



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

# Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jhlste](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jhlste)



## Academic Papers

# Are internship programs encouraging or discouraging?—A viewpoint of tourism and hospitality students in Turkey



Erdogan Koc<sup>a,\*</sup>, Sedat Yumusak<sup>a,1</sup>, Metin Ulukoy<sup>a,2</sup>,  
Recep Kilic<sup>a,3</sup>, Aytac Toptas<sup>b,4</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Balikesir University, Bandirma Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Business Administration, Bandirma Kampusu, Bandirma, Balikesir, Turkey

<sup>b</sup> Balikesir University, Erdek School of Advanced Vocational Studies, Gonen, Balikesir, Turkey

## ARTICLE INFO

### Keywords:

Internship  
Tourism and hospitality education  
Efficiency  
Effectiveness

## ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the views of tourism and hospitality students' of summer internship programs they participate. The results of the survey received from 603 students across Turkey reveal that after their internship experiences almost 18.3% of the students do now wish to work in tourism and hospitality sector while a significant proportion of them wish to work in different areas of tourism and hospitality they had originally intended. This may mean that a minimum of \$100 million may be wasted per annum. The study has important practical implications for tourism and hospitality education.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction, context and the rationale

According to World Tourism Organization's Tourism Highlights report (2013) with 35.7 million international tourists and representing about 7% of all world tourism, Turkey was the sixth country in the world in 2012 in terms of the number of international tourist arrivals ([World Tourism Organization \(WTO\), 2013](#)). In 2013 39.2 million tourists visited Turkey leaving an income of \$ 32.3 billion. Two Turkish tourist destinations alone, Antalya and Istanbul, attract together about 23 million tourists, almost as many tourists as attracted by countries like Russian Federation or Malaysia ([TUROFED \(Turkish Hoteliers Federation\), 2014](#)).

Tourism revenues represent about 4% of GNP in Turkey and cover more than 40% of foreign trade deficit of the country ([TURSAB \(Association of Turkish Travel Agencies\), 2014](#)). Additionally, tourism, directly or indirectly, represents about almost 18% of all employment in Turkey, a country where the official figure of unemployment is about 11%. Tourism is an attractive industry for investment not only for developing countries such as Turkey, but also for developed countries,

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +90 266 7380945x422.

E-mail addresses: [erdogankoc@balikesir.edu.tr](mailto:erdogankoc@balikesir.edu.tr), [erdogankoc@yahoo.com](mailto:erdogankoc@yahoo.com) (E. Koc), [sedat@balikesir.edu.tr](mailto:sedat@balikesir.edu.tr) (S. Yumusak), [mulukoy@hotmail.com](mailto:mulukoy@hotmail.com) (M. Ulukoy), [krecep@balikesir.edu.tr](mailto:krecep@balikesir.edu.tr) (R. Kilic), [atoptas36@hotmail.com](mailto:atoptas36@hotmail.com) (A. Toptas).

<sup>1</sup> Tel.: +90 266 7380945x232.

<sup>2</sup> Tel.: +90 266 7380945x231.

<sup>3</sup> Tel.: +90 266 7380945x424.

<sup>4</sup> Tel.: +90 266 855 71 80.

as capital requirement for tourism enterprises is relatively low and the realisation period of investments are relatively short (Williams & Shaw, 1992).

Tourism can also make a significant contribution to the diversification of the economy and may help alleviate regional imbalances while providing an export opportunity which is subject to relatively high growth rates and is less constrained (e.g. greater price flexibility and better employment opportunities) than the more traditional forms of export (Fletcher, 1995). Moreover, tourism is an important industry especially for a country like Turkey due to its high multiplier effect. The multiplier refers to total addition to income resulting from initial expenditure within a sector and it measures the impact of extra expenditure introduced into an economy. In the tourism multiplier league developed by Fletcher (1995) Turkey's multiplier value was found to be the highest (1.96) in the world, to be followed by the UK, the Republic of Ireland and Egypt, with values 1.73, 1.72 and 1.23, respectively. Though the figures in Fletcher (1995)'s tourism multiplier league may be considered as old, almost 20 years old, as there has not been any comprehensive study of tourism multipliers comparing countries or regions, these figures, to a certain extent, may still show the importance of tourism industry for Turkey. Thus, it may be stated that, any addition or loss of one dollar of tourism revenue has relatively more significant impact on Turkish economy.

