

# **To Study the Impact of Internship Program on Career Development Perception of Hospitality Students**

**Dr. Deepa Prasad Venkatraman<sup>1</sup>**

Professor

Department of Management Sciences (PUMBA)  
SavitribaiPhule Pune University, Ganeshkhind, Pune-411007

**Ms. Sarika Joshi<sup>2</sup>**

Research Scholar

Dr. D. Y. Patil Institute of Hotel Application & Management, Akurdi, Pune

**Ms. Prajakta Parasnis<sup>3</sup>**

Research Scholar

Dr. D. Y. Patil Institute of Hotel Application & Management, Akurdi, Pune

## **Abstract:**

The key objective of the study is to analyze the students' satisfaction levels after completing their internship at the hotel. Another objective was to check, depending on their internship experience, whether the students would further like to continue in the field of Hospitality. The study also helped to identify different sectors of Hospitality that the students would like to join after completing the graduation. However, as some students may not have a satisfactory experience during the internship, they may like to shift their interest in another field. Hence this study would help analyze the transition of hotel management graduate students to other allied sectors for their career development. The primary data for the study was collected through a set of controlled questionnaire which was forwarded to the students of Hotel Management institutes who have completed their internship program. Data thus collected was analyzed with the help of bar graphs and pie chart. The findings suggested that the students were happy with their industry exposure. Due to this most of them want to rejoin the same hotel property. However as there are multiple avenues available to the hotel management graduates the study could gauge multiple preferences of the students for career path.

**Keywords:** Internship, Hotel Management

## **Definition:**

**Internship:** As per Merriam- Webster, an internship is defined as “an advanced student or graduate usually in a professional field (such as medicine or teaching) gaining supervised practical experience (as in a hospital or classroom).”

## **Introduction:**

The Oxford English dictionary explains internship as, “The position of a student or trainee who works in an organization, sometimes without pay, in order to gain work experience or satisfy requirements for a qualification.” As per this definition the interns are the beginners, learners and also considered to be employees of an organization.

Tourism industry is growing continuously. It offers variety of products to the customers. That is how the tourism industry is proving to be one of the topmost emerging economic sectors in the world. Tourism industry is looked upon as an important industry for the socio-economic growth of a nation.

This is a service industry which needs skillful workforce to handle the increasing demands of the customers. The tourism sector is experiencing tough competition at global level. But in reality the industry does not have trained and skilled employees. The skilled staff is needed for a maintainable and balanced growth of a business. Some basic skills like interpersonal, communication, problem solving, etc. are essential for the employees working in hospitality sector. Additional skills like cultural skills, emotional intelligence, curiosity, honesty to new perspectives and influences, cross-cultural negotiations, managing uncertainty and complexity in international business environments, international adjustment and adaptability, and self-management are required and prove to be critical in building students career at the international level.

Education and training in Hospitality sector plays an important role in developing competencies and quality workforce. This will help in reducing the skill gap between the requisite of the industry and the education provided by the institutes of tourism education.

Education and work can be seen as two sides of the same coin. Both should be equally contributing to the quality of life and career of an individual. The system of internship is planned to apply the resources of organization to change individuals, on the base of theoretical knowledge and educational process, into graduates. They are capable of contributing to organization as well as the society. Higher education is giving an emphasis on the activity based learning, in the form of an internship. It is one of the most significant concepts in workforce development policy. The main concept behind this encouragement for work-based learning is that hands-on experience. It complements academic programs and classroom learning in real-world contexts.

Internships are always proving to be beneficial for all the stakeholders. It can be seen as a win-win-situation for all. Students can get hands on experience, face real-world situations and create professional networks which can be beneficial for the career. Educational institutes can give their students an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge into practice. Internship benefits the employers as well by providing low-cost and accomplished workforce. These trainees may turn to be the prospective hires. Moreover, internships are gradually perceived as an approach to bridge the so-called "skills gap," as the trained interns or tourism and hospitality graduates are the ones who would be the employees of that organization in future. This will basically provide solutions to problems faced by local labor markets and will improve local economies.

Based on the internship experience, some students may decide to begin their career in tourism and hospitality sector. Therefore, it becomes essential for students to understand the importance of internship. It should be treated as integral part of their education and knowledge. It would be easier to attain the educational objectives of the academic platform and students will be more confident and equipped to be a part of the tourism and hospitality industry. This is possible when they gain knowledge through both the parts of their education, which is theory and practical. Considering the involvement of both, students and industry, it is essential to know the

opinion of both the practitioner and the student intern about the internship. The expected outcomes are equally important in order to guarantee that the internship experience fulfills the needs of both parties.

