

# The Perceptions of Students, The Hospitality and Tourism Industry, and Tourism Polytechnics on Internships during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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## The Perceptions of Students, The Hospitality and Tourism Industry, and Tourism Polytechnics on Internships during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The focus of the study is to identify the perceptions of the students, the hospitality and tourism organizations, and the tourism polytechnic concerning the internships conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as their perceptions of virtual internships.

**Design/methodology/approach:** A survey method was used to collect the research data. Respondents comprised students from the six State Tourism Polytechnics (Perguruan Tinggi Negeri Pariwisata-PTNP), hospitality and tourism organizations, and the faculty internship coordinator & officials of each tourism polytechnics.

**Findings:** The findings of the study 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 organizations, 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/implications:** The objective of the study is to enhance tourism and hospitality higher education internships in the new normal 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 affected the internship program. Additional research should be conducted with a broader scope to allow for generalization findings.

**Originality/value:** The study is highlighting the internships implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well to explore the possibility if internships are carried out virtually.

*Keywords:* Hospitality and tourism education, Internship, COVID-19 pandemic, Virtual internship, Perceptions

## I. 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

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process in consideration of the COVID-19 pandemic (Dani et al., 2020; Steimle et al., 2022). All forms of learning that require face-to-face meetings are abolished, until an uncertain time. This condition certainly affects industrial work practices contained in the tourism polytechnic curriculum.

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 in the hospitality and tourism industry which mostly were in survival mode (Hamsal et al., 2022) and reduced staff due to minimal operations (Baum et al., 2020; Gössling et al., 2020). The findings of industrial visit reports made by lecturers of the Bali Tourism Polytechnic for the period July to December 2020, regarding the implementation of industrial work practices, show 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, also 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 lecturers through the 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. Therefore, this study examines the circumstances of implementing internships during the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of students, the hospitality and 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 the attributes were used to assess the implementation of the internship during the COVID-19 pandemic was seen based on the perceptions of students, the hospitality and tourism industry, and tourism polytechnics.

The hospitality and tourism industry changed the COVID-19 pandemic so 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 embraced. 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's framework recognizes the critical nature of a "service mindset" for the tourism & hospitality industry, particularly in the post-COVID-19 pandemic. Bilsland's study also challenges researchers to consider how the framework essential components were critical in a post-COVID-19 pandemic service environment, as well to expand the framework to be include in a virtual internship concept.

To adapt to the conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical to understand the perspective of students, hospitality and tourism industry, and tourism polytechnics, about the application of industrial 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 tourism polytechnics to assist in establishing curricula and assisting industries with future graduate recruitment and retention. This study presented qualitative findings on students, hospitality and tourism organizations, and tourism polytechnics' perceptions of internship experiences in the hospital and tourism industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, this study integrates the perspectives of three internship stakeholders on the feasibility of conducting virtual internships in the hospitality and tourism industry.

## II. Literature Reviews

### A. Internship

Industrial work practices, which are generally known as internships, are applied to vocational education institutions. The internship is carried out to bridge the industry's need for workers who have work experience (Doniņa, 2020). Internships allow students to gain practical experience in the industry (Ferrerias-Garcia et al., 2020; Franco et al., 2019). During the internship, students received job training from professionals who provided information and expertise in their respective work departments (Gad et al., 2020). Students were then evaluated by supervisors and lecturers/teachers using a competent and performance-based assessment (Cheong et al., 2014).

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 at equipping students with the professional knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the hospitality sector (Hora et al., 2020). 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 before completing their undergraduate degrees (C.-T. Chen & Chen, 2011; T. 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 (Johansson & Winman, 2020). 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 (Karunaratne & Perera, 2019). Internships also offered businesses the opportunity to recruit future employees who had proven themselves to be trainees (Gursoy et al., 2012). 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 (Harris & Zhao, 2004). The impact of skills on productivity was more stand out in countries where vocational education is based on internship training (Seyitoğlu & Yirik, 2015). When combined with other abilities acquired through on-the-job training offered by the employer, skill development results in increased productivity (Doniņa, 2020). It can be concluded that the combination of intermediate and higher-level skills is the most productive one (Roy & Sykes, 2017).

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 following 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 the industry through their industrial training (T. L. Chen & Shen, 2012; Koc et al., 2014). 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 (T. Chen et al., 2018).

The concept of 'learning by doing' (Kim et al., 2012; Lin et al., 2017) encourages learning through active engagement, minimized classroom teaching, and developed competencies for success in the future world of work (Dessler, 2011). The internship is a way to turn what students had learned theoretically into a professional experience (Stirling et al., 2015). The internship provided a professional experience for students in which they could experience a 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 applicants. 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).

