Internship Program: Does it Strengthen or Weaken Tourism Students’ motivation?

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Abstract—One of the students’ orientations in choosing a department in college is their future career. However, several previous studies confirmed that learning experiences can influence students' future interest in continuing their careers in line or even leave it. This study aims to investigate the influence of tourism students’ internship experience on their motivation to pursue career in the tourism and hospitality industry. Respondents were 72 tourism students of Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia who have finished their internship programs in 2015. Data collection was carried out for one month in two methods by sending questionnaires to the email of each respondent and self-administrative questionnaires. Simple linear regression was employed to analyze the data. The result showed that internship program experience did not have significance influence on students’ motivation to pursue career in Tourism Industry.

Keywords—internships; tourism students; tourism industry; motivation

I. INTRODUCTION

Internship program for tourism students has been well known as a skill development element in curricula for career preparation. It is usually done in a short-term period where students are trained in a specific field they are interested in [1]. It integrates work with learning experience to facilitate students in their transition from student to employment [2]. It also helps students to gain practical experience which they cannot acquire in learning at class [3], [4]. In turn, organizations or companies who participates in this program can get benefits in reducing employment recruitment and costs [5]. Researchers found that Internships can improve students’ academic performance and also motivate them to study [6], improve their self-confidence [7] and adaptability to their work environment [8] especially for tourism students where the industry requires skilled labor in its highly competitive and dynamic environment [9]. However, other researchers found that students also had negative experiences while they were in their internships and it influenced their intention to work at the same industry [10], reduced their confidence to pursue career in the industry [11] or even it made them leave the industry after they finished their internships [12], [13]. Those findings are confirmed by further studies which concluded that negative internship experiences influenced students motivation to work in the tourism industry [1], [9], [14], [15]. This study tries to investigate how much influence is the internships experience on tourism students’ motivation to work in the tourism industry.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been several studies which found that internship as one of the elements in curricula is giving positive values on students’ career development. For instance, psychologically internship is able to increase students' self-esteem [7] because they have already familiar with their work and work environment, so that they will tend to adapt more easily [8]. Internship also has a positive and significant impact on the readiness of students to work [16], increase the market value of students in the industry and their expectations of getting a good and appropriate job in the future [14], [17]. Students are also able to recognize discrepancies between their internship experiences and what they have learned in class and make them more aware of the problems in the industry [18].

However, extent studies focused on the students' negative internship experiences found that there are several issues identified in contributing to students’ unsuccessful internships such as, interns’ abilities which is connected to inadequate skills perceived by students at schools, low payment or even zero incentives, poor reward and support from the industry especially in mentorship during the internships [18], [19].

The successful internship is the combination between student expectations and interns’ perceptions of their internship experience [20]. There are several factors that can influence student expectations and perceptions of their internships. Expectations which do not fit with perceptions will naturally arise dissatisfaction and it may influence the students’ motivation on pursuing career related to tourism and hospitality.

Several studies show that successful internships are able to enhance the students’ intentions to pursue tourism and hospitality related careers after their graduation [7], [14], [21]. In the contrary, negative internship experiences will lead the students to leave the tourism and hospitality industry or pursue another career [14], [15]. Discrepancies between the pre-
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Internship perceptions and the actual experience can influence students not to pursue his or her career in tourism [22]. Depending on their experiences, students may have either a positive or a negative perception of their internships, negative perception will usually decrease their motivation to remain in the industry [23]. Other previous study also confirmed that internships experience can make students rather pessimistic regarding their future jobs [17]. However, students may also pursue careers in the tourism and or hospitality industry when the industry manifests work values that fit to what they desire [24].

III. METHODS

This study aimed to examine how much the influence of internship learning experiences is on the students’ motivation pursuing career in tourism industry. A quantitative research framework was employed in this research. The data gathered through online and self-administrative questionnaires which consisted of 15 questions about students perception related to the three main dimensions of internship, 1) pre-internship, 2) internship, 3) post-internship and 6 questions about both students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Respondent were 72 students who studied at Resort & Leisure Management Department of Indonesia University of Education and joined the internships program for four to six months in tourism or hospitality industry. Simple linear regression analysis was employed to analyze all the data obtained in this research.

