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Perception of tourism students toward training program

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Abstract

To ensure development in the tourism sector and to sustain competition, internship practices have become an essential element of education and are now compulsory. In this study, research has been conducted to assess how effective internship applications are for students, the extent to which students can benefit from internships will be analyzed and various recommendations will be proposed.

The findings reveal that various challenges and misunderstandings are encountered by students in internship practices that can place businesses and students in difficult situations. Students' opinions regarding internship practices were obtained by applying a survey method, and the results were analyzed in a computer environment for this study. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the opinions of the students who have completed their internships in the Tourism Management and Hotel Management Programs and to contribute to the related literature (Karacan, 2004).

The study was conducted with a sample of NEU Tourism and Hotel Management School students and a questionnaire technique was used. Previous studies were utilized whilst creating the survey questionnaire (Pelit&Güçer, 2006) (Sarı, 2007).

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1. Introduction

The implementation of internships during university education provides students with the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained during their studies in practical situations experienced in business life. The internships also provide valuable contributions to the students' personal development and confidence.

Job satisfaction and motivation are particularly important for the students working in tourism enterprises. Countries that aspire to gain an increased share of the international tourism market should engage in competition based on price and non-price factors, by ensuring the quality of service required by modern tourism concepts, and realizing that the relationship between the tourists and those who serve them must be effective and of high quality. This predominantly depends on the high level of vocational and technical education of the workforce employed in the sector (Timur, 1994).

Additionally, a person who has gained the necessary skills in their respective field is able to utilize their time efficiently and is capable of using the tools and equipment productively (Ağaoğlu, 1991). An internship period gives experience to the students, consequently preparing them for the problems they may face in business life. Internship practice is one of the conditions that students must fulfill in order to graduate from vocational colleges. In the current application, students are required to complete an internship of at least 30 working days during the summer vacation at the end of the 2nd or 4th semester (Karacan, 2004).

In this respect, the students who are trained at the Near East University School of Tourism and Hotel Management (NEU SOTHM) students are provided with the opportunity to observe and apply their knowledge and skills in a real environment. To this end, all academic and administrative staff works collaboratively to provide high quality education and training services.

The advantages for the NEU SOTHM students are that they have the privilege of applying the knowledge they have acquired in their lessons into practice at the teachers' restaurant, all other food and beverage outlets on the university campus as well as at the Dorana Hotel, the Park Palace Hotel and the Dorana Travel Agency, which all belong to NEU. After graduation, employment opportunities are offered to the students in these enterprises, which represents a significant contribution to the students' post-graduation employment prospects.

1.1 The purpose of the research

The purpose of the research is to evaluate the opinions of the students who have completed their internship in the Tourism Management and Hotel Management Programs. The possible answers to each of the research questions were:

- (1) I definitely do not agree
- (2) I do not agree
- (3) Undecided
- (4) I agreed
- (5) I definitely agree

1.2 Participants

A total of 56 volunteer students who studied at NEU SOTHM and had completed their internships participated in the research. The research was conducted during the 2013-2014 fall semester.

2. Findings and discussion

In general, it can be observed from the data in Table 1 that the opinions of the students regarding their internships are positive. A total of 69.6% of the students reported positive opinions in relation to the phrase "I have performed an internship appropriate to the department of my studies". It is possible to say that this is a positive development when the results of the previous research made in this field are taken into consideration.

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