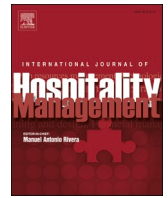




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Money or fit? The tradeoff of intrinsic and extrinsic variables in hospitality managers' job choice

Alan Yen^{*}, Kwang-Ho Lee

Department of Applied Business Studies, Miller College of Business, Ball State University, 2000 W. University Avenue, Muncie, IN 47306, USA

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ABSTRACT

With the hospitality industry facing an ongoing labor shortage exacerbated by the pandemic, this study extends research on job applicants' preferences for job offers, drawing primarily from the person-environment fit theory. It focuses on understanding the importance of entry-level salary, person-job (PJ) fit, and person-organization (PO) fit within the context of hospitality businesses. Using a two-phase model that unifies and extends the job choice of single-attribute and multiple-attribute job offers, this study uses mixed ANOVA analyses to test the proposed hypotheses. Our main result shows that job applicants experiencing high perceived financial stress are more likely to accept the job offer with both PJ fit and PO fit when compared to (a) the job offer with a higher entry-level salary and PJ fit and (b) the job offer with a higher entry-level salary and PO fit. Based on these findings, several theoretical and empirical implications are discussed.

1. Introduction

The hospitality industry continues losing people to direct competitors or other businesses in different industries despite constantly posting new job openings (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). Between 2018 and 2023, hospitality firms created an average of 1.16 million job openings monthly. However, they only managed to fill around 1.14 million positions, resulting in a continued loss of about 1.13 million individuals during the same period. Since 2020, this labor shortage has been exacerbated, posing risks such as customer dissatisfaction, decreased revenue, and potential erosion of customer loyalty (Morosan and Bowen, 2022) despite the increase in advertised positions. In response, hospitality firms have implemented various recruitment strategies (Goldberg, 2022; Hurdle-Bradford, 2022; Parker and Horowitz, 2022). Nevertheless, the question remains: what recruitment messaging strategies can we employ to cultivate a positive outlook among individuals regarding available job opportunities?

Job choice is a multifaceted decision and could be influenced by a series of tradeoffs between intrinsic and extrinsic variables (Malka and Chatman, 2003; Purohit et al., 2020; Ronda et al., 2020). Intrinsic variables are internalized within the person, encompassing personal feelings about the job and the expectations of the job and work environment. On the other hand, extrinsic variables, such as job location, salary, and stress from family members, are more closely related to

the external environment over which the individual generally has no control. Both intrinsic and extrinsic variables would have different levels of impact on an individual's job choice, leading them to make a decision based on their subjective preference for the attributes that matter the most to them (Uggerslev et al., 2012).

To date, most job choice research has found empirical support for the notion that intrinsic variables substantially influence individuals' decisions. Explicitly, studies utilizing person-environment fit theory have suggested that the perceived fits with the job (person-job fit, PJ fit) and the organization (person-organization fit, PO fit) are significant dimensions of the work environment that can better predict an individual's job choice decision (Andela and van der Doef, 2019; Lee et al., 2017; Saks and Ashforth, 2002; Song and Chon, 2012). However, most studies have neglected to incorporate additional variables alongside fit assessments, which are necessary for a comprehensive evaluation of individuals' job choice decisions. By considering a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic variables, researchers can better capture the true complexity of the decision-making process, particularly in the context of multiple job offer options (Chapman et al., 2005; Sauermaun, 2005). Additionally, some pre-existing conditions, such as financial stress, are not always taken into account in the decision-making process, which mainly stems from student loans (e.g., Cilluffo, 2019; Gervais and Ziebarth, 2019) and often causes challenges in daily life and at work (e.g., Chen et al., 2022). As a result, more effort is needed to verify that

^{*} Correspondence to: Department of Applied Business Studies at Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, USA.

E-mail address: cyen@bsu.edu (A. Yen).

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individuals may place more weight on variables other than perceived fits when making their final decision among multiple job offers.

In the United States, recent college graduates have faced significant challenges managing their student loans. This burden has significantly intensified in recent years, as evidenced by previous studies (e.g., [Lucca et al., 2017](#)), underscoring its distinctiveness on both domestic and global scales. As a result, instead of having the opportunity to apply their knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) in workplaces that align with their values and ideologies, individuals may feel compelled to alter their job choices due to the perceived financial stress they experience, as noted by [Froidevaux et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Rothstein and Rouse \(2011\)](#). Hence, this study aims to address the question: Do individuals' job choice decisions vary depending on the level of perceived financial stress? Specifically, are there differences when considering multi-attribute job offers that involve key intrinsic and extrinsic attributes such as salary, PJ fit, and PO fit, and when making trade-offs among job offers? Additionally, do potential job applicants differ from experienced job applicants when making job choice decisions?

From a research perspective, the results will enable us to better understand job choices associated with financial stress. In the recruitment literature, financial stress is often tied to job search behaviors and efforts (e.g., [Froidevaux et al., 2020](#); [Ji, 2021](#)). However, its role in making the final decision has not been extensively studied except from the perspective of childhood environment and socioeconomic status (e.g., [Wilcox et al., 2022](#); [Yuan and Li, 2020](#)). Although PJ fit and PO fit have been identified as reliable predictors of job choice, only a few studies have considered the simultaneous interaction of these work environment dimensions in the job choice decision, along with other variables (e.g., [Sekiguchi, 2007](#)).

Combined with the fact that student loans have created more substantial financial stress than other types of financial constraints in one's early stages of life (e.g., [Zhan et al., 2016](#)), individuals who are pursuing entry-level positions may not make the decision purely based on a fit with the job or with the organization. Instead, they may have a different perspective. Thus, we need to go beyond existing concepts and incorporate financial stress to understand individuals' job choice decisions. This incorporation is more realistic and reflects how individuals consider multiple offers. The results will also provide comparisons with studies in different fields and yield support to advance the current understanding of person-environment fit theory, job choice, and the influence of financial stress when considering various job opportunities.

From a practical perspective, the results will enable managers in the hospitality industry to understand better the key variables that lead to potential job applicants' job choice decisions. Given the labor-intensive and service-oriented nature of the business, attracting and retaining employees who can contribute to business success is a crucial goal of human resource management in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, the work condition in the hospitality industry is widely recognized as challenging due to the lack of labor supply ([Kwok, 2022](#)) and the difficulty in recruiting high-quality employees with lower average salaries ([Vassou et al., 2019](#)) in the private sector (e.g., [Ariza-Montes et al., 2019](#); [Park and Min, 2020](#)). Understanding potential job applicants' decision-making process can enhance attraction and recruitment effectiveness, particularly when targeting recent college graduates seeking entry-level managerial positions in the hospitality industry. Student loans often represent the first significant financial burden in one's life (e.g., [Mezza et al., 2021](#)). This study could provide insight into how individuals respond to financial stress and how it influences their job choice decisions later in their careers.

2. Literature review

2.1. Job choice decision

John [Holland's \(1997\)](#) theory of vocational choice provides a solid theoretical foundation that guides research in this domain. The premise

is that individuals' decisions are influenced by their interactions with their environment. Thus, the characteristics of individuals and the environment should be incorporated into the framework and assessed to gain a better understanding. While embracing this idea, scholars suggest that job choice is a process rather than an instant reaction to the environment or the event (e.g., [Gati and Asher, 2001](#)). During this process, job choice is not entirely goal directed. Instead, many social comparisons and individuals' career interests will affect their final choices (e.g., [Kulkarni and Nithyanand, 2013](#); [Roemer et al., 2021](#); [Su, 2020](#)). For instance, previous studies identify that job attributes, location, career advancement, compensations, work environment, peer interaction, and corporate social responsibilities affect an individual's job choice decision.