To deliver a good quality internship experience, it is also important for the educational institutes, industry & employers and students to have similar views and outlooks towards the process of internship. It is suggested that the employers and human resource managers in the hospitality and tourism sector must understand the future perceptions and career choices of students. The industry experts have to understand that the career choice can be influenced by the experience of internship of a student. The first impression of the tourism and hospitality industry is created during their internships. Based on the same, the students decide upon the career path in hospitality and tourism industry. The experience during internship can either improve or harm the reputation and picture of the industry. To create a quality internship experience, it is essential to provide properly supervised internship program. This would enable the students to have proper hands-on experience.

**Scope and Limitations of the study:**

- As the study focused on the Internship as a part of syllabus of Hotel Management institutes, students from the major Hotel management institutes in Pune region was a part of this study.
- Also the respondents of this study were the students who have completed either sixteen weeks or twenty weeks of industrial training.
- The scope of this study is applicable to interns either trained in India or abroad.

**Literature Review:**

**Adelia Samantha Sabirin, Munawaroh and Robert La Are (2018)** in their research, aimed to find out the impact of internship in career development of the students. The study was limited for Swiss German University student pursuing Hotel and Tourism Management. The responses were collected from 100 students. The simple linear regression was used in this research for regression computation and other necessary calculations. The benefits of the internship are Developing job and career related skills. Providing career related information to the students to help them in deciding upon their careers. The recommendations were, students should be proactive in learning. They should use the internship period for acquiring skills. Internship should be seen as beginning of the career. A structured internship program should be designed by employers. The internship program should be constantly supervised. Internship can motivate students to join the industry. Internship program should be used to expose the students to the industry and the expectations of the employers.

**Erwin Losekoot, EarneyLasten, Anne Lawson and Beverly Chen (2018)** in their study discussed the role of Industrial Training in developing soft skills in students. This experience adds to the hard skills learn at the educational establishments. The paper argues that the internship provides an opportunity for the employers to promote their organizations for

employment. The researchers used exploratory method to analyze the data collected from training diaries. The authors have used the training diaries of the students to collect the feedback on internship. The researchers have identified the some of the soft skills being developed in the students along with the hard skills. They are Communication skills, Professionalism, Teamwork; Personal development. The paper suggests that the industry can use internship as an opportunity to develop interest of the future employees by providing them hands on training of the procedures which are followed in the industry. The study found that soft skills are more important than the hard skills in hospitality sector. The employers suggest that the future managers must possess soft skills to have a successful career in hospitality industry.

**Dr Dario Šimičević, Dr Snežana Štetić (June 2017)** focused on the perception of students about internship and training program which is a part of the syllabus in tourism courses. The perceptions of the students were studied through the questionnaire distributed amongst students. The importance of the internship program was also studied from employment point of view. The satisfaction levels during internship were also studied.

The conclusions of the paper are, Service industry requires quality human resource. Inadequate quality human resource can lead to guest satisfaction. Apart from theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge is essential for developing skills. Tourism industry is looking for the candidates who are well equipped with skills and right attitude so that they can become a part of the operations. Industry is not inclined towards training new recruits and incurring extra costs. The internship programs are introduced to develop the skills in students. Students on the other hand are aware of the importance of internship and show interest in the same. Students feel that internships help them in acquiring practical knowledge and eventually better job opportunities. Operative skills acquired during internship add to the theoretical knowledge.

**Kiran Mayilmaneni, Dr. Vedala Naga Sailaja (December 2017)** in the research paper 'Industrial Exposure Training in Hotels and its Impact on Under Graduate Students – Challenges and Remedies' stated that the hospitality industry is guest oriented industry. Such business requires effective communication between the guests and the employees. The industry expects the employees to possess certain skills to serve the guests. Industrial Exposure Training (IET) plays an important role in developing these skills in the students. It is said that the first impression created lasts forever. The students must get positive experience from the industry. This will help to create a favorable picture of hospitality industry. Industrial training also helps in setting the students their career goals. The immediate supervisors have an important role to play in guiding the students throughout the training program. Industrial training provides hands on experience to the students which can be related with the theoretical knowledge.

