EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNSHIPS AS A MARKETING STRATEGY IN

TERTIARY COURSES: THE CASE OF NANYANG INSTITUTE OF

MANAGEMENT SINGAPORE

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EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNSHIPS AS A MARKETING STRATEGY IN

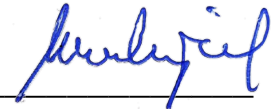TERTIARY COURSES: THE CASE OF NANYANG INSTITUTE OF

MANAGEMENT SINGAPORE

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Dedication

With immense gratitude and sincere appreciation, I dedicate this thesis to my family, who have always been my pillar of support. To my parents, whose love continues to be my greatest source of inspiration and whose selfless support and sacrifices made this academic journey possible. My profound gratitude goes out to my instructor and mentor, Dr. Josip Burusic, whose advice and knowledge helped shape my study. I owe my friends a debt of gratitude for their unwavering support and for sharing our successes and setbacks. I also want to express my gratitude to everyone who participated in my study and provided priceless insights into the research. This work is a tribute to everyone who supported me and encouraged me to keep going when I was doubting myself.

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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of internships as a strategic marketing tool in tertiary courses is examined in this thesis, with a focus on the Nanyang Institute of Management (NIM) in Singapore. Innovative strategies are considered as higher education institutions continually adjust to changing environments to draw and keep students. With the opportunity to gain practical experience in the workplace and enhance one's academic background, internships have become a popular marketing tactic. The study looks at internship experiences and analyses student enrolment data quantitatively. The study assesses how NIM's internship programs affect student enrolment by examining the relationship between internship participation and attracting potential students. Also, by examining students' perspectives and experiences, it explores the qualitative aspects of internships and offers insights into the program is success as a marketing tool. Through surveys and statistical analysis, the study thoroughly explains how internships have impacted learners' experience in the industry. The research's conclusive findings offer practical insights for educational institutions, especially NIM, to optimize their internship programs and contribute to the academic discourse surrounding marketing strategies in tertiary education. The findings reveal that internships prepare learners for better employment opportunities in the hospitality industry by enhancing relevant skills, professionalism, and work ethics. Including internship programs at NIM in Singapore is an effective marketing tool. Some reasons that justify this inference include enhanced visibility, brand reputation, and the bridge between education and industry practices.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The hospitality industry in Singapore is a vital component of the country's economy, generating significant revenue and providing employment opportunities for a substantial proportion of the workforce. The government welcomed over 19 million visitors in 2019, generating $27.7 billion in tourism receipts (Raguraman, 2023). The industry encompasses various sectors, including hotels, restaurants, tourism, and events (Leung *et al.*, 2022). Singapore's strategic location, efficient infrastructure, and supportive government policies have made it an attractive destination for tourists and businesses, resulting in a highly competitive and dynamic industry. As the industry grows, there is an increasing demand for skilled and knowledgeable professionals who can deliver high-quality services and create positive guest experiences.

Professionalism is an essential aspect of the hospitality industry, encompassing a range of competencies and behaviours crucial for the sector's success. The hospitality industry demands high levels of professionalism from its employees, which includes communication skills, attention to detail, teamwork, adaptability, and customer service (Kiryakova-dineva and Vladimirova, 2022; Chark and Ip, 2023). Professionals in the industry must create positive guest experiences and represent their organizations, with professionalism being crucial due to its encompassing range of essential competencies and behaviours for sector success (Leung *et al.*, 2022; Chark and Ip, 2023). The development of professionalism is crucial for ensuring service quality delivery and maintaining the

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industry's reputation. The acquisition of professionalism in the hospitality industry is typically achieved through a combination of formal education and practical experience, such as internships. The hospitality industry is competitive and dynamic, with internships as a critical pathway for students to develop their professional skills and gain an edge in the job market (Anjum, 2020; Chark and Ip, 2023). Internships allow students to apply their classroom knowledge to real-world situations and develop practical skills, such as problem-solving and communication, while also gaining exposure to different aspects of the industry (Anjum, 2020). By completing internships, students can gain valuable work experience, make industry connections, and improve their employability prospects.

However, despite the potential benefits of internships, there are also challenges associated with their effectiveness. One challenge is ensuring students receive adequate support and guidance during their internships. Internships can be challenging, particularly for students new to the industry, and it is essential to provide them with the necessary support to succeed (Zhang and Wilson, 2023). This aspect may include mentorship, regular feedback, and training to ensure students develop the essential skills and competencies. Another challenge is ensuring that internships provide students with meaningful and relevant experiences. Aligning internships with students' interests and career goals is crucial, exposing them to various industry aspects (Kiryakova-dineva and Vladimirova, 2022). Ensuring that students are assigned meaningful responsibilities rather than menial tasks is essential.

Singapore, a global hub for tourism and hospitality, offers many opportunities for students looking to pursue internships in the industry. Many

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universities and institutes in Singapore offer hospitality-related programs, ranging from diplomas to undergraduate and graduate degrees. One such institute is the Nanyang Institute of Management (NIM), which offers various hospitality-related programs, including diplomas, certificates, and a degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management (Chaney and Ryan, 2012). The NIM, a leading private education institution, has established itself as a critical player in providing hospitality education (including business, management, and hospitality courses) and training in the country (Yallop *et al.*, 2023). NIM's hospitality programs include a comprehensive internship component, where students are placed in various industry settings to gain hands-on experience. This exposure allows students to better understand the different career paths available in the industry and make more informed decisions about their future.

However, adopting internship programs is a challenging marketing approach for the NIM should industry stakeholders perceive the programs as ineffective. In light of findings by (Maertz *et al.*, 2014), the effectiveness of the NIM internship programs in terms of the productivity and employability of the institution's graduates raises the risk of reputation damage. The current study seeks to determine if including an internship program is an effective marketing tool and assess the effectiveness of the NIM internship program in equipping interns with practical skills.

1.2 Research Problem

This study investigates the potential ineffectiveness of the NIM internship program in equipping interns with the practical skills for success in the Singaporean hospitality industry and the global market. The program's failure to

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sufficiently prepare graduates to tackle practical hospitality responsibilities effectively may hinder the NIM's (and, to a significant extent, Singapore's) ability to maintain a competitive edge in the worldwide hospitality market. Offering internship programs can help market or ruin an organization's reputation, depending on the internship program application approach and outcomes (Maertz *et al.*, 2014). The NIM in Singapore is a prominent hospitality education provider, and its internships' effectiveness is particularly interesting to industry practitioners and scholars (Zhang and Wilson, 2023). This research problem is crucial because it will provide insights into how best to design and deliver internships that meet the needs of industry stakeholders, primarily interns, educators, and company stakeholders. By identifying the inhibitors of effective and competent internship programs, this research will inform the development of best practices in the industry. The study investigates the perceptions of students and industry professionals to address the ineffectiveness of the NIM internship program.

1.3 Purpose of Research

This study aims to comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of internships as a strategic marketing tool within tertiary education, focusing specifically on the NIM in Singapore. Through a thorough analysis of the perceptions, experiences, and outcomes of students and employers involved in the internship program, this research seeks to elucidate the extent to which internships enhance the institution's visibility, attract prospective students, and foster a positive brand reputation. By investigating the alignment between internships and academic objectives and exploring the practical implications and challenges associated with their implementation, this study aims to provide

valuable insights for scholars, policymakers, and industry practitioners to optimize internship programs as a marketing strategy in tertiary education contexts.

More specifically, this study investigates the extent to which internships provide students with relevant and meaningful experiences and the degree to which students develop the necessary skills and competencies. It analyses the support and guidance provided to students during their internships and the level of engagement between students and industry professionals during the NIM internship program. Also, the research assesses the career outcomes of graduates who have completed internships at the NIM. The assessment involves how much training has contributed to graduates' ability to secure employment in the hospitality industry and their perceptions of the value of their internship experience. Also, the study explores the extent to which graduates have been able to leverage their internship experience to develop their professional networks and advance their careers.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions guiding the study are as follows:

Research Question (RQ1): To what extent does the alignment of student and employer perceptions regarding the effectiveness of internships predict a well-functioning internship at the NIM in Singapore?

Research Question (RQ2): To what extent do student perceptions of the relevance, meaningfulness, and skill development opportunities offered by internships at NIM in Singapore predict graduate experiences?

Research Question (RQ3): To what extent does the quality of mentorship experiences, as perceived by student interns at NIM in Singapore, predict internship outcomes?

Research Question (RQ4): To what extent do student perceptions of the effectiveness of internships at NIM in Singapore predict career outcomes?

Research Question (RQ5): To what extent do student perceptions of the value and impact of internships at NIM in Singapore predict their employability in the hospitality industry?

Research Question (RQ6): To what extent do the professional networks developed through internships at NIM in Singapore predict career advancement in the hospitality industry?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for this study align with the study's research questions. The following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1 (H0$_1$): The alignment of student and employer perceptions regarding the effectiveness of internships does not significantly predict a well-functioning internship at the NIM in Singapore.

Hypothesis 2 (H0$_2$): Student perceptions of the relevance, meaningfulness, and skill development opportunities offered by internships at NIM in Singapore do not significantly predict graduate experiences.

Hypothesis 3 (H0$_3$): The quality of mentorship experiences perceived by student interns at NIM in Singapore does not significantly predict internship outcomes.

Hypothesis 4 (H0$_4$): Student perceptions of the effectiveness of internships at NIM in Singapore do not significantly predict career outcomes.

Hypothesis 5 (H0$_5$): Student perceptions of the value and impact of internships at NIM in Singapore do not significantly predict their employability in the hospitality industry.

Hypothesis 6 (H0$_6$): The professional networks developed through internships at NIM in Singapore do not significantly predict career advancement in the hospitality industry.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research is the basis for crucial variable measures based on the survey questions. The study's conceptual framework is based on the following constructs: internship design, student experiences, industry engagement, and career outcomes.

1.6.1 Internship Design

This construct refers to the design and delivery of hospitality internships at the NIM. It includes factors such as the duration of the internship, the type of work and tasks assigned to students, and the level of supervision and support. Assessment and evaluation processes are also used to measure student performance.

1.6.2 Student Experiences

The experience refers to students' experiences during their internships at the NIM. It includes factors such as the quality of the learning environment, the extent to which students can apply their classroom knowledge to real-world

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situations, the level of responsibility and autonomy given to students, and the opportunities for skill development and networking.

1.6.3 Industry Engagement

This industry engagement creates interaction between students and industry professionals during their internships at the NIM. It includes factors such as the quality of the mentorship and guidance industry professionals provide (Chark and Ip, 2023). The level of interaction between students and industry professionals and the opportunities for students to develop professional networks and gain exposure to different aspects of the industry.

1.6.4 Career Outcomes

This concept refers to the impact of internships on students' future career prospects in the hospitality industry. It includes factors such as the ability of students to secure employment in the industry, the relevance of their internship experience to their future career goals, and the extent to which students can leverage their internship experience to advance their careers in the industry.

Table 1

Framework Constructs

Constructs	Factors	Impact on Effectiveness
Internship Design	Duration of internship	Positive
	Assessment methods	Positive
Student Experiences	Quality of learning environment	Positive
	Student autonomy and responsibility	Positive
Industry Engagement	Quality of mentorship	Positive
	Interaction with industry professionals	Positive
Career Outcomes	Employment	Positive
	Relevance to future career goals	Positive
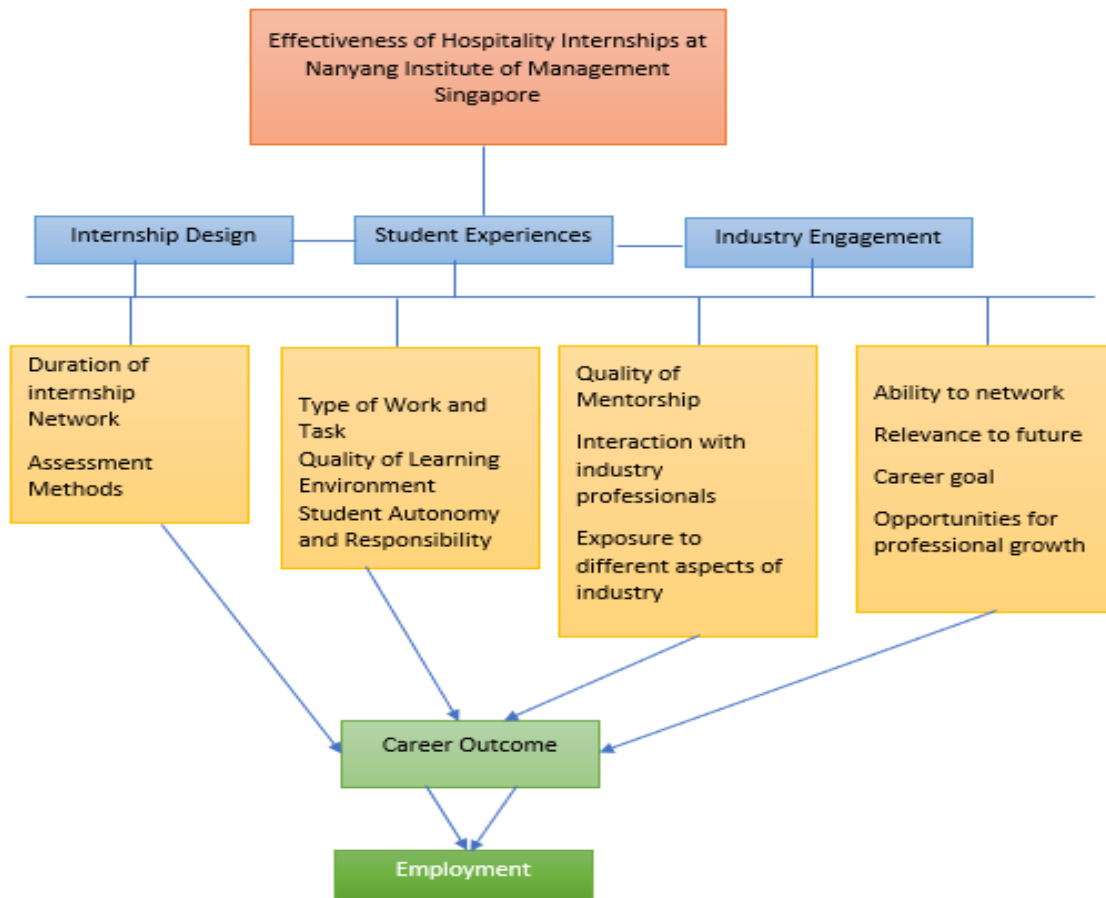
Figure 1

Conceptual Framework

The proposed conceptual framework is based on the premise that the effectiveness of hospitality internships at the NIM is determined by the interplay of these four key constructs (Zhang and Wilson, 2023). A well-designed internship program that provides students with meaningful and relevant experiences engages industry professionals and leads to positive career outcomes is likely to be perceived as effective by students and industry professionals alike. This study relies on the conceptual framework to identify what makes hospitality internships at NIM effective and how they influence students' future careers in the hospitality

industry. The study leverages the framework to offer guidance on how to design best and deliver internships that meet the needs of students, employers, and educators.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study significantly contributes to the hospitality industry. The findings of this study can provide insights and recommendations for hospitality industry stakeholders in Singapore and other countries. Hospitality internships are a crucial component of hospitality education and play a significant role in preparing students for successful careers in the industry. By examining the factors contributing to the effectiveness of the NIM, this study can provide valuable insights into improving the program and enhancing student learning outcomes (Chark and Ip, 2023). Hospitality internships allow students to develop practical skills and knowledge essential for industry success (Quinn and Buzzetto-Hollywood, 2019). For example, internships can help students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and leadership skills. By examining the specific experiences and factors that contribute to developing these skills, this study can provide insights into how to design and deliver effective internship programs that meet the needs of the industry. Further, the study analyses improvement strategies for industry-academic partnerships by examining how academic institutions and industry partners collaborate and support interns. With a better understanding of the effectiveness of hospitality internships, industry stakeholders can make informed decisions when designing internship programs, improving student experiences, and enhancing industry engagement.

The study exhibits academic relevance. This study can contribute to the existing knowledge of hospitality internships and their effectiveness. It contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the impact of internship design on students' learning outcomes and career readiness. This study provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of different internship designs, such as the duration, nature of work, and level of industry engagement, in developing students' skills and preparing them for their future careers. It could fill the gap in the literature on the specific case of NIM Singapore and add to the understanding of the factors that affect the effectiveness of hospitality internships.

The study contributes to career development for students. The study can significantly impact the career development of students in the hospitality industry. By understanding the factors that contribute to practical internships, students can better prepare themselves for the demands of the industry and make informed decisions on their career paths. Also, hospitality internship programs provide students with real-world industry experience. This experience allows students to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained in the classroom to practical situations and better understand the hospitality industry (Peini, 2022). Further, the hospitality industry is a critical sector in the Singaporean economy, accounting for a significant percentage of the country's GDP and providing numerous employment opportunities for Singaporeans and foreigners (Meng, 2022). There is a growing need to investigate the effectiveness of internships in this industry, particularly within the context of the NIM Singapore.

The study can significantly contribute to institutional improvement through internship enhancement. The study can benefit Singapore's NIM internship

program by considerably enhancing the student experience. By identifying areas of improvement, the institution can improve the quality of its programs and better prepare students for their careers. By investigating students' perceptions of their internship experiences, including their satisfaction, engagement, and motivation, the study provides insights into the factors contributing to positive student experiences during internships. This information can help educators and practitioners improve the quality of internships at the NIM and maximize their impact on students' learning and career readiness.

Finally, the study has government and policy implications. This study's findings can also impact government policies and regulations related to internships in the hospitality industry. It can inform the development of policies that promote practical internships and improve the industry's workforce quality. The study will contribute to the policy-making process in Singapore's hospitality industry by providing evidence-based recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of hospitality internships. The study's findings can inform policy decisions related to internship design, student experiences, and industry-academic partnerships.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study for the topic of the effectiveness of hospitality internships at NIM in Singapore encompasses several key areas, including internship design, student experiences, industry engagement, and career outcomes. The study's geographical scope is NIM Singapore, while the context scope is the effectiveness of internships as a marketing strategy in tertiary courses. It targets former and current students and employers at NIM, leveraging a mixed-

method approach with quantitative and qualitative analysis to collect and analyse qualitative and quantitative data.

