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Solutions to Improve the Quality of Professional Internship (Central Area Tour) for Vietnamese Studies (Tourism Specialized) Students, Department of Linguistics and Literature, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education

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Original Research Articles

Solutions to Improve the Quality of Professional Internship (Central Area Tour) for Vietnamese Studies (Tourism Specialized) Students, Department of Linguistics and Literature, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education

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Abstract

This article utilizes the outcome-based approach and development orientation to explore solutions for improving the quality of internship programs for Vietnamese Studies students majoring in Tourism at the Department of Linguistics and Literature (DLL), Ho Chi Minh City University of Education (HCMUE). The research employs a combination of document synthesis and practical survey methods. The research findings indicate that three factors significantly influence the quality of student internships: (1) organizational planning, (2) supervision and support, and (3) partner organizations. Additionally, the study highlights the unique characteristics of HCMUE and the Department of Linguistics and Literature, which contribute to the distinctiveness of the internship program. The research outcomes can be applied to clarify the PDCA cycle in organizing internships for Vietnamese Studies students, enhance the current quality of organization, and be utilized to improve the training quality at the Faculty of Linguistics and Literature, HCMUE.

Keywords: Internship Program; Vietnamese Studies; Tourism; Quality Improvement

Introduction

In undergraduate education programs, internships are crucial in enhancing knowledge, developing professional skills and attitudes, acquiring practical knowledge, and gaining experience in a working environment. However, there is always a certain gap between theory taught in universities and practice in internship organizations. For most types of training, the internship process depends entirely on the supervising unit, and the training institution only participates in supervising a part or indirectly. However, for the Tourism major, which belongs to the Vietnamese Studies program offered by the Faculty of Linguistics and Literature (DLL) at Ho Chi Minh City University of Education (HCMUE), the on-tour internship process is managed, supervised, and evaluated by both the training institution and the internship unit (tourism company). This creates the basis for a more realistic and effective assessment. Besides, the Decision approving the Vietnam Tourism Development Strategy to 2030 clearly states the requirement to improve the quality of training - following the orientation of "Strengthening the capacity of training institutions, high-quality tourism training schools in key tourism development regions." (Prime Minister, 2020). Therefore, this article aims to identify what factors affect the effectiveness of on-tour internships for tourism students; what the noteworthy aspects of the current internship situation for DLL's tourism students at HCMUE are, and how we improve the effectiveness of internships for this group of students.

Hence, the research subjects of this article are the internship process of 177 Vietnamese students majoring in Tourism from DLL, HCMUE from February 24, 2024, to March 3, 2024. The content and space of the research are internships, exploring the reality of routes, tourism business, and services through some typical tourist destinations in the Central and Central Highlands regions (Lam Dong, Khanh Hoa, Phu Yen, Binh Dinh, Quang Ngai, Quang Nam, Da Nang, Thua Thien Hue, Quang Tri, Quang Binh). Specifically, the three internship contents of the students include: (1) Infiltrating and exploring the reality of culture, geography, and tourism in the internship area (studying the basic characteristics of history, geography, culture, and customs of the locality, a preliminary survey of the tourism operation situation of the locality). (2) Visiting and practicing tour guide business (preparing and practicing commentary, introducing tourist attractions, interacting with customers, solving situations on tour, designing tours; collecting and extracting cultural heritage at the locality, tourist attractions, games, forms of interaction with customers necessary for the commentary on tourist attractions and the work of tour operation). (3) Writing a report (identifying the research problem, specific content, clear ideas, showing maturity and openness in the perception of a problem or a situation of tourism culture; presented in the correct format).

To assess the current situation, identify factors affecting the internship process on tours, and propose solutions to improve the quality of professional internships on tours in the Central

– Highlands region of Vietnam for tourism students, the following research questions are proposed:

Research Question 1: What are the requirements for an effective internship program for tourism students?

Research Question 2: What are the criteria for evaluating a reputable internship company for tourism students?

Research Question 3: What are the solutions to strengthen the management and supervision of the internship process?

Research Question 4: What support activities are needed to help students achieve the best results during their internship?

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

To address the research questions, this paper focuses on three groups of factors that potentially affect the internship process on tour and considers them as three hypotheses to be tested through a survey. The three groups of research hypotheses are related to the internship program, the quality of the partner (tourism company), and the supervision of the training unit.

