication skills within the industry (Rasal, Sukrana, & Al Naiem, 2021). Research indicates that when employees receive regular feedback, they feel more valued and connected to their organization (Sharma, 2021).

Furthermore, customer service roles require excellent communication skills within the industry. As highlighted by Ichdan (2024), positive customer communication enhances service quality, improving job performance and overall employee satisfaction. Thus, according to Ubaidillah, Hadi, and Septyarini (2024), effective communication influences job satisfaction directly and indirectly through its impact on job performance. Therefore, the hypothesis can be:

**H3:** Communication has a positive and significant influence on the job satisfaction of tourism and hospitality undergraduate students.

### **2.5 Company Policy (CP)**

A company's policies are rules, guidelines, and procedures; these affect how employees feel about their work and how pleased they are with their jobs. Kong, Jiang, Chan, and Zhou (2018) studied job satisfaction in the hospitality and tourism business. They found that several influencing factors, such as organizational support, culture, and policies, are present. Researchers have revealed that work processes, health and insurance plans, leave policies, rewards and future prospects, business vision, and work procedures all impact employees' satisfaction at work (Islam, Rasul, & Ullah, 2012). Therefore, positive relationships with co-workers, advancement opportunities, and employment stability all contribute to job satisfaction (Bhardwaj, Mishra, & Jain, 2021). Students' attitudes and career choices in the tourism sector are positively influenced by factors including high wages, company image, job stability, and proper placement policies (Akter, Gafur, & Al Hossien, 2024). Furthermore, it is important to determine which aspects of wellness policy are most likely to lead to happy employees. Still, a favorable correlation exists between wellness initiatives at work and job satisfaction (Shertzer, Zur, &

Ragones, 2022). Organizations can enhance employee well-being and retention by aligning their policies with employee needs and expectations (Moro, Ramos, & Rita, 2021). Consequently, it is possible to put up the following hypothesis:

**H4:** Company policy has a positive and significant influence on the job satisfaction of tourism and hospitality undergraduate students.

### **2.6 Work Itself (WI)**

The term "work itself" encompasses the various obligations, responsibilities, and tasks of an individual's occupation. The employee's duties and tasks essential to their role within a company should be included. Researchers have found that employees with a positive work attitude indicate significantly greater job satisfaction than those with a negative work attitude (Ahmad, Ahmad, & Shah, 2010). Moreover, the tourism and hospitality industries provide various exciting and challenging professions, from operational duties and visitor engagement to front- and back-of-house duties (Rasal et al., 2021). For workers to feel satisfied in their jobs, they should be doing things that they actually love and find enjoyable. According to Grobelna and Dolot (2018), when employees can focus on the aspects of their jobs that they enjoy, they are more likely to feel fulfilled in their jobs. Furthermore, people's feelings of purpose and job satisfaction rise when they truly connect to their work and realize how their efforts positively improve guests' experiences (Omar, Rafie, & Selo, 2020). Their job becomes more meaningful due to this relationship, which enhances the workplace atmosphere and inspires employees (Sibanyoni, Tshipala, & Venter, 2024). Ultimately, satisfied employees who recognize the worth of their service will perform better at work and experience greater job satisfaction. As such, the following hypothesis can be developed:

**H5:** Work itself has positive and significant influences on the job satisfaction of tourism and hospitality undergraduate students.

### **2.7 Opportunities (OP)**

Opportunities for growth and development are essential components of job satisfaction. The term "opportunity" describes the quality of a job that allows employees to obtain whatever they need in terms of resources for career development, accomplishing a job, and being appreciated (Albalawi, Naughton, Elayan, & Sleimi, 2019). This is also one of the crucial components that will help employees determine how they really feel about their jobs and future prospects at the organization. Research by Chit et al. (2024) indicates that a healthy work-life balance, professional development possibilities, and rewards and recognition significantly impact job satisfaction. Employees usually feel motivated and invested in their careers when they are given the chance to work in a department that best suits them, where their interests and skills match, and where they can express their abilities without worrying about losing their jobs. The individual is motivated to give their all and devote themselves fully to their work when they feel secure, and their interests are in line. Consequently, they are more likely to excel and achieve higher levels of productivity and job satisfaction. Employee development through training and learning opportunities significantly enhances job satisfaction (Tripathi & Chaturvedi, 2023). Job satisfaction in tourism and hospitality students is determined by numerous things, including job opportunities and organizational features (El-Said & Aziz, 2022). Studies indicate that when students anticipate opportunities for decent employment upon graduation, they are more motivated to balance their academic pursuits with potential career paths (Iqbal, Aziz, Farooqi, & Ali, 2016). This motivation increases further when they believe that the experience gained from part-time jobs will help them secure their desired careers in the future (Atay & Yildirim, 2010). Therefore, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

