

The Perceptions of Students, Hospitality & Tourism Industry and Tourism Polytechnics On Program of Internships During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

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Purpose. The focus of the study is to identify the students', the hospitality and tourism industry, and the tourism polytechnic' perceptions and the impact of internships conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as their perceptions of virtual internships.

Design/Methodology/Approach. Survey method was used to collected the research data. Respondents comprised students from the sixth State Tourism Polytechnics (Perguruan Tinggi Negeri Pariwisata-PTNP), tourism and hospitality organizations, and the faculty internship coordinator & officials of each PTNP's internship programed.

Findings. The study's findings indicated that the internship variables (student-focused issues, institution-specific issues, and organization-specific issues) were generally regarded as positive by the students, the hospitality and tourism industry, and the tourism polytechnics. However, they all disagree on the issue of remuneration during the internship. There are seven items on which only PTNP stakeholders disagree, all of which pertain to the virtual internships variable.

Research Limitations. The study's objective is to enhance tourism and hospitality higher education internships in the new era through collaboration and internship creation aligned with industry demands. The study's respondents were primarily from Politeknik Pariwisata Bali (Bali Tourism Polytechnic), who generally presented a general image of Bali's diminishing tourism, which had an effect on the internship program. Additional research should be conducted with a broader scope to allow for generalization findings.

Originality/Value. Provide responses to the impact of implementing internships during the Covid-19 crisis, as well as highlighting the possibility if internships are carried out virtually.

Keywords: Hospitality and Tourism Education, Internship, Covid-19 Pandemic, Virtual Internship, Perceptions

1. Introduction

Hospitality internship is the most critical part of the hospitality program (Zopiatis & Theocharous, 2013). While internships are an integral element of hospitality education, their importance is frequently overshadowed by the issues confronting stakeholders in the hospitality sector in providing experience in the workplace for the future generation of the hospitality profession (Amin et al., 2020). The sector of education is also experiencing obstacles in carrying out the learning and teaching process in consideration of the Covid-19 pandemic (Dani et al., 2020; Steimle, Sun et al., 2022). All forms of learning that require face-to-face meetings are abolished, until uncertain time. This condition undoubtedly has an effect on the inclusion of industrial work practices in vocational education institutions' curricula.

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the internship work plan has been delayed and modified. Students find it difficult to find a place to carry out industrial work practices due to policies from the tourism and hospitality sector which lay off employees due to minimal operations (Baum et al., 2020; Gössling et al., 2020). From the findings of industry visit reports made by lecturers of the Bali Tourism Polytechnic for the period July to December 2020 regarding the implementation of industrial work practices, shows that students were not performing their industrial work activities optimally, the student work schedule in the industry was not optimal due to the absence of guests, irregular working hours, the industry inquires cooperation and is aware that with the Covid-19 pandemic the objectives of implementing industrial work practices have not been achieved.

The implementation of the internship during the Covid-19 Pandemic was different from theoretical lectures that can be done virtually during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Lectures in theory are still possible to be conducted by teachers and lecturers through online teaching and e-learning process. Assignments can be given via email, WhatsApp, or Google Class Room and direct lectures can be done using live video conferencing using various applications such as Zoom, Google Meet, or WEBEX. This study examines the circumstances for implementing internships during the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of students, hospitality & tourism industry and tourism polytechnics. This paper will also address the possibilities of reforming internship implementation with virtual internships. The difference with this research was that those attributes were used to assess the implementation of the internship during the Covid-19 pandemic which was seen based on the perceptions of students, hospitality & tourism industry and tourism polytechnics in the implementation of the internship.

The tourism and hospitality sector underwent changes during the Covid-19 pandemic, so that this research added the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mechanism for implementing virtual internships. According to (Bilsland et al., 2020), virtual internships have not been widely embedded. Further, Bilsland et al. (2020) established a framework for identifying the important players in work-integrated learning in hospitality and tourism. This study looked at how alternate internship and virtual learning models could be used to educate hospitality and tourism students and help them develop important skills. Bilsland model recognizes the critical nature of a "service mindset" for the industry, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era, and challenges researchers to consider how the model's essential components were critical in a post-COVID-19 service environment, as well as how the model's essential components can be expanded to include a virtual internship concept.