### TABLE I. VARIABLES

| Dimensions       | Indicators                                 |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Pre-internship   | Internship purpose & outcome               |
|                  | Pre-internship seminar                     |
|                  | Pre-internship training                    |
|                  | Learning outcome - Job description suitability |
| Internship       | Industry orientation                       |
|                  | Mentoring/supervising                      |
|                  | Work done                                  |
|                  | Industrial treatment                       |
|                  | Adaptation ability                         |
| Post-internship  | Internship learning outcome                |
|                  | Industrial appreciation                    |
|                  | Satisfaction on learning experience        |
| Intrinsic motivation | Urg to work in tourism industry    |
|                  | Needs to work in tourism industry          |
| Extrinsic motivation | Work environment                           |
|                  | Work opportunity                           |

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

A. Internship Process

Research participants’ internship period was for 4 to 6 months. The process of internships consist of the pre-internship, internship, and post internships process. Pre-internship process starts by attending a pre-internship seminar where seniors inform their internship experiences from the company profiles, job description to their own self-experience. Junior students find that the information make them easier to make choices which company they will apply to according to their interests and abilities. The school also provide them briefing of academic and behavioral guidance. When students accepted by the company as intern students, the learning process in the field has just begun. Students will try to apply what they have learned during the class both soft and hard skills they have in doing their internships at the company. After they finished their internships program and go back students must review and reflect on their experiences and identify personal and professional developments from their internships experience in the form of written reports.

B. Respondents’ characteristics

As shown in Table 1, 52.8% of the 72 respondents of this study were male and 47.2% were female. Half of them or 52.8% had their intern at Hotels which mostly placed at Food & Beverage department. Rest were various at resort hotel, recreation area, tourism bureau, and the other 6.9% had their intern at tourism research center and architecture consultant.

### TABLE II. PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS

| Profiles             | n  | %   |
|----------------------|----|-----|
| Gender               |    |     |
| Male                 | 38 | 52.8%|
| Female               | 34 | 47.2%|
| Intern Placement     |    |     |
| Hotel                | 38 | 52.8%|
| Resort Hotel         | 12 | 16.7%|
| Recreation Area      | 7  | 9.7% |
| Tourism Bureau       | 10 | 13.9%|
| Other                | 5  | 6.9% |
| Intern Department    |    |     |
| Food & Beverage      | 15 | 20.8%|
| Front Office         | 12 | 16.7%|
| Accounting           | 3  | 4.2% |
| HRD                  | 7  | 9.7% |
| Marketing            | 10 | 13.9%|
| Guest Relation       | 4  | 5.6% |
| Research & Development| 4 | 5.6% |
| Training             | 3  | 4.2% |
| Hotel Operational    | 8  | 11%  |
| Other                | 6  | 8.3% |

C. Simple linear regression analysis

The constant value means that when internships program (x) is zero or work motivation (y) is not influenced by internships program, then the constant value is 20.379, while the regression coefficient b is 0.059 which means that if the internships program variable (x) increases by one unit, then the motivation to work in tourism industry (y) will increase by 0.059. The regression coefficient is positive, meaning that internships program (x) has a positive influence on work motivation (y) but does not have a significant effect.
Based on the above results, the adjusted $R$ value in this study is 0.008 which indicates the Internships Program variable ($x$) has a positive influence on students' work motivation ($y$) 0.008 of 1 with a percentage 0.8% which shows the correlation is in the very weak category.

The T-test results $T = 8.015$ where 0.748 > 2 (t table) which means that the internships program variable ($x$) individually influences the working motivation variable ($y$) of 0.748. It can be concluded that $H_0$ is accepted, meaning that there is no effect of the internships program variable ($x$) on works' motivation variable ($y$).

F table value is 0.559 where 0.559 < 4 which means $H_0$ is accepted or the internships program variable ($x$) does not affect the students' work motivation in the tourism industry.

Based on the participants’ opinion on the implementation of the internships program, the post-internship dimension gets the highest percentage (80%). It where the students get good appreciation and assessment from the industry, students can reflect and apply their knowledge obtained from studying in class, and both made them satisfied.
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