

## Hospitality and Tourism Internship Programme: Expectation Versus Reality

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### Abstract

Internship has been recognized as a significant component of hospitality education that will bridge the gap between industry and academia. This study investigated the hospitality student's perception about importance and performance towards the internship programme. Data about importance (expectations) before internship (pre-internship) and performance (experience) after internship (post-internship) was collected from the students who pursued either BBA or MBA degree in hospitality, travel, and tourism management from educational institutions in India. The findings of the study indicate that the students stand satisfied with the internship experience as a whole, but the level of satisfaction is low. The traditional Importance-Performance analysis by means of the four quadrants and the modified Importance-Performance analysis using the diagonal approach identified three important common aspects of internship that are to be taken care on urgent basis. They are: stable work shift, good opportunity for self-development, and feeling of being a team member. The hospitality organisations in India must pay special attention to and devote the maximum resources to enhancing the performance of these common facets that are critical for success of internship. These variables will affect the internship experience undesirably if due care is not exercised. The major implications of the study revolve around the internship organisations, educational institutions, and the student.

**Keywords:** hospitality; travel; tourism; internship; India

### Introduction

Over the past few years, there is remarkable growth visible in development of hospitality and tourism industry worldwide. For many countries, tourism and hospitality is now a significant foundation for economic prosperity, as well as a provider of jobs, and foreign exchange. As per the stance of Cooper et al. (1994); Yoon et al. (2001), the four A's of tourism and hospitality: attractions, access, amenities, and ancillary services, ought to be recognisable on national as well as on international level if tourism to subsidize to worldwide development. Young and Hurlic (2007), proposed that the development in tourism and hospitality sector take place quickly as compared to other sectors. This sector can significantly contribute to the economic prosperity of a nation by generating employment potentials on a larger scale (Mihail, 2006).

It is now indispensable for students studying in hospitality education institutions to guarantee a fair degree of readiness in an environment characterised by technological development by comprehending what essential skills, abilities, and knowledge is required to improve the likelihood of obtaining employment in hospitality sector. Nonetheless, experiential learning such as internships has turn out to be a significant component of tertiary education that has a noteworthy impact on employment choices in hospitality sector (Beggs, 2008). Educational institutions, particularly that offer opportunities for real-world experience are



excellent at producing knowledge-based human resources. Additionally, graduates' also benefit from the services that educational institutions offer for job placement in this sector.

Following an examination of the current research on education in tourism and the hospitality sector, it came to light that hospitality education and the tourism sector represent two sides of a single coin which are indistinguishable and that there must be a blend of both theory and practical experience. Researchers, Mohanty and Mohanty, (2019), Bello et al. (2019), argue that here exists a skill gap between the current tourism educational curriculum and the needs of the tourism sector as a whole. In addition, students from tourism and hospitality institutions are also dissatisfied due to a lack of relation between the curriculum and the job market (Rautenbach & Mann, 2019; Al-Romeedy et al., 2020; Hyasat, 2022). Taylor and Geldenhuys (2018), concludes that students have favourable overall opinion regarding the internship, however, support to be provided by the hospitality organisation that hosted internship and the educational institution was absent

To remain prosperous in the dynamic hospitality market, the hospitality organization requires a well-educated and well-trained personnel (Richardson, 2008). As a result, several hospitality academic institutions have expanded their programmes to include internship as a part of their curriculum. They collaborate with industry organisations by sending their students to fill the hospitality industry's manpower requirements (Lee & Chao, 2013). Internship programmes in hospitality are typically intended to bridge the gap between industry and academia (Collins, 2002; Jiang & Tribe, 2009). It enables learners in the hospitality industry to comprehend the sector and gain exposure to practical work conditions, which is limited in educational environments (Zopiatis & Constanti, 2007). A favourable experience with an internship, in general, helps students in the hospitality industry to enter the industry after completion and boosts job satisfaction as well as willingness to remain in the profession (Chathoth et al., 2011; Chuang & Jenkins, 2010). An apprehension raised up by World Travel and Tourism Council, (2018), states that without highly qualified professionals with wide-ranging experience, this multi-billion-dollar hospitality sector is at serious risks.

## **Literature review**

### ***Internship importance (expectations) – Performance (experience)***

In olden days, there was a normal culture to learn a vocation underneath the close guidance of an expert artisan, and this is where the roots of internships as a component of official education programmes originated (Gault et al., 2000). Accordingly, internship involve students in activities primarily to give them practical understandings increasing the learning and comprehension of the trade (Littky & Grabelle, 2004). Internship is a chance to connect with business people and develop the communication network, which we refer to as having a "real world experience". As per Walo (2000), Internship is "experience of work that applies the class rules through real-world work settings in the commercial, government, or industrial sectors". An internship is a kind of experimental education that cartels in-class information and concept with actual application and ability development in a workroom context (Wasonga & Murphy, 2006).

