A Career in Travel & Tourism: CHINESE UNDERGRADUATE PERCEPTIONS
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A CAREER IN TRAVEL & TOURISM: CHINESE UNDERGRADUATE PERCEPTIONS

Executive Summary

There is a pressing concern within the Travel & Tourism industry that companies are missing out on the best new talent due to negative perceptions of the career opportunities available in Travel & Tourism. In order to discuss and address these challenges, Members of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) formed the Human Capital Working Group and commissioned research to:

• understand the extent and nature of these negative perceptions among non-Travel & Tourism undergraduates
• map Travel & Tourism opportunities against their wider career aspirations
• comprehend the considerations taken when choosing a career
• provide recommendations on how future messaging regarding career opportunities in Travel & Tourism can best strike a positive chord with undergraduates

The research was undertaken through a mix of desk review, circulation of a survey and follow up interviews with Members of the Human Capital Working Group. WTTC is grateful to Qunar for sponsoring the fieldwork in China.

Key Messages and Outcomes

Travel & Tourism is viewed as an attractive industry for Chinese university undergraduates but one that is still poorly understood. Scarce information and misconceptions exist about the skills required for graduates as well as the roles, career development and working opportunities in this industry. In particular, there is a lack of variety and specificity of roles that undergraduates are able to identify as potential jobs in the industry. Undergraduates in China appear to have a very realistic outlook on the job market and employment overall. In particular;

• Respondents appear to be ambitious and driven by progression. They place great value onto graduate training schemes.
• CSR, ethics and values of the company are important (especially so in China), and
• Work-life balance matters across all regions but so do interpersonal relationships at work.
Travel & Tourism

- Overall Travel & Tourism is an industry that appears to be still poorly understood by this generation of undergraduates. Scarce information and even some misconceptions still exist about skills, roles, career opportunities and working conditions in the industry.

- The industry is perceived as attractive by the Chinese respondents and like the idea of working in an industry that will international opportunities, work life balance or the chance to speak languages, however other factors including **job security, competitive starting salary and career progression** are more important when choosing a job.

- In China, 87% of respondents say they would consider a career in Travel & Tourism. When asked to elaborate what they like about the industry, those who admitted interest in the sector often provide somewhat feeble reasons such as ‘I like to travel’ although some also mention their **cultural interest**, a belief that the sector opens the mind or indeed provides a **range of development opportunities**. Thus, a type of personality emerges that seems to be naturally attracted to the sector, for whom success may be defined by factors such as work-life balance, international opportunity, travel and good benefits. Promoting careers in the sector on the basis of this definition of success may attract a greater variety of candidates, provided they buy into the message.

- From a view point of sub-sectors, Airlines, Tourism Boards and the Cultural and Heritage Sector are considered the most attractive in respects to potential employment opportunities. In terms of the sub-sectors with Travel & Tourism, airlines, cruising, the public sector tourism boards and cultural sectors are the most popular. One quarter of Chinese undergraduates (24%) said that their number one choice for a job in the Travel & Tourism industry would be a tour guide. Very few respondents mentioned the opportunity to work in travel technology or website development. When asked to think about the potential opportunities available within sectors of the industry, worryingly finance, technology and innovation are thought to offer few opportunities.

- The sector is perhaps less attractive to those young individuals who are driven by a more traditional approach to career: financial results, achieving senior leadership positions, working for well-known companies in perceived prestigious sectors that provide highly paid jobs.

- Amongst those who are not interested in the sector lack of information, misjudgement and preconceptions are common. For example, respondents are only able to identify some very broad job roles (‘travel’, ‘guide’, ‘management’ are quoted) and only a career pathway in ‘sales & marketing’ is believed by all respondents to offer ‘many opportunities’.

General career expectations, attitude and choices

The younger generations of graduates appear to have a realistic and risk adverse approach to employment, which is consistent with the desk literature and the Chinese focus group specifically undertaken for the survey. Across all regions:

- Career and salary progression are scored as the top factors in making a career choice attractive.
- Job security is ranked in the top-3 factors.
- Work-life balance is ranked in the top-4 factors.