To adapt to the conditions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, it is critical to understand the viewpoints of educational institutions, industry, and students about the application of industry work practices (internships) that cannot be conducted virtually. Additional investigations are required to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of internships in preparing students for future employment and to provide information to vocational education institutions to assist in establishing curricula and assisting industries with future graduate recruitment and retention. The purpose of this study is to present qualitative findings pertaining to student, hospitality & tourism organizations and tourism polytechnic perceptions about internship experiences in the hospital & tourism industry during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study combines the perceptions of three internship stakeholders regarding the potential for virtual internships in the hospitality and tourism industry.

2. Literature Reviews

2.1 Internship

Industrial work practices, which are generally known as internships, are applied to vocational education institutions. Internship is carried out to bridge the industry's need for workers who have work experience. Internships allow students to gain practical experience working in the industry. During the internship, students received job training from professionals whom provided information and expertise in their respective work department. Students were then evaluated by supervisors and lecturers/teachers using a competent and performance-based assessment (Cheong, et al., 2014).

While internships can be broadly defined as work-related training, their primary aim is typically to fulfil academic requirements or to obtain final grades or prerequisites for admission to a university. Internships are described as a period of practical work experience during which students obtain training and develop competence in a certain industry or career path (Zopiatis & Theocharous, 2013). Vocational higher education is aimed to equip students with the professional knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the hospitality sector. An internship is an organized, focused, pre-employment experience that enables students to apply their skills and knowledge in the real world of work (Wright & Mulvey, 2021). Students majoring

in hospitality, leisure, and tourism are obliged to complete internships prior to completing their undergraduate degrees (Chen & Chen, 2011; Chen et al., 2018; To & Lung, 2020).

Internships are intended to ease the process from the classroom to the workplace, acting as a natural link between education and the job. Students, educational institutions, and industry believed that internships complemented students' academic assessments (Gault et al., 2000). Exposure to problems and the real world that is not usually as well defined or assessed as contained in textbooks is a valuable learning opportunity outside of the classroom. Internships also offered businesses the opportunity to recruit future employees who had proven themselves to be trainees. Internship participants were more productive as a result of experiences at work (Shin et al., 2013). Various studies showed that the context in which skills are developed can affect how effective they are at work. The impact of skills on productivity was more stand out in countries where vocational education is based on internship training. When combined with other abilities acquired through on-the-job training offered by the employer, skill development results in increased productivity. It can be concluded that the combination of intermediate and higher-level skills is the most productive one.

The curriculum of vocational education institutes is geared toward enhancing the quality of graduates' abilities and skills. The collaboration between vocational education institutions and the hospitality industry was crucial because it allowed students to work in the industry in accordance with their abilities, which was the ultimate goal of vocational graduates (Majid & Sudira, 2017). Students were supposed to be able to perceive, experience, and comprehend the application of scientific theory and knowledge in industry through their industrial training. Additionally, this training was conducted to enhance students' knowledge and abilities. As a result, training became a means of providing students with job experience relevant to the professional goals they desired to pursue.

The concept of 'learning by doing' (Kim et al., 2012; Lin et al., 2017) encouraged learning through active engagement, minimized the classroom teaching, and developed competencies for success in the future world of work (Dessler, 2011). Internship is a way to turn what students had learnt theoretically into a professional experience (Stirling et al., 2015). Internship provided a professional experience for students which they could experience the real work environment that encouraged the students to study harder (Shin et al., 2013).

Internships are a three-way collaboration between students, educational institutions, and the organizations that host them (Yiu & Law, 2012). There were three stakeholders in the implementation of the internship, namely educational institutions, employers, and students (Hoyle & Goffnett, 2013). The three parties involved in the internship were mutually benefited. Students gained real-world work experience, educational institutions gained a reputation, and employers gained potential applicant. There are three dimensions of important issues in the implementation of internships, namely student-focused issues (i.e., student interns), organization-specific issues (i.e., hospitality and tourism organizations), and educational institution-specific issues (i.e., tourism polytechnics) (Lee, 2014).