**H6:** Opportunities have positive and significant influences on the job satisfaction of tourism and hospitality undergraduate students.

Figure 1 presents the complete research model, encompassing all hypotheses.

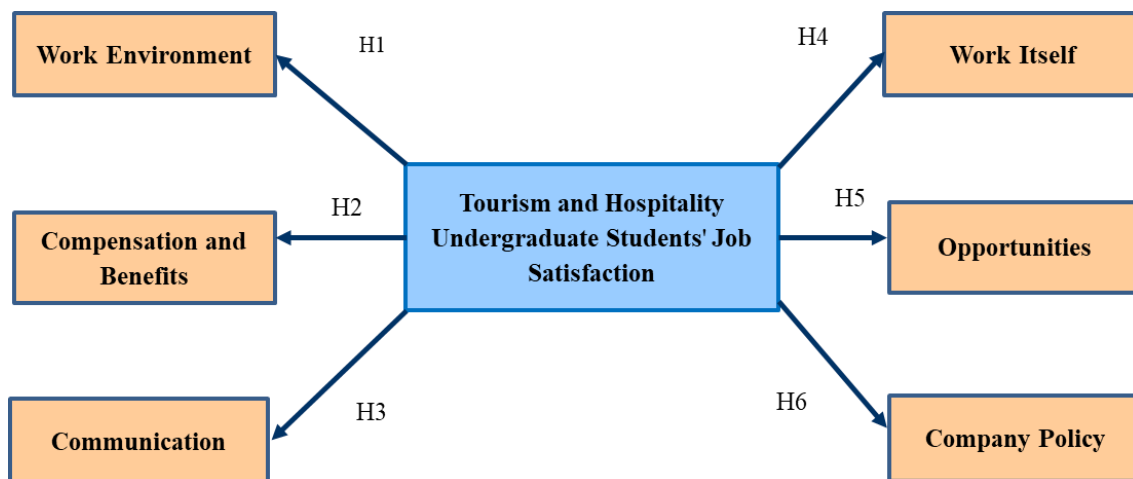


Figure 1. Hypothesized research model.

### 3. Research methodology

#### 3.1 Data collection, sampling, and sample description

A personal interview technique was employed to collect primary data (Ruslin, Mashuri, Rasak, Alhabsyi, & Syam, 2022). This approach allowed for direct interaction with participants, ensuring a higher response rate and the opportunity to clarify any questions immediately. Data was gathered from five universities offering undergraduate tourism and hospitality management programs. The study targeted those students who enrolled in the said program and are working either on a part-time or full-time basis alongside their studies. The non-probability convenience sampling method was applied where respondents were selected based on ease of access and availability to respond to the survey (Scholtz, 2021). Data was collected from each participant after obtaining their full consent.

The survey took place between April 1, 2024, and May 30, 2024. During this period, the authors visited each of the five institutions and distributed questionnaires among the students. A total of 124 students filled out the survey. After collecting completed surveys, the data were thoroughly checked for completeness and correctness. Due to missing responses and other relevant concerns, 16 questions were omitted from the final analysis (Taherdoost, 2021). As a result, the final sample size consisted of 108 valid responses. According to Green (1991), the minimum sample size advised for multiple regression analysis is  $N \geq 50 + 8m$ , where  $m$  represents the number of predictors. This calculation suggests 98 minimum sample size for this study, with six independent variables. The collected sample size of 108 exceeds this threshold, indicating that it is sufficient for the analysis conducted in this study (Pallant, 2020). A pilot study involving the first 10 respondents was implemented to validate the questionnaire's effectiveness and consistency. Participants completed an assessment to verify their grasp of each inquiry. This process facilitated the refinement of question formulation, lucidity, relevance, and coherence throughout the survey instrument (Mehendale & Patil, 2024). The analysis was conducted using the IBM SPSS 25 software. **Figure 2** represents the research framework and methodology.

