

ASSESSING INTERNSHIP PRACTICES FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM STUDENTS – CASE STUDY OF A TECHNICAL COLLEGE IN BOTSWANA

Keolebile Nnanasi Banyatsang
Gaborone Technical College, Department of Hospitality and Tourism
banyatsangnanasi@gmail.com

Kgosietsile Velempini*
University of Botswana, Department of Languages and Social Sciences Education
velempinik@ub.ac.bw

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the relevance of internship for travel and tourism students at a technical college in Botswana. There is inadequate research assessing the relevance of internship, essentially for students enrolled in travel and tourism programmes. A qualitative approach was employed in this study in 2017. Kolb's experiential learning theoretical framework was used to achieve the aims of this study. Participants in the study included nine travel and tourism students, ten internship host organizations, two internship coordinators and two curriculum development officers from the Department of Teacher Training and Technical Education. Participants were purposively selected. Thematic content analysis was employed. The results suggest that the internship programme undertaken by travel and tourism students at the technical college is irrelevant. The knowledge that the students acquire during classroom instruction does not match the expectation in travel and tourism industry. This research recommends that the curricula for travel and tourism programmes offered in institutions of higher learning be reviewed to ensure that students are equipped with relevant knowledge and skills for the travel and tourism industry and develop creative self-efficacy.

Keywords: travel and tourism, internship, higher education, curricula reform, Botswana

1.0 Introduction

The tourist industry needs providers who are effectively trained and equipped with knowledge and skills to enable competent services that meet tourist satisfaction (Manwa, Chipfuva & Mahachi, 2011; Marobela, 2011; Kaynak & Marandu, 2006). Botswana is one of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa region that aims at making sure that tourism services are of higher quality and match the needs of the customer (Republic of Botswana, 2018). Botswana has technical colleges that also offer travel and tourism programmes such as Diploma in Travel Management. One of the objectives of such programmes focuses on equipping learners with knowledge and skills in travel and tourism industry, which legitimately is the second largest income earner for Botswana's economy after the mining industry. Intriguingly, the value added by way of economic

activity at current prices (P million) for 2018 calendar year, was 31, 0657.7 for Mining and 36, 570.0, for Trade, Hotels and Restaurants (Statistics Botswana, 2019). This paper notes that the current threats posed by the COVID-19 coronavirus may also negatively affect the travel and tourism industry in Botswana (SafariBookings, 2020; Seitshiro, 2020). Implementation of the internship programme, as part of the programme for travel and tourism, which include Hotels and Restaurants, is one of the experiential practices required for students to successfully complete their academic studies. Students are mandated to undertake the practicum-based educational experience as a practice of what they have learnt in the classroom. Internships are also practices through which higher education providers integrate industry training (Hughes, Mylonas & Benckendorff, 2013).

There are different types of internships (Klooster, van Wijk, Go & van Rekom, 2008; Maertz, Stoeberl & Marks, 2014; Weible, 2010). Internships may be carried out before and after student graduation. For purposes of this research study, the internship which is assessed is the one which is carried out before students graduate from their learning programmes. An internship programme could be referred to as work placement, which is meant for educational purposes where students are engaged in experiential activities at an organization in order to acquire exposure and experience of the world of work (Nghia & Duyen, 2017). Students can experiment in the industry to determine if effective learning has taken place and whether it has integrated transformation of acquired knowledge. Students are expected to go through a learning process which takes place in the classroom and at a later stage practice in fieldwork what they have learnt in the classroom (Narayanan, Olk & Fukami, 2010). Internship is a relevant practice in the curriculum because it is also intended to confirm competency of students in the programme they are studying. Internship is beneficial to students because it exposes them to pertinent skills needed in the industry (Alpert, Heaney & Kuhn, 2009).

Even though internships are considered essential, research has reported continuous discrepancy (Lam & Ching, 2007; Singh & Dutta, 2010; Wadongo, Kambona & Odhuno, 2011). If the plan for implementing internship program is effectively carried out, students would not suffer criticism during their internship. Mahachi and Shemi (2014) warned that when institutions of higher learning place students without proper internship implementation plan, the value and the essence of internship would be compromised.

Nonetheless, it is possible that after students graduate and secure jobs they would be able to provide effective customer service. This also creates potential for customer attraction. Therefore, the results presented in this paper may benefit institutions of higher learning that offer internship not only in Botswana but globally. If institutions of higher learning adhere to the recommendations, the internship coordinator would have an improved guide on how to place students effectively. Botswana Government has interest in closing gaps of mismatch of knowledge and skills between the tourism industry and educational institutions. According to Republic of

Botswana (2018), the government aspires to build schools of excellence that would offer training in hospitality and tourism.