2.2 Student-focused Issues

Students are generally considered to be the main beneficiaries of internships. Students can acquire positive advantage by implemented theory and concepts from the classroom to the real work environment. Although sometimes what was taught in class is often different from what is in the workplace or even has never been taught before. The experience of students participating in the internship can be satisfaction or dissatisfaction, depending on their expectations and other factors. This factors includes motivation, wages, interns-supervisor relationships, communications, work environment, assignments or scope of work and working hours (Marinakou, 2013). Students perform internships to build a competitive profile for any employment possibility. Students need to acquire employability skills and protect themselves from the potential of future unemployment. Through the internship, students were able to expand their professional

knowledge and skills, integrate expertise, shape career paths, and change learning approaches (Nghia & Duyen, 2019). Performing in internships, significant a better understanding and knowledge of the tasks and practices performed by industry professionals, enhanced employment and professional growth opportunities, networking with potential employers, learning new concepts, gaining experiences, improving self-confidence, exposure to management activities and developing the competencies and skills demanded by the industry. Moreover, students may have a more proactive attitude toward their careers through acquiring the appropriate kind of experience to the sector and, most essential, the tools to analysis whether they have made the right decision in joining an organization.

2.3 Organization-specific Issues

From the employer perspective, an internship provides access to a pool of workers who are usually enthusiastic and dedicated to the industry and bring fresh ideas to the workplace. It is also frequently viewed as an important recruitment and retention tool (Ju et al., 1998). Students are providing low-cost assistance with routine duties (Yiu & Law, 2012). Enhance their image and thus respond to the needs of the community, through internships, an employer is given the opportunity to examine a student's performance and ability to handle not only day-to-day responsibilities but the unexpected situations that arise in almost every workplace. The hospitality industry expects institutions to educate students in a set of skills and competencies required to be successful and perform in their profession following graduation (Min et al., 2016). Industry focuses internship on a certain field of activity and work and requires a well-defined professional profile, clear abilities, and skills.

2.4 Educational Institution-specific Issues

Knowledge on its own is insufficient; what counts is how it is applied. Keeping in mind that education is a dynamic sector, curriculum development should be done in response to industry needs. A course framework that is industry-driven assists students in becoming industry-ready and thus facilitates a smooth transfer to the workplace (Sauder et al., 2019). Almost every institution that offers a higher education in tourism requires students to complete a required internship for a specified period of time in addition to getting theoretical instruction (Tse, 2010). The inputs offered by students during and after their internship should be welcomed to enhance and develop a better approach to the internship program (Pusiran et al., 2020). Educational institutions teach students to be future hospitality and tourism professionals and leaders, and the majority of hospitality and tourism majors do internships prior to graduation (Teng & Cheng, 2021). Internships also play a key role in supporting colleges with post-graduation student placement. Additionally, as a result of an employer's pleasure with a student's performance, the college will obtain industry credibility. This increases the opportunity of collaborative research, enhances an institution's profile, and facilitates the formation for long-term collaborations that optimize future graduate career opportunities (Seyitoğlu & Yirik, 2015; Yiu & Law, 2012).

34 3. Methods

This research is a descriptive study using a survey approach. This survey approach was chosen due to the extensive and large number of data from stakeholders related to the implementation of the internship. The respondents of this study consisted of (1) the students who carried out industrial work practices in July to December 2020 period, (2) the hospitality and tourism organizations who provided internship program for students in the July-December 2020 period, (3) the PTNP which was responsible for the placement of students whom carried out industrial work practices in the July to December 2020 period, in this case is the faculty internship coordinator. This research was conducted at the six State Tourism Polytechnics (PTNP) under the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. The six PTNPs were Bandung Tourism College, Bali Tourism Polytechnic, Medan Tourism Polytechnic, Makassar Tourism Polytechnic, Palembang Tourism Polytechnic, and Lombok Tourism Polytechnic.