There is substantial research demonstrating benefits of internship in the hospitality and tourism sector. Precisely, academicians conceived that internship have improved self-confidence of students' (Ko, 2008), enhanced their real value (Kim & Park, 2013), improved adaptability as well as understanding of the vocation (Robinson, 2008), allowed exchange of knowledge (Ruhanen et al., 2012), and reinforced managing of interns' expectations (Chen & Shen, 2012). High-calibre graduates are now a critical factor towards the competitiveness of the hospitality sector. The hospitality sector and internship are crucial to each other, and therefore both the parties i.e. the interns and the internship organization, should be well



informed about the internship and all its different facets. Graduates from a structured internship programme are expected to be well prepared to satisfy industry's demand through the skills required.

It is noted that a degree in hospitality is integration of operational and managerial aids that are prerequisites for a successful career (Baum, 1991; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Rae, 2007; Ragavan et al., 2014). Researchers (Dopson & Tas, 2004; Gursoy & Swanger, 2004; Mohanty & Mohanty, 2009; Al-Romeedy et al., 2020; Hyasat, 2022), demanded developing the syllabus for hospitality programme requires the application of substantive knowledge, skills, and values. Other studies on internships revealed what experts in hospitality education thought about the structure of the curriculum and recommended incorporating experiential learning into the teaching materials (Petrillose & Montgomery, 1997; Bello et al., 2019). These studies reinforced that internship is necessary to create qualified individuals with specific expertise in the hospitality business. Additionally, a trainee also requires knowledge of record-keeping procedures and legal requirements, in addition to the previously mentioned interpersonal skills, crisis management abilities, and operational efficiency abilities (Tas et al., 1996). Hence, focused curriculum creation along with industry-specific expertise is the need of the hour to satisfy the hospitality industry requirement (Taylor & Geldenhuys, 2018). Students, together with theoretical knowledge as well as practical experience are receiving more attention from the hospitality sector today. The prerequisite for a staff along with variability in abilities and the challenges posed by extremely competitive atmosphere, continual transformation as well the diverse character of hospitality business serves to emphasise the need of hiring and retaining competent workers with a broad base of training (Kim, 2012; Robinson et al., 2015). Since, internships often last 90 days or less, managers are dissatisfied with the length of the internship programme. The hotel managers do not consider the interns as prospective employees because they are still enrolled in classes, and are placed in the disorderly departments during internship (Yıldırım, 2002).

Both interns and the hospitality organizations gain from well-structured internship programmes. Interns can improve key job skills, refine career goals, and make connections that may be helpful throughout their careers by taking advantage of these on-the-job learning opportunities (Knouse & Fontenot, 2008). Cord et al. (2010), argued that there are numerous advantages, including increased professionalism, self-assurance, and job happiness of internship. It can also speed up employment after internship and improve awareness of reasonable workplace standards. These host of advantages also come up with a number of drawbacks too. Administrative difficulties, in particular, have been identified as hindering internship success. These problems include no remuneration for on-site official visit by mentors, insufficient training at educational institutes, less stipend, lack of support from industry, poor guidance at hotel as well as lack of inducements (Yiu & Law, 2012). In addition, the hospitality organization consider interns as answer to the employee scarcity issues (Yiu & Law, 2012).

Lam and Ching (2007), are of the opinion that compromise between students' expectations and interpretations of their internship experiences is the source of their overall satisfaction. Expectations correspond to how students see things prior to their internship, while perceptions refer to student's experience after completion of their internship. The difference between these two thoughts measures the intern's level of satisfaction. Analyses will reveal issues related to internship as well as will result in enhancements to its conception and execution. Our study is an answer to scarcity of studies that explore how satisfied students are with their internships in Indian hospitality sector.

The features and facets of internships that have an impact on student satisfaction can be learned from earlier studies. For example, Lee et al. (2006), concludes that lengthier



internship, previous industry knowledge, freedom, support from supervisor, team spirit and involvement offered impression that have encouraging insights about internship resulting in enhancing the student satisfaction with the internship programme. High student expectations might also contribute to internship dissatisfaction. Majority of the students in hospitality and tourism course expect more for their industry career, but they are highly disappointed when they actually land a job in the field. Another problematic issue is the attitude of the students and their belief and expectation that they warrant success without earning it. Therefore, it is extremely important to understand in what way expectations of students are formulated (Dickerson, 2009). Research findings in the past put forth several factors like academic theory, source of information, previous experience of work if any, calibre of coaching at the educational institutions, as well as the student's level of willingness, are mostly accountable for determining their expectations (Zopiatis, 2007; Jiang & Tribe, 2009; Chen et al., 2009; Singh & Dutta, 2010).

