

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jhlste

Does employability increase with internship satisfaction? Enhanced employability and internship satisfaction in a hospitality program

Tzu-ling Chen^a, Ching-cheng Shen^b, Mark Gosling^{c,*}^a Culinary Arts Department, National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism, 81271 No.1, Song He Rd., Xiaogang Dist., Kaohsiung City, Taiwan (R.O.C.)^b Graduate Institute of Travel and Tourism Management, National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism, 81271 No.1, Song He Rd., Xiaogang Dist., Kaohsiung City, Taiwan (R.O.C.)^c Department of Applied English, National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism, 81271 No.1, Song He Rd., Xiaogang Dist., Kaohsiung City, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Employability
Hospitality and tourism education
Internship satisfaction

ABSTRACT

A primary goal common across hospitality internship programs is to make students more employable. This study investigates enhanced competencies in employability leading to student satisfaction with an internship program and the relationship to key stakeholders in the program. The school and the student's own self-commitment show positive effect on employability, however satisfaction with the employer was not significant suggesting areas for improvement. The research identified the correlation between internship satisfaction, employability, and the stakeholders with a goal to improving internship programs and enhancing employability for future talent in the hospitality industry.

1. Research background and objectives

In the face of increasing competition in the labor market Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are called upon to better prepare graduates with employable skills. One commonly used path to enhancing employability is through an internship program. In Taiwan, the Ministry of Education's policy is to promote internships to give students experience in a workplace environment with a goal to bolster their competitiveness (Wan, Yang, Cheng, & Su, 2013).

Internships have been well received by scholars, students, and industry alike and shown to have many benefits (Binder, Baguley, Crook, & Miller, 2015; Busby, Brunt, & Baber, 1997; Chen & Shen, 2012; Yiu & Law, 2012; Zopiatis & Constanti, 2012). These benefits range through connecting classroom learning to the work environment; developing valuable practical experience; giving students greater familiarity with the workplace; opportunities to communicate and establish connections with supervisors within the industry and helping to clarify career expectations. These advantages exist across countries and industries and the hospitality industry is a fertile ground for internships which are seen as important for many hospitality and tourism-related majors (Beggs, Ross, & Goodwin, 2008; Binder et al., 2015; Cho, 2006; Kay & DeVeau, 2003). As a result, within tertiary level hospitality education internships have been included as compulsory courses for many undergraduate programs.

Enhancing employability is one of the known benefits from internships for graduating students (Ishengoma & Vaaland, 2016), however there is still a need for more research on understanding the elements of an internship program that contribute to the desired employability (O'Connor & Bodicoat, 2015).

Crossman and Clarke (2010) defined employability in general terms as, 'having the skills and abilities to find employment, remain

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: chen168@mail.nkuht.edu.tw (T.-l. Chen), sccheng@mail.nkuht.edu.tw (C.-c. Shen), markg@mail.nkuht.edu.tw (M. Gosling).

in employment or obtain new employment as, and when, required'. A precursor to finding employment in the industry is that students are sufficiently satisfied with their internship to want to continue in the industry, as opposed to being disillusioned by the experience and voting to exit. Zopiatis and Theocharous (2013) consolidated internship programs in individual countries to explore pre-internship psychological readiness and willingness to continue with the current job during and after internship. They indicated that successful internship experiences encourage students to remain in the tourism and hospitality industry; whereas mediocre internship programs can shatter the dreams of young people. This indicates the importance of internship program design and consultations provided during the process. The individual commitment of interns, arrangements made by schools, or company assistance and fair treatment influences a student's satisfaction with the internship and their decision to remain in the same industry in the future (Chen & Shen, 2011, 2012).

This paper argues that employability is an important goal for students undertaking an internship and that programs that enhance student's employability will increase student's overall satisfaction with the internship program. At the same time, there is a need to illuminate how satisfaction with the elements of an internship program, the school, the employer, and student, serve to enhance graduate employability. This study uses SEM to investigate these relationships.

