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<https://doi.org/10.3126/jtd.v8i1.95897>

**Journal of  
Training and Development**  
2026, Volume 8  
ISSN: 2392-456X (Print)  
ISSN: 2392-4587 (Online)

# Factors Influencing Students' Choice of Bachelor of Hotel Management Program in Nepal

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## Abstract

*The choice of academic programs for higher education is a crucial decision after school for students. It is one of the difficult decisions they make as they face dilemmas for choosing a right program which is influenced by different factors. Similar is the case with Bachelor of Hotel Management (BHM) students. Remarkably, little is known about the reasons behind the BHM choice in Nepal. With this consideration, a survey was conducted among 251 Bachelor of Hotel Management students in Kathmandu, Nepal. For this, exploratory factor analysis was used for data analysis. The result revealed four components: i) self-interest, ii) career development perception, iii) outcome expectations, and iv) social pressure. The findings of this study can help students and their parents to understand dimensions of BHM choice. The result can also benefit hotel management schools to counsel the students during the admission process.*

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*Keywords:* Academic program choice, Higher education, hotel management

## Introduction

Students choose academic programs for their higher education after schooling. However, it is not easy for them to choose academic program. They often face the biggest dilemmas and challenges in choosing the right program. The right choice can lead to a successful career and satisfaction. However, the wrong choice may lead to dissatisfaction and college dropout (Donnelly, 2015). In this connection, some factors influence choosing the right program for them. With this consideration, many researchers have suggested many factors influencing academic program choice. For example, Ouano et al. (2019) explored that

location, educational facilities, cost, and employment opportunities influence the course choice decision. For the authors, students' interest, the reputation of the program, prospects in the labor market, parents' pressure, teachers' advice, following the friends' circle, tuition fee, financial situation, social background, location, and students' expectations provide different weights in choosing the course.

The choice of academic program is influenced by intrinsic, extrinsic, and subjective norms (Awadallah & Elgharbawy, 2020). Intrinsic factors like self-interest, career aspiration, and self-efficacy are self-motivating factors of

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course choice. Researchers like Owino and Odundo (2016) and Awadallah and Elgharbawy (2020) suggested intrinsic factors as influential factors in students' choice of academic program. The study of Owino and Odundo (2016) revealed that one of the factors in the choice of History as an undergraduate was personal interest. Like intrinsic factors, researchers suggested the influential role of extrinsic factors on students' choice of academic program. Extrinsic factors like good career prospects and anticipated future earnings externally influence students in their choice of academic program (Ouano et al., 2019). Good career prospects and anticipated future earnings are examples of extrinsic factors (Awadallah & Elgharbawy, 2020). The study by Awadallah and Elgharbawy (2020) claimed that students choose the accounting major in Qatar because they perceive accounting as a distinctive qualification that makes them qualify for better job prospects after their degree. Many researchers like Eremie and Chiamala (2019) and Awadallah and Elgharbawy (2020) revealed subjective norms as influential factors parallel to intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Subjective norms like family members, peer groups, and teachers are social influence on choice of academic program (Awadallah & Elgharbawy, 2020). The study of Eremie and Chiamaka (2019) on Obio/ Akpor local government area of River State suggested that family influences students' choice of study.

Hotel management is one of the higher education courses running in Nepal. Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management (NATHM) is first institution to initiate a planned effort to produce human resources in the hospitality sector in 1972 (Thapa & Panta, 2019). A formal three-year bachelor's program in hotel management was started in 1999 by Tribhuvan University, and other bachelor programs in hospitality management from 2003 (Thapa & Panta, 2019). Many Nepali universities like Tribhuvan University, Purbanchal University, Mid-Western University, Kathmandu University, and Pokhara University offer the BHM program.

The students choose BHM for many reasons. According to Qie et al. (2017), some factors influencing the student to choose a career in

hotel management in Guangzhou, China, are student occupational aspiration, support from parents, cultural values, and career guidance and consultation. Similarly, the study of Lee et al. (2018) suggested six motivational factors influencing hospitality and tourism management choices among U.S. undergraduates. The factors are self-actualization, ease of study, job possibility, abroad experience, attractive field, and external influence. In the case of hotel management, intrinsic factors like personal choice (Briones & Bueno, 2019), extrinsic factors like good career prospects or occupational aspiration (Qie et al., 2017), and subjective norms like parents, faculty members, and advisors (Lee et al., 2018), influence students' choice of an academic program.