1.9 Summary

Chapter I defines the problem of ineffective internship programs, which aligns with the background and context of the research. This chapter also specifies the purpose of the study. It provides an overview of the research questions to address the problem. The significance of the study and its potential contributions are also discussed. The study's significance highlights the research's importance and possible contributions to the hospitality industry. Scope describes the boundaries and constraints of the research. The following chapter explores the relevance of the existing literature on the effectiveness of hospitality internships in Singapore and globally.

CHAPTER II:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The current literature review examines the challenges and shortcomings associated with internships in hospitality and tourism educational programs, focusing on their potential ineffectiveness. The literature section begins by reviewing the relevant theories (experiential learning theory and theory of reasoned action) and then exploring empirical evidence.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential learning theory is founded on constructivist principles, emphasising that individuals construct knowledge by actively engaging with their surroundings. Dewey believed that learning is most effective when individuals are actively involved in problem-solving situations, enabling them to create meaning and understanding through their experiences (Dernova, 2015). Dernova proposed a cyclical experiential learning model consisting of steps: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation (Dernova, 2015). The stages visualise the nature of learning, where individuals continuously refine their understanding through experience.

Seaman *et al.* (2017) focused on experiential learning's active engagement and hands-on experience aspects. According to Seaman *et al.,* participation in real-world tasks and challenges enables learners to acquire immediately applicable knowledge. Seaman *et al.* also noted that critical reflection is

fundamental to experiential learning. Through reflection, learners analyse their experiences, identify patterns, and extract valuable insights. Reflection facilitates the integration of new knowledge with prior understanding, promoting deep learning (Seaman *et al.*, 2017). Experiential learning focuses on applying knowledge in practical contexts. Seaman *et al.* concluded by encouraging the learners to transfer their learning to different situations to enable them to adapt and generalise their knowledge effectively.

The experiential theory recognises individual learners' unique characteristics and needs (Ricke, 2018). It promotes learner autonomy, self-direction, and personal agency in the learning process, enabling learners to take ownership of their educational journey. Ricke pointed out that the theory of learning has various practical implications in the academic setup. It provides the foundation for including hands-on activities, simulations, and real-world projects in the curriculum. The experiences provide learners with opportunities to engage actively and acquire practical skills. Educators can include pedagogical strategies to foster experiential learning, such as problem-based, cooperative, and project-based learning (McCarthy, 2016). The strategies encourage collaboration, critical thinking, and active participation among learners. The same researchers argued that experiential learning principles could guide the design of professional development programs for educators (McCarthy, 2016). The programs provide opportunities for teachers to experience and reflect upon new teaching strategies, enhancing their instructional practices.

2.2.2 Theory of Reasoned Action

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is a recognised social psychological model that provides valuable insights into human behaviour and decision-making processes. The theory asserts that an individual's intention to engage in a specific behaviour is influenced by their attitudes toward the behaviour and subjective norms (Nisson and Earl, 2020). Assessment of the effectiveness of hospitality internships requires the TRA to offer a helpful framework for understanding the factors that shape interns' intentions to participate and their subsequent behaviour in the programmes.

Attitudes toward hospitality internships play a significant role in determining interns' intentions to participate. When fostered through experiences, education, and perceptions of career advancement opportunities, a positive attitude is likely to increase interns' motivation to engage in the internship program (Obschonka and Stuetzer, 2017). Suppose interns perceive the internship will enhance their skills, provide valuable industry exposure, and contribute to their long-term career goals. In that case, learners are more likely to actively participate and demonstrate higher levels of commitment throughout the internship. Subjective norms may encompass the influence of peers, supervisors, mentors, and societal expectations (Silverman *et al.*, 2016). If learners perceive that their significant others and influential figures in the industry endorse and support internships, students are more likely to develop a favourable attitude toward participation. Social support and encouragement from peers and mentors can also positively impact interns' intention to engage in internships, enhancing a sense of belonging and motivation.

The TRA can be applied to assess the effectiveness of hospitality internships by examining interns' intentions to participate and their subsequent behaviour throughout the program. When interns are surveyed before and after their internships, researchers get an insight into the factors influencing interns' intentions and whether those intentions align with their actual behaviour during the internship. The assessment can provide valuable feedback to hospitality organisations and educational institutions to enhance the design and delivery of internship programs. Assessing the effectiveness of hospitality internships requires measuring interns' behaviour and outcomes during and after the program (Mohammed and Rashid, 2016). Evaluating interns' engagement, commitment, skill development, and overall satisfaction can provide valuable insights into the impact of internships on their personal and professional growth.

The TRA provides a valuable framework for understanding the factors influencing interns' intentions to participate in hospitality internships and their subsequent behaviour during the program (Nisson and Earl, 2020). By considering attitudes, subjective norms, and social influences, researchers and practitioners can assess the effectiveness of internships and identify areas for improvement (Shahar *et al.*, 2014). The hospitality organizations and educational institutions can further enhance the value and impact of internships on interns' professional development and the overall success of the hospitality industry.

2.3 Empirical Review

Relevant literature acknowledges various internship programs for providing learners with practical and field-based experience, especially when out of class work. Some researchers (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2022; Kim *et al.*, 2023) believe that

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internships offer experiential learning through which the learners practice the knowledge acquired from the classroom. Meng (2022) argues that internships help learners evaluate and consolidate their thoughts concerning what is practical in the job market. Saniter and Siedler (2014) perceived hospitality education as one that suits the internship programs since it gives insight to learners, especially those pursuing their studies in the same field. The literature pieces have argued the need for hospitality educators to align their education programs with every industry need, such as providing relevant hospitality facilities for practical studies. Applied training opportunities should be available for all learners seeking practical skills in the hospitality industry.

2.3.1 Positive Aspects of Internship Programs

A study by Niles *et al.* (2019) analysed the significance of internship programs in fostering more robust connections between graduates and employers. Niles *et al.* believed that internship programs are crucial in strengthening community relations and enhancing student retention rates within their organisations. The programs were also found to positively impact students' participation and interaction in the classroom, leading to a more enriched learning experience. Similar research by Chang and Tse (2015) established that internships serve as a platform for students to evaluate and consolidate their thoughts regarding what is practical in the job market. When working alongside experienced professionals, interns gain exposure to industry standards, workplace dynamics, and the expectations of employers. The firsthand experience allows them to refine their skills, note areas for improvement, and adapt their academic knowledge to meet real-world requirements.

According to Liu *et al.* (2022), internships provide learners with practical and field-based experience beyond classroom instruction. The opportunities allow students to apply the knowledge gained in the classroom to real-world situations, bridging the gap between theory and practice. Through the internships, students gain hands-on experience and develop essential skills that cannot be fully acquired through traditional coursework alone. Liu *et al.* (2022) also noted that experiential learning lies at the core of internships. Through direct involvement in professional settings, students are exposed to the realities of their chosen fields and learn how to manage the challenges one is likely to encounter in their future careers. The experiential learning approach fosters a deeper understanding of the subject matter and provides valuable insights into the industry.

While acknowledging the importance of internships in the hospitality industry, Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins (2010) argue that the nature of the hospitality industry demands practical experience and a deep understanding of the industry's inner workings. By participating in internships, hospitality students gain invaluable insights into the unique challenges and dynamics of the field. The learners get to engage with customers, handle guest services, and observe how the different departments within a hospitality establishment collaborate and operate. Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins also noted that hospitality internships provide learners with a holistic view of the industry and help them appreciate the interconnectedness of various roles and functions. Direct exposure allows students to understand what it takes to succeed in the industry. It also enables them to align their academic pursuits with the practical demands of the field. Taking part in internships allows students to test their interest and aptitude for specific

roles within the hospitality sector and make informed decisions about their future career paths.

Practical learning enables learners to network and establish connections within the industry. By working closely with professionals, interns can build relationships that may prove valuable for future job prospects (Chark and Ip, 2023). Students can learn from experienced mentors, receive guidance on career development, and gain access to a network of industry professionals. The connections can open doors to employment opportunities and provide a competitive advantage in the job market. While arguing from the same perspective, Anjum (2020) maintained that internships are critical in bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world application. The programs provide learners with practical experience, allowing them to put their academic knowledge into practice and gain valuable insights into their chosen fields. For hospitality and tourism students, internships offer a unique opportunity to gain firsthand exposure to the industry and develop a deep understanding of its inner workings. By engaging in internships, students can evaluate and consolidate their thoughts regarding practicality in the job market, refine their skills, and establish valuable connections within their chosen fields. Internships are essential to a comprehensive education that prepares learners for successful careers in their respective industries.

While focusing on career paths, Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins (2010) argued that internships provide career clarity and direction for learners. By actively engaging in the workplace, students better understand their interests, strengths, and areas of improvement. Learners can explore different roles and industries, assess their compatibility with specific career paths, and make more informed

decisions about their future careers. Internships serve as a reality check, allowing learners to test their assumptions, reassess their goals, and make necessary adjustments to personal growth; internships contribute to the overall improvement of academic institutions. By forging strong partnerships with organisations and industries, educational institutions can ensure their curricula remain relevant and up-to-date. The feedback and insights gained through internships help institutions tailor their programs to meet the evolving needs of the job market. The collaboration between academia and industry ensures graduates are well-prepared and equipped with the skills and knowledge employers demand. From a different perspective, Knouse *et al.* (1999) maintained that internships provide learners with practical experience, help bridge the gap between theory and practice, and contribute to personal and professional growth. Students get the opportunity to apply classroom knowledge, develop transferable skills, and gain firsthand exposure to the realities of the working world. For students in hospitality education, internships are particularly valuable, offering insights into industry dynamics and helping align academic pursuits with practical demands. Internships also foster career clarity, promote networking, and contribute to improving educational institutions. The researchers generally believed that internships are vital to a comprehensive education that prepares learners for successful and fulfilling careers.

Pang (2010) investigated the benefits of internship programs in the hospitality industry. Pang analysed various qualitative factors in the hospitality industry, including screening recruits, cost-effective supplement staffing, and new partnerships with the relevant institutions of higher learning. Pang averred that

internships benefit hospitality industry employers through cost-effective recruitment and tapping top skills among interns. Internship programs provide a link between highly skilled learners who are capable of bringing fresh ideas to their respective employers. While supporting the argument, Callanan and Benzing (2004) postulated that internship programs allow employers to train and identify themselves with future managers. Callanan and Benzing also found that interns help hotel owners reduce the cost of recruiting new workers. The researchers also argued that most hotel managers prefer interns for various tasks because they are efficient, energetic, and motivated to learn.

A study by Ramaprasad *et al.* (2022) investigated the usefulness of internship programs in facilitating stronger links between graduates and employers. Ramaprasad *et al.* averred that internship programs help strengthen community relations, improving student retention by their respective employers and their participation and interaction in the classroom. Institutions that the students represent well tend to be communities. So, institutional reputations are built based on public trust. It is possible to strengthen the link between education and industry to enhance long-term cooperation (Ramaprasad *et al.*, 2022). Internship programs help improve the educational progress of various learners (Ramaprasad *et al.*, 2022). In particular, when the learning institutions fail to provide critical facilities in the hospitality industries, like expertise in food and beverage, internship programs provide learners from the institutions with relevant exposure. From practical experience, learners can relate classroom theories to real-life situations.

Qualitative research by Kim *et al.* (2023) established that internship programs contribute to the establishment of robust relationships between graduates and employers. Through internships, students can work closely with professionals in their desired fields. The hands-on experience allows employers to observe the students' skills, work ethic, and potential, creating a direct connection that can lead to future employment prospects (Kim *et al.*, 2023). When students engage through internships, they become familiar faces within the organisation, developing a sense of belonging and rapport with their prospective employers. The connection increases the likelihood of graduates being retained by the employer and contributes to the organisation's overall success. Apart from strengthening community relations, Kim *et al.* also argued that internship programs positively influence students' participation and interaction in the classroom. Kim *et al.* showed that students who have participated in internships exhibit a higher level of engagement in academic settings. The practical experiences gained during internships provide real-world context, allowing them to comprehend better and apply theoretical concepts discussed in the classroom. The findings suggest that interns often bring their workplace experiences back to the academic environment, enriching discussions and offering unique perspectives to their peers. Active participation and increased interaction contribute to a more vibrant and dynamic learning atmosphere, benefiting the interns and fellow students.

By immersing themselves in different work environments, interns acquire practical skills and industry-specific knowledge that cannot be obtained solely through classroom instruction (Min *et al.*, 2016). Experiential learning equips students with a competitive edge in the job market, enabling them to transition into

their chosen professions seamlessly. The Min *et al*. emphasised that internships provide students with opportunities for self-reflection, helping them refine their career goals and aspirations based on their experiences in the field. Gursoy *et al.* (2012) held a similar but different perspective. Internship programs are vital in establishing stronger links between graduates and employers (Gursoy *et al.*, 2012). The programs strengthen community relations, improve student retention rates, and enhance students' participation and interaction in the classroom (Gursoy *et al.*, 2012). By facilitating meaningful connections between academia and industry, internships contribute to students' personal and professional development and benefit the employers and communities involved. Recognising the importance of internship programs, educational institutions, and employers can work together to create mutually beneficial opportunities that empower students and contribute to the growth and prosperity of local communities.

Through internship programs, learners could explore specific job opportunities (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2022). Kusluvan *et al.* discovered that most hospitality and tourism students knew little about the same industry before going through various internship programs. The internship programs brief the learners about the future of the hospitality industry and put into practice what is learned in classrooms. Internship boosts students' confidence in approaching real-life issues (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2022). Learners with basic classroom skills showcase their talents and in-depth application during internship programs. Kusluvan *et al.* concluded that internship programs are training grounds where learners are provided with practical skills. Kusluvan *et al.*'s investigations also justified the critical relationship between career choices and internship programs. Internship programs guide

learners in testing their career choices and other workplace skills (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2022). Most of the learners get absorbed by their employers upon graduation, which prepares them for ready employment. Further, internship programs help learners expand their social network through the bonds created during internships and discussions with peers about their experiences and plans.

2.3.2 Aspects of Internship in Practical Experience and Skill Development

Internships contribute to the personal and professional growth of learners. Beyond acquiring technical skills and industry-specific knowledge, internships provide a platform for developing essential transferable skills: communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability. Employers across various industries seek the skills vital for success in the job market. Students often encounter real-world challenges during internships and must navigate them using critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Ko, 2008). Students learn to analyse complex situations, identify potential solutions, and make informed decisions. Thinking and finding creative solutions to problems is valuable in any career. Internships also foster the development of practical communication skills. Whether it is interacting with colleagues, clients, or supervisors, interns learn how to articulate their ideas, listen actively, and present information professionally (Ko, 2008).

Further, Ko (2008) identified teamwork as another essential skill earned through internships. In professional settings, interns often work as part of a team, collaborating with individuals from diverse backgrounds and skill sets. Students learn to navigate group dynamics, contribute expertise, and work towards shared goals. By experiencing teamwork firsthand, interns develop the ability to collaborate effectively, respect differing opinions, and leverage the strengths of

each team member. Internships expose learners to real-world challenges and uncertainties, helping them develop adaptability and resilience. Students learn to navigate unfamiliar situations, handle ambiguity, and embrace change. Adaptability is crucial in the current evolving job market, where individuals must be prepared to adopt new technologies, industries, and work environments.

Knouse *et al.* (1999) studied internship training from the perspective of practical exposure. According to Knouse *et al.,* most students usually find fields that were initially appealing to be less attractive upon learning more about them. Through the internship programs, students fully understand the job experience and industry. Apart from reaching the doorsteps of potential companies and organisations, hospitality and tourism students can test drive their careers before full-time employment (Knouse *et al.,* 1999). Similar experiences may benefit not only the students but also the employers who benefit from the reduced cost of training recruits. Knouse *et al.* concluded that relevant institutions and stakeholders should design their internship programs correctly to ensure the students experience a low-pressure entry into the hospitality industry.

Seyitoğlu and Yirik (2015) established that internship programs efficiently equip learners with essential management competency skills. Seyitoğlu and Yirik affirmed that employers, particularly in the hospitality industry, should consider supporting internship programs to provide their trainees with competitive skills rather than a requirement to complete an educational program. Every student enrolling in various internship programs should receive adequate support from teachers, stakeholders in the hospitality industry, and students at advanced levels (Seyitoğlu and Yirik, 2015); this implies the need to set up a universal internship

model. Nonetheless, learners have never had an ideal internship program due to the hospitality industry's diversity level. Seyitoğlu and Yirik maintained that standardizing internship programs in the hospitality industry is challenging, resulting in some programs lasting longer than others. All the hospitality industry stakeholders are responsible for ensuring the quality of the internship programs through career preparation and excellent education programs (Seyitoğlu and Yirik, 2015). Learners can only benefit from well-developed internship programs jointly by faculty members and industry representatives. Seyitoğlu and Yirik believed that it is possible to maximize the potential of the learners and quality hospitality management graduates through consultative internship programs.

Dishman (2019) investigated the skills and knowledge gained during internship programs. Dishman noted consistency regarding what the interns embrace in completing their internship programs. Students in the internship programs must develop adaptation and flexibility skills to meet the expected internship goals (Dishman, 2019). The students should know the critical employability skills gained at the end of the internship programs. Through self-assessments available for the students at the beginning and the end of internship programs, students should be able to tell whether there is improvement in critical competencies like time management skills, self-confidence, and the ability to overcome pressure. From a different perspective, Dishman noted that most hospitality and tourism industry programs are designed to increase students' exposure to other cultures. As identified by Dishman, some key benefits of the disclosure include improvement in cultural knowledge, perfection in

communication skills, and outstanding language skills. Students should be able to learn more about the different cultures and how to relate to the community.

Most students value the critical communication skills acquired during internships. Classroom experience makes students more confident in handling group tasks (Zopiatis, 2007). Zopiatis argued that students understand the need to embrace good interpersonal skills at work by observing the communication styles at senior positions. Zopiatis concluded that internship programs enable learners to acquire practical communication skills on top of what is studied in the classroom. Internship programs in the hospitality industry offer learners a platform to evaluate their skills and competencies (Rodriguez and Darroca, 2019). Through assessing technical skills, developing soft skills, self-reflection, and guidance from supervisors and mentors, learners can comprehensively understand their capabilities and areas for improvement. The exposure to the industry and networking opportunities provided by internships enables learners to benchmark their skills against industry standards and explore potential career paths (Rodriguez and Darroca, 2019).