Despite these positive factors Turkish tourism faces major competition and it is highly vulnerable. For instance, when figures on tourist numbers visiting Turkey are analysed over the years it is seen that Turkey's tourism activity is highly seasonal and mainly based on one tourism product, which is the sun and sea tourism. Turkish tourism is highly seasonal as approximately 70% of tourism revenues are earned from tourists who visit Turkey between 1st of April to 30th of September for sun and sea holidays.

However, international trends show that people are moving away from sun and sea type of tourism. Culligan (1992) suggested that the tourist's increasing desire for more novel, adventurous, and 'authentic' forms of tourism experience is a function of the decline in utility associated with a decision to simply replicate previous experience. This means a move away from General Interest Tourism (GIT) towards Special Interest Tourism (SIT) (Brotherton & Himmetoglu, 1997). Krippendorf (1987a,b) argued that fundamental changes occurring in the tourism market in general are in line with the developments of new patterns of tourism consumption. He argues that in the near future there will be a substantial decline in those tourists for whom hedonism is a dominant travel motive, e.g. as in the case of sun and sea holidays, and for whom tourism is seen purely as a mechanism for recovery [rest] and liberation [escape from the ordinary]. In the tourism market there will be more emphasis on the environmental and social context in which tourism occurs, and the humanisation of tourism activities (Krippendorf, 1987a,b). This statement shows that there is a move from GIT to SIT with decreasing utility in hedonistically motivated holidays. Zauhar (1994)'s views are in line with this move. Zauhar (1994) argues that future projections, with reference to tourism trends, indicate a tendency pattern of breaking free time into a series of blocks, thereby permitting a variety of experiential stays within a single year (Zauhar, 1994).

Based on above, in addition to developing new special interest tourism products, it may be suggested that Turkish tourism needs to improve its efficiency and effectiveness so as to be able to remain competitive. According to Porter (1990)'s *Diamond Model* having skilled human resources as one of the factor conditions can play a significant role in the competitiveness of an industry or a nation. As tourism and hospitality industries are high contact industries, having knowledgeable and skilled human resources may be extremely instrumental for maintaining efficiency and effectiveness of businesses in these sectors. The increased contact with the customers in tourism and hospitality services usually causes customers evaluate the whole tourism and/or hospitality service based on personnel alone. Moreover, the inseparability and heterogeneity nature of tourism and hospitality services place additional heavy demands on human resources in terms of their quality and quantity. Service providing personnel in tourism and hospitality businesses may encounter incompatible job demands or expectations from both customers and management (Hsieh & Yen, 2005; Jackson & Schuler, 1985).

One way of ensuring continuous pool of skilled human resources is the provision of vocational education at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels of education. In contrast with declarative education, which is used in education in a usually broader scientific field concentrating on theory and abstract knowledge, vocational education emphasises the teaching of procedural knowledge based on manual and practical activities (Liburd & Christensen, 2013). Quantity wise, in Turkey in the 2013–2014 academic year there were about 63,886 students studying on tourism and hospitality programs at universities. In Turkey about 73% of these students were studying towards two-year associate of arts degrees at vocational schools, 9% were studying towards four year degrees at advanced vocational schools and 8% were studying towards four-year degrees at tourism faculties (OSYM (Turkish Higher Education Recruitment and Placement Council), 2014).

Policy makers and the practitioners need to make sure that the quality as well as the quantity of the tourism and hospitality graduates must be at a sufficient level to support tourism and hospitality industry. As internship programs constitute a key element of vocational education, studies exploring the efficiency and effectiveness of internship programs are highly essential for Turkey based on the above explanations. Against this background this study aims to explore the perceptions of internship programs of tourism and hospitality students after they have had their internship experiences. Since the study is exploratory and practical in nature, it should be assumed that it will have more practical implications, rather than theoretical ones.

## 2. Internship and tourism education

Internship practices which are also referred to as practical work experience, work placement, field of practicum, professional placement, cooperative education or experiential learning activity, are short-term periods of practical work

experiences wherein students receive training as well as gain invaluable job experiences in a specific field or potential career of their interest (Zopiatis & Theocharous, 2013). From a pedagogical perspective internship programs allow participants gain practical experience, provide opportunities to apply knowledge and learned theories and eventually allow them an opportunity to evaluate their knowledge and reach conclusions (Chang & Chu, 2009). Internship programs may have significant influences on both the internship-derived benefits and the practice's overall success (Lam & Ching, 2007; Zopiatis & Constanti, 2007).

