

Stakeholders' Perspectives on Internship Process in Tourism Higher Education

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Abstract

Internship is considered as a period of real work placement in a department or each department of an establishment; anything from several weeks to a year or more, taken in one or multiple placements. Thus, internship is an important part of tourism education since it helps undergraduates to put their knowledge into practice and expands their experience. This study explores stakeholders' perspectives – in terms of undergraduate students, academics and tourism industry- about the current internship process in relation to tourism higher education. A questionnaire distributed to the three groups of stakeholders has been distributed to collect views. The results indicated that there were generally considerable agreement among stakeholder groups, with some notable differences. Although tourism managers emphasized the importance of internship for tourism higher education, they did not consider students as important human resource – as stated by students- during their internship experience. On the other hand, academics mentioned that managers of tourism companies view students as a cheap employee that can do specific tasks during their internship. At the end of this paper, implications are drawn to improve internship program in tourism higher education.

Keywords: Tourism Education; Internship; Undergraduate Student; Academics; Tourism industry

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Introduction

In recent years, global tourism industry has become a highly competitive environment. Moreover, tourists' demand is changing as well as their needs and expectations. In order to cope with this, well-educated and trained personnel is essential for providing the best service. Yet, internship found to be an important part of tourism education because it helps undergraduate students to put their knowledge into practice and expands their experience.¹ Nowadays, the industry is seeking graduates who can demonstrate creativity, critical thinking, technical expertise and the ability to adapt to change.² Prior studies found that employers believe that students lack the necessary practical skills, maturity, experience and ultimately real-world preparation.³ Institutions have been criticized, however, for an overemphasis on theory and information.⁴ In response, there is increasing consideration of new approaches to curriculum, particularly in terms of work-integrated learning opportunities which aims to incorporate the workplace setting as a component of higher education.⁵ Internship as a work integrated learning model has grown in popularity, an increase in the perceived significance and are now widely used in a variety of disciplines and feature in many degree programs.⁶ Such models are prevalent within the business, tourism and hospitality study programs.⁷

Generally, there is a large and diverse body of internship related literature in the general education field as well as in specific fields such as those related to tourism and hospitality. Yet, despite the importance of internship as stated by prior studies, literature lack studies on tourism internship, especially in the Egyptian context. Moreover, the tourism institutions in Egypt were no longer able to provide practical training in collaboration with travel agencies. Several reasons could be claimed for this matter including the dramatic increase in the number of students and the cost and the effort involved in such activity.⁸ As a result, this may influence the successful product of high tourism education in Egypt.

Former studies have focused on an internship in terms of skills acquired and training needs rather than studying the process of internship itself. In particular, there has been little research on details of the fundamental components of internship: (1) what an internship should achieve (goals)? (2) How it should work (structure)? (3) How student performance could be graded (assessment)? Also, the empirical investigations which have been conducted generally did not take into account the potentially different perspectives of the key stakeholders. Prior empirical studies of internship have either assessed perspectives of one or two stakeholder groups; mainly students and academics. Aistrich and colleagues concluded that, academics and industry did have somewhat different perspectives, and that internship not only educates students but may educate also educators as to what industry see as important.⁹ Thus, an internship can serve the needs of the three parties: students, academics and industry.

Given above, this study fills a gap in the literature by comparing the perspectives of all the primary internship stakeholders (i.e. students, academics and tourism industry) on issues of goals, structure and assessment of tourism internship. In the following, relevant literature is discussed followed by the methods of data collection and findings. Then, results of the study are discussed and implications are drawn.

Literature Review

The internship has a number of meanings; Pauze and colleagues articulated that internship is equivalent to fieldwork, field experience or experimental learning with little variations.¹⁰ Davies stated that internship is a kind of experiential learning where students take the opportunity to apply learned theories from institutions in the real world situation, and it provides an opportunity for students to integrate and consolidate thinking and action.¹¹ McMahon and Quinn, on the other hand, called internship as a 'supervised work experience' and that students are under special guidelines and attention during their internship instead of working alone by themselves in the industry.¹² Fox, also, considered an internship as an opportunity to close the gap between college-learned theory and practical reality.¹³ Internship as a concept is defined as 'a process of short-time working in a department or each department of an establishment in order to increase undergraduate theoretical knowledge'.¹⁴ Also, Internship, or supervised work experience, found to value-add to, and contextualize, students' theoretical knowledge by applying and trying concepts in practice.¹⁵

Often internship is associated with an extended period of practical work placement; anything from several weeks to a year or more, taken in one or multiple placements. There are of course other models of work experience or work integrated learning which students might take part in, such as field visits, study tours, industry projects, live case studies, and monitoring, client-based learning models.¹⁶ In relation, this study adopts the broad term of internship that refers to the many forms of practical work-related learning experiences.