**Codruța Adina BĂLTESCU (2016)**, 'A View Point of the Undergraduate Tourism Students from the Transilvania University of Brașov' talked about importance of practical experience which the students can get through internship program. The students can understand the theoretical concepts clearly with hands on experience. The perception of the final year students pursuing master's degree program with specialization in Tourism, Trade and Services was

studied regarding the internship program. The feedback can help to improve the syllabus which would be as per the needs and expectations of the students. The results of the analysis were that the students could have added knowledge through procedures. Students feel that the practical knowledge is superior to theoretical knowledge. The students also get an opportunity of networking through internship. It helps in placements. The practical experience gained in internship program will help the students in getting placed in the industry as well as in the future. For most of the students the practical experience was satisfactory, but for very few of them, the experience was quite unsatisfactory. The positive attitude of staff was a major aspect which contributed to the positive experience of internship

**Elroy Joseph C. Valdez, Sushmita Shiena B. Alcantara, Charlene A. Pamintuan, Jhona G. Relos, Romer C. Castillo (2015)**, studied the contribution of On the Job Training (OJT) in developing skills, competencies and personality of tourism students. Descriptive method and survey questionnaire was used for data collection. The respondents were 74 tourism graduates. The results show that the OJT program designed by university enhances skills in students like basic skills, thinking skills, personal qualities, competencies on resources, interpersonal skills, and use of information, systems and technology. The study suggests that the educational institutes should work in collaboration with industry partners in tourism sector. This can impart excellent trainings for students. International OJT can make the students universally competitive. The training coordinators from university should regularly monitor the training progression of students. The university may also consider the methods to improve the entrepreneurial skills of tourism students.

**Faruk Seyitog˘ lu and Sevket Yirik (2014)**, mentioned about internship satisfaction of students and the role of internship on the professional development. The paper also discusses the industry perception on internship program. The researchers developed a questionnaire to collect data and 305 tourism students were the respondents. Data was analyzed by using multiple regression analysis. The purpose of study was to analyze education in tourism sector and importance of internship for development of students. The study suggests that the students should have better stipend during internship so that they can manage their expenses. The stipend also proves to be a motivating factor for the students. Students should be paid for overtime as regular employees. The management should treat the interns the same way as regular employees. They should not be overburdened and should not be treated as cheap labor by the employers. This may create a negative impact on the students about hospitality and tourism sector. The employers should train the students with the hard skills as well as soft skills throughout the internship. The findings note that the internship satisfaction and formal education play a major role in professional development and creating positive perception of the industry.

**Samuel B. Owusu-Mintah, Michael Kissi (SEPTEMBER 2012)**, examined the effectiveness of internship in tourism studies. A sample of 205 tourism graduates in Ghana was selected by using snowball method of sampling. The research suggests that if the students want to meet the industry expectations, then the internship should be given more weightage and importance in the

curriculum. The researchers opine that the internship helps the students to get a clear picture of the industry. Data was collected by using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Structured questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data and personal interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data. The sample size was 232 students and 60 industry experts. The respondents were 205 students and 25 industry experts. As per the findings, the students' opinion about internship is; Students may be put on work for long hours. By the time the students start settling in the organization, the internship program comes to an end. The findings of the study stated that, the students understand the importance of internship. Industrial training helps the students in being well equipped for the placements. Some students did not opt for industrial training and did not have the required skills developed by the end of graduation program. There should be stronger collaboration between industry and the educational institutes. The study suggests that the industrial training should be incorporated in the syllabus as a compulsory component.

**Chen, Hu, Wang and Chen (2011)**, tried to explore positive and negative impact on behavior of college students in Taiwan. The experience of internship has different effects on students. Purposive sampling method was used to select the sample size. 543 students were interviewed who had completed internship. A questionnaire was designed to collect the responses from the students. The paper concludes with the findings like Students acquired valuable skills during internship. Students could develop interpersonal skills after working in an organization. Students felt that their efforts had paid them for better future. Praise from customers boosted confidence of the students. Tolerance levels and patience of the students were improved while handling different tasks. The internship helped the students to set their career goals. Students stated that they acquired professional knowledge and skills during internship. The study also recorded some negative experiences of students during internship, which are mentioned further. The students were disappointed as they had some unworkable expectations from industry. The study suggests that the further study can be undertaken to reduce the gap between expectation from the industry and the current scenario.

**Maree Ann Walo (2000)**, suggested that the hospitality graduates must possess the skills needed to serve in the industry. The curricula need to incorporate the techniques which would help the students to develop these skills. The practical exposure or industrial training helps in developing required skills in the graduates. The study focuses on the role of internship in developing the essential skills in the tourism and hospitality graduates. The research utilized 24 competencies to test the hypothesis. The study found that the internship program helped the students to have a clear picture of competencies required to be a manager. Simultaneously, the internship helped in developing the managerial competencies in the students at the end of the program. Empirical data was collected from students and managers from industry. The results show that the internship component of hospitality education is important and prepares the students for career in hospitality industry.