Primarily, internship programs, supported by appropriate career and placement services, may enable college students to gain industry-related experience, improve their networking skills in the industry, and increase the rate of job placement upon graduation (Chi & Gursoy, 2009). Tourism and hospitality courses at universities place increasingly greater importance on practical training and developing efficient and effective internship programs for students. Busby (2001) argues that in the tourism and hospitality sectors the internship plus degree constitute the "necessary base" for employment. For this reason, access to, and ease in, recruitment is an often-discussed benefit and motivator for participating in internship programs. According to Solnet, Robinson, and Cooper (2007) internship allows students to have a 'sneak-peek' at a potential future work prospect.

Moreover, higher education institutions view internship as one of the positive strategies for recruiting students, thereby promoting a comprehensive curriculum with an attractive internship project. Students and the tourism industry are also well aware of the advantage of incorporating practical experiences into tourism and hospitality school curricula (Lam & Ching, 2007). Recent studies have given considerable attention to the impact of internship programs on career choice and job satisfaction, as well as on the development of long-term strategies for attracting and retaining talented employees in the hospitality and tourism industry (Lam & Ching, 2007; Richardson, 2008, 2009).

When students become aware of the issues and problems existing in the industry during an internship program, they may recognise some discrepancies between what they have learned in the classroom and what they experience on the job (Zopiatis & Constanti, 2007). Research shows that successful internship practices enhance the interns' intentions to pursue hospitality careers upon their graduation (Barron & Maxwell, 1993; Busby, 2003; Christou, 1999; Chen & Shen, 2012; Jauhari & Manaktola, 2006; Ko, 2006; Petrillose & Montgomery, 1998). The findings of Kim and Park (2013)'s study imply that desirable social experiences during students' internship periods can ultimately lead to a positive change in students' perceptions, thereby decreasing negative perceptions regarding various factors relating to a career in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Universities in Turkey offer a variety of tourism and hospitality programs. Students can attend two-year associate of arts degree programs at schools of advanced vocational studies as well as four-year degree programs, both at schools of applied sciences or at tourism faculties. The duration of a compulsory internship program is usually 30 days for two-year associate of arts degree programs and 60 days for four-year degree programs. Internship programs are taken by the students in summer months, at the end of year two in two-year degree programs, and at the end of year three and four at four year degree programs.

Internship programs are compulsory but non-credit course items on the curricula. Throughout the duration of the internship program students are required to write down all the jobs, tasks and activities they carry out daily in an internship diary given by the students' academic institutions. At the end of the internship period the student gets her/his internship diary signed by the management of the hospitality establishment and submits it to her/his academic institution. Then the student's supervisor reads and assesses the internship diary and awards a pass or fail grade for the internship exercise.

However, quite often students may submit fake internship diaries without actually participating in the internship program. As student numbers are high, supervisors usually are not in a position to check the genuineness of an internship program in terms of whether a student has really attended the internship program, and whether the contents of the internship diary reflect the actual internship experience. In most of the universities students do not receive planned and systematic orientation programs. Students themselves are expected to determine and find the hospitality establishments they will be doing internships themselves. Based against this background this study aims to explore the internship programs tourism and hospitality students have in Turkey.

### 3. Methodology

As mentioned earlier this study explores how tourism and hospitality students at Turkish universities perceive their internship experiences. Given the size and the importance of the Turkish tourism industry, its vulnerability and the numbers of students studying on tourism and hospitality programs at Turkish universities, investigating the efficiency and effectiveness of internship programs is important. In order to explore the perceptions of internship programs by students a survey has been developed and sent to 15 different tourism and hospitality programs in Turkey between 15th March and 15th May 2014. Altogether 9 universities with three tourism faculties (offering four year degree programs), two schools of advanced vocational studies/schools of applied sciences (offering four year degree programs) and 10 vocational studies (offering two year—associate of arts degrees or Higher National Diplomas) have participated in the survey.

Out of 800 surveys sent 603 valid surveys have been received and included in the analysis. In 2014 there were a total of 63,886 students studying tourism and hospitality at 166 advanced vocational schools (two-year degree programs), at 23 schools of applied sciences (four year degree programs) and at 35 tourism faculties (four year degree programs) at Turkish universities. Depending on the type of educational program and the various characteristics of the internship programs

students participated in, the survey investigated students' perceptions of the internship program in relation to their future career plans. The principle focus of the study has been to explore whether there have been any changes in the career plans of students after their internship experiences.