H1 – The internship program has a decisive role in the internship process.

The program and content of the internship are key factors that affect the internship process of students on tour, and this factor must be evaluated by the students themselves. Moustafa A. Mekawy and Moustafa M. Abu Bakr, in *Planning Internship programs: Tourism students' Perceptions* (2014), analyzed “how tourism students' perceptions can be used to develop successful industry-based internship (IBI) programs.” (p.41). Nguyen Thi Hai Ha and Nguyen Thi Tuyet Chinh, in their paper – *Effective Internship Program for Accounting Students* (2016), also affirmed the significance of internship programs and proposed a three-stage model: orientation and basic skills training, software practice, and direct internship. This means that the content of the internship is crucial to its success. However, it also means that the content must be attractive to the interns, who are students. However the needs of students can be attracted by many other factors, so this process needs to be adjusted accordingly. Nguyen Thi Thu Hang, in her paper – *Building a Practical Internship Activity Plan to Meet Output Standards* (2017), proposed solutions based on the principles of ensuring objectivity, systematicity, feasibility, and effectiveness. She stated that “there are many approaches to improving the effectiveness of managing students' internship activities in universities, of which the output standard approach (which is essentially a competency approach) is an inevitable trend of the modern teaching and learning process and brings high efficiency, which is applied by higher education institutions in the field of educational

management." (p. 166). The output standard approach, therefore, serves as the guiding principle for this research paper.

H2 – The Quality of Internship Partners in Improving the Quality of Student Internships

For an internship program to achieve optimal effectiveness, there needs to be close cooperation between the school and the internship units, including tourism companies and businesses. Nguyen Thi Hai Ha and Nguyen Thi Tuyet Chinh (2016) in their study on *Effective Internship Programs for Accounting Students* emphasized the importance of selecting internship partners. According to the authors, the school needs "to pay attention to the selection of partners and collect feedback from students on the quality of services after each internship term" (Ha, & Chinh, 2016: 92). Do Thi Thanh Toan (2018) also agrees and emphasizes the role of *University-Enterprise Linkages In Improving The Quality Of Training*. The author proposes effective cooperation methods in areas such as training, research, program development, and development support. More specifically, Ngo Phuong Thuy and Le Thi Ngoc in their study – *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Cooperation between Universities and Tourism Enterprises in Internship Activities for Students of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Thanh Hoa University of Culture, Sports and Tourism* (2023) identified the following requirements for businesses participating in the internship program. Businesses must develop a professional internship program, actively participate in consultations for program development, establish a cooperation mechanism and roadmap, provide infrastructure and facilities, and create a comfortable working environment for students, etc. These opinions, in combination with the survey results and practical experiences, have helped us to generalize the factor of partner quality in improving the quality of student internships.

H3 – Supervision and support from lecturers (training units) have a significant impact on the quality of internships.

After building a good program and cooperating with high-quality partners, training units need to monitor, evaluate, revise, and develop the program as well as the internship process. Nguyen Thi Thu Hang in *Building an Internship Practice Plan to meet output standards* (2017) recommended that training units need to "Organize and direct internship activities according to a process that is appropriate for the development of professional skills of students in the education management major" (Hang, 2017: 166). Nguyen Thi Hai Ha and Nguyen Thi Tuyet Chinh in *Effective Internship Program for Accounting Students* (2016) also emphasized the role of lecturers – "With the enthusiastic support of a team of experienced lecturers, adequate facilities and rich resources of the centers, students can access the practice more easily, overcoming inherent difficulties from the issue of information and data security at enterprises when receiving accounting internships"

(Ha, & Chinh, 2016: 92). Nga Thi Vo, Linh Hoang Phuong Le, and Van Thi Thanh Lam, in *Challenges for Student Satisfaction of Internship Program in Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Vietnam* (2022), shared this idea and point out – “To carry out this objective successfully, educators and organizations should not only improve practical and thorough courses for training but also need to continuously support students with the challenges they have to face in working environment and build in the skills and psychology to prepare themselves better for a satisfactory career internship.” (Vo, Le, & Lam, 2022: 1325). Expanding on this idea, Ngo Phuong Thuy and Le Thi Ngoc in *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Cooperation between Universities and Tourism Enterprises in Internship Activities for Students of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Thanh Hoa University of Culture, Sports and Tourism* (2023) proposed several solutions for training units, including building a network of businesses, developing criteria for selecting businesses, raising awareness through propaganda and practical programs, creating conditions for businesses to participate in program development and feedback, organizing career guidance and creating job opportunities. These opinions are also the basis for evaluating and adjusting the participation of training units in improving the internship quality of tourism students at DLL, HCMUE.