In the Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP) of 2015 to 2020 the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is not performing well in responding to the needs of the market. Graduates from TVET colleges are not able to serve the market satisfactorily. This is indicated by the internship programme implemented by academic institutions. TVET students do not have appropriate skills required by the industry. Moreover, there is continuous non-reviewed curriculum. Furthermore, Republic of Botswana (2015) states that TVET offers outdated curriculum content which is irrelevant and of poor quality. The end result of this is severe mismatch of knowledge that travel and tourism students at technical colleges acquire during instruction and the application of it during internship in host organizations. Research suggests that if students are sent for internship with a mismatch of knowledge and skills, they miss out on benefit by way of experience provided during internship (Maertz et al., 2014; Mahachi & Shemi, 2014). They would not experience the essence of internship and genuine career building opportunities, thus jeopardizing their professional development and self-efficacy¹. Technical College students' internship would only be valuable and relevant if what students perform during internship is what they have learnt during instruction in the classroom (Mahachi & Shemi, 2014; Knemeyer & Murphy, 2002; Manwa et al., 2011).

This article attempts to address the issue of mismatch of knowledge and skills which are experienced by host organizations (Mahachi & Shemi, 2014; Mekawy & Abubakr, 2014; Knemeyer & Murphy, 2002; Manwa et al., 2011). The study was guided by the following two questions: (a) How is the internship programme implemented at the technical college in Botswana? (b) What are the challenges facing travel and tourism students during internship? The purpose of this study was to assess the relevance of internship programme for students enrolled in travel and tourism programme in particular. The study further assessed if students are equipped with relevant knowledge and skills before they are placed for internship. The technical college in this study offers Diploma in Travel Management. This is a two-year programme which is divided into four semesters (Pelontle, 2014). Three semesters are planned for classroom learning and the fourth semester is planned for the internship programme. The college where data was collected is one of the seven government-owned technical colleges in Botswana (Republic of Botswana, 2015). In order for students to successfully complete the programme they are expected to undergo six months internship, the assignment of which is done by the internship coordinator to ensure proper placement of students.

¹ Students' belief in their ability to carry out tasks such as self-appraisal, vocational information gathering, and plans for the future, and problem solving (Crites, 1961).

2.0 Theoretical framework

In relation to an internship programme, Kolb (2015) outlined the Experiential Learning theoretical framework, which has four stages: (1) Engage (2) Reflect (3) Assimilate and (4) Plan. In the first stage, *Engage*, the internship coordinator at the host organization, the coordinator of internship at the academic institution and the student are all engaged during placement process. Students should have a logbook in which they record (daily journaling) all the activities they completed in a day during the internship process. Once the task has been completed the student and the internship coordinator at the host organization sign the logbook. The internship coordinator of the host organization supervises tasks that are given to students and provides guidance to the students accordingly. The institution coordinator is responsible for placing students and ensuring that students have relevant knowledge and skills needed by the host organization (Kolb, 2015; Zopiatis & Constanti, 2013). In the second stage, *Reflect*, after work placement, students deliberate on their work and on what they have learnt and acknowledge their successes and failures. Students should be able to assess themselves to find out whether they benefited from the internship and state opportunities and challenges they encountered during internship (Ismail, 2018). The third stage is *Assimilate*. This is where students compare and contrast what they have learnt in class and what they have experienced. There should be some growth and assimilation of knowledge and skills. The fourth stage clarified by Zopiatis and Constanti (2013) is *Plan*. In this stage, emphasis is that in order for internship to be effective in the future there should be a rectified and developed plan in place which should be shared with relevant stakeholders. The rectified plan should layout the terms and conditions of the internship programme that includes the goals and objectives of the programme.

3.0 Literature review

The internship programme benefits students if it is adequately planned (Alberta, 2019; Mekawy & Abubakr, 2014). Zopiatis and Constanti (2013) investigated the mismatch between educational experiences delivered to hospitality students and the genuine world practice they experience in Cyprus, an island country in eastern Mediterranean. The above authors suggested that internship in Cyprus rarely meet needs of travel and tourism students. Internship should go a long way to benefit students, industry and academic institutions (Ismail, 2018; Zopiatis & Constanti, 2013). Zopiatis and Constanti (2013) recommended a structured plan that can be used by institutions to enhance student placement.

Internship offers advantages for students such as development and growth in supervision skills. It additionally builds students' confidence in carrying out management duties and the ability to supervise junior officers. During internship, students are imparted with skills such as teamwork, interpersonal and communication skills and organizational skills (Busby, 2003; Saniter & Siedler, 2014). Zopiatis and Constanti (2013) report that the internship programme accords students the opportunity to reflect on their future career paths. Therefore, mounting an effective internship

programme is essential and to achieve these institutions should have a plan for implementation. Kasli and Ilban (2013) carried out research in North West Turkey that identified problems that undergraduate students encountered as interns in travel and tourism programmes. The research also documented the students' perceptions of the tourism industry after internship. These researchers employed a five-point Likert scale with the aim of finding out specific challenges faced by tourism students during internship. The findings indicated ignorance of host organization by internship supervisors as one of the problems faced by students during internship. Further, it was noted that students were not given attention by their supervisors; supervisors were rather reported to be forming intimate relationships with the interns instead. This had the unfortunate result of causing student to relax and be casual during their attachment. The other downside of this cavalier attitude on the part of supervisors was that the students developed a negative perception towards tourism industry, which they tended to view as valueless (Kasli & Ilban, 2013).