#### 4. Findings, analysis and discussion

The 603 valid surveys received from 15 different tourism and hospitality programs have been analysed by using SPSS® (version 17.0). A reliability analysis showed that Cronbach's Alpha value for the survey was 0.903. The analysis of the results shows that there may be clear efficiency and effective problems regarding the planning, implementation and controlling of internship activities. The figures in Table 1 shows that about 18.3% of the students decided not to pursue a career in tourism and hospitality industries after their internship experiences. This means that a significant proportion of students appear to have been discouraged to work in tourism and hospitality after their internship experiences.

As stated above there are currently 63,886 students in 2014 studying on tourism and hospitality programs at Turkish universities. As 18.3% of all these students would make 11,691 students, this finding may be interpreted that there may be a substantial wastage of resources.

According to OECD (2009) figures in Turkey the cost of per university student per year was approximately \$ 8455. Even when this figure dating to 2009 is multiplied by the number of students (11,691) (18.3% of tourism and hospitality students) it is seen that approximately \$ 100 million is wasted every year, as these students will seek employment in other sectors. If/when this amount of money is used efficiently and effectively certain countries may create wonders sometimes.

ANOVA analysis shows that (Table 2) the main reason driving students to seek careers outside tourism and hospitality is the large difference between their levels of expectations and satisfaction regarding the internship experiences. Especially the satisfaction levels of the students who have had their internship experiences in housekeeping appear to be relatively low. Decision makers at universities may be recommended to investigate how these programs are designed and implemented so as to explore the reasons behind this low level of satisfaction. Additionally, students need to be better prepared and informed about the characteristics and the requirements of all positions in tourism and hospitality, so that no unpleasant surprises occur during internship experience. Students' awareness could also be increased through regular and systematic industry visits and speech and presentations by industry experts.

An analysis of students in terms of their institutions (i.e. whether an advanced vocational school offering two-year-degree programs or faculty or school of applied sciences offering four-year degree programs) show that there are differences among students in terms of their perceptions (Table 3). For instance, while the expectations of students regarding their whole education on four-year-degree programs are higher, conversely the satisfaction levels of students on two-year degree programs appear to be relatively higher (Table 3).

A further analysis (Table 4) shows clearly that the wastage mentioned above (Table 1) may not be limited to the amount specified (approximately \$ 100 million), as substantial amount of students do not wish to work in the tourism and hospitality field they study or they have had their internship experience. Table 4 shows that wastage of resources are more than the amount shown in Table 1, as a significant proportion of tourism and hospitality students who prefer to develop careers in tourism and hospitality wish to develop their careers in subfields other than they have had their internship experiences. For instance only 6% of students who have had their internship experience in housekeeping would like to work in housekeeping, i.e. 94% of them do not wish to develop their careers in housekeeping. This means that 94% of those internship programs in housekeeping may be considered as wasteful. The wastage rate is 61.1% for front desk interns, 67.1% for F&B interns, 33.3% for administrative services interns, 29.5% for travel agency interns and 71.4% for entertainment services interns. In other words, the figures suggest that a significant proportion of students are planning to seek careers in areas they have not been 100% trained for. This means that to some extent their education and internship may be a waste.

These findings show that students are confused about their careers as probably they have not been very well briefed and prepared for their internship experiences. Further findings of the study show that prior to their internship experiences only 20.2% of the students have either participated in a survey or have been interviewed at their universities about the sort of internship experience they may wish to have. Thus, it may be stated that students may have a lack of understanding of the value of work experience, and a lack of drive and determination as suggested by Aggett and Busby (2011).

**Table 1**  
Future career intentions of tourism and hospitality students after the internship experience.

Future career intentions	N	%
<b>Other careers outside tourism and hospitality</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>18.3</b>
Food & beverage (kitchen and service)	112	18.6
Travel agencies	148	24.6
Administrative services	117	19.4
Front desk	87	14.5
Housekeeping	10	1.7
Entertainment	19	3.2
Total	603	100.0

