

What are Required Basically by Users of a Hotel Internship Programme: Hard-skills or Soft-skills?

Prof. Anusorn Kunanusorn PhD.

Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna
Chiang Mai 50300, Thailand

I. Gede Darmawijaya

Bali Tourism Institute, Bali Indonesia

Chanita Chotisatankul

Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna
Chiang Mai Thailand

Kanlayarat Sawettanan

Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna
Chiang Mai Thailand

Usamas Rattanawong

Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna
Chiang Mai Thailand

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to identify the skills that internship students are required to have in the hotel industry. To achieve these objectives, this research used questionnaires and interviews to collect data from 44 tourism businesses. Interviewings and questionnaires were obtained from businesses in Bali, Indonesia and Chiang Mai, Thailand which are both tourism attraction locations. The analysis method used for this research was descriptive analysis. The results showed that soft-skills were preferred to hard-skills. The preferred soft- skills were intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, self-motivation skills, autonomous learning skills, time management skills, problem-solving skills, creativity skills, and adaptability skills. These soft-skills were not well acquired, so educational institutions need to design learning programmes that allow students to live with these competencies. The current collaboration needs to be reviewed to establish a common goal and benefits for both parties regarding the development of soft-skills. There would be some other languages such as Chinese, Japanese and Korean which are necessary that we did not consider in this study but very important in tourism nowadays and future.

Keywords: Internship, Soft-skills, Hard-skills

BACKGROUND

AQAN (2013) requires continuous quality improvement in higher education in ASEAN. Accordingly, users' feedback should be traced to ensure that the competencies of graduates meet their requirements. Article 9.1.2 on customer satisfaction in ISO 9001: 2015 mentions that organisations should monitor customer perceptions related to the fulfilment of their expectations by establishing appropriate methods to obtain, monitor, and review information from customers. The above two references require the products produced to be able to meet the needs and desires of the customers. In higher education, students are the products produced while customers are the users. Therefore, to find out whether the products produced can meet the needs and desires of customers, it is very important to obtain feedback by measuring customers' perception, because human resources play significant roles in value creation (Erislan, 2017).

According to Tesone and Ricci (2012), the hospitality industry should provide internship opportunities for hospitality students to strengthen their competencies and to enable the industry to gain feedback on student competencies. The vocational education system in Switzerland requires the hospitality industry to provide the widest possible opportunities for vocational higher education students to carry out an internship in an effort to prepare competent future employees (Singmaster, 2015). For tourism education institutions, this internship period is used as a vehicle to gain feedback on the quality of student competencies so that they can take corrective action for continuous improvement. Internships are very important, because 76 per cent of managers have confirmed that employees with adequate educational backgrounds and work experience are more competent (Liaman, 2014). The article demonstrates that quality education integrates the acquisition of competencies at schools and field experience strengthened by internship programmes. These two things are reciprocal. The teaching-learning process utilises the industry best practices, which require teachers to have industry experience, and the modules or teaching materials used are validated by practitioners.

Prior to undertaking an internship, students must pass the selection held by the user, in which experience, personality, behaviour, communication skills, interest in the property proposed (Ruiz, 2017), and most importantly attitude (Nithyanand, 2017) are important, because hard skills will be honed in training and development programmes. To be accepted by an internationally reputable tourism business that has a strong commitment to an internship programme, each student prepares the competencies required by the industry. In short, students need to have a "hire for attitude and train for skills" approach.

The next process after passing the selection is the internship. Users will measure students' performance in terms of soft skills and hard skills. Tourism education institutions strive to be the best by building a superior image through the achievement of students during their internship. The centre of excellence image should be built to show the true identity, not just vision exposure (Adams, 2017). To build the image, the institution can provide value to its customers. This involves the level of acceptance of students who pass the selection being high, for example over 80 per cent, and the performance is satisfactory, with the achievement of 10–20 per cent of students obtaining the title of the best trainee. Another measurement that should be used is the most important competencies that have been mastered at the time of selection and after following the internship programme. Above all, the ranking position of students' performance following an internship can be compared with that of students from other educational institutions.

The key performance indicators are set forth in the study programme's strategic plan. These indicators should be established and then introduced to all academics, education personnel, parents, and most importantly users with whom the students carry out an internship (Maertz Jr., Stoeberl, & Marks, 2014). Prior to the internship, soft skills and hard skills that support the achievement of appraisal success indicators are measured at least every semester. The measurement result is used as the basis of corrective action for continuous improvement.

The preliminary study of this research was conducted by gathering documents from the training department of the Bali Tourism Institute and holding interviews with training managers of some hotels in Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia, and some tourism businesses in Chiang Mai, Thailand. It was revealed that users perceived students in internship programmes to have low English proficiency, a lack of confidence, low ability to communicate, low ability to work under pressure, and low self-learning initiative. What was surprising was that some reputable higher education institutions had lower internship ratings than other educational institutions. This study became very significant, because it measured users' perception of students' competencies in an internship programme, highlighting the most important and missing competencies, which will be used to redesign the curriculum to meet the requirements of the users.

