Host Companies Feedback on the Virtual Internship Performance of International Travel and Tourism Management Students

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ABSTRACT

Internship programs in higher education aim to help students integrate into the corporate world by exposing them to real work environments. This study evaluated host companies' feedback on the performance of Travel and Tourism Management students in virtual internships. It specifically looked at intern profiles, host company feedback on knowledge and skills, self-management, interpersonal skills, attitude, and output, and analyzed differences in feedback based on intern profiles. Descriptive research was used, with 392 interns as subjects. These students participated in virtual internships from the second semester of 2020-2021 to the second semester of 2021-2022. The university's evaluation form served as the assessment tool. Statistical tests included frequency, percentage, weighted mean, rank, Shapiro-Wilk Test, and Kruskal-Wallis. Results showed that most respondents were second-year students in Food and Beverage Services. Host companies reported that interns effectively applied their academic knowledge, maintained proper grooming, cooperated well with

supervisors, and submitted tasks accurately and on time. Significant differences were found in feedback regarding knowledge and skills based on semester, year level, and program enrolled.

INTRODUCTION

Internship programs offered by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) serve the crucial purpose of helping students become exposed to the corporate world by allowing them to actively participate in real work environments. These programs are integral to academic curricula, providing learners with enhanced opportunities to gauge how their academic knowledge and skill sets align with industry demands (Laguador et al., 2020). Recognizing the significance of such training initiatives and their pivotal role in holistic student development, universities are highly dedicated to designing practical curricula (Rana, 2018).

In addition, internships represent a prevalent practice within higher education institutions, enriching students' learning experiences and cultivating their technical competencies. Engaging in internship programs equips students with the means to refine their professional qualities and facilitates the establishment of valuable professional connections and potential career trajectories. In addition to serving as a traditional conduit connecting students to real-world work experiences throughout a program, internships can also be integrated as a dedicated component within a specific course (Amin et al., 2020).

Internship experience is a key component of academic preparation. Participating in an internship program allows students to excel compared to their peers in terms of GPA. Internships encourage greater student engagement, empowering them to control of their education, often leading to improved academic performance (Alnajjar, 2020).

Online internships allow students to develop skills and apply knowledge by gaining work experience remotely, often from home rather than on-site. However, remote or virtual internships can limit a student's direct interaction with their site supervisor or colleagues, as work is conducted through online platforms. Additionally, interns may miss out on the experience of presenting themselves professionally and engaging in daily office communication for 7-8 hours. To be effective, virtual internships should aim to provide a high level of skill development and satisfaction, ensuring students are as well-prepared for their future careers as they would be in a traditional internship setting (Park & Jones, 2021)

In higher education institutions, it is imperative to give students the essential knowledge and skills they will require in their future professional endeavors.

Companies extend opportunities to students to engage as trainee consultants in projects centered around innovation, serving as a means of hands-on experiential learning (Cheah & Li, 2020).

With this, feedback plays a crucial role in enhancing the learning and progress of students engaged in field service projects under the supervision of a mentor. A previous study by McKenzie et al. (2017) emphasized the positive impact of continued education through assessment and feedback on the performance of interns. Building on this, Wang et al. (2019) found that a detailed explanation in the provided feedback was more effective for improving learner's performance. Their research highlighted that this type of feedback contains more structured and supportive information, which reduces the learner's cognitive load and enables them to integrate new information with prior knowledge. In essence, feedback, particularly when it includes comprehensive explanations, not only enhances learner performance but also eases the process of knowledge assimilation and integration, which is especially crucial in field service projects where experiential learning is paramount.

Evaluating internship partners and the effectiveness of internship programs is crucial for identifying challenges in their implementation. Securing an internship placement is of limited value to students if it fails to offer the appropriate learning experience needed to develop job-relevant skills aligned with their field of study (Fei et al., 2020).

However, with the limitations on gatherings and mobility caused by the virus, instead of postponing or canceling the internships, academies are forced to offer an alternative in the form of virtual internships. Simulated Internship is the replacement of the traditional internship programs. Virtual Internships utilize the use of technology. Instead of being physically present in the tourism establishments, students will use technology-based applications to attend virtual meetings where they meet the host company. The internship programs in travel and tourism management include food and beverage, front office, airlines, and travel agencies.