**Table 2**  
Expectation and satisfaction with internship programs.

ANOVA		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Expectation	Between groups	4.678	6	0.78	2.279	0.035
	Within groups	203.2	594	0.342		
	Total	207.9	600			
Satisfaction 1	Between groups	8.142	6	1.357	1.213	0.298
	Within groups	665.5	595	1.119		
	Total	673.7	601			
Satisfaction 2	Between groups	28.94	6	4.823	5.24	0
	Within groups	546.8	594	0.92		
	Total	575.7	600			
Satisfaction	Between groups	18.29	6	3.049	3.749	<b>0.001</b>
	Within groups	483.2	594	0.813		
	Total	501.5	600			
Descriptives		N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error	
Expectation	I do not wish to work in tourism and hospitality	110	<b>4.553</b>	0.53908	0.0514	
	F&B	110	4.5886	0.54491	0.052	
	Travel agencies	148	4.4904	0.71313	0.0586	
	Administrative services	117	4.6695	0.43918	0.0406	
	Front desk	87	4.6274	0.51226	0.0549	
	Housekeeping	10	<b>4.1917</b>	1.13247	0.3581	
	Entertainment services	19	4.364	0.66331	0.1522	
	Total	601	4.5656	0.58861	0.024	
	Satisfaction 1	I do not wish to work in tourism and hospitality	110	3.1932	1.17146	0.1117
F&B		111	3.4032	1.08877	0.1033	
Travel agencies		148	3.4679	1.02282	0.0841	
Administrative services		117	3.4551	0.98185	0.0908	
Front desk		87	3.3132	1.07713	0.1155	
Housekeeping		10	3.05	0.8482	0.2682	
Entertainment services		19	3.6053	0.87128	0.1999	
Total		602	3.3783	1.05872	0.0432	
Satisfaction 2		I do not wish to work in tourism and hospitality	110	3.2788	1.103	0.1052
	F&B	111	3.8979	0.90703	0.0861	
	Travel agencies	147	3.647	1.04989	0.0866	
	Administrative services	117	3.8091	0.89102	0.0824	
	Front desk	87	3.8927	0.7797	0.0836	
	Housekeeping	10	3.6889	1.0288	0.3253	
	Entertainment services	19	3.7485	0.69964	0.1605	
	Total	601	3.697	0.97954	0.04	
	Satisfaction	I do not wish to work in tourism and hospitality	110	<b>3.2524</b>	1.03241	0.0984
F&B		111	3.7457	0.87163	0.0827	
Travel agencies		147	3.5892	0.97494	0.0804	
Administrative services		117	3.7002	0.8266	0.0764	
Front desk		87	3.7144	0.75995	0.0815	
Housekeeping		10	<b>3.4923</b>	0.91391	0.289	
Entertainment services		19	3.7045	0.67464	0.1548	

Another interesting finding of the study is that a relatively significant proportion of students (70.5%) who have had their experiences in travel agencies, would like to carry on and develop their careers in travel agencies (Table 3). It is noteworthy that students who have had their internship in travel agencies have the lowest exit rate (5.3%), i.e. students who do not wish to work in tourism and hospitality at all. This finding is interesting as with the increasing use of on-line bookings, travel agencies may be closing down in many countries. In Europe the numbers of travel agencies are in decline. For instance, in Germany between 2006 and 2013 1346 travel agencies closed down (DRV (Deutscher ReiseVerband), 2013). However, in contrast with many European countries, in Turkey the number of travel agencies in operation is on the rise. The number of travel agencies increased from 4515 in 2003 to 7337 in 2013 (TURSAB (Association of Turkish Travel Agencies), 2014). This means that students are aware that their likelihood of finding employment in travel agencies is relatively high and they value their internship experience relatively more than other students (Chi & Gursoy, 2009). As in the study of Chang and Hsu (2010) the findings of this study suggest that there is an increasing need for private sector (business establishments) involvement in the curriculum and internship program design of tourism and hospitality degree programs.

**Table 3**

Expectation and satisfaction with internship programs according to the type of education program attended.

		Levene's test for equality of variances		t-Test for equality of means					95% Confidence interval of the difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	Lower	Upper
Expectation	Equal variances assumed	4.851	0.028	-2.942	600	0.003	-0.14331	0.04870	-0.23896	-0.04766
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.008	545.908	0.003	-0.14331	0.04764	-0.23689	-0.04972
Satisfaction1	Equal variances assumed	5.111	0.024	0.979	601	0.328	0.08614	0.08802	-0.08672	0.25900
	Equal variances not assumed			1.003	552.854	0.316	0.08614	0.08585	-0.08250	0.25478
Satisfaction 2	Equal variances assumed	7.943	0.005	3.777	600	0.000	0.30440	0.08059	0.14614	0.46267
	Equal variances not assumed			3.667	459.372	0.000	0.30440	0.08301	0.14129	0.46752
Satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	3.291	0.070	3.128	600	0.002	0.23611	0.07549	0.08786	0.38436
	Equal variances not assumed			3.072	479.931	0.002	0.23611	0.07686	0.08508	0.38714

**Table 4**

A breakdown of future career intentions of tourism and hospitality students.