In regards to factors that influence **fulfilment at work**, across the board good relationships with boss and colleagues and clear career progression opportunities score highly. A good salary (but remarkably more so in UK and USA), ability to contribute, autonomy and adding value are also important factors but subject to greater regional differences.
At the opposite end, the least important factors that Chinese undergraduates think will fulfil them at work include:

- Ability to use language
- International opportunities/travel and relocation
- Diversity policies

Chinese undergraduates have ambitious expectations about their salary progression over the next five years, and were far more optimistic about this growth than those interviewed in both the USA and the UK. In China, in addition to expecting an average starting salary of nearly 82,000 Yuan, 70% of overall respondents expect to be able to more than double their salary; 25% to double it and only 6% to less than double it after five years of work.

When it comes to career choices, most respondents across the board focus on (sub-) sectors or pathways rather than a specific industry. Graduate schemes remain a very popular choice and respondents are aware that in current circumstances not one single tool will be more likely to lend you a job, therefore all need to be explored: career offices, fairs, websites, networking, social media etc. Interestingly, the only tool that is considered very helpful are referrals from mentors, friends, family and contacts – possibly a cultural factor also linked to the availability (in the USA especially) of mentoring and sponsoring schemes.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Today’s young people are conscious of the context in which they find themselves as employment-seekers. They are realistic in their approach and hope to pursue their dream jobs one day. Many of them, particularly those responding from China, are keen on maintaining a better work-life balance than previous generations did and wish to secure their future through good benefits packages.

Travel & Tourism is a potentially interesting industry to many of these young individuals, particularly those keener perhaps on experience, cultural exchanges, diversity and learning than instant financial rewards. Travel & Tourism holds up well against many other industry sectors that business undergraduates are considering careers in but there remain some challenges when it comes to the understanding of the sector and its subsectors, as well as its profile and awareness of what a career in the sector may offer.

There is no doubt that diversity is the key to success and the industry is doing well in trying to diversify the background of its talent but a clear understanding of needs and gaps is required in order to address them most effectively.

The research brings about some potential initiatives for consideration and review:

**Identifying critical skills needed in Travel & Tourism**

- The Travel & Tourism industry has a need to identify and map out the critical skills and values of graduates required by the companies within it. Recruiting graduates on the basis of these skills will be a better way of identifying the best potential talent for the industry.

**Building awareness and visibility of careers in Travel & Tourism**

- Increase information, clarity and visibility of Travel & Tourism careers by supporting an on-line portal providing access to career pathways, employer information, career case studies from WTTC Member companies, salary benchmarks with other industries etc. (see for example, http://www.careersthatmove.co.uk). Career offices at further and higher education establishments could then be encouraged to use this portal when guiding their undergraduates and the key messages could be built into a social media campaign to drive visits back to the portal.
• Support a compelling, promotional campaign aimed at highlighting less obvious Travel & Tourism roles/careers (and feeding into the above portal). This could be completed and enhanced by regional roadshows in collaboration with individual WTTC members aimed at top universities.

**Addressing industry competitiveness issues**

• Salary and benefit benchmarks for job roles could be developed to work across industries rather than within Travel & Tourism. Industry salary and benefit benchmarks are commonly held within the industry but less is available to compare Travel & Tourism against other industries. In an age where university costs can leave huge debts, the best graduates have no option but to look foremost at companies that pay the best salaries.

**Increased engagement with education establishments**

• Greater engagement with career offices in academia should be encouraged and planned in order to provide advice on the types of careers and career pathways available within Travel & Tourism. Career offices are generalist by nature and are unlikely to provide information about the industry unless a Travel & Tourism programme is offered within the institutions they belong to. The role of career centres in educating students about industry opportunities remains important to students and must be seen as an on-going priority.

• Alumni associations can also provide a fertile ground for educating and promoting the sector, especially when alumni originally did not graduate from a Travel & Tourism course. Alumni-students mentoring programmes as well as more general mentoring programmes in schools and universities can help in spreading a positive message and showcase aspirational role models from the sectors.

• Industry leaders should be showcased more frequently and should engage with academic institutions to ensure young people are inspired and motivated by the professionalism and leadership of such individuals. Role models should also involve the less usual jobs e.g. CFO, CTO, Head of PR etc.

