
Internship Experiences and their Influence on the Career Readiness of Hospitality Management Students

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ABSTRACT

This study examines at how internships influence the career readiness of hospitality management students at Pangasinan State University – San Carlos Campus for the school year 2023–2024. The study used a descriptive quantitative method to look at the satisfaction of 90 students with their internships, the influence of stakeholders, and the overall role of internships in preparing graduates ready for employment. The results showed that students were very satisfied, particularly with the hands-on training, mentorship, and development of technical skills. Collaboration between stakeholders, especially between schools and internship hosts training establishments, was also found to have significant impact on the satisfied students were. Internship also had a significant connection to increased professional confidence, clearer career goals, and enhanced skills that make you more employable. Despite the program has some positive aspects, it needs to do better in areas like giving students more international exposure as well as monitoring on them while they are interning. The study concludes that well-structured internships are instrumental in bridging the gap between theoretical learning and industry practice. It recommends strengthening stakeholder collaboration, enhancing international internship linkages, and implementing strategies to support student career development and global competitiveness in hospitality.

Keywords: *internship experience, career readiness, employability skills, stakeholder influence, internship satisfaction*

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality and tourism industry is known for its dynamic and volatile nature, which necessitates a workforce that is equipped with practical skills, knowledge, and positive attitudes. Avenues of internships are crucial as they enable students in hospitality management to gain experience from the industry first hand as well as apply what they have taught in class (Pusiran, et.al. 2020). This practical exposure is important for the development of competencies necessary to succeed in the hospitality business. According to Sari and Abrian (2020), internships account for 52.3% of work readiness influence thus emphasizing their significance in student professional growth.

Therefore, industry participation in program design and implementation would ensure that these experiences are balanced and effective. Well-structured internships offer students insight into how this industry actually operates, this has positive implications on their career decision-making self-efficacy. Wang (2021) noted that self-efficacy resulting from internship experiences significantly affects student's intentions to remain within the hospitality sector.

It is essential for industry to be involved in the preparation and execution of internship programs to make sure they are fair and useful. Internships that are well-planned help students learn about the real-world aspects of their field, which makes it easier for them to choose the right career. Self-efficacy, influenced by internships, was found by Wang (2021) to be directly related to hotel's intention of keeping a student in it. Internship satisfaction and career commitment further mediate this relationship which implies that constructive internship experiences can lead to long-term commitments towards an industry.

Internship satisfaction is a key factor affecting students' career intentions. According to Marinakou (2021), satisfaction with real work conditions and learning experiences during internships positively affects job intentions regardless of problems such as long working hours or inadequate reward systems. This finding highlights the importance of experiential internships that provide real-world job experiences to improve knowledge and readiness for future careers in hospitality.

Internships help hospitality management students prepare for their careers by providing valuable practical experience and industry exposure. This study emphasizes how crucial it is to have internship programs that are well-designed, to engage with industry, and to integrate curricula with current trends. These factors combine to enhance job readiness, career-decision self-efficacy and long-term pursuit of hospitality careers among student graduates. Hence, this research seeks to investigate the effect of internship experiences and its influence in relation with career readiness among hospitality management students that would contribute towards a better understanding from which institution can enhance their grooming process for potential future professionals.

Statement of the Problem

The study's primary objective is to assess the influence of internship experiences on the career readiness of hospitality management students.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of satisfaction of students with their internship experience?
2. How do the stakeholders influence students' satisfaction with their internship?
3. What is the role of internship in shaping the career readiness of hospitality management students?

Scope and Delimitations

This study examines the result of internship experiences on the professional preparedness of Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management graduates from Pangasinan State University – San Carlos Campus for the academic year 2023–2024. The objective is to assess student satisfaction with their internships, the influence of different stakeholders (educational institutions, private sector, students) on these experiences, and the impact of such experiences on professional decision-making and preparedness.

The scope is confined to graduates who have fulfilled their internship programs within the specified timeframe and who were assigned to Host Training Establishments (HTEs) as

stipulated by CHED Memorandum Order 104, s. 2017. Employer or faculty perspectives are not included in the survey, nor are hospitality students from other campuses or academic years.