The data was collected using a questionnaire that measures 3 dimensions; student-focus issues, institution-specific issues, and organization-specific issues (Lee, 2014) as well as statement items regarding virtual internships (Bilsland et al., 2020). The dimension of student-focused issues is composed of three components: personal development (increased independence; increased sense of responsibility; increased confidence and maturity), development of practical knowledge (understanding the work/job task in the placement; increased understanding of the industry; increased clarity on future career) and development of practical skills (Technical task skills; Communication skills; Interpersonal skills). The Institution-specific issues dimension is composed of two components: enhancement of classroom learning (create supplemental work assignments that contribute to industry knowledge; provide opportunity to discuss problems encountered in practice) and collaboration administration (evaluate internals' overall work performance; offer academic credit for an internship; provide direct and immediate feedback; agree on an internship's maximum/minimum duration). The following dimension is organizational-specific issues, which include five components: autonomy (ability to make independent decisions; ability to determine how to perform duties), cohesion among coworkers (be friendly; be supportive of one another), supervisor leadership (work of praise; recognition of efforts; on-the-job assistance; management attitude; management method), and physical work environment (safety; legality) (Regular Wage; Overtime payment; Exclusive Tip). Thirty statements were used to determine the relative relevance of each feature (Lee, 2014). A Likert scale was used to assess the question items. Respondents were sent questionnaires via Google Form with a one-month collection period.

4. Results

4.1.1 Student-focused issues based on student's perspectives.

The highest average score for the student-focus issues variable is “internship during the Covid-19 pandemic which increase students’ sense of responsibility and internship statements during the Covid-19 pandemic make students more mature” with an average score of 3.40 (strongly agree). The lowest average score for the student-focus issues variable is that “students become more clearly related to future career choices in internships during the Covid-19 pandemic” with an average score of 2.73 (agree). The overall average score of the student-focus issues variable is 3.10 (agree). It proves that the students agree of industrial work practices during the Covid-19, especially in the dimension of personal growth. However, during the pandemic, students felt that Practical Knowledge Development and Practical Skills Development were not optimal. This condition is understandable considering merely few working hours and shortened practical time due to the decrease in the number of guests.

4.1.2 Institution-specific issues based on student's perspectives.

The highest average score is the statement of “educational institutions agreeing that the maximum/minimum duration of internship implementation during the Covid-19 pandemic” is in the 3.45 category (strongly agree). The lowest average score is the statement of “educational institutions compiling additional assignments that are useful for students to increase knowledge about related industries in internship during the Covid-19 pandemic” which resulted 2.82 (agree). The overall average score of the institution-specific issues variable is 3.14 (agree). It shows that the students stakeholders agree that they can still develop their knowledge even in limited and extraordinary conditions, and agree that there are administration collaboration industrial work practices during the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.1.3 Organization-specific issues based on student's perspectives.

The highest average score is the statement “supervisor’s appreciating each student’s effort in internship during the Covid-19 pandemic” with the result, 3.62 (strongly agree). The lowest average is the statement

that students received overtime payments during their internship during the Covid-19 pandemic, which is 2.13 (disagree). The overall average of the organization-specific issues variable is 3.16 (agree). It shows that student stakeholders agree that they still receive the dimensions that existed in the organization-specific issues variable, except for the remuneration dimension. Students do not get paid and even food facilities are no longer provided. This is due to the policy of reducing operational costs and reducing the spread of the covid-19 virus.

4.1.4. Statement of virtual internship according to stakeholder views from students.

The highest average score is the statement “in the hospitality and tourism industry for internship students that technology awareness is needed because the use of digital technology itself has been incorporated into the hospitality and tourism operational system” of 3.41 (strongly agree). The lowest averages score is that “virtual internship can prepare students well to handle various situations that arise in the hospitality and tourism context of 2.63 (agree). The overall average score of virtual internship variables is 2.95 (agree). It reveals that student support virtual internships, as most students have trouble finding tourism or hospitality organizations that offer internship programs during the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.2.1. Student-focused issues as perceived by ¹²hospitality and tourism industry.

The highest average score for the variable student-focus issues is the statement that is internship during the Covid-19 pandemic make students more mature, getting an average score of 3.40 (strongly agree). The lowest average score for the variable student-focus issues is the statement that students become clearer regarding to their future career choices in internships during the Covid-19 pandemic, which is 2.83 (agree). The overall average score of the variable student-focus issues is 3.22 which is in the interval 2.52– 3.27 ³²h the agree category. It shows that industry stakeholders agree on the implementation of internships during the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of student-focus. Students are able to make their own decisions and ³⁶more willing to develop themselves and work together with colleagues by carrying out internships. Internship is an opportunity for students to practice the theoretical learning that they have learned. As for the industry itself, this internship helps finishing the work that must be done considering the lack of manpower due to reduced compensation for employees.