• Partnerships should be established with schools and universities with a view to enrol students onto placements, internships but also ‘discovery programmes’ (such as those run by WTTC member Shangri-La Hotels)
Introduction

In 2012, Travel & Tourism directly employed 101 million people around the world and 22.7 million of those jobs were in China. In China, Travel & Tourism accounts for 9.3% of GDP continues to grow and is expected to grow by a staggering 8.9% per year for each of the next ten years. This growth is going to require more people with more skills and experience to fill the jobs in the industry. WTTC estimates that Travel & Tourism will directly 4 million new jobs in China by 2023.

These new jobs will require a varied skillset across many different geographies, however there is a pressing concern within Travel & Tourism companies that the industry is missing out on recruiting the best new talent amongst top business graduates due to negative perceptions of the career opportunities available in the industry.

This is something WTTC member companies have already acknowledged; a 2011 survey undertaken by WTTC of its membership shows that recruitment from outside the sector, retention of staff and a disconnect between industry and academia are their most problematic Human Resources challenges.

In order to address these challenges, the WTTC Human Capital Working Group was formed, and commissioned further research to:

- understand the extent and nature of perceptions of Travel & Tourism among non-Travel & Tourism undergraduates
- comprehend the considerations taken when choosing a career
- map Travel & Tourism opportunities against their wider career aspirations
- provide recommendations on how future messaging regarding career opportunities in Travel & Tourism can best strike a positive chord with undergraduates

The findings which are illustrated and discussed in this report are intended to form the basis of new initiatives driven by WTTC and its Human Capital Working Group to improve the image of the Travel & Tourism industry among undergraduates.
This research showcases opinions of undergraduates from the ‘Generation Y’ or ‘Millennial’ generation. These terms, used interchangeably, refer to those students born between 1980 and 1995 who have grown up with digital technology, a culture of immediacy and an understanding, at least in the Western world, that a job may not be for life. Sources and research that form the background literature review for this study, while comprehensive and global in its reach overall, tends to cover mainly UK or North American markets. To ensure therefore that the detailed views of Chinese students were well understood, WTTC conducted a focus group with undergraduates from China who were attending the University of Hertfordshire in the UK.

In China, allowing for the strong economic growth, the young generation appears more attached to traditional values such as status and prestige when pursuing a career than those from the UK or USA. Many young Chinese today also appear keen to establish a better balance between life and work compared to their parents’ generation.

GENERATION Y TRENDS
Millennials have been defined as a generation in a hurry; rushing to get on in their careers, to experience new things, and to live life to the full. Being ‘digital natives’, Millennials live and breathe technology from the moment they wake up to when they go to sleep. They are used to instant communication, feedback and gratification and in their world this immediacy is taken for granted.

Most know that a job for life is very rare and this doesn’t often factor into their career planning. The consultancy, FreshMinds, published a report in 2007 that shows that 41% of Generation Y expect to progress rapidly in their organisation and 38% of Generation Y define themselves by their success at work. The definition of ‘success’ however is remarkably different from that of previous generations as it includes horizontal moves, engagement in special projects, business travel, as well as the more obvious ‘money and status’.

There is no doubt however that the global recession has affected Generation Y views of their careers in a number of ways. Research from Ashridge Business School in the UK into Generation Y graduates (2011) shows that due to the financial downturn, in the last year or two, many have taken any job, and are working in the right area but not their ideal job, or even are staying in a job they don’t like. However, such compromises are unlikely to last long as many as 57% of those surveyed by Ashridge intend to leave their job within two years and 40% one year.

#1 – GREAT EXPECTATIONS
Generation Y individuals are ambitious, motivated by money, challenging/interesting work and career advancement. They expect rapid progress in these areas but are often frustrated by Generation X/’Baby Boomers’ Managers with more conservative views of the right pace of progress. According to Ashridge, over half (56%) of graduates expect to be in a management role within three years of starting work, while 13% of graduates expect a management role within a year.

Furthermore Generation Y employees want more at work: gym membership and sabbaticals are important as well as flexible working, short-term commitment, consultation, and to have their value recognized.

Equally important, is that this generation is also starting to consider careers outside traditional, corporate structures. A new generation of job search websites has emerged to help talented people of any age to escape from unfulfilling corporate jobs.

Chinese Generation Y undergraduates demonstrated a very realistic outlook in this study. While ambition and a desire to earn a good salary, to travel and climb up the career ladder was certainly noted, they greatly appreciated the current economic and competitive environment and were less confident in their ability to achieve their dream job. They also placed great value on graduate training schemes.