This study aims to assess the virtual internship performance of the interns during their deployment to the different programs and the different tourism and hospitality establishments. This is beneficial for undergraduate students for their future career development, improvement of interpersonal skills, self-management, and enhancement of their knowledge, skills, and attitude after completing their internship period. Additionally, this study seeks to discover the challenges that host companies may encounter during the deployment of the students and will serve as an enhancement or improvement of the future internship programs provided by the university.

FRAMEWORK

Virtual internships allow students to gain work experience remotely, often from home. However, this setup may limit professional engagement and communication with supervisors and colleagues compared to traditional internships. It must ensure skill development and career preparation, similar to on-site internships (Park & Jones, 2021).

In addition, virtual coaching using Skype and Bug-in-the-Ear technology was used to give immediate feedback to teacher candidates during their internships. The real-time feedback helped improve instructional practices and was seen positively by participants, enabling immediate corrective actions without disrupting their performance (Wake et al., 2017).

In relation to this, evaluating internship programs and placements is vital to ensure students acquire relevant job skills. If internships do not provide appropriate learning experiences, they might not benefit students in their fields of study (Fei et al., 2020).

Research shows that internships can improve students' academic performance and engagement. Internships provide real-world experience, which encourages students to take more responsibility for their learning, and often leading to better grades (Alnajjar, 2020).

This study was anchored to Kolb's experiential learning theory. This experiential learning cycle is the most scholarly, influential, and cited model (Morris, 2020). Effective instructional strategies are needed for career practitioner training. Experiential learning theory (Kolb & Kolb, 2009) provides an instructional foundation from which awareness of the various components of career development can be enhanced. It emphasizes that learning is a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. According to Kolb, learning is most effective when a person goes through a cyclical process of experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting. Support for ELT as an effective method of instruction exists in various fields (Hoover et al., 2017; Ti et al., 2009).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study assessed the feedback of host companies on the student performance in virtual internships of Travel and Tourism Management students. Specifically, it describes the profile of the students, the internship program taken, the duration of the internship, and the host company; determines the host company's feedback

in terms of knowledge and skills, self-management, interpersonal skills, attitude and output, and tests the significant difference on the assessment of the host company when grouped according to profile and propose an action plan based on the result of the study.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive quantitative research design was used in gathering the data to assess the feedback of the host company on the virtual internship performance of the International Travel and Tourism students. Descriptive research seeks to provide a precise and systematic portrayal of a population, circumstance, or phenomenon. It is capable of addressing questions concerning "what," "where," "when," and "how," but it does not delve into the realm of answering "why" questions (McCombes, 2022).

Respondents

The subject of the study is 392 or the total population of BSITTM students who have undergone virtual internship from the second semester of 2020-2021 to the second semester of 2021-2022. The evaluators who assessed the performance of the interns were the managers or supervisors of the host company.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire is the evaluation form used by the university to assess interns' performance. This was taken from the internship office. Part I presents the profile of the trainees in terms of semesters they took the program, year level, and internship program enrolled. Part II assesses the performance areas of interns in terms of knowledge and skills, self-management, interpersonal skills, attitude, and output. The study used 5 point Likert scale: 5 – Excellent, 4 – Very Good, 3 – Satisfactory, 2- Fair, and 1 – Unsatisfactory.

Data Gathering Procedure

The study used documentary analysis. The researchers gathered data from the students' submitted evaluation forms to their practicum professors at the end of the internship program or the end of the semester. This was one of the bases of the professors in the computation of student grades.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage distribution were used to describe the profile of

the students in terms of year level, semester they took the program, and the internship program they took. Weighted mean and rank were used to determine the host company's feedback in terms of knowledge and skills, self-management, interpersonal skills, attitude, and Output. The result of the Shapiro-Wilk Test showed that the p-values of all variables were less than 0.05, which means that the data set was not normally distributed. Therefore, the Kruskal-Wallis test for more than two groups was used as part of the non-parametric tests to determine the significant differences. All analyses were performed using SPSS version 28.