The study is limited to how internship experiences impact perceived satisfaction, skill development, and career readiness. This study does not address factors that affect employability, such as extracurricular involvement and academic achievement.

Review of Related Literatures

In order to prepare students for professions in hospitality management industry, internship experiences are essential. According to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order 104 S. 2017, Article III, defines internship as the practical application of classroom learning to the actual in a regular work environment. As a result, the goal of these programs is to enable the students to obtain work in identified Host Training Establishments (HTEs) so as to enhance their knowledge and add practical skills. This thus gives students opportunities that will develop essential skills that are highly needed by employers like communication, teamwork and adaptability (Fauzan et al., 2023).

The satisfaction derived from internships significantly influences students' career intentions, as shown by research implying that good internship experiences raise confidence levels on choosing profession (Wang, 2021) and intentions of working in the hotel industry (Marinakou & Giousmpasoglou, 2021). Additionally, strategic planning and involvement of industrial players according to Shetu & Sayedas (2020) are important in designing suitable internship programs for their students' professional paths.

Furthermore, research by Bawica (2021) and Ocampo et al. (2020) found out how internship programs are effective in improving student's employability skills and adaptability to career transition which can make them more likely to gain success in employment. Consequently, communication barriers and long working hours should be addressed (Vo, Le, & Lam, 2021), as this would facilitate a satisfactory internship experience among hospitality management students, hence enhancing their overall career readiness.

Students' employability and career flexibility are significantly affected by the perceived skills they acquire during internships. According to Tavitiyaman, Tsui, and Ng (2023), internship-developed soft skills such as communication and problem-solving have a positive effect on career adaptability and perceived employability. Technical skills, however, did not exhibit the same effect, highlighting the necessity of striking a balance between classroom instruction and real-world internship experiences.

According to Ramaprasad et al. (2021), internship satisfaction plays a significant role in improving students' decision-making self-efficacy and career adaptability. The significance of self-regulatory mechanisms in career development was highlighted by their study, which revealed that the relationship between internship satisfaction and career outcomes is moderated by students' core self-evaluation.

The importance of internships in hospitality management education is supported by Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory. Students can create meaning, grow personally and

professionally, and apply their knowledge to real-world situations through internships (Smith et al., 2024). These encounters have a significant effect on students' self-efficacy in making career decisions, which in turn affects their intention to stay in the hospitality sector. This relationship is mediated by career commitment and internship satisfaction, and moderated by intrinsic motivation (Wang, 2021). The curriculum of hospitality management programs plays a crucial role in developing students' perceived career readiness (Lee et al., 2021). Furthermore, internship satisfaction enhances career adaptability and affects career decision self-efficacy, conditional on students' core self-evaluation levels (Ramaprasad et al., 2021).

Savickas' Career Construction Theory is applied to understand how internships influence hospitality management students' career readiness and decisions. Internships provide opportunities for students to examine their abilities, interests, and career choices in a workplace context (Wang, 2021). The internship experience, including preparation, cultural adaptation, and post-internship reflection, plays a crucial role in shaping students' career paths (J. Zhu et al., 2023). Internships help students develop their career decision-making self-efficacy, which has an immediate influence on their intention to remain in the hospitality sector (Wang, 2021). Students' self-efficacy, which mediates the relationship between work experience and career expectations, is strengthened by work experiences (Liu et al., 2022). Collaboration between educational institutions and industry is crucial to enhancing career readiness because it guarantees that curricula align with industry trends and provide students the skills and knowledge they need (Lee et al., 2021).

Furthermore, despite challenges, Vocal's (2023) research shows that internships play a significant role in both professional and personal development by offering guidance and real-world experience. The study also highlights a knowledge gap that needs to be filled by more research on the various training programs and factors affecting intern experiences across various organizations, institutions, educational levels, and cultural contexts.

In order to better understand and enhance these hands-on learning opportunities for future professionals, it is crucial to look into how internship experiences affect the career readiness of hospitality management students. Therefore, looking into these elements will provide important information about how to improve internship programs and future professionals' readiness in the hospitality sector.