The difference can also be attributed to industry segments where the data is collected. From different samples, it is revealed that individuals' ranking of important factors may differ based on their stage in their career (i.e., college students seeking first position postgraduation from college or working professionals seeking promotion) ([McGraw et al., 2012](#)).

These empirical results reveal that job choice decisions could be complex and heterogeneous. Nevertheless, some common themes still emerge across different settings and unique features specific to various groups.

2.2. Person-environment fit theory

Based on the person-environment (PE) fit theory, by comparing themselves with the job and the organization, job applicants can develop an initial comparison to make their choice among different job offers (e.g., [Andela and van der Doef, 2019](#); [Greguras and Diefendorff, 2009](#)). Individuals tend to have more positive work behaviors desired by the company if they perceive themselves as fitting the work environment in some domains ([van Vianen, 2018](#)).

Person-job (PJ) fit is defined as "the match between the abilities of a person and the demand of a job or the needs/desires of a person and what is provided by a job" ([Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001](#), p. 455). Hence, the assessment of PJ fit is often based on individuals' subjective evaluation of their KSA with the job requirement or whether or not the characteristics and attributes of the job may satisfy individuals' desires ([Sekiguchi, 2004](#)). On the other hand, person-organization (PO) fit is defined as "the compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when at least one entity provides what the other needs, they share similar fundamental characteristics, or both" ([Kristof, 1996](#), pp. 4–5). Thus, when assessing individuals' perceived fit with their jobs and organizations, existing scales often ask individuals to evaluate the match between their own characteristics, such as personality, attitudes, and values, and those of an organization ([Carless, 2005](#)). Taken together, this study views PJ fit as individuals' assessment of how well their competencies align with job requirements and whether the job fulfills their aspirations, including goals, psychological needs, and interests. Conversely, PO fit is regarded as individuals' perception of how closely their beliefs and values align with the organizational culture, with a particular emphasis on the hospitality industry.

Previous studies have employed various techniques to assess PJ and PO fits (e.g., [Guan et al., 2021](#)), such as comparisons based on descriptive texts, field studies, experimental tests. These studies consistently provide empirical evidence that both PO fit and PJ fit positively impact individuals' commitment to the organization. This association has been evidenced through actions such as taking initiative to assist others, adhering to organizational rules for the greater good, experiencing higher job satisfaction, being motivated to participate in various work-related activities, and displaying reduced intentions to leave the organization. (e.g., [Andela and van der Doef, 2019](#); [Farzaneh et al., 2014](#); [Iplik et al., 2011](#); [Madera et al., 2018](#)). Hospitality studies have similarly found that individuals who exhibit stronger PJ fit and PO fit tend to experience positive outcomes in their work (e.g., [Chen et al.,](#)

2014; Choi et al., 2017; Kim and Gatling, 2019; Park and Hai, 2023).

After reviewing existing works on recruitment and job choices based on PE fit, studies (e.g., Chapman et al., 2005) have shown that PJ fit and PO fit are the most common factors that affect individuals' job choice decisions across different settings and groups, especially within the hospitality industry (e.g., Yen, 2017). The rationale is that job attributes and organization characteristics are explicitly assessed at different stages of recruitment. Thus, most individuals use job/organization attributes as the foundation to evaluate various offers.

Despite the empirical support that PJ fit and PO fit matter in recruitment and selection and can influence one's job choice decision (e.g., Guan et al., 2021), individuals rarely rely on a single factor when making personal and professional decisions. Instead, individuals will articulate and weigh different factors through a series of tradeoffs to reach a conclusion that best suits them (Manroop and Richardson, 2016; Mickel and Dallimore, 2009). Thus, it is suggested that additional effort is still needed to develop our understanding of the rapid change in the work environment (Barrick and Parks-Leduc, 2019).

2.3. Financial stress and student loans in the US

In the general literature, financial stress is defined as the subjective feeling from individuals associated with their financial status in response to their inability to meet daily life economic responsibilities, obligations, and hardship, which can also be influenced by their psychology (Affi et al., 2018; Friedline et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2003; Manturuk et al., 2012; Northern et al., 2010; Robb, 2017). From a theoretical perspective, financial stress negatively impacts people's work performance (Chan et al., 2017). For instance, Peasley et al. (2020) found that financial stress leads to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced work performance. With the boundary between workplace and personal life blurred, personal issues tend to spill over into work and cause burnouts and other individual and organizational deviances. In this study, financial stress is characterized as the subjective sentiments encountered by individuals pursuing hospitality occupations, encompassing roles within hotels, restaurants, and event management enterprises.

One of the leading causes behind the heightened financial stress is student loans (e.g., Britt et al., 2017; Montalto et al., 2019). Individuals who recently acquired a bachelor's degree, mainly Millennials, have the most substantial financial burden, such as student loan debt and poverty, compared with previous generations (Pew Research Center, 2014). Fry (2014) suggests that college students carry a hefty debt from student loans, with an average of \$27,000 at the time of reporting, and the figure has now reached approximately \$37,000 (Hanson, 2021; U.S. Department of Education, 2021). This intensified financial stress has created hardship that prohibits individuals from pursuing higher education or dropping out of school; it has also stretched into their post-graduation life, forcing them to experience economic instability and continued difficulties (Oliff and Levine, 2021).

In the context of recruitment, financial stress can affect one's job search self-efficacy, search intensity, and successful interviewing, possibly due to depressive symptoms that are negatively associated with the quality of reemployment (e.g., Heckman et al., 2014; Ji, 2021). Applying this concept to the current labor market, younger individuals, mainly those who graduated from college recently and have more substantial financial stress than other generations (e.g., Mezza et al., 2021), may spend less time searching for jobs that meet their KSAs, alter their choices (e.g., Ji, 2021), and may leave for other positions later in the future (e.g., van Hooff et al., 2021). Although previous studies have found that the perceived fit with the job and the organization has a significant and lasting impact on job choice decisions (e.g., Zopiatis et al., 2016), such an impact could be neutralized in the current situation.

2.4. Hypothesis development

Empirical studies have provided rigorous support that perceived PJ fit and PO fit indeed affect individuals' job choice decisions and other work-related attitudes and behaviors. However, the trade-off between different fits and other factors has not been extensively explored in the hospitality context. Nonetheless, comprehending the simultaneous relationship between these factors reflects the complex nature of decision-making in real-world scenarios. Therefore, analyzing a wide range of internal and external factors could provide valuable insights into employees' preferences for job offer descriptions, integrating persuasive message elements for potential job applicants in the hospitality industry (Murray, 2021).