Research Ethics Protocol

To observe the highly confidential nature of the survey, no particular names were mentioned in the report. The identity of the respondents was not revealed except that they are host companies of Travel and Tourism students. No personal opinion was given by the researchers; only information and results based on the data gathered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.
Distribution of Respondents' Profile

Profile Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Semester Taken the Program		
1st Sem 2021 – 2022	117	29.8
2nd Sem 2021 – 2022	114	29.1
2nd Sem 2020 – 2021	161	41.1
Year Level		
4th year	117	29.8
3rd year	114	29.1
2nd year	161	41.1
Internship Program Taken		
Travel Agency Services	117	29.8
Airline Services	114	29.1
Food & Beverage Service	161	41.1

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents' profiles in terms of semester taken by the program, year level, and internship program taken. In terms of the semester, the students took the program, during the second semester of 2020-

2021, there are 161 or 41.1% of the students enrolled in that semester, followed by 1ˢᵗ semester of 2021-2022 with 117 or 29.8% of the students enrolled while for 2nd semester 2021-2022 have the lowest with 114 or 29.1%. With regards to the year level, 2ⁿᵈ year had 161 students or 41.1%, followed by 4th year with 117 or 29.8%, and the least was 3ʳᵈ year students. As to the internship program taken, Food and Beverage Service had the highest frequency with 161 or 41.1%, followed by Travel Agency Services with 117 or 29.8%, and the lowest, Airline Services with 114 or 29.1 %

The results among the three profile variables are interrelated. There are more students enrolled in the food and beverages services because it is offered in the second semester of the academic year second semester 2020-2021 during their 2nd-year level wherein the enrollees are in both the Associate Program and Bachelor Degree. As they advance to the 3rd year level, some of the students in the Associate program have graduated already. That is why there are fewer trainees in the Travel Service and Airline. The result also means that the food and beverage industry is a large and growing industry with many opportunities for interns, which is why it is a popular choice of internship among students.

Table 2.

Host Company's Feedback in terms of Knowledge and Skills

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. The intern applies academic knowledge and skills to activities related to workplace settings	4.90	E	1
2. The intern demonstrates comprehension of new concepts and ideas.	4.71	E	2
3. The intern applies theories and concepts to practical usage.	4.63	E	3
4. The intern exhibits skill and ability to express thoughts on paper, reports and projects.	4.43	VG	4
Composite Mean	**4.67**	**E**	

Legend:4.50-5.00=Excellent (E) ;3.50-4.49=Very Good (VG);2.50-3.49=Satisfactory (S);1.50-2.49=Fair (F);1.00-1.49=Unsatisfactory

Table 2 presents the host company's feedback in terms of knowledge and skills, with a composite mean of 4.67, rated as excellent. The intern applies academic knowledge and skills to activities related to workplace settings (4.90), which is ranked the highest, followed by the intern demonstrating comprehension of new concepts and ideas (4.71), which is rated as excellent.

The result means that the intern has been able to successfully transfer their learning from the classroom to the workplace. This is a positive sign, indicating

that the intern can apply their knowledge and skills in a real-world setting. There are a number of factors that may have contributed to the intern's success. First, it is likely that the intern was given the opportunity to work on projects that were relevant to their academic studies. This allows them to use their knowledge and skills in a practical way. The intern may have received positive feedback and encouragement from their supervisor or mentor which can help to boost confidence and motivation that can lead to improved performance.

This is supported by the study of Alaraj et al. (2019) it requires newly arrived trainees to expand their networks and acquire insights into various tasks conducted in government agencies. This objective is anticipated to enhance their prospects of securing future employment across diverse job sectors. This assumption reflects an existing notion that knowledge will be shared within the program, facilitating the transfer of expertise from the Swedish workplace to the trainees.

Meanwhile, the intern applies theories and concepts to practical usage (4.63) rank low and the lowest was the intern exhibits skill and ability to express thoughts on paper, reports and projects (4.43) with the verbal interpretation of very good.

This rating is a positive sign because it indicates that the intern can communicate their ideas and thoughts clearly and concisely in writing and in person. This skill is valuable, allowing the intern to effectively share their knowledge and insights with others. This is evident because they can express their thoughts clearly and concisely without ambiguity or confusion. They can also tailor their communication style to the specific audience, whether a supervisor, colleague, or customer. This is also a valuable skill that can help them to succeed in their career.

