



Investigating Key Issues Causing Ineffectiveness of Students' Internship Programs in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

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Abstract

The internship program has been recognised worldwide as a high-impact practice that provides students with the knowledge, practical skills, desirable attitude, and behaviours. However, the most previous studies have primarily focused on its benefits. By looking at issues, most of the existing studies represented them from a specific party's side, either intern students or business operators. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining issues affecting internship programs from the perspectives of three key stakeholders: students, educational institutions, and business operators. The study explores the major issues causing the ineffectiveness of students' internship programs in the hospitality and tourism industry. An integrative literature review was conducted, synthesising secondary data to identify key issues affecting the hospitality and tourism students' internship program. Relevant keywords (e.g., Internship, Issue, Ineffectiveness, Work-based Learning, Hospitality, and Tourism) were entered into Google Scholar and Google search engine, and 50 articles were selected based on their quality, clarity, and relevance, following the PRISMA model. In this manner, eight primary issues that lead to the ineffectiveness of internship programs in the hospitality and tourism industry are found. It includes 1) poor working conditions, 2) lack of effective monitoring system, 3) perceived as cheap labour, 4) unsupported social working environment, 5) ineffective supervision, 6) inadequate academic and attitude preparedness, 7) no/low pay and compensation, and 8) unclarity of assigned tasks. In addition, the study also proposes some actionable suggestions to overcome these issues and potential future research directions related to this topic.

Keywords: Internship, Issue, Ineffectiveness, Work-based learning, Hospitality and Tourism

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■ Introduction

Work-based learning (WBL) is widely adopted by educational institutions throughout the world as it would be beneficial to students to gain professional experience in a real business setting (McHugh, 2016, Silva et al., 2016). This concept has been permeated in various learning arrangements such as internship programs, cooperative training, or joint training (Lee et al., 2006). With this professional experience that the students could not find within the university, therefore, the practical training or internship program has recently become a vital supplement course for the students to acquire industrial knowledge, practical skills, industry-need attitude, and it would prepare students for a smooth transition from the student's life to the professional life in the real business setting. In this regard, numerous curriculums have included an internship or practical training program as one of the core courses the students are mandatorily required to participate in prior to graduation. There is no exception in hospitality and tourism curriculums.

The internship programs are highly acknowledged as a high-impact practice that would advocate the students to achieve their academic and future careers (Parker et al., 2016). Moreover, many scholars and educators believe that the internship program would allow students to apply the theoretical knowledge gained in the classes to real working situations (Anjum, 2020; Baert et al., 2021; Shaheen et al., 2022). In addition, the program also provides a greater understanding of the industry needs, career choices, and skills required in the workplace (Walo, 2001). Moreover, various articles also proposed the issues causing an ineffective internship program, but it was fragmented because most prior articles presented the issues from a single perspective, either students or business operators.

Therefore, this study explores the major issues causing the ineffectiveness of students' internship programs in the hospitality and tourism industry through an integrative literature review. Using the PRISMA model, the study systematically identified, screened, and selected 50 high-quality articles from an initial pool of 8,660 results retrieved via Google Scholar. Relevant keywords (e.g., Internship, Issue, Ineffectiveness, Work-based Learning, Hospitality, and Tourism) were applied alongside refinement criteria such as publication stage, date range (1990 onwards), language (English), and source type (journals, books, and conference proceedings). The integrative review synthesised findings from diverse perspectives—students, educational institutions, and business operators—uncovering eight primary issues. Actionable suggestions to address these challenges are provided, aiming to enhance preparedness and prevention efforts. Additionally, the article proposes directions for future research to further address these concerns.

■ Significance and Purposes

- 1) By examining the issues affecting internship programs from multiple perspectives—students, business operators, and educational institutions—this study aims to provide a holistic view of the challenges and inefficiencies in current internship practices. This comprehensive approach helps in identifying systemic problems that might not be apparent when viewed from a single perspective.

2) The study seeks to address and propose solutions to the problems identified within internship programs in the hospitality and tourism industry. By highlighting these issues and suggesting actionable improvements, the study aims to enhance the overall effectiveness and impact of internships, thereby better preparing students for their future careers.

■ Literature Reviews

Definitions, key components, and benefits of internship programs

With the comprehensive literature review, an internship program is described as an educational process that allows the students to obtain off-campus experience by receiving training from professionals within a specific business setting or actual working situation (Hora et al., 2020). Furthermore, through the process, the students would enable to develop professional experience and networks (Hora et al., 2020). Therefore, in addition to general concepts of internship found, it can also be identified that those definitions and concepts of the internship program are included the key necessary elements of students' internship programs as presented in table 1.

Table 1.

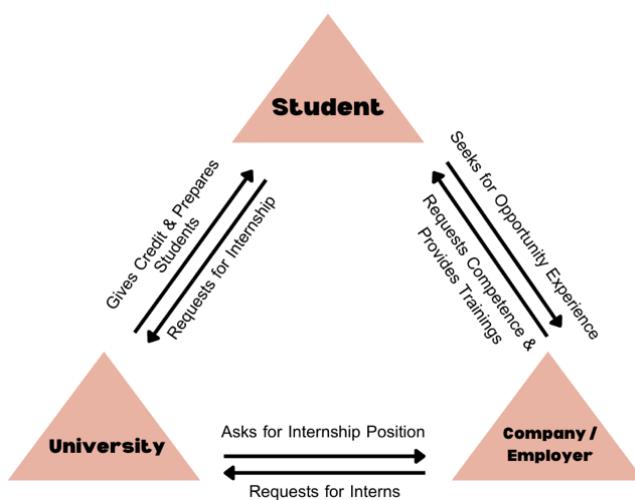
Definitions and key elements of an internship program