Objective

To assess the current situation, identify factors affecting the internship process on tours, and propose solutions to improve the quality of professional internships on tours in the Central – Highlands region of Vietnam for tourism students.

Research Methodology

Based on the research object and objectives, this article is conducted based on the **outcome-based approach**. The outcome-based approach focuses on identifying and ensuring the learning outcomes of learners at the center, focusing on what learners need to know and can do after completing the training program. This principle governs all stages such as identifying learning outcomes, and designing the training program including content, teaching methods, and assessment in this article. Specifically, this study is based on the learning outcomes of the Internship modules 1 and 2 of DLL, HCMUE for Vietnamese studies, majoring in tourism. *(Analyze and evaluate the tour guide business activities in the internship program through comparing the learned knowledge and the business activities of the tour guide. CLO2: Utilizing and analyzing the equipment and technical devices in the practical program (such as means of transportation, equipment of accommodation facilities, supporting technical devices, etc.) for the purpose of tour guiding. (Chung Le Khang, 2022, 2-3). Analyze the tourism services and activities included in the internship program. Analyze and evaluate the tour guiding activities in the internship program by comparing the knowledge learned with the tour guide's work. Evaluate the characteristics of tour guiding, tourism services, and travel agency activities. Use and analyze the equipment and technical means available in the internship program (such as means of transportation, equipment*

of accommodation facilities, supporting technical equipment...) for tour guiding. (Ngo Thi Thanh Tam, Nguyen Anh Ngoc, 2022, 4)).

Next, this study is conducted on the **development orientation** as a principle to ensure the direction of enhancing capacity and expanding the capabilities of people, systems, and organizations. This methodology aims to solve practical problems and promote sustainable development in many different fields. In this article, we consider learners as the center of the development process and aim to improve their capacity, knowledge, and skills by examining issues from multiple perspectives, including economic, social, environmental, and cultural. Accordingly, stakeholders including learners, teachers, internship partners, etc. are encouraged to participate in the research and development process to ensure relevance, effectiveness, and the search for sustainable tourism solutions.

Based on the output-based approach and development, the literature/theory synthesis method is applied in the first stage of the study to collect, analyze, and synthesize information from various sources (books, newspapers, scientific articles, etc.) related to the research topic to create a comprehensive picture of the research topic and to identify gaps in existing knowledge and propose directions for further research. Developed long ago and quite popular, this method has been applied in typical studies such as Thomas S. Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), which explained how scientists synthesize information and knowledge in the research process. Glass, G. V., McGaw, B., & Smith, M. L. in *Meta-analysis in Social Research* (1981) used 7 chapters to introduce the method of literature synthesis, identify and select studies for synthesis, assess the quality of studies, code data, statistical analysis, etc. In this article, the literature synthesis method is used to identify the research topic and research questions, search and collect literature related to the research topic, assess the quality of the collected literature, analyze and synthesize information from the collected literature, and write a literature synthesis report. Accordingly, the literature synthesis method has provided this article with a comprehensive picture of the research topic, identified gaps in existing knowledge, and proposed directions for further research.

To verify, update, and develop theory, the survey method has been used and shown to be remarkably effective since ancient times. Pierre Bourdieu, in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1972), linked the survey method and structuralism to study behavior and meaning in specific social contexts. This method combines different data collection techniques, including interviews and observation. First, interviews are used as a data collection technique (knowledge, emotions, behavior) by asking questions and recording the answers of the interviewee. In this paper, we use structured interviews with a fixed set of questions and unstructured interviews - direct conversations with students about their internship. Second, the observation method is used to collect information about the research object through direct observation with participation in

the activities of 158 students by recording audio and video on the internship line. The questions were sent to students through two forms, a Google form, and a face-to-face interview, and were structured according to the following table:

Table 1. Four Categories of Survey and Interview Questions

Group of Questions 1	Evaluation of the internship program					
Questionnaire content	Duration	Accommodation	Tourist sites	Requirements	Experiential exercise	Gala dinner
Group of Questions 2	Evaluation of tourism service quality					
Questionnaire content	Transportation	Foodservice	Accommodation service	Sightseeing, shopping services	Health services	Other services
	Driver's attitude		Tour guide's support	Medical staff's support	Support from the executive team	
Group of Questions 3	Evaluation of support activities from the training unit					
Questionnaire content	HCMUE's support	Faculty's pre-trip support	Lecturers' supervision	Lecturers' comments	Solving problems	
Group of Questions 4	Open comments on the corresponding contents					
Questionnaire content	Overall assessment	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Next internship expectation	Gender; Course	Internship unit (vehicle number)

Based on the research orientations, methods, subjects, questions, and hypotheses, this article is designed based on the following model:

Table 2. Research model

Research hypothesis	Research approach	Methodology	Research content	Contribution	Purposes
H1. Program Content	Approaching Output Standards	Literature Synthesis	Evaluation and Content Proposal	Clarifying Influential Factors from	Evaluate the status quo.

Research hypothesis	Research approach	Methodology	Research content	Contribution	Purposes
	Approaching Development	Practical Survey		Internal and External Perspectives	Identify influencing factors.
H2. Quality of Partner Travel Agencies			Evaluation and Proposal for Partner Quality Improvement	Enhancing Internship Effectiveness	
H3. Lecturers' Management, Supervision, and Support			Evaluation and Proposal for the Management Unit	Summarizing Research and Introducing It in Program Implementation and Development	Propose solutions

Results

Program

After the online interview round and online survey (180 minutes per vehicle), 139 responses were recorded with the following statistical results for the program:

[**Table 3.** Evaluation of the Student Internship Program]

	Very inappropriate	Inappropriate	Normal	Appropriate	Very appropriate
Duration	4	8	42	63	22
Accommodation	6	9	58	52	14
Tourist sites	3	22	46	52	16
Requirements	2	4	45	60	28
Experiential exercises	1	1	30	71	36
Gala dinner	0	3	30	71	51