It is important that both employers and graduates consider internship as a serious practice-based educational experience that transforms service delivery (Lin, Kim, Qiu & Ren, 2017). Duties of students who are placed on internship and those of the employers who offer internship should be clearly clarified. Kenya is one of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa that recognizes the importance of placing students for internship (Alberta, 2019; Gitau & Muhoro, 2017; Wadongo et al., 2011). According to Shaketange, Kanyimba and Brown (2017). Namibia, also situated in sub-Saharan Africa, has a national strategy which aspires to equip the nation with relevant skills which add value to the country's economy, and one of the ways of achieving this is placing students for internship. Student placement for internship is also practised in Botswana.

In Botswana, Manwa et al. (2011) reported that travel and tourism programmes faced problems of finding a true match between students' academic programme and the industry. Manwa et al. (2011) carried out a qualitative research in academic institutions of Botswana. The objective of the research was to establish how travel and tourism programmes offered in institutions of Botswana contribute to the rate of employability. The study noted that the internship undertaken by travel and tourism students rarely bears fruits, mainly because of a mismatch between the knowledge and skills the students had and the needs of the travel and tourism market. According to Manwa et al. (2011), the reason for this mismatch of knowledge and skills experienced by students and the industry is that some courses offered in institutions are franchised and do not match the needs of the travel and tourism industry locally. Moreover, there is no effective internship plan to manage and monitor the internship programme. In order for internship to be effective, Manwa et al. (2011) recommended engagement of travel and tourism industry organizations when academic institutions develop the travel and tourism curriculum. The purpose would be to ensure that industry stakeholders provide input regarding the content that is taught in classrooms and hence close the gap between skills and knowledge acquired in the classroom and the needs of the industry. Mahachi and Shemi (2014) also carried out a qualitative research with

the aim of establishing the relevance of internships for tourism and hospitality students at the University of Botswana. The objective of the research was to determine benefits of internship as perceived by students. The results suggest that students appreciate the programme content because the theory component helped them to carry out the internship programme successfully and further helped them to develop skills such as supervisory and management skills. They also had opportunity to market themselves for career opportunities since they were given opportunities to lead some sections within host organizations. However, students had limited exposure in some skills needed by the industry. Consequently, the current research at a technical college in Botswana was framed within travel and tourism students.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Study sites and participants

This study followed a qualitative research design and employed a case study (Patton, 2002; Saldaña, 2013; Stake, 1995). The population included participants in host organizations from the travel and tourism industry in Kasane and Maun, which are major tourist destinations in Botswana (Mbaiwa, 2018). The study ensured reliability of data by targeting participants who have knowledge on the topic of study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In order to ensure triangulation, three different research instruments were used. These included documents analysis, semi structured interviews and focus group discussions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Internship supervisors from host organizations and travel and tourism students of 2015 cohort were interviewed. Focus group discussions which involved travel and tourism students were conducted to ensure further reliability of data. Participants included travel and tourism organizations which hosted students from the technical college, internship coordinators at the college, and travel and tourism students enrolled from 2015, and curriculum officers from the Department of Teacher Training and Technical Education. Table 1 shows population and sample size of participants for the study.

Table 1: Population and sample size of participants

Participants	Population size	Sample size
Diploma in travel management 2015 cohort students	45	15
Travel and tourism internship Coordinators	2	2
Travel and tourism organizations which hosted students	15	10
Principal Technical Education officers	2	2

4.2 Placement Guides

Documents such as work placement guides provided to technical colleges by Department of Teacher Training and Technical Education were analysed (Cohen et al., 2007). The guides include work placement guide for colleges, for students and for work placement providers. The guides are vital; they present some insightful, relevant ideas for effective implementation of internship.

The work placement guide for colleges clarifies the processes and procedures to conduct an internship programme (UNESCO, 2014). The guide emphasizes that before internship takes place, colleges should build positive relationship (rapport) with host organizations. By so doing, building positive relationships enables colleges to place students smoothly because organizations and colleges would understand each other in terms of what colleges require from host organizations and what host organizations require from colleges. It is emphasized in the document that colleges should market themselves to ensure that students are appropriately placed. The work placement guide for colleges stipulates that colleges should evaluate work placement often to improve the internship programme. This can be done through observing, assessing, and reviewing students' portfolios which they are expected to build during their internship (APPA Student Internship Task Force, 2019). The evaluation can also be done through feedback from host organizations which are done by college internship coordinator during visits to host organizations (Mgaya & Mbekomise, 2014).