This is supported by the study by MacDermott and Ortiz (2017), wherein respondents recognize the importance of written and oral communication skills, underscoring the holistic nature of effective communication in the workplace. By emphasizing both aspects, professionals can enhance their communication proficiency and contribute more effectively to their organizations' success.

Table 3.

Host Company's Feedback in terms of Self-management

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. The intern attends virtual training sessions regularly, on-time and finishes the sessions as scheduled.	4.88	E	4
2. The intern reports to training sessions in proper grooming and attire is suitable for the training session.	4.93	E	1
3. The intern demonstrates and has the ability to handle multiple tasks and can discern priorities.	4.89	E	2.5
4. The intern is reliable and imbues a sense of responsibility in handling the tasks assigned to him/her.	4.89	E	2.5
Composite Mean	4.90	E	

Legend:4.50-5.00=Excellent (E) ;3.50-4.49=Very Good (VG);2.50-3.49=Satisfactory (S);1.50-2.49=Fair (F);1.00-1.49=Unsatisfactory

Table 3 shows the host company's feedback in terms of self-management, having a composite mean of 4.90, rated as excellent. The intern reports to training sessions in proper grooming and attire is suitable for the training session (4.93) ranked first, followed by The intern demonstrates and can handle multiple tasks and can discern priorities (4.89), followed by interns demonstrates and can handle multiple tasks and can discern priorities (4.89) tied with intern is reliable and imbues a sense of responsibility in handling the tasks assigned to him/her (4.89). All the top 3 indicators were rated as excellent.

The result means that the intern consistently reports to training sessions in proper grooming and attire. This is a positive sign, as it shows that the intern is taking their training seriously and is making an effort to make a good impression. Proper grooming and attire can help create a professional atmosphere and can also boost the intern's confidence.

The study of Pascua et al. (2022) indicates that students have received training in personality development, focusing on grooming and office decorum, reflecting the recognition of the significance of these attributes in professional settings. Such training equips students with the necessary skills and knowledge to present themselves professionally, adhere to workplace norms, and contribute positively to their future careers.

However, they attend virtual training sessions regularly, on time, and finish the sessions as scheduled. They ranked the lowest with a weighted mean of 4.88 but were still rated as excellent.

This means that the trainee who attended the virtual training sessions regularly, on time, and finished them as scheduled could still learn the material

and demonstrate their understanding. However, this may have ranked the lowest in a few possible reasons. They may not have participated as actively as other participants. Virtual training sessions can be more difficult to participate in than in-person sessions, as asking questions or contributing to discussions can be harder. If the trainee did not participate as actively as other participants, they may not have received as much feedback or attention from the trainer.

The interns demonstrate confidence and effectively communicate any challenges or difficulties they encounter in the workplace to their mentors. They acknowledge their limited experience and recognize the need to seek advice from industry experts who can provide valuable insights. However, despite relying on the expertise of others, the interns exhibit a self-assured demeanor and convey their confidence in handling their assigned tasks (Arago et al., 2019).

Table 4 .
Host Company's Feedback in terms of Interpersonal Skills

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. The intern works effectively with and contributes ideas or suggestions to the team/group.	4.96	E	2
2. The intern is cooperative and courteous in dealing with supervisors, mentors, and peers.	4.97	E	1
3. The intern enjoys a comfortable working relationship with his/her mentors/facilitators and peers.	4.95	E	3
4. The intern exercises self-confidence and is comfortable in airing his/her problems and difficulties with his/her supervisor and mentors.	4.81	E	4
Composite Mean	4.92	E	

Legend:4.50-5.00=Excellent (E) ;3.50-4.49=Very Good (VG);2.50-3.49=Satisfactory (S);1.50-2.49=Fair (F);1.00-1.49=Unsatisfactory

Table 4 reveals the host company's feedback in terms of interpersonal skills, with a composite mean of 4.92, which is rated as excellent. The intern is cooperative and courteous in dealing with supervisors, mentors, and peers (4.97), which tops the rank, followed by the intern working effectively with and contributing ideas or suggestions to the team/group (4.96), both indicators rated as excellent.

