

# A Study on Student's Perception about Internship Program and Its Impact on Their Personality, With Reference to Hotel Management Students of Pune Region

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## Abstract

The main objective of this study is to identify the factors which contribute to the preference opted by the interns amongst various options for an internship. The two major options available for the interns are Domestic internship and International internship. The study also aims at a comparison between the two choices of the internship. This study further explores the impact of internship on the personality development of the interns. This study also aims to identify the level of satisfaction of the students with their internship experience, the stakeholder that has the most influence over student's overall satisfaction. A structured survey questionnaire was used to collect data from Hotel management students in different colleges of Hotel Management & Catering Technology, Pune. The data was analyzed and presented with the help of pie charts and bar diagrams. The findings were based on Internship planning, the factors contributing towards the selection of preferences between Domestic and International Internship, and the impact of internship on interns. However, the respondents perceived internship program planning as the most important factor in their internship. This shows that institutes play an important role in the internship experience of the students. The findings also showed that majority of the respondents were highly satisfied with their internship experience as it contributed positively towards the development of their personality.

**Keywords:** Internship, Hotel Management, Personality Development.

## 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 Hospitality Industry is a growing industry in sync with the Tourism industry. This increase in the growth has been seen, as people travel for various reasons like corporate work, business, leisure, education, pilgrim, research and so on to different places. This reason-giving expansion to hospitality industry and also contributes in the economy of the entire hospitality sector. Hotels are major part of this service-oriented hospitality industry. It has been said several times that out of every ten employees, one employee belongs to the hospitality industry. With this increase growth in tourism and hospitality sector the hotel management colleges play a very important role which is providing the skilled manpower.

Hotel Industry being a crucial part of the hospitality industry with its peculiar features requires not only skilled manpower, although also needs specific attributes of courtesy, caring, aesthetics, and hard work. The hospitality schools and colleges contribute in inculcating the above-required features. These hotel management

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colleges impart skills in students as to how they can manage best the operation of a hotel, resort, restaurants, pubs or other hospitality establishment.

(Imran Rahman 2010) It is frequently stressed that some level of industry involvement is important in hospitality curriculum assessment as hospitality education is heavily linked to the industry. The viewpoints of educators solve this problem as industry experience is a prime requirement for jobs in the hospitality academic world. In the undergraduate hotel management curriculum, Industrial Training is compulsory for all students enrolled in this course of all Indian universities. The duration prescribed by various universities ranges between 18 weeks to 24 weeks.

(Immaneni 2017) The main objective of industrial training is:

- It improves the students' employability skills and ensures smooth on boarding to their careers.
- It helps them to translate the knowledge gained from the institute to be put to practice.
- This helps them to gain work-related skills and expertise related to their future careers.
- Real work situations enable them to establish their career goals.

Internships in are often considered as a win-win situation for all the stakeholders viz; students of hotel management institutes, Hotel management institutes and the Hotels. Students can get hands-on experience during the internship period. Hotel management institutes can build professional relations with the industry and thus can give an opportunity to their students for industry exposure. However, hoteliers can get the workforce to run its operations. Thus each stakeholder has an important share in bringing the internship a successful experience. Thus, an internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2011).

## SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As the study focused on the Internship as a part of the 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

**Dilipkumar Mahadik, Kiran Chavan (2016):** They stated in the study that the Hotel industry is the largest employer of skilled and semi-skilled manpower. To cope up with this demand, most of the metropolitan cities are mushrooming with institutes providing Hotel and Tourism education. Internship in their curriculum is a compulsory component. As a result a lot of students undergoes industrial training in hotels. The data collected highlighted that the trainees has to face challenges related to long duty hours and strenuous work. There is an exploitation of these trainees in hotels during their internship. The study recommends that this problem should be solved with the combined efforts by the colleges, government and the industry.

**Wang, Yao-Fen & Chiang, Min-Huei & Lee, Yi-Ju. (2014):** The study aimed at finding out the relationships amongst the intern anxiety, internship outcomes, and career commitment of hospitality college students. During the internship, the students are expected to interact with people, gather information in various departments and handle different situations. During the industrial training, the students get an insight of the actual industry. At times the interns get recognition from the managers, which increase their chance of getting recruited in the same hotel after graduation. The internship may help the candidate in absorbing knowledge, improve ability and work under pressure and implementation of theoretical knowledge. Finally, schools were advised to keep records regarding

feedback from the interns, their experiences and should update the data to further improve on the systems.