### **Objectives**

In the case of Nepal, the recent growth of hotels due to increased investment (Hotel Association of Nepal [HAN], 2022) might increase the demand for hotel management graduates. This leads to a promising career prospect for BHM graduates. However, career prospects might be one of many factors influencing students' choice of hotel management in their higher studies in Nepal. But there are limited studies on factors determining students' choice of BHM in Nepal. Thus, the study's main purpose is to identify different factors motivating students to choose BHM in Kathmandu. To meet the purpose, the research question is "What factors influence students' choice of hotel management in Kathmandu, Nepal?"

### **Conceptual Framework**

Choice refers to the selection of best possible options and is based on individual decision making. Choice is determined by many factors. The context of determinants of the choice of higher education can be best described by Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) and Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA).

### **Social Cognitive Career Theory**

One of the most used theories on higher education choice is Social Cognitive Career Theory. This theory was proposed by Lent et al., which is based on Bandura's Social

Cognitive Theory (as cited in Carrico et al., 2017). SCCT helps to understand how individuals decide on a career, including academic program choice. SCCT is the expanded version of Social Cognitive Theory. SCCT provides cognitive mediators like interest and abilities to influence choice.

SCCT provides contextual factors like interests, values and abilities to influence person for their career choice (Lent et al., 2002). SCCT is used by previous studies which suggest career choice is done based on self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals (Carrico et al., 2017; Nguti et al., 2019; Qui et al., 2017). SCCT provides a higher education choice decision based on self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals. Self-efficacy represents the beliefs held by students that they can perform better with skills they have if they choose certain course. Outcome expectations represent the extrinsic reward in the future, such as a good salary from their choice of course. Personal goals represent students' commitment for doing relevant work.

SCCT suggests that academic program's choice is determined by the perception of student to succeed and their self-efficacy. Students who have high self-efficacy belief in particular field, they are supposed to choose program in line to such fields (Lent et al., 2002). Students believe that such programs are good fit for their career. In alignment to self-efficacy, SCCT purposes that outcome expectations play major role in determining choice of academic program among students (Nguti et al., 2019). Students are motivated to choose courses which lead them to high paying job.

### **Theory of Reasoned Action**

Another prominent social psychological theory on students' choice of higher education or career decision is the Theory of Reasoned Action. According to this theory performance behavior of certain individual is influenced by their attitude towards that behavior and subjective norms (normative component or social norms surrounding the individual) (Muhamad et al., 2020). This theory suggests if student have a positive attitude (belief and willingness to succeed) towards certain course for example BHM and if their surroundings like

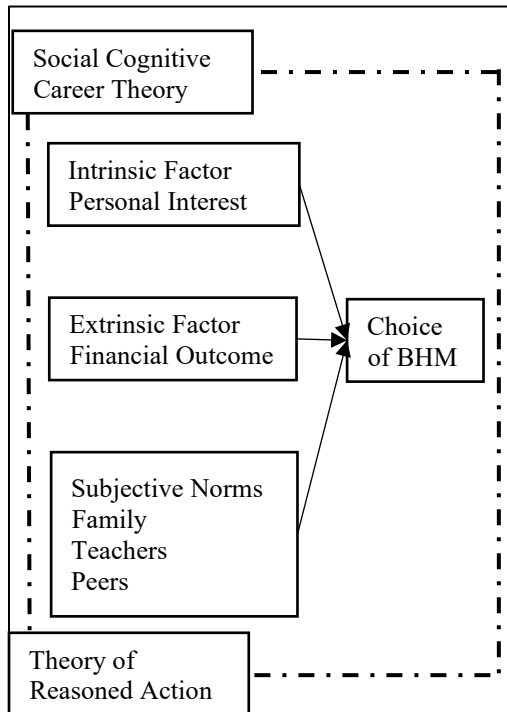
family members, teachers or peers want them to do that course then they become highly motivated to choose BHM course. It gives basic motivation behind choosing certain action (normative action).