Theoretical Framework

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) and Savickas' Career Construction Theory (2005), which both emphasize the importance of experience in both professional and personal development, are cited in this study. According to Kolb's experiential learning theory, learning is a cyclical process that includes active investigation, abstract thought, reflective observation, and concrete experience. This concept highlights how practical experiences help develop professional competencies and practical skills during internships in the hospitality industry.

Furthermore, according to Savickas' CCT, people develop their careers by determining

lessons from their previous experiences and adapting to shifting demands in the workplace. It emphasizes how important vocational adaptability—control, curiosity, concern, and confidence—is in determining career readiness. When taken as a whole, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how internships influence hotel management students' professional preparedness in terms of both skill development and independent career advancement.

Conceptual Framework

The Input-Process-Output (IPO) model, which demonstrates the logical order of how internship experiences impact students' career readiness in hospitality management, serves as the foundation for this investigation. Variables pertaining to internship experiences, such as student satisfaction, stakeholder influence on how well internships prepare students for careers, and the internship's role in influencing students' career readiness, are included in this model's input. The process reflects the methodical actions done to evaluate these inputs by gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data. Lastly, a policy brief to enhance internship programs for better career preparation is included in the output.

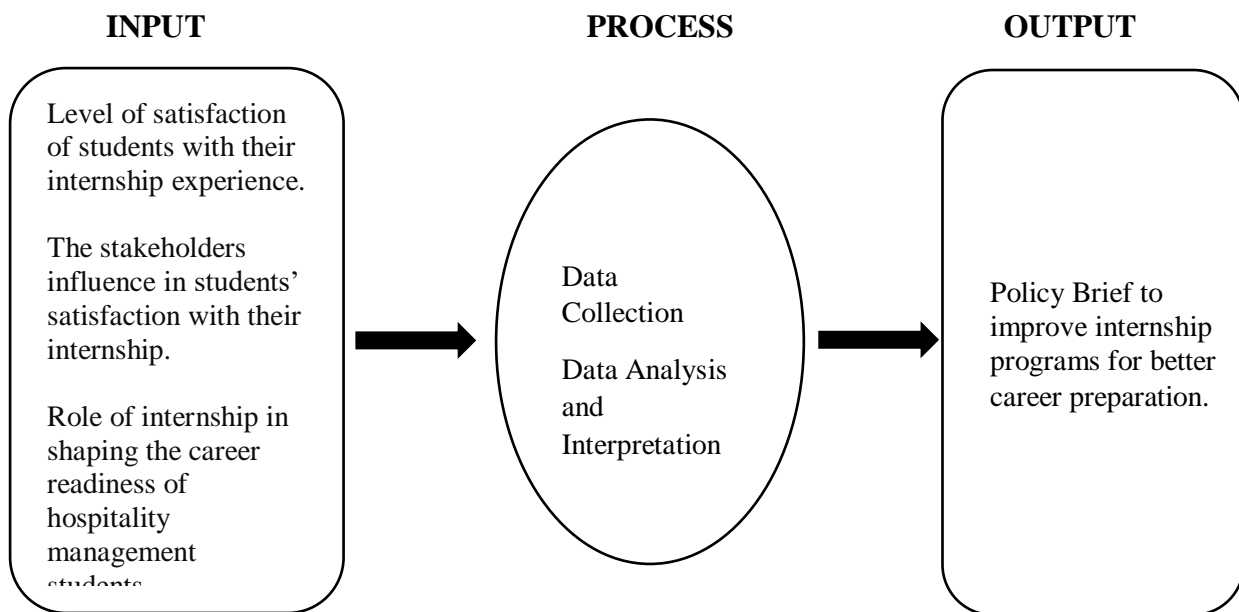


Figure 1. Research Paradigm of the Study

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative research approach, specifically the descriptive method, to examine the influence of internship experiences on the career readiness of hospitality management students. By using a quantitative approach, the researchers were able to collect quantifiable and statistical information about the perceived career readiness, stakeholder influences, and student satisfaction levels. Studies that intent to observe, characterize, and record elements of a situation as it naturally arises without changing any variables can benefit from descriptive research.