In prior studies, the relations between education and internship have been widely discussed. The internship process is not only an important milestone for students to acquire practical experience that could be beneficial to their future career development, but also a way that in turn can affect their work satisfaction.¹⁷ It influences students' intentions of pursuing working in the tourism sector and strengthen their passions to choose the sector as their future career.¹⁸ It is important for academics and program managers to understand student perspectives of the internship as it's now recognized as an 'essential collegiate experience', as opposed to just an optional enhancement to academic requirements.¹⁹

Students are generally considered to be the main beneficiary of internship, although there are numerous benefits to academic institutions, educators and company hosts. Much of the literature has focused on the positive benefits students derive from applying class room based knowledge, theory and concepts to real world settings.²⁰ Further, internship provides an opportunity for students to gain hands-on, practical experience, as well as develop and acquire skills and knowledge that cannot be obtained within a normal class room environment.²¹ This concurs with studies that have claimed that internship provides a mean to develop or enhance personal attributes and abilities such as: interpersonal communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, networking, leadership and customer relationship skills.²²

Beside the practical experience that the students gain through internship, internship can improve capacity to enter employment 'industry ready'.²³ As Stitts noted, students have already been exposed and are somewhat 'adjusted' to 'the psychology of workplace cultures'.²⁴ Also, Mello argues that internship is the single most effective strategy for gaining permanent employment.²⁵ There is evidence that interns are better prepared to enter the job market than non-interns,²⁶ and that completing an internship provides a competitive edge.²⁷ Interns believe that these programs enhance professional development with the provision of business contacts, better knowledge of the job market and improved job satisfaction,²⁸ and aid in the development of more realistic career expectations overall.²⁹ It is claimed that for industry, internship represents a valuable recruiting tool.³⁰ Internship provides host companies pre-selected graduate recruits,³¹ who are familiar with the job and need less training. As a sequence, hiring and training costs could be reduced.

Although prior studies has focused on the benefits of internship for students, internship has its shortcomings. They have come under criticism for a lack of careful planning, associated monitoring is logistically challenging, resourcing visits to, and contact with, the intern in situ, as well as the intern's employer or supervisor. Moreover, implementing an experience that is developed with an academic purpose but is designed for non-academic implementation is complex. These problems have brought into question the internship's academic legitimacy.³² Since internship is predominantly conducted off-campus, their full educational benefit may not be realized.³³ Sometimes host companies supervisors are unable to develop suitable projects and tasks that are suitable to the intern and the learning objectives of the experience, interns may not feel a part of the team, and a poor match between the intern and employer may diminish the internship experience.³⁴ Barriers to success are created due to lack of clarity and understanding (or even ignorance) regarding each party's (student, institution and the industry) roles and responsibilities.³⁵ In addition, students perceive that they are not engaged in meaningful work (i.e. intern making photocopies), employers do not consider the internship a serious part of the business, and institution does not view internship as part of the educational program due to a lack of academic content (why should they get academic credit for this?).³⁶ Researchers warn that to avoid any negative outcomes, internship should be developed with clear educational objectives, a structure to deliver those objectives, and standardized methods of evaluation.³⁷ Therefore, there can be many positive outcomes for all parties that can be drawn from an internship program; if only a triangular of partnership between students, institutions and industry is formed.