Numerous research undertaken in past examine the impact of interns' satisfaction about the internship programmes on career decision-making. Researchers, Chen and Shen (2012), have confirmed that students' career decision-making is highly influenced by the quality of as well as satisfaction regarding internship programme. Students expressed positive as well as negative feeling and attitude towards the hospitality industry after their internship experience (Mqwebedu et al., 2022). Ko (2008), advocated that students' career progression is reinforced by the internship training received. On the other hand, undesirable experiences from the internship training have led to verdicts about withdrawal from the hospitality and tourism sector (Lu & Adler, 2009; Chen & Shen, 2012; Koc et al., 2014). According to Lambulira et al., (2022), majority of students had positive opinions of tourism careers as a consequence of their optimism about tourism industry recovery, opposite to those who expressed their concerns about the tourism recovery after covid19 pandemic. Similarly, work exhaustion at the time of internship period was responsible to adversely influence student intent to work at tourism and hospitality sector (Richardson, 2008). Nevertheless, internship training has found to have a significant effect on career growth of students. The current study tries to examine the students' expectations and perceptions about the internship programme that in turn will help to advance the design as well as the application of internship programme that are of value to the academicians as well to the industry experts.

### **Research methodology**

The research examines the student's pre-internship expectations and post-internship experience. The students who pursued either an BBA degree or MBA degree in hospitality, travel, and tourism management in educational institutions in India were studied. The study lasts for ten months, beginning from February 2022 to November 2022. Studies in past investigated about the internship have assumed a qualitative approach (Ko, 2008; Chen & Shen, 2012; Koc et al., 2014; Hyasat, 2022; Lambulira et al., 2022). Therefore, quantitative approach comparing the pre and post internship experience is need of the hour to offer deep insights on various factors that outline the internship understanding. One must understand that minimum mandatory number of internship period differs amongst the various hospitality educational institutions across India. However, a minimum of 16 weeks and maximum of 24 weeks of internship duration has been prescribed and the same has been considered in the sample design. However, it is always preferred and recommended that a long internship duration is more effective that permits adequate interaction with the industry (Chen & Shen, 2012).

Based on a comprehensive literature review, a well-designed survey denoting Lam & Ching (2007); Yafang & Gongyong (2014), was undertaken to determine how students anticipated and perceived the internship programme. In part I of the questionnaire, pre



internship expectations and post internship experience were captured using a five-point scale extending from Expected to a great extent (5) to Not at all expected (1), and Met to a great extent (5) to Not at all met (1) respectively. Part II recorded the demographic information. The study includes 228 respondents who have completed their internship. With SPSS 27, data was examined. Descriptive calculations, analysis of mean, gap analysis and paired sample t-test were used to draw conclusions. Factor analysis was used to condense the original scale of 27 variables and Cronbach's Alpha to assess the validity of the scale.

### **Importance-performance analysis (IPA)**

IPA involves the concurrent measurement of respondent's valuations of importance and their performance about the variable being measured. IPA framework has been used extensively across several arenas. Specially, the management as well as the representatives have utilised IPA matrix for assessing the competitive spot for a tourism invention, facility, firm or destination as well as in formulation of appropriate tactics to attain a competitive gain over competitors in tourism (Hudson et al., 2004; Enright & Newton, 2004; Deng, 2007). IPA provides a two-dimension grid i.e. Importance (Expectations) and then Performance (Experience), further dividing it in four quadrants formulated based on the mean score of the variables. Afterwards, these values are evaluated in relation to their grid quadrant. A distinct tactic is suggested by each quadrant. The key objective of IPA is to recognize the qualities that interns value most, assess how well the organisation providing the internship delivers these qualities, and provide recommendations about what each should focus on and what approaches to take in order to have a rewarding and meaningful internship experience. By using the mean score of importance and performance, each element is positioned on an importance-satisfaction scale. Following completion of these calculations, the results are shown on a two-dimension grid known as Importance-Performance Matrix (Kozak & Nield, 1998).