Based on the requirements of the users and the preliminary research findings mentioned above, the problem of this research could be identified: the students' competencies in internship programmes did not meet the users' requirements, so this process, internship, needs to be monitored and evaluated. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research to identify the most important and missing competencies in internship programmes as feedback for redesigning the curriculum.

Based on the background of the problem, the questions posed in this research were (1) "What is the perception of the users regarding the most important and missing competencies of students in internship programmes?" and (2) "What is the rank of student internship performance in tourism education institutions?" From this formulation of the problem, the purposes of this research were to determine (1) the perception of the users regarding the most important and missing competencies of students in internship programmes and (2) the rank of internship students' performance in tourism educational institutions in Bali and Chiang Mai.

The results of this study are expected to provide the following benefits:

- a. Tourism education institutions can develop a strategy for improving the quality of their internship programme. The head of the study programme needs to redesign the curriculum and formulate strategies to manage the teaching-learning process and the internship programme.
- b. Students may use these findings to improve the quality of their internship, accelerating the mastery of their competencies.
- c. For the development of science, these findings may be used as a reference in the development of learning in accordance with users' needs.

The scope of this study was users' perception of the most important and missing competencies of students in internship programmes, which included the acceptance rate in the selection process and the ranking of students' performance in the internship programmes in tourism education

institutions in Bali, Indonesia, and Chiang Mai, Thailand. This study made use of data from 44 businesses offering student internships, 9 of which were in Bali and 35 of which were in Chiang Mai.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This section covers four concepts, namely perception, users, performance, and internship. Perception is one's belief or opinion about something that has happened (Cambridge University Press, 1995). An expert stated that perception is an opinion about what has been experienced by someone (Blank, 2017). From these two definitions, it can be concluded that perception is an individual's judgement of an experience by way of giving his or her opinion about it. The concept of perception in this study is operationally defined as the assessment performed by training managers of trainees' acceptance rate in selection, the most important and most missing competencies, and the rank of internship performance in tourism education institutions in Bali and Chiang Mai.

Users are organisations or institutions that hire students as trainees. The users (respondents) in this study are the training managers of tourism businesses. The users have a very strategic position as the party that determines the requirements of the consumers. User assessment and recognition are essential to know the alignment of students' competencies with those required and used as a basis for corrective action. On the other hand, users also have a responsibility to provide trainees with learning, because learning is a shared responsibility (Kelly in Jarratt, Murphy, & Lowry, 1997).

Performance is the outcome of the completion of a task compared with the established standards or requirements (Business Dictionary, 2017). The performance of students in selection and internship is the level of acceptance, the required level of competencies, and the rank of the performance in tourism education institutions in Bali and Chiang Mai. The level of acceptance is the ratio between the number of interns applying for an internship at a hotel and the number of students accepted multiplied by 100 per cent. The higher the level of acceptance, the better the student's performance. Another aspect of performance is the mastery of competencies during selection and internship.

An internship is a learning process conducted in the industry in the form of a cooperative education programme (CEP) or on-the-job training (OJT). Curriculum improvement is needed for student internships through the involvement of major stakeholders (teachers, industry, and students) in the collaborative design of curriculum materials (Akomaning, 2019). Internship programmes have become an absolute requirement of vocational education. In the Sekolah Tinggi Pariwisata Nusa Dua Bali (STPNB) referred as Bali Tourism Institute, this programme is conducted for one semester for Diploma 3 (a three-year vocational programme equal to level 5 in the Indonesia Qualification Framework) and two semesters for Diploma 4 (a four-year vocational programme equal to level 6 in the Indonesia Qualification Framework). In the RMUTL, the internship is carried out in the fourth year for one semester for a bachelor's degree (a four-year programme equal to level 6 in the Thailand Qualification Framework). Internship learning materials are tailored to the learning achievements, referring to the graduate profile, and agreed by the head of the study programme, students, and learning managers from tourism businesses so that there is a common goal for effective internships.

Quality assurance of higher education is conducted by the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQMS) and External Quality Assurance System or EQMS (Ministry of Education, Office of Higher Education Commission Thailand, 2006; Ministry of Research and Technology for Higher Education Indonesia, 2016). This system is planned, implemented, evaluated, controlled, and developed by universities both in the academic (including education, research, and community services) and in the non-academic area (governance, human resources, finance, facilities, and infrastructure).

The IQMS operates through a cycle of activities, including planning, implementation, evaluation, control, and improvement (PIECI). Planning is the activity of determining standards established by the ministries. Implementation is a standard fulfilment activity, which is then evaluated to compare standards with implementation. Control analyses the factors that cause non-conformity to standards and takes corrective action. The latter is an improvement activity to avoid repeating the same mistakes to ensure continuous quality improvement.

In relation to the above, any academic or non-academic process must follow the PIECI quality assurance cycle. One of the most important processes in vocational education is internships, meeting the requirement of 60 per cent practicum activities. In addition, the proportion of lecturers who are practitioners is targeted at 50 per cent. Therefore, internships have become mandatory for vocational education programmes that will contribute to the proportion of 60 per cent practice and strengthen students' competencies through mentors at the time of learning in the industry.