Author, year	Definition	Key element(s)
Davies (1990)	An internship is a form of experiential learning where students are given an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge obtained from a university in real-world situations. It allows students to integrate knowledge gained from the classes into real actions.	- Able to apply knowledge from the classes in the real business setting
McMahon & Quinn (1995)	An internship is defined as a working experience under professional supervision; the students will be provided guidelines and paid close attention during the internship program.	- Be supervised and trained by professionals in that particular field

Author, year	Definition	Key element(s)
Zopiatis (2007)	<p>An internship is an opportunity for the students to bring the theoretical knowledge in the classes to practice in a real business setting. In addition, they will have a chance to evaluate the compatibility of their future career with their interests and personality.</p>	<p>-To evaluate the compatibility of a future career with their interests and personality.</p>
Bogdana et al. (2012)	<p>An internship program is described as an educational development opportunity for the students to enhance their knowledge and skills within the field that they are interested in meeting with the industry needs</p>	<p>-To develop skills and experiences within the specified sector in which a student is interested</p>

Table 1 presents key elements of students' internship program, which include integrating knowledge gained from the educational institution into the real working situation, being trained and supervised by professionals in the field, having an opportunity to evaluate the compatibility of a future career with their interests and personality, and developing skills demanded by the industry. These elements would play an essential part in the perceived success of the internship program. Specifically, for the hospitality and tourism program, the internship would offer students an opportunity to interact with real guests in a real business situation and develop their hospitableness. In addition, their service-minded attitude is also shaped during the internship program.

Moreover, the literature also revealed three main interplay actors within an internship program, including students, educational institutions, and hotel and tourism companies, as shown in Figure 1. These three parties play a vital role in a student internship program (Yiu & Law, 2012; Vo et al., 2021). In addition, Zopiatis and Theocarous (2013) illustrated the benefits generated by this triparty involved in the student internship program. They stressed that students would have an opportunity to experience the real business setting and practical work. Meanwhile, educational institutions could increase and strengthen their reputation, upgrade students' enrollment, and prepare their curriculum to fit the industry's needs. Finally, for the company, they would obtain an opportunity to recruit and train their potential employees who have knowledge and skills that meet their requirements.



(Adapted from Yiu & Law, 2012)

Figure 1. Three essential parties influencing the success of students' internship programs

Furthermore, most of the existing literature and research works are mainly emphasised the advancement of students and the benefits derived from the internship programs. Those positive outcomes have resulted in an increase in the popularity and higher perceived significance of internship programs. The potential benefits or outcomes would be presented in association with economic, psycho-social, and, importantly, academic aspects. According to previous studies, internship programs benefit all concerned parties in the different dimensions and perspectives, as presented in table 2.

Table 2.

Benefits of internship programs to all concerned

Students' perspective	Employees' perspective	Educators' perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop students in their professional and personal aspects (Kok, 2000). • To help them better understand and know all tasks and operations performed by professionals within the industry. • To enhance future employment and career growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have an accessibility to a pool of potential future workers with competencies needed (Ju et al., 1998) • To have a "try before you buy" opportunity for employers to know students that have the potential to be hired after graduation (Cates-McIver, 1998). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An internship program can be used as a promotional tool to attract more intake students. • Increasing student employment or placement at the time of their graduation can ultimately develop recognition in prospective students and their parents' minds.

Students' perspective	Employees' perspective	Educators' perspective
<p>opportunities, networking with potential employers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To develop their essential competencies and skills needed by the field (Tinoco-Giraldo, 2021). ● To improve students' confidence and ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds (Cook et al., 2004). ● To gain learning-by-doing experience, the students can integrate their theoretical knowledge and skill obtained from the university into a real working setting (Bullock et al., 2009). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To develop a positive company image and support education (Thiel & Hartly, 1997). ● To handle labour shortages and have consistency in providing services to the customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The universities will receive credibility from the industry when an employer is satisfied with a student's performance (Cook et al., 2004). ● To enhance future collaborations in terms of academics, research, and others. ● To establish a long-term relationship with future students' internship opportunities and graduate employment opportunities (Walo, 2001). ● To examine the compatibility and relevance between academic theories and the needs of the industry.

Although it only emphasises the importance and benefits of the internship, there is very little existing literature presenting limitations or key problematic issues from all triparty, which ultimately result in the ineffectiveness of the internship programs. By performing the literature review on the relevant articles, various issues are found to become barriers to the success of the internship program. In this article, key factors and issues causing the ineffectiveness of hospitality and tourism students' internship programs are unearthed since it has been aware that unsuccessful internship experiences would highly impact those three main parties, especially students who are the future of the industry. They could be discouraged and turn away from the industry by either dropping out of university or changing their career choices (Waryszak, 1999; Fox, 2001).

In hospitality and tourism curriculums, internship programs become integral components, serving as essential educational tools that add significant value to students' learning experiences (Zopiatis, 2007). Certain professional skills and knowledge are best acquired through practical, hands-on experiences rather

than traditional classroom instruction. According to Sir E.M. Statler, the father of American Hotels, who suggested and emphasised that the hospitality students need to undergo and obtain real-world experience within the industry, this priceless experience could be achieved through a hands-on learning experience (Zopiatis, 2007). For hospitality and tourism students, internships provide opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings, enabling them to understand industry expectations and align their competencies with market demands. Consequently, internships play a crucial role in preparing students to meet industry requirements effectively. Vo et al. (2022) highlight that, in recent years, all hospitality and tourism students are required to complete internships lasting between two to six months, either through self-application or academic recommendations. Moreover, previous studies have demonstrated the significant impact of successful internship programs on students' future career decisions. For instance, Tse (2010) found that satisfaction with internship experiences facilitates the transition from academic learning to career decision-making, providing a solid foundation for students' professional futures.