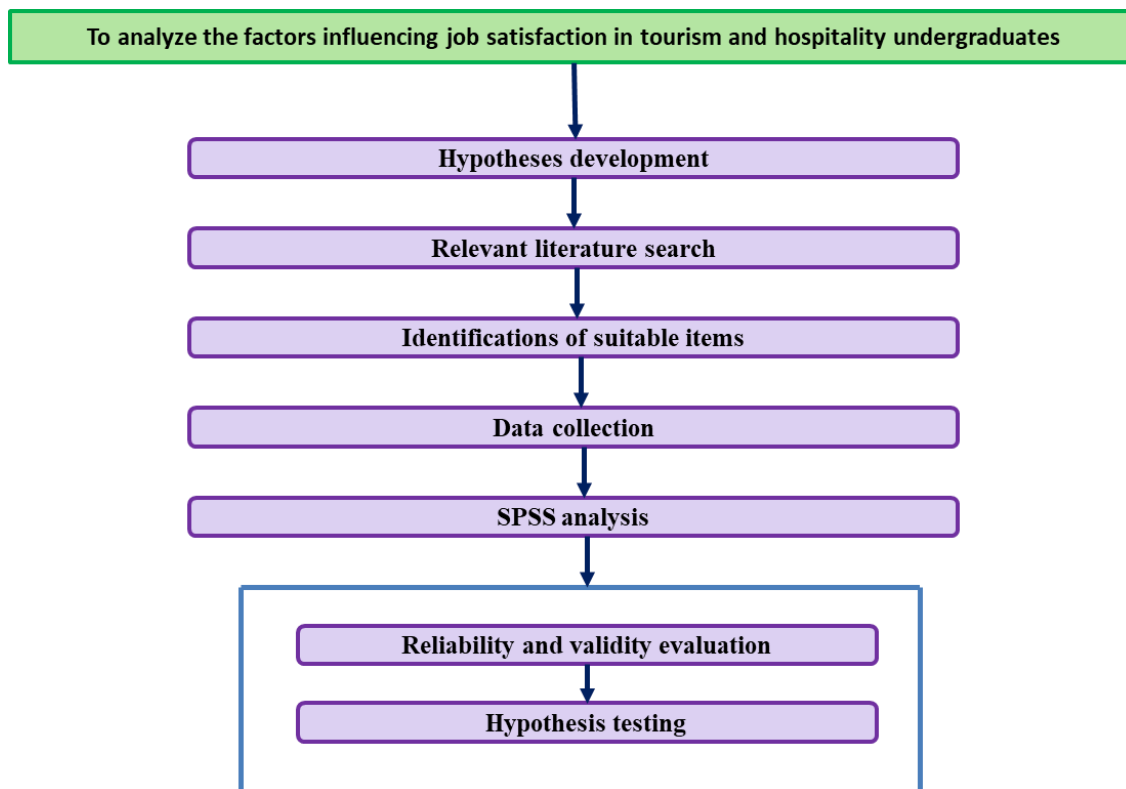


Figure 2. Research framework and methodology.

### 3.2 Questionnaire and measurement drivers

Researchers designed a well-structured questionnaire to obtain data on job satisfaction from undergraduates enrolled in tourism and hospitality programs who are also currently employed (Bihu, 2021). The responses of these students were collected using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating "Highly Dissatisfied" and 5 indicating "Highly Satisfied" (Sukrana, Hassan, Jui, Shakur, Debnath & Bari, 2025). The questionnaire consisted of 30 items categorized under seven variables designed to investigate various elements of job satisfaction among undergraduate students. To measure job satisfaction completely, the variables and their corresponding items for this study were meticulously derived from an extensive literature review. Key variables identified as determinants of job satisfaction (JBS) included work environment (WE), compensation and benefits (COB), communication (COM), opportunities (OP), work itself (WI), and company policy (CP). These constructs were informed by previous research conducted by Belias, Rossidis, Papademetriou, and Mantas (2022), Echor and Lohor (2022), Heimerl et al. (2020), Verčić (2021), Pratama, Suwarni, and Handayani (2022), and others. Additionally, the measure of job satisfaction (JOB) itself was grounded in the work of Vinh et al. (2022) and Akgunduz and Eser (2022). **Table 1** in the **Appendix** presents the list of constructs and their corresponding measurement items.