Mastery of competencies during an internship is required by the Indonesian Qualification Framework (IQF) and the TQF in Thailand. Three- and four-year diploma programmes are equivalent to levels 5 and 6. Level 5 qualification requires the completion of a wide range of work, the selection of appropriate methods from various options that have not yet been standardised by analysing the data, and the ability to demonstrate the performance with measurable quality and quantity of work. At this level, students can master the theoretical concepts of a particular field of knowledge in general and are able to formulate the solution of procedural problems. Another ability is to manage a working group and prepare a comprehensive written report for their own and group work.

Meanwhile, the level 6 qualification requires the ability to apply the field of expertise and utilise science, technology, and/or art in the field in problem-solving and to adapt to the situation at hand. It is necessary to master the theoretical concepts of a particular field of knowledge in general and the theoretical concepts of a special section of the field of knowledge in depth and to be able to formulate solutions to procedural problems. Furthermore, the level allows the holders to make informed decisions based on the analysis of information and data, to provide guidance in choosing various alternative solutions independently, and to be responsible for their work and for the achievement of the work of the organisation.

The ability gained at the qualification level in the IQF and TQF is used as the basis for measuring students' ability at the time of internship. Internships give real experience to the trainees, because the real environment is in the workplace. Participants are able to become familiar with the working atmosphere that they will face every day. Thus, this type of training is superior to off-the-job training in terms of the working atmosphere, the working relationships, and all the resources

used. As explained in the previous concepts, the performance of vocational educational institutions can be measured using the acceptance rate in the selection process of internships. Quantitatively, the measurement is performed by calculating the acceptance rate. Qualitatively, this first measurement is accompanied by a competency control analysis that specifies user-defined requirements.

Selection is the process of choosing the right person to occupy a particular position. Positions are referred to in the tourism business as trainee level, apprentice, rank and file, supervisor, department head, manager, and general manager. Peter Drucker stated that selection is a very important process and takes a long time because it has a huge impact on the survival of the organisation (Woods, 2006). This indicates that the decision taken regarding the selection, acceptance, or rejection of an applicant has implications for the performance of the individual concerned and the institution from which he or she originated. The selection decision is made after obtaining input from several parties, including the personnel or human resource department (Kavanaugh, 2001). The other parties involved in selection are the user departments that conduct the assessment of the applicant's key competencies. Decisions are made after several selection stages, such as written tests, interviews, and practice (Woods, 2006). Written tests are usually conducted on foreign language competencies, such as English, and basic skills, such as honesty, consistency, interests, creativity, and independence, while interviews are performed to determine the physical condition of applicants and cross-check the suitability of their curriculum vitae and their answers or recognition. Practical tests are performed in jobs that require special skills that it is difficult for the two previous selection methods to reveal. Another type of performance is the control of competencies at the time of internship. Competency mastery is associated with the acquisition of user requirements. In this case, the competencies measured are soft competencies and hard competencies. Measurements are made by comparing the required competencies and the missing competencies.

Validity in the selection process is achieved through employee performance appraisal. In regard to internship programmes, it is very important to identify the mastery of soft and hard competencies. In this process, the mentor or training manager will be able to determine the main competencies for an occupation that can be mastered during the internship. This appraisal process is carried out with the mechanisms used in the internship and the results issued at the end of the internship programme.

To be accepted for an internship, each applicant must know the competencies required by the users. The following are the opinions of experts about the value/characteristics/competencies required by users. The competencies required by employers, which have been proposed by experts, in general, confirmed the concept proposed by Nithyanand (2017), which stated: "hire for attitude, train for skills". "Attitude" is related to soft skills and "skill" is related to hard skills. Of the 35 competencies sought by employers, only two were related to hard skills, namely competencies in accordance with their position and computing, as shown in Table 1.

Higher education institutions in the field of tourism require high quality in every business process. An internship is an academic business process that is crucial in determining the quality of excellent graduates. Therefore, the learning process conducted before the internship process refers to the requirements of the users, so students have a high acceptance level and become top

performers due to their capability to acquire all the necessary competencies. This business process is managed by the study programme as an organ that is responsible for the quality of graduates.

All users have their own mechanism for selecting the students who will perform an internship. The criteria for selection are determined in accordance with the requirements of each position and the general competencies that must be possessed by each applicant. Selection is performed gradually, starting with portfolio screening and general competences revealed through an interview conducted by the personnel department and then continuing with the departments concerned as users. The last screening is carried out by a general manager or someone assigned by the management representatives at the final stage. The results of this selection are students who are accepted or rejected for internship programmes. Then the internship programme commences. At this stage, students will have mentors to facilitate their learning process. At the end of the programme, students will undergo a comprehensive evaluation from the training department in the form of final marks completed with descriptions.