**Christina G. Aquino, Ma. (2014):** The research aimed at finding the expectations of various stakeholders during the internship program. Industrial training imparts hands-on experience to the students in their chosen field of specialisation. During this period, the industry plays the role of a guide or a mentor in giving knowledge to the students. This helps the interns to polish their technical skills and acquire other skills needed for the industry. However, if there are gaps, in the expectations of the stakeholders, be it the industry or the intern, should be considered important. As each of these stakeholders is expected to have one output, practicum training.

**Felicen, Sevilla, et al. (2014):** This study aimed to review the level of performance of the interns as feedback given by the manager of the department of the hotel, where the interns were placed for an internship. The researcher design was descriptive, and the participants in the area of food and beverage and travel agencies. Results of the study showed that interns have a satisfactory level in academic performance. In training performance, they developed their technical knowledge, departmental related skills, positive attitude and good personality. It was also revealed through this study that the academic performance of the students and his industrial training has got no relationship among them.

Kim, Peter B & Mcclary, Ken & Kaufman, Tammie. (2013): The researchers studied about the new generation in the Hospitality industry and their career preferences. For each recruiter, to update their recruitment policies, it is important to understand what the preferences of the trainees are. As there are efforts being taken to examine the attributes of the students on their career decisions. The study was conducted in the United States where data was collected from 442 hospitality students in seven different universities in the US. The data analysis revealed that the most preferred segment for the job was hotels, whereas the least preferred was the fast-food restaurants. When deciding a job preference, firsthand information sources (e.g., work experiences, personal experiences) and extrinsic factors (e.g., advancement chances, job security) were most influential. The research provided practical implications for career selection.

**Kim, Hong-bumm & Park, Erin. (2013):** The purpose of this study is to identify the impact that undergraduate

students' internships have on their perceptions of careers in the hospitality and tourism industry, focusing on the moderating role of informal social experiences with co-workers and supervisors that may occur during the internship period. Data for pre-internship expectations and post-internship perceptions were gathered from undergraduate students majoring in hospitality and tourism management in two-year courses in the Seoul metropolitan area, Korea. The results imply that desirable social experiences during students' internship periods can ultimately lead to a change in students' perceptions, thereby decreasing negative perceptions regarding various factors relating to a career in the hospitality and tourism industry.

**Yiu, Maria & Law, Rob. (2012):** The internship is one of the most effective models of experiential learning in hospitality education. However, to be successful, it requires the cooperation of students, employers, and educators. This article identifies the role and value of the internship in hospitality education. Its benefits and drawbacks are discussed from the perspectives of the three stakeholders, and an overall assessment is discussed. The article ends by proposing suggestions for future research.

**Chen, Tzu-Ling & Shen, Ching-Cheng. (2012):** The aim of this study was to explore the factors affecting a student commitment to pursue a career in the hospitality industry. It involved the role of the curriculum planning, role of the hotel industry and the commitment of the student. The study applied Structure Equation Modelling (SEM) and employed a questionnaire to collect data from students at twenty universities to test seven hypotheses proposed in this study. The results mentioned that internship programme planning, the involvement of the hotel industry, and student's commitment has a positive influence on the overall internship experience. Internship planning and guidance from the industry people have an impact on the student's decision to make his career plans in the industry.

**Chen, C.-T & Chen, C.-F. (2011):** The study investigated college students in Taiwan, about the effect of internship experience on behavioural of these students. The results suggested that internship may bear positive as well as negative experiences. These can be divided into five major aspects, such as, sensory experiences, affective experiences, creative cognitive experiences, physical experiences, and relational experiences. These contribute to the individual personality differently. It may reflect

satisfaction with experiences at an internship, willingness to work, and in turn, recommending the same to others. It may also sometimes result in dissatisfaction, like, thoughts of suspending schooling, career transition, complaints, etc. However, different personalities react differently to these situations in internships.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify factors that contribute to the internship preference amongst Hospitality students.
- To compare the preference of student's choice, between an international and domestic internship
- To study the impact of internship on the personality development of Hospitality students.

## 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. In relation to this, the researcher adopted the conceptual framework by Chen and Shen (2012) in their study entitled *Today's Intern, Tomorrow's Practitioner? – The Influence of Internship Programmes on Students' Career Development in the*

*Hospitality Industry*. The study adopted the questionnaire method. 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 fifty 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 a structured questionnaire. Most of the questions were based on a five-point Likert scale on various parameters related to the 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 study, based on the internship of Hotel management students.

