



Research on Internship Quality Evaluation for Tourism Management Majors in Application-Oriented Universities: a Student Perspective

Jiao Liu^a, Hui Wang^{b*}

Department of Management, Guangzhou Xinhua University, Guangzhou, 510520, China

aliujiao3232161@163.com

^{b*}Corresponding author: mdwk@xhsysu.edu.cn

Abstract. The tourism management major in application-oriented undergraduate programs emphasizes integrating theoretical knowledge and practical skills to train high-quality, interdisciplinary talent for the tourism and modern service industries. Internship teaching is a critical component of this training. However, current evaluation practices primarily involve schools and enterprises, often neglecting students' autonomous awareness and subjective perceptions. This paper uses in-depth interviews to explore internship quality evaluation content from the student perspective, extracting three dimensions: internship competency, value perception, and recognition. Based on this, an evaluation system integrating school, enterprise, and student perspectives is constructed.

Keywords: Tourism Management, Internship Quality, Student Evaluation

1 Introduction

The core characteristic of application-oriented universities is their emphasis on cultivating applied talents, with practical teaching as an essential component. Professional internships are indispensable in tourism management education. They consolidate theoretical knowledge, enhance practical skills, broaden industry insights, and cultivate service awareness and capabilities. Internships also play a pivotal role in improving the overall quality of talent development in tourism management programs.

However, ensuring the quality of professional internships, conducting evaluations, and using these evaluations to enhance educational practices remain challenging. These challenges include defining evaluation subjects, standards, and methods. For example, Wang Peizhang et al. (2018), Xu Nuo (2023) identified shortcomings in the current evaluation system for off-campus internships in application-oriented universities, including incomplete evaluation stakeholders, unscientific goal systems, insufficient task collaboration, and immature support systems. Introducing a robust evaluation system has been proposed as an effective solution to these issues^{[1][2]}. Lu Yangyang et al. (2024) found a statistically significant linear relationship between internship quality dimension, internship experience dimension and employment quality dimension through

empirical research^[3]. Wu Qian et al. (2021) ,Jia Xiaosong (2024),Liu Yanli(2024)advocate for constructing a comprehensive internship quality evaluation system where students, enterprises, and schools are all stakeholders^{[4][5][6]}. Qi Haoliang et al. (2024) proposed the establishment of a "three-step and four-measure" precise practice system for internships and practical training, forming a three-stage evaluation process before, during, and after internships and practical training^[7]. Paul Stansbie et al. (2016) proposed that the contents of classroom education provide preparation for students' internship and support students to acquire new skills during internship^[8]. Marianne HADDAD-ADAIMI et al. (2022) proposed from pre-requisites and inputs; internship classification and selection; internship period; gap identification; control variables and corrective actions to evaluate the whole process of internship^[9]. Sirinan Pantaruk et al. (2025) found that soft skills such as communication, teamwork and problem solving play an important role in improving the employability of the hotel industry. In addition, internship is an important bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical application, which can improve students' professional ability and keep it in line with the needs of the industry^[10].

In current practice, evaluation relies heavily on standardized feedback from schools, supplemented by enterprise and student assessments. Student feedback often lacks emphasis on subjective perceptions and values, undermining the objectivity and rationality of evaluations. Additionally, this oversight limits the potential for optimizing practical teaching systems. Therefore, it is essential to explore internship quality from the student's perspective, integrating their subjective experiences into the evaluation framework. This study focuses on internship students from Guangzhou Xinhua College's tourism management program, utilizing interviews to construct a student-centric evaluation framework for internship quality.

2 Interview Survey of Tourism Management Interns

This study conducted in-depth interviews with 35 tourism management interns from Guangzhou Xinhua College, spanning the graduating classes of 2023 and 2024. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. The discussion began with "a memorable experience during the internship" and extended to three core themes: challenges faced, achievements gained, and factors influencing internship quality. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using content analysis and frequent word association techniques, resulting in five core insights.