Internships provide students with a firsthand experience of the realities of their chosen professions, exposing them to the challenges and rewards of their desired career paths (Rodriguez and Darroca, 2019). Through their internship experiences, students can evaluate whether their expectations align with the practical demands of the industry. The self-assessment helps interns make informed decisions about their future careers, enabling them to adapt their goals and aspirations accordingly. Internships allow students to network with professionals in their fields and establish valuable connections that may benefit

their future endeavours (Rodriguez and Darroca, 2019). Internships serve as a platform for students to apply and refine the theoretical knowledge acquired in their academic studies (Pang, 2010; Rodriguez and Darroca, 2019). By putting their classroom learning into practice, interns gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter and develop practical skills. Integrating theory and practice enhances their educational experience and equips them with the necessary tools to excel in their future professional roles.

Hanifah *et al.* (2023) analysed real-world communication skills. According to the researchers, internships provide learners with realistic environments to apply and refine their communication skills. Engaging in professional settings allows learners to interact with colleagues, supervisors, and clients, providing opportunities to practice effective verbal and written communication. Through real-world scenarios, learners gain experience expressing ideas clearly, actively listening, and adapting communication styles to different audiences. Hanifah *et al.* also argued that internships often expose learners to diverse communication contexts within and with external stakeholders. Learners may be required to communicate with individuals from various cultural backgrounds, age groups, or professional hierarchies. The exposure enhances learners' cross-cultural communication skills, ability to navigate differences, and the importance of adapting communication approaches to different contexts. Hanifah *et al.* also investigated communication skills in the context of feedback and Guidance from Professionals. According to Hanifah *et al.,* learners receive feedback and guidance from experienced professionals, which helps them identify areas for improvement in their communication skills. Supervisors and mentors offer valuable insights into

effective communication strategies, provide constructive criticism, and guide on enhancing communication effectiveness.

In their research, Zhong *et al.* (2022) alluded that interns can learn from feedback and apply it to future interactions, thus continuously improving their communication skills. Many internships involve direct interaction with clients or customers (Zhong *et al.*, 2022). The aspect allows learners to practice and enhance their customer service and interpersonal communication skills. Interns learn to effectively address customer inquiries, handle complaints, and maintain professionalism in client interactions. The experiences develop their ability to communicate with empathy, active listening, and problem-solving skills. Zhong *et al.* concluded that internship opportunities significantly improve learners' communication skills. Through real-world application, exposure to diverse communication contexts, professional feedback, collaboration in teamwork, and client interactions, learners develop and refine their verbal, written, and interpersonal communication abilities. The enhanced skills benefit learners during their internships and impact their future careers (Zhong *et al.*, 2022). Internships serve as valuable platforms for learners to strengthen their communication skills, a vital competency employers seek.

Pang (2010) investigated how internship programs in the hospitality industry influence the spirit of teamwork among students. According to Pang, students are likely to embrace their spirit of consultation, discussion, and negotiation when exposed to interacting with colleagues in the real world. Pang argued that interns seek employment opportunities as much as there is learning. As a result, their connection and networking with the other employees at the company are

fundamental. However, Pang maintained that organisations could improve their social attractiveness by enabling interns to work alongside their peers. A similar study by Callanan and Benzing (2004) revealed that teamwork remains an essential skill earned through internships. In professional settings, interns often work as part of a team, collaborating with individuals from diverse backgrounds and skill sets. Students learn to navigate group dynamics, contribute expertise, and work towards shared goals. By experiencing teamwork firsthand, interns develop the ability to collaborate effectively, respect differing opinions, and leverage the strengths of each team member. Internships expose learners to real-world challenges and uncertainties, helping them develop adaptability and resilience. Learners also navigate unfamiliar situations, handle ambiguity, and embrace change.

Lam and May-Fung (2021) investigated the role of interaction, networking, and peer collaboration in enhancing the students' engagement and their ability to consult, discuss, and negotiate within a team. Internship programs are vital in bridging the gap between academic knowledge and practical experience in various industries, including the hospitality sector. The programs provide students invaluable opportunities to apply their theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, fostering personal and professional development. Callanan and Benzing (2004) held a similar view regarding collaboration and teamwork. According to Callanan and Benzing, internships often involve working collaboratively as part of a team, fostering the development of interpersonal and teamwork skills. Effective communication becomes essential in the environments, as learners must convey ideas, coordinate efforts, and resolve conflicts within the team. The experiences

also enable interns to learn the importance of clear and open communication, active listening, and respectful dialogue, all contributing to their communication skills.

Harris and Zhao (2004) shed light on the positive influence of internship programs on the development of team spirit among students in the hospitality industry. Harris and Zhao stated that when students are exposed to interacting with colleagues in the real world, they are more likely to embrace a spirit of consultation, discussion, and negotiation. By engaging with professionals and peers in an authentic work environment, interns gain valuable insights into teamwork dynamics, communication strategies, and problem-solving techniques. Harris and Zhao alluded that internships serve as dual-purpose experiences, with students actively seeking relevant learning opportunities and potential employment prospects. The perspective emphasises the significance of interns' connections and networking with other employees within the organisation. Building relationships with colleagues and supervisors enhances interns' understanding of teamwork dynamics. Students can develop a sense of belonging, thus increasing team spirit and engagement.

Students seek internships mainly to acquire more skills in their respective areas. Gosling (2023) stipulated that since students do not have much experience desired by their employers, internship opportunities provide the exposure to practice and accomplish what other employees can do in the same area. Trainees with extensive skills, particularly in the hospitality and tourism industry, are promoted to cover each other's weaknesses efficiently. Internships enhance teamwork, which provides problem-solving and motivation for students. While

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supporting the argument, Waxman (2018) maintained that trainees might feel inadequate when a group of experienced employees compares them based on a specific skill. Compared to peers, interns learn to appreciate their career paths and what it entails to remain within the pact of careers. Interns remain motivated and ready to stay in the same pack.

Most students seek internships to acquire more skills in their respective areas. Students often lack the experience employers desire, making internship opportunities crucial for gaining practical exposure and accomplishing tasks that other employees are capable of in the same field (Simanjuntak and Indrianty, 2019). Simanjuntak and Indrianty's study suggested that interns with diverse skills, particularly in the hospitality and tourism industry, can efficiently compensate for their colleagues' weaknesses. The collaborative approach enhances teamwork, fosters problem-solving abilities, and serves as a source of motivation for the students. Also, internships play a significant role in facilitating the development of teamwork skills among students (Forbes, 2009). When placed in a professional setting alongside experienced employees, interns can work collaboratively and contribute to resolving real-world challenges. By actively engaging in teamwork, interns gain valuable insights into effective communication, coordination, and cooperation, essential qualities in any professional environment. Exposure to teamwork improves interns' problem-solving abilities and instils camaraderie and mutual support among team members. Despite the positive aspects of internships, interns may sometimes experience feelings of inadequacy when compared to a group of experienced employees (Forbes, 2009). The comparison can create a sense of insecurity and self-doubt among interns, as students may lack the

necessary skills and knowledge to match the expertise of their more seasoned counterparts. However, a contrasting scenario arises when interns are compared to their peers. Learners are more likely to appreciate their career paths and gain a deeper understanding of the commitment required to excel in their chosen fields. The appreciation informs interns' motivation to remain focused and determined to achieve their career goals.

2.3.3 Aspects of Internship in Self-Evaluation

Yung and Khoo-Lattimore (2019) classified the hospitality industry as one of the environments with rapid spaces. According Yung and Khoo-Lattimore, hotel management entails working with people from different backgrounds, taking on various tasks, and ensuring the teams perform their duties. Internship programs enable students to work while studying. It allows the students to experience the real taste of working on the ground. Although Yung and Khoo-Lattimore acknowledge that interns face various challenges, such as working under pressure, students learn to work with people from diverse backgrounds. Students also learn to deal with cultural sensitivities by interacting with people from different backgrounds (Yung and Khoo-Lattimore, 2019). While encouraging learners to consider bringing new ideas to the hospitality and tourism industry, the researcher noted that interns have rich skills to get a balanced approach to attitudes at the end of the internship period.

Similarly, Tolkach and King (2015) deemed internship programmes valuable platforms for learners to evaluate and enhance their skills in various industries, including hospitality. According to Tolkach and King, the programmes provide learners with practical, hands-on experience in real-world work

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environments. Tolkach and King explored how internship programs facilitate learners' skill evaluation within the hospitality industry. Tolkach and King focused on technical and soft skills, noting that internship programs offer learners opportunities to apply their technical knowledge and skills acquired during their academic studies to real-life scenarios. Learners can assess their proficiency in executing industry-specific tasks by actively participating in operational tasks within hospitality establishments, like front desk operations, food and beverage service, or event management. The direct feedback received from supervisors and mentors during internships helps learners evaluate their technical competencies and identify areas for improvement. Students also learn to assess their abilities to effectively engage with diverse individuals, handle challenging situations, and deliver exceptional services.

While focusing on self-reflection, Sisson and Adams (2013) argued that internship programs create opportunities for learners to engage in self-reflection and evaluate their compatibility with specific roles and career paths within the hospitality industry. By experiencing the day-to-day operations of different departments, such as the front office, food and beverage, or event management, learners can assess their interests, aptitude, and passion for various roles (Sisson and Adams, 2013). Self-reflection allows learners to make informed decisions about their future career paths, ensuring a better alignment between their skills, interests, and industry demands. Brown *et al.* (2015) argued from the perspective of supervision and mentorship. The guidance and support provided by supervisors and mentors during internships play a crucial role in helping learners evaluate their skills (Brown *et al.*, 2015). Supervisors offer constructive feedback, assess

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performance, and provide guidance for improvement (Brown *et al.*, 2015). Through regular interactions and mentorship, learners receive valuable insights into their strengths and areas for growth. The ongoing evaluation process allows learners to track their progress, set development goals, and make necessary adjustments to enhance their skill set.

Lee *et al.* (2016) analysed the benefits of an internship in the context of industry exposure and networking. According to Lee *et al.*, internship programs expose learners to the hospitality industry. The exposure allows learners to evaluate their skills in the context of industry standards and best practices (Lee *et al.*, 2016). Internships also offer opportunities to build a professional network, interact with industry professionals, and gain insights into potential career opportunities. The connections and industry exposure enable learners to benchmark their skills against industry benchmarks, identify skill gaps, and seek guidance on further skill development.

2.3.4 Negative Aspects of Internship Programs

Farmaki (2018) voiced the challenges of internships. Farmaki believed that students could be prompted to develop negative attitudes toward the hospitality industry upon completing their internship programs. The negative attitude is attributed to the inadequacy of challenging work and complex management engagement. Farmaki also attributed the same to discrimination, poor remuneration, and compensation. Interns find developing soft skills such as teamwork and personal communication challenging (Farmaki, 2018). Belhassen *et al.* (2020) held a similar perspective, stating that a wide gap between students' expectations and experience in the hospitality and tourism industry results in low

self-esteem about the career. According to Belhassen *et al.*, the main difference between experience and expectation is whether the students are satisfied with the job. It implies that learners sometimes have unrealistic career expectations just before the internship experience exposes them. Students may expect to fill management positions from universities and colleges, a belief that is always disputed when learners serve in junior positions during internships.

Therefore, students may develop a negative attitude towards the industry and careers they are pursuing. Belhassen *et al.* (2020) also identified the lack of structured learning to criticise internships in the hospitality and tourism sector as the lack of structured learning experiences. As argued by Belhassen *et al.,* internships primarily involve menial tasks or low-level responsibilities, failing to provide comprehensive training and meaningful engagement with industry professionals. A lack of structure can limit the educational value of internships, leaving students with limited exposure to the depth and breadth of the industry.

Zopiatis *et al.* (2014) based their arguments on limited exposure to diverse areas to emphasize the ineffectiveness of internships. Hospitality and tourism encompass various sectors, including lodging, food and beverage, events, and travel (Zopiatis *et al.*, 2014). Also, internships often offer limited exposure to only one area, restricting students' understanding of the industry (Zopiatis *et al.*, 2014). Narrow exposure can hinder students' ability to explore diverse career options and develop a comprehensive understanding of the field, potentially leading to limited career prospects. In the same context, Goh and Lee (2018) raised concerned about the insufficient duration to criticize internship programs. The period of internships is another factor that affects their effectiveness (Goh and Lee, 2018).

Short internships, typically lasting a few weeks or months, may not give students enough time to fully immerse themselves in the industry or develop a deep understanding of its complexities (Goh and Lee, 2018). Conversely, longer internship durations generally allow students to acquire essential skills and knowledge, as there may be more time to engage in meaningful projects and gain hands-on experience.

Yiu and Law (2012) identified limited Mentorship and Supervision as one factor that informs the ineffectiveness of internship programs for hospitality and tourism students. According to Yiu and Law, effective mentorship and supervision are crucial for students' professional growth during internships. Still, the hospitality and tourism sector has reported inadequate mentorship and supervision. Insufficient guidance from industry professionals can hinder students' learning experiences and limit their ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings. Han *et al.* (2016) supported the argument, stating that a lack of mentorship and supervision can prevent students from fully capitalising on their internship opportunities, adding that the hospitality and tourism industry requires a wide range of skills, including communication, customer service, problem-solving, and cultural competency. Without such skills, internships may fail to address the skill requirements promptly. Students may lack specific competencies necessary for success in the industry, contributing to a skills gap between educational programs and industry expectations (Han *et al.*, 2016). The failure to develop essential skills can lower students' employability and limit their career progression.

Robinson *et al.* (2016) analysed limited Integration with Academic Curriculum as a critical reason to justify the ineffectiveness of internships in the

hospitality and tourism industry. Based on Robinson *et al.*'s perspectives, combining internships with the academic curriculum ensures a cohesive learning experience. Some challenges might arise in aligning internship experiences with educational objectives and coursework (Robinson *et al.*, 2016). Internships may be viewed as separate entities, disconnected from classroom theoretical knowledge. Improper integration can hinder the transfer of learning from internships to academic settings and impede the application of theoretical concepts in real-world situations. On the other hand, Robinson *et al.* (2019) considered unpaid and low-paid Internships to justify the ineffectiveness of internship programs. Financial constraints associated with unpaid or low-paid internships are significant concerns in the hospitality and tourism industry (Robinson *et al.*, 2019). The arrangements can exclude students from disadvantaged backgrounds who cannot afford to undertake unpaid internships. The inequitable practice can limit access to valuable learning opportunities and perpetuate social disparities within the industry. The unpaid internships can also create financial burdens for students, forcing them to seek alternative income-generating activities that may detract from their internship experience.

While arguing the negatives of internship programs, Tung and Law (2017) investigated the perceived outcomes at the beginning of the internship programmes. According to Tung and Law, most universities and colleges develop internship programs with limited learning outcomes that the industry stakeholders should agree upon. In particular, Tung and Law argued that some internship programs are designed to ensure the learners gain a specific experience on working hours rather than a specific outcome about competency. Learners may be

forced to specify their goals differently from what the designers of the internship programmes expected. Further, the hospitality and tourism industry is characterised by inconsistent satisfaction among interns (Koc *et al.*, 2014). Internship learners always get dissatisfied when required to improve their technical skills (Koc *et al.*, 2014). Koc *et al.* maintained that most internship students get discouraged in hospitality, with problem-solving ability being a significant concern.

Further findings by Koc *et al.* affirmed that learners in internship programs are always satisfied with what is done, but appraisal remains an issue that should be addressed. A similar study was conducted by Kim and Jeong (2018) to investigate the reasons for dissatisfaction among hospitality and tourism interns. Their findings highlighted poor administration and coordination between the learning institutions and hotels as leading causes of student dissatisfaction (Kim and Jeong, 2018). Improper objectives for the internship programs designed to expose students to real-world experiences were identified as a significant contributing factor (Kim and Jeong, 2018). Additionally, Kim and Jeong noted that interns often struggled to apply the theoretical skills acquired in the classroom to solve contemporary issues in the workplace.

Ahmad (2015) identified poor administration and coordination between learning institutions and hotels as critical factors that make internship programs effective. Ahmad found that the lack of effective communication and collaboration between the two entities led to confusion and a disconnect in the internship experience. Ahmad recommended clear and transparent guidelines, expectations, and roles by the learning institutions and hotels to ensure a smooth and beneficial internship experience for the students. Well-collaborated coordination would help

streamline processes, establish effective communication channels, and enhance overall satisfaction among interns. Another critical aspect highlighted by Ahmad was the absence of clear objectives for the internship programs. When the purpose and goals of internships are not clearly defined, students may find it challenging to understand the expectations and relevance of their tasks (Ahmad, 2015). When there is no clear understanding of their role and the intended outcomes, students may struggle to see the value and application of the skills acquired during their internships. Addressing the same problem requires the internship programs to have well-defined objectives that align with the overall educational goals and provide a meaningful learning experience for the students.

Ho and Law (2022) identified the difficulty of applying theoretical skills acquired in the classroom to real-world situations as the significant challenge of internship programs. While students may possess a solid foundation of theoretical knowledge, they may face difficulties transferring that knowledge to practical problem-solving scenarios encountered in the workplace. The disparity can lead to frustration and a feeling of unpreparedness among interns. Learning institutions should focus on integrating functional components into their curriculum to bridge the gap and provide opportunities for students to apply their theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts through simulated exercises or case studies (Ho and Law, 2022). Ho and Law concluded that mentorship and guidance from experienced professionals during internships could help students connect theory with practice, facilitating a smoother transition and enhancing the effectiveness of their skills.

Seyitoğlu and Yirik (2015) shed light on the reasons for dissatisfaction among hospitality and tourism interns. Poor administration and coordination,

unclear objectives, and difficulties applying theoretical knowledge were significant contributing factors. Seyitoğlu and Yirik suggested that addressing the challenges requires improved communication and collaboration between learning institutions and industry partners, clearly defined objectives for internship programs, integration of practical components into the curriculum, and mentorship opportunities. When such issues are addressed, internship programs in the hospitality and tourism industry can provide students with a more fulfilling and valuable learning experience, ultimately preparing them for successful careers in their chosen fields. While justifying the same argument, Seyitoğlu and Yirik maintained that poor supervision is a significant factor that prompts dissatisfaction among learners, leading to invaluable benefits. Internship students feel satisfied with their duties when they enter supportive relationships with management. Seyitoğlu and Yirik's findings revealed that students consistently score lower on perception than expectation scores. Seyitoğlu and Yirik attributed insufficient coordination between schools and employers. A low score on perception was also attributed to limited opportunities for the students to showcase skills learned in classrooms. Also, Wan *et al.* (2014) identified poor administration and coordination between the relevant learning institutions and hotels as one of the main reasons for student dissatisfaction. Wan *et al.* exposed the difficulty of students putting into practice the theoretical skills acquired in class to solve most contemporary workplace issues.