**Objectives of the study:**

1. To understand student’s satisfaction level of the internship experience
2. To identify various hospitality sectors that the students plan to join after graduation.
3. To analyze the transition of hospitality students to other allied sector for career development

**Research Methodology**

This study focused on the factors that influence the decision on internship preference amongst the Hospitality students. The study also explored the level of satisfaction of students with their internship experience. The study adopted questionnaire method, where a set of structured questionnaire was circulated to the students of various Hotel Management institutes in Pune region. The respondents are the students have completed the internship (either sixteen weeks or twenty weeks) in different hotels in India or abroad in various core departments. The sample size for the study is seventy five such students from various institutes of hotel management.

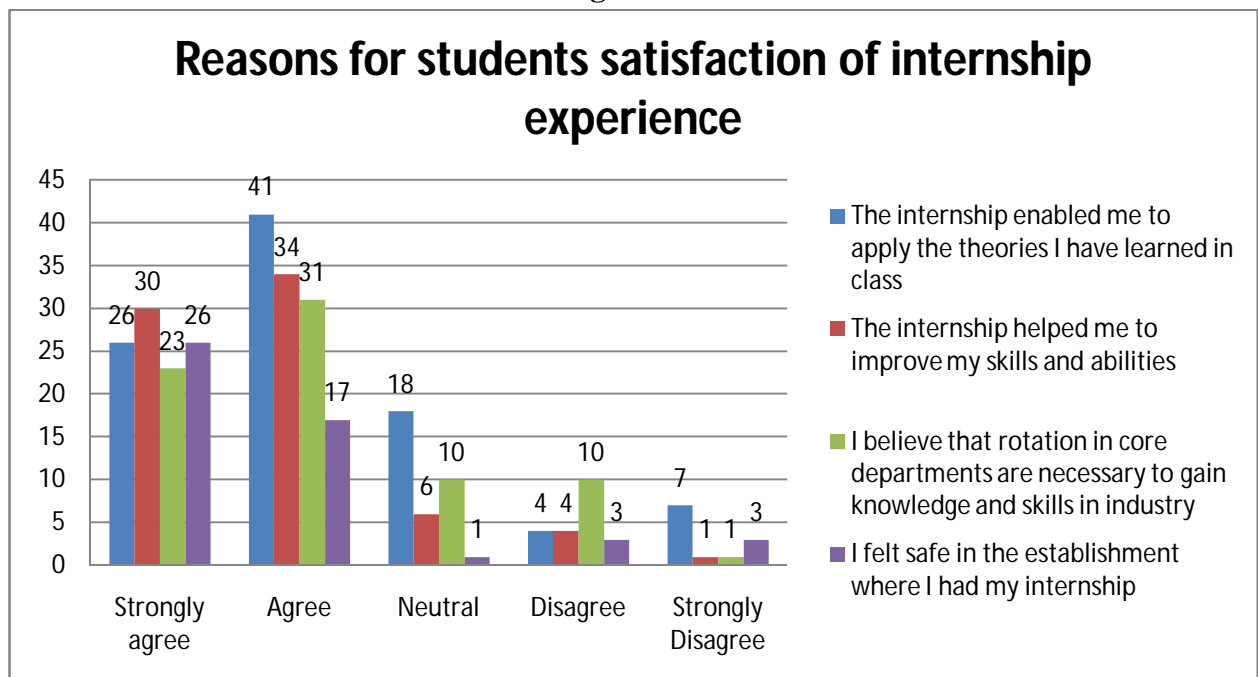
**Primary Data Collection:** The primary data was collected with the help of replies given by the respondents to the set of structured questionnaire. Most of the questions were based on five point Likert scale on various parameters related to internship.

**Secondary Data Collection:** Secondary data is collected with the help of articles from literature reviews from published journals, published research papers, newspapers, magazines, books etc.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The primary data collected for the research was analyzed with the help of bar diagrams and graphs for better interpretation. The data analysis was conducted with the purpose of attaining the objectives of the research, based on the internship of Hotel management students.

**Figure 1:**



**Observation:**From figure no 1, it was found that different reasons led to students’ satisfaction after the internship experience.