Apart from normative component, subjective component can contribute on the choice of individual's action. The TRA helps to analyze individual's behavior based on their motivation to carry out action (Awadallah & Elgharbawy, 2020). Recently Awadallah and Elgharbawy (2020) and Muhamad et al. (2020) used this model to explain the students' choice of higher education.

For academic program choice, TRA suggests that students' attitude towards the certain program influences them to enroll in such programs along with the influence of their surrounding social norms (Awadallah & Elgharbawy, 2020). If students believe that certain program will provide them better outcomes, including knowledge and skills and a good career with greater earning opportunities, they will develop positive attitude towards such a program. Thus, they are more likely to choose such a program. In alignment to attitude, as suggested by Awadallah and Elgharbawy (2020), TRA also suggests that social norms play important role in the students' choice of academic program. If their family, friends or teachers want them to pursue certain academic program, they are more likely to choose such programs.

Thus, this study adopted combined model of SCCT and TRA in the context of this study. The conceptual framework of this study is illustrated in Figure 1. Figure 1 suggests intrinsic factors such as personal interest and self-efficacy, extrinsic factors like financial outcome (good salary expectation) and non-financial outcome (career growth opportunities) and subjective norms like family, teacher, and peers influence students to choose hotel management in their higher education. Intrinsic and extrinsic factors develop the motivation to choose hotel management. Similarly, subjective norms like family, teachers, and peers can influence students to choose hotel management in their higher education.

**Figure 1**  
*Conceptual Framework*



**Methodology**

This study used a survey approach (Creswell, 2009). With the literature review, factors influencing hotel management choice were identified. Questionnaires was adopted and contextualized for understanding each variable of cause and effect for the survey purpose (Shehadeh, 2020). To contextualize the questionnaire in this study, researchers first discussed it with the principals and program coordinators of colleges. Researchers also performed a focus group discussion with three students to understand their choice. The overall Cronbach alpha value of scale is 0.889 ensuring the reliability. Likewise, this study checked content validity, construct validity, and criterion validity. The questionnaire was adopted and localized in Nepal’s context. Also, related literatures were reviewed and many experts were consulted while creating the questionnaire. This ensured the content validity. This study has adopted the questionnaire from Awadallah and Elgharbawy

(2020). Furthermore, for this research the theory of reasoned action and social career cognitive theory was considered while developing the construct of third year students’ choice of hotel management. This ensured construct validity. In order to ensure criterion validity, the result of this study was compared and contrasted with other similar type of studies.

**Respondents and Data Collection**

The survey was done among first year students of Bachelor of Hotel Management in universities in Kathmandu. The total population was 701. And sample size was determined as 249 using formula  $n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$  and  $n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{n_0 - 1}{N}}$  where, N= total population,  $n_0$  is sample size without finite population correction factor, n=corrected sample size (Cochran, 1977). This study used cluster sampling method where colleges are treated as cluster. Researchers of this study visited different academic institutions and collected data from first year students by providing informed consent. Underlying variables were identified using factor analysis. The data were collected from 270. However, there were missing cases. Thus, final 251 data were analyzed.

**Data Analysis: Exploring Factors Determining BHM Choice**

To explore the factors influencing students’ choice of hotel management, this study performed exploratory factor analysis (EFA) because this study adopted others’ scale and modified it. EFA should be performed when researchers adapt or adopt previous scale or modify previous scale with deletion or addition of new items (Yahaya et al., 2018). All the assumption of EFA was fulfilled.

**Results**

After all the assumptions have been addressed and factor extraction method and rotation method have been selected, 21 items were retained under four factors (dimensions) by using the scree plot and Eigen value greater than 1 rule (i.e., K1). Table 1 shows the factors and their eigen values.