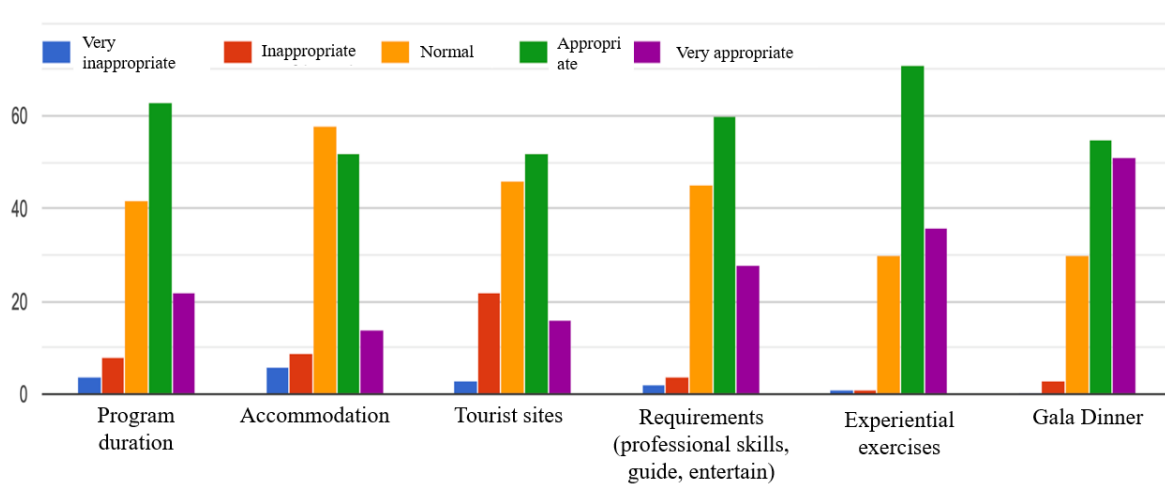


Figure 1: Student Internship Program Evaluation Results

Overall, the students were satisfied with the content of the internship program. Most of the criteria were rated as "Appropriate" and "Very Appropriate". The highest-rated criteria were "Experiential Activities" and "Gala Dinner" (77% and 88% of students rated them as appropriate or above). This indicates that the students valued the opportunity to participate in practical activities during the internship program. In particular, the Gala Dinner, which was organized and planned by the students themselves, left a deep impression with the candlelight ceremony, sharing of thoughts, and other activities that were highly appreciated by the students. The criteria of "Accommodation" and "Tourist Sites" were rated lower, with 11% and 18% of students rating them as inappropriate or below. This means that the actual program and accommodation need to be considered more from the student's perspective. This is more evident in Chart 1, where the "Accommodation" criterion has a different shape with a higher "Normal" ratio than "Appropriate". Therefore, it can be seen that the internship program is designed in line with the training objectives of the tourism industry and meets the needs of the students; however, the accommodation could be improved.

4.2. Tourist services (Tourist company)

In September 2023, the department initiated the internship program and invited bids from travel agencies. Applications were received and evaluated through a bidding process. Viet Media Travel Corporation won the bid with its strong profile, which demonstrated a focus on investing in service quality and human resource development to ensure stable services for tourists. The company also has experience collaborating with universities and tourism

departments to guide students during their studies. The success of the Gala dinner, which was directly supported by Viet Media Travel Corporation in many aspects, further confirmed their capabilities. A survey of 139 students showed that the majority were satisfied with the travel services provided. Specifically, 70% were satisfied with transportation, food, and accommodation; 65% were satisfied with sightseeing and shopping; 63% were satisfied with medical services; and 69% were satisfied with other services. However, there are still areas for improvement. For example, 18% of students were dissatisfied with transportation, 26% were dissatisfied with food and beverage, and 17% were dissatisfied with sightseeing and shopping.

Table 4. Evaluation of Student Satisfaction with Tourism Services

	Very inappropriate	Inappropriate	Normal	Appropriate	Very appropriate
Transportation	18	20	28	40	33
Foodservice	7	26	46	45	15
Accommodation service	4	17	60	46	12
Sightseeing, shopping services	2	9	58	53	17
Health services	1	19	57	62	0
Other services	6	14	41	51	27

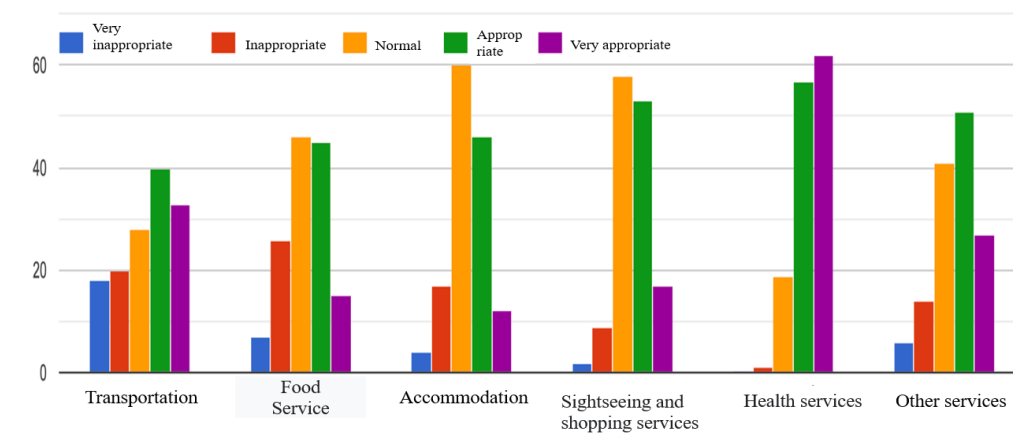


Figure 2: valuation of Tourism Service Quality by Students

Observations from the service quality evaluation chart show that the evaluated criteria can be divided into three groups based on the rating trend: Group of Accommodation, catering, sightseeing, and shopping services received the highest rating, which is "Normal." Group

transportation and other services were rated as "Appropriate." The group of healthcare services received the highest proportion of "Very Appropriate" ratings and no "Very Inappropriate" ratings. This is a reasonable result because the travel agency arranged for two doctors to accompany the group and promptly resolved any health issues that arose for the members.