Research Methodology

Research Instrument

Informed by an extensive review of related literature,³⁸ a self-administered questionnaire are distributed to collect views of students, academics and travel agencies managers. The questionnaires were exactly the same for each of the respondents groups in order to allow comparisons. The questionnaires consisted of three sections; where the first section dedicated for, respondent profile and background. This was adapted to fit each group (e.g., students were asked about their year of enrollment; for academics, their academic rank; and for industry, company size). The second section asked respondents to rate internship goals, structure and assessment for 24 questions. Each question was evaluated by using a five-point Likert Scale, ranging from 1= 'strongly disagree' to 5= 'strongly agree'. Finally, the third section was an open ended question where the respondents were asked to state their opinion on what was required to improve an industry internship program. Prior to the formal survey, the questionnaires were pre-tested on a panel of experts; who were faculty members and practitioners in the field of tourism. This provided valuable information about the questionnaire design, wording and measurement scales. This process has resulted in some modification to the questionnaires.

Sample and Sample Procedures

Questionnaires were distributed among the three groups of respondents. The sampling frame of students and academics incorporated tourism and hotels' high institutions in Alexandria in which students are required to undertake a certain period of internship as part of the requirement for graduation. A selective sampling technique was used to identify such institutions. The researcher found only four tourism and hotels' high institutions located within the geographic area of the research, in which one of them conducts students' industry training in house. Therefore, this has limited the research to three institutions and for pragmatic reasons, two institutions were invited and they agreed to participate in the survey.

The sample included: (1) Student sample consisted of students enrolled in the academic year 2014-2015 and who had participated in the industry internship. Questionnaires were distributed to students from third and fourth year in classrooms by the researcher and respective lecturers. Students were provided a briefing before completing the questionnaire about its purpose and the procedures for completion. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately after students had filled them. Altogether 90 questionnaires were distributed and five questionnaires were discarded because of incomplete information. Thus, a number of 85 usable questionnaires were obtained, representing a response rate of 94.4%. (2) Academics sample consisted of all staff members working in the tourism studies departments in both institutions. To encourage openness, a cover letter accompanied the questionnaire to indicate that it was voluntary and anonymous. A total of seven questionnaires were sent by email to seven staff members who represented 100% of the population. They were all returned and were used in the analysis. (3) Tourism industry sample consisted of managers of travel agencies located in Alexandria. Questionnaires were sent by email and a cover letter was sent also to indicate the purpose of the survey and the procedures for completion. Managers' responses were not easy to obtain. A number of 84 emails were sent to travel agencies' managers listed on the Tourism Ministry website. Only 34 questionnaires were received which represented response rate of 40%. All questionnaires were eligible for analysis and were used for the survey.

Data Analysis

To understand the demographic information for respondents, frequency and percentage distributions was calculated. Regarding the questionnaire statements, mean and standard deviation have been calculated. In respect to the difference between independent variables and questionnaire statements whether it was meaningful to analyze; the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied.

In order to test the reliability and the validity of the questionnaires, Cronbach's Alpha was conducted; the values ranged between 0.80 and 0.89. Also, factor analysis was conducted to test the validity of the questionnaires. The factor loadings exceeds 0.085. Consequently, the questionnaires got considerable reliability and the construct validity of the questionnaires was good.³⁹

The research results

Respondents Profile

Table 1 illustrates student profiles. More than half of the group (63.5%) was male and 36.5% was female. Almost the entire group (94.1%) was within the 17–19 years age bracket. Half of the group (55.3%) previous education was 'Thanaweya Amma', 28.2% was 'Tourism Diploma (5 years)', 14.1% was 'Agriculture Diploma' and 2.4% was 'Commercial Diploma'. Most of the students (76.5%) was enrolled in fourth year and 23.5% was enrolled in third year.

Table 1: Profile of Students Group

	Number	Percent
Gender		
Male	54	63.5
Female	31	36.5
Age		
17-19 years	80	94.1
20-22 years	5	5.9
Previous Education		
Thanaweya Amma	47	55.3
Agriculture diploma	12	14.1
Commercial diploma	2	2.4
Tourism diploma (5 years)	24	28.2
Year enrolled		
Third year	20	23.5
Fourth year	65	76.5

While, Table 2 indicated the profile of the academics; the whole group was consisted of female which formulate the total population and 42.9% of the group was between 30-39 years and 40-49 years age bracket respectively and 14.2% was between 20-29 years. More than half the group (57.1%) was not specialized in tourism studies as first high education degree and only 42.9% received their first high education degree in tourism studies. More than half of the group (57.1%) academic rank was lecturer, while, 14.3% was demonstrator, assistant lecturer and assistant professor respectively.