According to the study conducted by Beard and Morton (1998), several key factors contributing to the success and effectiveness of students' internship programs were identified. These factors include: (1) students' academic preparedness, (2) students' initiative, (3) students' positive attitude, (4) the quality of supervision, (5) employers' practices and policies, and (6) compensation. While these components are well-documented in the literature, numerous prior studies have also identified issues leading to the ineffectiveness of internship programs. These issues often stem from the absence of these key components, unintentional actions, or a lack of understanding of the purpose and structure of student internships, ultimately resulting in unsuccessful outcomes. This article aims to examine and present these challenges in detail.

■ Methods

This study employed integrative literature review analysis which is a systematic review (Stevens, 2001). According to Russell (2005), an integrative literature review is depicted as a comprehensive methodological approach of reviews to synthesize the research evidences to answer the subject questions.

In this study, a comprehensive review of the literature was conducted using the PRISMA flow diagram to examine case studies and identify the major issues contributing to the ineffectiveness of students' internship programs in the hospitality and tourism industry. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews (PRISMA) flow diagram was developed by a group of 29 review authors, medical editors, consumers, clinicians, and methodologists (Liberati et al., 2009). In 2005, this group attended a three-day meeting and engaged in extensive post-meeting digital correspondence to reach a consensus on the optimal process. As a result, a 27-item checklist and a four-phase flow diagram were created (Liberati et al., 2009; Stovold et

al., 2014). Liberati et al. (2009) emphasised that PRISMA focuses on helping authors ensure the transparent and complete reporting of systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

Relevant keywords (Internship, Issue, Ineffectiveness, Work-based learning, Hospitality and Tourism) were initially entered into a Google Scholar search engine as a part of problem formulation. A total of 8,660 results were retrieved in February 2022. Figure 2 displays a flowchart illustrating the integrative review process for selecting articles. The following criteria were applied to refine the results:

- The publication stage was final.
- The year of publication was 1990 onwards
- The language was limited to English.
- Source type was limited to journal, book, and conference proceedings.