**Table 1**

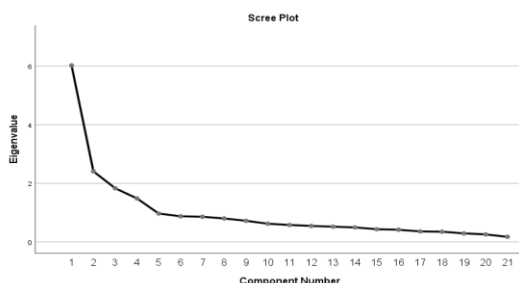
*Factors and their Eigen value*

| Components | Initial Eigen Value |
|------------|---------------------|
| 1          | 6.019               |
| 2          | 2.408               |
| 3          | 1.831               |
| 4          | 1.484               |

Similarly, the scree plot of these four factors is shown in Figure 2

**Figure 2**

*Scree plot*



**Nomenclature of Factors Influencing BHM Choice**

The structure matrix of four factors from the varimax rotation is shown in Table 2. The matrix presented Factor 1 contains seven items, Factor 2 contains six items, Factor 3 contains five items, and finally Factor 4 contains three items. These combine four factors explain 55.92% of the total variance. One of the major tasks of the factor analysis is to give an appropriate and meaningful name to the factor, which should cover all the issues of listed items (Cohen et al., 2018). So, with proper analysis four factors were named. The names of the four factors are as follows: i) Self-interest, ii) Career Development Perception, iii) Outcome Expectations, and iv) Social Pressure.

Self-interest was loaded with seven items. The factor loading ranges from 0.608 to 0.762. These values are above the minimum factor

loading value of 0.5. It has been named Self-interest because items in this factor are related to self interest in pursuing the hotel management in their undergraduate. The four items are related to liking and interest towards hotel management jobs, feeling proud to work in hotel industry, and suitable personality towards hotel management jobs. Similarly, the other two items are about liking to get information and watch hotel-related programs. Finally, the last item is about interest to continue their career in hotel industry. These items concern students' interest (Awadallah & Elgharbawy, 2020) towards joining hotel management. Thus, this factor was named self-interest.

Career development perception was loaded with six items. The factor loading ranges from 0.572 to 0.774. These values are above the minimum factor loading value of 0.5. It has been named Career Development Perception because this factor relates to career development after pursuing hotel management in their undergraduate. The first item shows students' belief in developing their careers in the hotel industry. The second item offers the belief of students in good career opportunities in the hotel industry.

Similarly, the third item relates to students' satisfaction with working in the hotel industry. The fourth item shows students' perception of fun working in the hotel industry. The fifth item shows students' belief in succeeding in the hotel industry job. And finally, the sixth item shows students' belief on utilizing their capacity fully in the hotel industry. These items are concerned with the perception of student on their career development (Twumasi et al., 2018) in hotel industry. Thus, this factor was named career development perception.

Outcome expectation was loaded with five items. The factor loading ranges from 0.640 to 0.776. These values are above the minimum factor loading value of 0.5. It has been named "outcome expectations" because items in this factor relate to job-finding opportunities after pursuing hotel management in their undergraduate. The first item shows students' belief that they can go abroad easily with a hotel management degree. The second item shows

students' belief that they may get a job quickly and easily after graduation. Similarly, the third item is related to easy job opportunities abroad for hotel management graduates. The fourth item shows students' perception of getting a job easily in the hotel industry. And finally, the fifth item shows students' belief in high demand of BHM graduates. These items concern student perception of career opportunities (Twumasi et al., 2018) in hotel industry. Thus, this factor was named as outcome expectations.

Social pressure was loaded with three items. The factor loading ranges from 0.698 to 0.829. These values are above the minimum factor loading value of 0.5. It has been named Social Pressure because items in this factor relate to