Table 2: Profile of Academics Group

	Number	Percent
Gender		
Male	0	0.0
Female	7	100.0
Age		
20-29 years	1	14.2
30-39 years	3	42.9
40-49 years	3	42.9
Education Specialization		
Tourism Studies	3	42.9
Other	4	57.1
Academic Rank		
Demonstrator	1	14.3
Assistant Lecturer	1	14.3
Lecturer	4	57.1
Assistant Professor	1	14.3

Finally, Table 3 demonstrated the profile of the respondents who represent the tourism industry management. More than half of the respondents (67.6%) were male and 32.4% were female. More than half of the respondents (61.8%) age were 50 years or more, 20.6% were between 30-39 years age bracket and 17.6% were between 40-49 years age bracket. All of the respondents did not receive high education degree in tourism studies. They all represented travel agencies category (A), with almost more than half of the companies (58.9%) number of employers ranged between 6-10 employers and 41.1% of the companies number of employers were 11 employers or more. Considering the number of interns annually; more than half of the respondents companies (64.7%) received from 1-5 interns, while, 35.3% of the respondents companies did not receive any interns.

Table 3: Profile of Industry Group

	Number	Percent
Gender		
Male	23	67.6
Female	11	32.4
Age		
30-39 years	7	20.6
40-49 years	6	17.6
50 years or more	21	61.8
Previous education		
Tourism Studies	0	0.0
Other	34	100.0
Type of company		
Category A	34	100.0
Number of employers		
6-10 employers	20	58.9
11 employers or more	14	41.1
Number of interns annually		
1-5 interns	22	64.7
No interns	12	35.3

Goals of the internship program

Comparison between students, academics and managers' views regarding internship program goals, table 4. , revealed some interesting results. The ANOVA results showed that the level of significant was ($p < .05$) for ten out of the eleven items. Overall, the Table showed considerable differences of views on internship goals. The only questions on which there was clear agreement was internship offer the opportunity to improve students' themselves (Question 8), a relatively strong perception on internship is important and essential for tourism education (Question 1), and efficiency of internship is related to sufficient foreign language knowledge the students have (Question 6).

All three groups strongly agreed that the efficiency of internship is related to students' willingness to work in the tourism business (Question 7). They relatively agreed also on students desire to pursue working in tourism sector after their internship experience (Question 9). Thus, this indicated that an important part of the internship was obtaining a job experience. Respectively there were quite an agreement that the efficiency of the internship is related to sufficient theoretical knowledge students have (Question 5). Relatively there were an agreement that the student internship should be related to the education field (Question 4). This meant that internship should guide students in applying textbook theory directly to work experience.

Also, all three groups are strongly agreed that the main goal of the internship is to offer the opportunity to improve students' themselves (Question 8). However, there were slightest agreement that the tourism companies consider students as an important human resource during their internship experience (Question 10). In addition, there were rather a disagreement that students can find place of their internship easily (Question 2) and that students have the same benefits and opportunities that a full-time employee got (social rights such as work hour, wage, permission, etc.) (Question 11). This reflected a strong 'employment' focus by students, as these were among the questions that attracted students' highest levels of disagreement (especially questions 2 and 11). Apparently, academics showed also focus on employment, with the same two questions receiving highest level of disagreement. In contrast, academics and managers showed no significant differences on whether tourism companies consider students as an important human resource during their internship experience (Question 10).

Finally, all three groups of stakeholders have a consensus that institutions deal with finding companies for students' internship (Question 3), here more collaboration is needed between institutions and tourism industry to fulfill the goals of internship program. Table 4 shows the overall means for each question, the average of the three group means, and the ranking of items. The rankings need to be interpreted carefully, as some differences in ranking are based only on small differences in means.