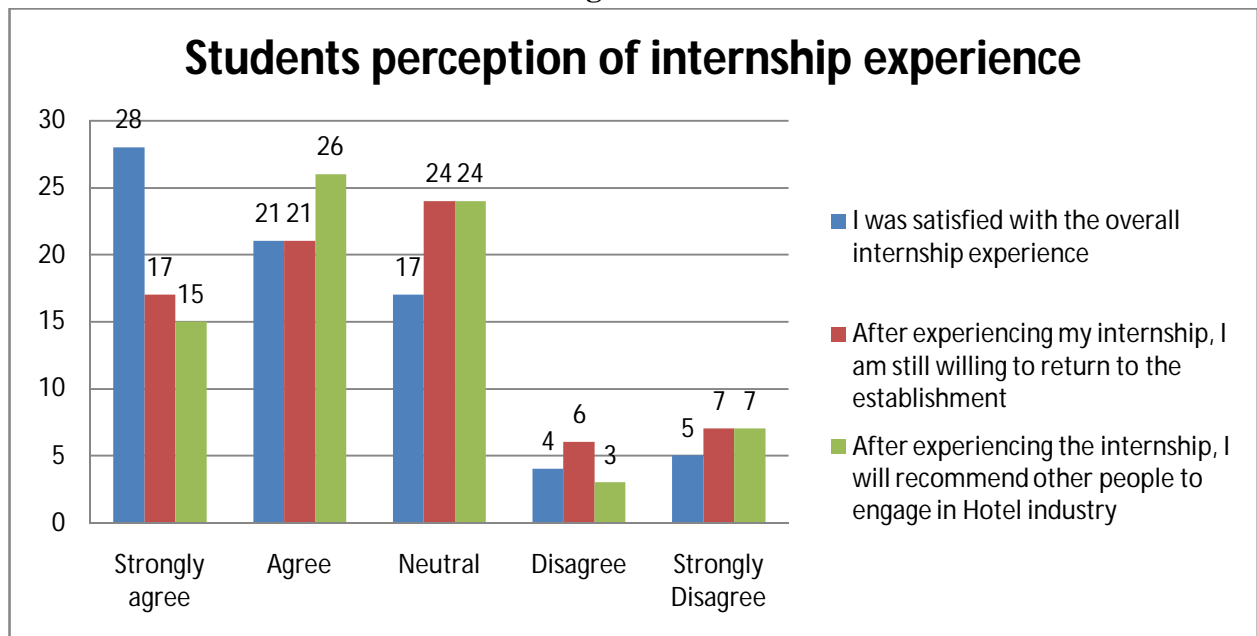
Most number of students agreed that the internship enabled them to apply the theoretical knowledge, which they learnt during the classroom sessions, in hotels, while interning.

The students also believed that they could improve their skills due to the industrial training exposure.

From the above representation, it can also be analyzed that students believe that rotation in different core departments is necessary to learn their functions.

Most of them strongly agreed that the environment of the hotel, where they trained was secure and safety norms were followed in hotels.

**Figure 2 :**



**Observation:** Internship is an important part of students pursuing their career in hotels. After successful completion of the industrial training, it could be analyzed from figure no. 2 that:

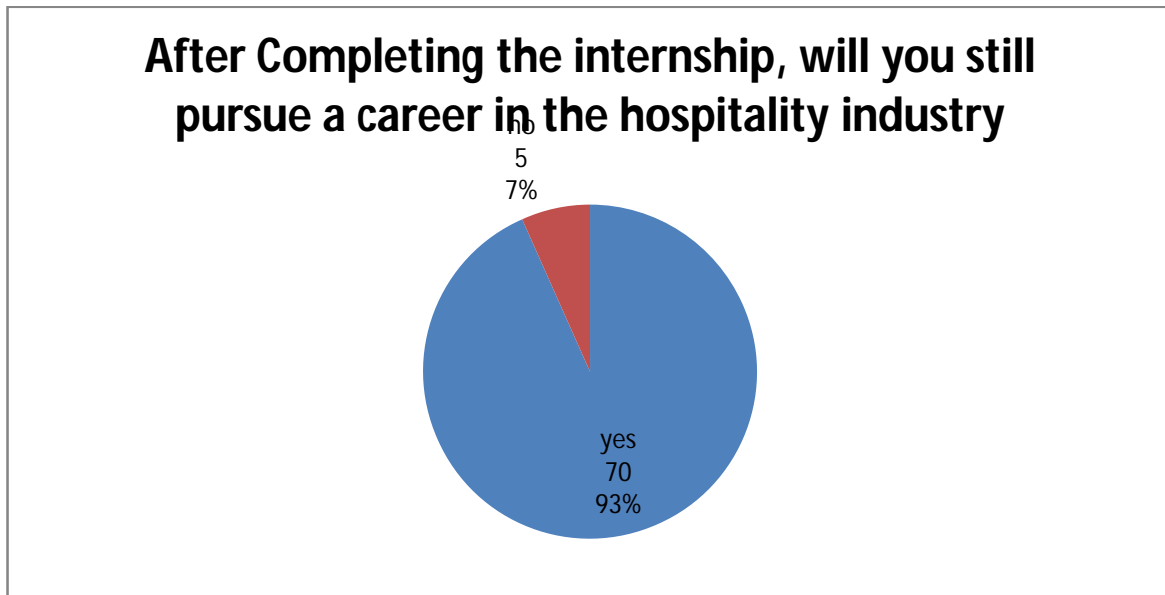
The overall first hand on experience of industrial exposure was quite satisfactory. They gained knowledge, and could relate theory to practical experience.