The result indicates that the intern can work well with others and respects their authority. This is important for any intern, as they will work with various people during their internship. Being cooperative and courteous will help the intern build relationships with their supervisors, mentors, and peers, which will

benefit their learning and development. With these skills, the intern is more likely to be given challenging assignments, as their supervisors and mentors will be confident they can handle them. It also indicates that the intern is a valuable asset to any team and is likely to be successful in their career.

According to Coltrain's study (2018), by being cooperative and courteous, the intern exhibits valuable interpersonal skills that contribute to a harmonious and productive work atmosphere. Their ability to work well with superiors, mentors, and peers demonstrates their professionalism and their commitment to maintaining positive relationships within the professional setting.

Meanwhile, the intern enjoys a comfortable working relationship with his/her mentors/facilitators and peers(4.95) ranked low while the lowest was The intern exercises self-confidence and is comfortable in airing his/her problems and difficulties with his/her supervisor and mentors (4.81) ranked the lowest but still rated as excellent.

This means that the intern is confident and comfortable in asking for help when they need it. This is a valuable skill for any intern, as it allows them to learn and grow in their role. It also shows that the intern is open to feedback and is willing to take on new challenges. The skills and experience interns gain from asking for help and overcoming challenges will be invaluable in their future careers.

According to McDonald and Wilson-Mah (2022), mentorship in the workplace provides valuable opportunities for enhancing both psychosocial support and career development. Students' perceptions of mentorship highlight the importance of supervisors acting as mentors, the initiation of mentorship relationships, the level of formality involved, and the key benefits and learning outcomes gained from the experience.

Table 5. *Host Company's Feedback in terms of Attitude*

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. The intern applies the virtues of integrity and honesty in all aspects of his/her work.	4.93	E	1
2. The intern has the positive attitude towards criticism and towards supervisors and mentors	4.92	E	2
3. The intern accepts miscellaneous jobs and tasks with the proper attitude without complaining.	4.91	E	3.5
4. The intern shows interest, enthusiasm and pride with the tasks assigned to him/her.	4.91	E	3.5
Composite Mean	4.92	E	

Legend:4.50-5.00=Excellent (E) ;3.50-4.49=Very Good (VG);2.50-3.49=Satisfactory (S);1.50-

2.49=Fair (F);1.00-1.49=Unsatisfactory

Table 5 presents the host company's feedback in terms of attitude, which got the composite mean of 4.92. The intern who applied the virtues of integrity and honesty in all aspects of his/her work (4.93) got the highest weighted mean, followed by the intern who had a positive attitude towards criticism and towards supervisors and mentors (4.92), both rated as excellent.

The result indicates that interns are more likely to be successful in their internship. When interns are honest and have integrity, they are more likely to be trusted by their supervisors and colleagues. This can lead to more opportunities and responsibilities. The skills and experience interns gain from honesty and integrity will be invaluable in their future careers. When interns are honest and have integrity, it creates a more positive and supportive work environment for everyone. This can lead to increased productivity, creativity, and innovation.

From an ethical standpoint, integrity is commonly defined as being honesty, truthfulness, and accuracy in one's actions. It is fundamentally opposed to hypocrisy. When assessing integrity based on certain standards, maintaining internal consistency is seen as virtuous. Therefore, one might evaluate whether individuals possess integrity by observing the extent to which their actions align with the values, beliefs, and principles they profess to uphold (Macomber, 2019)

Meanwhile, the intern accepts miscellaneous jobs and tasks with the proper attitude without complaining (4.91), ranked last, tied with the intern showing interest, enthusiasm, and pride in the tasks assigned to him/her (4.91) but still rated as excellent.

The result is a positive assessment of the intern's work ethic and attitude. This means that the intern is engaged in their work and takes pride in their accomplishments. This is a valuable quality in any employee, and it is especially important for interns who are still learning the ropes. An intern who is interested and enthusiastic about their work is more likely to be successful in their internship and beyond.

A strengths intervention is a structured procedure aimed at recognizing and nurturing the strengths present in an individual or a group. These interventions actively encourage individuals to identify and harness their unique strengths, regardless of their nature. The overarching objective is to enhance well-being or achieve other positive outcomes, such as improved academic performance (Meyers & Van, 2017).