Kucukusta *et al.* (2013) highlighted the importance of mentorship and guidance for addressing the dissatisfaction among hospitality and tourism interns. Kucukusta *et al.* found that interns with access to supportive mentors and

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experienced professionals during their internships reported higher satisfaction levels and a better understanding of applying their skills in practical settings. Mentorship provides interns valuable guidance, feedback, and support throughout their internship journey. Specialists from the relevant sectors should be consulted to offer insights into industry best practices, advise navigating challenges, and help interns bridge the gap between theory and practice. When various mentorship programs are created within internship initiatives, learning institutions and industry partners can enhance the overall internship experience for students. Bharwani and Jauhari (2013) emphasised integrating reflection and debriefing sessions into the internship programs. It can be argued that sessions allow interns to reflect on their experiences, focus on their growth areas, and make connections between their classroom learning and real-world application. Reflecting promotes metacognition, helping interns develop a deeper understanding of their skills and progression throughout the internship (Bharwani and Jauhari, 2013). Bharwani and Jauhari also noted that reflection allows interns to share their insights, challenges, and suggestions for improvement with their supervisors and program coordinators.

Chen and Shen (2012) underscored the significance of aligning internship programs with the evolving demands of the hospitality and tourism industry. The researchers noted that internships should expose students to industry trends, emerging technologies, and evolving customer expectations. When well-updated internship programs are established alongside industry advancements, learning institutions can equip students with the relevant skills and knowledge needed to excel in the rapidly changing hospitality and tourism industry (Chen and Shen, 2012). Concerning addressing the challenges identified, Chen and Shen argued

that learning institutions and industry partners must collaborate closely in designing and implementing internship programs. Regular communication channels should foster a continuous feedback loop, allowing both parties to exchange insights, address concerns, and make necessary improvements to the internship experience. Learning institutions should actively seek input from industry professionals to ensure that internship programs are aligned with industry needs and expectations. Kim and Park (2013) conducted a study in the same context to cover the key factors contributing to dissatisfaction among hospitality and tourism interns, including poor administration and difficulties applying theoretical knowledge. When establishing mentorship programs that meet industry demands, learning institutions and industry partners should focus on improving the internship experience and addressing the challenges (Kim and Park, 2013). Kim and Park emphasised that similar efforts may lead to greater satisfaction, improved skill evaluation, and better learners' preparedness for successful careers in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Rosyidi (2021) noted that addressing dissatisfaction and challenges hospitality and tourism interns face requires collaborative efforts from learning institutions and industry partners. Improved administration and coordination can be achieved through regular communication and feedback exchanges between both parties. For internship programs, specific and objective goals should be established to ensure that students understand the purpose and expected outcomes (Rosyidi, 2021). Rosyidi also noted that learning institutions should strive to enhance the practical application of theoretical skills by incorporating experiential learning components into their curricula and fostering mentorship

opportunities. Continuous evaluation and improvement of internship programs are essential. Rosyidi suggested regular feedback mechanisms to gather insights from interns about their experiences, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. The feedback can help identify areas of concern and inform necessary adjustments to enhance the internship programs and maximize student learning outcomes.

In support of favourable conditions, Seyitoğlu and Yirik (2015) argued that internships should give opportunities for students to develop problem-solving skills by exposing them to real-world challenges. The complexities that students encounter during their internship placements require them to think critically, analyse situations, and propose innovative solutions. The practical experience enhances their problem-solving abilities and prepares them for the dynamic and fast-paced nature of the modern workplace. The effectiveness of internships in developing problem-solving skills requires integrating the concept of experiential learning (Seyitoğlu and Yirik, 2015). Experiential learning involves actively engaging students in hands-on experiences and encouraging reflection on those experiences to extract meaningful insights. When interns participate actively in problem-solving tasks, it becomes easier to apply theoretical knowledge in practical situations, gain a deeper understanding of their challenges, and identify the most effective problem-solving approaches.

Kusluvan *et al.* (2010) recommended that internships be supplemented with structured training programs on problem-solving skills. The suitable programs can cover various problem-solving aspects, including identifying problems, analysing them, evaluating options, decision-making, and implementation. Enriching the

interns with a systematic problem-solving framework enables them to approach challenges in a structured and efficient manner. The training programs can also incorporate case studies, simulations, and interactive exercises to provide students with a simulated environment to practice and refine their problem-solving skills (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2010). Regular debriefing sessions throughout the internship can contribute to developing problem-solving abilities. Kusluvan *et al.* further argued that debriefing sessions allow students to reflect on the problems encountered, the strategies employed, and the outcomes achieved. By engaging in thoughtful reflection, students can identify their strengths and weaknesses in problem-solving, analyse their decision-making processes, and learn from their successes and failures.

2.4 Summary of Findings

The literature review highlights the significance of internships in preparing students for careers in the ever-evolving hospitality and tourism field. Although internships remain important, concerns have been raised regarding the effectiveness of educational programs in the hospitality and tourism industry. The review explored the challenges and shortcomings of internships, examining their potential significance and ineffectiveness. The review has revealed significant changes in hospitality and tourism education and the industry. The changes reviewed prompt the inclusion of practical experience to ensure learners are equipped with the necessary skills to remain relevant and competitive in the job market. It contradicts the previous programmes that emphasised hands-on learning and theory-based resources at the degree level.

The review provides insight into the importance of internships bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Internships provide students with valuable opportunities to apply their classroom learning in real-world settings, gaining firsthand experience and developing essential skills specific to the industry. Through the internship programs, learners familiarize themselves with the fast-paced and dynamic nature of the hospitality and tourism industry. Learners can adapt and thrive in diverse work environments. The review also acknowledges the challenges associated with internships. A notable challenge is the need for effective program design and structure to ensure internships align with educational objectives. The finding points to the need to balance theoretical education and practical experience. Internship programs that provide students with meaningful learning opportunities while meeting industry demands should be provided.

The potential exploitation of interns is another critical challenge identified in the review. The current research emphasises establishing clear guidelines and regulations to protect interns' rights, noting that the primary focus should be reasonable compensation, supervision, and valuable learning experiences during internships. The review emphasises the importance of effective communication and collaboration between educational institutions and industry partners to enhance the quality and relevance of internships. The review recommends well-designed internship programs that align with educational objectives. When the related challenges and shortcomings of the internships are mitigated, academic institutions can help achieve the effectiveness of internships in preparing students for successful careers in the hospitality and tourism industry.

The current research believes that institutions well-represented by their students tend to foster favourable communities. When students participate in internships followed by employment within their local communities, contributing to the growth and development of the communities becomes a priority. Internship programs create a symbiotic relationship between educational institutions and employers, resulting in a mutually beneficial partnership. Employers benefit from extensive talents, while learners benefit from gaining practical experience. Internship programs bridge academia and industry and contribute to learners' personal and professional growth in the hospitality industry.

CHAPTER III:

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Research Problem

The underlying problem is the possible ineffectiveness of the NIM internship program in equipping interns with the practical skills for success in the hospitality industry. The program's failure to sufficiently prepare graduates to tackle practical hospitality responsibilities may hinder the NIM's (and, by extension, Singapore's) ability to maintain a competitive edge in the hospitality market. This problem provides insights into how best to design and deliver internships that meet the needs of stakeholders, especially student interns, and employers. By identifying the inhibitors of effective and competent internship programs, this research will inform the development of best practices in the industry. This study will inform the development of policies and programs to support students' transition from education to employment.

3.2 Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

The study translated key theoretical concepts into measurable variables based on the effectiveness of internships as a marketing strategy at NIM. The transition involved the identification of the following theoretical constructs defined in the conceptual framework: 1) internship design, 2) student experiences, 3) industry engagement, and 4) career outcomes. All the measures adopted in the survey questions were grounded on the conceptual framework based on these four theoretical constructs.

Factors like duration, type of work, and tasks involved in the internships were instrumental to the operationalization of internship design. For example,

employers were asked, "Does your organization offer interns the experience that impacts associates and improves their performance?" This question depicts tasks involved in the internships, investigating whether the organization provides specific tasks and experiences that could improve the learning experiences of interns. Perceptions of relevance, meaningfulness, and skill development opportunities operationalized student experiences. Industry engagement was operationalized based on factors like the quality of mentorship experiences and professional networks developed. Finally, internship outcomes, graduate experiences, and career advancement (among other factors) operationalized career outcomes. For example, multiple questions covered internship outcomes by highlighting various aspects of the internship experience, from expectations to satisfaction. More specifically, one of the questions investigated whether interns were satisfied with their internship experience. The measure here is the level of satisfaction.

Further, the measurement instruments were open-ended survey questions for qualitative data related to student experiences and industry engagement. In contrast, closed-ended survey questions helped collect quantitative data on these constructs. Further, the operationalizations were chosen to align with the study's research questions.

3.3 Research Purpose and Questions

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of hospitality internships at the NIM in Singapore, exploring the perspectives of students and industry partners. The study examines how internships impact the NIM's visibility, attract prospective students, and enhance its brand reputation by analysing the experiences and

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outcomes of stakeholders involved in the program. The research questions guiding the study are:

RQ1: To what extent does the alignment of student and employer perceptions regarding the effectiveness of internships predict a well-functioning internship at the NIM in Singapore?

RQ2: To what extent do student perceptions of the relevance, meaningfulness, and skill development opportunities offered by internships at NIM in Singapore predict graduate experiences?

RQ3: To what extent does the quality of mentorship experiences, as perceived by student interns at NIM in Singapore, predict internship outcomes?

RQ4: To what extent do student perceptions of the effectiveness of internships at NIM in Singapore predict career outcomes?

RQ5: To what extent do student perceptions of the value and impact of internships at NIM in Singapore predict their employability in the hospitality industry?

RQ6: To what extent do the professional networks developed through internships at NIM in Singapore predict career advancement in the hospitality industry?

3.4 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

$H0_1$: The alignment of student and employer perceptions regarding the effectiveness of internships does not significantly predict a well-functioning internship at the NIM in Singapore.

H0₂: Student perceptions of the relevance, meaningfulness, and skill development opportunities offered by internships at NIM in Singapore do not significantly predict graduate experiences.

H0₃: The quality of mentorship experiences perceived by student interns at NIM in Singapore does not significantly predict internship outcomes.

H0₄: Student perceptions of the effectiveness of internships at NIM in Singapore do not significantly predict career outcomes.

H0₅: Student perceptions of the value and impact of internships at NIM in Singapore do not significantly predict their employability in the hospitality industry.

H0₆: The professional networks developed through internships at NIM in Singapore do not significantly predict career advancement in the hospitality industry.

3.5 Research Design

The study adopted a mixed method design, which entails a qualitative and quantitative research approach. The quantitative approach focused on the survey design. A quantitative survey approach allows the collection of numerical data that can be objectively measured and analysed (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The methodology is ideal for gathering quantifiable information for hypothesis testing and inferential statistics (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The survey focused on students and employers within the hospitality industry. The study utilized closed-ended questions with Likert scale responses to obtain quantitative data that could be analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics. As such, the quantitative

measures enabled the researcher to determine the study's trends, patterns, and overall satisfaction levels.

Alongside the surveys, open-ended questions were used to collect the qualitative data; this was the basis for the qualitative design. Both closed and open-ended questions were administered simultaneously using the same questionnaire for students and another for employers. The main reason for including the open-ended questionnaires is to obtain detailed responses from the participants, encouraging them to experience, understand, and make suggestions (Ruslin *et al.*, 2022). Qualitative data generated from the open-ended questions are analysed thematically to ensure the recurring themes, narratives, and implications are determined and interpreted accordingly. The qualitative aspect of the research design allowed the researcher to extensively explore the experiences and perceptions of the critical stakeholders in the hospitality industry, providing valuable insight for NIM and the overall hospitality education sector.

Using the mixed method design in the current study enhanced a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic – the critical numerical data is completed with rich qualitative insights to improve an elaborate understanding (Şahin and Ozturk, 2022). Besides, the design enables a comparison of the key findings from different data sources, promoting uncompromised validity and reliability (Manzoor, 2020). Through the participant's collection process that targeted interns in an internship program at NIM, the research design provides a specific context for hospitality internships.

3.6 Population and Sample

The study targeted current and former students and employers in the hospitality and tourism industry. Past and current students who have been on internships as part of their course program at NIM in Singapore were preferred in the study. In particular, the targeted population involved students enrolled in various hospitality-related disciplines such as hotel management, tourism, and culinary arts. Including past and present students in the study ensured a comprehensive representation of perspectives and opinions from individuals well-acquainted with the internship program.

Involving the two groups of students enabled the researcher to capture the long-term implications of internship programmes on students' ability to develop skills and industry knowledge and be employed in the highly competitive hospitality industry. Former students could reflect on their internship experiences, giving valuable insights into the impacts of internship programmes. Current students provided real-time perspectives on the current internship environment and interactions. Further, including students from diverse hospitality disciplines and employers from multiple sectors within the hospitality industry ensured the study findings reflect the diversity in the hospitality and tourism industry. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), diversity enhances a broader view of the effectiveness of hospitality internships and the potential impact on the ability of the students to develop skills and get employed, leading to the general understanding of the value-adding nature of internships at NIM.

Another section of the study population was the employers in the hospitality industry in Singapore, some of whom had created internship opportunities for NIM

students. The employers were considered essential stakeholders in hospitality and tourism education as they were in direct contact with the interns. As such, they provided vital insights into the impacts of internship programmes on students from an industry point of view. Various perspectives regarding students' performance, critical skills acquired, and the overall value of the internship program were considered essential in the study to understand the impact of internships on learners' preparedness for real-world employment opportunities. Targeting NIM students and employers in the hospitality industry enabled an in-depth examination of internship experiences, perceptions, and outcomes, incorporating the diverse perspectives of industry professionals who directly interact with NIM interns.

The study employed a purposive sampling method to select participants from the potential population, former and current NIM students who have completed or are currently undertaking internship programmes in Singapore. The sampling also included hospitality industry employers who have offered NIM students internship opportunities. The principle of saturation guided the study's choice of sample size (number of participants). The principle of saturation focuses on gathering sufficient and well-represented data sets (Guest *et al.*, 2020). The saturation point is attained when more participants in a study no longer add new insights. The sample size was determined iteratively as the data collection process continued to ensure a sufficient number of participants was included, capturing a wide range of experiences and perspectives.

3.7 Participant Selection

With the authority of the NIM's leadership, the researcher obtained the list of former and current students who have gone through internships from the

institution's database. The list served as the pool from which the potential participants (former and current students) were selected for the study. In the same context, the researcher obtained potential employers' details from the institute's network contacts. NIM for internship placements will be identified through the institute's industry network and contacts. The actual study participants were selected based on the following criteria:

1. A student is either a former or current student of the NIM.
2. A student must have enrolled in hospitality-related courses.
3. A student must have undergone an internship programme in the hospitality industry.
4. An employer must engage with NIM's hospitality and tourism interns by hosting, supervising, and evaluating their performances.

However, students who had undergone practicum, such as early childhood and engineering studies, were considered to attain different perspectives and controversial findings. Once the potential participants were identified, they were invited to participate in the study through appropriate channels, such as email or in-person communication. The invitation included information about the study, its purpose, and the voluntary nature of participation. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their understanding of the research and their agreement to participate.

3.8 Instrumentation

The study utilised two surveys to obtain data from students and employers. The two survey sets consisted of closed-ended and open-ended questions, developed strategically to assess how hospitality internship programs impact

students' skills development and employability in the labour market. The questionnaires also included Likert scale items, measuring the satisfaction levels and perceptions of the participants.

3.8.1 Validity of Instruments

The researcher developed the survey instruments to suit the standards based on the existing validated scales and measures reviewed in the relevant literature to ascertain the validity of the instruments used in data collection. The researcher ensured that the survey items reflected the essential dimensions of the research topic, aligning it with the study's purpose. The researcher consulted the hospitality management and internship programme's experts to evaluate the content validity of the instruments. As a result, the experts reviewed the survey items to ensure they were relevant and appropriate. Expert feedback and suggestions should be considered and informed in the final survey instruments, ensuring that the surveys adequately measure the constructs of interest (Sürücü and Maslakçi, 2020). In the same context, the researcher also conducted a face validity by initiating feedback from experts with diverse knowledge and experience in tourism, hospitality, and internship programmes. The feedback helped determine whether every survey question measured the variables they were meant to measure. It also determined if the participants could read and understand them correctly.

3.8.2 Reliability of Instruments

The reliability of the instruments implies their ability to provide consistent and stable measurements. The researcher used the test-retest method, as referenced in Rodrigues *et al.* (2019), to establish the reliability of the data

collection instruments. In two instances, a subsample of participants was asked to complete the survey instruments at different time intervals. The researcher used Cronbach's alpha technique to assess the internal consistency reliability for the Likert scale items. Olaniy (2019) specified that the technique helps determine the extent to which the items in every scale and construct of the survey instruments measure the same construct correctly.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

3.9.1 Participant Invitation

All the participants were invited to participate in the study through email as the primary communication channel. The invitation included a clear explanation of the study's purpose, the nature of participation, commitment to confidentiality, and the anonymity of survey responses. The invitation also provided information on when the participants would complete the surveys.

3.9.2 Consent Process

Every participant was expected to provide informed consent before participating in the study. The consent process ensured that all participants clearly understood the purpose of the research, their rights in the study, and the confidentiality of every response provided. The consent was obtained mainly through electronic mail and online forms. Due to limited time, the researcher could not administer physical consent forms. Every participant was allowed to decline to participate and even withdraw if they felt unwell to continue participating. The participant's decision to withdraw from the study did not attract any consequences.