Due to the high level of satisfaction, the students are willing to return to the establishment, where they completed their internship. That means that the experience was good and satisfactory.

The figure indicates that not only was the students, satisfied, and would return back to the establishment for further placement, but also that they would recommend other students to do their internship in the same hotel. They gave a positive feedback about the hotel.

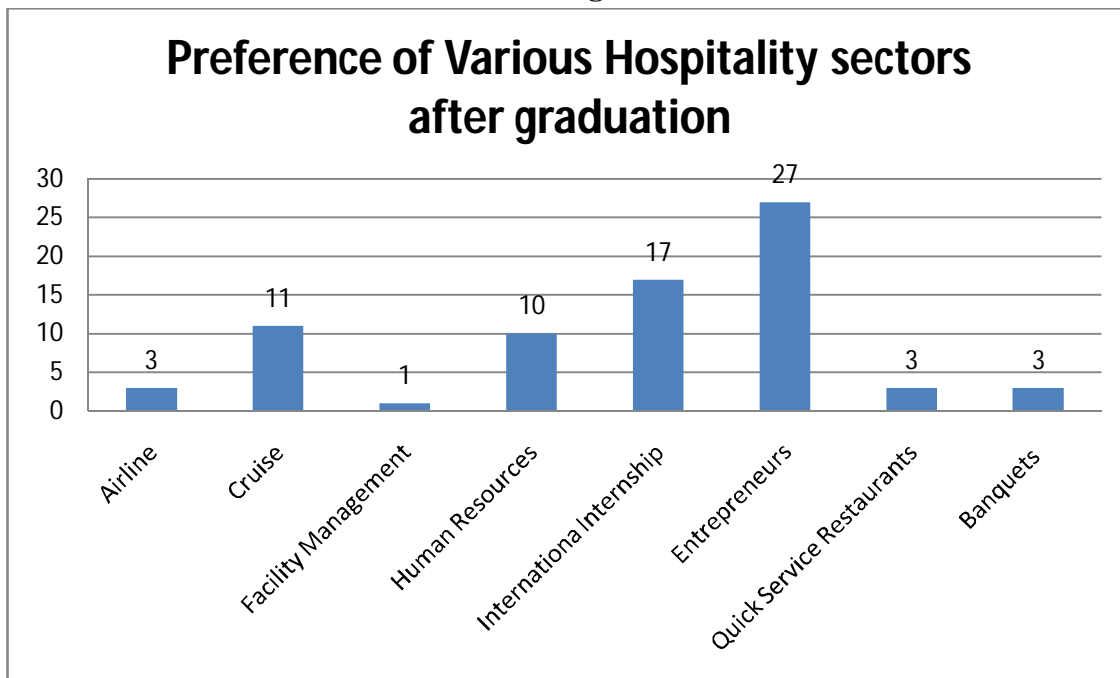


Figure 3:



**Observation:** The above analysis was done to check if the students look forward to hotel industry as their career path. 93% of the students mentioned that they would like to follow their career in Hospitality Industry. This is because they got an exposure to different departments of the hotel, which helped them to polish their skills like communication skills, confidence and better work ability.