Table 4: Differences between the three groups regarding goals of the internship program

Goals of the Internship program	Students		Academics		Industry		Overall		P
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	
1. Internship is important and essential for tourism education	4.74	3	5.00	1	5.00	1	4.88	2	.026*
2. Students can find place of their internship easily	2.39	11	2.14	11	1.67	10	2.03	11	.0001*
3. Institutions deal with finding companies for students' internship	3.40	8	2.43	9	1.99	9	2.69	9	.0001*
4. Internship should be related to the education field	4.52	5	3.86	6	3.62	7	4.06	7	.001*
5. Efficiency of internship is related to sufficient theoretical knowledge students have	4.46	6	3.57	7	3.99	5	4.20	5	.002*
6. Efficiency of internship is related to sufficient foreign language knowledge students have	4.62	4	4.67	2	5.00	2	4.81	3	.0001*
7. Efficiency of internship is related to students' willingness to work in tourism sector	4.76	2	4.29	4	4.31	4	4.53	4	.001*
8. Internship offer the opportunity to improve students' themselves	4.82	1	4.67	3	5.00	3	4.90	1	.0001*
9. Students desire to pursue working in tourism sector after their internship experience	4.38	7	4.14	5	3.99	6	4.18	6	.010*
10. Tourism companies consider students as an important human resource during their internship experience	3.35	9	3.14	8	3.32	8	3.33	8	.944
11. Students have the same benefits and opportunities as full-time employees have during their internship (social rights such as work hour, wage, permission, etc.)	2.46	10	2.43	10	1.32	11	2.20	10	.0001*
Cronbach's alpha	0.82								

Structural aspects of internship programs

In the ten items concerning the internship structural aspects, some differences between groups were found, but mostly their views were the same. Mean responses on these questions are shown in Table 5. The ANOVA found significant differences to responses on five questions ($p < .05$).

The three groups of stakeholders are strongly agreed that monitoring internship can increase its importance and success (Question 6). They relatively agreed that efficiency of internship is related to managers-students related work (Question 9). They also agreed that efficiency of internship is related to companies-students choose (Question 8). The students' responses differed from academics and managers (especially Question 8); as it appeared that student believed that internship was about themselves, a matter which was completely different for academics; especially managers, who believed that internship was intended to provide students with a broader range of abilities.

The three groups of stakeholders are generally agreed that before starting internship, the goals and objectives of the program and roles of all relevant parties are clear (Question 2). And that tourism companies are able to screen potential interns (Question 1). On the other hand, there was slight agreement on tourism companies appoint 'internship coordinator', who provides the point of contact between the companies and the institution (Question 7). This would seem that all three groups agreed that clear goals and objectives including appointing an internship coordinator within the company to work with the academic supervisor enhanced students' internship. Whilst companies emphasized

on screening potential interns; perhaps managers preferred to find individuals that would fit in easily within their company. Respondents hereby clearly indicated that unstructured internship was not desirable.

Table 5: Differences between the three groups regarding structural aspects of the internship program

Structural aspects of the Internship program	Students		Academics		Industry		Overall		P
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	
1. Tourism companies are able to screen potential interns	4.04	3	3.71	4	2.98	8	3.52	7	.0001*
2. Before starting internship, the goals and objectives for the program and roles of all relevant parties are clear	3.67	6	3.29	7	3.63	6	3.64	5	.761
3. Duration of internship (60 days) is satisfactory	4.25	2	3.57	5	2.98	9	3.61	6	.0001*
4. Duration of internship should be longer	3.85	5	3.00	9	3.71	5	3.75	4	.454
5. Duration of internship should be shorter	1.55	10	2.00	10	1.64	10	1.61	10	.493
6. Monitoring internship can increase its importance and success	4.26	1	4.43	1	5.00	1	4.62	1	.0001*
7. Tourism companies appoint 'internship coordinator', who provides the point of contact between the companies and the Institution	3.51	8	3.14	8	3.02	7	3.26	9	.130
8. Efficiency of internship is related to companies students choose	3.53	7	3.43	6	4.31	2	3.90	3	.001*
9. Efficiency of internship is related to managers students work with	4.01	4	3.86	2	4.31	3	4.15	2	.180
10. Tourism companies consider students as a cheap employee	2.52	9	3.86	3	4.04	4	3.30	8	.0001*
Cronbach's alpha	0.80								

All groups of stakeholders are strongly disagreed that the duration of internship should be shorter (Question 5). Students and managers agreed on duration of internship should be longer (Question 4). While there were fairly agreement that the duration of internship (60 days) is satisfactory (Question 3). In contrast with the managers that seemed to wish that internship was much longer. Most interesting result found was that academics and managers (with academics seemingly more fervent) agreed that tourism companies consider students as a cheap employee (Question 10), though students respondents entirely disagreed on this statement.