Table 1 Competencies Required by Users

Proposed by	Competencies
Liaman (2014)	1. Willingness to learn more and be coached 2. Openness to change 3. Problem solver 4. Willing to take risk 5. High-quality work 6. Creativity and innovation 7. Critical thinking
Gehrels (2007)	8. Optimistic 9. Energetic and passionate 10. Pride in work and show enjoyment 11. Self-motivated
Tesone and Ricci (2012)	12. Admit mistakes 13. High personal presentation 14. Demonstrate ability rather than moaning 15. Trustworthy/resilient 16. Team player 17. Ability to sell and influence others 18. Willingness to do more than expected 19. Learning to learn/metacognition 20. Require little supervision and direction 21. Inspire others 22. Be a role model 23. Focus on reducing costs and increasing profit margins
Beggs, Ross, and Goodwin (2008)	24. ITC literate 25. Able to prioritise 26. Able to respond positively 27. Smooth disputes 28. Interest in employers 29. Personal and social responsibility, including cultural awareness 30. Fit into the company culture 31. Fit into the position based on knowledge, skills, and capacity
Johanson, Ghiselli, Shea, and Roberts (2010)	32. Have good time management 33. Communication and collaboration/teamwork 34. Citizenship – local and global 35. Life and career balance

The result of this discussion of selection and internship was used as a reference in collecting data for this research. The data collected were the rank of internship students compared with students from other institutions and their most important and the most missing competencies. The findings of this analysis were the rank of students in tourism education institutions and the competencies that must be considered and improved in the learning process. These findings were also used to measure the achievement of an institution's vision in accordance with predetermined milestones.

This is an ongoing process, in which education institutions have to obtain continuous feedback from the users regarding the competencies needed to work in the industry. An internship programme is one academic process that should be monitored and evaluated so that the findings can be used to review and revise the curriculum and its teaching and learning processes.

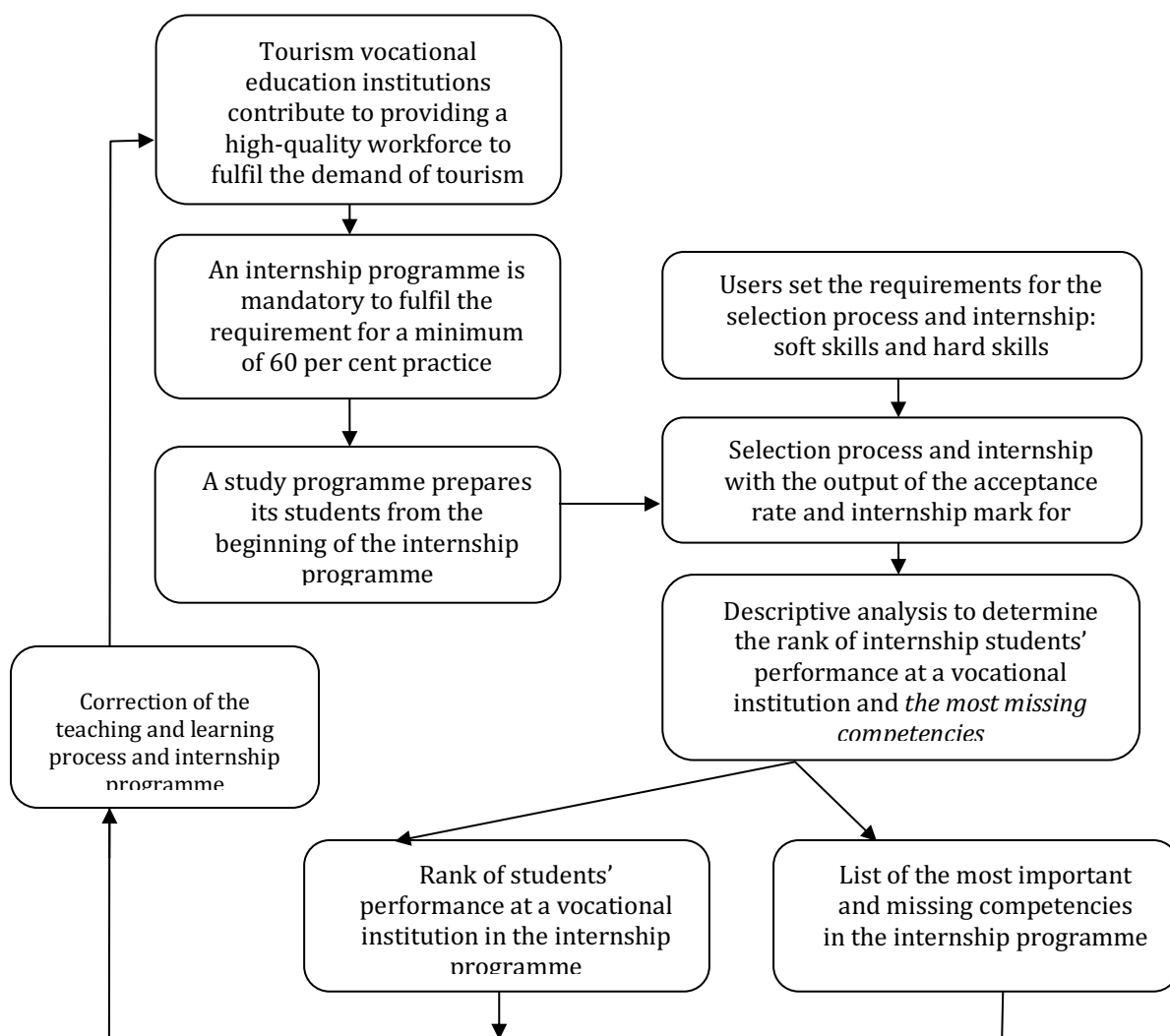


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was qualitative research, but it is more likely to be called comprehensive research, which is used to avoid the risk of abstract actors, circulatory, and equifinality (Dana & Dumez, 2015). It was conducted on tourism businesses in Bali, Indonesia, and Chiang Mai, Thailand, that