**Table 2**

*Factors Influencing BHM Choice.*

| Items  | Factors     |             |       |       |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------|-------|
|  | 1           | 2           | 3     | 4     |
| I like jobs relating to hotel management.                | <b>0.76</b> | 0.22        | 0.13  | 0.01  |
| Continue my career in the hotel industry.                | <b>0.74</b> | 0.11        | -0.05 | 0.09  |
| I am interested to work in the hotel industry.           | <b>0.73</b> | 0.31        | 0.07  | -0.09 |
| I feel proud to work in the hotel industry.              | <b>0.67</b> | 0.24        | 0.17  | 0.01  |
| I like to get information about hotel management.        | <b>0.66</b> | 0.06        | 0.02  | 0.04  |
| My personality matches to hotel management jobs.         | <b>0.65</b> | 0.12        | 0.18  | -0.13 |
| I like to watch hotel related program.                   | <b>0.61</b> | 0.16        | 0.08  | -0.03 |
| I believe I can develop my career in the hotel industry. | 0.36        | <b>0.78</b> | -0.01 | 0.04  |
| Good career opportunities in hotel industry.             | 0.07        | <b>0.72</b> | 0.26  | -0.08 |
| I get satisfied working in the hotel industry.           | 0.37        | <b>0.66</b> | 0.01  | -0.10 |
| It's fun to work in the hotel industry.                  | 0.03        | <b>0.65</b> | 0.10  | 0.06  |
| I believe I can succeed in the hotel industry.           | 0.33        | <b>0.61</b> | 0.21  | -0.09 |
| I can fully utilize my capacity in the hotel industry.   | 0.33        | <b>0.57</b> | 0.11  | 0.05  |

pressure from others in pursuing the hotel management in their undergraduate studies. The first and third items show the influence of peers in joining the hotel management. The second item offers the influence of school-teachers in entering the hotel industry. These items concern others' influence (Awadallah & Elgharbawy, 2020) in joining hotel management. Thus, this factor was named social pressure.

Additionally, internal consistency of the four factors identified from the PCA was assessed by Cronbach's alpha. Table 4 presents the Cronbach's alpha value for all four factors.

*Factors influencing students' ....*

|  |              |              |             |             |
|--|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Easy to go abroad with BHM degree.             | 0.01         | 0.22         | <b>0.77</b> | -0.03       |
| BHM graduates easily get job.                  | 0.21         | 0.05         | <b>0.76</b> | 0.13        |
| I can easily get a job abroad with BHM degree. | 0.08         | 0.30         | <b>0.75</b> | -0.12       |
| It's easy to get job in the hotel industry.    | 0.10         | -0.12        | <b>0.65</b> | 0.11        |
| High demand of employees in the hotel industry | 0.05         | 0.17         | <b>0.64</b> | -0.06       |
| Peer pressure                                  | 0.10         | 0.05         | 0.10        | <b>0.82</b> |
| School teacher encouragement                   | 0.16         | 0.02         | -0.11       | <b>0.72</b> |
| Following friends                              | -0.09        | -0.10        | 0.05        | <b>0.69</b> |
| % Variance                                     | <b>28.66</b> | <b>11.47</b> | <b>8.72</b> | <b>7.07</b> |

*Extraction method: principal component analysis*

*Rotation method: varimax*

*Using cutoff value 0.50*

*The bolded number within each component gives practically significant coefficients with effect sizes larger than .5*

Table 3 shows the internal consistency among the items of each factor identified by EFA. The table also presents the mean score and standard deviation of all four factors. The Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0.607 to 0.845 with a cutoff value 0.7. The factor self-interest has Cronbach's alpha value of 0.845, indicating very good reliability. Likewise, factor career development perception has Cronbach's alpha of 0.814, indicating reliability. Similarly, factor

outcome expectations have Cronbach's alpha value of 0.788. This indicates good reliability. Finally, the last factor, social pressure, has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.607, less than 0.7. However, Hair et al. (2014) suggested that there may be the possibility of low Cronbach's alpha of factors with a smaller number of items. Thus, the fourth factor has moderate reliability and can be used in exploratory analysis (Hair et al., 2014; Hinton et al., 2014).

**Table 3**

*Cronbach's Alpha and Descriptive Statistics of Factors*

| S. N | Factors                       | No. of items | Cronbach's alpha | Mean  | SD       |
|------|-------------------------------|--------------|------------------|-------|----------|
| 1    | Self-interest                 | 7            | 0.845            | 5.303 | 0.889382 |
| 2    | Career Development Perception | 6            | 0.814            | 5.191 | 0.876356 |
| 3    | Outcome expectations          | 5            | 0.788            | 4.368 | 1.306522 |
| 4    | Social Pressure               | 3            | 0.607            | 1.745 | 1.08074  |

SD= Standard Deviation

## Discussion

This study identified four determinants of the students' choice of hotel management. The four identified determinants are: i) Self-Interest, ii) Career Development Perception, iii) Outcome Expectations, and iv) Social Pressure.