### 3.3 Model of the study

The study examines the relationship between job satisfaction (dependent variable) and six independent variables. This relationship will be modelled using the following equation:

$$JBS_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (WE_t) + \beta_2 (COB_t) + \beta_3 (COM_t) + \beta_4 (OP_t) + \beta_5 (WI_t) + \beta_6 (CP_t) + E_t$$

In the above equation, JBS represents the measurement of employee satisfaction. The term  $\beta_0$  is the intercept of the model, while  $\beta_k$  ( $K= 1, 2, \dots, 6$ ) are the coefficients to be estimated, and E denotes the error term of the equation. Each variable is measured at a specific time t.

## 4. Results and discussions

### 4.1 Respondents' demographic analysis

Numerical methods were utilized to summarize the information from the data set in an organized manner. Among the 108 responses, there were 76 males and 32 females. The majority number of

students (73%) were between the ages of 19 and 25, and a significant portion (41%) were final-year students. Regarding employment, most students (32%) work in the hotel industry, with restaurants coming in second (24%). **Table 1** represents the respondents' demographic profile.

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	76	70.4
	Female	32	29.6
Age	19-25	79	73.1
	26 or above	29	26.9
Current year of Study	First Year	8	7.4
	Second Year	21	19.4
	Third Year	33	30.6
	Final Year	46	41.7
Types of organizations	Hotel	35	32.4
	Restaurant	26	24.1
	Tour and Travel Agency	20	18.5
	Resort	6	5.6
	Event Management Firm	8	7.4
	Others	13	12.0

#### 4.2 Reliability statistics

A reliability test measures the internal consistency of a questionnaire and identifies items that may be omitted (Sukrana, Haque, & Jui, 2023). In this study, an analysis of the questionnaire's reliability was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha (Amirrudin, Nasution, & Supahar, 2021). As shown in the table below, Cronbach's Alpha values are summarized for each variable. The results indicate that the factor "Opportunities," which includes four items, has the highest Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.903. Conversely, the factor "Work Itself," also comprising four items, has the lowest Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.760. All other factors in the study have Cronbach's Alpha values greater than 0.70. According to the general guideline, where a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.70 is considered acceptable, 0.80 is better, and 0.90 is excellent, all factors in the questionnaire are deemed reliable (Nawi, Tambi, Samat, & Mustapha, 2020). The reliability statistics are presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Reliability Statistics

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Job Satisfaction (Dependent Variable)	0.844	4
Work Environment	0.856	5
Compensation and Benefits	0.787	5
Communication	0.892	4
Opportunities	0.903	4
Work Itself	0.760	4
Company Policy	0.800	4

#### 4.3 Multiple regression analysis

Multiple linear regression is a statistical technique to analyze the relationship between one dependent variable and independent variables. It is extensively used in various disciplines, such as economics, engineering, and social science, to provide insights into the relationships between variables, make forecasts, and support decision-making (Sun, Wang, Zhang, & Zuo, 2023). To examine the impact of

work environment, compensation, communication, opportunities, work itself, and company policy on job satisfaction, multiple regression analysis was employed. Job satisfaction served as the dependent variable, while the aforementioned factors were considered independent variables. The results are displayed in **Table 3, 4** and **5** where **Table 3** indicates a strong relationship between the independent and dependent variables, with R-squared equalling 0.836, suggesting that 83.6% of the variance in job satisfaction can be explicated by the combined effects of the included predictors. A Durbin-Watson value of 2.228 confirms the absence of autocorrelation in the residuals, satisfying a key assumption of the regression model.

Table 3. Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
0.914	0.836	0.826	1.62407	2.228

The F-test in **Table 4** showed that the F-statistic was 85.764 and  $p < 0.05$ . Hence, the linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables is significant. The result supports the model, which indicates that a combination of independent variables explains a substantial portion of the variance in the dependent variable.