Table 6: Differences between the three groups regarding assessments of the internship

Assessment of the Internship	Students		Academics		Industry		Overall		P
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	
1. Students' oral presentation is evaluated by academic and company supervisors	4.67	1	3.86	2	4.31	1	4.47	1	.002*
2. Students' report is evaluated by academic and company supervisors	4.09	3	2.71	3	3.32	3	3.67	3	.0001*
3. Internship is considered as part of the educational program and student get academic credit for this.	4.47	2	4.71	1	4.31	2	4.40	2	.367
Cronbach's alpha	0.89								

Assessment of internship

In order to know respondents perception about how interns should be assessed for their internship. Table 6 shows the mean for each item. The ANOVA found a significant difference for responses across all groups ($p < .05$) but only for two items. The students strongly agreed that students' oral presentation is evaluated by academic and company supervisors (Question 1). They also quite agreed that students' report is evaluated by academic and company

supervisors (Question 2) as compared to managers and academics. This implies that both students and managers have given oral presentation by far the highest perception. The pattern of students' results here suggested that they wanted industry to be a major part of their internship, more than managers or academics did. While, the academics are strongly agreed that internship is considered as part of the educational program and student get academic credit for this (Question 3). It seems that although academics appeared the most enthusiastic stakeholders about it, the managers were found to be the least welcoming of sharing in that effort.

Means of improvement of internship program

The open-ended question responses have been recorded into categories and a frequency analysis was undertaken. The responses coded into categories and their frequencies are shown in Table 7. The three groups emphasized upon the need to a cooperation between the Ministry of High Education and the Ministry of Tourism to encourage tourism companies to accept interns (Statement 4), as this attracted the highest frequency level. Whilst, managers and students stressed on the selecting of potentials interns with good language and personality skills who are able to deal with others (Statement 5). They stressed also on that internship program need be extended to the four years of study (Statement 2). Academics highlighted the importance of amendments in education programs that must be done to keep pace with the development in e-booking and teaching courses, such as; customer service, psychology and communication skills (Statement 3). Moreover, they highlighted that institutions need to have its own training center to accommodate the exceeding number of students annually and to be totally managed by industry and practitioners (Statement 1). This training center should adopt the concept of a business unit in which a tourism company business setting is implemented. In contrast with what managers and students needed, as these statements had the least frequency level among them, as they were keen for more real business-style experience.

Table 7: Differences between the three groups regarding means of improvement of internship program

Means of improvement of internship program	Students		Academics		Industry		Overall	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
1. Institutions must have its own training center to accommodate the exceeding number of students annually and to be totally managed by industry and practitioners	3.7	5	20	3	0	0	5.3	5
2. Internship program must be extended to the four years of study	18.5	3	0	0	16.7	3	15.8	3
3. Amendments in education programs must be done to keep pace with the development in E-Booking and teaching courses such as; Customer Service, Psychology and communication skills	7.4	4	20	2	16.7	4	10.5	4
4. Cooperation between Ministry of High Education and Ministry of Tourism to encourage tourism companies to accept interns	48.2	1	60	1	33.3	1	47.4	1
5. Selecting potentials interns with good language and personality skills who are able to deal with others	22.2	2	0	0	33.3	2	21	2

Conclusion

Unlike other prior empirical studies, this research identified important issues related to the fundamental internship: goals, structure and assessment. These were important aspects that needed to be considered in an internship program design. In the pursuit of establishing a tourism internship designed to satisfy the needs of all stakeholders, this research would be the first to survey all three participant groups (students, academics and industry) on these critical internship areas. Both differences and similarities were found in the views among the three groups of stakeholders. This presented a compound situation that required a closer look to each of the tables. This is in order to get a better understanding of internship and achieve maximum benefits to all parties through the design, evaluation or amendment of such programs.