3.9.3 Survey Administration

The surveys were distributed to all the selected participants based on the consent process. The surveys were distributed to the students electronically, mainly via email, to ensure convenience and faster delivery to all the participants. Similarly, the selected employers received the surveys through emails as it was the most feasible and preferred means. Moreover, the participants were given clear instructions on responding to the surveys, including deadlines and contact information for any questions or concerns.

3.9.4 Reminders to Participants

To ensure an optimal response rate, the researcher provided periodic reminders to every participant waiting to complete the surveys. The reminders were prompts that encouraged the participants to participate, increasing the overall response rate. The intervals within which the participants were reminded were a subject of the study timeline and participant preferences.

3.9.5 Data Quality Assurance

Throughout the data collection, the researcher ensured high-quality and complete data. Accordingly, the response rates were regularly monitored, and the technical challenges arising from the participants were promptly addressed in time and verifying whether the survey responses were complete. The researcher ensured regular data cleaning and validation procedures to identify and rectify the errors and inconsistencies in the final data set.

3.10 Data Analysis

3.10.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

All the quantitative data collected through closed-ended survey questions were analysed using descriptive statistics, providing an overview of each participant's responses. The various descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were calculated to summarise the data. A correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationships between the variables under study. Correlation analysis effectively measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two or more variables (Karim, 2021). The study employed correlation analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) as the leading statistical software. The SPSS was used to calculate the correlation coefficients, particularly Pearson's correlation coefficient. Pearson's correlation coefficient falls in the range between -1 to +1. A positive correlation implies a direct relationship, a negative value implies an inverse relationship, while zero (0) implies no correlation (Afyouni *et al.*, 2019).

3.10.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

The study systematically analysed the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended survey questions. The thematic analysis involved the identification of the recurring patterns, themes, and categories within the data subjected to analysis. Every response was read, coded, and organised into themes to capture the main ideas and insights expressed by the participants. A systematic approach is followed in thematic analysis, including data familiarisation, code generation, theme development, and revision (Lochmiller, 2021). The analysis involved identifying patterns and connections between codes, grouping them into broader

themes, and refining the themes iteratively. The main of observing the analysis procedure was to extract meaningful and relevant themes that represent the essence of the qualitative data.

3.10.3 Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Findings

The quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated to enhance a comprehensive understanding of how practical hospitality internships are to NIM students. The correlation and thematic analysis results were compared and contrasted, revealing the convergence and divergence points. Integrating the two sets of findings requires complementarity; the qualitative data provides in-depth explanations and context for the quantitative findings (Larkin *et al.*, 2019). The qualitative insights helped interpret and explain the relationships revealed in the correlation analysis, making the interpretation extensive and rich in logic.

3.10.4 Interpretation and Synthesis

The results were interpreted and synthesized in response to the critical research questions. The results were synthesised for a comparative discussion with relevant literature findings. The interpretation and synthesis of the results were within the theoretical frameworks and the context of the hospitality internship program at the NIM. The main findings were highlighted, backed up with data analysis evidence, and presented clearly and coherently afterward. The research utilized visual representations, including tables, charts, and graphs, to help effectively present and interpret the quantitative data. The study also employed quotations or excerpts from the qualitative data to illustrate and support the key themes and findings from the thematic analysis process.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

3.11.1 Informed Consent

Every participant was promptly informed about the purpose of the study, potential risks and benefits, rights to participate, and the voluntary nature of their involvement. Potential participants were allowed to ask questions and make informed decisions about participating in the research. Informed consent was obtained through electronic consent processes due to the difficulty of meeting the participants face-to-face.

3.11.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

The confidentiality and anonymity of every participant were vital investment areas for the researcher. All collected data was handled with the highest level of confidentiality, taking all the measures to protect the privacy of every participant. The research ensured a more secure data storage, only allowing the authorised teams access. At the reporting stage, critical information relating to participants' identities was removed and anonymised, ensuring all the participants were anonymous to avoid social discrimination.

3.11.3 Voluntary Participation

The decision by every participant to take part in the study was voluntary; each participant was granted the freedom to decline to participate. Every participant in a study should be allowed to withdraw from the study at any stage of the research without conditions or consequences (Donahue and Kleinberg, 2020). All the participants were guaranteed free participation where the student's involvement did not affect their academic performance, employability in the

hospitality industry, or any relationships or bonds initially established between them and the employers.

3.11.4 Minimization of Harm

The researcher put various measures in place to minimize harm or discomfort to all the participants before and during the study. Key measures include ensuring that every survey question and interview prompts are sensitive, respectful, and non-intrusive. As such, the participants were not exposed to risks or burdens as they participated in the study. The potentially sensitive or triggering questions, especially the open-ended questions, were presented carefully to avoid causing discomfort. Moreover, the researcher established appropriate support mechanisms for all the participants who needed assistance.

3.11.5 Data Protection and Privacy

The study is based on strict adherence to data protection laws and regulations. All the participants' personal information was handled keenly, and the data collected was stored and transferred under the protection of appropriate encryption and security measures. In the same context, the researcher obtained explicit consent from the participants for data storage and usage to guarantee their privacy. The researcher strictly adhered to ethical considerations and ascertained that the study was conducted ethically and responsibly, ensuring every participant's rights, well-being, and privacy. Strict adherence to ethical principles also adds to the trustworthiness and credibility of the research findings.

3.11.6 Data Storage

The researcher observed careful attention to ensure every information's security, confidentiality, and integrity. Password-protected computers and secure

cloud-based storage systems served the same purpose. Only authorised persons were given access to the data collected, observing the confidentiality protocols. Also, the researcher ensured the implementation of regular data backup procedures to prevent data loss or controversies. Further, institutional policies, ethical guidelines, and legal regulations retained the data collected. The researcher had initially defined the data retention period, informing all the relevant institutions about the intended plans as required by the data protection laws. After the end of the research, as deemed suitable by the researcher, all the relevant stakeholders and institutions will be notified about the plans to permanently delete the data securely and comply with the data protection laws.

3.12 Research Design Limitations

3.12.1 Sample Size May Not Be Ideal

The sample size of this study is 65 students and five hotel partners, which may not be ideal as it may not be representative of the entire population of hospitality students and employers in Singapore. A larger sample size would have been preferable, but this was not feasible due to time and resource constraints (Meng, 2022). The study's findings may only be generalizable to some of the population of hospitality students and employers in Singapore. The small sample size may also affect the study's statistical power, reducing its ability to detect significant differences or relationships between variables (Quinn and Buzzetto-Hollywood, 2019). The researcher must be cautious in concluding the study's findings and avoid generalizing beyond the sample population.

3.12.2 Sample Bias

Sample bias is possible since not all hospitality students and employers in Singapore are included. The sample size is relatively small, consisting of only sixty-five students and five hotel partners (also known as the employers), which may only be representative of some of the population of hospitality students and employers in Singapore. Therefore, the study's findings need to be more generalisable to the larger population of hospitality students and employers in Singapore. The sample may need to be more diverse, and certain groups may be overrepresented or underrepresented, leading to biased results, which could impact the study's validity and limit its overall generalizability (Quinn and Buzzetto-Hollywood, 2019). It is essential to acknowledge this limitation and interpret the results within the context of the study's sample.

3.12..3 Research Design Flaws

The study likely exhibits significant design flaws, which may lead to errors in the methodology or data analysis, affecting the findings' accuracy and reliability. Leung *et al.* (2022) posited that inexperienced researchers may need more skills and knowledge to design a comprehensive research study. The design flaws may involve errors in the research questions, sampling methods, data collection techniques, or data analysis procedures. For example, the researcher may have overlooked some critical measures to collect data that could affect the results. This study acknowledges the possible limitations of insufficient or misplaced measures to capture participants' perspectives fully. The potential design flaws align with the operationalization of theoretical constructs.

3.13 Summary

Chapter III covered the methodology used by the researcher to examine the research topic and address the research problem. The study employed a mixed-method research design, utilising surveys and questionnaires. The study had two central target populations. For the first group, the study targeted former and current students of NIM in the hospitality and tourism faculty who had undergone relevant internship programmes. In the second group, the study targeted employers who had provided internship opportunities to NIM students and interacted with them in various professional capacities. The data collection instruments were pilot-tested for clarity and validity before the electronic data collection process. The quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyse the final data set, enhancing a comprehensive assessment of the critical impacts of hospitality internship programmes on students.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

4.1 Data Reliability Test

Before performing statistical analysis on the study's dataset, a Cronbach's Alpha reliability test was conducted to ensure internal consistency within the data set. Table 2 presents Cronbach's alpha scores for the main variables utilized in the study.

Table 2

Data Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Internship Program	0.864254
Experience	0.820593
Career Prospects	0.764418
Professional Networks	0.611468
Support and Mentorship	0.93078
Long-term career outcomes	0.67018
Employability	0.779004

Table 2 revealed that all the variables corresponding to the various survey questions portrayed desirable and acceptable internal consistencies. Two variables (Internship programs and Experience) are characterized by internal consistencies generally grouped as good ($\alpha > 0.8$). Support and mentorship are characterized by excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.93$). On the other hand, the remaining four (career prospects, professional networks, long-term career outcomes, and employability) were characterized by questionable internal

consistency, as Cronbach's alpha was slightly greater than 0.6. These values indicate some correlations among the items but are not entirely independent. As such, Cronbach's alpha values for the variables examined in the survey prove that the data set obtained and used in the study is reliable, as used in the current analysis.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

4.2.1 General Description of the Participants

From Figure 2, the number of student participants was higher than the employer participants, translating to 91% and 9%, respectively. The participants' distribution was biased since more students responded than the employees. However, data cleaning helped to remove data points that might have been affected by the bias.

Total Participants

Employers: 6	Students: 60
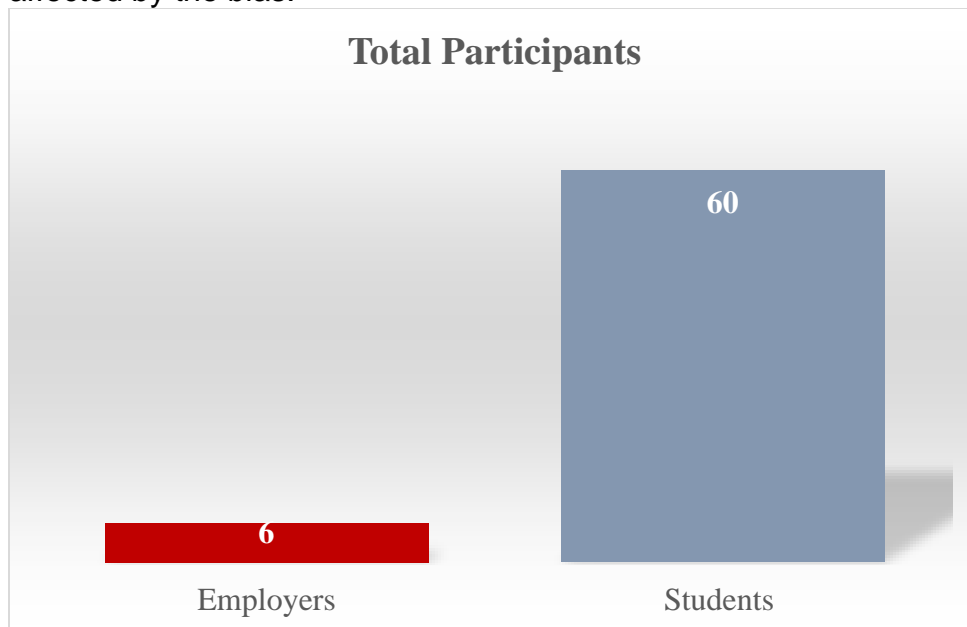
Figure 2

Distribution of Employee and Student Participants

4.2.2 Specific Participants Responses

Figure 3 below presents the findings of the specific responses from the questionnaires. From Figure 3, most participants noted joining the programs for internship opportunities.
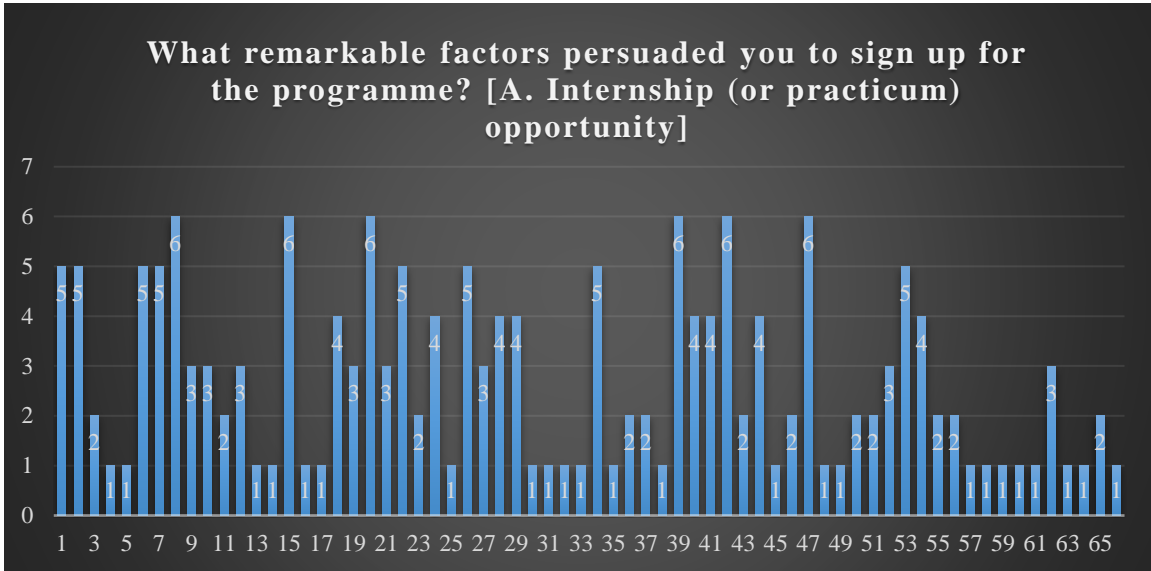
Figure 3

Response Set 1

From Figure 4 below, most participants joined the programs due to the course fee compared to the other programs.
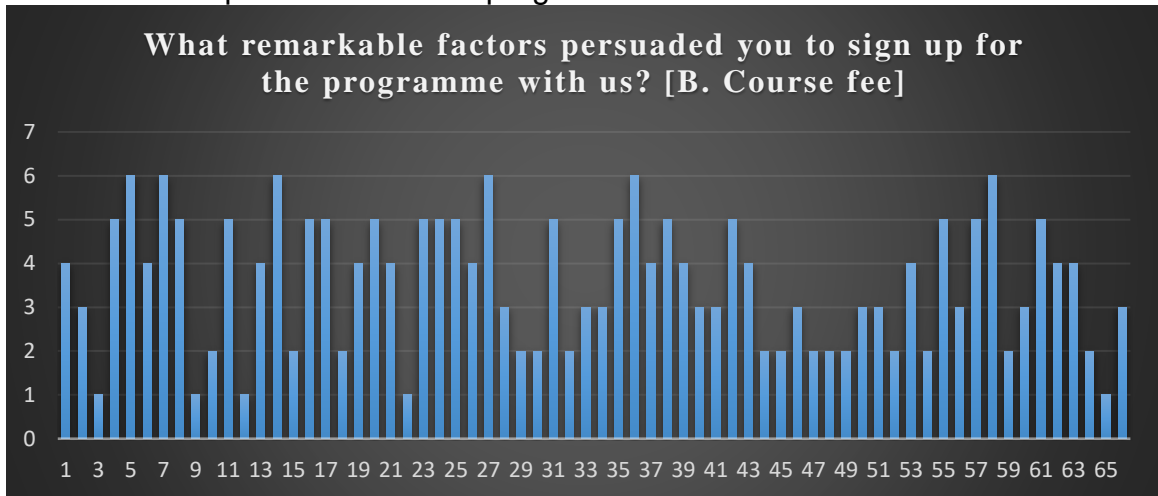
Figure 4

Response Set 2

Figure 5 below shows several participants persuaded to join the program due to the college's location.
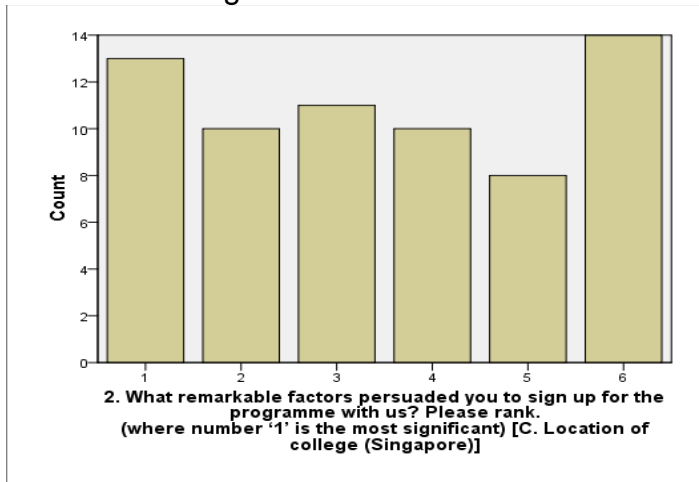
Figure 5

Response Set 3

From Figure 6 below, most students joined the programs due to persuasions from the course syllabus.
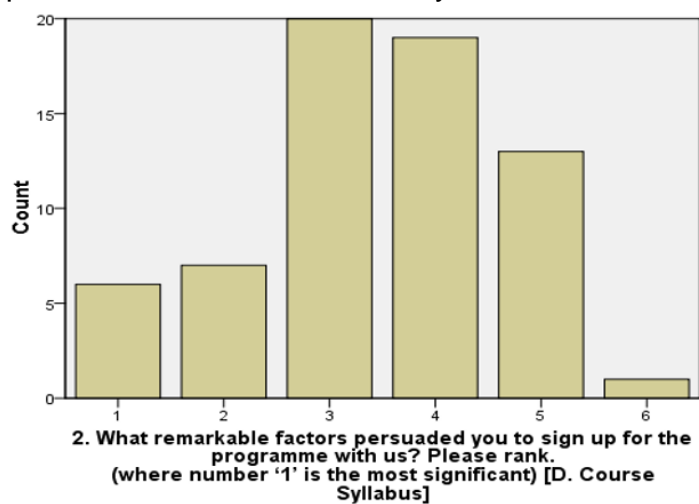
Figure 6

Response Set 4

In Figure 7 below, most participants were persuaded to join the programs through word of mouth, perhaps from peers.