4.2.2. Institution-specific issues as perceived by the hospitality and tourism industry.

The highest average score for the institution-specific issues variable is 3 statements with a value of 3.28 (strongly agree), as follows:

- a) Educational ⁴institutions provide an opportunity to discuss problems found in practical learning activities in internships during the Covid-19 pandemic ⁴
- b) Educational institution offers academic credit for internships during the Covid-19 pandemic ¹¹
- c) Educational institution agrees on the maximum/minimum duration of internship implementation during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The difficulty in finding a place to do internships, as well as establishing relationships between industry and institutions, the agreement was mainly made regarding the duration of the internship, which supposedly 6 months turned into to 3-4 months. The industry has continued to provide assessments in accordance with what educational institutions require. The lowest average score for the institution-specific issues variable is the statement that “educational institutions prepare additional assignments that are useful for students to increase knowledge about related industries during internships during the Covid-19 pandemic”, ⁷hich is 3.08 (agree). This term and condition considering the reduced duration of the internship due to the decrease in the number of tourists staying. The overall average of the institution-specific issues variable is 3.22 (agree). It shows that industrial stakeholders agree on industrial work practices during the Covid-19

pandemic from an institutional-specific issues perspective. Various adjustments must be made due to the Covid-19 pandemic so that the implementation of the internship could still be fulfilled.

4.2.3. Organization-specific issues as perceived by the hospitality and tourism industry.

The highest average for the variable organization-specific issues there are 2 statements with a value of 3.56 (strongly agree), as follows:

- a) Supervisors appreciate every student's efforts in internships during the Covid-19 pandemic
- b) Supervisor provides assistance at work to interns during the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was happening because of the reduced workload with the limited services that needed to be provided to guests. Supervisors had time to coach trainees on how to do their tasks. Supervisors were also assisted in carrying out the work due to the efficiency of employees, who required them to perform other tasks that were not their responsibilities. The lowest average score for the variable organization-specific issues is the statement that "students get paid overtime during their internship during the Covid-19 pandemic, which is 2.19 (disagree). The cost efficiency made by the industry led to the limited facilities and also uniforms provided. This condition was understandable in the midst of difficult economic conditions, in which the tourism and hospitality strategy was operational cost efficiency, one of which was to reduce all forms of expenditure that were considered unnecessary. The overall average score of the organization-specific issues variables is 3.16 (agree). It shows that industrial stakeholders agree on industrial work practices during the Covid-19 pandemic from an organizational specific issues perspective. It indicated that the industry continued to support the implementation of the internship amidst the existing limitations while still accepting students who carried out the internship.

4.2.4. Virtual internships as perceived by the hospitality and tourism industry.

The highest average score for the virtual internship variable with a value of 3.21 (agree), which is a statement that "in the hospitality and tourism industry for internship students, awareness of technology is needed because the use of digital technology itself has been incorporated into the hospitality and tourism operational system". The lowest average score for the virtual internship variable is the statement that virtual internships can prepare students well to handle various situations that arise in hospitality and tourism context, which is 2.71 (agree). The overall average score of virtual internship variables is 2.97 (agree). It shows that industry stakeholders agree on industrial work practices during the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of virtual internships. However, the industry stated that the implementation of the internship could not be done virtually for the entire period as the tourism and hospitality industry was related to travel and hospitality. Therefore, the service had to be done in direct contact, meanwhile there are several things that can be done virtually as well, such as online booking, online check-in, and online payment. Also, considering the nature of the tourism and hospitality industries, which demand inseparable service elements, simulation learning can only be done partially.

4.3.1 Student-focus issues as perceived by the PTNP.

The highest average score for the variable student-focus issues, statement "during the Covid-19 pandemic made students more mature" with a score of 3.25 (strongly agree). The lowest average for the variable student-focus issues with an average value of 2.25 (disagree), there are three, namely as follows:

- a) Student better understand the work industry in internships during the Covid-19 pandemic;
- b) Student communication skills develop during the internship during the Covid-19 pandemic
- c) Student interpersonal skills develop during the internship during the Covid-19 pandemic

Due to the decreasing number of guests, the institution felt that there were not much things for students to be learned in this condition. The working hour was less than 9 hours per day and the shorter duration for the internship making students had a lot of free time beside the internship time. It created less opportunity

for the students to develop their ability and skills to directly interact and serve guests. The overall average score of the variable student-focus issues is 2.59 (agree). It demonstrates that PTNP's perceptions of industrial work practices during the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of student-focused issues are consistent, even if they are not advantageous on some aspects.