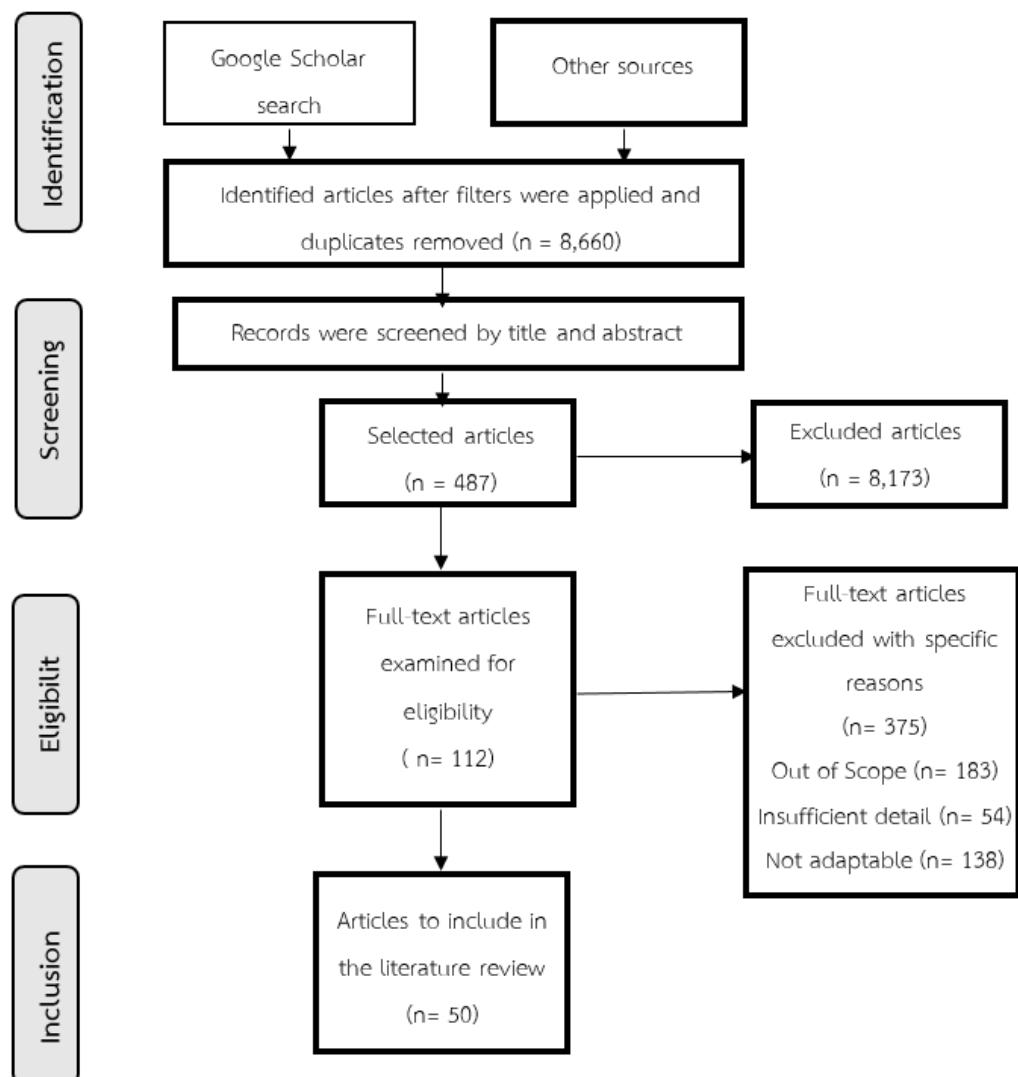


Figure 2. PRISMA flow diagram for a review of the literature

Analysis of Data

Effective internship programs are crucial for bridging the gap between academic learning and professional practice. However, numerous challenges often hinder their success, impacting students, business operators, and educational institutions alike. Understanding these challenges from all perspectives is essential for developing effective solutions. In this study, the data analysis was conducted using a systematic approach to extract and analyse information from secondary data, specifically from the 50 selected articles. A thematic analysis was conducted to uncover recurring patterns and issues contributing to the ineffectiveness of internship programs. Following the approach outlined by Clarke and Braun (2017), this method is well-suited for identifying, analysing, and interpreting meaningful patterns, or “themes,” within qualitative data. The process began by extracting key details, including the study objectives, findings, and challenges, from each article. These details were then systematically coded into themes based on their relevance to specific problems in internship programs. In this manner, eight key issues causing the ineffectiveness of internship programs emerged, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

Key Identified Issues Causing the Ineffectiveness of Internship Programs

Key Identified Themes	Author(s) and Year
Poor working conditions	Ju et al., 1998; Waryszak, 1999; Neumann & Banghart, 2001; Collins, 2002; Cook et al., 2004; Lam & Ching, 2007; Zopiatis, 2007; D'Abate et al., 2009; Agarwal et al., 2016
Lack of effective monitoring system	McQuade & Graessie, 1990; Eyler, 1993; Feldman et al., 1999; Gordon, 2002; Zopiatis, 2007; Tinoco-Giraldo et al., 2021
Inadequate academic and attitude preparedness	Bourland-Davis et al., 1997; Beard & Morton, 1998; Ju et al., 1998; Knouse et al., 1999; Walo, 2001; Lee et al., 2006; Sapp & Zhang, 2009; Zopiatis & Theocharous, 2013; Galloway et al., 2014; Gautam, 2017
Perceived as a cheap labour	Huyton, 1991; Fox, 2001; Rothman, 2007; Bogdana et al., 2012; Kasli & Ilban, 2013; Cheong et al., 2014; Dhanraj & Parusasur, 2014; Maertz et al., 2014
Unsupported social working environment	McMahon & Quinn, 1995; Knouse et al., 1999; Waryszak, 1999; Tovey, 2001; Cook et al., 2004; Robinson et al., 2015; Hussien & La Lopa, 2018; Vo et al., 2021
Ineffective supervision	McMahon & Quinn, 1995; Beard & Morton, 1998; Ju et al., 1998; Mowday, 1998; Roever, 2000; Dixon et al., 2005; Zopiatis, 2007; Knouse & Fontenot, 2008; Sapp & Zhang,

Key Identified Themes	Author(s) and Year
	2009; D'Abate et al., 2009; McHugh, 2016; Zoppiatis & Theocarous, 2013; Cheong et al., 2014
No/low pay and compensation	Bacow & Byrne, 1992; Thiel & Hartley, 1997; Beard & Morton, 1998; Cheong et al., 2014; Maertz et al., 2014; Pasternack, 2015; Crain, 2016; McHugh, 2016; Hora et al., 2019; Hora et al., 2020
Unclarity of assigned tasks	Waryszak, 1999; Rothman, 2007; Maertz et al., 2014; McHugh, 2016; Coco, 2000; D'Abate et al., 2009

The categorisation into three perspectives—students, educational institutions, and business operators—was achieved through an iterative process of thematic analysis. Each identified issue was carefully reviewed to determine which stakeholder group(s) it primarily affected or was most relevant to.

Each issue was subsequently mapped to the corresponding party using explicit evidence or context derived from the articles. The results were synthesised into Table 4, which illustrates that the issues causing the ineffectiveness of internship programs arise from all three parties—students, educational institutions, and business operators—across various dimensions. These issues are often interconnected, with one problem potentially influencing or exacerbating others. As such, the table highlights the specific issues and the key stakeholders involved. Understanding these concerns provides a foundation for all parties to address the problems effectively, fostering a more successful and collaborative internship experience.

Table 4.

Factors contributing to the ineffectiveness of internship programs and concerned parties

Concerned party	Poor working conditions	Problems					
		Lack of effective monitoring system	Inadequate academic and attitude preparedness	Perceived as a cheap labour	Unsupported social working environment	Ineffective supervision	No/Low pay and compensation
Student		√			√		√
Educational Institution		√	√				
Business operators	√			√	√	√	√

Remark*** √ indicates the primary party concerned with each issue.

On the students' side, inadequate academic preparedness, undesirable attitudes, limited experience in developing social interactions, and a lack of understanding of task performance are primarily self-imposed issues. Therefore, students must ensure they have the essential knowledge and skills required for their internship roles. Additionally, maintaining a positive attitude, including a service-oriented mindset towards the company's guests and colleagues, is crucial. Furthermore, students should proactively seek clarification and request guidance when they find assigned tasks unclear or need further instructions.

In the educational institutions, a lack of an effective monitoring system and sufficient student preparation existed in the educational institution side. Coordination between the educational institution and hotels and tour companies is one of the most crucial elements responsible by the university's internship representatives. Universities should have representatives who are only responsible for internship affairs. These persons must actively communicate and follow up with the students and internship sites to ensure the effectiveness of the students' internship program. In addition to their administrative tasks, they also develop the students' readiness before the internship program; therefore, they need to be knowledgeable in the hospitality and tourism industry. Nowadays, many universities offer preparation courses for students who will undertake an internship program. It is an addition to the regular courses in the program. Preparation courses may include academic and non-academic knowledge and skills such as personality development, positive attitude development, development of emotional intelligence, and other essential skills for their internship programs.