Given this recognition, there have been many endeavors to illustrate the role of intrinsic and extrinsic factors in hospitality employees' job choice decisions. For example, Murray (2021) proposed a need for exploring employees' preferences on job reward (intrinsic factors (e.g., good wages, good working conditions, interesting work, and feeling of being "in" on things at work) in terms of demographic differences in the lodging industry. They demonstrated that frontline employees and senior executives are less likely to prefer good wages to good working conditions and the feeling of being "in" on things at work. Furthermore, Vassou et al. (2019) underlined the importance of hospitality firms' extrinsic rewards (e.g., salary) in favor of recognizing how they can recruit and retain high-quality workers. They also highlighted the significant role of their intrinsic rewards (e.g., employee recognition and treatment) that manifest employees' positive feelings about the situation in which the average payment rate in hospitality firms is low compared to average wages in other sectors. However, these studies reflect a narrowed assessment of specific fits that will affect the individuals' decisions and behaviors. Therefore, a holistic aspect of different fits and tradeoffs should be further explored. Additionally, it is arguably important to identify which format of job offers (single- or multiple-attribute job offers) is most effective in attracting potential job applicants in the hospitality industry based on intrinsic factors such as PJ fit and PO fit and extrinsic factors such as salary. Therefore, the following hypotheses are developed.

Hypothesis 1. Potential job applicants will exhibit varying preferences regarding the format of job offers emphasizing higher entry-level salary, PJ fit, and PO fit concerning hospitality job positions.

Hypothesis 2. Potential job applicants will exhibit varying preferences regarding the format of job offers emphasizing higher entry-level salary and PJ fit, higher entry-level salary and PO fit, and PJ fit and PO fit in hospitality job positions.

Financial pressure can significantly impact individuals' career choices, affecting their satisfaction personally and professionally. When faced with financial difficulties, people may feel compelled to accept job offers primarily for financial stability, even if these positions do not match their skills, interests, or values (e.g., Brown et al., 2014), leading to dissatisfaction, burnout, and adverse effects on mental health and well-being. In hospitality contexts, prospective job applicants often carefully consider job characteristics and how well they fit with the organization when deciding on their careers (e.g., Yen, 2017). This tendency may arise from their awareness of the typically lower salaries in hospitality jobs compared to other industries. Hence, graduates in the hospitality field showed a greater preference for long-term earnings potential over an initial high starting salary. Given these circumstances, it is crucial for hospitality organizations to actively foster a harmonious alignment between job roles and the overall work environment while also offering acceptable financial support. Achieving this objective requires offering comprehensive and appealing benefit packages that address financial needs and prioritize employee well-being in the workplace.

Given the assumption that the format of job offers is directly

connected to job choice decisions in the hospitality industry, some studies have proposed a theoretical perspective where financial stress plays a role in influencing the relationship between the formation of job offers and job choice in person-environment fit models. Examining this issue of financial stress associated with prospective job applicants (i.e., college students or recent college graduates) in terms of job acceptance behaviors, Heckman et al. (2014) identified not having more student loans at graduation as one primary source of financial stress among prospective job applicants. Other studies have also provided empirical evidence indicating that financial insecurity from student loans significantly impacts college students' job search behaviors (e.g., Rehr et al., 2022; Zhang and Kim, 2019). Therefore, understanding the influence of financial stress on job choice is essential for comprehending the dynamics of the hospitality industry's recruitment process and the decisions made by potential candidates.

When considering the impact of perceived financial stress on both PJ fit and PO fit within joint relationships, a notable empirical study concluded that financial rewards, including salaries and wages, act as a moderating variable, enhancing the influence of intrinsic values (e.g., work environment and necessary skills) on the decision to pursue a career in public organization settings (e.g., Rahayu and Abidin, 2023). Given the perspective of self-determination theory and the previously discussed important concepts of person-environment fit theory, PJ fit and PO fit, intrinsic values (e.g., PJ and PO fit) and extrinsic values (e.g., monetary rewards and incentives) become clear as crucial factors in making a successful career choice. However, it is worth noting that income level does not interfere with the relationship between work value orientations and work-related outcomes (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007). In this regard, some hospitality scholars have highlighted the need to examine the impact of individuals' perceptions of financial rewards on job choices in complex interactive relationships. To support this, Teng (2008) provided theoretical insights that the predisposition towards extroversion plays a significant role in shaping job candidates' (e.g., students) aspirations and perspectives regarding careers in hospitality. In a similar vein, Fernandez et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of personality traits in predicting the career preferences of potential hospitality employees, highlighting the crucial influence of person-environment alignment on their career trajectories. Their findings suggest that hospitality job candidates possessing traits like openness to experiential value are inclined towards occupations that score lower on the Realistic dimension. This indicates that, despite concerns about financial stability, these individuals prioritize personal fulfillment and compatibility with their work environment when making career decisions. In this regard, while the impact of financial stress on career decisions within business contexts produces varied results, they should not necessarily mirror those consistently observed in hospitality job choice scenarios.

In this context, Zhou et al. (2021) pointed out the significance of psychological stress (e.g., job and financial insecurity) during the transition into a job market. Their study revealed that individuals, even when confronted with external pressures such as intense emotional situations (e.g., financial stress), tend to exhibit heightened levels of proactive personality, a trait renowned for its resistance to external influences. Similarly, theoretical frameworks of career choice models proposed that after fulfilling psychological needs (i.e., PJ fit) and perceiving positive organizational values (i.e., PO fit), individuals then may consider financial rewards such as salaries, wages, and incentives (Zaraket and Saber, 2017). Therefore, financial compensation should be a factor in selecting career paths for potential job candidates (Yousaf et al., 2014), especially in hospitality industries, where individuals may prioritize personal desires, diverse work experiences, and organizational values over monetary gains. Drawing from these theoretical discussions, we formulate the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3. Job applicants with high financial stress will prefer job offers that emphasize PJ fit and PO fit over those highlighting higher

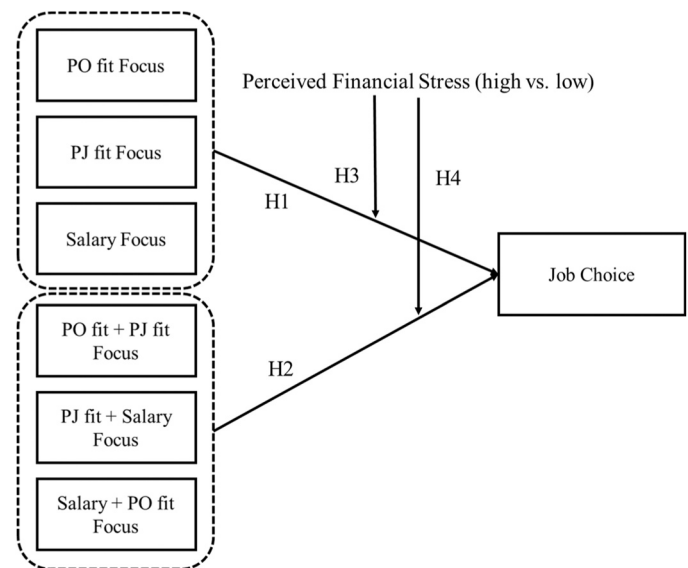


Fig. 1. Proposed research framework.

entry-level salaries, particularly concerning hospitality job positions.

Hypothesis 4. Job applicants with high financial stress will lean towards job offers prioritizing PJ fit and PO fit over those emphasizing higher entry-level salary alongside PJ fit or PO fit, especially within the realm of hospitality job positions.