cooperated with tourism education institutions in a student internship programme. The study was conducted in the second half of 2017. The reasons for selecting Bali and Chiang Mai as locations for the research were; first, both cities are famous and attractive tourist destinations worldwide; second, both the RMUTL and the STP school offer a tourism curriculum and are well known for training students for the tourism industry; third, both cities have international chain hotels and tourism agencies; and, fourth, the RMUTL and STP have joint and cooperative academic programmes.

The population in this study consisted of all tourism businesses that cooperated with tourism education institutions. The sample in this research was chosen by using the purposive sampling approach. Of the total of 75 selected tourism businesses, 44 responded, and it was considered that the data were sufficient to assess the users' perception of competencies in internship programmes.

There was one variable in this study, which was the competencies required by the users for students who undertook an internship in a tourism business. The instrument in this study was a questionnaire that focused on the competency variable required by the users for students carrying out an internship in a tourism business.

The data collection procedure used in this study was to send out a mail questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed to 75 training managers of tourism businesses as samples. To clarify the data, interviews were conducted with training managers to discuss the competencies selected, both the most important and the most missing competencies. The results were then triangulated to strengthen the study (Golafshani, 2003) by asking the human resource officers to reach a consensus on the data collected. In the end, only the agreed-upon criteria were used in the data analysis.

The data in this research were qualitative and included the acceptance rate in the selection process and students' performance rank in internship programmes, while the qualitative data were in the form of the most important competencies required by the businesses and the most missing competencies of the students.

This study used descriptive analysis to rank students' performance in an internship programme, based on the acceptance rate and the most important and missing competencies during the internship programme. The procedure for data analysis in this research was as follows: (1) tabulate the level of the acceptance rate in the internship selection process, (2) compare the level of the acceptance rate in the internship selection process with that of students from other institutions, (3) tabulate the most important competencies and the most missing competencies of students in the selection and internship process, (4) interpret the rank of students' performance in the selection and internship process based on the most important competencies and the most missing competencies, and (5) draw a conclusion.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The tourism businesses used as the source of data in this study are 44 out of the 75 tourism businesses that were given the questionnaire. The location distributions are 9 in Bali Indonesia and 35 in Chiang Mai Thailand. Characteristics of data sources can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2 Characteristics of the Data Sources

No.	Criteria	Total
1	Number of Tourism Businesses	44
2	Location	
	• Bali, Indonesia (9)	20%
	• Chiang Mai, Thailand (35)	80%
3	Kind of Tourism Businesses	
	• Hotels (31)	71%
	• Travel Agents (5)	11%
	• Airlines and Airport Services (5)	11%
	• Spas (2)	5%
	• Restaurants (1)	2%

Source: Data processed by authors

The numbers of respondents were quite different since the response rate in Bali was quite small while the response rate in Chiang Mai was much higher. This finding indicated that RMUTL relationship was tighter and had consequences for higher participation. The STPNB needs to review its collaboration scheme to elevate mutual support and benefits, but an even larger number of respondents of the RMUTL still need to improve their collaboration with tourism businesses.

The Acceptance Rate in the Internship Selection Process

Compared with other students, the acceptance rate for the Bali Tourism Institute's (Sekolah Tinggi Pariwisata Nusa Dua, Bali, abbreviated in the Indonesian language as STPNB) students in the internship selection process was the highest, 60 per cent, among the schools in Bali. The acceptance rate for the RMUTL's students was 51 per cent. It can be concluded that the STPNB's acceptance rate in the internship selection process is still higher than that of other educational institutions. For the RMUTL, there were no data from the respondents indicating comparison with other institutions. This rate was considered to be low. As the centre of excellence, the rate should be more than 85 per cent due to the many higher education and vocational institutions that offer a tourism programme in Chiang Mai.

The Most Important Competencies Required for Students in an Internship Programme

The interviews and questionnaires revealed that ten competencies were required by the hotels in internship programmes, ranked from the most important to the least important, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 The Most Important Competencies Required by Tourism Businesses for Internship Students

Bali		Chiang Mai	
No.	Competencies	No.	Competencies
1	Interpersonal skills	1	Willingness to do more than expected
2	English	2	Willingness to learn more and be coached
3	Job skills	3	Communication skills and
4	Personal	4	collaboration/teamwork
5	presentation	5	High-quality work
6	Communication skills	6	Be able to respond positively
7	Willingness to learn	7	Creativity and innovation
8	Time management	8	Learning to learn/metacognition
9	Adaptability	9	Openness to change
10	Be a role model	10	Personal and social responsibility – including
	Strive for excellence		cultural awareness
			Pride in work and showing enjoyment

Source: Data processed from the interviews and questionnaires.

