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## Determinants of Internship Satisfaction Among Hotel Management Graduates: A Mixed-Methods Inquiry

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### ABSTRACT

Internships provide a critical link between course delivery and practical experience in hotel management courses. This study investigated important aspects of internship satisfaction among hotel management graduates using a sequential mixed method, where a survey was followed-up with individual interviews. This research covered areas including supervision quality, opportunity of cross-departmental training, work-life balance, living conditions, and institutional support. Significant findings revealed meaningful mentoring experiences and exposure to numerous hotel departments as benefiting positive experiences; whereas logistical issues/inconveniences, or excessive tasks and responsibilities, negatively impacted interns' experiences. Further, 68% of respondents reported that they were either extremely satisfied or satisfied with their supervisors and 72% were either extremely satisfied or satisfied with their movement through hotel departments, although many desired more cross-training. The study concluded that enhancing both intrinsic (i.e. learning, recognition) and extrinsic (e.g. meals, housing) parts of intern experiences could be possible. Implications from the findings led to meaningful recommendations for educators and hospitality organizations wishing to enhance internships and develop experiences that are meaningful to



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students, while enhancing their preparations for industry.

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### **1. Introduction:**

Professional internships act as a transitional crucible in the educational journey of hospitality students, and provide students with immersion in operational departments like the front office, housekeeping, culinary services, and food and beverage operations. Internships carry academic and professional importance, but interns experience qualitative variety in their internship experiences, sometimes due to complex relationship dynamics at both organizational and individual levels. Bad internship experiences may lead to disillusionment, skill deficits, and ultimately decreased work commitment. Therefore, it is timely and useful to engage in a meaningful exploration of factors associated with internship satisfaction to help with decisions regarding evidence-based curriculum and industry practice.

### **Research Objectives:**

- To identify and assess the important factors that influence internship satisfaction of graduates in hospitality management.
- To examine the interrelationships between these factors and internship satisfaction.
- To develop actionable recommendations for academics and industry practitioners to sustainably improve the design and delivery of internships.

### **2. Literature Review:**

Internship satisfaction, as a construct, intersects organizational psychology, experiential learning theory, and vocational training paradigms. Gault et al. (2000) assert that internships enhance professional readiness by bridging academic instruction with industry practices. Within hospitality education, Richardson (2008) highlights a discrepancy between student expectations and experiential realities, often leading to disenchantment. Herzberg's (1959) dual-factor theory provides a heuristic lens to distinguish between extrinsic hygiene elements (e.g., compensation, accommodation) and intrinsic motivators (e.g., learning opportunities, professional recognition).

Key empirical contributions include:

- Teng (2008) underscored the centrality of mentorship in shaping intern satisfaction.
- Lam and Ching (2007) emphasized the pedagogical utility of departmental rotation.



- Zopiatis and Constanti (2007) documented the psychosocial benefits of work-life integration and emotional scaffolding.

The latest work was done in 2024 at Vietnam, which shows only 50% students are satisfied, but still most are leaving the career, due to poor experience.. (Phan & Truong, 2024)

Similar research conducted in India, 2024, result shows, students are mostly happy, which contradicts the reality.(Verma et al., 2025)

### 3. Methodology:

**Research Design:** Convergent parallel mixed-methods, Primary Data from structured questionnaire and secondary data from relevant literatures.

**Sample Frame:** 120 hotel management graduates across accredited Indian institutions who completed internships within the preceding 24 months.

**Data Instruments:** First hand data collected by Standardized Likert-based questionnaire and semi-structured qualitative interviews.

**Analytic Approach:** Descriptive and inferential statistics for quantitative data; thematic coding for qualitative insights

### 4. Results and Discussion:

#### Quantitative Findings:

- 68% indicated high satisfaction with supervisory relationships and mentorship quality.
- 55% expressed dissatisfaction with logistical arrangements, notably accommodation and meals.
- 72% valued departmental rotation but recommended enhanced cross-training modalities.
- 40% reported unsustainable workload pressures contributing to psychosocial stress.
- 60% deemed the internship as substantively beneficial to their professional orientation.