Moreover, the work placement guide for colleges stipulates that colleges are responsible for securing internship for students (UNESCO, 2014). This has potential to ensure that students are suitably placed. In this study, several expressions mentioning the process for placing students were recorded. For instance, one of the participants said, "we are called and informed by our lecturer that it is time for internship and we as students we are responsible for securing a place for ourselves. If we do not succeed, our lecturer secures the place for us." Suitable placement of students includes submission of students' Curriculum Vitae (CV) to host organizations prior to student placement. The main objective of providing a CV is for the host organization to assess and determine if students have relevant knowledge. In the CV, students clearly state the knowledge they acquired by indicating the modules they covered during instruction. Students are expected to include the aims and objectives they intend to achieve after completing the internship. The whole idea of providing the CV is to ensure students' internship is effective and relevant (UNESCO, 2014).

It is the responsibility of the college to inform and induct students on what is expected by host organizations. It is also the responsibility of the college to ensure that host organizations are aware of responsibilities of students. The college should ensure that during internship students are

supervised by competent supervisors. Host organizations are expected to provide information on what they expect from students. Before internship starts, the internship supervisor from the host organization is expected to further induct students so that they have a clear picture of what they are expected to do (APPA Student Internship Task Force, 2019; UNESCO, 2014, O'Neill, 2010).

Work placement guide for work placement providers states that before students are accepted for internship, the supervisor is obligated to view students' CV provided by the college. When satisfied with the CV, the supervisor is expected to provide the acceptance letter. Once the student is accepted, the supervisor should induct students on the operations of the organization. The supervisor should ensure that students' logbook is signed every fortnight. The logbook is a guide which informs the supervisor about areas that the students should be observed on. The guide encourages that both the college internship coordinator and the host organization internship supervisor should have a plan on how the internship would be implemented (Centre for Student Internship, Mobility and Adjunct Lectureship, 2013; UNESCO, 2014).

Supervisors are not expected to train students on their areas of duties because the students already have the knowledge they acquired during classroom learning (UNESCO, 2014). Therefore, it remains the responsibility of the college to ensure that students are equipped with knowledge prior to the start of internship. The guide emphasizes on general induction of the organization's daily procedures. The guide suggests that supervisors should evaluate the internship programme. The evaluation may include aspects such as benefits of internship gained by the host organization, challenges experienced during internship and effective implementation of work placement by the college. The main purpose of evaluating the internship programme is to ensure students are suitably placed.

Work placement guide for students state that students are assessed on the work they are engaged on and the attitude they possess and display when carrying out duties (UNESCO, 2014). Students are also assessed on quality of work, teamwork, customer care and ability to work independently. The students must ensure that the supervisor signs their logbook fortnightly. The students are expected to evaluate the internship (e.g. writing reflective essays). This would provide feedback to the college to find out if internship was relevant and if it would be relevant in the future. Students are expected to evaluate the aims and objectives they set before they start internship to determine if they were achieved. Students should also evaluate the benefits of internship in terms of enhancing students' personal and professional development goals (UNESCO, 2014).

4.3 Sampling and ethical considerations

The sampling techniques included the broader purposive sampling. Specifically, quota sample and convenience sample were employed (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Quota

sample refers to choosing participants from a specific subgroup. Convenience sample refers to a group of participants who are conveniently available to participate in a research (Bordens & Abbott, 2006). Quota sampling suited the present study because participants were readily available and in one place. Participants also had knowledge on the topic of the study. Convenience sample was used for other populations such as hosts organizations in and around Gaborone. Ethical considerations were observed by producing a letter of consent on which confidentiality, anonymity and privacy were discussed. Participants in the study signed the letter of consent to ensure that consensus is reached.

4.4 Analysis

Thematic content analysis was used to analyse data. Thematic content analysis sought to get detailed information from participants without limiting them on ideas they shared. Thematic content analysis is aligned to semi structured interviews and focus groups, which this study used as data instruments (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The researchers also analysed feedback from students who were on internship from September to December 2016 at the same technical college. The reason for analysing 2016 cohort students' feedback was that the number that was targeted for interview students fell short. Instead of interviewing 15 sampled students, only nine students (two males and seven females) turned up for the interview. According to Dawson (2009) it is important that when carrying out a study that the data collected be valid and reliable. The results presented in this paper emerge from a broader research project conducted by the principal researcher for Master's degree at Botho University in Botswana. For purposes of anonymity and confidentiality, the technical college where this research was conducted is not mentioned in this paper (Patton, 2002). Names of participants and internship host organizations establishments are also not mentioned.