Many researchers have agreed on the role of self-interest of students on their choice of higher education. For example, the study of Qie et al. (2017) on students of Guangzhou suggested that students choose hotel management for their self-interest. With the factor analysis, they identified the self-interest of students as one of the main factors for choosing BHM. Most of the students in their study agreed that they chose hotel management independently. Likewise, the study on factors on undergraduate students' choice of business major by Stock and Stock (2019) confirmed that personal interest is a leading factor. Because of their self-interest, students choose business majors in their undergraduate degree. Similarly, the study by Lamichhane et al. (2022) on undergraduate and postgraduate students of business administration at Pokhara University revealed personal interest as one of the influencing factors of business administration choice in higher education. Students choose such a program where they have high personal interest. Lamichhane et al. (2022) agreed that the students chose business administration because of their interest. Similar findings were presented by Abe and Chikoko (2020). In their Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) study, more than 55% of students agreed that they chose STEM based on their personal interest. The passion and desire to work in a certain industry leads student to choose courses related to industry in which student have desire and passion. Likewise, the students of Vehari, Pakistan choose their course because of personal interest as one factor (Humayon et al., 2018). With multiple regression analysis, they claimed that personal interests greatly influence their course choice.

If students choose the higher education of their interest, they become happier (Wright, 2018). The study of Wright (2018) suggested that personal interest needs to fit in the choice of

major in higher education. Their study revealed that students tend to be happier and work in the same field if they choose the major that fits their personal interests. Similarly, they also revealed that students choose a major in which they want to do the job or are interested in working. In this study, many students agreed that they are interested in hotel-related jobs and willing to work in the hotel industry. Likewise, the work of Twumasi et al. (2018) also revealed that personal interest is an influential factor in students' career choices. They contended that student from Switzerland and USA choose courses because of their interest. They choose courses because of their individual desired goals. This study also found that students' passion and desire to work in the hotel industry made them choose BHM for their undergraduate degree. Likewise, personal interest of serving people was the main factor in Nepali medical students choosing medical courses (Hayes & Shakya, 2013). However, in the collectivist country family influence is important in the choice of course (Humayon et al., 2018). But in BHM choice personal interest is greater influencing factor. This suggest growing career opportunities in Nepal which is visible with increase investment in tourism and hotel sector (Adhikari, 2024).

Like self-interest, many researchers confirmed in their study that students choose courses where they aspire to develop their careers. Like, the survey of Qiu et al. (2017) on students of Guangzhou claimed that students choose hospitality management because of their aspiration to develop a career in the hotel industry. Students tend to choose courses where they believe they can develop their career and attend the higher possible position. In the study of Qiu et al. (2017), most students agreed that they aspire to attend top positions in five to ten years if they join hotel management. Similarly, the study of business administration students in the bachelor and master programs of Pokhara University revealed that career advancement is one-factor influencing students' choice of business administration course (Lamichhane et al., 2022). Most students in their study agreed that they chose business administration because they believe there is a career advancement

### *Factors influencing students' ....*

opportunity by doing business administration courses.

Likewise, the study of Twumasi et al. (2018) also suggested that professional development opportunity as one of the factors of career and their college major choice. They found out career development perception influences Chinese student in the choice of academic program, and American students were motivated by strong career maturity (career development process). Similarly, they claimed that Students of Indonesia were also influenced by career development aspirations for their course choice. Students choose courses that enhance their knowledge and skills and help their career development. The study of Abe and Chikoko (2020) claimed that students choose Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects because they believe in STEM courses since they can acquire knowledge and skills that help them in their potential development and career development. Students choose courses in which they can unlock their potential and believe they can do well in their future careers. Similarly, the findings of study of Srikanth et al. (2020) claimed that students choose an MBA because of the excellent career development. Students analyze the courses and get enrolled, which have good career growth. A study of Srikanth et al. (2020) revealed that career growth influences student for MBA selection. Most students agreed that they analyzed the course properly and chose MBA as they saw good career growth after doing it. Likewise, the study of Suhi et al. (2022) also revealed that career quality (provides an opportunity to implement creativity and career development) is one factor that influences students to choose careers in social science. They claimed that career development perception positively impacts course selection. If students see good career growth in certain sectors, they are more inclined to choose courses related to them. In India, many choose online courses because of the perceived benefits of career growth in online and digital industries, as online courses add value for career growth (Ray et al., 2019). But in many cases instead of career growth opportunity, the perception of hotel industry as glamorous job may influence student for the

choice of BHM. The study of Coman et al. (2025) also suggested the perceived lifestyle influence students for shaping their professional values.