Table 4. ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1357.260	6	226.210	85.764	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	266.397	101	2.638		
Total	1623.657	107			
Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction					
Predictors: (Constant), Work Environment, Compensation, Communication, Opportunities, Work Itself, Company Policy					

Table 5. Hypothesis Result

Hypotheses	Relations	B	t	P – values	Result
H1	WE → JBS	-0.023	-0.349	0.728	Not Supported
H2	COB → JBS	0.150	2.962	0.004	Supported
H3	COM → JBS	0.219	2.634	0.010	Supported
H4	OP → JBS	0.174	2.438	0.017	Supported
H5	WI → JBS	0.430	5.938	0.000	Supported
H6	CP → JBS	0.029	0.376	0.708	Not Supported

Note:  $p < 0.05$ ; WE= Work Environment, COB= Compensation and Benefits, COM= Communication, OP= Opportunities, WI= Work Itself, CP= Company Policy, JBS= Job Satisfaction.

To determine the impact of each predictor on job satisfaction, regression coefficients were calculated and the results are presented in **Table 5**.  $H_1$  predicted a positive relationship between work environment and job satisfaction. However, the results indicated no significant effect of work environment on job satisfaction ( $\beta = -0.023, t = -0.349, p = 0.728$ ). Therefore,  $H_1$  was not supported.  $H_2$  posited a positive association between compensation and benefits and job satisfaction. The findings supported this hypothesis, demonstrating a significant positive relationship between compensation and benefits and job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.150, t = 2.962, p = 0.004$ ).  $H_3$  proposed a positive relationship between communication and job satisfaction. Consistent with the hypothesis, communication was found to have a significant and positive influence on job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.219, t = 2.634, p = 0.010$ ).  $H_4$  predicted a positive association between opportunities and job satisfaction. The results supported  $H_4$ ,

indicating a significant positive relationship between opportunities and job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.174, t = 2.438, p = 0.017$ ).  $H_5$  hypothesized a positive relationship between work itself and job satisfaction. This hypothesis was supported by the significant and positive relationship between the two variables ( $\beta = 0.430, t = 5.938, p = 0.000$ ).  $H_6$  predicted a positive relationship between company policy and job satisfaction. Contrary to the hypothesis, company policy was found to have no significant effect on job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.029, t = 0.376, p = 0.708$ ). Consequently,  $H_6$  was not supported.

#### **4.4 Discussion**

This study proposed and verified hypotheses to explain the factors (work environment, compensation and benefits, communication, opportunities, work itself, and company policy) that influence tourism and hospitality undergraduate students' job satisfaction in Bangladesh. Data collected from five universities offering tourism and hospitality management programs revealed significant relationships between these variables. The study developed six hypotheses about the relationship between the independent variables (work environment, compensation and benefits, communication, opportunities, work itself, and company policy) and the dependent variable (job satisfaction). The findings discovered strong positive correlations between compensation and benefits, communication, opportunities, and work itself with job satisfaction. Therefore, the second hypothesis  $H_2$ , the third hypothesis  $H_3$ , the fourth hypothesis  $H_4$  and the fifth hypothesis  $H_5$  have been accepted. These outcomes are consistent with prior studies, which found that adequate salary, good communication, opportunity for progress, and fulfilling work content correlate with greater job satisfaction levels among employees (Heimerl et al., 2020; Verčič, 2021). Fair remuneration and benefits packages, in particular, assist in relieving financial stress, whereas efficient communication lowers uncertainty and promotes a happy work atmosphere (Jolly, McDowell, Dawson, & Abbott, 2021). Moreover, opportunities for advancement and skill enhancement motivate employees, while engaging and challenging work tasks boost job satisfaction (Lehtonen, Nokelainen, Rintala, & Puhakka, 2021).