Internship experience	After your internship experience in which of the subfield of tourism and hospitality would you like to develop your career?							Total (%)
	I do not wish to work in tourism and hospitality (%)	Front desk (%)	Housekeeping (%)	F&B (%)	Administrative services %	Travel agencies (%)	Entertainment services (%)	
Front desk	29.8	33.9	1.7	5	21.5	8.3	-	100.0
Housekeeping	20	14	6	24	6	26	4	100.0
F&B	19.4	19.4	1.6	32.9	19.4	9.9	4.4	100.0
Administrative services	12.1	-	3	3	66.7	9.1	6.1	100.0
Travel agencies	5.3	6.1	-	6.1	12.1	70.5	-	100.0
Entertainment services	28.6	-	-	7.1	7.1	28.6	28.6	100.0

**Table 5**

A breakdown of future career intentions based on whether the internship experience took place in a seaside establishment or city establishment.

Internship Experience	After your internship experience in which of the subfield of tourism and hospitality would you like to develop your career?							Total (%)
	I do not wish to work in tourism and hospitality (%)	Front desk (%)	Housekeeping (%)	F&B (%)	Administrative services (%)	Travel agencies (%)	Entertainment services (%)	
City hotel	13.4	15.6	27.7	19.6	18.3	2.2	3.1	100.0
Seaside hotel	21.2	20.1	22.8	19.3	12.2	1.3	3.2	100.0

The results also show variances among students depending on the characteristics of the place internship program took place. For instance, students who have had their internship experiences at city hotels rather than seaside hotels are relatively more satisfied. Fewer of the students who have had their internship experiences at city hotels would like to work in non-tourism and hospitality establishments (Table 5). Though it is worth further investigations, a number of suggestions could be made readily to explain this finding. First, as seaside hotels in Turkey mainly operate on all-inclusive bases and provide almost 24 h-non-stop service, the workload for staff is significantly much higher in seaside hotels (Koc, 2006, 2013). Additionally, while in seaside hotels students having their internship experiences serve guests who are resting, relaxing and

enjoying their lives, in city hotels they may be serving many busy businessmen and businesswomen. The amount of workload together with the environment they work in may influence students' mood and their perceptions of the internship experience.

In line with the suggestions of [Chang and Hsu \(2010\)](#), the findings so far point out that universities and tourism and hospitality businesses should work together in the planning and implementation stages of the not only the internship programs, but also in all curriculum development activities. In Turkey many tourism and hospitality businesses think opportunistically and view interns selfishly as a source of cheap labour, and do not care much about the individual development of the interns. Thus, tourism and hospitality programs are recommended to have feedback systems to improve the internship program year after year based on the feedback they receive. However, having said that universities may not be powerful enough to influence the whole system, as in many cases academics in the tourism and hospitality programs are just complacent enough to find any places for their students to have their internship experiences. Perhaps, tourism and education ministries should be involved in the design and implementation of internship programs. These ministries can work together to ensure that internship programs are primarily designed for developing students, i.e. students are not exploited as a source of cheap labour by tourism and hospitality businesses. Ideal internship programs can be designed and developed by the collaboration of all stakeholders, academic institutions, hospitality establishments and government bodies. The efficiency and effectiveness of all internship programs can be monitored and assessed based on specific guidelines for ideal internship programs. Following the assessment and evaluation of the internship programs tourism and hospitality establishments may be given incentives per internship experience based on the scores received. Additionally, managers from tourism and hospitality establishments may attend internship meetings and can make presentations at universities.

The findings of this study appear to draw parallels with the studies of [Little and Harvey \(2006\)](#), [Morgan \(2006\)](#), [Walker and Ferguson \(2009\)](#) in the UK, in terms of the fact that there is a growing dissatisfaction with the internship programs. However, there may be differences in terms of the root causes of the problem between the two countries. For instance, while in the UK, to a large extent, the main problem may be a lack of understanding of the value of work experience and a lack of drive and determination ([Aggett & Busby, 2011](#)) on the part of students, in Turkey the problem may be more to do with the design and implementation of internship programs.