3. Study 1

3.1. Methodology

Before delving into the main objective of the research, which is to comprehend the impact of financial stress arising from student loans on job choice decisions, the purpose of Study 1 is to gain insight into individuals' decision-making process regarding job choices and the tradeoffs they consider to arrive at a final decision. This understanding will serve as a solid groundwork for subsequent exploration. To ensure the authenticity of our findings, we utilized a self-administered online questionnaire encompassing a case scenario presenting multiple hypothetical job offers, taking into account factors such as salary for an entry-level managerial position, PJ fit, and PO fit.

3.2. Design and participants

Given that the primary objective of this study is to evaluate whether prospective job applicants exhibit varying preferences towards different formats of job offers, specifically higher entry-level salary and PJ fit, higher entry-level salary and PO fit, or a combination of PJ fit and PO fit, within the context of hospitality job positions. Our data collection initially targeted prospective job applicants in the hospitality industry who are graduating students fulfilling their academic program's capstone requirement. A convenient sample of 175 prospective job applicants was recruited, and all responses were retained for analysis (n=175) in Study 1.

The questionnaire comprised the following sections: (1) demographic background, including age (age from 18 years to 22 years: 91%), gender (male=53.7% and female=46.3%), ethnicity (White=84%, Black=6.3%, Hispanic=4.6%, Asian=2.9%, and other=2.3%), and current employment status (full-time=5.7%, part-time=48.0%, and not employed=46.3%) and (2) a case scenario with multiple hypothetical job offers.

With regard to job offers, participants were presented with a hypothetical scenario in which they were asked to consider different job

offers for a full-time entry-level managerial position in the hospitality industry. Recognizing that salaries in the hospitality industry often tend to be lower compared to other sectors, as the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics \(2021\)](#) indicated, we designed six job offers to evaluate participants' decision-making in two distinct phases (see [Table 1](#)). Given the perception of job applicants that the hospitality industry provides lower compensation ([McGinley et al., 2017](#)), we established the higher salary offer as 10% above the industry average, while the lower salary offer was set at 10% below the average. The case scenario is included in the appendix.

Firstly, Phase 1 encompasses the examination of a single attribute job offer. This phase includes three options: Option 1 presents a job with a favorable starting salary but lacks both PO and PJ fits. Option 2 offers a job with a good PJ fit but lacks PO fit, along with an entry-level salary lower than the average. Option 3 presents a job with a good PO fit but lacks PJ fit, also offering an entry-level salary lower than the average.

Secondly, Phase 2 focuses on analyzing multiple attributes within job offers. This phase comprises three options: Option 4 presents a job with a favorable entry-level salary and PJ fit yet lacking PO fit. Option 5 offers

Table 1
Results of the paired t-tests from Study 1.

Phase	Format	Job offer options	Comparisons with	Paired t-tests (n=175)
Phase 1	Single-Attribute Focus	Option 1 (M= 2.16)	Option 2	SD= 1.229, t= -1.168, p = 0.244
			Option 3	SD= 1.155, t= 2.094, p = 0.038
			Option 4	SD= 1.165, t= -15.961, p = 0.000
	Single-Attribute Focus	Option 2 (M= 2.27)	Option 3	SD= 1.145, t= -11.425, p = 0.000
			Option 4	SD= 1.601, t= -10.436, p = 0.000
			Option 5	SD= 0.965, t= 3.994, p = 0.000
Phase 2	Single-Attribute Focus	Option 3 (M= 1.98)	Option 4	SD= 1.265, t= -13.562, p = 0.000
			Option 5	SD= 1.378, t= -8.447, p = 0.000
			Option 6	SD= 1.181, t= -12.926, p = 0.000
	Multiple-Attribute Focus	Option 4 (M= 3.57)	Option 5	SD= 1.344, t= -15.634, p = 0.000
			Option 6	SD= 1.201, t= -12.906, p = 0.000
			None	SD= 1.221, t= -15.669, p = 0.000
Multiple-Attribute Focus	Option 5 (M= 3.15)	Option 6	SD= 1.265, t= 4.361, p = 0.000	
		None	SD= 1.397, t= 1.353, p = 0.178	
		None	SD= 1.404, t= -2.585, p = 0.011	
Multiple-Attribute Focus	Option 6 (M= 3.42)	None	None	
		None	None	

Note: Option 1 = higher entry-level salary; no PJ fit, no PO fit (salary focus); Option 2 = lower entry-level salary, good PJ fit, no PO fit (PJ focus); Option 3 = lower entry-level salary, no PJ fit, good PO fit (PO focus); Option 4 = higher entry-level salary, good PJ fit, no PO fit (salary and PJ focus); Option 5 = higher entry-level salary, no PJ fit, good PO fit (salary and PO focus); Option 6 = lower entry-level salary, good PJ fit, good PO fit (PJ and PO focus); Job offers were measured with a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

a job with a good entry-level salary and PO fit but lacks PJ fit. Option 6 presents a job with good PJ and PO fits, although the entry-level salary is lower than the average.

3.3. Results

[Table 1](#) presents the outcomes of the paired t-tests conducted on the six distinct types of job offers. As anticipated, the mean values of all multiple-attribute job offers exceeded those of single-attribute job offers. Notably, option 2 (PJ focus, M= 2.27) exhibited a higher mean value compared to option 1 (salary focus, M= 2.16) and option 3 (PO focus, M= 1.98). Among the multiple-attribute job offers, option 4 (salary and PJ focus, M= 3.57) and option 6 (salary and PJ focus, M= 3.42) demonstrated higher mean values than option 5 (salary and PO focus, M= 3.15). Consequently, the findings of Study 1 supported our predictions ([Hypotheses 1 and 2](#)) that prospective job applicants have distinct preferences when evaluating single- and multiple-attribute job offers for positions within the hospitality industry.

This study also examined the variations among the six job offers in demographic variables, including age, gender, ethnicity, and current employment status. The results indicated no significant differences in age, ethnicity, or employment status concerning job offer preferences. Regarding gender, there were no significant distinctions observed between males and females in relation to option 2 (PJ focus), option 3 (PO focus), option 4 (salary and PJ focus), and option 5 (salary and PO focus). However, there were significant disparities between males and females regarding option 1 (salary focus) and option 6 (PJ and PO focus). Specifically, males (M=2.33 in option 1 and M=3.29 in option 6) were more or less likely to choose option 1 and option 6 compared to females (M=1.96 in option 1 and M=3.58 in option 6) within the job offer choices (option 1: t=2.299, p=.02, Cohen's d=.349, and option 6: t=-2.188, p=.30, Cohen's d=-.332).

3.4. Study 1 discussion

Study 1 aimed to evaluate whether prospective job applicants exhibit distinct preferences toward various formats of job offers, including higher entry-level salary with PJ fit, higher entry-level salary with PO fit, and PJ fit with PO fit, in the context of hospitality job positions. Based on the findings mentioned above, hospitality firms need to acknowledge the priorities of job applicants regarding single- and multiple-attribute job offers, particularly under limited environmental and economic conditions.

To effectively cater to job applicants' preferences, hospitality firms should consider implementing a two-stage approach when presenting job offers. The first stage, phase 1, could involve single-attribute job offers tailored to the specific budgetary constraints of small and medium-sized hospitality businesses, with a focus on PJ fit. Meanwhile, larger hospitality firms with additional resources should prioritize multiple-attribute job offers, such as options that combine "salary and PJ focus" or "PJ and PO focus" in phase 2.