For the business operators' side, most of the students' internship activities occur at the internship site; therefore, the employer and his/her staff play a vital role in the success of the student's internship and positive experience. Based on this literature review, the most frequently found problems at the internship sites are the wrong perception toward an internship, unsupported social working environment, lack of effective supervision, unclarity of assigned tasks, and no/low compensation. This is in line with the previous study done by Kasli and Ilban (2013), which found that the hotel and tourism sector did not provide attention, compensation, and professional conditions to the students during the internship program. Therefore, it should be started by the establishments' managers to understand and change their perception of the internship program. They need to set their mindset that those students were there to learn the knowledge from the industry to become valuable employees or even the industry leaders in the future. Therefore, they need to provide the best support, including supervisor support, supervisor mentoring, training, social support, and working materials. This manner could yield a positive student response and make the interns obtain whole industrial experience and become valuable industry assets in the future.

■ Results and Discussion

The comprehensive literature review found that hospitality and tourism students' internship programs still encountered ineffectiveness, derived from three main parties: students, educational institutions, and business operators. The factors that cause the ineffectiveness of students' internship programs are presented as the following;

1. Poor working conditions

This issue is derived from the characteristic of internship positions in the hospitality and tourism industry. According to the prior study done by Neumann and Banghart (2001), students' internship positions in this sector are normally perceived to have less opportunity for job rotation. In addition, some students were found to do repetitive tasks every day throughout their internship period with a hotel or tour company. Consequently, they will become monotonous, resulting in being demystified and burn out ultimately (Agarwal et al. 2016). Finally, they might perceive that the industry may not match their interest, and they do not want to work in the future.

Numerous literatures revealed that the work characteristics such as challenge assigned tasks and task variety significantly influence the employees' perception of job satisfaction (D'Abate et al., 2009; Dhanraj & Parumasur 2014). This proposition is also found to influence the intern students as well. According to Rothman (2007), the study showed that intern students expect to experience challenging work where they would have more opportunities to learn and contribute to the company. Moreover, Cheong et al. (2014) further stated that interns who had opportunities to perform exciting and challenging tasks were more satisfied with their internship program. It would allow them to apply theoretical knowledge to the workplace.

In addition, various articles revealed poor working conditions in the hospitality and tourism industry based on students' perceptions, including poor and ineffective communication, lack of good coordination among the team members, unorganised working environment, limited or no delegation, long working hours, little or no monetary compensation, work shift, and a hectic working environment, especially during the peak time (Collins, 2002; Lam & Ching, 2007). These poor working conditions would make the students have dissatisfying experiences and become pessimistic about what they are doing, resulting in low productivity and job satisfaction. Moreover, Lam and Ching (2007) argued that these negative perceptions might occur because the educational institutions did not prepare students well in order to handle these challenges and high demands in the real working situation in the hotel and tourism industry. Additionally, Fatma Güll and

Volkan (2018) suggest that students' negative attitudes and low initiative further contribute to these unfavorable perceptions, leading to the view of poor working conditions.

2. Lack of effective monitoring system

For students' internship programs, the monitoring system is a crucial element that drives the success of the internship and would be able to support the students to meet their purpose of undergoing an internship. The monitoring system includes coordinating with hospitality and tourism companies, supporting all students' internship activities, following up on students' performance, and advising the students (Feldman et al., 1999; Gordon, 2002).

However, several articles still illustrated that ineffective monitoring systems are a significant problem for educational institutions in many programs. Those articles revealed that most educational institutions would assign their academic staff to perform a liaison role for the students' internship program. Furthermore, most of them could encounter heavy workloads because they did not only perform the role of an internship coordinator, but they still have other tasks to perform, such as teaching, research, and others. This is in line with the study done by McQuade and Graessie (1990), which stated that most internship representatives at the educational institutions are academic staff who are not only responsible for the coordination and administration of students' internship programs but also must be responsible for their regular teaching and conducting research. Eyler (1993) stressed that students' internship programs would become secondary to academic activities and more challenging when the primary role of the responsible person is not only internship coordination. It can be said that administration and coordination are essential to the success of students' internships. It may require a lot of time to communicate with the companies within the industry and students. This monitoring system would ensure that the students achieve their internship goals with satisfactory performance throughout their internship period (Serreqi et al., 2023). Moreover, those internship sites would need a responsible person to contact if an educational institution's advice is needed.

3. Perceived as a cheap labour

Several articles presented that many business operators might not fully understand and be aware of the internship objectives and take the benefit from students' internships incorrectly (Cheong et al., 2014, Maertz et al., 2014). They might misuse the interns as a solution to fill the labour shortage within their organisation, especially in the hotel industry, which requires human-intensive. Generally speaking, they might consider the intern students as cheap labour, which could help them save the business's labour costs. Fox (2001) mentioned that many organisations just wanted to have people in particular areas where they needed staffing or someone to perform; they were not aware of developing their future potential employees from an internship opportunity. In addition, Huyton (1991) have found a similar perception that

some organisations might have no idea of what they could expect from the intern students, even did not know how to train them successfully and what kinds of skills and knowledge they should provide to the students during the internship period. They simply wanted people to support their daily operations and do what they command.

In the hotel industry context, the study done by Kasli and Ilban (2013) revealed the hotel managers' expectations of students' internships. The findings showed that those managers recognised the intern students as cheap labour in their business, not potential employees in the future. Therefore, they tended to assign intern students to the departments where they were busy and needed support instead of assigning them to the department that could help them achieve their internship goals.