Table 6.

Host Company's Feedback in terms of Output

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. The intern submits activities and assigned tasks completely, accurately and promptly.	4.84	E	1
2. The intern is attentive to details and provides good deliverables that meet expectations.	4.80	E	2
3. The intern produces quality outputs that demonstrate proper planning.	4.61	E	3
4. The intern completes all the required activities, projects and assignments.	4.43	VG	4
Composite Mean	4.67	E	

Legend:4.50-5.00=Excellent;3.50-4.49=Very Good;2.50-3.49=Satisfactory;1.50-2.49=Fair;1.00-1.49=Unsatisfactory

Table 6 reveals the host company's feedback in terms of Output, with the composite mean of 4.84 rated as excellent. The intern submits activities and assigned tasks completely, accurately, and promptly (4.84), ranked first, followed by the intern who is attentive to details and provides good deliverables that meet expectations (4.80), both rated as excellent.

This means that the interns have a high-performance standard, and it is likely that the intern is a valuable asset to the company. The fact that the intern has been ranked the highest and rated as excellent suggests that their work is of the highest quality. It also indicates that interns are motivated and eager to learn, conscientious, and take pride in their work, as well as organized and efficient.

The ability to meet most employers' expectations exceeds fulfilling tasks—it signifies adaptability, reliability, problem-solving skills, effective communication, and overall commitment to success. This capability enhances individual career growth and positively influences the teams and organization (Ortiz & MacDermott, 2018).

Meanwhile, the intern produces quality outputs demonstrating proper planning (4.61), which is ranked low, and the lowest is the intern completing all the required activities, projects, and assignments (4.43), which is rated as very good.

This indicates that they have been rated as "very good," which suggests that their work is high quality. The rating also suggests that there is some room for improvement. They could be more proactive in seeking new challenges and opportunities, take more initiative in leading and managing projects, and be

more creative in their thinking and problem-solving.

This is supported by the study of Snell (2019), which, based on interviews with interns and their partner organization representatives, found that interns are required to submit written assignments as part of the program's completion.

Table 7.

Difference of Responses on Host Company's Feedback When Grouped According to Profile

Profile Variables	λ^2 c	p-value	Interpretation
Semester Taken the Program			
Knowledge and Skills	6.606	0.037	Significant
Self-management	1.888	0.389	Not Significant
Interpersonal Skills	1.619	0.445	Not Significant
Attitude	3.399	0.183	Not Significant
Output	1.881	0.390	Not Significant
Year Level			
Knowledge and Skills	6.606	0.037	Significant
Self-management	1.888	0.389	Not Significant
Interpersonal Skills	1.619	0.445	Not Significant
Attitude	3.399	0.183	Not Significant
Output	1.881	0.390	Not Significant
Internship Program Taken			
Knowledge and Skills	6.896	0.032	Significant
Self-management	1.704	0.427	Not Significant
Interpersonal Skills	1.490	0.475	Not Significant
Attitude	3.417	0.181	Not Significant
Output	2.024	0.364	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value<0.05

Table 7 shows the difference in responses to the host company's feedback when grouped according to profile. There was a statistically significant difference in responses to the Host Company's feedback in terms of knowledge and skills when grouped by profile because the obtained p-values were less than 0.05. A post hoc test revealed that there was a significant difference in responses between the first semester of 2021-2022 and the second semester of 2021-2022.

This means that the responses of the host company manager or supervisor to the interns' knowledge and skills differed depending on the interns' profiles. This difference was statistically significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance. The post hoc test revealed a significant response difference between the 1st semester 2021-2022 and the 2nd semester 2021-2022. This means the host companies' feedback on the interns' knowledge and skills differed between the two semesters. This might be because the interns in the 2nd semester may have had more prior experience than those in the 1st semester. Another possible reason is that the host companies' expectations of the interns changed between the two semesters.

As to the year level, there was a significant difference in the responses between the 4th year and the 3rd year level. Based on the findings, those respondents who took the internship program during the 4th year were evaluated higher by the host company's manager or supervisor.