In Study 1, by comprehending the mean differences between single- and multiple-attribute job offers, it becomes possible to categorize and understand job applicants' preferences for job-offer options in Phase 1 and Phase 2, respectively. This understanding will facilitate the development of targeted job offers that align with the preferences of prospective applicants.

4. Study 2

The results of Study 1 provided validation for the notion that job choice decisions possess a certain level of complexity. However, it is important to note that these findings only establish a foundational understanding. As individuals transition from students to professionals, their perspectives on job choice decisions may change, particularly when considering the added factor of perceived financial stress caused

by student loans. To investigate this aspect further, Study 2 was designed to replicate the findings of Study 1 and examine the moderating influence of perceived financial stress among individuals presently employed in the hospitality industry, specifically those seeking entry-level managerial positions.

4.1. Design and participants

To confirm Hypotheses 3 and 4 in Study 2, additional measurement items were incorporated into the survey questionnaire used in Study 1. These included an assessment of perceived financial stress, encompassing variables such as student loans and loan amounts, as well as a four-item scale measuring perceived financial stress (e.g., I feel that I am unable to control the important financial things in my life), adapted from Manturuk et al. (2012) (rated on a scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Study 2 was designed to delve into the job choice process, focusing specifically on active job applicants who are millennials with a keen interest in the hospitality industry. Consequently, the target population for this study consisted of individuals in their mid-twenties who had completed an undergraduate degree and possessed work experience in the hospitality sector.

The following criteria were implemented for participant selection to ensure that the collected data reflected the evaluation of key attributes in job choice decision-making by actual job applicants. Firstly, participants should have graduated from university within the past five years at the time of their participation. Secondly, participants should have had experience actively seeking a full-time managerial position at the time of their participation. Responses from participants who lacked job search experience related to a full-time position were excluded from the analysis, as their input may not authentically reflect a job seeker's perception within a recruitment context. The data was collected in 2021 through Qualtrics, an online survey service company. We employed a stringent screening mechanism to ensure data quality as the data were collected from a paid panel. For instance, any response with contradictory answers or the same choice options for all questions was deleted. A total of 261 responses were retained for analysis.

4.2. Results

The majority of participants were female (80.5%), in their mid-twenties (77.8%), employed either in a full-time or a part-time position (82.8%), and with a student loan (56.7%). The average student loan is about US\$21,123. We also assessed participants' perceptions of financial stress. The majority indicated that perceived financial stress (PFS) is high and affects some aspects of their daily life ($M_{FS} = 3.25$, $SD = 1.06$) (see Table 2).

We conducted an initial assessment to examine the potential correlation between student loans and perceived financial stress, as well as job offers in both phase 1 and phase 2. The results indicate a significant correlation between perceived financial stress and option 1 ($r = .148$, $p < .05$). Furthermore, option 1 demonstrates a significant correlation with option 2 ($r = .549$, $p < .01$) and option 3 ($r = .194$, $p < .01$), respectively. Additionally, option 2 exhibits a significant correlation with option 3 ($r = .129$, $p < .05$). In phase 2, no significant correlation is identified between option 4, option 5, and option 6 (see Table 2 for details).

The results of the paired t-tests indicate significant mean differences among the three job offers in both phases. In phase 1, there are significant mean differences between option 1 and option 2 ($t = -5.384$, $p < .01$) as well as between option 1 and option 3 ($t = -4.410$, $p < .05$). These findings suggest that option 2, which focuses on PJ (potential for job growth), may be the most preferred by potential job applicants. Moving on to phase 2, significant mean differences are observed between option 4 and option 5 ($t = 2.568$, $p < .05$), between option 4 and option 6 ($t = -4.493$, $p < .01$), and between option 5 and option 6 ($t =$

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations, and intercorrelations of study variables for Study 2.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Student Loan	1.43	0.50					
2. PFS	3.25	1.06	-.298**				
3. Option 1/	1.92/3.43	0.90/0.96	-.072/-	.148			
Option 4			.048	*/.155			
4. Option 2/	2.31/3.24	0.94/0.08	-.080/-	-.001/	.549		
Option 5			.062	.078	**/.194		
5. Option 3/	2.27/3.80	1.02/0.82	.043/	-.090/-	.194	.129	
Option 6			.109	.043	**/-.100	*/-.065	

SD = Standard Deviation; Student Loan: 1 = yes, 2 = no; Perceived Financial Stress (PFS) measured with a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

Option 1 = higher entry-level salary, no PJ fit, no PO fit (salary focus); Option 2 = lower entry-level salary, good PJ fit, no PO fit (PJ focus); Option 3 = lower entry-level salary, no PJ fit, good PO fit (PO focus)

Option 4 = higher entry-level salary, PJ fit, no PO fit (salary and PJ focus);

Option 5 = higher entry-level salary, good PJ fit, no PO fit (salary and PO focus);

Option 6 = lower entry-level salary, PJ fit, good PO fit (PJ and PO focus)

** p < .01

* p < .05

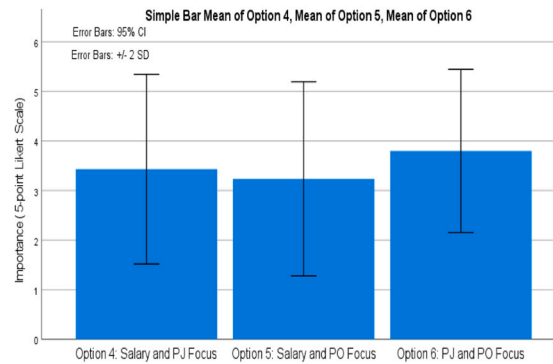
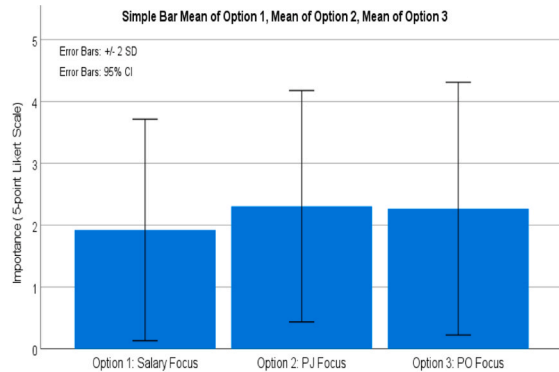
-6.899, $p < .01$). This suggests that option 6, which focuses on both PJ and PO fits, may be the most preferred by potential job applicants (see Table 3). As a result, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

We assessed PFS, indicating how individuals perceive their lives as uncontrollable and overloaded regarding financial management. This measurement was derived by modifying the four items of PFS measures (Manturuk et al., 2012). To validate the measurement items in the specific context, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted due to the slight modification of the measure [Bartlett's test of sphericity = 500.088, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) = 0.792, Cronbach's alpha = 0.857] (Hair et al., 2010). This indicates that the items related to perceived financial stress were internally consistent and stable, forming a reliable scale. It was hypothesized that an individual's perceived financial stress would moderate the relationship between the job offers in both Phase 1 and Phase 2. To test this hypothesis, participants were segmented into two subgroups using the median value (3.50, $n=30$) of the four items on the PFS scale. This division resulted in two subgroups: 102 cases with high PFS and 129 cases with low PFS. Two mixed ANOVA analyses were conducted to examine the interaction effect between these two subgroups (see Table 3 for details).