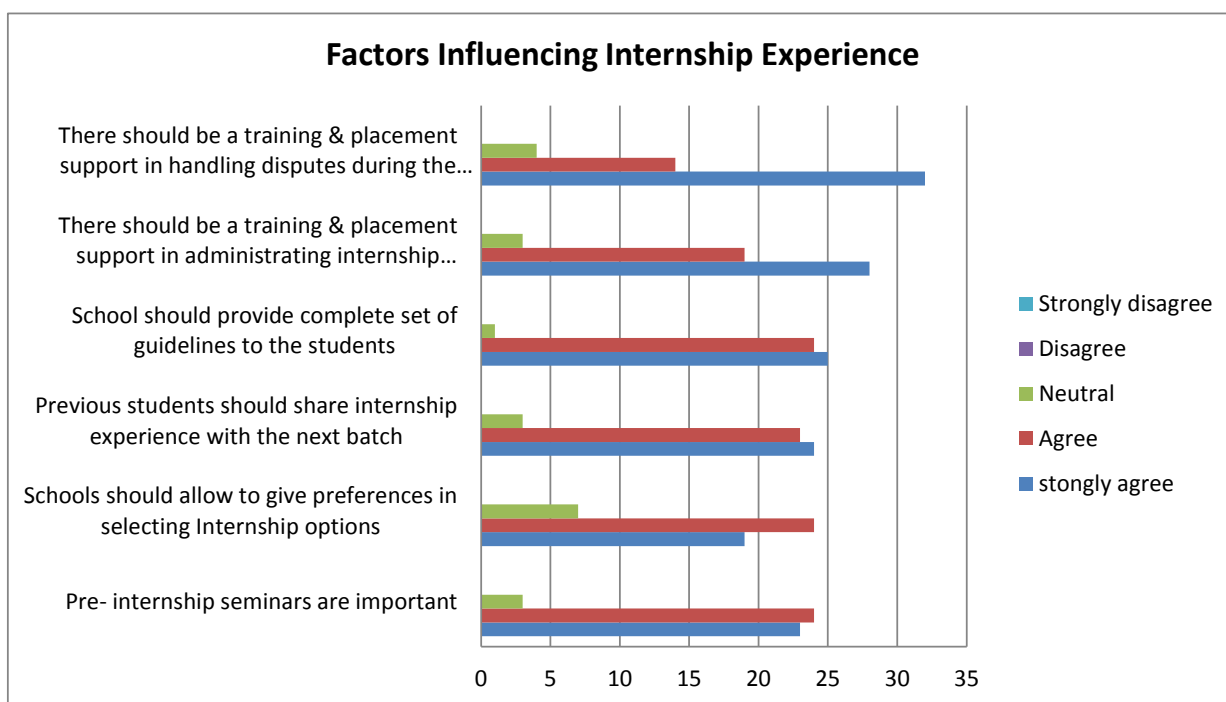


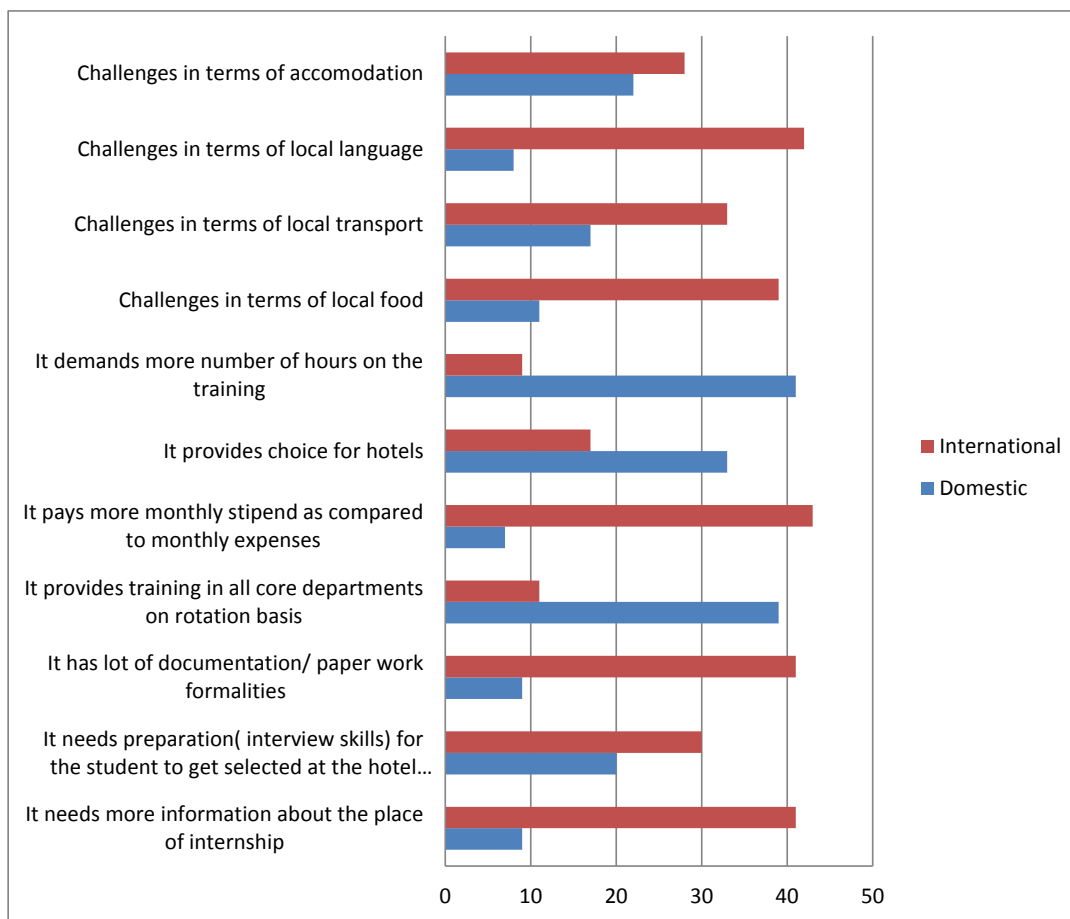
Fig. 1:

*Observation:* There are various factors which may be responsible for influencing a student towards selecting internship options.

- The above graph shows that the Training & Placement Cell of the institute has an important role in handling the disputes related to the internship. One of these may be confusion in selecting the place of internship, Selecting a hotel, problems related to documentation, travel, food, insurance, number of duty hours, etc. required during the internship.
- To help students in internship options, Training & Placement cell should administer great support before and during the internship program.
- One of the help extended is the clear guidelines given

to the intern with all regards to the internship.