2. What remarkable factors persuaded you to sign up for the programme with us? Please rank.
(where number '1' is the most significant) [E. Word-of-mouth]
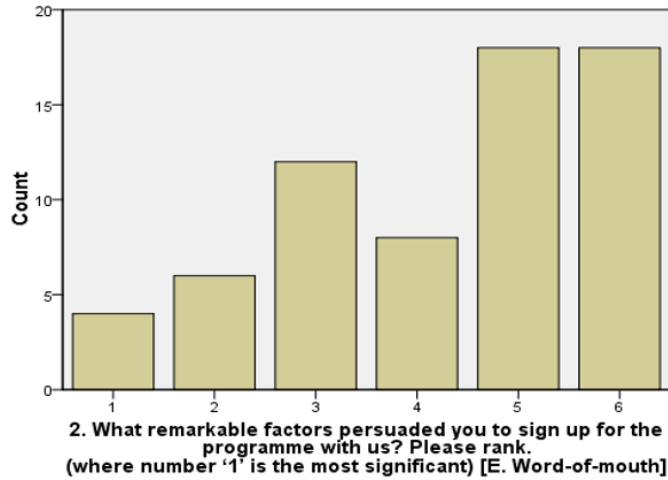
Figure 7

Response set 5

In Figure 8 below, most participants were persuaded to join the programs to get networks for better employment opportunities.

2. What remarkable factors persuaded you to sign up for the programme with us? Please rank.
(where number '1' is the most significant) [F. Opportunity to find full-time employment in Singapore]
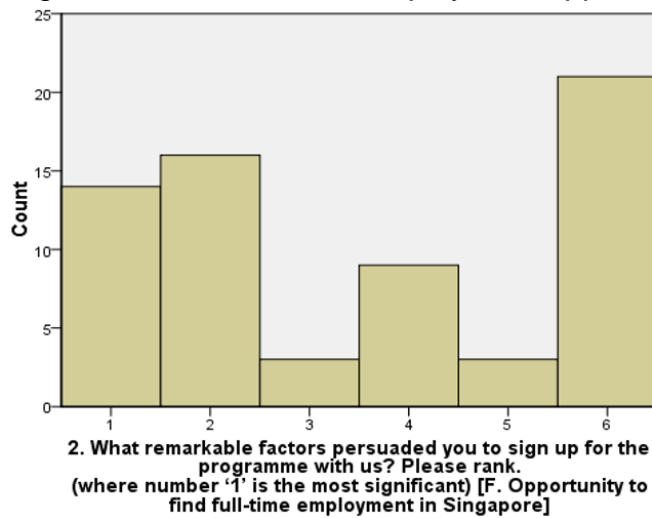
Figure 8

Response Set 6

From the line graph in Figure 9, most participants believed that having internships as part of the course programs makes them attractive, even though some did not undertake any internships.
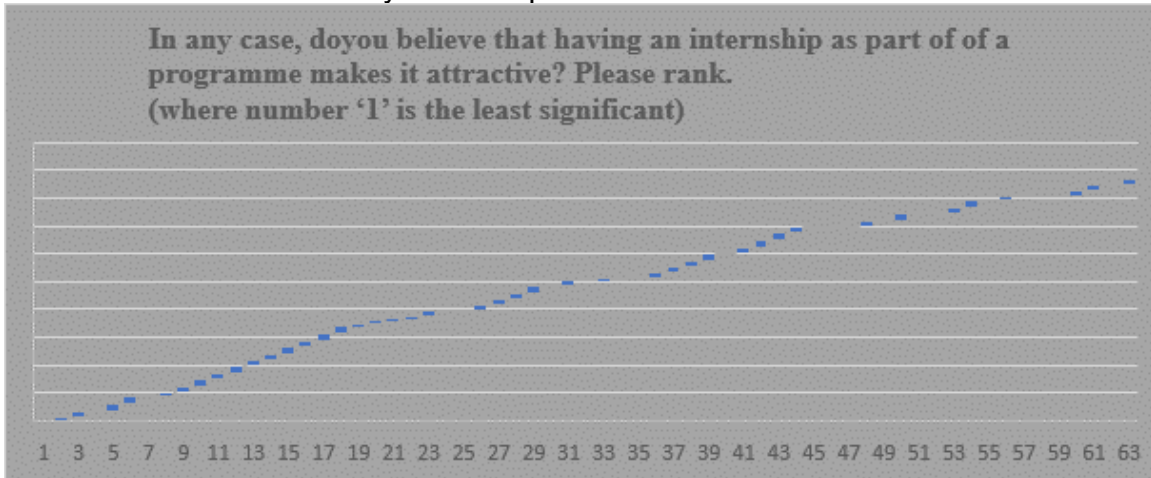
Figure 9

Response Set 7

From Figure 10 below, most participants noted that they were very satisfied with the internship programs, with the minority expressing dissatisfaction.

Figure 10

Response Set 8

In Figure 11 below, most participants got average exposure during the internship, with the minority strongly disagreeing and agreeing in equal measure.
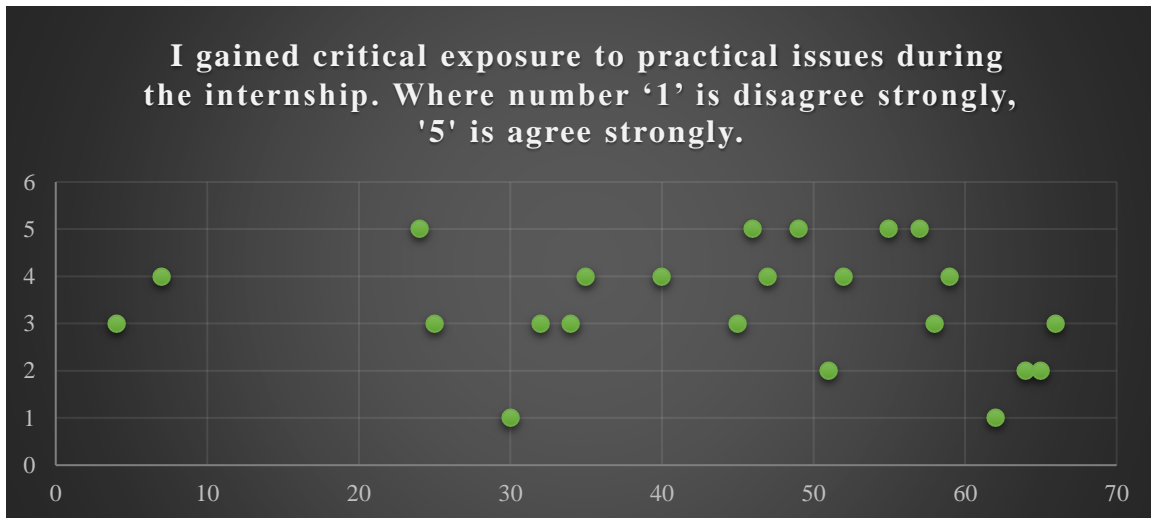
Figure 11
Response Set 9

From Figure 12 below, most participants agreed that internship programs are for the complex and dynamic hospitality industry.

Figure 12

Response Set 10

From Figure 13 below, most participants agreed that the internship provided diverse professional experience before graduation.
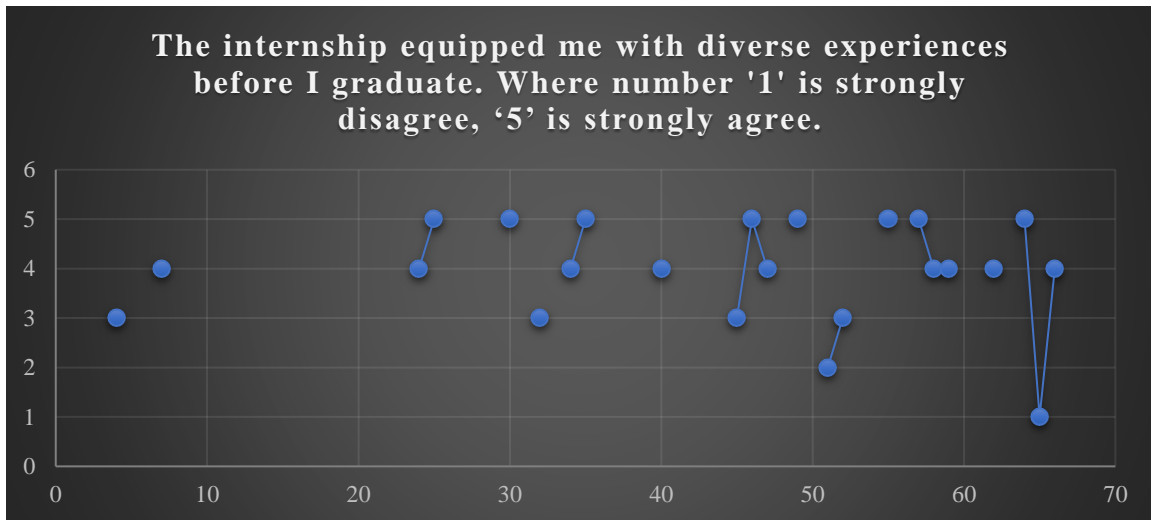
Figure 13

Response Set 11

In Figure 14 below, most participants strongly agreed that an internship helps to acquire relevant industry skills and knowledge.
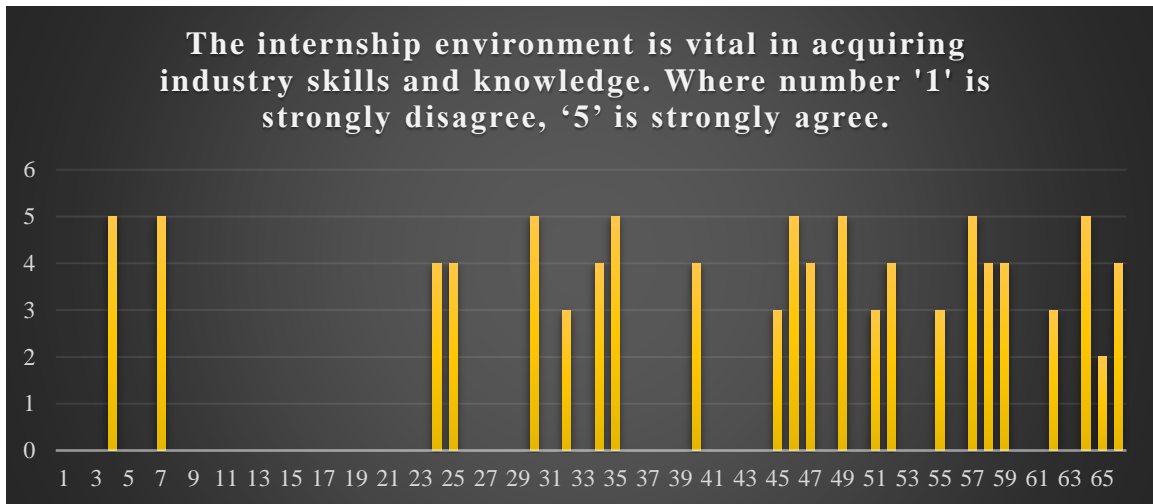
Figure 14

Response Set 12

From Figure 15 below, most participants noted that their courses prepared NIM students, recent graduates, and novice practitioners for challenging roles in the hospitality industry in Singapore.
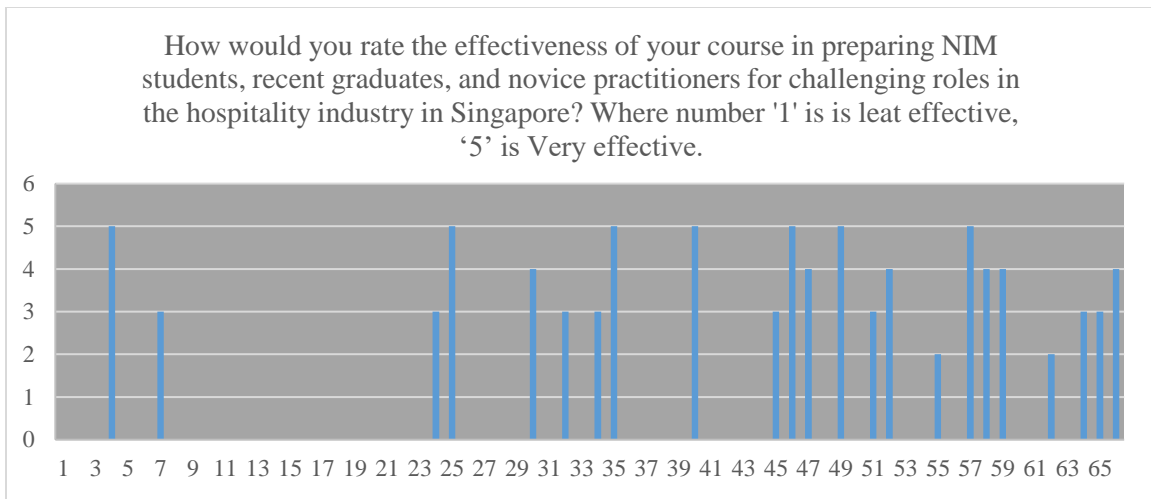
Figure 15

Response Set 13

4.3 T-test Result

Table 3 presents the results of the one-sample test. All the p-values associated with the t-test are less than the threshold (p-value <.05), justifying that the sample mean is significantly different from zero. The population mean is not likely to be zero; hence, a general conclusion can be drawn that the sample is a true reflection of the total population and that the findings are statistically significant.

Table 3

One-Sample Test

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Internship Program	13.309	59	.000	2.367	2.01	2.72
Experience	14.191	59	.000	2.783	2.39	3.18
Career Prospects	13.884	59	.000	2.433	2.08	2.78
Professional Networks	15.504	59	.000	2.767	2.41	3.12
Support and Mentorship	13.498	59	.000	2.767	2.36	3.18
Long-term career outcomes	11.662	59	.000	2.267	1.88	2.66
Employability	14.996	59	.000	2.717	2.35	3.08

4.4 Research Question One

Table 4 shows the chi-square test result for the dependence between internship and productivity of graduates.

Table 4

Dependence between Internship and Productivity

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	40.265[a]	25	.027
Likelihood Ratio	51.722	25	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	.733	1	.392
N of Valid Cases	66		

a. 34 cells (94.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .45.

Table 4 above shows a chi-square statistic (40.265), significant at *p*-value (.027<.05). Since the *p*-value (.027) is smaller than the standard alpha value (.05),

the study concludes that internship programs and graduates' productivity in the hospitality industry are significantly dependent. The high chi-square value justifies that the two variables are strongly associated, implying that internship programs effectively inform the productivity of hospitality graduates.

RQ1: We reject **H0₁** since the internship at the NIM in Singapore and productivity are dependent. The alignment of student and employer perceptions regarding the effectiveness of internships significantly predicts a well-functioning internship at the NIM in Singapore.

4.5 Research Question Two

Table 5 presents the chi-square test results for the dependence between internship and graduate experience.

Table 5

Dependence between Internship and Graduate Experience

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	40.157[a]	25	.028
Likelihood Ratio	52.991	25	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.032	1	.005
N of Valid Cases	66		

a. 35 cells (97.2%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .73.

Table 5 shows a chi-square statistic (40.157), significant at *p*-value (.028<.05). Since the *p*-value (.028) is smaller than the standard alpha value (.05), the study concludes that internship programs and graduates' level of Experience

relevant in the hospitality industry are significantly dependent. The high chi-square value (40.157) justifies that the two variables are strongly associated, implying that internship programs effectively inform the necessary Experience of hospitality graduates.

RQ2: We reject **H0₂** since the internship at the NIM in Singapore and graduate experience are dependent. Student perceptions of the relevance, meaningfulness, and skill development opportunities offered by internships at NIM in Singapore significantly predict graduate experiences.

4.6 Research Question Three

Figure 6 presents the chi-square test results for the dependence between internship support and mentorship.

Table 6

Dependence between Internship and Mentorship

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	39.632[a]	25	.032
Likelihood Ratio	45.856	25	.007
Linear-by-Linear Association	.003	1	.958
N of Valid Cases	66		

a. 34 cells (94.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .09.

The table shows a chi-square statistic (39.632), significant at p-value (.032<.05). Since the p-value (.027) is smaller than the standard alpha value (.05), the study concludes that internship programs and support and mentorship

provided to the participants in the hospitality industry are significantly dependent. The high chi-square (39.632) value justifies that the two variables are strongly associated, implying that the internship programs inform valuable supportive mentorships.

RQ3: We reject **H0$_3$** since the internship at the NIM in Singapore and mentorship are dependent. The quality of mentorship experiences perceived by student interns at NIM in Singapore significantly predicts internship outcomes.

4.7 Research Question Four

Table 7 presents the chi-square test result for the dependence between the variables of internship and student career prospects.

Table 7

Dependence between Internship and Student Career Prospects

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	45.528[a]	25	.007
Likelihood Ratio	51.994	25	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.081	1	.043
N of Valid Cases	66		

a. 34 cells (94.4%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .36.

Table 7 shows a chi-square statistic (45.528), significant at *p*-value (.007<.05). Since the *p*-value (.007) is smaller than the standard alpha value (.05), the study concludes that internship programs and student's career prospects, particularly in the hospitality industry are significantly dependent. The high chi-

square value (45.528) justifies that the two variables are strongly associated, implying that internship programs effectively shape the student's career prospects, particularly in the competitive hospitality industry.

RQ4: We reject **H0$_4$** since the internship at the NIM in Singapore and student career prospects are dependent. Student perceptions of the effectiveness of internships at NIM in Singapore significantly predict career outcomes.

4.8 Research Question Five

Table 8 presents the correlation test results between hospitality internship programs at NIM and employability.

Table 8

Dependence between Internship and Employability

Correlations

		Internship	Employment
Internship	Pearson Correlation	1	.279*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.023
	N	66	66
Employment	Pearson Correlation	.279*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	
	N	66	66
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Table 8 presents the correlation analysis result between internship and hospitality graduates' employability. The Figure shows a Pearson Correlation value of (.279) significant at (.023<.05). Since the *p*-value (.023) is smaller than the standard alpha value (.05), the study concludes that internship programs and student's employability in the hospitality industry are positively correlated. The positive correlation value implies that the variables increase in the same direction;

more internship programs prompt more employment rates. The finding suggests students who undergo well-designed internship programs at the NIM in Singapore are more likely to be employed faster than those who fail to join the programs.