For academics, the conceptual and theoretical learning aspect was very important, that's probably was the reason that academics place greater emphasis on considering 'internship as part of the educational program and student must get academic credit for it', because they encourage learning. They should be wise enough to convey to their students that the internship provides 'links' to industry, but is not in itself employment. On the other hand, students believe that the internship was all about getting employment experience and earning money, discarding the educational benefits that must be gained. Businesses seems to value the knowledge of foreign language students have, as a criterion for success in the industry, perhaps this showed a lack of perception of the education system, but it was this perception of education that was being used by industries when choosing future employees. Thus, it's important for academics and students to communicate to the industry that internship is a long-term investment, and they should request from

companies to reveal the characteristics they value in a future employee. It could be suggested that communication skills were very important, relying on an increased role for oral presentations in internship assessment.

The three groups of stakeholders (students, academics and industry) see the important role of internship. They all believe that 'internship is essential for tourism education, but the logistical, resources and administration, as well as supervising issues, may be more than some institutions could endure. Perhaps for this reason, academics would like companies and professional practitioners to play a greater role in managing on-site activities, as well as in the internship assessments. The research highlighted also a common ground among the three parties which was that 'internship offers the opportunity to improve students' themselves'. The work place experience would broaden tourism related education for students. Furthermore, the knowledge exchange opportunities within the internship program considered beneficial for both industry and academics. Therefore, they all need to work well together to ensure that the main goal of the internship is achieved.

Three main implications could be drawn from the findings and by far can be considered keys for improvement. Firstly, and probably the key finding; a briefing sessions before and after the internship process was highly recommended for a clearer expression of the goals, structure and assessment of the program. Secondly, academic supervisor might be assigned to each internship group, to guarantee a structural alignment of goals with what occurs on the ground. Finally, institutions might consider allowing students to work part-time in the tourism sector in a paid employment position. Accordingly, the students' needs for work experience can be fulfilled. It is suggested that these procedures would decrease the negative consequences of unstructured programs and permit the benefits to bear fuller fruit.

The study included a major limitation; the limited sampling frame. Only two tourism and hotels' high institutions participated in this study. Thus, results might not be able to be generalized. Future studies should include a larger sample size with various types of tourism institutions. Even though, this study differs as it has provided useful insights into the internship process. Future researchers may consider means to measure the success of internship programs in increasing students' abilities and their industry work readiness and should consider also stakeholders views on ways of balance between internship structure and fluidity.

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وجهة نظر الطلاب والأكاديميين وصناعة السياحة في عملية التدريب الميداني بالتعليم السياحي

التدريب الميداني كمفهوم هو فترة من العمل الحقيقي في قسم أو كل قسم من المنشأة، يتراوح من عدة أسابيع إلى سنة أو أكثر، ويكون في موقع واحد أو مواقع متعددة. وبالتالي، فهو يشكل جزءا هاما من التعليم السياحي لأنه يساعد الطلاب لوضع معرفتهم في الممارسة وتوسع أيضا خبراتهم. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد وجهة نظر الطلاب والأكاديميين ورجال صناعة السياحة في عملية التدريب الميداني الحالية. ومن أجل الوصول إلى الهدف، تم إجراء استبيان بين المجموعات الثلاث. وأشارت النتائج إلى أن هناك اتفاقا كبيرا بين المجموعات أصحاب المصلحة، مع بعض الاختلافات الملحوظة. فعلى سبيل المثال الأكاديميين ومديري شركات السياحة أكدوا على أهمية التدريب للتعليم السياحي، إلا أن ذكر الطلاب أن شركات السياحة لم تعتبرهم موردا بشريا هاما خلال تجربة التدريب الخاصة بهم. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، ذكر الأكاديميين أن شركات السياحة تعامل الطلاب كأيدي عاملة رخيصة. وعليه، يمكن استخلاص بعض التطبيقات الرئيسية من النتائج والتي تعتبر نقط أساسية لتحسين برنامج التدريب الميداني.

الكلمات الدالة: التعليم السياحي، التدريب، الطالب، الأكاديميين، صناعة السياحة.