4. Unsupported social working environment

According to the study previously done by Vo et al. (2021), the working environment and co-workers at the workplace have a significant influence and play a vital role in internship satisfaction and success. Hussien and La Lopa (2018) stated that a good social experience with team members during the internship would greatly enhance interns' interests and excitement in working. A similar finding from the study done by Robinson et al. (2015) confirmed this phenomenon. It was reported that the student's internship satisfaction was derived from the working environment and relationship with the co-workers as team spirit and social support. In the hotel and tourism context, employees are constantly engaged with the customers in a busy and fast working environment. As newcomers, interns may feel having little chance or do not know when and how to start developing relationships with others without interrupting their operations. In some cases, they may perceive less social support from others. McMahon and Quinn (1995) explained that poor employee-organisational fit becomes a big concern for the students' internship because they would perceive that they were encountering difficulties in communicating and establishing good relationships with others, resulting in isolation and no intention to work. Consequently, they would be dissatisfied and have a negative perception and depression because they may feel that they are not along with the team (Waryszak, 1999, Knouse et al., 1999).

5. Ineffectiveness of supervision

Supervisors for intern students play a vital role in determining the overall internship experience in the students' perceptions, whether positive or negative (Ju et al., 1998; Roever, 2000). Cheong et al. (2014) found that supervision effectiveness significantly correlated with overall interns' job performance and the success of the internship program. With the literature review, the characteristics of effective supervisors for the internship programs were portrayed as consistently providing constructive feedback, being supportive, demonstrating high work standards, having coaching skills, and giving opportunities to the interns to explore their career interests (Zopiatis & Theocharous, 2013; McHugh, 2016). The support from the supervisor would

enable to reflect the company's commitment to the interns and make them feel that they belong to the team (Mowday, 1998). Apart from showing the company's commitment to the interns, the supervisor would help develop the interns' commitment to the company (Dixon et al., 2005). However, most recent studies (e.g., Richardson, 2009; F Davis, 2019) found that the students' perceptions of the companies' supervision system were negative, especially in the hotel where the students and their supervisors worked different work shifts. Apart from that, those supervisors still have their daily tasks to complete. Therefore, the role of interns' supervision would become secondary. Consequently, the students perceived that the relations between interns and their supervisors were weak and distant. With this issue, the students would not be able to entirely improve their performance and confidence and feel a lack of support; it would limit their learning and improving their professional skills. Finally, they might have a negative experience with their internship program (D'Abate et al., 2009).

6. Inadequate academic and attitude preparedness

Academic preparedness becomes an integral part of equipping students with the essential knowledge and skills of the hospitality and tourism industry for applying to the internship program. According to the prior studies, academic preparedness was a determinant of effectiveness in an internship program (Beard & Morton, 1998). Bourland-Davis et al. (1997) stressed that the students doing an internship should understand the fascinating professional field and the relevant key concepts and knowledge. In addition, Beard and Morton (1998) revealed that healthy academic preparation would provide students to have more opportunities during the internship and quickly understand assigned tasks and complete them within a time frame. In order to promote internship effectiveness, some hospitality and tourism programs may require students to complete a certain level of their course work or study some mandatory courses in the hospitality and tourism context before undertaking an internship. Therefore, it can ensure that they are well prepared and have the necessary knowledge and skills to pursue their internship. In some circumstances, a specific minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) was set as a criterion to screen those who are well academic prepared (Knouse et al., 1999).

Moreover, a positive attitude is another essential element for interns to succeed in the internship program (Galloway et al., 2014). Many hospitality and tourism programs attempt to shape the students' attitudes to fit with the industry from the early day, especially service-minded, because they need to provide services to the guest (Gautam, 2017). In addition, the students must have other types of attitudes for their development and learning progress, such as a willing-to-learn or willing-to-assist attitude. This attitude would develop a good perception from other co-workers toward the students. Ultimately, those people feel more willing to train and consider the students as a part of their team faster.

The literature review found that intern students who have adequate knowledge, skills, and a positive attitude to perform tasks during the internship were more likely to succeed and be satisfied with the internship program (Walo, 2001). Therefore, it would be indicated that academic knowledge background and preparedness plus industrial fit attitudes for hospitality and tourism students would advocate for the intern students to gain better results from their internship experience. On the other hand, adverse results would be expected in the lack of academic preparedness. In addition, it revealed that academic and attitude preparedness would facilitate their learning and development progress during the internship.

7. No/Low pay and compensation

Unpaid internship seems to be a lengthy topic discussed among the concerned parties. However, the conflict propositions between paid and unpaid internships are still inconclusive and under discussion. According to Maertz et al. (2014), Fair Internship Initiative. (2018), and Hora et al. (2019), paid internships seem to have higher positive outcomes than unpaid ones. In contrast, employers may justify lacking a monetary compensation that the student's development program is valuable enough to warrant the absence of pay (Pasternack, 2015). In the hotel business, some hotels offer low pay because they have already provided other welfare to the interns, such as meals on duty, staff shuttle bus, uniforms, etc.

However, the research on compensation and interns' performance has remained unaddressed. The currently existing literature, such as Crain (2016), stressed that a lower satisfaction level of internship experience was found with unpaid internships than with paid ones. In addition to this, several scholars' studies revealed that compensation should be considered as a critical factor to determine the internship quality and the success of the internship program (Bacow & Byrne, 1992; Beard & Morton, 1998). Bacow and Byrne (1992) further stated that paid internships would increase students' sense of educational preparedness because they would reflect the real situation in the working environment. In consistence with Beard and Morton (1998), who claimed that compensation would promote students' commitments to the organisation and take accountability for the assigned tasks.