Interpersonal skills/interpersonal relationships were the most important competencies required by the hotels, followed by English competencies according to the job. These findings confirmed the concept of “hire for attitude, train for skills”. Education institutions should focus their efforts on developing skills related to interpersonal relationships. These competencies are based on a positive attitude so that the behaviour that appears on the surface will be sincere. For example, personal relationship skills in helping a co-worker based on a positive mindset would build a positive attitude so that the working relationship is comfortable.

According to Agus, an Assistant Manager of Learning & Development at Conrad Hotel in Bali, “A student must build self-image by doing things more than expected and showing high learning willingness”. Personal growth only occurs when individuals consciously organise their learning programme so that their senior colleagues can help them to develop themselves. According to Whetten and Cameron (2011, p. 145), a person has to have a personal principle to prioritise the activities to be performed that have a direct positive impact on their goals. Personal principles will encourage a person to determine the priority of activities. Examples of personal principle statements include those by Mahatma Gandhi – “I shall not fear anyone on earth” and “I shall conquer untruth by truth” – and William Rolfe Kerr – “Success at home first” and “Never compromise with honesty”. These principles guide students always to stay on the right track to make their goals attainable.

To develop students with strong hospitality and leadership characteristics, schools had to build a personal principle statement for each student as a foundation for thinking, speech, and action. The skills required by the hotels were used as a reference to build personal principles. These principles were internalised and used as a habit in academic or non-academic cultures. It could be achieved by creating a supportive learning environment, and each course was required to build the skill. The ten most important competencies required by the tourism businesses were interpersonal skills, English proficiency, job skills, personal presentation, communication skills,

willingness to learn, time management, adaptability, being a role model, and striving for excellence.

The common findings between Bali and Chiang Mai were categorised into four categories. These were language proficiency, interpersonal relationships, self-management, and hard skills. Regarding language proficiency, HR managers in both places agreed that communication, especially the English language, was still an issue. Students' English proficiency was at a very basic level. Tourism businesses expected students to be able to speak English at the upper intermediate level to be able to fill positions on the frontline and managerial levels. Their score for the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), for instance, should be more than 600. Interpersonal relationships were related to students' ability to communicate with customers and co-workers. This competency was critical since tourism is a people business. The products mean nothing if employees are not able to deliver them effectively to customers to their satisfaction. The third category was self-management. It is related to self-motivation, time management, pride in work, and openness to change. Without good self-management or intra-relationship competency, managing others would be challenging. The last category was hard skills. These were related to the competencies of the core job: safety, security, preparation, production, service delivery, marketing, finance, human resources, and quality assurance.

The Most Missing Competencies of the Students in the Selection Process

The three most missing competencies in the internship selection process were English, self-confidence, and personal appearance. The other competencies are shown in Table 4. Therefore, these three main competencies should be a major concern in preparing students for internship selection. The head of a study programme is responsible for developing the three competencies to increase the acceptance rate of internships during the selection process.

The most missing competencies were grouped into categories. The communication category included a lack of listening, calmness, speech, body language, emotional control, smiling, eye contact, personal appearance, and body odour. The category of self-management included internal motivation, time management, focus, optimism, creativity, role modelling, understanding, openness to change, and adaptability. The last category included good customer relationships, contribution to the team, problem-solving, decision making, and the best job results.

Hard competencies were shown to have been acquired less than soft competencies. These included job competencies in accordance with the competencies of the study programme, both general and special competencies. This showed that the curriculum still needs attention and a review to design it in line with the industry's needs, today and in the future.

There were slight differences between the findings for Bali and those for Chiang Mai. Businesses in Bali expected greater English language proficiency and self-management, while those in Chiang Mai preferred a work-life balance and the ability to have a quality life and work. This finding was true when the working place in Chiang Mai was very private and looked more like a home, with many personal belongings for relaxation and refreshment. They also expected students to have a greater ability to solve problems by being critical, creative, and innovative. One point to take into account in these findings was the high demand for being a supervisor or an assistant manager equal to levels 5 and 6 of the qualification frameworks.

Table 4 The Most Missing Competencies in the Internship Selection Process

Bali		Chiang Mai	
No.	Competencies	No.	Competencies
1	English	1	Fit the position based on knowledge, skills, and
2	Self-confidence	2	capacity
3	Personal appearance	3	Citizenship – local and global
4	Job skills	4	Life and career balance
5	Self-motivation	5	Problem solver
6	Time management	6	Able to prioritise
7	Being a role model	7	Critical thinking
8	Eye contact	8	Willing to take risk
9	Professional body	9	Team player
10	language	10	Inspire other
	Calmness		Open to change

Source: Data processed from the interview and questionnaire results.