Surprisingly, undergraduate tourism and hospitality students' job satisfaction does not appear to be significantly affected by work environment or company policy. So, the first hypothesis  $H_1$  and the sixth hypothesis  $H_6$  have not been accepted. Undergraduate employment is a lot more short-term than the graduate job market, so students work for the immediate benefits and learning opportunities without considering the long-term factors like work environment and company policy, which might explain this unexpected result. In addition, the high turnover common among undergraduates may cause them to be less exposed to different kinds of work environments and company culture, making this factor seem less relevant to them when assessing job satisfaction.

Although a pleasant working atmosphere is commonly cited as important for job satisfaction, previous research also validates our results. For instance, Enzelina, Dlyaulhak, Nabillah, and Nurdiana (2024) findings contradict the fact that the work environment is not a significant contributor to job satisfaction. These results are consistent with the study findings, showing that the workplace has little to no impact on job satisfaction in this situation. Furthermore, another study found that company policy does not significantly impact job satisfaction. Policy may contribute indirectly to performance through employee job satisfaction, but it doesn't appear to have a direct effect on job satisfaction itself (Jawaad, Saputra, & Elorza, 2022). In order to investigate these insights further, the study developed a plot to better understand the potential reasons for these unexpected findings.

#### **4.5 Theoretical implications**

The current study supports the existing tourism literature by identifying the level of relationship between various factors that influence undergraduate students' job satisfaction. To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the first study that assesses tourism and hospitality undergraduates' job satisfaction in the Bangladeshi context, thus responding to a meaningful space in the literature. It advances the theoretical understanding by drawing on localized perception and lays a foundation for further cross-cultural and comparative studies.

This research also contributes the influencing insights into the tourism and hospitality industry to ensure tourism undergraduates' job satisfaction. If the employees are satisfied with their pleasing employment conditions, that contributes to SDG 8 (**Decent Work and Economic Growth**) by fostering productive employment and decent work for all. This, in turn, will impact the overall sustainability of the industry.

#### ***4.6 Managerial implications***

It is crucial for industry stakeholders to know how undergraduate students in tourism and hospitality feel about their jobs in order to optimize recruitment strategies, bolster employee retention, and make the tourism industry more sustainable for both employees and tourists. There are several key factors that make tourism and hospitality careers attractive to undergraduates. These include opportunities for career progression, a positive work environment, a supportive organizational culture, and fair compensation. It is, therefore, such points that employers can use to compose messages when trying to recruit prospective graduates. This way, their attractiveness to young professionals who join the field will increase by aligning the job opportunities with values and goals that attract new talent.

A comprehensive onboarding and training program development can address undergraduate students' specific needs and expectations. To get exposure to industry challenges, mentorship programs and hands-on training in guest service skills could be included. By providing proper support and training from the outset, employers can easily increase job satisfaction and diminish the turnover issue among new hires. In order to motivate employees and enhance their commitment to long-term career goals within an organization, structured training programs and multidisciplinary experiences should be communicated and consistently promoted during recruitment.

## **5. Conclusion**

### ***5.1 Conclusion and recommendations***

This study investigated the factors influencing job satisfaction among undergraduate tourism and hospitality students employed part-time or full-time in Bangladesh. The research concentrated on the impact of work environment, compensation and benefits, communication, opportunities, and the nature of the work itself on job satisfaction.

The study findings show that compensation and benefits, communication, growth opportunities, and work itself are the most influential factors among the students of tourism and hospitality to feel satisfied with their jobs. Satisfied workers are those who know their job description, enjoy their work, find ways to develop themselves personally and professionally and show enthusiasm for performing well. Hence, job satisfaction plays a vital role in motivating employees toward productivity and engagement and also encourages them to stay longer in their roles, which is beneficial for the industry's sustainability. So, the tourism and hospitality industry should provide employees with competitive pay and benefits to improve job satisfaction. The awareness and open communications strategy also need to be considered. Equally, attention has to be given to opportunities that would allow employees to improve themselves and advance their careers. A motivated workforce can bring significant benefits to employees, the organization, and the overall tourism industry.