From students' perspective, compensation became the main barrier to pursuing their internship with the organisation that offers their interesting position. The students tend to choose the internship site by considering the payment instead of knowledge and interest because they still need to pay for accommodation, food, etc. Regarding the study done by Hora et al. (2019), some students found an organisation offering their interesting position with stipends, but it was not enough to pay for the gas so they might consider others. This issue may raise a question: Do the students have an opportunity to pursue their internship within the area they are really interested in? Alternatively, just they do it for completing the graduation requirements.

8. Unclarity of assigned tasks

Various studies included clarity of tasks to reflect the internship effectiveness (Waryszak, 1999; Maertz et al., 2014). It would be said that those interns are new in the field, and they might carry only one perspective of knowledge that they gained from the classes, which may not be adequate to perform the tasks in an actual working situation. Moreover, they also lack industrial experience. Different hospitality and tourism business companies have different standard operating procedures; knowledge from the classes may not be applicable in their real working setting. All of these may cause their performance to become lower than expectations (McHugh, 2016). Rothman (2007) revealed that lack of tasks clarity and poor planning in interns' work assignments could cause interns to feel stress, depression, and frustration. Furthermore, unclear roles and job assignments would negatively affect the intern student's performance and job satisfaction. Therefore, the hotels and tourism companies should ensure that job descriptions and standard operating procedures (SOPs) are given to the interns; they can understand all tasks they must perform and have a certain procedure to follow to eliminate their confusion.

With the problematic issues specified earlier in this article, the author proposes the following suggestions to address these problems and enhance the quality and effectiveness of internship programs:

1. Establish collaborations between educational institutions and companies

Industry-Educational institutions' collaboration is broadly recognised throughout the educational field. Many scholars and policymakers are also realised its benefits which can provide industrial innovation products and enhance graduate skills development (Sudiyatno et al., 2020). By establishing a collaborative agreement model, both industry and educational institutions can develop a mutual win-win situation. This model can be extended to include the university's internship programs. In this manner, both parties can understand each other's roles and identify each other's needs and expectations. In terms of internship programs, the collaboration allows both parties to form mutual agreements and specify requirements such as job characteristics, supervision system, mentoring system, students' qualifications, compensation, working hours, etc.

Moreover, the educational institutions can also invite people from the hospitality and tourism industry to share their experiences or even participate in students' preparation before the internship program begins. This collaboration would be considered as a mechanism to control the effectiveness of students' internship programs initially. At the same time, those companies will receive qualified students for joining their organisations and being well known among their future employees.

2. Changing employers' mindset

One of the biggest challenges in improving the effectiveness of the internship program is to change the business operators' mindset not to perceive the intern students as cheap labour. This should be

commenced since the top managers of the companies change their mindset and perception that an internship program is not a solution to solve the labour shortage situation. Remind themselves and other members within the organisation that the students who decided to undertake an internship program because they wanted to obtain the knowledge and skills from the industry and wanted to be shaped by professionals to become valuable employees or even the industry leaders in the future. Therefore, Kasli and Ilban (2013) suggested that the managers and supervisors adopt a more friendly approach to interns, increasing positive responses. Moreover, it would make the students feel more comfortable and be able to adjust themselves to the new environment. In addition, both managers and staff should become the best support and facilitate them in learning and performing their tasks.

3. Offer job rotation

Job rotation is one of the learning tools used by many organisations (Malinski, 2002). It has been defined as a movement of the staff from one job to another within the department or the organisation. It has been acknowledged that this learning tool would enable the company staff to obtain additional knowledge and skills; apart from that, this would help them know more about the organisation's insight. Then, it could be said that job rotation can promote staff's learning and development (Eriksson & Ortega, 2006). Therefore, the hotel and tourism company may consider implementing this concept with the intern students by rotating them from one job to another to broaden their exposure and understanding of the organisation's characteristics. The prior study done by Agarwal et al. (2016) illustrated that job rotation would prevent the interns from job boredom, fatigue, apathy, and carelessness. Significantly, it would also help to enhance their professional development and decide their future career choice. In addition, Faegri et al. (2010) stressed that job rotation would improve their problem-solving skills and teamwork and increase their employment opportunity. Therefore, implementing this concept will benefit both students and the company.

4. Develop internship manual guide

Having an internship manual is vital; all essential information should be included in the manual. For the students, it will provide guidelines and instructions that they must know and comply with to complete their internship program successfully. Within the manual, clear objectives and processes must be given. Moreover, the students can use it as a reference which can give them answers to some questions that may be arisen during the program and eliminate their confusion. The students can also use it to regulate their internship program to ensure that it will become effective and successful. The internship manual should not be available only to students but also to the internship sites. This manual would make their employers clearly understand the purpose and all requirements of the internship. It can be considered as a material or tool

to communicate the must-know information with the internship sites. The following information must be included;

- Introduction
- Objectives
- Specified role and responsibilities for all concerned parties: educational institution, student, and internship partners/supervisors
- Internship process and procedures: application, pre-internship training session, during internship assignments, students' visit, etc.
- Rules and regulations
- Evaluations
- Contact person and details' educational institution
- Flow chart of the Internship process, as exemplified in Figure 3
- Etc.