5.0 Results

Two critical themes emerged from the data that was collected. The themes are implementation process of the internship programme and challenges facing travel and tourism students during internship.

5.1 Implementation process of the internship programme

Three of the student participants were attached at a travel agency in Gaborone; three were attached at a guest house in Maun; one was attached at a lodge in Gaborone, and two were attached in mobile Safaris in Maun. Table 2 shows sectors of host organizations and duties that students carried out during internship.

Table 2: Host organizations and duties that students carried out during internship

Host organizations	Number of students placed at host organizations	Categories of duties carried out by students
Travel agencies	2	tour packaging, tour costing, reservations, marketing and selling
Camp sites	6	housekeeping, laundry services, food preparation, waitressing, scullery, bar attendant, camp management
Hotels	1	reservations, supervisor of the hotel, front office
Guest Houses	5	housekeeping, laundry services, food preparation, waitressing, scullery, bar attendant, camp management
Lodges	1	housekeeping, laundry services, food preparation, waitressing, scullery, bar attendant, camp management

The 2015 cohort students in the Diploma programme of Travel Management as shown on Table 2 were placed at different hospitality sectors such as travel agencies, campsites, hotels, guest houses and lodges. The students who were attached at travel agencies reported fair internship experiences. They had the opportunity to apply the knowledge they acquired during classroom instruction. For instance, students reported that some modules such as air travel and tour packaging, which they learnt in class, helped them during the internship. Feedback from travel agencies was also positive.

Opinions on the competence of the interns and the usefulness of the internship programme were varied. On the one hand, according to host organizations, travel and tourism students lack the knowledge needed to carry duties in lodges and guest houses. Supervisors reported that they expect students to be part of the team and carry out hospitality duties such housekeeping, food preparations, waitressing, laundry services, and bar operations. Supervisors further reported that they accept the students with the assumption that they have the requisite knowledge in hospitality operations. Although some of the students were reported to be performing well in professions like front office and reception, overall the internship supervisors generally felt that students did not

meet work expectations. The students need to be inducted to augment the skills and knowledge, which are deemed wanting, but such induction takes from the much-needed work time.

On the other hand, host organizations acknowledged the internship programme as beneficial. Despite the challenges highlighted above, one of the supervisors said, “internship is viewed as a very important programme because there is some exchange of new knowledge brought in by students.” Some host organizations reported that at times when students’ competence is satisfactory, they are left to run the organizations and by so doing carry out activities of employees who would be allowed to go on vacation. One of the internship coordinators at the technical college stated that:

The main objective for students to undertake work placement is that there are some certain modules that they undertake in the college that they would have to undertake and experience or apply in the industry. That is basically the reason why they have to go for attachment so that they have the feel of the industry.

According to technical college internship coordinators, the procedure for placing travel and tourism students is also a challenge. Students identify work placement themselves and then inform the internship coordinator. The internship coordinator would then contact the host organization and prepare necessary placement documents. Internship coordinators assist in identifying a host organization if students fail to do so.

5.2 Challenges facing students of travel and tourism program during internship

According to students’ responses, those who were attached in lodges, guest houses and safaris facilities encountered challenges when compared to those placed at travel agencies. Students placed at lodges, guest houses and safaris were expected to carry out duties which were not aligned with their classroom teaching. Students expected duties such as making reservations, tour packaging and marketing. Unfortunately, most of the time they were obliged to do hospitality operations such as housekeeping, laundry services, and food preparations, which they did not learn in class. Students reported that guest houses and safaris made their internship irrelevant. A student placed at a guest house said:

Most of the time, supervisors during the attachment expected me to carry out activities that were not related to tourism. I was obliged to be engaged on duties such as housekeeping and kitchen operations. I never learnt anything on kitchen operations and I never had interest in kitchen operations.

The other student placed at a lodge commented:

Lodges are more focused on hospitality operation duties, and as a student on internship I am expected to be attached at places which match what I have covered as a travel and tourism student such as being attached at airports. Travel and tourism internship does not give us the chance to do what we learnt at school.

Only two students who were attached at travel agencies were satisfied with the duties assigned to them. Thirteen students attached at other host organizations stated that they were not comfortable with duties assigned to them because they were related to hospitality operations. This study noted that coordinators of internship in the technical college were aware that travel management students were not properly placed. The technical college internship coordinator remarked as follows:

Unfortunately, with travel management students, you would find that there are not many travel agencies or travel related companies where travel management students can be attached. So, as we try to attach them, we meet so many challenges and we end up attaching them at the hotels. The students definitely feel uncomfortable. They feel that they are forced to learn something which is different and which they have not chosen as a course. It was not their desire. They are compelled to do what the organizations expect them to do.