Numerous studies suggest that students choose such courses where they expect positive outcomes after graduation. The study of Abe and Chikoko (2020) on students at a university in South Africa claimed that output expectancy is one-factor influencing students to choose STEM. Because of the more career opportunities and prospects in STEM, they chose STEM subjects. Similarly, the systematic review study by Twumasi et al. (2018) suggested that output expectations influence students to choose their courses and careers. They claimed that American student chose their career based on output expectations as one of the factors. Similarly, one of the factors students choose an MBA is career opportunities after MBA (Srikanth et al., 2020). Their study claimed that students analyze different subjects and choose courses that can provide them with jobs easily after an MBA. In this study, many students also agreed that they choose hotel management because of the expectation of getting job easily.

Likewise, the study by Awadallah and Elgharbawy (2020) claimed that students choose an accounting major in Qatar because they perceive accounting as a distinctive qualification and makes them qualify for better job prospects after the degree. They suggested outcome expectations of a job after an accounting degree significantly influence accounting choice as a major. Similarly, the study of Suhi et al. (2022) also claimed that one of the factors that Bangladeshi students choose social science is job prospects with good financial incentives. They suggested that the relationship between output expectation of job and course choice is significant. A similar kind of finding was revealed by Pratiwi et al. (2020). They claimed that output expectation influences Indonesian students' choice of dentistry. Students believed that they would get jobs easily after dentistry. Thus, they choose dentistry. Similarly, the study of Najam and Ghazal (2022) on Pakistani students claimed that output expectations significantly influence them to choose their careers. They suggested

students believed financial stability through a job was one of the outcome expectations for their choice.

Unlike this study, the students of Vehari, Pakistan, chose their course because of family influence as one factor (Humayon et al., 2018). Using multiple regression, they claimed that families greatly influence their course choices. Similarly, the study by Awadallah and Elgharbawy (2020) argued that students choose accounting majors in Qatar because of their family members. They suggested parental pressure significantly influences accounting choice. Similarly, family influences students' STEM choices in South Africa (Abe & Chikoko, 2020). They claimed that many students agreed that their family strongly influences their STEM choice. Similarly, the study of Qiu et al. (2017) on students of Guangzhou suggested that students choose hotel management by little influence of parents. With the factor analysis, they identified support from parents of students as one of the factors for choosing BHM. Most of the students in their study agreed that they choose hotel management independently. Students choose courses because their families have expectations of them. The findings of Twumasi et al. (2018) also revealed that students from collectivist cultures choose courses because of their family expectations. Their study suggested that parental influence significantly influences the students' choice of higher education and career. Likewise, the study of Ngussa and Charles (2019) on students at secondary schools in Meru District, Tanzania revealed that parents' significant role in students' career choice preparedness. Similarly, the study of Eremie and Chiamaka (2019) suggested a significant influence of family on students' choice of study. But in case of BHM in Nepal, hotel management is still not preferred career among parents. Thus, family influence is not significant in BHM choice.

In line with this study, many researchers suggested the peers or friends influence on the students' choice of course in higher education. The study of Awadallah and Elgharbawy (2020) claimed that many students choose accounting major in Qatar because of the peer pressure. They suggested peer pressure