INTERNSHIP PROCESS



Figure 3. Example of Flow chart of the Internship process

5. Internship preparation courses

Apart from theoretical knowledge gained from the classes at the university, students also need other essential knowledge and skills which they can apply during the internship programs. To ensure that they are ready to face the real world outside the university, the educational institutions should consider arranging the internship preparation courses for all students before their internship program begins. Those preparation courses must be specifically designed to facilitate and support the students to handle challenges of the

professional life and promote a successful internship experience. Various courses can be included in the internship preparation for hospitality and tourism students, such as personality development, social interaction skills, emotional control, service-minded attitude development and others. Moreover, professionals from the field can be invited to become as speakers to share their experiences. Their insight experience would help students understand the nature and culture of the industry and prepare for what they will encounter. All job characteristics and related challenges should be shared during the sharing session. The students will become ready and confident to work in a real business setting by arranging this preparation.

■ Conclusion

It was widely accepted that an internship program is one of the educational tools which allows the hospitality and tourism students to gain real industry experience, which does not enable to find in the classes through receiving training from professionals within a specific business setting or real working situation. It is recognised as a high-impact practice that would advocate for students to achieve their academic and future careers. Through this style of learning arrangement, the students are shaped and qualified to meet the industry needs, including knowledge, skills, and attitude. Moreover, successful internship programs would retain those valuable human workforces within the industry. It would increase the number of well-educated and qualified staff in the hospitality and tourism business sector. However, the finding in the present study highlighted the numerous primary issues that occur with hospitality and tourism students during their internship and would discount the program's effectiveness. The followings are the issues found in this study;

- 1) Poor working conditions
- 2) Lack of effective monitoring system
- 3) Inadequate academic and attitude preparedness
- 4) Perceived as a cheap labour
- 5) Unsupported social working environment
- 6) Ineffective supervision
- 7) No/low pay and compensation
- 8) Unclarity of assigned tasks

These challenges can be seen as barriers to the effectiveness of internship programs. Therefore, a successful internship program requires strong collaboration and coordinated efforts among the key tripartite stakeholders to address these issues, as illustrated in Figure 4. All efforts spent on solving these issues lead to better internship conditions for the students. Moreover, it would promote students' positive industrial

perception to remain working in this sector. This article provides actionable suggestions for business operators and educational institutions, such as establishing collaborations then, both educational institutions and the business sector can work in coordination, offer job rotation to broaden their knowledge and future career choice and provide internship preparation courses to equip the students with essential skills that they can apply during the internship. These efforts would be able to reinforce and advocate more effectiveness and higher satisfaction in students' internship programs in the hospitality and tourism sector.

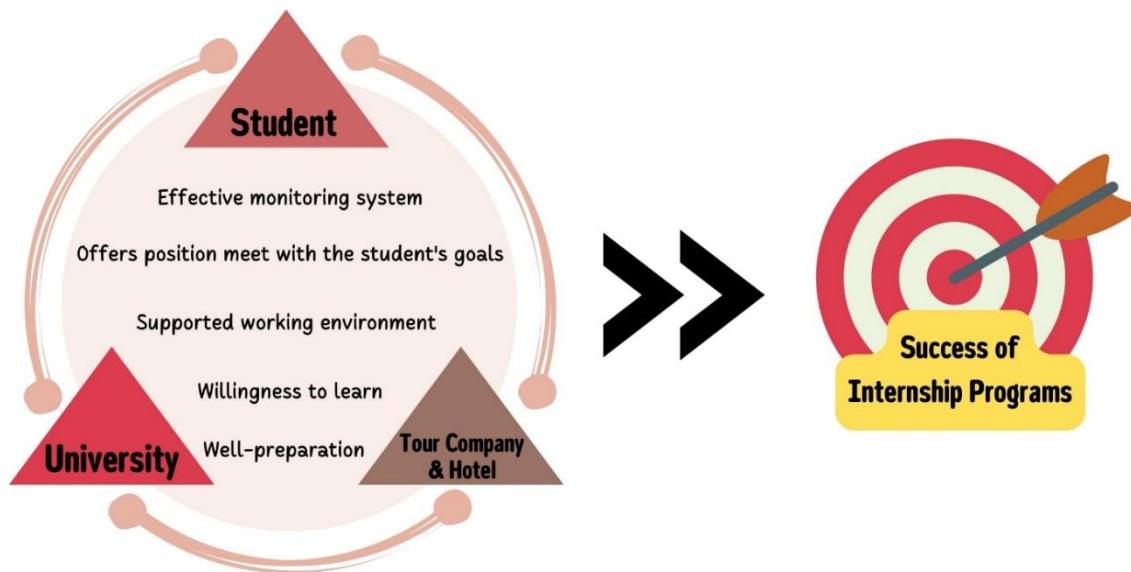


Figure 4. A conceptualised model to promote the effectiveness of hospitality and tourism students' internship program

■ Limitations and Recommendations

With respect to this article, it would be an initial stage to investigate the relevant topics within this area further. This article is written from the secondary data analysis in which some of the content is described the factors leading to the ineffectiveness of students' internship programs in general. Future research may further consider conducting research specifically in the hospitality and tourism industry. For instance, the intern student's perception and intention to work in the hospitality and tourism industry after completing the internship program was very little known. Therefore, it would shed light on the study to investigate the impact of internship programs on their perception and intention to work in the industry. It would make the concerned parties know the key factors influencing their perception and intention to remain in their career within the field. Moreover, it would present certain factors that influence their negative perception.

In addition, the factors influencing the enhancement of intern students' performance and job satisfaction within the hotel and tourism business context is underexplored. These research topics would provide a guideline for the business operators and educational institution representatives to design the internship programs. For educational institutions, preparing students is one of their primary roles. Therefore, understanding the required competence and skills from the field would help them better have students' preparedness by equipping them with the essential competencies. Therefore, this also allows the research to identify the current students' competence needed from the industry perspective. Educational institutions can further use this information in developing curriculums and internship preparation courses, and it would help students be better prepared for working in real situations.

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