The officer from the Department of Teacher Training and Technical Education disclosed that travel and tourism students are not properly placed and as a result there is mismatch of skills. One curriculum officer from Department of Teacher Training and Technical Education commented:

Other students feel that when they get to host organizations, they don't perform what they learnt at school. They feel misplaced. You would find that those who are supposed to be placed at tourism related organizations are placed at hotels. There is a mismatch of skills which supervisors normally complain about.

Host organizations such as the lodges and guest houses also reported similar observation, noting that travel and tourism students are not competent enough to be attached at their places. One internship supervisor from one of the organizations advised as follows:

I would advise you to place them at bush camps especially that they are doing travel and tourism course. You should visit workplaces before you send students so that you can assess and see if it will suit the course they have chosen.

Students felt that the challenges they faced during their work placement were due to the internship programme structure which is too theoretical. One student lamented:

There is too much theory. I feel that too much theory that is delivered to us at the college is a waste of time. I normally compare the course that I'm doing with courses offered by institutions such as Madirelo Training Centre which offers National Craft Certificate. What they normally do is that their students have more practicals than theory, which benefits them, but as for us we are only allowed to go for attachment for one semester which is not enough.

Students felt that there is need to review what they considered an outdated curriculum content. She commented as follows: "I feel that the theory we are taught at school is a waste of time because what we are taught at school is not the same as what we do at the industry." Furthermore, the current implementation practice appeared to be a disadvantage. Students felt that going for internship at semester three and coming back for classroom learning at semester four was poor planning. The disadvantage in this is that some of them perform exceptionally well during internship and are offered job opportunities which they are not able to accept because of the obligation to return to school to complete their studies. Students recommended that internship be offered at semester four to enable them to take advantage of job opportunities. Students also felt that with just a semester, the duration of internship programme was too short. This mean that the programme is mostly theory than practice. One student commented:

The timing for work placement must be looked at. For instance, it is unfortunate to realize that some of the units we cover them after we have completed internship. I have realized that units such outdoor cooking are covered at semester four after we have completed internship. This unit should be covered before we go for internship.

Technical college internship coordinators reported that internship is a tedious exercise because they are not the only college seeking for space to attach students. The coordinator said: "The main challenge is that our technical college is not the only college, so we have to compete for few spaces that are out there." Different colleges and universities seek attachment for their students at the same time.

6.0 Discussion

This study aimed at assessing the relevance of internship programme offered to travel and tourism students at a technical college in Botswana. Manwa et al. (2011) also reported that travel and tourism students do not benefit from the internship programme because the knowledge they acquire in classroom does not match industry requirements. Challenges of mismatch of skills and knowledge experienced by travel and tourism students at the technical college implies that students lose out on acquiring relevant experience during internship. According to Zopiatis and Constanti

(2013) internship should provide motivation and learning experiences for students and give them a sense of achievement in the acquisition of the relevant skills. However, results from this study suggest that travel and tourism students are barely motivated by their internship. Most are compelled to carry out operations which they did not learn in classroom. Zopiatis and Constanti (2013) continue to state that internship should encourage students to have a feel of and attachment to their academic programme through internship. Internship should further encourage students to develop self-awareness and be able to design their own professional career path.

Internship is an experiential learning process. Zopiatis and Constanti (2013) emphasized the experiential learning process through Kolb's experiential learning theoretical framework. According to the experiential learning theoretical framework by Kolb (2015), the first stage emphasizes on the engagement of relevant stakeholders before internship begins. This study noted that the technical college rarely engages relevant stakeholders; it only engages host organizations at a later stage. Work placement guides stipulate that before student can start their internship, colleges should provide host organizations with students' CVs so that the organizations screen the students to find out if they match their organizational needs. It has emerged from this study that although students compile their CVs, the CVs are not forwarded to the host organizations for screening. This study suggests that the implementation of internship programme for travel and tourism students does not effectively provide experiential learning for students.

After the engagement process, Kolb (2015) suggests that students should reflect on the internship process. During their internship students should be able to apply the knowledge they have acquired. What they apply during the internship should match what they learnt. This would allow them to reflect after completion to determine if they have benefited from the internship. Reflection assists students evaluate their academic knowledge and skills as they think about their career paths. Kolb's experiential learning theoretical framework suggests that travel and tourism students at the technical college hardly have anything positive to reflect on because of inappropriate internship attachment. Diverse voices of students indicate that, for the most part, and for some of them, their internship is characterized by bitterness and regrets. However, as part of reflection the student could work to improve the weaknesses in the internship programme going forward. According to Kolb (2015), this stage is called *Assimilation*. Assimilation is part of students' growth which shows that learning has taken place, that is, what the student was lacking before being engaged in internship would be acquired after the internship. The results of this study suggest that some or most of the travel and tourism students at the technical college do not experiment with the knowledge they acquired during classroom learning, which emanates from misplacement during internship. They therefore find it challenging to assimilate because of mismatch of knowledge and skills and the requirement of the industry.