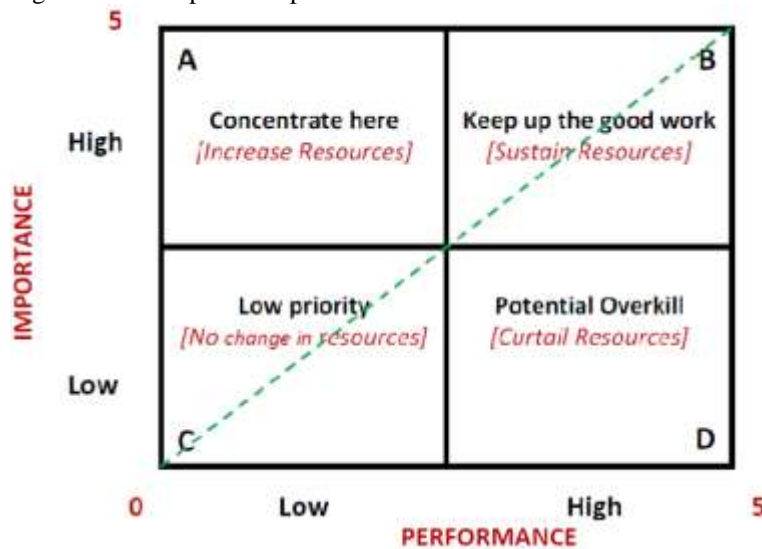
After that, each grid element is examined by determining which quadrant it belongs to (please refer figure no 1). The items in Quadrant A, which is referred to as "Concentrate here," are of the utmost importance, but because overall satisfaction is below average, action, resources, and effort are needed. The elements in Quadrant B are referred to as "Keep up the good job," and its satisfaction level is above average. To maintain the quality of these areas, one must work and continue to invest sustain resources. Quadrant C is referred to as "Low Priority," and the elements there are of the least importance, with a below-average level of importance. Typically, nothing is done in this area until the respondents start to give it more importance, therefore no shift in resources is needed. The elements in Quadrant D, which is referred to as "Possible Overkill," are ranked above-average on performance but below-average on importance. Typically, these sections do not need any improvement or more resource spending.

Abalo et al., (2007); Chen, (2014), proposed modified version of IP Analysis, that splits the factors in study in two quadrants, with factors overhead the diagonal line in Quadrant A, wherein greater focus is essential, and the factors underneath the diagonal line in Quadrant B, those are considered of little important or just continue the way you are operating or more efforts may result in a possible overkill (please refer figure 1).

The inventors of this technique, Martilla and James (1977), emphasised that IPA uses relative rather than absolute measurements and the positioning of crosshairs in reference to the importance-performance mean score is arbitrary (Ziegler et al., 2012). Here, grand mean and the data mean were used in place of the original I-P mapping graph to create IP matrix as well as to draw cross hairs.



Figure 1. The importance-performance matrix



Source: Importance-Performance Matrix (Chen, 2014)

The interns' opinion about the importance of and performance with the internship programme is shown by the mean analysis. The internship is considered satisfactory if the mean value is in the range of 3 to 5. Values between 1 and 2 indicate that student do not think it is important. The gap analysis shows the values by subtracting importance mean from performance mean. If the Gap score is zero or positive, then the interns' expectations (importance) regarding internship programme have been met or surpassed the expectations, suggesting fulfilment. Negative gap value signifies that the interns' expectations (importance given) remained higher as compared to students' actual experience (performance), indicating disappointment. The difference in the Gap (mean values) has been examined using a paired t-test. To put it statistically, the following hypotheses was tested:

*H1: There is statistically no significant difference between interns' perception about the importance assumed to and satisfaction with their internship programme.*

### Data presentation and discussion

As seen in Table 1 below, Male students are higher (67%) as compared to female students' respondents (33%). Such finding provides evidence of the overall belief that there is higher enrolment of male students than female with average age of 20.38 years. About the different departments, 25.3% are in the Front Office, 23.7% are in the Food and Beverage, Housekeeping 19.3%, Human resource 10.5, Sales and Marketing 3.5% and other departments such as Finance and Accounting, Security and Personnel, Rooms division, Maintenance etc., covers 17.15%. Majority of the students (59.6%) have undertaken internship in a five-star property, 24.6% are in the four-star property, 10.5% are in three-star property and 503% are on two-star property. About 67.5% do not have any previous internship experience, 32.5% had previous internship experience. About 27.2% have completed MBA degree and 72.8% have completed BBA degree. More than two third (78.9%) have undergone less than four months of internship, followed by internship for four to eight months (17.5%) and more than eight months were 3.5%.



Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents (N= 228)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	152	67%
Female	76	33%
<b>Department</b>		
Front office	58	25.4%
Housekeeping	44	19.3%
Sales and marketing	8	3.5%
Food and Beverage	54	23.7%
Human resource	24	10.5%
Others	40	17.5%
<b>Star rating</b>		
One star	0	0%
Two star	12	5.3%
Three star	24	10.5%
Four star	56	24.6%
Five star	136	59.6%
<b>Previous internship experience</b>		
Yes	74	32.5%
No	154	67.5%
<b>Program</b>		
BBA	166	72.8%
MBA	62	27.2%
<b>Internship duration</b>		
Less than 4 months	180	78.9%
4 to 8 months	40	17.5%
More than 8 months	8	3.5%

Source: Primary data

Factor analysis using principal components analysis with varimax rotation generated five factors using the 24 survey-related variables (please refer table number 2). The Scree plot and Eigen values indicated that a five-component combination could explain 52.563% of the total variance, and five factors with Eigen values more than 1.0, with factor loadings greater than 0.3 were accepted. Bartlett test of sphericity score was 5,600.802, and correlation matrix's overall significance was 0.000. It was reasonable to employ Factor Analysis because the results showed a considerable link amongst the variables.