Even though the work environment did not rank highly in the study, creating a positive workplace atmosphere is needed to retain both full-time and part-time student employees in the tourism and hospitality industries. Organizations should therefore continue their efforts to provide a caring and team-oriented work environment to ensure increased job satisfaction and greater efficiency among employees. As well as the study indicating an insignificant effect of company policy on job satisfaction, organizations should not overlook its importance. In order to promote long-term engagement and staff dedication, a well-written company policy may be essential. A clear and supportive policy provides stability and a sense of purpose for undergraduate students, and they may become interested in pursuing long-term careers with the organization after witnessing these practices. For this reason, companies in the tourism and hospitality industries should invest in thoughtful company policies to support current employees as well as encourage future employees. By tackling these crucial elements, companies may

reduce layoffs and foster a more committed and engaged workforce. Overall, industry performance and sustainability will both be enhanced by these coordinated efforts.

### 5.2 Limitations and future research

Even though this study has provided valuable insights, some limitations necessitate further investigation. First, the sample was restricted to five universities located mainly in Dhaka City, which may limit the validity of the findings to a larger population of tourism and hospitality undergraduate students across Bangladesh. Nevertheless, the results offer a foundation for subsequent research on a larger scale. Additional perspectives can be gained by comparing perceptions and attitudes among tourism undergraduates from different countries or regions. Moreover, the study's reliance on a convenience sample method may have introduced bias, as this approach does not guarantee representativeness. Increasing generalizability would be achieved through a more rigorous sampling technique in future research.

Besides job satisfaction, other job-related attitudes deserve consideration, such as job involvement, engagement, and performance. Future research could explore how tourism HR professionals address these additional factors to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of undergraduate job-holding students in the tourism and hospitality industry.

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## APPENDIX

**Table 1:** List of constructs and measurement items

Constructs	Items and Statements	Sources
<b>Work Environment</b>	WE1: I am provided with adequate tools, equipment, and safety measures.	(Belias et al., 2022; Echor & Lohor, 2022; Heimerl et al., 2020)
	WE2: I am quite happy with my supervisor.	
	WE3: It feels easy working with my co-worker.	
	WE4: My physical working circumstances are great.	
	WE5: I am convinced my place of work is a safe atmosphere.	
<b>Compensation and Benefits</b>	COB1: I am convinced that my salary scale has a positive impact on my employee productivity.	(Adanlawo & Nkomo, 2023; Heimerl et al., 2020)
	COB2: I am satisfied with the indirect compensation program including employee welfare (insurance, medical allowances).	
	COB3: I am satisfied with my promotion prospects.	
	COB4: The six-month and twelve-month employee award programs are very stimulating for me.	
	COB5: The increment system of salary is clear and satisfying to me.	
<b>Communication</b>	COM1: I am very friendly with my co-workers and vice versa.	(Glaveli, Grigoroudis, &

	COM2: I think that there is a proper channel of horizontal and vertical communication.	Manolitzas, 2019; Verčič, 2021)
	COM3: It is easy for me to communicate with my supervisor at any time.	
	COM3: I am involved in decision-making that affects my work positively.	
	COM4: My opinions are free to be expressed without fear of repercussions.	
<b>Company Policy</b>	CP1: I am pleased with the organizational culture that my superiors, co-workers, and peers share.	(Jawaad et al., 2022; Pratama et al., 2022)
	CP2: I feel that my organization's beliefs are compatible with my own.	
	CP3: I believe that my organization promotes a good work-life balance for its workers.	
	CP4: I feel there is a high level of transparency and communication in my organization.	
<b>Work Itself</b>	WI1: My work is both fulfilling and stimulating.	(Glaveli et al., 2019; Heimerl et al., 2020)
	WI2: My job responsibilities are well-structured.	
	WI3: I get the chance to work in my preferred department.	
	WI4: In my present position, I have not been required to work lengthy hours.	
<b>Opportunities</b>	OP1: I'm optimistic that I will be able to obtain an abroad appointment.	(Belias et al., 2022)
	OP2: I feel fulfilled with the training and learning opportunities.	
	OP3: I get opportunities to contribute to the organization's goals.	
	OP4: I feel that I have ample opportunities to improve my professional skills.	
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>	JBS1: I am pleased with my job since my company's policies are suitable.	(Akgunduz & Eser, 2022; Vinh et al., 2022)
	JBS2: I am satisfied with the working conditions provided by my organization.	
	JBS3: I am satisfied with my organization's pay system.	
	JBS4: I am delighted with the communication system developed inside my company.	

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