significantly influences accounting choice. Similarly, the study of Mtemeri (2020) suggested that peers significantly influence students' career choice. However, some researchers claimed that friends and peers do not influence students' choice of course. The study of Eremie and Chiamaka (2019) suggested there is no significant influence of peers and best friends on students' choice of study. Similarly, in line to this study, many researchers claimed that choice of higher education is influenced by teachers. The study of Abe and Chikoko (2020) claimed that teachers significantly influence students' STEM choices in South Africa. They claimed that many students agreed that their teacher strongly influences their STEM choice. Similarly, the study of Nagireddy (2021) suggested that teacher and student relationships play a major role in students' choice of course and career. Nagireddy claimed that teachers' observation of students' attitudes and behavior helps them properly guide students in their higher education choices, leading to a promising career. Likewise, the study of Ngussa and Charles (2019) on students of secondary schools in Meru District, Tanzania suggested that teachers are influential on students' course choice. Thus, the findings of this study is similar with most of the existing literature like Nagireddy (2021), and Ngussa and Charles (2019), which suggests that peers and teachers have significant influence on students' choice. Some researchers claimed the insignificant role of peers for career growth. Unlike the result of this study, many researchers such as Twumasi et al. (2018), Qiu et al. (2017), Awadallah & Elgharbawy (2020), and Humayon et al. (2018) found that family members influence on course choice. In the case of Nepal, hotels and hospitality jobs are not considered socially prestigious. Thus, parents are not influenced to choose hotel management.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

Academic program choice is a complex process. Many factors influence students to choose academic programs. BHM is one of the academic programs running in Nepal to produce graduate for hotel industry. The objective of this paper was to identify factors

influencing BHM choice in Kathmandu, Nepal. This study identified self-interest, career development perception, outcome expectations, and social pressure as determinants of BHM choice.

There are certain limitations of this study. First, survey was conducted among students doing their BHM in Kathmandu District only. This hinders the generalizability of this study. Second, this provides the factors quantitatively. But this does not provide how such factors interact for their final decision. Thus, this study lacks subjectivity. Finally, this is cross-sectional study which does not provide the cause-and-effect relationship.

The result of this study can be implied by students planning to do hotel management, parents of the student, academic institutions providing BHM, policy-makers, and future employers. Firstly, the conclusion of this study is applicable to prospective students willing to join hotel management. They can analyze four identified factors and their items, and reflect on whether they are willing to do hotel management. This enhances their chances to make them ready for their undergraduate program. Secondly, the conclusion of this study can be helpful to parents as well. Parents understand that many students joined BHM because of career development perception and outcome expectancy, as a result of this study. They can support their children in choosing hotel management and guiding them properly. Likewise, the findings of the study are helpful to academic institutions that provide BHM. Educational institutions understand the influential factors for the student's choice of BHM. Academic institutions can focus on the needs of existing and future students. They can play a role in developing student's interest in the hospitality industry. They can expose students to their career in the hotel industry and highlight its benefits and positive aspects. The conclusion of this study can help academic institutions advertise and attract students to pursue BHM at their institutions. This result helps academic institutions develop appropriate strategies for promoting their institutions by focusing on the key factors that influence students' choice of BHM. Similarly, the hotel employer can benefit from the findings of this

study. They can understand what students want in the hotel industry career. To attract good human resources, they can get prepared accordingly. Further, the results of this study are helpful for labor market policy-makers. Policy-makers can create collaboration between academic institutions and the hotel industry to expose students more to hotel industry careers and they can design the BHM course, which connects industry through internships, apprenticeship programs, and field visits. Finally, future researchers can use this study to cover larger geographical areas for better generalizability. Likewise, future researchers can utilize mixed methods research for better understanding how and why students choose BHM.

**Funding:** This research received no grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

**Declaration of conflicting interests:** The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

**Data Availability:** The dataset will be provided on request.

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Annex  
*Respondents' Gender, Family Types, Locale, and Ethnicity*

| Category              | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender                |           |         |
| Male                  | 134       | 53.4    |
| Female                | 117       | 46.6    |
| Others                | 0         | 0       |
| Family Type           |           |         |
| Nuclear               | 172       | 68.5    |
| Joint                 | 79        | 31.5    |
| Locale                |           |         |
| Urban                 | 153       | 61      |
| Semi-Urban            | 77        | 30.7    |
| Rural                 | 21        | 8.4     |
| Ethnicity             |           |         |
| Brahmin               | 48        | 19.1    |
| Chettri               | 92        | 36.7    |
| Janajati and Aadibasi | 85        | 33.9    |
| Madhesi               | 6         | 2.4     |
| Dalit                 | 5         | 2       |
| Others                | 15        | 6       |