### B. Student-focused Issues

Students are generally considered to be the main beneficiaries of internships. Students can acquire a positive advantage by implementing theory and concepts from the classroom to the real work environment (Hussien & La Lopa, 2018; Sihombing, 2021). 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 (Hussien & La Lopa, 2018; Marinakou, 2013; Yafang & Gongyong, 2014). These factors include 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 (T. Chen et al., 2018). 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 (Marinakou & Giousmpasoglou, 2021; Zopiatis et al., 2021). Moreover, students may have a more proactive attitude toward their careers through acquiring the appropriate kind of experience in the sector and, most essential, the tools to analyze whether they have made the right decision in joining an organization (Ko & Sidhu, 2012; Tsai et al., 2017).

### C. Organization-specific Issues

From the employer's 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 allowed 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 (Lee, 2014). The hospitality industry expects institutions to educate students on 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.

### D. 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 higher education in tourism

requires students to complete a required internship for a specified period 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 before graduation (Teng & Cheng, 2021). Internships also play a key role in supporting colleges with post-graduation student placement (Belhassen et al., 2020). Additionally, as a result of an employer's pleasure with a student's performance, the college will obtain industry credibility. This increases the opportunity for collaborative research, enhances an institution's profile, and facilitates the formation of long-term collaborations that optimize future graduate career opportunities (Seyitoğlu & Yirik, 2015; Yiu & Law, 2012).

### III. Method

This research is a descriptive study using a survey approach. This survey approach was chosen due to the extensive amount of data from stakeholders related to the implementation of the internship. The respondents of this study consisted of (1) the students who carried out internship in July to December 2020 period, (2) the hospitality and tourism organizations who provided internship programs for students in the July-December 2020 period, (3) the PTNP which was responsible for the placement of students who carried out internship in the July to December 2020 period, in this case, was 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 NHI 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 variables; 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 variable 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 variable is composed of two components: enhancement of classroom learning (create supplemental work assignments that contribute to industry knowledge; provide the 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 variable 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), physical work environment (safety; legality), and remuneration (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. The questionnaire was created in Google Form and sent to respondents using WhatsApp with a collection period of one month.

### IV. Results

#### A. Students' Perspective

##### 1. Student-focused issues based on students' perspectives

The highest average score for the student-focus issues

variable is "internship during the COVID-19 pandemic which increases 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 with industrial work practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, 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 a few working hours and shortened practical time due to the decrease in the number of guests.

#### 2. Institution-specific issues based on students' 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 an internship during the COVID-19 pandemic" which resulted in 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.

#### 3. Organization-specific issues based on students' perspectives

The highest average score is the statement "supervisor's appreciating each student's effort in an internship during the COVID-19 pandemic" with a result of 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 are existed in the organization-specific issues variable, except for the remuneration dimension. Students do not get paid and food allowance are no longer provided. This is due to the policy of reducing operational costs and reducing the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

#### 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 students support virtual internships, as most students have trouble finding tourism or hospitality organizations that offer internship programs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### B. Hospitality and Tourism Industry Perspective

#### 1. Student-focused issues as perceived by the hospitality and tourism industry

The highest average score for the variable student-focus issues is the statement that is "internships 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 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 with 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 can make their own decisions and be more willing to develop themselves and work together with colleagues by carrying out internships. The internship is an opportunity for students to practice the theoretical learning that they have learned. As for the industry itself, this internship helps finish the work that must be done considering the lack of manpower due to reduced compensation for employees.

### 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 institutions provide an opportunity to discuss problems found in practical learning activities in internships during the COVID-19 pandemic
- b) Educational institution offers academic credit for internships during the COVID-19 pandemic
- 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", which is 3.08 (agree). This term and condition considering 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.

### 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) The supervisor assists the work 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 amid 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. 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 the 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 should 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, several things 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.

C. Tourism Polytechnics Perspective

1. Student-focus issues as perceived by the PTNP

The highest average score for the variable student-focus issues, the 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) Students 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 many things for students to be learned in this condition. The working hour was less than 9 hours per day and the shorter duration of the internship made students have a lot of free time besides 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 in some aspects.

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. The internship cannot yet be replaced by online learning; students must be able to practice the theoretical learning that they have acquired.

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

- 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 agree with industrial work practices during the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of organization-specific issues.

#### 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 stakeholders' perceptions of industrial work practices during the COVID-19 epidemic in terms of virtual internships are acceptable, even though 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 2 summarizes the findings of the virtual internship questionnaires.