- Most of the respondents agreed that the intern from the previous batch should share his/ her experience of internship with the next batch.
- Respondents also agree that the institutes, after giving the guidelines, should also provide different options to interns. These could be either domestic options or different options abroad to choose from. Not only options related to the place, but also related to the hotel chain/ brand should be provided.
- Most of the respondents also believed that pre-internship seminars are very important. These will give an opportunity to interns to help solve their queries related to the internship.



**Fig. 2: Comparison Between International & Domestic Internship**

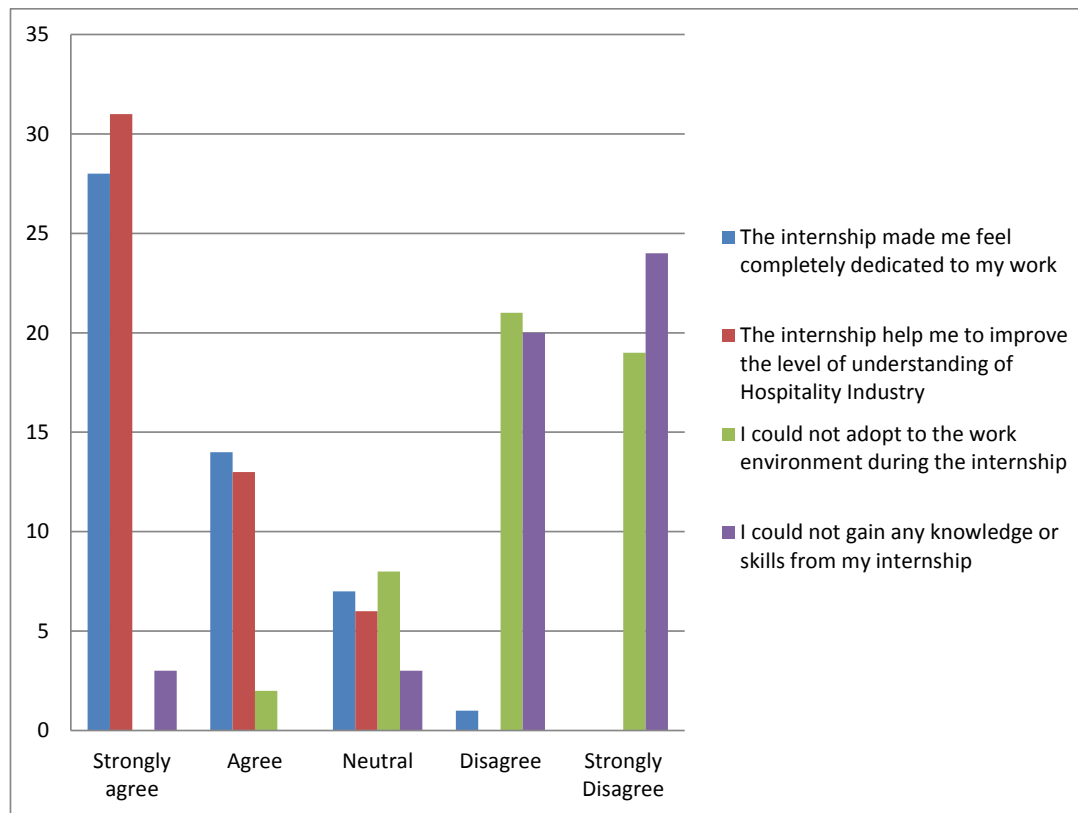
*Observation:* Fig. 2, reflects upon most of the points of comparison that an intern has done between a Domestic internship and an International internship.