The Most Missing Competencies in Internship Programmes

Not particularly different from the most missing competencies in selection, the three most missing competencies in internship programmes were English, communication, and interpersonal relationships. Meanwhile, the top ten from rank four were willing to learn, time management, job skills, problem-solving, being a role model, self-confidence, and self-motivation. This suggests that self-management skills need more attention. With good self-management skills, students would be able to conduct self-evaluation and recognise the gap between the skills owned and the skills expected according to their dream career. Other missing skills are shown in Table 5.

From Table 5, it can be seen that internship students should have self-management skills with high self-motivation, willingness to learn, willingness to work with less supervision, creativity, problem-solving with the ability to make the right decisions, openness to change, and excellent quality of work. Highly satisfying teamwork results could be achieved through high leadership skills with a sufficient span of control towards a common goal set. In essence, internship students could achieve high performance if they are able to manage themselves, contribute highly to team performance, and produce high quality of work while maintaining harmonious relationships with colleagues and customers.

The most missing competencies in Bali's and Chiang Mai's findings, both for selection and for internships, were quite similar. Bali's tourism business practitioners expected more English language proficiency and self-management, while those in Chiang Mai preferred to have self-motivated students with aims to achieve a work-life balance and the ability to have quality life and work.

Table 5 The Most Missing Competencies in Apprenticeships

Bali		Chiang Mai	
No.	Competencies	No.	Competencies
1	English	1	Self-motivated
2	Communication	2	Being a role model
3	skills	3	Life and career balance
4	Interpersonal skills	4	Inspire others
5	Willingness to learn	5	Require little supervision and direction
6	Time management	6	Fit the position based on knowledge, skills, and capacity
7	Job skills	7	Interest in employers
8	Problem solving	8	Citizenship – local and global
9	Being a role model	9	Problem solver
10	Self-confidence	10	Personal and social responsibility, including cultural awareness
	Self-motivation		

Source: Data processed from the interviews and questionnaires.

Ranking of STPNB and RMUTL Students' Performance Compared with Other Students in Internship Programmes

Reviewing the performance rankings, STPNB students' internship performance was ranked as the best or had the highest internship performance compared with students from other higher education institutions. These advantages lay in the strength of their basic working skills, and attitudes. Based on interviews with the Director of HR of the Holiday Inn, Putu Hartana, "STPNB students are still the best, but there are plenty of rooms for improvement". STPNB students needed to strengthen their entrepreneurial spirit with a strong owner mindset and turn their worker spirit into an entrepreneur's or business owner's spirit, so they could work hard and be smart and sincere. With the quality of this characteristic, the students could work with little supervision, produce high-quality work, show high willingness to learn, carry out more than expected, always show the best work result, be a role model, and always be part of the solution.

The findings showed that the RMUTL's students were ranked 2.11 in the selection process among the education institutions in Chiang Mai, but the rank was higher for the internship programme, which scored 1.97. This finding meant that the students of the RMUTL made quite a good improvement in the internship programme.

Users' Recommendations to Improve the Quality of Internship Programmes

Based on the results of the interviews and questionnaires, HR/training managers recommended that educational institutions should engage in more intensive communication related to the internship period, number of students, assessment criteria, and internship appraisal. This communication would increase the closeness of the relationship, so that a hotel, for example, would have a better comprehension of the internship programme. So far, education institutions' relationship with tourism businesses had not been well managed with clear goals, an assigned person in charge (PIC), and a plan, do, check, and act (PDCA) approach to the management of internship programmes.

Therefore, first, an agreement should be made on the sustainability of internships, regarding both the number of students and the internship period. This would provide certainty for the businesses, for example in the continuity of the number of students participating in the internship based on

the businesses' needs. Second, there should be an exchange of information related to the school's internship and the internship model already provided by the businesses. These two parties should be able to harmonise their respective objectives so that the goals of both parties can be achieved. Third, the evaluation is absolutely necessary for improvement purposes. At the end of the internship period, the two parties need to conduct an internship review meeting for the purposes of evaluating, developing action plans for improvement, and making continuous improvements.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion in the previous section, the following conclusions can be made:

- a. The most important competencies required by tourism businesses for internships were mostly soft competencies rather than hard ones. These were interpersonal relations; self-management; and hard skills like English and competencies related to the core job: safety, security, preparation, production, service delivery, marketing, finance, human resources, and quality assurance.
- b. The most missing competencies in the selection process of internships were English and job competencies followed by soft competencies: self-confidence; personal appearance; self-motivation; time management; role models; eye contact; professional body language; calmness; citizenship – local and global; life and career balance; problem-solving; ability to prioritise; critical thinking; willingness to take the risk; team player; inspiring others; and openness to change.
- c. The most missing competencies in internship programmes for both STPNB and RMUTL students were English; communication skills; interpersonal skills; willingness to learn; time management; job skills; problem-solving; being a role model; self-confidence; self-motivation; life and career balance; inspiring other; requiring little supervision and direction; interest in employers; and citizenship – local and global.
- d. In their respective region, STPNB internship students' performance was ranked the highest while RMUTL students' performance was ranked second but was better in internships than in selection.
- e. The results from the research can be generalised to other areas where hotels and travel agencies are available, since competencies are very important to tourism staff; however, culture and custom are mediating factors. Indonesia and Thailand are in Asia and in the same zone, but the culture in Asia may be different from that in other parts of the world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the following actions are recommended:

- a. For the STPNB and RMUTL, (a) review the curriculum to fit the current and future industry needs so that the requirements for soft competencies and hard competencies can be met. Besides, (b) it is necessary to make a clear-cut separate assignment between the head of the study programme and the internship department for managing an internship programme so that the quality of the internship can be improved. A lecturer should be assigned to handle the subject who is responsible for establishing the study programme's training manuals, pre-internship briefing manual, networking manual, monitoring manual, and evaluation manual. The study programme also needs to set internship KPIs, such as the acceptance rate in top companies, performance rank, and percentage of students earning the best trainee awards.

