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A Longitudinal Study Of Commitment To Careers In The Hospitality Industry Based On Analysis Of Employment Expectations And Perceptions Of Hospitality Students Enrolled At New Zealand Polytechnics In 1997/98.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

This thesis contains the findings from a longitudinal study of New Zealand hospitality students' perceptions of aspects of employment along with measures of their commitment to careers in the hospitality industry. The sample includes students from almost all hospitality programmes offered by New Zealand polytechnic institutions over the 1997 and 1998 academic years. With the primary focus on students undertaking three-year management programmes, a number of significant changes in students' views about the industry are identified, but no leading indicators are found that may indicate those individuals with a higher likelihood of staying in the industry. Some comparisons are made with students undertaking one-year skills programmes and current industry employees.

Extensive statistical tables are included showing respondents' ratings of each of the items used in the research instruments in three rounds of data collection. Also reported are how these ratings change over time and the differences between the ratings by various sub-groups based on independent variables, including sex, age, qualifications held, previous work experience, level of industry knowledge at programme entry, preferred area of employment, and having friends or relatives employed in the industry. Predominantly quantitative, the research also incorporates qualitative data.

Although the size and direction of changes in respondents' ratings of items is analysed in detail, no clear causes of such changes are established. However, some potential implications of these changes are identified for both educators and employers. A number of possible strategies are suggested for consideration by employers in the face of students' declining enthusiasm for this industry.
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