4.3.2. Institution-specific issues as perceived by the PTNP.

The highest average score for the institution-specific issues variable is the statement of “educational institutions agreeing on the maximum/minimum duration of internship during the Covid-19 pandemic” of 3.75 (strongly agree). The lowest average score for the institution-specific issues variable is the statement of “educational institutions offering academic credit for internships during the Covid-19 pandemic” with a value of 2.88 (agree). The overall average score of the institution-specific issues variable is 3.40 (agree). This reveals that PTNP stakeholders strongly agree with industrial work practices during the Covid-19 pandemic, because institutions must continue to implement the existing curriculum. Internship cannot yet be replaced by online learning; students must be able to practice the theoretical learning that they have acquired.

4.3.3. Organization-specific issues as perceived by the PTNP.

The highest average score for the variable organization-specific issues with a value of 3.63 (strongly agree), as follows:

1. the supervisor praises the results of student work during the internship during the Covid-19 pandemic
2. the supervisor appreciates every student's effort during the internship during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The lowest average score for the variable organization-specific issues is the statement that “students can make their own decisions on internships during the Covid-19 pandemic with a score of 2.13 (disagree). Students certainly cannot make their own decisions, because students are under the supervision of a supervisor who is responsible for the work they do. The overall average score of the variable organization-specific issues is 2.97 (agree). It shows that PTNP stakeholders are in agreement with industrial work practices during the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of organization-specific issues.

4.3.4. Virtual internship variables as perceived by the PTNP.

The highest average score for the virtual internship variable is a statement in the hospitality and tourism industry for internship students that technology awareness is needed because the use of digital technology itself has been incorporated into the hospitality and tourism operational system of 3.50 (strongly agree). The lowest average score for the virtual internship variable is that the statement of virtual internships can prepare students well to handle various situations that arise in the context of complex hospitality and tourism is 2.00 (disagree). The total average of the virtual internship variables is 2.63 (agree), indicating that PTNP stakeholder perceptions of industrial work practices during the Covid-19 epidemic in terms of virtual internships are acceptable, despite the fact that for certain indicators, PTNP stakeholders believe it was not in compliance with the internship's established objective in the curriculum. The result of the perception of stakeholders is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Perception of Stakeholders

Variable	Students	Industry	Institutions	Mean	Remarks
<i>Dimension</i>					
<i>Student-focus issues</i>	3.10	3.21	2.55	2.95	Agree
<i>Personal Growth</i>	3.27	3.35	2.97	3.19	Agree
<i>Practical Knowledge Development</i>	2.94	3.09	2.38	2.80	Agree

Variable	Students	Industry	Institutions	Mean	Remarks
41 <i>Dimension</i>					14
<i>Practical Skills Development</i>	3.03	3.19	2.29	2.84	Agree
Institution-specific issues	3.12	3.21	3.38	3.24	Agree
<i>Classroom learning enhancement</i>	3.05	3.18	3.32	3.18	Agree
<i>Administration for collaboration</i>	3.19	3.24	3.44	3.29	Strongly Agree
Organization-specific issues	3.16	3.15	2.91	3.07	Agree
<i>Autonomy</i>	3.13	3.09	2.26	2.83	Agree
<i>Co-worker Cohesion</i>	3.54	3.51	3.19	3.41	Agree
<i>Supervisor Leadership</i>	3.51	3.48	3.38	3.46	Agree
<i>Physical Work Environment</i>	3.43	3.44	3.32	3.39	Agree
<i>Remuneration</i>	2.2	2.23	2.42	2.28	Do Not Agree

Source: Data Processing. 2021

Table 2 summarizes the findings of the virtual internship questionnaires.