The KMO score was 0.733, indicating a sufficient sample size. Cronbach's Alpha score was 0.923. The first factor, F1-Superior Assistance and Guidance, had six variables and an alpha of 0.773. F2 -Autonomy and support from superior, second factor, has five variables and an alpha of 0.813. F3 -Peer relationships and Resume, which had five variables and alpha of 0.795, was the third factor. The fourth factor, F4-Job itself, with four variables and an alpha of 0.755, and fifth factor, F5-Team spirit and involvement, with four variables and an alpha of 0.731(please refer table number 2).

Table 2 points out at grand mean value of the scale in terms of pre-internship expectations, which is 3.76. For F1, it was 3.85 (above average). For all other variable except for 'Encouraging innovative ideas,' grand mean is little less as compared to 'above average importance' values. For F2, it was 3.59 (below average). Variables 'Sympathetic help from superior with problems in workplace' and 'Comprehensive training programme,' were found to be slightly above average, rest were below importance average level. Similarly, for F3, variables 'Good peer relationships' and 'Appreciation and praise from managers' were slightly less than the average value of importance. In case of F4, variables 'Broad work experience' and 'Able to apply theories to workplace' were found to be slightly below average. Finally, for F5, one variable 'Able to identify self-strengths and weaknesses' was of above average importance, remaining were below average importance. Therefore, we can conclude that Factor



1 (Superior support and Guidance), Factor 3 (Resume and peer relationship), and Factor 4 (Job itself) are weighing ‘above average’ importance, whereas, Factor 2 (Autonomy and help from superior) and Factor 5 (Team spirit and involvement) are considered to be of ‘average’ importance (please refer Table 2).

Table 2: Factor analysis and gap analysis, comparison of means & grid position (n=228),  $\alpha = 0.923$ , 27 items

Variables	Loading	Importance (Expectations)	Performance (Experience)	Gap (P) - (I)	p	Original *	Diagonal **	$\alpha$
<b>Factor 1: Superior support and Guidance, Eigen value= 8.972, % of Variance Explained= 29.409%</b>								
1. Reasonable boss	0.762	3.84	3.39	-0.45	0.000	A	B	0.773
2. Sufficient supervisory support	0.730	3.89	3.40	-0.38	0.000	A	B	
3. Encouraging innovative ideas	0.667	3.67	2.96	-0.45	0.000	C	B	
4. Stable work shift	0.617	3.98	2.57	-1.14	0.000	A	A	
5. Feedback from managers	0.602	3.88	3.53	-0.35	0.000	B	B	
6. Involve in supervisory tasks	0.582	3.85	3.43	-0.12	0.000	A	B	
<b>Factor Mean</b>		<b>3.85</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>-0.48</b>				
<b>Factor 2: Autonomy and help from superior, Eigen value= 2.789, % of Variance Explained= 9.209%</b>								
7. High autonomy	0.607	3.42	3.31	-0.11	0.000	C	B	0.813
8. Sympathetic help from superior with problems in workplace	0.563	3.78	3.57	-0.21	0.000	B	B	
9. Competitive training	0.552	3.70	2.96	-0.74	0.000	C	B	
10. Competitive fringe benefits	0.542	3.32	3.20	-0.12	0.000	C	B	
11. Comprehensive training programme	0.531	3.77	2.81	-0.96	0.000	C	B	
<b>Factor Mean</b>		<b>3.59</b>	<b>3.17</b>	<b>-0.42</b>				
<b>Factor 3: Resume and peer relationships, Eigen value= 4.105, % of Variance Explained= 6.191%</b>								
12. Good for my resume	0.817	4.01	3.42	-0.59	0.000	A	B	0.795
13. Good peer relationships	0.704	3.56	3.85	0.29	0.000	D	B	
14. Able to develop technical skill	0.678	3.90	3.74	-0.16	0.251	B	B	
15. Good opportunity for self-development	0.635	3.86	2.31	-1.55	0.000	A	A	
16. Appreciation and praise from managers	0.512	3.68	3.88	0.20	0.394	D	B	
<b>Factor Mean</b>		<b>3.80</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>-0.36</b>				
<b>Factor 4: Job itself, Eigen value= 1.131, % of Variance Explained= 4.185%</b>								
17. Interesting and challenging work	0.689	4.27	3.76	-0.51	0.000	B	A	0.755
18. Good work environment	0.613	4.13	3.61	-0.52	0.000	B	B	
19. Broad work experience	0.604	3.72	3.35	-0.37	0.413	C	B	
20. Able to apply theories to workplace	0.586	3.30	3.61	0.31	0.000	C	B	
<b>Factor Mean</b>		<b>3.85</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>-0.27</b>				
<b>Factor 5: Team spirit and involvement, Eigen value= 1.792, % of Variance Explained= 3.569%</b>								
21. High team spirit in the group	0.715	3.68	3.62	-0.06	0.000	D	B	0.731
22. Feeling of being a team member	0.655	3.75	3.36	-0.39	0.000	A	A	
23. Able to identify self-strengths and weaknesses	0.567	3.92	3.98	0.06	0.286	B	B	
24. Acceptable work pressure	0.474	3.56	2.92	-0.64	0.000	C	B	
<b>Factor Mean</b>		<b>3.72</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>-0.25</b>				
<b>KMO= 0.733, Bartlett's test of sphericity 5600.802 ** p &lt; 0.05</b>								