Table 1. Perception of Stakeholders

Variable Dimension	Students	Industry	Institutions	Mean	Remarks
<b>Student-focus issues</b>	3.10	3.21	2.55	2.95	Agree
Personal Growth	3.27	3.35	2.97	3.19	Agree
Practical Knowledge Development	2.94	3.09	2.38	2.80	Agree
Practical Skills Development	3.03	3.19	2.29	2.84	Agree
<b>Institution-specific issues</b>	3.12	3.21	3.38	3.24	Agree
Classroom learning enhancement	3.05	3.18	3.32	3.18	Agree
Administrative for collaboration	3.19	3.24	3.44	3.29	Strongly Agree
<b>Organization-specific issues</b>	3.16	3.15	2.91	3.07	Agree
Autonomy	3.13	3.09	2.26	2.83	Agree
Co-worker Cohesion	3.54	3.51	3.19	3.41	Agree
Supervisor Leadership	3.51	3.48	3.38	3.46	Agree
Physical Work Environment	3.43	3.44	3.32	3.39	Agree
Remuneration	2.2	2.23	2.42	2.28	Do Not Agree

Source: Data Processing, 2021

**Table 2.** Perception of Stakeholders on Virtual Internship

Variable	Students	Industry	Institutions	Total Mean	Remarks
Virtual intemship	2.95	2.97	2.63	2.85	Agree
Virtual internship opportunities will allow hospitality and tourism students to develop practical skills.	2.78	2.91	3.00		
Virtual internship opportunities will allow hospitality and tourism students to gain experience regardless of their location.	2.80	2.97	2.63		
Virtual internship opportunities will help develop students of hospitality and tourism's digital literacy.	3.06	3.06	3.00		
Virtual internships help students in hospitality and tourism build self-management abilities.	2.89	2.91	2.63		
Provide students with hands-on experience	2.82	2.95	2.50		
Enhance students' service orientations	2.72	2.77	2.13		
Prepare students adequately to deal with a variety of scenarios that may emerge in complicated hospitality and tourism environment	2.63	2.71	2.00		
Prepare students adequately to deal with a variety of situations that emerge in challenging hospitality and tourism environment	3.07	2.94	2.38		
Virtual intemships will become the new normal.	3.01	2.98	2.50		
Industry representatives and training providers might utilize this increasing efficacy to gradually phase out face-to-face internships in favor of virtual experiences.	3.00	3.00	2.25		
Remote learning can be used to create the abilities required for the post-COVID-19 era.	2.92	2.91	2.13		
Interns in the hospitality and tourism industries must become increasingly technically savvy as hospitality and tourism operations use more digital technology (e.g. hotels).	3.41	3.21	3.50		
Online internships can meet the digital technology training need	3.03	3.11	3.13		
Industry confidence in digital technologies is high	3.20	3.18	3.00		

Source: Data Processing, 2021

## V. Discussions

According to this research, students, hospitality and tourism industry, and tourism polytechnics participating in the internship all had a favorable opinion of the internship that took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although many restrictions and limitations 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. The internship is a learning process that 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 Vélez & 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 an internship for students cannot be obtained optimally during the pandemic. <sup>13</sup>

Various studies have shown that internships provide students with a transitional experience in 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. Undergoing an internship program, students' professionalism and soft skills will increase so this provides job prospects. <sup>34</sup>

For the 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 workforces 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).

The internship is an important learning tool, especially for vocational education institutions, 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's

administrative pressure and will improve its reputation among the students as well as in the industry furthermore they may gain competitive advantages over other institutes (Karunaratne & Perera, 2019). <sup>3</sup>

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's perceptions about the benefits of internships to improve technical skills, and readiness to face 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. <sup>45</sup> 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. <sup>1</sup>

## VI. Conclusion, Limitation, Future Research

<sup>9</sup> Internships are a type of experiential learning in which students apply and develop their abilities in a professional environment while obtaining a career

and life experience. Internships are expected to help and assist students in strengthening their performance and employment experience while obtaining their degrees. The result of the study deepens our understanding of internship implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The three stakeholders agreed that amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of the internship could still improve student-focus issues, institution-specific issues, and organization-specific issues. However, all stakeholders disagree on the remuneration issue. Also, the students, the hospitality and tourism industry, and the tourism polytechnics agree that virtual internships should be applied. 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 tourism polytechnics 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 into the "new normal" of learning, technology can continue to expand capabilities while decreasing costs, and industry and training proponents.

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

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 organization. Tourism polytechnics must take into consideration enabling technology in the delivery of internships.

It will take time to rebuild competitive labor markets for recent college graduates. Job prospects will be reduced, modified, or discarded. Tourism polytechnics

must assist existing students in resolving workplace challenges and reorganizations. This study has called attention to the reinvention of internships in the post-COVID-19 pandemic by evaluating new developments and trends and demonstrating their continued practical applicability for student learning and career transition.

The limitation of this study is that the majority of respondents were from the Bali Tourism Polytechnic, which more accurately portrays the status of Bali tourism, which has been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the industry's stakeholders are primarily drawn from the hotel industry and government educational institutions. Private educational institutions and other sectors that are also involved in tourism and hospitality may be included as research respondents. Future research on the practicality of virtual internships is necessary, particularly in developing countries, where technology adoption varies according to financial availability and the capability of each stakeholder.

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