Research Design

The study used descriptive method of research to assess the influence of internship experiences on the career readiness of hospitality management students. According to Creswell (2018) descriptive research design is categorized as a quantitative research design that is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data that can be transformed into usable statistics. Under quantitative design, descriptive research design seeks to describe the present state of a variable or phenomenon by using quantifiable data to establish facts and identify trends.

Research Steps

The research started with a thorough review of the relevant literature to build a solid theoretical foundation and identify gaps where existing studies were insufficient. After that, the researchers made a structured survey questionnaire that was aligned with the objectives of the study. Five experts looked at the instrument and made suggestions for how to make it better to make sure it was valid and reliable. Once validated, Google Forms were used to distribute the questionnaire online. The researchers made sure that the people they chose to respond were not biased by using a simple random sampling method. After gathering the data, the responses were sorted, counted, and subjected to the appropriate statistical tests to look for patterns, relationships, and results. Lastly, the results were analyzed and summarized to obtain useful information that was relevant to the study's goals.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

The researchers used a survey questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection. The developed questionnaire was submitted to five experts for validation. The study employed a simple random sampling technique in selecting the respondents.

A structured questionnaire with two parts was used to gather data. The first part asked respondents about their demographics profile. The second part focused on three main variables: how satisfied they were with their internship experience, how much influence stakeholders (schools, private sector, students) had on them, and how internships helped them to prepare for a career. The target respondents were Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management students from Pangasinan State University – San Carlos Campus who completed their internship during the academic year 2023–2024. Data collection was conducted through online via goggle form and then the data are tallied and subjected to appropriate statistical treatments.

Data Analysis Methods

The data collected from the survey questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, particularly frequency distribution, percentage, weighted mean (WM), and descriptive equivalent (DE) to determine the influence of internship experiences on the career readiness of hospitality management students. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure each item on the questionnaire. We found the overall trend of responses by calculating the weighted

mean (WM) for each statement. The average scores were analyzed using the descriptive equivalent (DE). The study's main objectives were: to measure how satisfied students were with their internships, examine the influenced of stakeholders like schools, industry partners, and students themselves, and assess how internship experiences prepared students for careers in the hospitality industry.

Study Limitations and ethical considerations

The study followed ethical standards by obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and granting participants the right to withdraw at any time. The researchers ensured the respectful representation of participant perspectives in the final report. Ethical approval was assumed to be granted in accordance with university policies on student research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOP 1. What is the level of satisfaction of students with their internship experience?

Table 1: Level of Satisfaction with Internship Experience
n = 90

Indicators	SD	D	N	A	SA	WM	DE
1. The internship program met my expectations.	1	2	6	27	54	4.46	A
	1.1%	2.2%	6.7%	30.0%	60.0%		
2. The tasks assigned were relevant to my field of study.	1	2	6	21	60	4.52	SA
	1.1%	2.2%	6.7%	23.3%	66.7%		
3. I received adequate supervision and mentorship during my internship.	1	3	7	25	54	4.42	A
	1.1%	3.3%	7.8%	27.8%	60.0%		
4. The working environment was professional and conducive to learning.	2	3	11	26	48	4.28	A
	2.2%	3.3%	12.2%	28.9%	53.3%		
5. My internship allowed me to develop technical skills applicable to the hospitality industry.	1	1	7	23	58	4.51	SA
	1.1%	1.1%	7.8%	25.6%	64.4%		
6. I had opportunities to engage in hands-on training during my internship.	0	1	5	19	65	4.64	SA
	0.0%	1.1%	5.6%	21.1%	72.2%		
7. My internship experience has positively influenced my perception of the hospitality industry.	1	1	4	24	60	4.57	SA
	1.1%	1.1%	4.4%	26.7%	66.7%		
8. The workload during my internship was appropriate and manageable.	1	1	4	32	52	4.48	A
	1.1%	1.1%	4.4%	35.6%	57.8%		
9. I was given responsibilities that allowed me to grow professionally.	1	1	3	21	64	4.62	SA
	1.1%	1.1%	3.3%	23.3%	71.1%		
10. I received timely and constructive feedback from my supervisors.	1	1	6	21	61	4.56	SA
	1.1%	1.1%	6.7%	23.3%	67.8%		