Source: Primary data

\* Original IP analysis: A: High Importance-Low Performance, B: High Importance- High Performance, C: Low Importance-Low Performance, D: Low Importance-High Performance (IPA Original).

\*\* Modified IP Analysis: A: High Priority / Concentrate Here, B: Low Priority / Keep up the good work.

Grand mean score for Performance (post-internship) is 3.37. For the F1, it is 3.21. It can be observed that two variables ‘Encouraging innovative ideas’ and ‘Stable work shift’ were below average performance (satisfaction). For F2, the mean value for performance is 3.17. One





variable ‘Sympathetic help from superior with problems in workplace’ is of above average satisfaction. Similarly, F3 have mean value of 3.44, one variable ‘Good opportunity for self-development’, is well below average. F4 with mean value of 3.58, have one variable ‘Broad work experience’ of below average satisfaction value. F5 with mean value of 3.47, two variables ‘High team spirit in the group’ and ‘Able to identify strength and weaknesses’, are of below average satisfaction value. Therefore, we can say that Factor 1 (Superior support and Guidance) and Factor 2 (Autonomy and help from the superior) are at lower end of ‘average’ performance indicating a below average satisfaction. On the other hand, Factor 3 (Resume and peer relationship), Factor 4 (Job itself), and Factor 5 (Team spirit and involvement) indicate that they are at the higher end of ‘average’ performance (satisfaction) about internship experience (please refer table number 2).

The results obtained by the paired sample T-test (please refer table number 2) indicates that variables ‘Able to develop technical skill’ and ‘Appreciation and praise from managers’ in F3 and variable ‘Broad work experience’ in F4, and variable ‘Able to identify strength and weaknesses’ in F5, that there is no significant difference in perception of interns about the importance assumed to internship and their level of satisfaction with it. Regarding other variables in all the five factors, there is statistically significant difference of perception of interns regarding the internship and their level of satisfaction with it. Hence, there is partial support for the hypothesis.

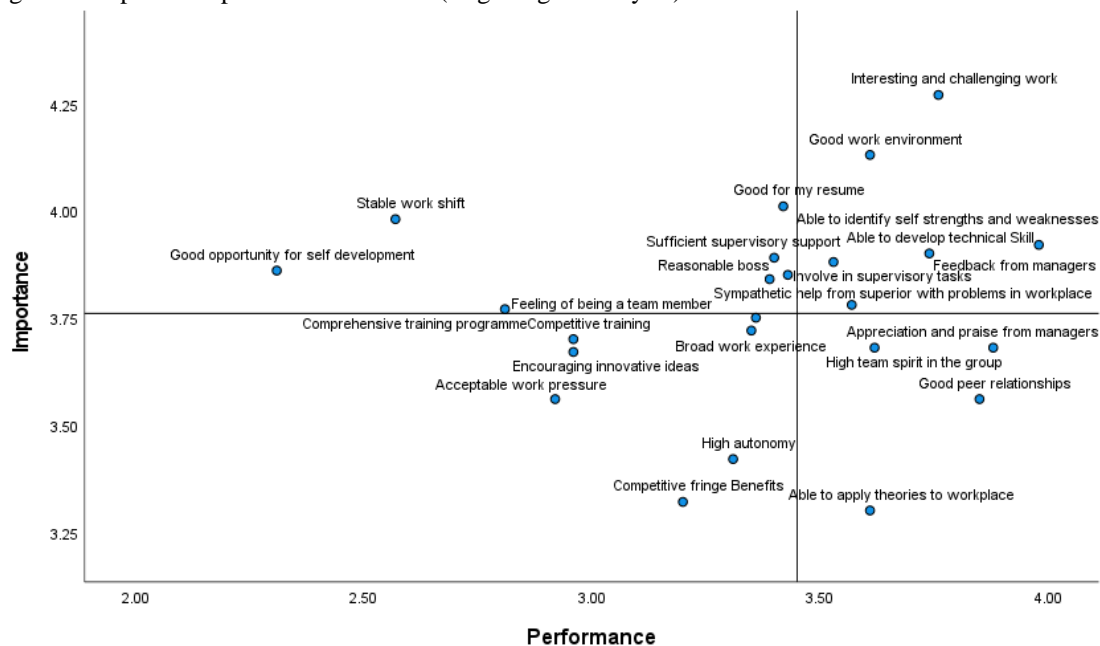
Mean analysis of the factors indicates that there is average satisfaction regarding Factor 3 (Resume and peer relationship), Factor 4 (Job itself), and Factor 5 (Team spirit and involvement). However, for Factor 1 (Superior support and Guidance) and factor 2 (Autonomy and help from superior), the satisfaction level is below average. Gap analysis discovered that gap score is overall negative for all five factors and for individual variables, signifying that expectations are higher as compared to the actual experience resulting in low level of satisfaction, and further leading to an experience that is not utterly satisfying and should not be repeated.