4.3. Supervisory Support from the Training Unit

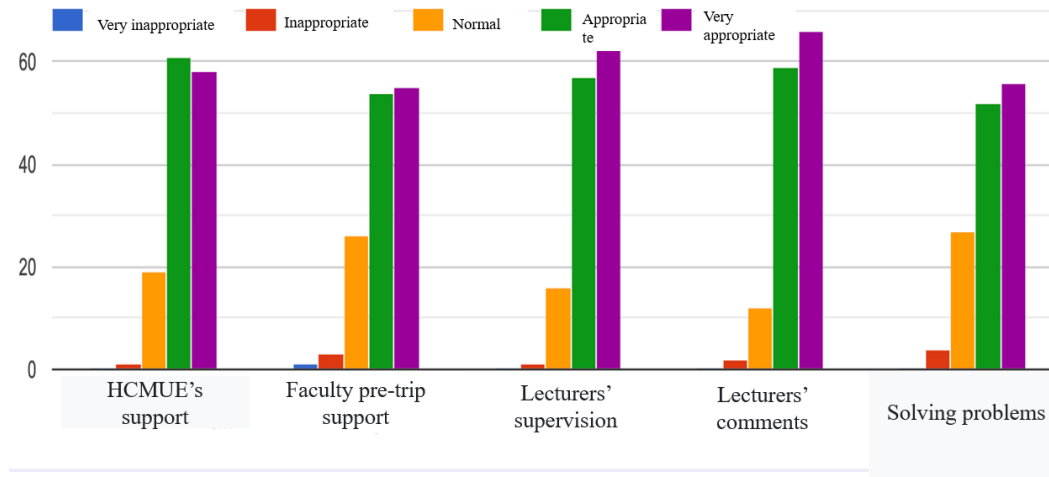


Figure 3: Evaluation of Student Support Activities from the Training Unit

Six lecturers from the DLL were assigned to accompany the delegation to implement the program and coordinate in guiding the students' professional activities, including checking and preparing all the services that the delegation would use, supporting special cases, checking and managing the delegation (people and luggage) during the tour, conducting customer care activities. Being responsible for managing, supervising, supporting, and evaluating the students' attitude, adaptability, internship reports, presentations, and collected materials. The survey chart showed that the support activities from the training unit were highly appreciated. In general, the indicators for the support of HCMUE, DLL, the supervision, comments, and handling of situations by the lecturers were mostly rated as very suitable and suitable. The answers to the interview and open-ended questions of the survey also highly appreciated the training unit's monitoring, comments, and support for the students. This is a good sign for the personnel organization in the internship of tourism students at DLL, HCMUE.

Discussion

Firstly, the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle is used in the DLL's tourism internship program for Vietnamese students. This ensures that the program meets the required standards

and helps students develop their skills. In the planning stage, the overall goal is to improve students' professional skills and practical knowledge. Specific goals include enabling students to perform basic tasks in the tourism industry, communicate effectively with customers, work in teams, and solve problems. Based on these goals, the internship program is designed to last 10 days and 9 nights, from January to February each year. This corresponds to the beginning of the second semester of the third and fourth year of the program and is also the low season for summer tourism. The internship takes place in 11 provinces in the Central and Central Highlands regions of Vietnam, which are popular tourist destinations for both domestic and international visitors. Partner tourism businesses are selected through a bidding process, with a contract value of up to 1.4 billion VND. The selection criteria include quality, bid price, and other factors. The department and the partner develop a detailed internship program that includes activities, schedules, assessment rubrics, contract implementation, internship diaries, and internship report guidelines. In the implementation stage, the instructor guides students on how to implement the internship program, answers their questions, and provides support throughout the internship. The instructor also supervises and regularly assesses the students' performance throughout the Central region. In the checking stage, the students self-assess their internship results, and the instructor and the business jointly assess the students' internship results based on the pre-determined criteria. These results are collected, analyzed, and compared to form the final assessment result. Finally, based on the assessment results and feedback, the department updates and improves the internship program to improve its effectiveness and to meet the needs of businesses and the tourism market. This process helps to improve the quality of the internship program, helps students achieve their internship goals, strengthens the cooperative relationship between the school and businesses, and enhances students' competitiveness in the labor market.