#2 – WORK IS SOMETHING YOU DO, NOT SOMEWHERE YOU GO
Technology makes the workplace redundant. For Generation Y, work is something you do, not somewhere you go. This generation believes that you can work any place, any time and that bosses should be judging outcomes not physical presence. This concept certainly applies to most countries, but less so in China where Generation Y feels that home and/or remote working are still foreign concepts to businesses. A consequence of technology is also freedom in the way this generation likes to carry out work. Older generation’s managers often favour a
more balanced blend of freedom and control, and do not always appreciate how important independence is to their younger employees. For example, Chinese respondents value the opportunity to contribute towards the success of the company by working autonomously.

# 3 – CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, ETHICS AND VALUES

Although rather self-orientated, Generation Y has grown with a greater awareness of global environmental, social and economic issues and company values. This goes hand in hand – it is argued – with the way in which they use technology to make people aware of on-going issues and are able to raise the awareness of millions in a few clicks, through Twitter, YouTube and similar social networks. For this generation the ethics and values of the company are fundamentally important. They want to work for a company that benefits others and are likely to enquire about their future employer’s credentials right up front.

Environmental and social concerns are growing amongst Chinese Generation Y, particularly those who have studied or worked in Western countries, and they are likely to grow in importance for Chinese businesses and society at large over the coming years.

TREND #4 – WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Many youths today believe that a dream job comprises of at least one or more of the following aspects: the job works with their lifestyle, they can be themselves, their co-workers have the potential to become friends and their workplace is social and fun. This generation is keen to protect their interests, hobbies and personal space, yet will accept working any hours required to finish a project or task that they have responsibility for. This might mean for example working remotely through digital technology or working during unusual hours if that enables them to pursue their favourite activity all the same. Autonomy and ownership are important factors to many of this group, particularly in the United States, and can considerably impact their perception of a positive work-environment, as shown later in this report.

Also important is the possibility of socialising and building relationships with colleagues. Borders between work and private life are often blurred, as colleagues become friends and work related discussions are moved from office to coffee houses, bars and pubs after hours. Chinese undergraduates interviewed by WTTC in 2012, agreed that for the right job they would be prepared to work very long hours, however they also thought that their parents worked too hard for not enough reward and would hope to achieve a better balance especially in their 30’s when they thought that family and stability should prevail.

TREND #5 – CONNECTING AND STAYING CONNECTED

Generation Y has grown up with social networking and is used for developing connections and in staying connected all the time. This is true for the way relationships are developed in private life but also for professional purposes and Generation Y believe that social networking is very important to their careers. This generation is the most likely to follow companies on Facebook and Linked-In, to use video-resume/CV sites when looking for work and to leave comments or engage in a forum on a company website. What this communicatively-adept generation may lack in experience, it makes up for in its knowledge and understanding of the digital space, an ever-evolving toolkit that is shaping the way companies and brands communicate and function.

In China micro-blogging sites have grown their audience exponentially. Sina Weibo, for example, grew 181 percent in 2011 and now ranks as one of the largest social network sites worldwide. A recent study from the Boston Consulting Group found that young Chinese spend an average of 2.7 hours a day on social media channels, far more than many of their Western counterparts.

REFERENCES

Reports

On-line resources
WTTC undertook a survey of undergraduates in business, marketing and management-type studies in China between October 2012 and January 2013. Hosted on the Qunar website, a total of 1,004 people responded. The survey explored motivating factors for career choice and perceptions of Travel & Tourism in relation to these factors. It also explored respondents’ understanding of the different opportunities available in Travel & Tourism and their knowledge of the sector. Depth interviews with four members of the WTTC Human Capital Working Group followed this research in order to understand whether the student view was confirmed by those in the industry who have experience of recruiting and working with graduates.

**Important factors influencing career choice**

Travel & Tourism is viewed as an attractive industry by Chinese undergraduates and one where they could experience international opportunities, achieve good balance between work and life and a chance to speak languages.

Work life balance is a very important issue as mentioned throughout this report by Chinese respondents. However, respondents feel that other factors such as job security, competitive starting salary and career progression are more critically important overall when deciding about the attractiveness of a sector and a career choice. From a view point of sub-sectors, Airlines, Tourism Boards and specifically in China, the Culture and Heritage sector are considered the most attractive in respects to employment opportunities.