- b. Tourism businesses' training managers should set requirements and internship plans to be communicated to the school and agreed so that the internship programme can benefit both parties.
- c. Once the curriculum and internship plan have been developed, both parties need to review them together to validate the documents before approval and implementation.
- d. Regarding the implications of the study and its contributions to business and globalisation, if the needs of hotels and travel agencies are met by producing competent employees, their efficiency and effectiveness can be improved. Hotels will be able to have qualified, competent, and well-trained employees, who will raise the standard of service in the tourism industry.
- e. Further study can be carried out to elaborate specifically on the concepts of soft and hard skills revealed in this research so that the concepts revealed can be implemented and measured.

References

- Adams, J. (2017, 13 May). Five ways to build a strong brand image for your company. Adams Knight. www.adamsknight.com
- Akomaning, E. (2019). Improving student internship through collaborative curriculum design: Needs and context analysis to inform the design process. In J. Pieters, J. Voogt, & N. Pareja Roblin (Eds). Cham: Springer.
- AQAN (2013). The ASEAN Quality Assurance Network. Downloaded from www.passcu.org.ph.
- Beggs, B., Ross, C. M., & Goodwin, B. (2008). A comparison of student and practitioner perspectives of the travel and tourism internship. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 7(1), 31–39.
- Blank, C. (2017, 14 May). Consumer perception theory. Hearst Newspaper, LLC. www.smallbusiness.chron.com
- Business Dictionary. (2017, 21 May). Performance. Web Finance Inc. www.businessdictionary.com
- Cambridge University Press. (1995). *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*. United Kingdom: The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.
- Dana, L. P., & Dumez, H. (2015). Qualitative research revisited: Epistemology of a comprehensive approach. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship & Small Business*, 26(2), October, 154–170.
- Erislan, N. A. (2017). The role of tourist attraction & uniqueness of resources on value creation in the tourist destination. *International Journal of Business and Globalisation*, 19, 191. 10.1504/IJBG.2017.085926
- Gehrels, S. A. (2007). How hospitality industry managers' characteristics could influence hospitality management curricula. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 5(2), 37–48.
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597–606. <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol8/iss4/6>
- ISO 9001 (2015). *International Standard ISO 9001:2015 Quality management systems — Requirements*. Ch. de Blandonnet 8 • CP 401 CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva, Switzerland
- Jarratt, D. G., Murphy, T., & Lowry, D. (1997). Building customer relationships: A model for vocational education and training delivery. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 49(4), 598.
- Johanson, M., Ghiselli, R., Shea, L. J., & Roberts, C. (2010). Revealing key competencies of hospitality graduates demanded by industry: A 25-year review. *International CHRIE Conference – Refereed, Track 5*.
- Kavanaugh, R. R. (2001). *Supervision in the hospitality industry*. Lansing, MI: AHLAI.
- Liaman, A. (2014). *Competencies and qualifications of staff and management in hospitality establishments*. Prague: Institute of Hospitality Management.

Kunanusorn, A., Darmawijaya, I. G., Chotisatankul, C., Sawettanan, K., & Rattanawong, U. (2021). What are Required Basically by Users of a Hotel Internship Programme: Hard-skills or Soft-skills? *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 8(3) 505-521.

Maertz Jr, C. P., Stoeberl, P. A., & Marks, J. (2014). Building successful internships: Lessons from the research for interns, schools, and employers. *Career Development International*, 19(1), 123–142.

Ministry of Education, Office of Higher Education Commission Thailand. (2006). National qualifications framework for higher education in Thailand. Implementation handbook. Thailand.

Ministry of Research and Technology for Higher Education. (2016). Regulation No 62/2016 regarding internal quality assurance system. Indonesia.

Nithyanand, S. (2017, 13 May). Featured profiles. Aspiring Minds. www.aspiringminds.com

Ruiz, J. (2017, 13 May). Career advice. Totaljobs Group Ltd. <https://www.caterer.com>

Singmaster, H. (2015). Learning from the best: Designing an effective, high-quality CTE system. Virginia: Association for Career and Technical Education.

Tesone, D. V., & Ricci, P. (2012). Hospitality industry expectations of entry-level college graduates: Attitude over aptitude. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 1, 140–149.

Whetten, D. A., & Cameron, K. S. (2011). Developing management skills. NJ: Pearson.

Woods, R. H. (2006). Managing hospitality human resources. Lansing, MI: AHLEI.