Secondly, in addition to the overall efficiency, the survey results indicate that the transportation and other services indicators of the tourism company differ in nature from the other criteria. Specifically, this indicator pertains to the drivers' attitude and other support from the operational management, which is evaluated with a notable sign when the support and non-support rates are quite similar.

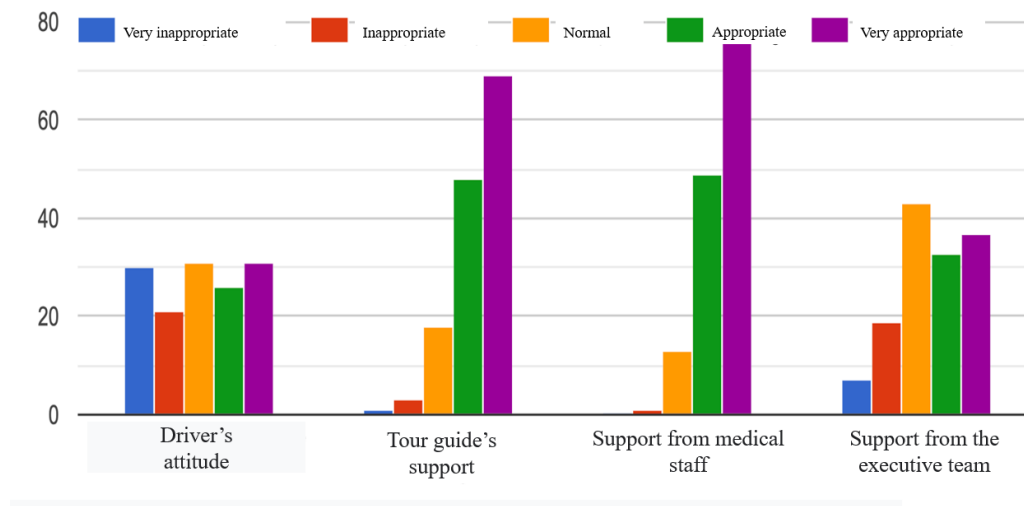


Figure 4: Evaluation of Student Support Activities by Travel Agencies

Drivers and tour guides play a crucial role in the overall success of a tour and the internship experience for students. This is because they have direct contact with customers and students. While tour guides are trained and managed directly by the tour operator (usually accompanying large groups), drivers are often outsourced. Although they meet the requirements for passenger transportation, they often lack the knowledge and skills necessary for providing quality service. During internship tours, there have been cases of drivers not cooperating with student groups directly serving on the route. The driver is solely responsible for managing the air conditioning, sound system, and presentation equipment on the vehicle. Student interns who receive enthusiastic support from the driver will achieve significantly better results. The issue at hand is that the tour company needs to focus on training both hard skills and soft skills for its service staff, especially drivers. This is essential for improving the service culture of the tourism industry, building a civilized and sustainable tourism environment, meeting the expectations of tourists, and raising the awareness and behavior of tourism professionals.

Thirdly, as a major department of HCMUE - the leading pedagogical university in the South, DLL has a tradition and strength in training undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students in the fields of literature, and philology pedagogy. Therefore, in addition to the system of knowledge, skills, and attitudes corresponding to the profession, students majoring in tourism (Vietnamese Studies) at DLL also possess some specialized knowledge and skills, contributing to creating the identity of students majoring in tourism at DLL, HCMUE. First, the system of specialized knowledge in literature, Chinese and Nom characters, etc. helps students can synthesize and introduce information related to literature and cultural studies. The difference in

the student's presentation on the tour is reflected in the ability to lead poetry and tell legends and stories related to the tourist destination, such as Da Dia Reef, the theme of Xuan Dieu's poetry in Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh; Han Mac Tu in Tuy Hoa effectively and attractively. In particular, the skills of analyzing Chinese and Nom characters have helped students confidently explain at religious sites such as Truc Lam Zen Monastery in Da Lat, Linh Ung Pagoda in Ngu Hanh Son, etc.