Table 2. Perception of Stakeholders on Virtual Internship

Variable	Students	Industry	Institutions	Total Mean	Remarks
2 <i>Virtual internship</i>	2.95	2.97	2.63	2.85	Agree
<i>Virtual internship opportunities will allow hospitality and tourism students to develop practical skills.</i>	2.78	2.91	3.00		
2 <i>Virtual internship opportunities will allow hospitality and tourism students to gain experience regardless of their location.</i>	2.80	2.97	2.63		
<i>Virtual internship opportunities will help develop students of hospitality and tourism's digital literacy.</i>	3.06	3.06	3.00		
<i>Virtual internships help students in hospitality and tourism build self-management abilities.</i>	2.89	2.91	2.63		
<i>Provide students with hands-on experience</i>	2.82	2.95	2.50		
<i>Enhance students' service orientations</i>	2.72	2.77	2.13		

Variable	Students	Industry	Institutions	Total Mean	Remarks
Virtual internship	2.95	2.97	2.63	2.85	Agree
<i>Prepare students adequately to deal with a variety of scenarios that may emerge in complicated hospitality and tourism environment</i>	2.63	2.71	2.00		
<i>Prepare students adequately to deal with a variety of situations that emerge in challenging hospitality and tourism environment</i>	3.07	2.94	2.38		
<i>Virtual internships will become the new normal.</i>	3.01	2.98	2.50		
<i>Technology's capabilities continue to develop while its cost decreases. Industry representatives and training providers might utilize this increasing efficacy to gradually phase out face-to-face internships in favor of virtual experiences.</i>	3.00	3.00	2.25		
<i>Remote learning can be used to create the abilities required for the post-COVID-19 era.</i>	2.92	2.91	2.13		
<i>Interns in the hospitality and tourism industries must become increasingly technically savvy as hospitality and tourism operations use more digital technology (e.g., hotels).</i>	3.41	3.21	3.50		
<i>Online internships can meet the digital technology training need</i>	3.03	3.11	3.13		
<i>Industry confidence in digital technologies is high</i>	3.20	3.18	3.00		

Source: Data Processing. 2021

5. Discussions

According to this research, students, industry, and the education institution participating in the internship all had a favorable opinion of the internship that took place during the Covid-19 pandemic. Although there are many restrictions and limitations that occur, the internship can still improve the technical abilities of the internship students. This is in line with several previous studies which state that the internship program prepares students for their future careers, prepares a workforce that is ready to work, and provides knowledge of the real working world (Aqli et al., 2019; Ferreras-Garcia et al., 2020; Gault et al., 2000; Nyanjom et al., 2020).

Previous research has stated that the internship program provides benefits for students in terms of job preparation and their future income in addition to being able to work in tourism or hospitality organizations. Internship is a learning process that actually prepares students to work in the real world, and makes students a potential workforce. Internships provide students with knowledge of how the tourism and hospitality industry works (Aqli et al., 2019; Hurst & Good, 2010; Nyanjom et al., 2020; Sanahuja Vález & Ribes Giner, 2015). However, it is undeniable that the Covid-19 pandemic crisis has resulted in students not getting the full experience of serving guests, lacking communication and interpersonal skills due to the lack of guests they can serve due to the declining level of tourist visits. The benefits of internship for students cannot be obtained optimally during the pandemic.

Various studies have shown that internships provide students with a transitional experience into the world of work. Internships can improve students' critical thinking skills, develop written and oral communication skills, problem solving and interpersonal skills (Binder et al., 2015; Gad et al., 2020; Gault et al., 2000; Shoenfelt et al., 2013). The abilities gained in the internship turn students into potential workers sought by the industry. The point is, that by undergoing an internship program, students' professionalism and soft skills will increase so that this provides job prospects.

For industry as employers, they will prefer prospective workers who have work experience, internship and placement (Kinash et al., 2016). By having the interns working, another advantage for the employers is that they have motivated workforce with no or low cost. Providing opportunities for students to do internships is a form of recruitment tool for employers. An effectively managed internship program will indirectly help employers in terms of lowering entry-level recruitment costs, increasing retention, improving organizational performance and becoming a profitable market employer on campus (Doniņa, 2020).

Internship is an important learning tool, especially for vocational education institutions, in order to provide a trained and educated workforce according to the need of the industry. Another advantage of the internship is the establishment of the reputation of the institution in the industrial sector, the formation of collaboration between industry and educational institutions, external assessment of the existing curricula, and as a source of recruitment for industry (Doniņa, 2020). An adequate internship program would lower the university administrative pressure and will improve its reputation among the students as well as in the industry and furthermore they may gain competitive advantages among other institutes (Karunaratne & Perera, 2019).