## 5. Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, this study is exploratory and practical in nature, and hence it should be expected that it would have more practical implications, rather than theoretical ones. Given the size and importance of the Turkish tourism industry and the challenges it faces a number of recommendations could be made to the practitioners, at universities and in the industry, and policy makers, based on the main findings of this study. First, the results of the study show that there is a need for academics to spend more time on the planning, designing and implementation of tourism and hospitality internship programs in Turkey. They are recommended to have interviews and discussions with students in order to be able to design internship programs in line with students' career aspirations. However, teaching and workloads of lecturers, especially the number of supervisees per supervisor, need to be taken into account. If the number of internship diaries a supervisor needs to read and assess are too many, then the advising, monitoring of the students and assessment and evaluation of internship diaries may not be carried out appropriately.

There is also a need for higher levels of cooperation among universities and tourism and hospitality establishments. Efficient and effective feedback systems should be established within the internship programs so that corrections and improvements could be made. For instance students may be asked to fill in questionnaires before, during and after their internship programs. Also, as in most UK sandwich degree programs, students may be visited by their supervisors at the place of work/internship internships. Additionally, students may be better followed after graduation in terms of their careers so that decisions about reshaping internship programs could be made for the future.

Academics and managers on tourism and hospitality programs should not be complacent for finding sufficient positions for their students to have their internship experiences and let their students exploited by businesses. In many instances, students find their own internship establishments without any support from their educational institutions. As tourism is the largest industry in the country, policy makers in the government (e.g. at ministries of tourism and education) should participate in the design and implementation of internship programs so that internship programs reach their real and intended objectives.

## References

- [Aggett, M., & Busby, G. \(2011\). Opting out of internship: Perceptions of hospitality, tourism and events management undergraduates at a British university. \*Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education\*, 10\(1\), 106–113.](#)
- [Barron, P., & Maxwell, G. \(1993\). Hospitality management students' image of the hospitality industry. \*International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management\*, 5\(5\), 5–8.](#)
- [Busby, G. \(2001\). Vocationalism in higher level tourism courses: The British perspective. \*Journal of Further and Higher Education\*, 25, 29–43.](#)
- [Brotherton, B., & Himmetoglu, B. \(1997\). Beyond destinations-special interest tourism. \*Anatolia: An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research\*, 8\(3\), 11–30.](#)
- [Busby, G. \(2003\). Tourism degree internships: A longitudinal study. \*Journal of Vocational Education and Training\*, 55\(3\), 319–334.](#)