Mean	4.51	Strongly Agree
Legend: 1.00-1.50: Strongly Disagree (SD), 1.51-2.50: Disagree (D), 2.51-3.50: Neutral, 3.51-4.50: Agree (A), 4.51-5.00: Strongly Agree (SA)		

The findings presented in Table 1 illustrate the level of satisfaction among respondents regarding their internship experience. The overall mean satisfaction score is 4.51, which falls under the category of “Strongly Agree,” indicating a generally high level of contentment with various aspects of the internship program. A majority of the respondents strongly agreed that they had opportunities to engage in hands-on training during their internship (WM = 4.64). Similarly, they strongly agreed that they were entrusted with responsibilities that contributed to their professional growth (WM = 4.62).

Moreover, the respondents strongly agreed that their internship experience positively influenced their perception of the hospitality industry (WM = 4.57), suggesting that the program provided meaningful exposure and insights into the field. Additionally, respondents strongly agreed that they received timely and constructive feedback from their supervisors (WM = 4.56), emphasizing the critical role of mentorship and guidance in enhancing the learning experience.

Respondents also affirmed that the tasks assigned were relevant to their field of study (WM = 4.52), and that the internship allowed them to develop technical skills applicable to the hospitality industry (WM = 4.51). These results suggest that the internship program was effective in delivering practical training and promoting both academic and professional development.

Other aspects of the internship experience were rated under the category of “Agree.” These include the appropriateness and manageability of the workload (WM = 4.48), the extent to which the internship met their expectations (WM = 4.46), the adequacy of supervision and mentorship (WM = 4.42), and the professionalism and conduciveness of the working environment (WM = 4.28).

The results of this study, which revealed high levels of student satisfaction with their internship experiences align with the findings of Ramaprasad et al. (2021), who emphasized that internship satisfaction positively influences career adaptability and decision-making self-efficacy. This suggests that students who are satisfied with their internships are more likely to feel confident in making informed career decisions and adapting to the professional environment. The strong satisfaction ratings in the current study reflect not only the effectiveness of the internship program but also its role in enhancing students’ readiness to transition into the workforce, thereby supporting Ramaprasad et al.’s conclusion that internship satisfaction is a key factor in developing career-related competencies.

SOP 2. How do the stakeholders influence students’ satisfaction with their internship?

Table 2: Influence of Stakeholders on Internship Satisfaction

n = 90

Indicators	SD	D	N	A	SA	WM	DE
1. My school provided sufficient guidance and preparation for my internship.	1	1	7	30	51	4.43	A
	1.1%	1.1%	7.8%	33.3%	56.7%		
2. The private sector (internship host) provided a structured internship program.	1	1	4	32	52	4.48	A
	1.1%	1.1%	4.4%	35.6%	57.8%		
3. I took personal responsibility in maximizing my internship learning experience.	1	1	8	29	51	4.42	A
	1.1%	1.1%	8.9%	32.2%	56.7%		
4. My school effectively monitored my internship progress.	3	0	4	35	48	4.39	A
	3.3%	0.0%	4.4%	38.9%	53.3%		
5. The private sector offered learning opportunities aligned with my academic training.	1	1	6	27	55	4.49	A
	1.1%	1.1%	6.7%	30.0%	61.1%		
6. The collaboration between my school and the internship provider enhanced my experience.	1	1	4	35	49	4.44	A
	1.1%	1.1%	4.4%	38.9%	54.4%		
7. The school’s internship policies were clearly communicated and well-implemented.	2	1	5	31	51	4.42	A
	2.2%	1.1%	5.6%	34.4%	56.7%		
8. The internship provider maintained a supportive and professional learning environment.	1	2	5	32	50	4.42	A
	1.1%	2.2%	5.6%	35.6%	55.6%		
Mean	4.44			Agree			
Legend: 1.00-1.50: Strongly Disagree (SD), 1.51-2.50: Disagree (D), 2.51-3.50: Neutral, 3.51-4.50: Agree (A), 4.51-5.00: Strongly Agree (SA)							

The results presented in Table 2 highlight the influence of various stakeholders on internship satisfaction, with an overall mean score of 4.44, categorized under “Agree.” This indicates that respondents generally perceived the support provided by both their school and internship host as effective in enhancing their internship experience.