There are total seven variables in Quadrant A (Concentrate here) as observed from the above Figure 2. Quadrant A is suggestive of that the organization must take greatest efforts and additional resources must be concentrated here on priority basis. The variables appearing in Quadrant A are: Reasonable boss, Sufficient supervisory support, Stable work shift, Involve in supervisory tasks, Good for my resume, Good opportunity for self-development, and Feeling of being a team member. These variables also have highest negative gap demonstrating maximum dissatisfaction. Therefore, the organization must undertake measures on priority basis in order to improve interns’ satisfaction level towards these variables (please refer table number 2 and figure number 2).

There are six variables in quadrant B (Keep up the good work). These variables are: Feedback from managers, Sympathetic help from superior with problems in workplace, Able to develop technical skills, Interesting and challenging work, Good work environment, and Able to identify self-strengths and weaknesses. This recommends that there is not much that can be done to increase students’ satisfaction towards these variables, however, resources should still be focused on them in order to keep quality at this level (please refer Table 2 and Figure 2).



Figure 2: Importance-performance matrix (original grid analysis)



Source: Primary data

Quadrant C (Low priority) consists of seven variables. They are: Encouraging innovative ideas, High autonomy, Competitive training, Competitive fringe benefits, Comprehensive training programme, Broad work experience, and Acceptable work. IPA proposes this quadrant is of low priority. Hence, allocating limited resources to these variables shall provide small tactical benefit, and as a result, small to no effort and resources should be expended. Additionally, these variables are also likely to be considered relatively unimportant by the interns (please refer Table 2 and Figure 2).

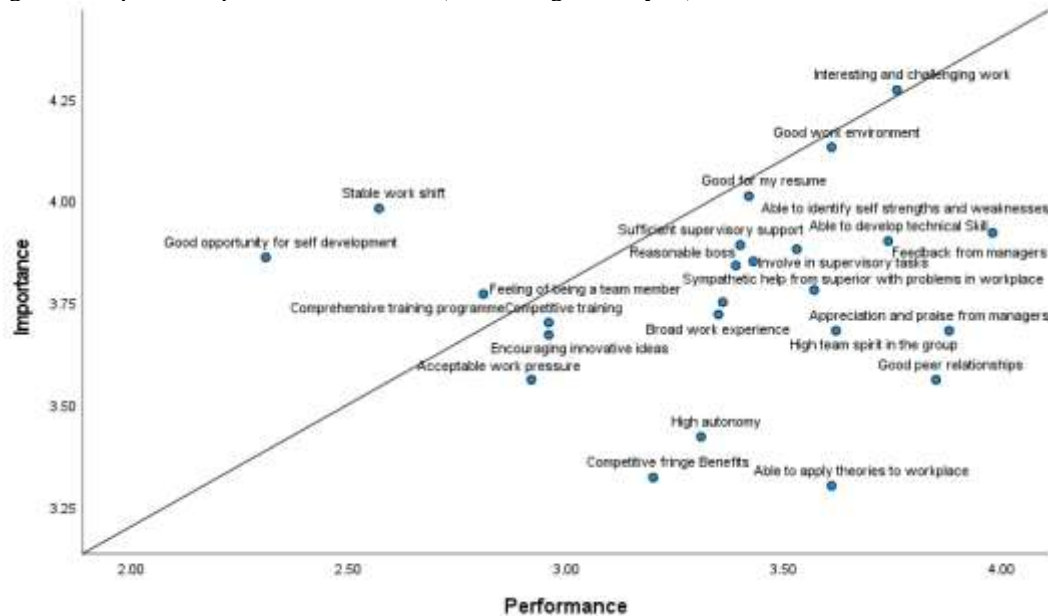
Quadrant D (Possible overkill) have four variables. They are: Good peer relationships, Appreciation and praise from managers, Able to apply theories to workplace, and High team spirit in the group. IPA recommend that the efforts and resources expended should be kept at same level but that, given its low importance, no additional efforts and resources should be invested (please refer Table 2 and Figure 2).