2.1 Continuous Learning

It reflects that the mentality of students in internship is social learning, and daily affairs are also carried out around learning various skills. When describing "learning", students often mention learning content and learning process. The most direct gain of students in internship is to acquire social knowledge that is different from professional knowledge. At the same time, students should strive to complete tasks within the time node content during internship, learn to solve various work problems, and continuously

accumulate experience in the learning process, quickly adapt to job work and the transformation of "social people". The biggest problems faced by students during internship are the lack of job knowledge, the lack of work skills and the unfamiliarity of interpersonal environment, so they need to invest a lot of time and energy to learn.

2.2 Knowledge Acquisition

Interns identified the acquisition of new knowledge as a key benefit, enhancing their industry understanding and job performance. The interplay between theoretical knowledge and practical application was evident, fostering professional growth. Emotional transitions during internships—from stress and anxiety to progress and confidence—illustrated the value of their experiential learning.

2.3 Social Adaptation

Internships served as critical transitional phases for adapting to societal and professional expectations. Interns recognized the need for a strong sense of career ethics, proper life beliefs, and harmonious interpersonal relationships. The contrast between pre-internship expectations and real-world experiences initially caused adjustment challenges but ultimately led to satisfaction and positive reflections.

2.4 Problem Solving

During the internship, students are often impressed by the difficult problems they face at work, which are problems that they have never faced in school. In the process of solving problems, students need to use their learning ability, knowledge transfer ability, communication ability, interpersonal skills, and team coordination ability. This process has a significant impact on students' growth and improvement.

2.5 Negative Emotions

The sources of students' negative emotions during internships are mainly divided into three aspects: Firstly, the unfamiliarity and confusion of entering the workplace bring pressure to students. Secondly, the burnout brought by the work itself. The third is the interpersonal communication difficulties with guests and colleagues at work. But overall, students can learn from experience and lessons at work, change their cognition and motivation for social roles, and have a more positive expectation for future planning and development.

3 Evaluation Dimensions from the Student Perspective

Based on the interviews, the study identified three primary dimensions for student-centric evaluation: internship competency, value perception, and recognition. These dimensions encompass nine specific criteria, as shown in Table 1. Each evaluation item

can be used to gain an in-depth understanding of students' needs for knowledge, skills and abilities during internships, understand what students have gained during internships and their impact on subsequent employment, and understand students' perception of their own professions after internships, their satisfaction with their companies and their sense of identity with their professions. After understanding the students' situation, improvements can be made in terms of professional training and corporate cooperation to improve interns' internship satisfaction.

Table 1. Student-Centric Internship Quality Evaluation Dimensions

Primary Dimension	Secondary Dimension	Evaluation Criteria
Internship Competency	Knowledge	Mastery of necessary professional knowledge
	Skills	Proficiency in required technical skills
	Ability	Capability to learn and solve problems
Value Perception	Learning Value	Contribution to skill development and knowledge
	Experiential Value	Satisfaction with the internship process
	Employment Value	Relevance to career development
Recognition	Professional	Affirmation of professional relevance
	Enterprise	Satisfaction with workplace environment
	Career	Willingness to pursue the profession

4 Mechanisms for Internship Quality Evaluation

4.1 Establishing a Comprehensive Evaluation System

Incorporate the tourism management internship quality evaluation with students as the evaluation subject into the existing evaluation system, integrate the evaluation systems at the three levels of school, enterprise and student, and form a complete tourism management internship quality evaluation system, as shown in Figure 1.

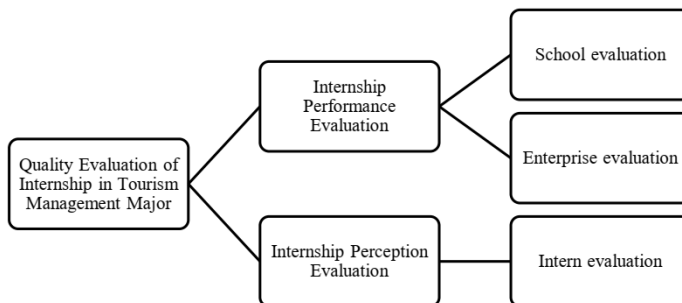


Fig. 1. The internship quality evaluation system of tourism management major at three levels: school, enterprise and intern

4.2 Defining Stakeholder Responsibilities

In the student internship practice, apart from the direct participation of students, enterprises and supervising teachers in the internship evaluation, there are also counselors, parents of students, student class advisors and professional leaders involved in the internship guidance. It is necessary to clearly define the responsibilities and obligations of each participant to facilitate effective management and motivation during the internship assessment and enhance the sense of responsibility of the assessment subjects.