In China, 87% of respondents say they would consider a career in Travel & Tourism. When asked for their reasons, most provide comments such as ‘I like to travel’. Some also mention a passion for the sector and some describe a cultural interest, a belief that the sector opens the mind or indeed provides a range of development opportunities and in some cases good benefits packages. Therefore, promoting careers in the sector on the basis of these drivers/motivators may attract a greater variety of candidates, provided they buy into the message. On the other hand this could also imply that the sector is perhaps less attractive to those young individuals who are driven by a more traditional approach to career and who are attracted to messages promoting financial returns or achieving senior leadership positions.

**Important factors for Chinese students in choosing a career**

Table 1 below provides a detailed overview of the things that Chinese undergraduates rate as being attractive when choosing a career.

The ‘prestige’ of the brand or of the industry rates highly and is more important in China than in the US or UK. Chinese survey respondents also seem to value international opportunities the most. Travel is a relatively new activity for the fast growing middle classes and as such a greater desire to maximise the opportunity is conceivable.

Good benefits packages also matter a lot to Chinese undergraduates. Chinese employees rely on their companies for health and medical cover and this may contribute to the reason for the strength of opinion here. In China, says one WTTC Working Group member ‘It is extremely competitive. People will move roles at the drop of hat for an increase of salary’ And also another comments ‘In China, any extra benefits one can offer goes very well. It’s a competitive advantage.’
TABLE 1: Q2 - How important do you believe are the following things in making a career choice attractive? (1 = not at all important, 5 = very important)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career and salary progression</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good benefits package (e.g. medical/health care coverage, pension)</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-life balance</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company values &amp; corporate responsibility</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige of the companies/brand</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige of the industry</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International opportunities</td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential to earn bonuses</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong diversity policy</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive starting salary</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides an intellectual challenge</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use my languages</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General career expectations, attitude and choices

Early questions in the survey aimed to understand and confirm the aspirations driving the younger generations of graduates. What emerges is a realistic and risk-averse approach to employment, which is consistent with the desk literature and the Chinese focus group specifically undertaken for the survey. In China the following four factors are decisive in making a career attractive:

- Career and salary progression
- Good benefits package (e.g. medical/health care coverage, pension)
- Job security
- Work-life balance.

The following three factors are also important for young Chinese job seekers:

- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Prestige of the company & brand
- Prestige of the industry.

Chinese undergraduates have very ambitious expectations about their salary progression over the next five years, and were far more optimistic about this growth than those interviewed in both the USA and the UK. In China, in addition to undergraduates expecting an initial starting salary of nearly 82,000 Yuan, 70% of overall respondents expect to be able to more than double their salary; 25% to double it and only 6% to less than double it within five years. It would be worth further research to understand whether this is indeed the case within China currently given the enormous growth the country is experiencing, or whether current undergraduate perceptions are far out of line with reality.

**TABLE 2**: In China, fulfilment at work depends on good relationship and clear career progression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good r'ship with colleagues</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear career progression</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good r'ship with boss/manager</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent training/development</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of company's leadership</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of value from contribution</td>
<td>=6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic work environment</td>
<td>=6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good salary</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear company strategic direction</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual autonomy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of experiences</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ranking of top mean scores responses at Q6 “In order to be fulfilled at work, how important do you think the following factors are” (1 = not at all important, 5 very important)

*base 1004*
In regards to factors that influence fulfillment at work the following factors top the Chinese agenda:

- Good relationships with boss and colleagues.
- Clear career progression opportunities.
- Excellent training/development mentoring programmes, strength of company’s leadership and sense of value from contribution are also important factors for young Chinese.

According to Bloomberg Businessweek (2010)¹ 'Chinese Generation Y want to learn but they do not want to be told what to do and how to do it. They long for good role models and often mention Apple CEO Steve Jobs [...] For Gen Y, the good boss is like a kung-fu master who stays in the background, teaching through small hints. The good boss is highly available to his employee and has trust in them. He is balanced and non-emotional. He knows how to share his skills without talking much but rather expresses himself in the right dose, at the right time and place. […]'.

At the opposite end of the spectrum ability to travel and/or relocation are only marginally more important to the Chinese than they are to their Western counterparts.