Among the key findings, respondents agreed that the private sector offered learning opportunities aligned with their academic training (WM = 4.49). This suggests that both structured programs and individual initiative played a role in increasing internship satisfaction.

Additionally, respondents agreed that the private sector provided a well-structured internship program (WM = 4.48), reinforcing the importance of organized and carefully managed experiential learning.

Respondents also acknowledged that collaboration between their school and internship provider enhanced their experience (WM = 4.44). The guidance and preparation provided by the school were rated positively (WM = 4.43), indicating that pre-internship orientations and support played a valuable role. Moreover, respondents agreed that they took personal responsibility in maximizing their internship learning experience, that the school’s internship policies were clearly communicated and well-implemented, and that the internship provider maintained a supportive and professional learning environment, all with a weighted mean of 4.52.

While respondents agreed that the school effectively monitored their internship progress (WM = 4.39), this was the lowest-rated item, indicating potential areas for improvement in tracking and supporting students throughout their internships.

These findings align closely with Bawica’s (2021) study, which emphasized that effective internship programs are shaped by both individual and organizational factors, including academic preparedness, supervision, task clarity, and institutional support.

SOP 3. What is the role of internship in shaping the career readiness of hospitality management students?

Table 3: Role of Internship in Career Readiness
n = 90

Indicators	SD	D	N	A	SA	WM	DE
1. My internship helped me understand real-world applications of my coursework.	1	2	3	19	65	4.61	SA
	1.1%	2.2%	3.3%	21.1%	72.2%		
2. I gained essential professional skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, problem-solving) through my internship.	1	2	2	18	67	4.64	SA
	1.1%	2.2%	2.2%	20.0%	74.4%		
3. My internship experience increased my confidence in entering the workforce.	1	2	4	20	63	4.58	SA
	1.1%	2.2%	4.4%	22.2%	70.0%		
4. The skills acquired during my internship are transferable to future employment.	1	2	5	21	61	4.54	SA
	1.1%	2.2%	5.6%	23.3%	67.8%		
5. My internship experience has influenced my career goals in the hospitality industry.	1	1	4	20	64	4.61	SA
	1.1%	1.1%	4.4%	22.2%	71.1%		
6. I feel prepared to pursue a career in hospitality management because of my internship.	1	2	2	24	61	4.58	SA
	1.1%	2.2%	2.2%	26.7%	67.8%		
	1	2	7	18	62	4.53	SA

7. My internship provided networking opportunities that may help in my future career.	1.1%	2.2%	7.8%	20.0%	68.9%		
8. I have a clearer understanding of the career path I want to take after my internship.	1	1	4	23	61	4.58	SA
	1.1%	1.1%	4.4%	25.6%	67.8%		
Mean	4.58				Strongly Agree		
Legend: 1.00-1.50: Strongly Disagree (SD), 1.51-2.50: Disagree (D), 2.51-3.50: Neutral, 3.51-4.50: Agree (A), 4.51-5.00: Strongly Agree (SA)							

The findings in Table 3 demonstrate that internships play a critical role in enhancing career readiness among students, as reflected in the overall mean score of 4.58, which falls under the category of “Strongly Agree.” This indicates that respondents highly valued their internship experience in preparing them for future careers, particularly in the hospitality industry.

Among the key indicators, the highest-rated statement was that students gained essential professional skills—such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving—through their internship (WM = 4.64). Additionally, respondents strongly agreed that their internship helped them understand the real-world applications of their coursework and affirmed that the experience influenced their career goals within the hospitality industry, both with a weighted mean of 4.61.