With regard to the assumption of equal observed covariance matrices for the job offer variables across groups, the Box's test of equality of covariance matrices (Box's M test) was employed. The insignificant Box's M test results in phase 1 ($F(7.528, p = .284)$) and phase 2 ($F(5.136, p = .536)$) indicate that the data is suitable for mixed ANOVA analyses in both phases (Hahs-Vaughn, 2016). Subsequently, we examined the job choice decisions based on perceived financial stress. The results of the repeated measures ANOVA, with a Greenhouse-Geisser correction, revealed significant mean differences among the three job offers (option 1, option 2, and option 3) based on the perceived financial stress groups (high vs. low) in phase 1 ($F(1.917, 438.896) = 3.930$, $p = 0.022$). However, in phase 2, no significant mean differences were found among the three job offers (option 4, option 5, and option 6) based on the perceived financial stress groups (high vs. low) ($F(1.976, 451.411) = 1.648$, $p = 0.194$) (see Fig. 2). As a result, Hypothesis 4 is partially supported.

Table 3
Results of the paired t-tests: Phase 1 and Phase 2 for Study 2.

Phases (N= 261)	Sample 1 – Sample 2	Sample 1 Mean	Sample 2 Mean	Mean Difference	t-value
Phase 1	Option 1 – Option 2	1.92	2.31	-0.39	-5.384**
	Option 1 – Option 3	1.92	2.27	-0.35	-4.410*
	Option 2 – Option 3	2.31	2.27	0.04	0.617
Phase 2	Option 4 – Option 5	3.43	3.24	0.19	2.568*
	Option 4 – Option 6	3.43	3.80	-0.37	-4.493**
	Option 5 – Option 6	3.24	3.80	-0.56	-6.899**



Phase 1: Option 1 = higher entry-level salary, no PJ fit, no PO fit (salary focus), Option 2 = lower entry-level salary, good PJ fit, no PO fit (PJ focus), Option 3 = lower entry-level salary, no PJ fit, good PO fit (PO focus)

Phase 2: Option 4 = higher entry-level salary, good PJ fit, no PO fit (salary and PJ focus), Option 5 = higher entry-level salary, no PJ fit, good PO fit (salary and PO focus), Option 6 = Lower salary, good PJ fit, good PO fit (PJ and PO focus)

** p<.01

* p<.05

4.3. Study 2 discussion

The findings of Study 2 validate the hypothesized interaction effect of perceived financial stress on the relationship between job offer options and preferences. The results demonstrate that perceived financial stress significantly influences an individual’s job selection process, both in the context of single-attribute job offers (such as higher entry-level salary, PJ fit, and PO fit) and multi-attribute job offers (such as higher entry-level salary with PJ fit, higher entry-level salary with PO fit, or PJ fit with PO fit).

Consequently, hospitality employers must recognize that salary and other monetary compensations alone may not be sufficient to sway job applicants. The perceived significance of PO fit and PJ fit highlights that individuals have higher expectations from their prospective employment beyond mere financial gains. They actively seek additional intangible values and meaningful aspects associated with the job and the organization.

Despite the aforementioned implications, this study has some limitations that warrant discussion.

5. General discussion

This study introduces a novel perspective by examining whether perceived financial stress actually plays a significant role in influencing individuals’ pursuit of employment in the hospitality industry. The primary objective is to investigate how individuals consider crucial factors, namely PJ fit, PO fit, and salary, during the decision-making process of job selection. Additionally, the study aims to explore the effects of perceived financial stress when individuals weigh multiple offers considering different combinations of these factors.

A thorough theoretical analysis examining the influence of financial stress and the hospitality industry’s distinct characteristics indicates that individuals searching for employment may place significant emphasis on salary as a primary factor when assessing a job offer that is limited to a single attribute. However, this inclination may be influenced by a combination of multiple job offer attributes, including a relatively

higher entry-level salary, congruence between the individual’s skills and the requirements of the job (PJ fit), as well as compatibility between the individual’s values and the organizational culture (PO fit). For example, job applicants burdened with higher levels of perceived financial stress due to student loans may exhibit a stronger inclination towards prioritizing PJ fit and PO fit over salary levels. Thus, notable distinctions emerged among individuals in a broader context, as evidenced by study 1, and these distinctions were further amplified when the factor of perceived financial stress was introduced, as illustrated in study 2. The change is consistent with previous studies (e.g., [Barrick and Parks-Leduc, 2019](#); [Su, 2020](#)) that individuals may place different weights on different factors throughout the decision-making process associated with job choices. When individuals receive additional cues, they may reconsider their original choice and ponder whether the initial decision should be sustained. Since decision-making is a complex process, individuals would place more weight on the most important factors, while other factors will not be excluded. Instead, the interaction of these factors would lead to the final choice.

The findings of this study reveal that perceived financial stress can influence individuals to prioritize certain intrinsic factors over extrinsic variables, thus emphasizing the ongoing significance of perceived fits with the job and the organization when making decisions among competing job offers in the hospitality industry. Despite the impact of perceived financial stress on people’s daily lives, it was evident that salary alone was not the exclusive determinant considered by job applicants. Specifically, the results indicate that job applicants do not find a job offer appealing solely based on a comparatively higher salary if there is a lack of fit with the job and the organization in the context of single-attribute job offers.

However, in the case of multi-attribute job offers, individuals may accept an offer that aligns with both their professional interests (PJ fit) and the values of the organization (PO fit) over other options, which include job offers with higher entry-level salaries coupled with PJ fit or PO fit. As a result, it becomes essential for job offers in the hospitality industry to attain a certain level of alignment with individuals who face the decision of job choice. This alignment ensures that the job offers are