- The graph indicates that International internship is more challenging in regards to accommodation, food, local travel and local language.

- Most of the respondents, after experiencing the internship, realise that internship in Domestic hotel properties demand a number of hours on duty, as compared to an internship abroad, where there are fixed hours.
- However, respondents agreed that the choice of hotel for internship has wider scope with hotels in India than abroad.



- Almost all respondents strongly believed that the stipend paid in hotels abroad is much higher as compared to that paid in India.
- The graph-based on replies states that the kind of documentation required for an international internship is more as compared to internships in India.
- As far as preparation for selection in hotel property is concerned, students going abroad need to have better interview skills and most importantly the knowledge about the country, place where they wish to do their training.



**Fig. 3: Student's Personality Development During Internship**

*Observation:* The above chart represents the role of internship on the personality of the interns.

- Respondents strongly agreed that industrial training helped them to improve their level of understanding of the hotel operations.
- Respondents agreed that during the internship, the interns were dedicated to their work and learnt and improved their skills and technical knowledge.
- The interns disagreed that they could not adapt to the hotel environment during the internship.
- The interns strongly disagreed that they could not develop their skills during the internship.

### Conclusion of the Study

- The study concluded that most significant contribu-

tion towards the experience of the internship is of Training & Placement Cell of the institute. The training & placement cell should be able to help students in solving disputes related to the place of internship, help related to documents required for training, before the internship. Also, training cell should liaise with students during internship for any concerns like, number of duty hours, etc. Their first step is to guide the students on internship preferences available.

- Proper counseling should be given to the students who have doubts/ concerns about the internship.
- They should a point of contact for the industry/ agent responsible for an internship.
- Pre- internship seminars should be conducted to help students solve their queries if any.
- If the previous batch interns, would share the experience of their internship with the students of the next

batch, it will be a first hand information, based on which they can make informed decisions about their internship.

- In comparison between the domestic and the international internship, the later is more challenging in terms of local food, local language and travel-related challenges, paperwork, type of hotel property and the hotel department. However the previous is more challenging in terms of number of duty hours and the stipend.
- The study concluded that internship helps in making the intern more responsible, confident, dedicated, and adaptive and also helps to update technical skills. Respondents agreed that during internship, the interns were dedicated to their work and learnt and hone their skills and technical knowledge.

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The Training & Placement cell of the hotel management institute should follow a structured procedure for Industrial training of their students.
- A set of guidelines, proper counseling should be provided to the aspiring interns.
- Mock interview sessions should be conducted to prepare students to face the hotel interview. Also, senior interns should share their internship experiences.
- The internship placement of the students should be based on their preferences of hotel chains and location.
- Proper feedback of the intern should be taken from the hotel organisation about punctuality, willingness to work, communication and the behaviour of the intern.
- Feedback should also be taken from the intern about his/ her internship experience. Valuable points should be noted and implemented for the next batch of interns.
- As industrial exposure is the first on the job training provided, it may lead to intern returning to the same organisation. Hence industry as a stakeholder should be responsible in guiding and training the intern well.

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