Fulfillment at work comes from a number of factors, but it is clear that good relationships with others are key. Having a ‘sense of value from contribution’, is relatively high in China (6th position) while the need for autonomy and individual responsibility is not as high, suggesting perhaps that young generations are putting greater value on team based projects and opportunities, which also links in with the strong desire to get along well with colleagues (and bosses). The importance of having a ‘Clear company strategic direction and your contribution to it’ is rated 9th in China suggesting that the link between the all-important job-security and a company strategic clarity is not made. This may well be due to undergraduates’ lack of experience or their belief that it can be difficult for companies to influence and/or withstand the impact of the wider economic context.

¹www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/jan2010/gb20100125_06522.htm
Finding a job

This report has already discussed what Chinese undergraduates are looking for when searching for a job. Travel & Tourism emerges relatively strongly as an industry, but some concerns remain elsewhere. In terms of the industry sectors with the most or least preferred jobs, the picture emerging is one in which:

- Government and Public administration jobs are still sought after – partly a cultural aspect, partly and perhaps most importantly young graduates may (rightly or wrongly) still perceive them as the most secure jobs.

- Marketing, Advertising and PR score highly, which is in principle good news for the Travel & Tourism sector as respondents also believe (see earlier on in this report) that Travel & Tourism offers many opportunity for those looking to pursue marketing & sales pathways.

CHINESE UNDERGRADUATES THINK THAT AN ATTRACTIVE CAREER WILL HAVE:
- CAREER AND SALARY PROGRESSION
- GOOD BENEFITS PACKAGE (E.G. MEDICAL/HEALTH CARE COVERAGE, PENSION)
- JOB SECURITY
- WORK-LIFE BALANCE.

**TABLE 3:** Q9 Please have a look at the list of industry sectors below and think about which you would like to work in when you graduate. Please rank your preference from 1 (most preferred) to 10 (least preferred)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Sector</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel &amp; Tourism</td>
<td>4.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing, Advertising, PR</td>
<td>5.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government &amp; Public Administration</td>
<td>5.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking, Investment, Insurance</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media &amp; Publishing</td>
<td>5.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property &amp; Construction</td>
<td>5.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity &amp; Non-profit</td>
<td>5.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT &amp; Information Services</td>
<td>5.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail &amp; Sales</td>
<td>5.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering &amp; Manufacturing</td>
<td>6.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*base 1004*
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The results of this survey also show that there is a gap in the awareness of the type and importance of skills that are perceived to be required in highly desirable jobs and those generally sought after in Travel & Tourism.

Undergraduates who are not interested in the sector demonstrate lack of information as well as misunderstanding and misjudgment about it. Again, common justifications to the lack of interest include the fact that ‘the sector is for the low skilled’, ‘I would be wasting my talent’, ‘the sector is not challenging enough’ and even ‘my parents would not agree to me working in the sector’. It appears that Travel & Tourism still faces challenges around its image and perception with many young people thinking of it as low profile and low skilled. One of the Human Capital Working Group Members adds to this point: ‘We go [...] to those countries with strong travel promotion such as Thailand and Singapore to draw in those students who understand the value of the Travel & Tourism industry.’

Difference between percieved attractive career choice and careers in T&T among Chinese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2 - All</th>
<th>Q1 - T&amp;T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International opportunities</td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong diversity policy</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential to earn bonuses</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use language skills</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides intellectual challenge</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige of industry</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive starting salary</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige of company/brand</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-life balance</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company values and CSR</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good benefits package</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career/Salary progression</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference in mean score between responses at Q2 “How important do you believe are the following in making a career attractive” and Q11 “How attractive do you feel T&T is as a career choice based on the following areas” (1= not attractive at all, 5= very attractive)

base= 1004

Career Opportunities in Travel & Tourism

When asked about the types of job roles and career pathways within the industry, Chinese respondents are only able to identify some very loose titles (‘travel’, ‘guide’, ‘management’ are quoted as job roles) and as far as pathways opportunities only ‘sales & marketing’ is believed by Chinese respondents to offer ‘many opportunities’, with most others offering either some or few opportunities. Worryingly finance and technology and innovation are thought to offer far fewer opportunities.

WTTC Human Capital Working Group Members provided more relevant comments:

‘Typically they stumble upon it [Travel & Tourism]. In my experience they are either grown up in the industry or they were studying something else and were doing a part time job and they have enjoyed this angle and pursued it. Travel & Tourism is not seen as a profession. It’s not a natural instinct to choose it early on. We could do a better job in the industry to promote that it is a profession and career.’