Kolb (2015) suggested that in order for internship programme to be effective it must be planned. In this study, the technical college has a proper plan in place which guides the implementation of the internship programme. The problem is that the guides were also not followed. The work placement guide for college states that institutions should create partnerships with organizations which colleges know would be appropriate hosts to the students. If the technical college had formed partnerships, the students would not be improperly placed.

7.0 Conclusion and recommendations

This study sought to assess the relevance of internship for travel and tourism students at a technical college in Botswana and several issues were noted. Students at the technical college are not placed in appropriate organizations for effective internship and as a result there is a mismatch between the knowledge that the students have and the expectations required by host organizations. Furthermore, travel and tourism students do not develop a sense of attachment to their course because during their internship they are expected to do duties which are different from what they learnt during instruction. Therefore, this study recommends that planning for the internship programme needs a holistic review so that it suits the students' and host institutions' interests. Such a review should factor in the schedule for the internship programme; it would be advisable for the internship programme to be scheduled for two semesters so that the programme does not become largely theory based.

References

- Alberta, O. (2019). Competency development among hospitality graduates in Kenya: Assessing the influence of industry-based learning. *African Journal of Education, Science and Technology*, 5(2), 155-163. Retrieved from <http://www.ajest.info/index.php/ajest/article/view/362>
- APPA Student Internship Task Force. (2019). *APPA student internship guidelines*. retrieved from <https://www.appa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/appa-student-internship-guidelines-082219.pdf>
- Bordens, K. S., & Abbott, B. B. (2006). *Research design and methods. A process approach* (10th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Busby, G. (2003). Tourism degree internships: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 55(3), 319-334. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/13636820300200232>.

- Centre for Student Internship, Mobility and Adjunct Lectureship. (2013). *Guidelines for student industrial training (SIT) ICB / IDB 3037*. Universiti Teknologi Petronas. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/29787170/guidelines_for_student_industrial_training_sit_icb_idb3037_centre_for_student_internship_mobility_and_adjunct_lectureship_csimal
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Crites, J. O. (1961). A model for the measurement of vocational maturity. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 8(3), 255–259. doi.org/10.1037/h0048519
- Dawson, C. (2009). *Introduction to research methods: A practical guide for anyone undertaking a research project* (4th ed.). United Kingdom: How to Books, Ltd.
- Gitau, J. K & Muhoro, S.N. (2017). Work-placement experiences and post-experience behavioral intentions of hospitality undergraduate students enrolled in universities within Nairobi metropolis, Kenya. *International Journal of Advanced Engineering and Management Research*, 2(5), 1663-1678. Retrieved from http://www.ijaemr.com/uploads/ijaemr_01_194.pdf
- Hughes, K., Mylonas, A., & Benckendorff, P. (2013). Students' reflections on industry placement: Comparing four undergraduate work-integrated learning streams. Asia-Pacific. *Journal of Cooperative Education*, 14(4), 265-279. Retrieved from https://www.ijwil.org/files/apjce_14_4_265_279.pdf
- Ismail, Z. (2018). *Benefits of internships for interns and host organisations*. Helpdesk report. K4D. Knowledge, evidence and learning for development. University of Birmingham. Retrieved from <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b3b5de3ed915d33c7d58e52/internships.pdf>
- Kasli, M., & Ilban, M. O. (2013). The influence of problems faced during internships on interns' views of their profession and their intention to work in the tourism industry. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 52, 79-96. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ej1060369.pdf>
- Kaynak, E., & Marandu, E.E. (2006). Tourism market potential analysis in Botswana: A Delphi Study. *Journal of Travel Research*, 45, 228-236. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287506291595>

- Kolb, D. A. (2015). *Experiential learning. Experience as the source of learning development*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.,
- Klooster, E. V., van Wijk, J., Go, F., & van Rekom, J. (2008). Educational travel. The overseas internship. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(3), 690-711. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2008.05.003
- Knemeyer, A.M., & Murphy, P.R. (2002). Logistics internships. Employer and student perspectives. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, (32). 135-152. Retrieved from <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/09600030210421732/full/html>
- Lam, T., & Ching, L. (2007). An exploratory study of an internship program: The case of Hong Kong students. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 26, 336-351. doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2006.01.001
- Lin, P.M.C., Kim, Y., Qiu, H., & Ren, L. (2017). Experiential learning in hospitality education through a service-learning project. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 29(2), 71-81. doi: 10.1080/10963758.2017.1297716.
- Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly hills, CA: Sage.
- Maertz, C.P., Stoeberl, P.A., & Marks, J. (2014). Building successful internships: lessons from the research for interns, schools, and employers. *Career Development International*, 19, 123-142. doi 10.1108/cdi-03-2013-0025.
- Mahachi, D., & Shemi, A. (2014). Students' experiences of the tourism and hospitality industrial attachment programmes: Lessons from the University of Botswana. *Botswana Journal of Business*, 7, 60-75. Retrieved from <https://ubrisa.ub.bw/bitstream/handle/10311/1615/299-1012-1-PB.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Manwa, H., Chipfuva, T., & Mahachi, D. (2011). Tourism education in Botswana: A contested issue. *Journal of Tourism*, 12(1), 17-38.
- Marobela, M.N. (2011). Tourism and decent work in Botswana: From private sector to a collectivist model. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 1(3), 1-9. Retrieved from http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/marobela_m.d._article_12_vol.1_31.pdf

- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2011). *Designing qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Mbaiwa, J.E., (2018). Effects of the safari hunting tourism ban on rural livelihoods and wildlife conservation in northern Botswana. *South African Geographical Journal*, 100(1), 41-61. doi: 10.1080/03736245.2017.1299639.
- Mekawy, M.A., & Abubakr, M.M.A. (2014). Planning internship programs: Tourism students' perceptions. *Tourism*, 62(1), 41-61. Retrieved from https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/15b9/a6928fcdccd5b7090eeb98aba347a91067ec.pdf?_ga=2.37825003.956402707.1576744587-260351776.1565098119
- Mgaya, K., & Mbekomize, C. (2014). Benefits to host organizations from participating in internship programs in Botswana. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 15(2), 129-144.
- Narayanan, V.K., Olk, P.M., & Fukami, C.V. (2010). determinants of internships effectiveness: an exploratory model. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 9, 61-80. doi.org/10.5465/amle.9.1.zqr61
- Nghia, T.L.H., & Duyen, N.T.M. (2017). Internship-related learning outcomes and their influential factors. The case of Vietnamese tourism and hospitality students. *Education & Training*, 60(1), 69-81. doi 10.1108/et-02-2017-0030.
- O'Neill, N. (2010). Internships as a high-impact practice: Some reflections on quality. *Peer Review*, 12(4), 4-8. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/internships-high-impact-practice-some-reflections-quality>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Pelontle, K. (2014, April 8). *BEAR to enhance vocational training quality*. Botswana Daily News. Retrieved from <http://www.dailynews.gov.bw/news-details.php?nid=10522>
- Republic of Botswana. (2018). *Draft. Tourism policy*. Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism. Gaborone: Government Printers.
- Republic of Botswana. (2015). *Botswana education and training sector strategy plan (ETSSP 2015- 2020)*. Retrieved from https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/resources/botswana_etssp_2015-2020.pdf

- Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Saniter, N., & Siedler, T. (2014). *Door opener or waste of time? The effects of student internships on labor market outcomes*. IZA Discussion Papers 8141. Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA). Available at <https://ideas.repec.org/p/iza/izadps/dp8141.html>
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2016). *Research methods for business students* (7th ed.). England: Pearson.
- SafariBookings. (2020). *The worrying impact of the coronavirus outbreak on the safari industry*. Retrieved from <https://www.safaribookings.com/blog/coronavirus-outbreak>
- Seitshiro, K. (2020). *COVID-19 impacting traffic over Bots airspace*. Retrieved from <https://www.sundaystandard.info/covid-19-impacting-traffic-over-bots-airspace/>
- Shaketange, L., Kanyimba, A. T., & Brown, E. (2017). The challenges and measures for internship among fourth-year students in the department of lifelong learning and community education at the University of Namibia. *Creative Education*, 8, 2258-2274. doi.org/10.4236/ce.2017.81415
- Singh, A., & Dutta, K. (2010). Hospitality internship placements: Analysis for United Kingdom and India. *Journal of Services Research*, 10(1), 85–99. Retrieved from <https://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=5083e6ee-b9f4-4215-aa7e-3e24a74a7c8d%40pdc-v-sessmgr04>
- Stake, E. R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Statistics Botswana. (2019). *Gross domestic product. Quarter 1*. Retrieved from <http://www.statsbots.org.bw/sites/default/files/Gross%20Domestic%20Product%20Q1%202019.pdf>
- United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2014). *The better education for Africa's rise project*. Retrieved from <https://en.unesco.org/themes/skills-work-and-life/bear>
- Wadongo, B., Kambona, O., & Odhuno, E. (2011). Emerging critical generic managerial competencies: A challenge to hospitality educators in Kenya. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, 2(1), 56-71. doi 10.1108/20400701111110777.

Weible, R. (2010). Are universities reaping the available benefits internship programs offer? *Journal of Education for Business*, 89, 59-63. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08832320903252397>

Zopiatis, A. & Constanti, P. (2013). Managing hospitality internship practices: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*, 24, 44-51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2012.10696661>