2. Literature review

2.1. Internship research

Internships are a practicum-based education experience that are seen as a valuable step in integrating classroom-based learning with real world exposure. They are very commonly found as an integral part of hospitality and tourism programs (Robinson, Ruhanen, & Breakey, 2016). The focus of much research, they have been shown to be well received by HEIs, employers and students alike.

Scholars believe there are several benefits from incorporating internships into an HEI program. An internship offers practical work experience in a way that connects to classroom learning (Stansbie, Nash, & Chang, 2016) and allows students to become more familiar with the work place (Ruhanen, Robinson, & Breakey, 2013a). At the same time, it is challenging for an HEI to arrange and coordinate an effective internship program (Lam & Ching, 2007; Zopiatis, 2007). Zopiatis (2007) outlined that good internship experiences must be customized, interesting, and empower students; students must be assigned meaningful tasks and qualified supervisors, and that the company's organization must be favorable for the development of interns. As outlined by Stansbie, Nash, and Jack (2013) internships can be of benefit to all stakeholders, however, they need to be well structured.

From an industry operator's perspective, a well-educated and skilled workforce adds to market success and internships allow students to demonstrate earnest learning attitudes and professional competencies at the same time (Finch, Hamilton, Baldwin, & Zehner, 2013). Industry is aware of the advantages of an effective internship (Lam & Ching, 2007) and aware that graduates' employability skills often fail to meet the requirements of the industry (Yang, Cheung, & Fang, 2015).

For students, internships can be a helpful step in preparing for the industry by giving them an opportunity to understand working conditions and to develop relationships with hospitality workers and supervisors (Marinakou & Giousmpasoglou, 2013). After completing their internships, there is a vast improvement in students' ability and confidence to work with people, their knowledge of how the industry works, their ability to adapt to changes, their leadership, and their financial management competency (Lam & Ching, 2007). Students can also gain insights into their careers to make better informed decisions about opportunities available to them (Wang, Chiang et al., 2014), and for many the internship can be a spring board into full time employment (Collins, 2002).

The three stakeholders in the internship process, HEIs, employers and students appear united that there are positive benefits to be obtained from an effective internship program, and this makes internships the focus of this study. Following on from this we will examine how the internships serve to enhance employability.

2.2. Content and dimensions of employability

Research on employability has been gaining prominence in recent years (Eurico, da Silva, & do Valle, 2015) and there is indication that enhancing the employability of students is of the utmost priority. At its core, employability is seen as the qualities within a graduate that equips him or her with skills to attain and remain in employment (Asonitou, 2015; Yorke & Knight, 2006). However, within this slightly circular definition lies the difficulties in its definition and measurement. Generally, employability is seen as a multi-dimensional construct which several scholars have remarked upon as having definitional challenges (Harvey, 2001; Huang, 2013).

In a prominent paper in the field Harvey (2001) observed that one measure of employability loved of governments is a count of how many graduates achieve employment. This measure no doubt has the attraction of some simplicity, but as Harvey describes it is a distorting, 'pseudo measure.' Instead Harvey's summary of definitions of employability in the literature includes five elements: 1. Job type, 2. Timing, 3. Attributes on recruitment, 4. Continuing education, 5. Employability skills. This list has been expanded to include soft skills, such as willingness, attitude, motivation for competency training, and flexibility at work (Misra & Mishra, 2011). Arguably, participating in an internship programs is a sound approach to improving these kind of skills, including the ability to communicate and interact with people, morality, critical thinking, leadership, lifelong learning and problem-solving capabilities, adaptability, and flexibility (Blackwell, Bowes, Harvey, Hesketh, & Knight, 2001). Other scholars have expanded these models to include areas such as emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, reflection and evaluation and life experience (Pool & Sewell, 2007). Whilst there are no doubt strong arguments for the inclusion of many of these items and for a broad spread of dimensions this is perhaps at the risk of effective

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7419960>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7419960>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)