‘The sector struggles somewhat. Perception is slowly changing. All those hired are brand ambassadors for the industry. Those who started outside of the industry once joined say how brilliant it is and didn’t know. We don’t do enough. We are challenged because people don’t understand what the possibilities are.’
Travel & Tourism as a career choice

The aspect of ‘attractiveness’ of the Travel & Tourism industry has been already discussed above. Table 3 provides a full overview of results.

**TABLE 3:** Q11 How attractive do you feel Travel & Tourism is as a career choice based on the following areas? (1 = not very attractive, 5 = very attractive)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International opportunities</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good benefits package (e.g. medical/health care coverage, pension)</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-life balance</td>
<td>3.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential to earn bonuses</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige of the companies/brand</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong diversity policy</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career and salary progression</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige of the industry</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company values &amp; corporate responsibility</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides an intellectual challenge</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive starting salary</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use my languages</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the sub-sectors with Travel & Tourism, as discussed above, airlines, cruising, the public sector tourism boards and cultural sectors are the most popular. Despite not having asked why this is the case, we can hypothesize here as to the reasons:

- These sectors provide jobs that are easier to visualise career paths for.
- Tourism boards and other public sector related job are perceived as more secure jobs.
- Airlines and cruising are attractive as they are thought of as larger employers (and therefore with better benefit packages).
- The cultural heritage sector (particularly important to US respondents) might be linked with not for profit (also highly rated by US respondents).

As to why other sub-sectors may be perceived as less attractive remains somewhat puzzling and can be perhaps explained by the lack of information as well as misunderstanding about the sector. This conclusion is plausible when many respondents are later unable to provide any answer to the top three jobs in Travel & Tourism that would appeal to them in a specific way, identifying ‘guide’, ‘hotel/hotel management’ and ‘planner’ as their top 3 jobs of choice. One quarter of Chinese undergraduates (24%) said that their number one choice for a job in the Travel & Tourism industry would be a tour guide. Only a handful of respondents mentioned the opportunity to work in travel technology or website development.

Nevertheless the fact remains that Travel & Tourism is an industry where business and finance undergraduates will consider working in future. Nearly nine in ten (87%) of Chinese respondents would consider a career in the industry.
The Way Forward: 
Increasing awareness and visibility of careers in Travel & Tourism

This research was undertaken by the WTTC at the request of its Human Capital Group to address a pressing concern within the industry that companies are missing out on the best new talent due to negative perceptions of the career opportunities available in Travel & Tourism. This report, focusing on the view from Chinese undergraduates has provided some interesting insights into the life and career aspirations of the young generations in China as well as their perception of Travel & Tourism.

Today’s young Chinese are cautious and relatively realistic in their approach to choosing a career, while still hoping to pursue their dream jobs one day. Many are also clear about the fact that their parents’ generations worked too hard for what they perceive to have been a modest outcome; they are therefore keen on maintaining a better work-life balance and wish to secure their future through good benefits packages.

Travel & Tourism is a potentially interesting industry to many young Chinese. Suggestions have been made earlier in this report that those for whom success is driven by experience, cultural exchanges, diversity and learning more than instant financial rewards will find the industry a good career choice. This is an important point when it comes to recruitment campaigns and how the industry may attract or put off graduates from different backgrounds. Travel & Tourism holds up well against many other industry sectors that Chinese business undergraduates are considering careers in. A decade of efforts in educating public sector, governments and the public in general about the economic contribution of the industry, the growth experienced by the sector overall versus other more traditional areas and possibly the influence of some mega events such as the Beijing Olympics have clearly contributed to raising the profile of the industry in China. This effort should be praised and continued in the longer term.

Nevertheless there are still some challenges when it comes to the understanding of the sector and its subsectors, as well as its profile and awareness of what a career in the sector may offer. The industry is doing well in trying to diversify the background of its talent but a clear understanding of needs and gaps is required in order to address them most effectively.

Recommendations were submitted in the main report for consideration by WTTC members overall including from the region. It may be also helpful to identify and adapt some of the more specific initiatives to China’s own needs in order to strengthen the present and future Travel & Tourism talent pipeline.
Recommendations:

Identifying critical skills needed in Travel & Tourism

- The Travel & Tourism industry has a need to identify and map out the critical skills and values of graduates required by the companies within it. Recruiting graduates on the basis of these skills will be a better way of identifying the best potential talent for the industry.