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic since 2020, the workplace has changed, as a result of social distancing, contactless interactions, flexible work arrangements, remote workplaces, and the increasing use of digital technology in every sector (Gill, 2020; Jeske & Linehan, 2020). For employers and the industrial sector, virtual internships are beneficial because they can get talent from various locations, are more cost effective, and create beneficial relationships with existing mentoring mechanisms. For students and the industry, virtual internships will be advantageous in terms of distance, cost and accessibility (Pittenger, 2021). This study also found that the students, the industry and the educational institutions involved in the internship viewed virtual internships positively. But not all jobs can be done virtually, especially those that require direct contact with guests and some things that are confidential and impossible to do at home. The students, the industry and the institution perceptions about the benefits of internships to improve technical skills, and readiness to face the real-work situations are not in line with the objectives and learning curricula. Virtual internships prevent students from being able to experience direct interactions with their supervisors or coworkers, and they will not experience what it's like to act professionally and present in an office setting for 7-9 hours a day. In addition, it is necessary to realize that virtual internships certainly require technological readiness and various changes in the structure and planning of the internship, which are not yet available during the Covid-19 pandemic.

6. Conclusions ¹⁰

This article responds to the call for a virtual internship in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the results have theoretical and practical applications. The variables evaluated have theoretical consequences because they are related to the student's profile and suitability for an internship, as well as the qualitative characteristics of industry and polytechnics. These research findings indicate that internships significantly enhance students' employability, particularly those from polytechnic institutions – apparently because polytechnics, with their vocational orientation, are more linked with the needs of the tourism and hospitality sectors.

Finally, internships are a required component of a wide variety of vocational education programs. It may assist students in bridging the divide between academic and real-world experience. Internships can then be thought of as a way to connect academic and practical knowledge, thereby enhancing graduates' employability. To encourage student internships, collaboration between universities, polytechnics, and the industry must be increased.

It will take time to rebuild competitive labor markets for recent college graduates. Job prospects will be reduced, modified, or discarded. Polytechnics must assist existing students in resolving workplace challenges and reorganizations. This study has called attention to the reinvention of internship in the post-COVID-19 pandemic world of work by evaluating new developments and trends and demonstrating their continued practical applicability for student learning and career transition.

The rapid and oppressive transition to remote learning that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic increased the need for innovative alternatives to internship models that rely heavily on learning at an external site or organization. Vocational education institutions must take consideration of enabling technology in the delivery of internships. It will become increasingly critical for them to understand the essentials of entire concept. Curricula and the development of job-related competencies must be aligned with both educational and industrial demands. All institutions of higher education attempt to prepare students for entry into the labor market and professional competitions. Internships are especially beneficial in this sector. ²³

According to the perspectives of the students, the tourism and hospitality industry, and the State Tourism Universities (PTNP) under the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, internships done during the COVID-19 pandemic were widely accepted. This shows that the characteristics of the quality of the internship carried out during the Covid-19 Pandemic as assessed by the aspects of student-focus issues, institution-specific issues, and organization-specific issues are generally rated satisfactory by stakeholders.

However, all stakeholders disagree on the remuneration issue. Students indicated that they were not compensated for their internships because their objective was to develop their knowledge and abilities in the real world. Additionally, the industry asserted that internships were not compensated. Indeed, prior to the pandemic, students who interned received one meal at their hotel or internship location. Due to a cost-cutting strategy and to avoid cross-contamination with Covid-19, the meal facility was discontinued. Additionally, the internship generally less than nine hours a day and was not full for six working days. The PTNP also indicated that internship students were not paid. Internships are required as part of the program, and students are responsible for completing them. The industry has no requirement to compensate students performing internships. ³⁷

Concerning virtual internships undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic, students, industry, and the State Tourism Universities (PTNP) under the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy have reached a consensus. Stakeholders recognize that implementing virtual internships is critical to consider, given the unforeseeable end of the Covid-19 pandemic and the transition to a new normal era. However, upon further examination, it becomes clear that PTNP stakeholders disagree on whether virtual internships equip students with practical skills, improve students' attitudes toward service, adequately prepare students to deal with real-world challenges in the hospitality and tourism industries, virtual internships can be integrated

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