Respondents also strongly agreed that their internship experience increased their confidence in entering the workforce, made them feel prepared to pursue a career in hospitality management, and helped them gain a clearer understanding of their desired career path, all with a weighted mean of 4.58. These results suggest that experiential learning significantly contributed to their professional development.

Moreover, respondents agreed that the skills acquired during the internship are transferable to future employment (WM = 4.54). They also expressed strong agreement that the internship provided networking opportunities that may benefit their future careers (WM = 4.53).

These findings support the studies of Fauzan et al. (2023) and Wang (2021). Fauzan et al. emphasized that internships develop essential skills like communication and teamwork, which respondents rated highly. Wang (2021) highlighted how positive internship experiences boost career confidence and clarity—reflected in the strong agreement from students in this study. These findings confirm that internships play a vital role in enhancing students’ career readiness.

SUMMARY

This study explored the internship experiences of 90 hospitality management students, focusing on their demographic profiles, levels of satisfaction, the role of various stakeholders,

and the influence of internships on career readiness. The findings reveal several key trends and implications for hospitality education and training.

Demographically, most respondents were young adults aged 23–25, with a majority being female (64.44%). All participants completed local internships, primarily in hotels (82.22%), and most engaged in short-term internships of less than three months. The absence of international internship experience highlights the limited global exposure available to students and underscores the need for expanded international training opportunities.

In terms of satisfaction, the respondents reported a high overall mean of 4.51 (Strongly Agree), indicating that the internship programs were generally effective. The highest-rated aspects included hands-on training opportunities (WM = 4.64), the assignment of meaningful responsibilities (WM = 4.62), and positive professional development, such as receiving timely feedback and developing industry-relevant technical skills. However, areas like workload management and mentorship were rated slightly lower, suggesting opportunities for improvement.

Stakeholder influence was also notable, with an overall mean score of 4.44 (Agree). Respondents acknowledged the importance of school-industry collaboration, effective pre-internship preparation, and the supportive environments provided by internship hosts. While respondents generally took personal responsibility for their learning, the relatively lower score in school monitoring (WM = 4.39) signals a need for enhanced tracking and follow-up systems during internships.

Most significantly, the data confirmed that internships are instrumental in boosting career readiness, as reflected in the high overall mean of 4.58 (Strongly Agree). Students agreed that internships improved their professional skills (WM = 4.64), helped them understand real-world applications of academic knowledge, influenced their career goals, and enhanced their confidence to enter the workforce. Respondents also acknowledged the networking and transferable skills gained through their internships, which are crucial for future employment in the hospitality industry.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The study revealed that the majority of hospitality management students preferred local, short-term internships in hotel establishments, with a strong participation from female students aged 23 to 25. The absence of international internship experience suggests existing limitations in global exposure, underscoring the need for institutions to strengthen international linkages.
2. Students reported a high level of satisfaction with their internship experiences, particularly in areas related to hands-on training, responsibility assignment, mentorship, and the development of technical skills. The results confirm that the internship program was well-aligned with students' academic preparation and

- career interests, contributing meaningfully to their professional growth and industry perception.
3. Stakeholder involvement, including both the academic institution and internship hosts, was positively perceived by the students. The findings highlighted the importance of collaboration between schools and industry partners, effective pre-internship preparation, clear communication of internship policies, and the creation of a professional learning environment. However, monitoring by schools during the internship process emerged as a potential area for improvement.
 4. Internships were found to be instrumental in enhancing career readiness, as students gained critical professional skills, increased their confidence to enter the workforce, and clarified their career goals. The results strongly support the role of experiential learning in bridging the gap between academic theory and real-world application, as well as in developing employability and transferable skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed to further enhance the effectiveness of internships in the hospitality industry:

- 1) The institution should explore international internship placements and collaborations to provide students with global exposure and a competitive edge in the industry.
- 2) A career orientation may be conducted for the graduating students to help them get their first job in which they will intend to stay.
- 3) The university should continue developing the skills relevant to the graduates' job.
- 4) A study on job satisfaction and/or job performance of the graduates should be conducted.
- 5) The graduates should consider pursuing advanced studies for professional development and promotion in their workplace.

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