Building awareness and visibility of careers in Travel & Tourism

- Increase information, clarity and visibility of Travel & Tourism careers by supporting an industry-led on-line portal providing access to career pathways, employer information, case studies, salary benchmarks with other industries etc. (see for example, http://www.careersthatmove.co.uk). Career offices at further and higher education establishments could then be encouraged to use this portal when guiding their undergraduates and the key messages could be built into a social media campaign to drive visits back to the portal.

- Support a compelling promotional campaign aimed at highlighting less obvious Travel & Tourism roles/careers (and feeding into the above portal). This could be completed and enhanced by regional road-shows in collaboration with individual WTTC members aimed at top business schools.

Addressing industry competitiveness issues

- Salary and benefit benchmarks for job role could be developed to work across industries rather than within Travel & Tourism. Industry salary and benefit benchmarks are commonly held within the industry but less is available to compare Travel & Tourism against other industries.

Increased engagement with education establishments

- Greater engagement with career offices in academia should be encouraged and planned in order to provide advice on the types of careers and career pathways available within Travel & Tourism. Career offices are generalist by nature and are unlikely to provide information about the industry unless a Travel & Tourism programme is offered within the institutions they belong to. The role of career centres in educating students about industry opportunities remains important to students and must be seen as an on-going priority.

- Alumni associations can also provide a fertile ground for educating and promoting the sector, especially when alumni originally did not graduate from a Travel & Tourism course. Alumni-students mentoring programmes as well as more general mentoring programmes in schools and universities can help in spreading a positive message and showcase aspirational role models from the sectors.

- Industry leaders should be showcased more frequently and should engage with academic institutions to ensure young people are inspired and motivated by the professionalism and leadership of such individuals. Role models should also involve the less usual jobs e.g. CFO, CTO, Head of PR etc.

- Partnerships should be established with schools and universities with a view to enroll students onto placements, internships but also ‘discovery programmes’ (such as those run by WTTC member Shangri-La Hotels).
Scope and methodology of research

The research has focused on non Travel & Tourism undergraduates, specifically on those within business and humanities-related faculties. It has been global in approach, with meaningful data collection and analysis representation from key markets in the USA, UK and China. This report focuses just on the data from the Chinese respondents.

The research consisted of three steps: a review of published literature; survey of business undergraduates in China and in-depth interviews with HR directors of WTTC Member companies. Information from the desk review and the WTTC Member interviews are incorporated into this report.

Desk review

A review of published research on undergraduate career motivations and aspirations from selected universities and consultants was undertaken in Spring 2012. This gave a picture of general expectations in terms of work life balance, salary, travel, career progression etc. and how they are prioritised. Findings informed the design of the survey questionnaire which was circulated in various stages between September and December 2012. A focus group was also undertaken with UK based Chinese students studying business or management degrees at the University of Hertfordshire.

Survey

An online survey of undergraduates from around the world was undertaken exploring areas such as career aspirations, attractiveness of different sectors and the appeal of jobs in the Travel & Tourism industry:

This is a difficult demographic to recruit with minimal cost and an initial attempt to recruit students to the survey from university websites proved unsuccessful. In China, therefore, Qunar, the leading Chinese travel information and booking website and a WTTC Member company, sponsored the research and found the respondents through their website. Responses were then uploaded into the software used for the other countries, Survey Monkey, to allow comparisons between the other countries. Chinese respondents (who score careers in the Travel & Tourism industry higher than students in the UK and USA) may have a more favourable impression of the industry compared to those recruited in the other countries as having been on the Qunar website, they have already shown an interest in travel.

Ultimately, 1,004 respondents completed the survey in China.

Interviews

Following the collection and the analysis of survey results, members of the Human Capital Working Group were sounded for their views on the initial findings. Four interviews took place in which interviewees were asked to provide their insights and overall comments on issues identified by the survey. The interviews proved very valuable and we are grateful to WTTC Working Group members for their input and feedback.

WTTC would like to thank the following member companies for their time and insight in participation in additional interviews that contributed to this research:

- Shangri-la
- JTB
- Wyndham Worldwide
- Qunar
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