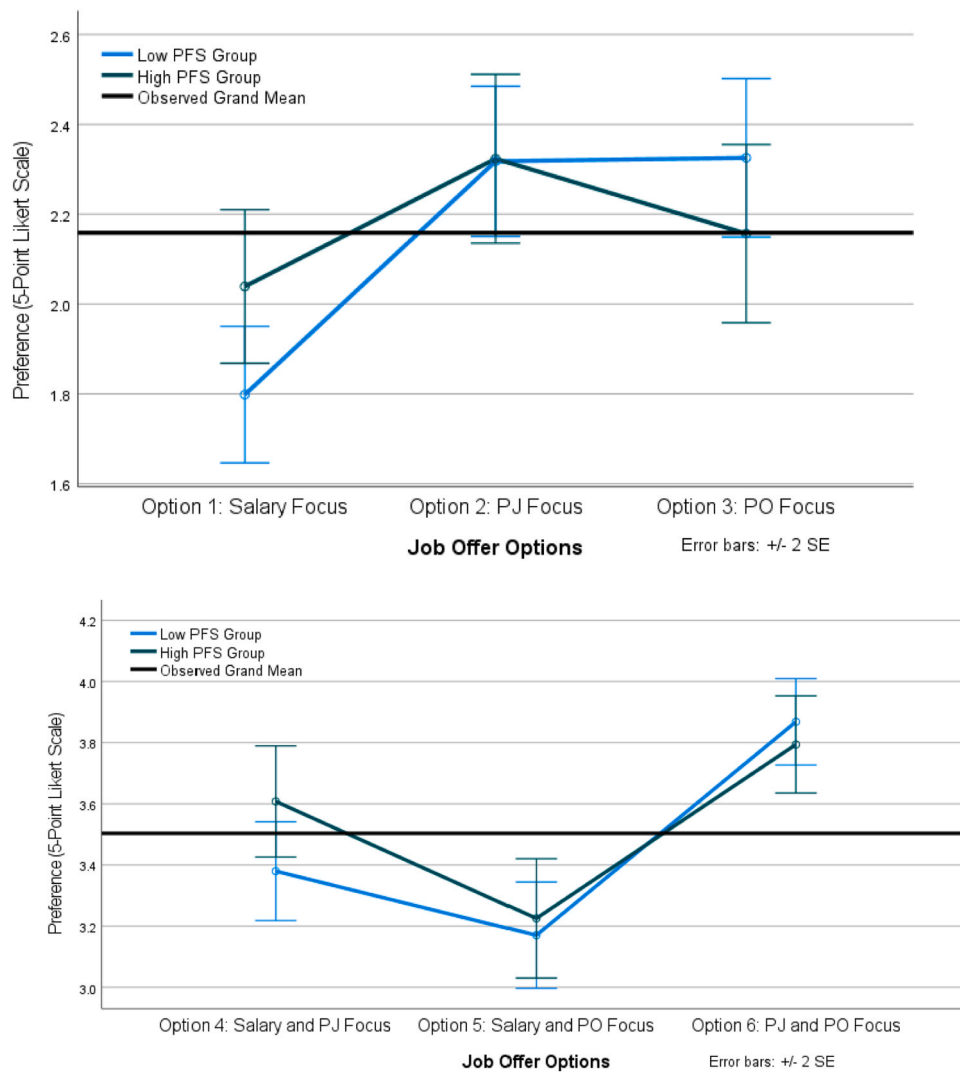


Fig. 2. Results of the mixed repeated ANOVA models. Note: the main effect of job offers is significant, $F(2, 458) 16.861, p = 0.000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.069$. Note: the main effect of job offers is significant, $F(2, 458) 28.789, p = 0.000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.112$.

considered attractive options by effectively matching the needs and preferences of these individuals within the hospitality industry context. The result aligns with previous findings that job choice, especially for hospitality positions, cannot be solely affected by monetary factors (e.g., Birtch et al., 2021). Instead, individuals are attracted because the job and/or the organization can offer something that meets their expectations, such as social or psychological needs.

The results of this study confirm that the process of making a job choice decision is complex and multifaceted, influenced by the interplay between intrinsic factors (such as perceived fit with the job and the organization) and extrinsic factors (such as salary). Interestingly, although we initially hypothesized that job applicants' perceived financial stress, primarily arising from student loans, would impact their job choice decisions, the findings from correlational analyses reveal that perceived financial stress is significantly associated only with option 1 (salary focus) and option 4 (salary and PJ focus) among the six types of uniformly presented job offers. These results demonstrate a typical pattern observed in testing linear associations between two variables.

Considering the existing research gaps in job choice decisions among different financial stress groups (high-stress group vs. low-stress group), it becomes necessary to explore non-linear associations between the financial stress groups and the various types of job offers using a mixed model ANOVA. This would allow for a more comprehensive

understanding of how different levels of perceived financial stress relate to job preferences and decision-making processes.

Overall, this study's findings support the idea that PJ fit has a stronger influence on job applicants, consistent with previous research (e.g., Uggerslev et al., 2012), regardless of their perceived financial stress. Understandably, PJ fit has a more significant impact than PO fit, as PJ fit represents the most direct and crucial assessment job applicants can make before entering a professional work environment. However, this does not imply that PO fit is unimportant. The disparity in influence may arise from a lack of detailed information about the organization beyond the recruitment message conveyed to job applicants by recruiters or other sources such as the company website, social media, or word-of-mouth from family and friends.

5.1. Theoretical contribution and implications

The study makes several theoretical contributions. The theoretical foundation of this research was established through a comprehensive review of existing literature that focuses on the congruence between individuals and their work environment (e.g., Chen et al., 2014; Guan et al., 2021), as well as the theoretical framework of self-determination theory in job choice models (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007). Specifically, we integrated two key dimensions of the work environment, namely the fit

with the job and the fit with the organization, to directly examine how individuals evaluate potential job offers. While PJ fit and PO fit have been identified as primary intrinsic factors for assessing individuals' behavior in the workplace, the simultaneous interaction between these two fits has not been extensively explored, particularly within the context of recruitment in the hospitality industry (Yen, 2017). Given the pivotal role of the workforce in delivering a satisfying customer experience in this industry, it is crucial to investigate how these fit perceptions influence job choice decisions. The findings indicate that individuals assign different levels of importance to PJ fit and PO fit perceptions when making such decisions, thereby providing support for the broader PE fit theory and corroborating previous empirical findings on the influence of PJ fit and PO fit in the recruitment context (e.g., Choi et al., 2017; Park and Hai, 2023; Ronda et al., 2020).

The results of studies 1 and 2 imply the significance of utilizing theoretical frameworks from person-environment fit theory to evaluate job choice decisions, particularly among younger generations. This demographic group constitutes a substantial portion of the workforce, especially within the hospitality labor market (e.g., Chan et al., 2017; Li et al., 2023). This suggests that although millennials face increased financial stress due to higher student loan burdens, it is crucial to acknowledge that their decision-making process in job choice models may not be solely governed by monetary factors. This introduces a novel aspect to job choice models rooted in PE fit theory, distinguishing millennials from previous generations like baby boomers and Generation X, who may mainly emphasize financial incentives in job choices (e.g., Mezza et al., 2021). As a result, scholars in hospitality exploring job recruitment and choice models should revisit PE fit theory with other significant theories such as self-determination theory and trait theories of personality, considering that millennials prioritize factors they can influence at work and highly value opportunities for career advancement provided by both the organization and the specific job role.

Considering the results of Hypothesis 3 in study 2, which reveal that job offers combining both PJ fit and PO fit are more appealing than alternatives emphasizing either PJ fit and salary or PO fit and salary, the decision-making process regarding job choice is complex. In this regard, hospitality job applicants may not rely solely on one factor when evaluating multiple job offers. They might be influenced by both intrinsic factors, such as personal considerations aligning with the beliefs and values of jobs and environments, and extrinsic factors when assessing the importance of key factors and making trade-offs to reach their final selection. Altogether, this study confirmed the extension of the examination to incorporate additional extrinsic factors, such as the starting salary, to gain insights into individuals' decision-making processes based on the theoretical foundations of PE fit theory (Saks and Ashforth, 2002) and self-determination theory in job choice models (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007). This implies that further exploration of the joint influence of these perceptions and other extrinsic factors in various specific recruitment scenarios holds promise for future research.

In sum, the results of the two studies contribute to a theoretical understanding of recruitment dynamics and emphasize the need for comprehensive understanding. Each type of fit perception and other job-related factors may contribute additional predictive variance when evaluating job and organization attractiveness, particularly when considering the collective integration of all these factors in real-world scenarios. Although previous studies found empirical support that PJ fit has a dominant effect on individuals' job choice (Song and Chon, 2012; van Vianen, 2018), the comparison to other factors was mainly associated with different dimensions of the work environment individuals (i.e., PO fit) instead of a comprehensive and holistic inclusion additional factors. This highlights the potential for further advancements in our understanding of the multifaceted nature of job choice decisions, which is more reflective of reality and expands the current view and application of the PE fit theory in recruitment studies.