4.3 Utilizing Evaluation Outcomes

Strengthen the application of internship quality evaluation results from the following three aspects: (1) Evaluations identify gaps in course design and skill development, offering data to refine practice-oriented curricula. Insights into workplace demands, such as proficiency in financial systems or interpersonal skills, guide curriculum adjustments. (2) Optimized procedures and policies create better communication channels between stakeholders. Mental health support systems address interns' psychological challenges. (3) Schools can identify and recommend reputable enterprises for internships while discontinuing partnerships with poorly rated organizations. Strong partnerships are deepened for mutually beneficial outcomes.

4.4 Providing Psychological Support

Interns often face emotional challenges, including workplace pressure and interpersonal difficulties. To address this, it can refer to the following specific measures: (1) Psychological Support. Psychological counselors can be engaged to assist interns showing signs of emotional distress. (2) Intervention Mechanisms. Supervisors and enterprise mentors can refer students to counselors for timely support, fostering a healthier internship experience.

5 Conclusion

A comprehensive internship quality evaluation system for tourism management programs is a crucial foundation for improving the quality of practical teaching. The internship experiences and perceptions of interns are key components of this system. Based on in-depth interviews with interns, the following conclusions were drawn: (1) Students' perceptions of internship quality primarily focus on continuous learning, acquiring knowledge, adapting to society, problem-solving, and managing emotions. (2) Internship quality evaluation from the student perspective can be categorized into three dimensions: internship competency, value perception, and recognition. These dimensions can be integrated into existing evaluation systems for tourism management programs in applied universities. (3) Institutions should pay particular attention to students' negative emotions during internships and offer more specialized psychological counseling to support them effectively.

Acknowledgments

This study is funded by Guangzhou Xinhua University teaching reform project “The practice and exploration of integrating the high-quality development of tourism management major with the eco-tourism development of Qi’ao Island Nature Reserve”(2023J010).

References

1. Wang Peizhang, Qian Rui, Guo Liang. Discussion on the Construction of Quality Evaluation System for Developmental Off campus Internship in Applied Universities [J]. Journal of Xingtai University, 2018, 9 (3), 176-179.
2. Xu Nuo. Exploration of Problems and Solutions in Quality Management of Distributed Internship in Universities [J]. Journal of Jiamusi Vocational College, 2023 (11): 188-190.
3. Lu Yangyang, Yang Wenjing, Cui Yingying. The Relationship between Internship Experience and Employment Quality of College Students [J]. Heilongjiang Science, 2024(15):81-83.
4. Wu Qian, Zhu Xiangfeng. Exploration of Quality Management in the Group Internship of Tourism Management Majors in Higher Vocational Education under the 2+1 Talent Training Model [J]. 2021, 2 (28): 164-166.
5. Jia Xiaosong. Evaluation and Optimization of Quality Evaluation Indicators for Job Internship from the Perspective of TQM [J]. Modern Vocational Education, 2024(29):79-82.
6. Liu Yanli, Gu Jungai, Gao Xiaotao. Research on the Graduation Internship System of Applied Talents Cultivation under the Background of Industry University Research Collaboration in Education [J]. Science and Technology Wind, 2024 (18): 59-61.
7. Qi Haoliang, Chang Yana. Construction and Practice Research of Internship and Training Evaluation System for Energy Majors in Universities under the Background of Dual Carbon [J]. Inner Mongolia Petrochemical, 2024, 50 (8), 59-63.
8. Stansbie, P., Nash, R., & Chang, S. Linking internships and classroom learning: A case study examination of hospitality and tourism management students[J]. Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 2016, 19: 19-29.
9. Marianne HADDAD-ADAIMI, Roy ABI ZEID DAOU and Yves DUCQ. Internship Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education [J]. International Journal on Integrating Technology in Education , 2022, 11(1):17-33.
10. Pantaruk, S., Khuadthong, B., Imjai, N., & Aujirapongpan, S. Fostering future-ready professionals: The impact of soft skills and internships on hospitality employability in Thailand. [J]. Social Sciences & Humanities Open, 2025, 11:1-12.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