RQ5: We reject **H0₅** since the internship at the NIM in Singapore and employability are dependent. Student perceptions of the value and impact of internships at NIM in Singapore significantly predict their employability in the hospitality industry.

4.9 Research Question Six

Table 9 presents the chi-square test results for the dependence between the variables internship and professional networks.

Table 9

Dependence between the Internship and Professional Networks

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	187.550[a]	25	.000
Likelihood Ratio	130.401	25	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	31.848	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	66		

a. 34 cells (94.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .27.

Table 9 shows a chi-square statistic (187.550), significant at *p*-value (.000<.05). Since the *p*-value (.000) is smaller than the standard alpha value (.05), the study concludes that internship programs and student's professional network**,** particularly with the potential the hospitality industry are significantly dependent. The high chi-square value (187.550) justifies that the two variables are strongly

associated, implying that internship programs effectively shape the students' professional networks, particularly in the competitive hospitality industry.

RQ6: We reject **H0₆** since the internship at the NIM in Singapore and professional networks are dependent. The professional networks developed through internships at NIM in Singapore significantly predict career advancement in the hospitality industry.

4.10 Summary of the Findings

The current study's findings generally imply that hospitality internships at the NIM in Singapore are effective, as per the perceptions of both students and industry employers. Students view internships as crucial for skill development, real-world application of knowledge, and career preparation. Employers in the same industry find NIM's interns adaptable and ready for jobs. In addition, the research underscores the impact of the internship programs, including leveraging the skills and experiences to get employment and build robust professional networks within the hospitality industry. The findings jointly affirm the role of internships at NIM in bridging the gap between hospitality education and overall success in the same industry.

CHAPTER V:

DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of Results

The results are grounded on the responses to the six research questions that guided the study. First, the study disclosed that students participating in hospitality internships generally perceive the internship programs as effective. The findings imply that NIM is an institution that consistently produces well-prepared, adaptable interns who can contribute effectively at the workplace. Secondly, the key findings support the hypothesis that internships provide learners meaningful experiences for developing essential skills needed in the hospitality industry. Thirdly, the results revealed that NIM emphasises providing support and mentorship to learners during the internships. The support encompasses orientation, training, mentorship, and access to resources and advice. Fourthly, the key findings in response to the research purpose provide compelling evidence justifying the hypothesis that internships substantially impact students' future career prospects in the hospitality industry. Internships are crucial in shaping students' career trajectories. Fifthly, the study's key findings provide substantial insights into the career outcomes of graduates who have completed internships at NIM. The findings affirm the hypothesis that internship programs positively influence students' ability to secure employment in the hospitality industry. Finally, the study presented valuable insights into how graduates can leverage internship experiences to advance their careers in the hospitality industry. The study also revealed that the extensive network provided by NIM in the hospitality industry

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shapes graduates' professional networks, connecting them with key industry events, conferences, and networking opportunities.

Based on the study outcomes, it can be inferred that including internship programs at NIM in Singapore is an effective marketing tool. Some reasons that justify this inference include enhanced visibility, brand reputation, and the bridge between education and industry practices. The findings indicate that internships positively impact NIM's visibility and attract prospective students, enhancing its brand reputation in the hospitality industry. Also, internship programs bridge the gap between education and industry practice, preparing students for successful careers in Singapore's dynamic hospitality industry. Further, students in the internship programs can enjoy long-term professional success; this exhibits experiential learning opportunities. The key stakeholders can benefit significantly by adopting and promoting internship programs. NIM will strengthen its dominance in the hospitality industry, and interns will learn and achieve career growth. The discussions of the research questions below further affirm the significance of including internship programs at NIM in Singapore.

5.2 Discussion of Research Question One

RQ1 explored the perceptions of students and industry professionals regarding the effectiveness of hospitality internships at the NIM in Singapore. The key findings in response to **RQ1** justify the theoretical hypothesis that such internships are generally effective. Students perceive internships to be effective for different reasons. In real-world application, the findings disclosed that internships allow students to apply theoretical knowledge from the classroom to real-world scenarios. Such hands-on experience is viewed as a bridge that

connects classroom learning to practical demands in the industry. The finding backs the assertions of Anjum (2020) that internships allow students to develop various skills, from customer service and communication to problem-solving and teamwork. The learners deem the acquisition of fundamental practical skills invaluable. Regarding exposure to industry dynamics, the study revealed that internships provide students with more insights into the hospitality industry. Students learn about the nuances of the sector, including guest interactions, service standards, and operational challenges.

The study investigated the viewpoints of industry professionals supervising and interacting with interns. The employers' perspectives were critical to provide insights into how well-prepared and capable the interns are in a real-world work setting. The industry professionals, like the students, deemed the NIM's hospitality internships effective. The reasons behind industry professionals' positive perceptions revolved around various factors. Regarding work-readiness, the finding that the NIM's interns are always ready for jobs and often require less training and supervision, enabling them to integrate into the workplace seamlessly, implies that the internships are quite effective. Regarding adaptability, the finding that interns from NIM are adaptable, quick learners, and capable of handling the hospitality industry's fast-paced and dynamic nature emphasizes the internship programs' effectiveness.

Similarly, regarding the application of knowledge, the finding that interns effectively apply their classroom knowledge to real-world situations justified the practical relevance of internship programs in hospitality education. The finding on positive attitude that interns develop high levels of positive attitude,

professionalism, and commitment to their roles emphasizes the relevance of internship programs in hospitality education. The general finding regarding the positive perceptions by employers resonates well with the existing literature, particularly by Ramaprasad *et al.* (2022), on the benefits of internships in education. The employer's recognition of the effectiveness of NIM's internships suggests that the essential experiences imply that the learners achieve the intended educational objectives through internship programs.

5.3 Discussion of Research Question Two

The study's **RQ2** delved into the quality of experiences learners gain through internship programs incorporated by the NIM in Singapore. The study assessed whether internships offer students relevant experiences and equip them with the essential skills needed for success in the hospitality industry. The primary data collected during the research demonstrated that students overwhelmingly perceive their internship experiences at NIM as relevant and meaningful. The essential experiences are not only viewed as routine assignments in hospitality education but also as an opportunity to engage with the real-world challenges and dynamics of the hospitality industry. Learners often mentioned that they were entrusted with responsibilities that resembled those encountered in actual hospitality settings, such as hotels or restaurants. The finding complements the previous findings in the literature, emphasizing the importance of experiential learning in internships. In particular, the finding supports the assertions by Pang (2021) that relevant and meaningful experiences in internships enable learners to connect theoretical knowledge with practical applications, improving their understanding of the subject matter and fostering critical thinking skills.

Regarding developing skills and critical competencies, the study established that learners develop the necessary skills and competencies when exposed to hospitality internship programs. The essential skills were technical skills, such as customer service and food preparation, and soft skills, like communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. The finding backs the initial findings in the broader literature on experiential learning. In particular, the finding is consistent with the finding by Simanjuntak and Indrianty (2019), who alluded that internships provide a platform for students to apply and refine the skills acquired in the classroom, nurturing them for the demands of future careers. In the same context, survey findings from industry employers showed that students demonstrated a high level of competence and adaptability when exposed to internships compared to when the same programs were not made available to them. The finding justifies the initial finding that the internship programs effectively impart practical skills and competencies highly valued in the hospitality industry.

5.4 Discussion of Research Question Three

The study's **RQ3** investigated the extent to which support and mentorship programs are provided to learners during their internships at the NIM, analysing how such factors influence the level of engagement between students and industry professionals during the internship programs. The study established significant findings about the support and guidance provided during internships at NIM and the impact on engagement levels between students and industry professionals. The study established that students could recognize that they were provided adequate support from NIM and their industry mentors, familiarizing themselves with the workplace and its expectations. Similarly, regular check-ins with mentors

enabled the students to seek guidance and clarification on the tasks. From a different perspective, the students had access to resources and contacts through NIM's network, justifying that the programs were valuable for the learners.

The findings complement initial findings by Brown *et al.* (2015), who asserted that the level of support and guidance directly influence the level of engagement between students and industry professionals during the internship programs. Well-supported learners are likelier to engage, remain proactive, and be confident in their roles. Such engagements result in positive outcomes, like better performance, increased learning, and a deeper understanding of the industry. The study established that industry employers were more willing to invest time and effort in mentoring and engaging with students who showed a solid commitment to learning and a willingness to be guided. The reciprocal engagement between students and industry professionals led to a positive learning environment during the internships. The findings align with conclusions drawn by Dishman (2019) on the importance of mentorship and support structures during internships, that effective mentorship increases the interns' experience and promotes professional development and readiness for career opportunities in the hospitality industry.

5.5 Discussion of Research Question Four

RQ4 explored the profound and lasting impact of internships at the NIM on the career prospects of students within the hospitality industry. The study investigated whether completing internships at NIM influenced the learner's career trajectories, enhancing employability and success in the hospitality industry. Hospitality internships were found to play significant roles in helping students

clarify their key career goals, refine career paths, and develop a clearer sense of purpose within their hospitality education and industry at large. The finding justifies initial assertions by Chen *et al.* (2023) that internships bridge academic knowledge and real-world practices, making the students put what is learned into practical context. As students become part of the internship programs, they gain firsthand exposure to the complexities and demands of the hospitality industry. Further, they get to interact with industry professionals and learn about different roles and responsibilities, gaining insights into the trends and challenges in the hospitality industry.

The study findings also revealed that the immersive experience results in a more informed and focused career direction. The establishment of internship programs helped the graduates to decide on specific career tracks within the hospitality sector, implying that career goals are essential for students, enabling them to make informed decisions about their academic and professional pursuits. The study also holds that going through internships, particularly at NIM, significantly improves the employability of graduates within the hospitality industry. Further findings in the same context revealed that employers in the hospitality sector highly prefer graduates with exemplary, practical experience and a deep understanding of the industry's inner workings. The current study backs the assertion by Min *et al.* (2016) that internship experiences equip students with unique skills, competencies, and industry-specific knowledge, making them more attractive to potential employers.

The study findings also revealed that internships enabled most graduates to secure full-time employment with the organizations where they were initially

attached for the internships. Internships allow students to transition seamlessly into the workforce, reducing the challenges of securing employment upon completing hospitality education programs. Results based on the testimonials from employers in the hospitality industry who had employed hospitality graduates with internship experience from NIM revealed that students portrayed desirable practical skills, professionalism, and industry awareness. The finding backs the initial findings by Kim *et al.* (2023), who alluded that students exposed to internship programs are more likely to portray a quicker learning curve adapted seamlessly to the roles and may require less training compared to candidates who do not have any internship experience.

5.6 Discussion of Research Question Five

RQ5 explored the long-term career outcomes of graduates who completed internships at the NIM in Singapore. The research question investigated whether graduates can secure employment in the highly dynamic hospitality industry by understanding the various perceptions of the value of internship experience. The study established that the graduates with internship experience from NIM portrayed a notably higher rate of success in securing employment within the hospitality industry compared to their peers who did not have internship experience. The finding aligns with the findings of Kusluvan *et al.* (2022) regarding the roles of internships in providing students with a competitive advantage in the job market. The study established that employers within the hospitality sector prefer candidates with practical experience and an extensive understanding of the industry's nuances. Graduates with internship experience are perceived to be more attractive candidates as they are argued to have the necessary skills,

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competencies, and industry-specific knowledge. Most students secured full-time positions in prestigious hospitality establishments, comprising hotels, restaurants, and event management companies.

The study delved into graduates' perceptions of the value of the internship experiences. The findings generally revealed overwhelmingly positive perceptions, implying that graduates considered the internships at NIM as pivotal in their career development. The key highlights and aspects when expressing the internship experience's value include practical skill development. The findings align with the assertions of Lam and May-Fung (2021) that graduate internship programs are vital in equipping individuals with essential practical skills that are directly applicable to various job roles. Such skills encompassed customer service, problem-solving, teamwork, and industry-specific knowledge.

In the context of professional networks, the study's findings revealed that internships offer graduates the opportunity to build a professional network within the hospitality industry. Most graduates were revealed to have maintained contacts with industry professionals they met at the internship stations, hence a valuable asset for career development. Also, the study established that most graduates considered their insights into the hospitality industry's workings invaluable as they practiced at various employment stations. The key highlights consisted of understanding industry trends, customer expectations, and the day-to-day operations of hospitality establishments. The finding complements the initial findings by Gosling (2023), who argued that internships boost the confidence of various individuals about their abilities to take up professional roles within the hospitality industry. The study concluded that graduates are likely to be more

prepared and capable of taking on assigned responsibilities at their places of work, informed by the practical experiences gained during their internships.

5.7 Discussion of Research Question Six

The study's **RQ6** investigated the lasting impact of internship programs at the NIM in Singapore on the ability of graduates to develop and leverage professional networks and advance their careers within the hospitality industry. The research question examined whether internships provide immediate career opportunities and facilitate the long-term growth and development of graduates within the hospitality industry. Results showed that internships at NIM are vital in helping graduates develop and expand critical professional networks within the hospitality industry. The internships are deemed a unique platform through which the graduates connect with industry professionals, mentors, and peers. While on internships, graduates can interact with various individuals within the industry, from front-line staff to top management. Most graduates benefit from mentorship and guidance during the internship, leading to long-lasting professional relationships. The findings complement the previous assertions by Rosyidi (2021) that the connections between interns and employers often stretch beyond the internship duration.

Further, most graduates effectively leverage the professional networks they develop during the internship programs to advance their careers within the hospitality industry. The connections made during internships give the graduates competitive advantages in different aspects. First, the study established that internships provide learners access to various opportunities. Upon completion of internship programs, the graduates will likely benefit from the job referrals and

recommendations from mentors and industry professionals they meet during their internships. Also, the referrals opened doors to job interviews and opportunities that may be challenging to access. The finding supports initial assertions by Ho and Law (2022) that most students will likely maintain ongoing mentorship relationships with industry professionals with whom they might have connected during their internships. The mentorship provides valuable insights, advice, and career guidance, contributing to professional development.

Graduates would benefit significantly from staying connected within the professional network and remaining informed about industry trends, emerging opportunities, and potential career paths within the hospitality industry. The finding complements the assertions by Kim and Jeong (2018) that networking helps graduates secure promotions and advancements within organizations. Proactive engagement with employers and other professionals in the industry enhances the student's commitment to continuous learning. Moreover, the critical testimonial findings from graduates who had completed internships at NIM showcased how individuals leverage their professional networks to advance their careers in the competitive hospitality industry.

CHAPTER VI:

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

The research explored the effectiveness and impact of hospitality internships at the NIM in Singapore. Multiple conclusions can be drawn from this study. The first conclusion relates to the substantial productivity among hospitality graduates attributed to the internship programs at the NIM in Singapore. Hospitality internships allow students to apply theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom to real-world scenarios. During the internships, students engage in tasks such as front desk operations, food and beverage service, event planning, and guest relations. Through hands-on experience, they develop practical skills directly applicable to their future careers.

Experiential learning builds their problem-solving abilities, enabling them to address issues efficiently. Students who have successfully undergone internship programs, navigating through complex scenarios during the internships, have a better chance of overcoming the challenges in their professional roles, thus positively impacting their workplace's productivity. Most internship programs encourage the use of software and systems that are relevant to the hospitality industry. Students gain proficiency using the tools during their internships, reducing the learning curve when transitioning into their professional careers. The familiarity allows them to work more efficiently, as they can navigate software and systems confidently, leading to increased productivity.

Proper mentorship helps to create professional networks for the students. The networking can open doors to future employment opportunities,

collaborations, and partnerships. Mentees also learn how to navigate professional relationships effectively, an invaluable skill in the hospitality industry where networking plays a crucial role. In a demanding industry like hospitality, interns may face challenges and stress. Mentorship programs offer emotional support and comfort, enabling the learners to overcome challenges in employment. Graduates maintain contact with their mentors, turning the relationships into lifelong connections. Such connections are a valuable resource throughout their careers, providing guidance and advice even after graduation.

The research findings emphasize a critical conclusion: internship programs shape hospitality graduates' career prospects. The programs go beyond providing practical experience; they significantly impact students' professional trajectories and their ability to secure rewarding positions within the hospitality industry. Hospitality internships streamline the students' career prospects through a glimpse of favourable career goals. Exposure to different aspects of the hospitality industry gives the students invaluable insight into what they can and cannot do. Self-awareness helps the students make informed career decisions, enabling them to align their aspirations with the opportunities available in the hospitality sector.

Internships are also revealed to bridge the students with potential employers in the job market as learners or graduates who are through internships and are steps ahead of fresh graduates with no experience. Employers highly value candidates with practical experience, as it demonstrates their readiness to contribute immediately upon employment. Internship experiences prove candidates' commitment to the field, making them graduates more attractive to potential employers. The study concludes that graduates are more likely to be

absorbed by the employers with whom they were once attached subject to their reputations and skills. By acknowledging the critical values of the particular interns in the industry, employers will likely prioritize individual students with good records compared to new students. Such pathways to employment opportunities streamline the career prospects of the trainees, aiding their transition from school to the professional world.

Internships also contribute to the development of a professional network. Internship students interact with industry professionals, colleagues, and mentors who can become valuable connections throughout their careers. The networks can lead to job referrals, collaborations, and ongoing support, further enhancing career prospects. Various skills necessary in the hospitality industry, like customer service, problem-solving, and teamwork, are acquired practically acquired through. Such skills widen the available career options for the students, enabling them to explore different career paths and adapt to evolving industry trends.

6.2 Implications

The findings imply that NIM is an institution that consistently produces well-prepared, adaptable interns who can contribute effectively at the workplace. The reasons behind industry professionals' positive perceptions revolved around various factors. Regarding work-readiness, the finding that the NIM's interns are always ready for jobs and often require less training and supervision, enabling them to integrate into the workplace seamlessly, implies that the internships are pretty effective. Regarding adaptability, the finding that interns from NIM are adaptable, quick learners, and capable of handling the fast-paced and dynamic

nature of the hospitality industry emphasizes the effectiveness of the hospitality internship programs.