Figure 4:



**Observation:**

The Hotel Management graduates have multiple options post completion of their course. Till then they have a fair idea of various departments of hotel, as they have completed their

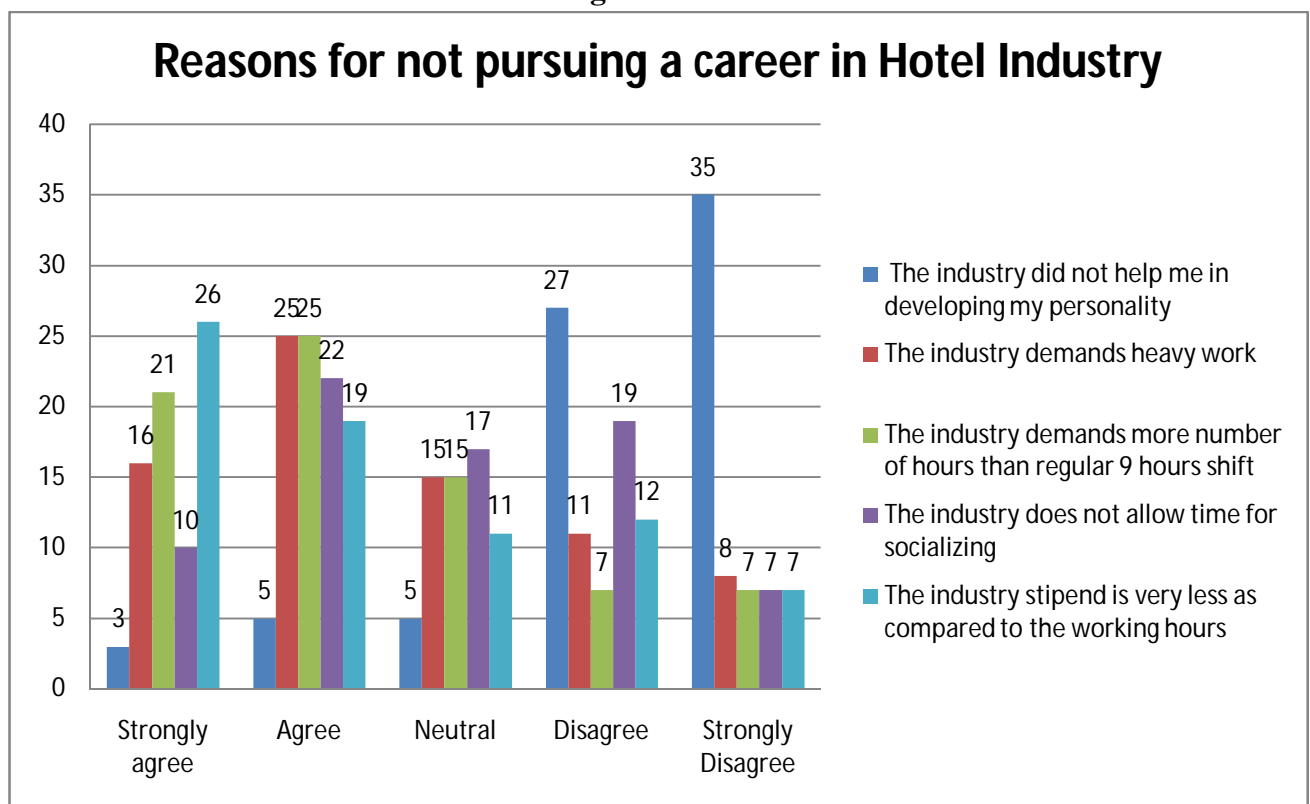
internship. Based on their passion and area of interest, they can choose from different options available for career path to them. Some of them are illustrated in figure no. 4 as follows:

Most of the students mentioned that they would prefer to be entrepreneurs, as the food business is growing all over and customers prefer to explore new outlets.

Out of the respondents, a good percentage of students want to apply for Internships abroad. They choose this option as there is a wide scope and better benefits to them in terms of stipend paid to them.

Another preferred option that is available to students is a career in Human resource department. This is mostly preferred by those who have people skills and wish not to opt for core departments.

**Figure 5:**



**Observations:**

Though most of the students want to pursue career in the Hospitality industry, there are some who want to shift their career path due to following reasons, analyzed from figure no 5.

Most of the students, especially those who have trained in the domestic properties, believe that the stipend paid by the industry is less as compared to the number of hours on duty.

Students also feel that the industry does not allow time for socializing due to long duty hours.

After exposure to Industrial training, students agree that the hotels demand heavy work, especially in operational departments.

However, they strongly disagree that, the industrial training exposure did not help them in their personality development.

**Conclusion of the study:**

The study concluded that, there are various reasons for a satisfactory training experience. This may include, opportunity for application of theory into operations, skills development, situation handling.