Aiming to improve the quality of internship organization for Vietnamese students majoring in Tourism at DLL, HCMUE, the internship program should focus on sustainable tourism in terms of resources, environment, climate change, and national defense and security. Specifically, from an economic perspective, the program content can be oriented towards introducing and encouraging tourists to buy local specialties such as Da Lat strawberries, Ly Son garlic, coconut handicrafts in Binh Dinh, Hoi An silk village, Hue lotus silk; preserving and promoting local culture, encouraging local experiences such as enjoying Tay Son Binh Dinh martial arts music, Hue singing on the Huong River, etc. promoting the protection of the marine environment along the Central Coast, educating the community to serve tourism by encouraging drinking coconut water with reed straws in Quy Nhon. Because cultural heritages can only be preserved and promoted when they are planned and connected to tourist routes. The spirit of sustainable tourism should also be included in the weight of the students' route presentation assessment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, with the output-oriented and development approach, this paper applied two methods of literature synthesis and practical survey to clarify three factors affecting the quality of internship of tourism students (DLL, HCMUE) including program content, quality of partner travel agencies and management, supervision and support of lecturers. The survey results showed that the quality of internships can be improved through improving accommodation and transportation services; program content needs to focus on and implement the sustainable tourism development direction. Besides, students need to continue to promote their strengths absorbed from the training unit, at the same time, self-training soft skills, aiming to effectively participate in the task of fostering knowledge and skills for the community residents involved in tourism business to preserve and promote heritage, and national culture.

In the future, this study can further develop the evaluation from stakeholders including lecturers, organizing partners, accommodation establishments, etc. to have a more comprehensive view than just focusing on the student's perception channel. In addition, facing the technological trend of Industry 4.0, improving the quality of organizing internship activities for tourism students DLL, HCMUE needs to be associated with the task of applying software to manage activities and evaluate professional tasks; specifically, students can apply mobile

applications to enrich the way of providing information at the point, schedule, services, etc. In the future, this study can be extended to the potential application of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) to help students experience explaining famous landmarks before entering the official internship because this is the inevitable development trend in education and life.

Suggestions and Implementations

Based on the findings of this study, several key suggestions and implementations are proposed to improve the quality of professional internships for tourism students at the Department of Linguistics and Literature (DLL), Ho Chi Minh City University of Education (HCMUE).

1. Enhancing Program Content and Student Experience

The results indicate that students highly value experiential learning activities, with Experiential Exercises and the Gala Dinner receiving the highest satisfaction ratings. To further enhance the program's effectiveness, the following recommendations are suggested: Increase hands-on activities, such as role-playing as tour guides, managing real tour groups, and handling unexpected travel situations. Expand student-led initiatives, including event planning and interactive learning experiences, to strengthen problem-solving and leadership skills. Improve accommodation quality and variety of tourist sites to enhance student satisfaction, as these aspects received comparatively lower ratings.

2. Strengthening Collaboration with Tourism Agencies

The collaboration with Viet Media Travel Corporation yielded positive feedback, particularly in areas like transportation, food services, and health support. However, some dissatisfaction was noted, particularly in transportation (18%) and food services (26%). To address this: Regular feedback sessions should be conducted with students and service providers to refine and adapt services. Increase the number of accommodation and food options to better align with student preferences. Improve transportation efficiency by considering student feedback regarding comfort, scheduling, and safety.

3. Expanding Faculty Supervision and Support

Faculty supervision was highly rated, demonstrating the effectiveness of direct academic guidance during internships. To build on this: Develop structured mentorship programs, where faculty members provide ongoing support, evaluations, and workshops before, during, and after the internship. Utilize student performance tracking systems to ensure continuous improvement in adaptability, professional attitude, and report writing. Introduce peer mentoring, where senior students assist juniors in understanding fieldwork expectations and best practices.

4. Future Research and Technological Advancements

To maintain the relevance and competitiveness of the tourism internship program, future initiatives should align with emerging Industry 4.0 technologies. Key areas for development include: Implementing digital tools: Introducing mobile applications for internship management, including scheduling, service quality tracking, and student feedback collection. Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR): Utilizing VR/AR simulations to allow students to experience historical landmarks, cultural sites, and guided tours before the actual internship. Expanding stakeholder involvement: Future studies should integrate lecturers, tourism agencies, accommodation providers, and tourists to gain a holistic understanding of internship effectiveness.

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Declaration of Interests

The authors declare no competing interests related to this study.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to all relevant ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Ho Chi Minh City University of Education. All participants provided informed consent before contributing to the study, ensuring their voluntary participation and confidentiality.

Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest to declare.

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