Similarly, regarding the application of knowledge, the finding that interns effectively apply their classroom knowledge to real-world situations justified the practical relevance of internship programs in hospitality education. On the other hand, the finding on positive attitude, that interns develop high levels of positive attitude, professionalism, and commitment to their roles, emphasizes the relevance of internship programs in hospitality education. The general finding regarding the positive perceptions of employers resonates well with the existing literature on the benefits of internships in education. The employer's recognition of the effectiveness of NIM's internships suggests that the essential experiences imply that the learners achieve the intended educational objectives through internship programs. The key findings in response to **RQ1** highlight the consensus among students and industry professionals concerning the effectiveness of hospitality internships. Internships can be viewed as routine experiences and valuable educational opportunities that promote students' development and readiness for career opportunities in the hospitality industry.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

The first recommendation for further research is to focus on diversifying internship opportunities. Further research from the same perspective will ensure that a broader range of internship experiences enhances the overall educational value for hospitality students. To effectively prepare students for the multifaceted hospitality industry, institutions like the NIM should aim to expand and diversify the internship options available to their students. Diversity in internship opportunities

can encompass various sectors within the hospitality industry, such as hotels, restaurants, event management, cruise lines, and tourism organizations. It can also include internships with different scales of operations, from small boutique hotels to large multinational chains. By offering a wider variety of experiences, institutions can cater to their students' diverse interests and career aspirations. Diversified internship opportunities significantly expose the trainees to different aspects of the hospitality industry. So, learners get equipped with a more diversified skill set, making them more professional in the workplace.

The recommendation is for further research to focus on monitoring internship quality, ensuring that hospitality internship programs consistently deliver valuable and meaningful experiences to students. By implementing a robust monitoring system, institutions like the NIM can maintain and enhance the quality of their internship programs. Monitoring internship quality involves ongoing assessment and evaluation of various aspects of the internship experience. They include evaluating the learning objectives, the suitability of internship placements, the mentorship provided, the alignment with academic curricula, and the overall satisfaction of both students and industry partners. An essential advantage associated with monitoring internship involves identifying the key areas that need to be improved. Early identification of problems allows institutions to take prompt corrective actions, ensuring that students continue having positive and productive internship experiences.

The third recommendation is for further research to focus on collaboration between learning institutions and the hospitality industry to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of hospitality internship programs. Collaborative

activities with the hospitality industry, especially employers, will be essential to keep institutions such as NIM aligning the school programs and internship policies with the emerging trends in the job market. Students will be provided with real-world experiences, enhancing a mutual relationship. It entails active engagement in dialogue, joint initiatives, and the sharing of resources and expertise. Such active engagements will enhance students' practical skills and nurture their confidence and competence, making them more effective in their roles.

One of the primary advantages of collaborating with the industry is the opportunity to provide students with internship placements that closely align with the demands and expectations of employers. Industry partners can expose students to the latest technologies, trends, and best practices, ensuring their internship experiences remain current and valuable. The industry collaboration also enhances the relevance of academic curricula. Input from industry professionals can inform the development of coursework that directly addresses the skills and knowledge needed in the workplace. Such alignment between education and industry requirements enhances the employability of graduates. The industry collaboration also helps to mobilize additional resources for internship programs, including financial support, specialized training, and access to industry events and conferences. The resources enrich the internship experience and contribute to the overall quality of the programs. Collaboration with industry partners also helps institutions like NIM establish a reputation for producing work-ready graduates. Employers value graduates with practical experience and industry-relevant skills, making them more likely to hire and retain interns from institutions with strong industry ties.

The fourth and final recommendation is to research further the long-term outcomes of internships as a forward-looking approach that acknowledges the importance of evaluating the lasting impact of hospitality internship programs like those at the NIM. It suggests that institutions should systematically research how such programs influence graduates' long-term career trajectories and professional success. Researching long-term outcomes involves tracking and studying the career paths and achievements of graduates who have completed internship programs. The research should incorporate factors such as employment rates, job satisfaction, career advancement, and alumni contributions to the hospitality industry.

One key benefit of researching long-term outcomes is the ability to assess the actual effectiveness of internship programs. It helps institutions determine whether their programs prepare graduates for successful and fulfilling careers in the long run. It provides insights into areas for program improvement, allowing institutions to adapt and enhance their offerings based on empirical data. Such research creates more data for prospective students, demonstrating the tangible benefits of participating in internship programs. It can serve as a persuasive tool in attracting new students and assuring them that their investment in education will lead to long-term professional success. Additionally, the research will help institutions build stronger relationships with former students who can provide valuable insights and industry connections. It fosters community and continued engagement, benefiting the institution and its graduates.

6.4 Conclusion

The research has extensively investigated hospitality internships' significant role in shaping NIM graduates' career prospects, skills, and overall success. The findings have revealed that internship programs are valuable to the educational experience and contribute substantially to bridging the gap between education and industry practice. Also, including internship programs at NIM in Singapore is an effective marketing tool. Some reasons that justify this inference include enhanced visibility, brand reputation, and the bridge between education and industry practices. By implementing the recommended strategies, NIM will further enhance the impacts and effectiveness of its internship programs, preparing the students to thrive in careers in the dynamic hospitality sector.

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Teo Johnson

Dean

School of Business

Nanyang Institute of Management

Email – johnon.teo@nanyang.edu.sg

5th October 2022

Dear Student,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Mr. Teo Johnson, and I am conducting a study on the effectiveness of internships as a marketing strategy in tertiary courses at the Nanyang Institute of Management. As a student at our institution, your insights and experiences are invaluable to this research.

The purpose of this survey is to understand how internships have impacted your educational journey and to evaluate their role in promoting our courses. Your feedback will help us assess the strengths and areas for improvement in our internship programs, ultimately enhancing the quality of education and professional preparation we offer.

Participation in this survey is completely voluntary, but your input is crucial for the success of this study. The survey will take approximately five minutes to

complete. Rest assured, your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for academic purposes. No personal information will be shared, and all data will be anonymized.

To participate, please click on the following link to access the survey: https://forms.gle/cLkvWZwEfxY8FCTr9. Please complete the survey by 30th May 2023.

If you have any questions or need further information, feel free to contact me at johnson.teo@nanyang.edu.sg or +65 66710112.

Thank you very much for your time and participation. Your feedback is greatly appreciated and will contribute significantly to our ongoing efforts to improve the educational experience at the Nanyang Institute of Management.

Warm regards,

Teo Johnson
Dean of School of Business
Nanyang Institute of Management

INFORMED CONSENT

Participant Information Sheet

Name of school: Swiss School of Business Management, Geneva
Title of study: EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNSHIPS AS A MARKETING
STRATEGY IN TERTIARY COURSES: THE CASE OF NANYANG INSTITUTE
OF MANAGEMENT SINGAPORE

Introduction

You have been invited to take part in a research project examining the effectiveness of internships as a key marketing source for our programmes, like the diploma, advanced diploma and postgraduate diploma programmes. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important that you understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read this information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything that is unclear or if you would like more information, please contact me using the contact details on the following page.

What is the purpose of this investigation?

The aim of this investigation is to comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of internships as a strategic marketing tool within tertiary education, focusing specifically on the NIM in Singapore. In conducting this investigation, I am trying to determine what attracts our students to take up our programmes. Would

students still take up the programmes if no internships were offered? If internships were not paid, would students be eager to take up the programmes?

What will you do in the project?

Part of this study involves you taking part in a simple questionnaire of no more than 30 questions. The questions will be surrounding your learning and internship experience, which is expected to shed light if a mandatory internship is an advantage or disadvantage to the courses.

Do you have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not you would like to take part in this study, but your contribution would be greatly appreciated. You will not be treated any differently, whether you choose to take part, or decide not to do so. If you do decide to take part, you may later withdraw from the study without giving a reason and without penalty.

Why have you been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this project because you have met the eligibility criteria. Either you had done an internship in Singapore or you chose not to do the internship, when it was part of your programme.

What are the potential risks to you in taking part?

You do have the right to withdraw from this project at any point, without giving a reason. You can withdraw from the project by informing me (the researcher) via email that you wish to do so. If you withdraw from the research, any words used by you will be removed from the data that has been collected. You may request that the information you have provided is removed from the study at any point until the data has started to be analysed. This means that you can request that your data be removed from the investigation until four weeks (28 days) after the date that you took part in the study.

What happens to the information in the project?

All data collected whilst conducting this investigation will be stored securely on the password protected OneDrive storage system, which is used for the storage of research data at SSBM, in line with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation. The information collected whilst conducting this project will be stored until end of 2025.

Thank you for reading this information – please ask any questions if you are unsure about what is written in this form.

What happens next?

If you are happy to take part in this project, you will be asked to sign a consent form in order to confirm this.

It is possible that the results of this research project will subsequently be published. If this is the case, appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that all participants remain anonymous.

If you do not want to be involved in the project, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for reading the information above.

This investigation was granted ethical approval by York St John University.

Researcher contact details:
You should not include personal contact details.

Teo Johnson	**Dr. Josip Burusic**
Nanyang Institute of Management Singapore	Swiss School of Business Management, Geneva
Email: johnson.teo.jt@gmail.com	Email: josip.burusic@ssbm.ch

Consent Form

Name of school: Swiss School of Business Management
Name of researcher: Teo Johnson
Title of study: EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNSHIPS AS A MARKETING STRATEGY IN TERTIARY COURSES: THE CASE OF NANYANG INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT SINGAPORE

Please read and complete this form carefully. If you are willing to participate in this study, please circle the appropriate responses and sign and date the declaration at the end. If there is anything that you do not understand and you would like more information, please ask.

• I have had the research satisfactorily explained to me in verbal and / or written form by the researcher.	**YES / NO**
• I understand that the research will involve: *(Filling in a questionnaire of no more than 30 questions)*	**YES / NO**
• I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time without having to give an explanation. This will not affect my future care or treatment. I understand that I should contact you via email if I wish to withdraw from the study and that I can request for the information that I have provided to be removed from your investigation for a period of four weeks (28 days) after the date that I took part in your study.	**YES / NO**
• I understand that all information about me will be treated in strict confidence and that I will not be named in any written work arising from this study.	**YES / NO**
• I understand that any audiotape material of me will be used solely for research purposes and will be destroyed on completion of your research.	**YES / NO**
• I understand that you will be discussing the progress of your research with your research investigation supervisor at York St John University.	**YES / NO**
• I consent to being a participant in the project.	**YES / NO**

Print Name:	Date:
Signature of Participant:	

APPENDIX C:

ETHICAL REVIEW APPLICATION FORM

Refer to Ethics Application Form

APPENDIX D:

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR INTERNS

1. Which programme did you enrol in?
    A. Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management
    B. Advanced Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management
    C. Postgraduate Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management

2. What remarkable factors persuaded you to sign up for the programme with us? Please rank.
    (*where number '1' is the most significant*)
    A. Internship opportunity   ……..
    B. Course fee   ……..
    C. Location of college   ……..
    D. Course Syllabus   ……..
    E. Word-of-mouth   ……..
    F. Opportunity to find full employment in Singapore   ……..

3. Did you practice your internship in Singapore?
    A. Yes
    B. No

4. Which organisation did you do your internship?
    ……………………………………………………………

5. To the best of your ability, recall and select the year in which you did your internship from the following:
    A. 2016
    B. 2017

C. 2018

D. 2019

E. 2020

F. 2021

G. 2022

H. 2023

6. Which category of the following were you attached to for your internship?

    A. Hotel – Front Office division

    B. Hotel – Food and Beverage division

    C. Hotel – Housekeeping division

    D. Travel agency

    E. Independent chained restaurant

    F. Family-owned restaurant

    G. None of the above but still in the service industry, *please state;*

        …………………………………………..

    H. None of the above, *please specify below*

        …………………………………………..

7. How does having an internship as part of the course programme affect you as an NIM student?

    (For example, do you think an option to do an internship greatly influenced your decision? **Why?***)*

    ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

8. Did you have any expectations for your internship before you embarked on it?

    A. No

    B. Yes, please briefly describe.

....

....

....

....

9. Was the internship training well structured? (*For example, was a clear schedule of training tasks and performance objectives provided?*)

   A. Strongly agree

   B. Somewhat agree

   C. Disagree

10. Were you satisfied with your internship experience?

   A. Yes

   B. No

11. What are some of the issues you believe that had critically influenced your internship experience that led to your response to question 10? (*please list as many as you can remember*)

....

....

....

12. How did the management at your internship workplace respond to some of the issues you mentioned in question (11) above?

....

....

....

13. Did you find any meaningful relationship between the NIM internship programme and your decision to sign up for the course?

   A. Yes

B. No

C. Not Sure

14. How would you rate your satisfaction with your course based on the internship experience at the place you selected above?

5= Extremely satisfactory	4=Highly satisfactory	3= Moderately satisfying	2 = Lowly satisfying	1=Non-satisfactory

15. Which of the following comprehensive experiential learning strategies did you find the most beneficial during your internship programme?

A. Interpersonal skills

B. Cooperative learning

C. Problem-based learning

D. Teamwork

E. Other (*please specify*):

……………………………………………….

16. What skills and knowledge from your course were the most useful during the internship programme? (*please list all that apply*)

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Please rank each of the statements below using the following scale

5=Strongly agree; 4=Agree; 3=Slightly agree; 2=Disagree; 1=Strongly disagree.

Variable	5	4	3	2	1
17. The internship allowed me to interact with diverse industry stakeholders and resources					
18. I gained critical exposure to practical issues during the internship					
19. The internship prepared me for the complex and dynamic industry					
20. The internship equipped me with diverse experiences before I graduate					
21. The internship environment is vital in acquiring industry skills and knowledge					
22. The internship is the best context for applying classroom knowledge					

23. How would you rank the effectiveness of your course in preparing NIM students, recent graduates, and novice practitioners for challenging roles in the hospitality industry in Singapore?

5= Extremely effective	4=Highly effective	3= Moderately effective	2 = Lowly effective	1=Non-effective

24. Based on your internship experience, what are some of the improvements you would like to see in your course to improve students' transition from academic to professional life within Singapore's tourism and hospitality industry?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

25. Which of the following factors do you consider the most crucial in succeeding during the internship programme?
    A. Academic preparedness
    B. Self-initiative
    C. Positive attitude

26. Did the following hygiene factors positively influence your internship experience? Please rate them using the scale:
    5=Strongly agree; 4=Agree; 3=Slightly agree; 2=Disagree; 1=Strongly disagree.

Variable	5	4	3	2	1
Main supervisor					
Co-worker/intern					
Task clarity					
Learning opportunity					
Organisational satisfaction					

27. Which of the following was instrumental to your success and satisfaction with the internship experience?
    A. Programme's modules
    B. Internship officer
    C. Employer

28. In your opinion, would you think an internship is essential to gain a headstart in the service industry? (*please briefly explain*)
    A. Yes   B. No

    ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………………

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR EMPLOYERS

1. How would you describe your current situation with skilled human resources in the tourism and hospitality industry?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Which of the following factors most influences your hiring decisions?

   A. Demand

   B. Pay Structure

   C. Costs

   D. Government's regulations

3. Which of the following external factors is the leading contributor to the decline in skilled labour in the tourism and hospitality industry?

   A. The high cost of education

   B. Reductions in government support

   C. Precipitous declines in the traditional college-aged population

   D. Declining popularity of the jobs

4. How likely do you request for interns from private institutions, assuming business demand is high?

   1. Very likely
   2. I try not to

5. The reason that you cannot hire foreign interns is usually because of

    A. Government regulation

    B. Management decision (culture)

    C. Higher costs

    D. More administrative work to be done

6. Would you say that what an intern has learnt from the institution is crucial for your

   selection?

    1. Yes, there is a difference

    2. Not really, as training will be provided by the employer

7. I will ONLY work with private institutions that offer internships as part of their

   hospitality program.

    1. True

    2. False

8. Do foreign interns usually perform better than local ones?

    1. Yes

    2. No

9. Assuming there were no restrictions at all, you would prefer

    1. Interns from private institutions

    2. Interns from public institutions

10. Which of the following issues proved to be the most challenging to service delivery by interns at your workplace?

    A. Dealing with unimaginable guest requests,

    B. Service breakdown,

    C. Response during systems downtime,

    D. Response to workplace politics,

    E. Transformational changes

    F. Working in an unfamiliar environment

11. What are some of the multidisciplinary ways you think can be appropriate in improving tourism and hospitality courses and programmes for NIM students seeking internship?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Please rank each of the statements below using the following scale:

5=Strongly agree; 4=Agree; 3=Slightly agree; 2=Disagree; 1=Strongly disagree.

Variable	5	4	3	2	1
12. Internships reduce the risk of unemployment among foreign tourism and hospitality students					
13. As an organization, we try to foster a positive attitude towards work among our interns					
14. As an employer, I prefer recruiting students from specific institutions into our fold					
15. Educators collaborating with the industry market adds value to the student training programme					
16. Through internships, students build useful networks that reduce the risk of unemployment					

17. How does your organization liaise with training institutions to ensure graduates

possess the requisite attitudes, knowledge, abilities, and skills consistent with their

tourism and hospitality industry roles?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

18. How does implementing an internship program benefits the student and you as an

organization?

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19. Does your organization offer interns the experience that impacts associates and

improves their performance?

5= I strongly agree	4= I agree	3= I moderately agree	2 = I disagree	1= I strongly disagree

20. Does your organization have platforms for interns' engagement and feedback to

ensure they evolve with the company?

   A. Yes

   B. No

   C. Not sure

21. What factors do you consider instrumental to decision-making when students select internship employers?

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22. Which of the following job characteristics elicit high satisfaction levels among interns attached to your organization?

   A. Utilization of various skills

   B. Task identity

   C. Task significance

   D. Autonomy

   E. Feedback provision

23. Among the following contextual factors, which one do you perceive to have high influence on interns' satisfaction when attached to your organization?

   A. Pay

   B. Working hours

   C. Job location

   D. Commuting

   E. Employer Branding

24. Foreign interns from private institutions play a significant support to the tourism and hospitality industry.

   1. Agree

   2. Disagree

25. The option of providing internship opportunities as part of hospitality programs is
    crucial in attracting foreigners to Singapore as this would be an additional avenue for
    employers to tap on for reinforcing their labour.

    1. Strongly Disagree

    2. Somewhat Disagree

    3. Neither Agree nor Disagree

    4. Somewhat Agree

    5. Strongly Agree