#### Descriptive Statistics:

Factor	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	25%	50%	75%	Max
Supervision Quality	4.1	0.70	3.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	5.0
Accommodation & Meals	2.2	0.60	1.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
Departmental Exposure	4.4	0.49	4.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	5.0
Workload Manageability	2.5	0.50	2.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.0
Overall Satisfaction	3.7	0.46	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0

**Correlation Matrix:**

	Supervision	Accommodation	Dept Exposure	Workload	Satisfaction
Supervision Quality	1.00	0.19	0.47	0.14	0.41
Accommodation & Meals	0.19	1.00	0.07	-0.33	0.22
Departmental Exposure	0.47	0.07	1.00	0.41	0.53
Workload Manageability	0.14	-0.33	0.41	1.00	0.22
Overall Satisfaction	0.41	0.22	0.53	0.22	1.00

**Thematic Analysis (Qualitative):** Emergent themes reflected diverse emotional and cognitive responses:

- "The absence of structured feedback mechanisms was demotivating."
- "Being utilized as substitute labor without acknowledgment undermined my sense of purpose."
- "Mentorship served as a pivotal axis for learning and morale."

**Interpretive Discussion:**

The interaction of intrinsic and extrinsic features supports the complexity of satisfaction concerning internships. In regard to the quantitative results, exposure to departments and quality of supervision are both strong predictors of overall satisfaction and in contrast, logistical inadequacies and high workload act as detractors. Here, we support Herzberg's theoretical split theory by suggesting the need to consider both hygiene and motivational aspects in order to achieve an overall satisfaction dimension.

**5. Conclusion:**

Internship satisfaction is an important component to assess how effective hospitality education is. This study identifies structured mentorship, exposure to the entire department and balance of workload as critical enablers. Institutions and industry partners must take a systems approach to internship design where feedback loops, collegiality, and learning communities are built in.

**Recommendations:**

- Institutionalize mandatory pre-internship orientation sessions
- Develop iterative feedback systems and reflective evaluations



- Enhance accommodation and sustenance infrastructure
- Formalize mentorship frameworks across host organizations
- Expand rotational training across diverse operational domains

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## Survey Instrument

Below questionnaire has been presented through Google Form to the hotel management students of batches who completed their Industrial training.  
<https://forms.gle/UAm69t5HxKYGhNS49>

### Questions (Likert Scale: 1–5)

1. The pre-internship orientation provided by my institution prepared me adequately.
2. My internship role and responsibilities were clearly communicated.
3. My supervisor was supportive and available when needed.
4. I received timely and constructive feedback.
5. I gained exposure to multiple departments.
6. My accommodation and meals were satisfactory.
7. My workload was manageable relative to my role.
8. I felt recognized and valued by the organization.
9. My internship experience reinforced my interest in a hospitality career.
10. Overall, I am satisfied with my internship experience.

### Demographic Information:

- Gender: Male / Female / Other
- Age:
- Academic Institution:
- Internship Type: Chain Hotel / Independent Property / Resort / Other
- Duration of Internship:
- Geographic Location:
- Interview Guide:
  - Can you describe your overall internship experience?
  - What elements of your internship were most and least beneficial?
  - In what ways did your supervisor influence your learning outcomes?
  - Would you endorse the same internship opportunity to your peers? Why or why not?



## Appendix:

- Informed Consent Template

### Informed Consent Form

**Title of the Study:** *Determinants of Internship Satisfaction Among Hotel Management Graduates: A Mixed-Methods Inquiry*

**Purpose of the Study:** You are invited to participate in a research study that aims to explore the factors affecting internship satisfaction among hotel management graduates. The findings of this study will help improve internship structures and student experiences in hospitality education.

**Procedures:** If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey that will take approximately **10–15 minutes**. The survey includes multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions, and no sensitive personal data will be collected.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation is **completely voluntary**. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits.

**Confidentiality:** All responses will be kept **strictly confidential**. Data will be anonymized and used solely for academic purposes. No identifying information will be shared or published.

**Benefits and Risks:** There are no known risks associated with this study. While you may not receive any direct benefits, your responses will contribute to improving future internship programs for hotel management students.

**Consent Statement:** By proceeding with the survey, you acknowledge that:

- You have read and understood the information provided above.
- You voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
- You are at least 18 years of age.