It can be concluded that, due to the high levels of satisfaction during training, students turn out polished and more confident. They can handle situations and improve their knowledge. Due to this reason, they are willing to return to the same hotel company, where they had their industrial exposure.

Some percentage of students, who did not have a satisfactory experience during the industrial training, may choose not to opt for career in Hospitality Industry. There could be multiple reasons to this such as, long duty hours, and less salary as compared to the amount of work.

**Recommendations of the study:**

**Recommendations for students:**

Students should consider industrial training exposure as an opportunity for their personality development. They should be quick learner, grasp knowledge through actual situations during operations.

Students can return to the same hotel establishment, after graduation, as they will easily get accustomed to the culture and working environment of that particular hotel.

They can still be a part of different Hospitality avenues which are open for them after graduation, such as Airline industry, Cruise line, Multicuisine restaurants, ancillary departments such as Human resource development, Marketing, to name a few. They can also choose to be entrepreneurs.

**Recommendations for Hotel Industry:**

Hotels should rotate students in all core departments during their industrial training. This will give them an opportunity to explore the working in all departments and make better decision to opt for one after graduation.

Hotels should consider the standard working hours as 9 hours. Increase number of hours could be initially tiring for the students.

Stipend paid during internship, could be revised, as students generally tend to compare it with the other hotels, especially hotels abroad.

Hotels should consider interns as their future employees. They should guide and groom their personality. A good feedback from the supervisors may help them to build a positive image about the hotel industry.

**Bibliography & References:**

Adelia Samantha Sabirin, Munawaroh and Robert La Are (2018) 'Is Internship Program Impact Career Development Perception? Empirical Study on "SGU" Hospitality Students' Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research (AEBMR), volume 52

Chen, Hu, Wang and Chen (2011), 'A study of the effects of internship experiences on the behavioural intentions of college students majoring in leisure management in Taiwan' - Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education (Vol. 10, No. 2.)

Codruța Adina BĂLTESCU (2016), 'The assessment of internship programs. A view point of the undergraduate tourism students from the Transilvania University of Brașov' Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brașov, Series V: Economic Sciences • Vol. 9 (58) No. 1

Dr Dario Šimičević, dr Snežana Štetić (June 2017), 'The Role and Importance of Internship Programs as Part of Formal Education: Students' Perceptions -The Case of College of Tourism' Journal - Turističkoposlovanje

Erwin Losekoot, Earney Lasten, Anne Lawson and Beverly Chen (2018), 'The Development of Soft Skills during Internships: The hospitality student's voice' Research in Hospitality Management, 8(2): 155–159

Elroy Joseph C. Valdez, Sushmita Shiena B. Alcantara, Charlene A. Pamintuan, Jhona G. Relos, Romer C. Castillo (2015), Contributions of On-the-Job Training Program to the Skills, Personal Qualities and Competencies of Tourism Graduates - Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, November (2015) Part II Vol. 3, No. 4

Faruk Seyitog˘ lu and Sevket Yirik (2014), 'Internship Satisfaction of Students of Hospitality and Impact of Internship on the Professional Development and Industrial Perception' Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research.

Jennifer Salatan (2016) 'The Influence of Internship Experience on Students' Career Selection in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry'

Kiran Mayi Immaneni, Dr. Vedala Naga Sailaja (2017), Industrial Exposure Training In Hotels And Its Impact On Under Graduate Students – Challenges And Remedies - International Journal of Mechanical Engineering and Technology (IJMET) Volume 8, Issue 12, pp. 834–840

Matthew T. Hora, Matthew Wolgram, Samantha Thompson (2017) 'What Do We Know About The Impact Of Internships On Student Outcomes?'  
Centre for Research on College Work-force Transitions – Research Brief 2

Nagarjuna Arjun (2013) 'Expectations of Tourism Industry on Competencies and Tourism Education'.

Samuel B. Owusu-Mintah, Michael Kissi (SEPTEMBER 2012), 'Assessing the Effectiveness of Internship in Tourism Education and Training in Ghana' Interdisciplinary Journal Of Contemporary Research In Business, VOL 4, NO 5

The contribution of internship in developing industry-relevant management competencies in tourism and hospitality graduates (2000)

Troy P. Tuzon (2016) 'Tourism and Hospitality Students' Level of Satisfaction on Their Internship Experience' LPU–Laguna Journal of International Tourism and Hospitality Management Vol. 3, No. 2 September 2016

[www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu)

[www.researchgate.net/publication](http://www.researchgate.net/publication)