This means that the host companies' feedback on the interns' knowledge and skills differed depending on their year level. It could be that those in the fourth year level have more knowledge and skills learned during their three years at the university, and they were able to apply those during their internship.

There was a significant difference in responses between travel agencies and airlines regarding the program taken. Based on the findings, the host company's manager or supervisor evaluated respondents who took the internship program in an airline.

This means that the host companies' feedback on the interns' knowledge and skills differed depending on the program taken. It also means that host companies' feedback on the interns' knowledge and skills differed depending on the industry in which the interns were deployed. One possibility is that the interns in the airline industry were given more challenging and interesting work to do. Another possibility is that the host companies in the airline industry were more supportive and engaged with the interns. It is also possible that the interns in the airline industry had more prior experience in the travel industry, which

gave them a better foundation for their internship.

Table 8 presents the action plan for implementing virtual internship programs effectively for the students of International Travel and Tourism Management. Objectives are based on the indicators/key result areas that did not achieve an excellent rating.

Table 8.

Proposed Action Plan for the Improved Implementation of Virtual Internship

Key Result Area/ Objectives	Strategies/Program	Expected Outcome
Knowledge and Skills To exhibit excellent skills and ability to express thoughts on paper, reports, and projects.	1. Ensure that writing flows logically from one point to the next. Use transitional words and phrases to guide readers through their ideas. 2. Practice writing regularly. Set aside dedicated time for writing, even if it's just journaling or short essays.	Good output will be produced and completed by the interns.
Output To complete all the required activities, projects, and assignments on time.	1. Plan the writing tasks and allocate sufficient time. Avoid rushing the work, as it can lead to errors and a lack of coherence. 2. List all tasks, projects, and assignments. Give priority based on their deadlines and importance, and focus on completing high-priority tasks first.	Students/interns will be able to submit all the tasks on time.

The implementation of this action plan will be a joint responsibility of the internship coordinators, faculty advisers, and students. The internship will begin with an orientation session at the start of the internship period, during which strategies will be introduced and expectations will be set. Weekly progress checks will be conducted through virtual meetings or submission logs. Additionally, feedback mechanisms will be established to enable interns to reflect on their performance and seek support when needed. With consistent guidance and active participation, the plan is expected to foster an improved virtual internship experience that prepares students for professional work environments.

CONCLUSIONS

Most respondents are enrolled in Food and Beverage Services in their second year during the 2nd semester of 2020 to 2021. This means that universities and colleges can use the findings of this study to develop programs and courses that are more aligned with the needs of the food and beverage industry.

When it comes to the feedback of the host company, interns can apply academic knowledge and skills to activities related to workplace settings. They report to training sessions in proper grooming, are cooperative with and courteous in dealing with supervisors, are honest in dealing with superiors, and submit activities and assigned tasks completely, accurately, and promptly. The result implies that internship programs are an effective way to prepare students for the workforce; therefore, universities and colleges should focus on developing internship programs that align with the needs of employers and provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in the workplace.

Significant differences exist in the feedback of the host company regarding knowledge and skills when grouped according to semester taken, year level, and program enrolled. An action plan was developed to provide a more effective virtual internship program to the students of International Travel and Tourism Management.

This study is significant as it provides valuable insights for universities, colleges, and industry partners in improving internship programs, particularly in Food and Beverage Services for International Travel and Tourism Management. The development of a corresponding action plan underscores the study's practical value, offering strategies to enhance virtual internship implementation and strengthen collaboration between the university and industry stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Faculty members may provide students with more tasks or activities that will enable them to enhance their skills in report preparation and projects. Collaborative writing platforms and simulation software can also be used to improve the preparation and presentation of tourism-related projects

2. CITHM may introduce rotational internships where students experience 2–3 different types of hospitality or tourism settings.

3. A proposed action plan may be implemented to have a perfect score in each area.

4. Future studies can lead to the development of an Internship Quality Index (IQI), a standardized tool for assessing the effectiveness and quality of internship providers.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The findings of this study will be utilized to improve the virtual internships offered by the institutions in the next semesters and can be the basis of new internship programs. This will equip students with upgraded skills and knowledge, improved self-management, interpersonal skills, and attitude.

LITERATURE CITED

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