- Chang, T. Y., & Hsu, J. M. (2010). Development framework for tourism and hospitality in higher vocational education in Taiwan. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education*, 9(1), 101–109.
- Chang, D. Y., & Chu, P. Y. (2009). University-industry cooperation in action: A case study of the integrated internship program (iip) in Taiwan. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*, 21(1), 6–17.
- Chen, T. L., & Shen, C. C. (2012). Today's intern, tomorrow's practitioner? The influence of internship programmes on students' career development in the Hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 11(1), 29–40.
- Culligan, K. (1992). *Developing a model of holidaytaking behaviour*. In: *Leisure and tourism futures conference proceedings*. London: The Henley Centre for Forecasting.
- Chi, C. G., & Gursoy, D. (2009). How to help your graduates secure better jobs? An industry perspective. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 21(3), 308–322.
- Christou, E. S. (1999). Hospitality management education in Greece. An exploratory study. *Tourism Management*, 2(6), 683–691.
- DRV (Deutscher ReiseVerband) (2013). Fakten und Zahlen, Retrieved April 20, 2014 from ([http://www.driv.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Fachbereiche/Statistik\\_und\\_Marktforschung/Fakten\\_und\\_Zahlen/14-03-17\\_DRV\\_Zahlen\\_Fakten2013\\_V2.pdf](http://www.driv.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Fachbereiche/Statistik_und_Marktforschung/Fakten_und_Zahlen/14-03-17_DRV_Zahlen_Fakten2013_V2.pdf)).
- Fletcher, J. (1995). Economics and forecasting—Economic impact. In S. F. Witt, & L. Moutinho (Eds.), *Tourism marketing and management handbook*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Hsieh, A., & Yen, C. (2005). The effect of customer participation on service providers' job stress. *The Service Industries Journal*, 2, 891–905.
- Jackson, S. E., & Schuler, R. S. (1985). A meta-analysis and conceptual critique of research on role ambiguity and role conflict in work settings. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 36, 16–78.
- Jauhari, V., & Manaktola, K. (2006). Comparison of internship experiences in food service firms in India and UK. *Journal of Food Service Business Research*, 9(2/3), 187–206.
- Ko, W. H. (2006). Training, satisfaction with internship programs, and confidence about future careers among hospitality students: A case study of universities in Taiwan. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 7(4), 1–15.
- Kim, H. B., & Park, E. J. (2013). The role of social experience in undergraduates' career perceptions through internships. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 12(1), 70–78.
- Koc, E. (2006). Total quality management and business excellence in services: The implications of all-inclusive pricing system on internal and external customer satisfaction in the Turkish tourism market. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 17(7), 857–877.
- Krippendorff, J. (1987a). *The holiday makers: Understanding the impact of leisure and travel*. Oxford: Heinemann Professional Publishing.
- Krippendorff, J. (1987b). Tourism in Asia and the Pacific. *Tourism Management*, June, 137–139.
- Koc, E. (2013). Inversionary and liminoidal consumption: Gluttony on holidays and obesity. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 30(8), 825–838.
- Lam, T., & Ching, L. (2007). An exploratory study of an internship program: The case of Hong Kong students. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 26(2), 336–351.
- Little, B., & Harvey, L. (2006). *Learning through work placements and beyond. A report for the Higher Education Careers Service Unit and the Higher Education Academy's Work Placements Organisation Forum*. England: Centre for Research and Evaluation, Sheffield Hallam University.
- Liburd, J. J., & Christensen, I. M. F. (2013). Using web 2.0 in higher tourism education. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 12(1), 99–108.
- Morgan, H. (2006). Why students avoid sandwich placements. In: *Education in a changing environment, conference proceedings*, University of Salford, England. Retrieved April 10, 2014 from ([http://www.ece.salford.ac.uk/proceedings/papers/hm\\_06.rtf](http://www.ece.salford.ac.uk/proceedings/papers/hm_06.rtf)).
- OECD. (2009). *Education at a glance*. Paris: OECD Indicators.
- OSYM (Turkish Higher Education Recruitment and Placement Council) (2014). Higher education statistics. Retrieved April 25, 2014 from (<http://www.osym.gov.tr/belge/1-13575/2011-2012-ogretim-yili-yuksekogretim-istatistikleri.html>).
- Pettilose, M. J., & Montgomery, T. (1998). An exploratory study of internship practices in hospitality education and industry's perceptions of the importance of internships in hospitality curriculum. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*, 9(4), 46–51.
- Porter, M. E. (1990). *The competitive advantage of nations*. London and Basingstoke: The MacMillan Press Ltd.
- Richardson, S. (2009). Under graduates' perceptions of tourism and hospitality as a career choice. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(3), 382–388.
- Richardson, S. (2008). Under graduate tourism and hospitality students attitudes toward a career in the industry: A preliminary investigation. *Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism*, 8(1), 23–46.
- Solnet, D. S., Robinson, R., & Cooper, C. (2007). An industry partner ships approach in tourism education. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 6(1), 66–70.
- TUOFED (Turkish Hoteliers Federation) (2014). Tourism statistics. Retrieved May 20, 2014, (<http://sgb.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR,50930/istatistikler.html>).
- TURSAB (Association of Turkish Travel Agencies) (2014). Various tourism statistics. Retrieved May 20, 2014, from (<http://www.tursab.org.tr/tr/istatistikler>).
- Walker, F., & Ferguson, M. (2009). Approaching placement extinction? *Exploring the reasons why placement students are becoming a rare breed at the University of Central Lancashire: Work in progress*. Retrieved March 29, 2014, from ([http://www.work-experience.org/ncwe.rd/products\\_136.jsp](http://www.work-experience.org/ncwe.rd/products_136.jsp)).
- Williams, A. M., & Shaw, G. (1992). Tourism research—A perspective The Horrible Babel of Tongues. *American Behavioural Scientist*, 36(2), 133–144.
- World Tourism Organization (WTO) (2013). Tourism highlights 2013. Retrieved April 20, 2014 from ([http://dtxqt4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/unwto\\_highlights13\\_en\\_hr.pdf](http://dtxqt4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/unwto_highlights13_en_hr.pdf)) (accessed: 2014).
- Zauhar, J. (1994). *Loisirs et Tourisme—Convergence or divergence*. Ottawa: Balfour Institute.
- Zopiatis, A., & Theocharous, A. L. (2013). Revisiting hospitality internship practices: A holistic investigation. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 13, 33–46.
- Zopiatis, A., & Constanti, P. (2007). 'And never the twain shall meet': Investigating the hospitality industry-education relation ship in Cyprus. *Education & Training*, 49(5), 391–407.