This study's results align with previous research findings and expand our understanding of how young job applicants prioritize different

factors when deciding on jobs (Birtch et al., 2021). By focusing on the unique perspectives and preferences of younger generations, this study provides valuable insights that contribute to the existing theoretical knowledge in this field.

5.2. Practical implications

This study provides several practical implications. Firstly, we found that perceived financial stress can influence individuals' job choices to some degree. As the cost of higher education continues to rise and the potential for student loan debt increases (e.g., Oliff and Levine, 2021), individuals may feel pressured to choose jobs that offer higher salaries initially. This tendency could realistically lead them to prioritize financial stability over pursuing their passions or finding jobs that align with their values. Yet, when individuals perceive that they are forced to remain in a position, they develop negative psychological, emotional, and behavioral responses, which can be detrimental to both themselves and the organizations (e.g. Parker and Horowitz, 2022), especially in hospitality contexts. Hence, it ought to be an authentic employment opportunity for both hospitality firms and job candidates to discover methods of balancing life and work stressors. This alignment of personal and professional goals with those of the organizations could lead to improved outcomes for all involved in the long term. For example, hospitality firms should regularly assess the priorities of both current and prospective employees regarding their roles and the work environment, in addition to market conditions. This proactive approach helps in comprehending individuals' genuine needs and enables the identification of strategies to alleviate stressors that might dissuade potential candidates from joining or staying with the organization. Consequently, well-suited job roles and work environments not only foster employee retention and motivation but also enhance the organization's reputation, making it more appealing to prospective applicants.

Secondly, according to the findings, job applicants under significant financial stress may emphasize the perceived fit within the job and the organizational culture rather than solely considering a higher entry-level salary. This suggests that offering a competitive salary alone might not be enough to attract and retain these applicants effectively. Instead, employers should highlight how the job and the organization align with the applicant's values, interests, and long-term career objectives. This may require hospitality firms to recognize employees as valuable assets to their operations. Consequently, continual efforts should emphasize aligning organizational vision and mission with opportunities for self-career development for potential employees when crafting job recruitment statements such as descriptions and specifications. This approach may enhance their favorable perception of both the roles and the organizations themselves.

Thirdly, it is advisable to tailor job offers that combine PJ and PO fit to attract applicants with high financial stress. This may involve highlighting the compatibility of the job role with the applicant's skills and interests and revealing how the organization's values and culture align with their own. Providing additional benefits or incentives that address financial concerns, such as flexible payment options or assistance programs, may also be beneficial in overcoming the market situation faced by hospitality firms limited to competitive financial packages.

Fourthly, the findings of this study (Hypothesis 4) reveal that job applicants with high financial stress may prefer job offers that provide PJ fit and PO fit, even if they come with lower entry-level salaries compared to offers lacking fit. Hospitality firms should carefully evaluate the trade-offs between offering competitive salaries and ensuring a good fit for these applicants. It may be necessary to strike a balance by considering other factors like long-term career growth opportunities, training and development programs, and work-life balance initiatives. As an example of effective HR practices, hospitality firms should prioritize specific areas to attract and retain talented individuals. These areas include offering opportunities for job enrichment, providing financial consulting services to address financial stress, implementing effective

training programs, fostering schedule flexibility, and developing robust retention practices. By emphasizing these aspects, hospitality firms can enhance their ability to attract and retain a skilled and motivated workforce.

Overall, these findings highlight the importance of considering job applicants' specific needs and preferences when experiencing high perceived financial stress when designing job offers in the hospitality industry. By recognizing the significance of fit and tailoring offers accordingly, hospitality firms can enhance their recruitment and retention strategies for this specific applicant segment.

5.3. Limitations and suggestions for future research

Hospitality firms must attract and retain talented individuals who can deliver memorable and satisfying experiences to customers, thereby establishing a bond of loyalty that contributes to sustainable success. This study reveals that job applicants, regardless of their perceived financial stress, prioritize factors beyond salary when seeking employment. This highlights the complexity of job choice decisions when intrinsic and extrinsic factors are taken into account simultaneously. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of job applicants' job search behaviors and psychology, future studies should continue to explore the dynamic interactions among multiple factors. For instance, other intrinsic and extrinsic considerations, such as job location, could be incorporated into the model of job offer acceptance. By delving further into these aspects, researchers can deepen their insights into the complex decision-making processes involved in job choice and enhance our understanding of job applicants' preferences and motivations.

Several limitations to this study should be acknowledged. Firstly, it is important to recognize that the job search process is lengthy. The data collected for this research represents only a partial assessment of job applicants' financial stress and job-related factors within a recruitment setting. To provide a more comprehensive understanding, future studies should consider incorporating additional time-lapsed data to capture job applicants' perceptions at different stages of the recruitment process.

Another limitation is that this study primarily focused on job choice decisions from the perspective of financial stress related to student loans. It would be valuable to extend the scope of the investigation to encompass other influential factors. For example, examining the impact of other financial support individuals receive, their prior employment experiences and their level of familiarity with potential job opportunities and prospective employers could enhance our understanding of job selection dynamics.

By addressing these limitations and broadening the scope of inquiry, future research can shed further light on the complexities surrounding job applicants' decision-making processes and provide more comprehensive insights into the factors that shape their job choices.

6. Conclusion

It has been a critical challenge for hospitality firms to acquire the right individuals who fit the job and the organization and are willing to stay with the company. With the heightened concern about the high turnover rate in the industry and the substantial cost associated with recruitment and other HR functions, managers need to understand the complexity of job applicants' decision-making process. It is imperative that hospitality firms retain employees who can deliver a desirable customer service experience and thus create repeat business. Therefore, it is critical to understand job applicants' perception of work conditions and job-related factors, especially under significant financial stress, and their decision-making process. This study found that individuals did not make their job choices solely based on salary. Instead, they considered different combinations of key factors in this process. We also discovered that PJ fit had a more decisive influence on job choice decisions than other factors, including PO fit.

As a series of job choice decisions are made, and multiple intrinsic

and extrinsic variables simultaneously affect the process, future studies should continue expanding efforts to understand the dynamic interactions among key factors to comprehend the underlying processes utilized by job applicants.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Alan Yen: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.
Kwang-Ho Lee: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Resources, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of Competing Interest

We wish to confirm that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with this publication, and there has been no significant financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome. We confirm that the manuscript has been read and approved by all named authors and that there are no other persons who satisfied the criteria for authorship but are not listed. We further confirm that the order of authors listed in the manuscript has been approved by both of us. We confirm that we have given due consideration to the protection of intellectual property associated with this work and that there are no impediments to publication, including the timing of publication, with respect to intellectual property. In so doing, we confirm that we have followed the regulations of our institutions concerning intellectual property. We understand that the Corresponding Author is the sole contact for the Editorial process (including Editorial Manager and direct communications with the office). He is responsible for communicating with the other authors about progress, submissions of revisions, and final approval of proofs. We confirm that we have provided a current, correct email address that is accessible by the Corresponding Author and which has been configured to accept email from cyen@bsu.edu.

Data Availability

The data that has been used is confidential.

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