Figure 3 represents the Modified Importance-Performance mapping graph (please refer table 2 second last column named diagonal and figure number 3). It can be observed that only four variables appear in Quadrant A (High Priority, Concentrate here) above diagonal line. These variables are Stable work shift, Good opportunity for self-development, Interesting and challenging work, and Feeling of being a team member. This indicate a clear picture that thoughtful efforts are essential to manage the resources concerning these variables so that the internship programme can provide a pleasing experience. The other twenty variables in Quadrant B (Keep up the good work, Low priority) needs to be taken care of through effective resource management.

Comparison of both, the original I-P matrix and the modified I-P matrix presents a very interesting picture. Though there were seven variables in Quadrant A as per original I-P matrix, as per modified I-P analysis there are only four variables in Quadrant A. Surprisingly, there were only three common variables as per original I-P matrix and the modified I-P matrix. These variables were: Good opportunity for self-development, Stable work shift, and Feeling of being a team member. This indicate that these individual variables are of utmost importance to the student/interns and therefore the hospitality organizations must concentrate on urgent basis. Therefore, the researcher partially rejects the hypothesis in general and accomplishes that

students are dissatisfied with the these three variables and conclude that there is no significant difference between interns’ perception about the importance given to and performance with: (a) Work shift; (b) Self-development opportunities provided; and (c) Feeling of being a team member, during pre and post internship period.

Figure 3: Importance-performance matrix (modified grid analysis)



Source: Primary data

Above the diagonal line: QUADRANT A, High Priority, concentrate here.

Below the diagonal line: QUADRANT B: Low Priority, Keep up the good work

## Conclusion

The study tried to respond to the following queries: What students anticipate before starting their internship? What do students think about the internship experience? What relation exists amongst the difference between performance (experience) and importance (expectations)? According to the mean analysis, students had high expectations for a variety of internship variables such as interesting and challenging work, positive work environment, value of an internship experience on a resume, a stable work shift, ability to identify their strengths and weaknesses, development of technical skills, supervisory support, manager feedback, the chance for self-development, participation in supervisory duties, a reasonable boss, and a comprehensive training. However, the expectations of the students were not fulfilled as expected, which led to general dissatisfaction among the students/interns. This finding is in line with the study of Taylor & Geldenhuys (2018). Analysis of the factor means demonstrates an average level of Importance (3.76) as well as average level of Satisfaction (3.35), thereby indicating overall satisfaction towards internship, but the level of satisfaction is not very high. Similarly, regarding the hypothesis outlined about the five factors consisting 24 variables, 20 variables are significant and partially support the hypothesis outlined.

The traditional I-P analysis by means of the four quadrants and the modified I-P analysis using the diagonal approach highlight three common aspects of internship. They are: stable work shift, good opportunity for self-development, and feeling of being a team member. This clearly designates that these are the major areas of importance for students’ concern requiring highest concentration of efforts on priority basis. The hospitality organisations in India must pay special attention to and devote the most resources to enhancing the performance



of traits that are rated related to these common variables. They will affect the internship experience negatively if due care is not exercised being low satisfaction level areas.

### **Research implications**

The current research focused on examining the Importance and Performance of student towards the internship while perusing BBA/MBA degree in Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Management. The major implications of the study revolve around the internship organisations, educational institutions, and the student.

The students are aware of the advantages of being a participant in the internship programme. Today's interns are future human resource. The hospitality organization should not show inhospitableness to their prospective human resource. Their chances of finding an employment does improve as a result of internship. They must be provided with more internship opportunities to ensure that they hold on to the basic practical skills required. The hospitality and tourism educational institute, which serves as the focal point, when organizing internship programme should allow the hospitality organisations and students to participate in the planning stage. Such exercise will assist in developing and designing curricula to boost the structure of the internship programme. Supervisors or guides must schedule an official or informal meetings with student to go over a variety of topics relating to their observation, training development, or other concerns. The creation of mentorship rules could be a further necessity.

The hotel industry's entry level is marked by low compensation, repetitive duties, a lack of decision-making, and lengthy working hours (Shetu & Sayeda, 2020). Therefore, educators should counsel students on the standards and organisational culture in the hospitality and tourism industry. At the same time, they also ought to pick institutions that provide the best training opportunities for students' satisfaction. This will help to have positive internship experience that can improve students' commitment to work and learning, otherwise the damaging impact on students' commitment to themselves is inevitable.

### **Limitations and future studies**

The study has some limitations too, including a small sampling frame. In this study, only student from the hospitality and tourism educational institutes from India have participated. Therefore, it might not be possible to extrapolate the findings to other geographical areas. Future research ought to use a bigger sample size and a wider range of hospitality services. One way to ensure that internships in the hotel sector have the optimum content and structure is that the future studies must concentrate on the perspectives of proprietors on supply of interns and compare them to the study's outcomes.

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