



Interns' Experience of Management Support and Supervision in Internship Programs

Jason Philip B. Capacio

Lecturer, Department of English Language
Faculty of Liberal Arts and Science
Nakhon Phanom University, Thailand

Corresponding author Email: capacio.ja@npu.ac.th

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Abstract:

Internships provide students with valuable opportunities to translate academic knowledge into practical experience. While extensive research exists on internships and student development, there is limited focus on the role of management practices in influencing intern satisfaction and motivation. This study employs a mixed-methods approach to examine how leadership style, communication, autonomy, and work environment shape intern experiences in customer service roles. With the use of a validated questionnaire with open-ended questions, the study explores the significant impact of leadership practices, structured feedback, and autonomy on intern satisfaction and motivation. The analysis, based on the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and the Job-Demand Control (JDC) Model, emphasizes the importance of trust-based supervision and effective communication. The study suggests that incorporating peer feedback, improving logistical support, aligning tasks with career goals, and providing pre- and post-internship training can significantly enhance internship programs and better prepare interns for their careers.

Key Words: Intern Experience, Management Support, Supervision, Internship Programs, Internship Quality.



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Introduction

Internship programs are designed to provide students with authentic, real-world experience and professional exposure related to their field of study (Sukmawati, 2022). It is during these internships that students apply the knowledge and skills they gained inside the classroom and reinforce them in a workplace setting. Students benefit from internships as they develop professional qualities while increasing learning opportunities and preparing for future work. Various studies have confirmed that internships enhance academic profiles regardless of subject area or student background, leading to positive outcomes (Binder *et al.*, 2015). Additionally, internships provide essential practical skills to students and simplify their professional role transition (Matusovich *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, interprofessional experience strengthens entry into the job market by improving job search prospects and reducing the gap between education and professional demands, thereby helping students secure work opportunities (Santosa *et al.*, 2024). Students who undertake internships use this experience to explore future career paths while building professional contacts and gaining comfort in authentic work settings.

Similarly, the outcomes of internships depend heavily on adequate management support during the program, as this support enhances learning, satisfaction, and the career transition process. Thus, interns' professional development is significantly influenced by mentoring, which boosts their competencies and satisfaction levels. Developmental relationships involving supervisor support and mentor status shape interns' experiences by defining their learning and satisfaction while influencing their job acceptance decisions (Ali & Gardner, 2022). Furthermore, support from supervisors, organizations, and colleagues strongly influences internship satisfaction by creating an advantageous learning environment that makes interns feel valued by the team (Mensah, Appietu, & Asimah, 2020). A smooth workplace transition occurs primarily through how interns view their internal position based on work responsibilities and leadership involvement during the internship. Interns' internal beliefs are crucial for their smooth integration into regular positions within their host organizations (Rose, 2018). An internship succeeds when integration strategies such as interactive learning and peer mentoring are used to help interns learn their duties while preparing them for their future careers (Lui, Walsh, & Philbin, 2020).

Student internship experiences connect academic knowledge with professional practice, helping students develop workplace skills and career readiness. The support provided by internship managers and their supervisory practices significantly determines how interns perceive the internship experience. Effective management practices lead to more satisfied interns who are motivated and acquire new skills. Conversely, management shortcomings, such as unclear communication and unfair supervision, can harm interns' learning experiences and professional growth.

This study offers valuable insights for organizational leaders, educational institutions, and policymakers to improve internship management practices across the hospitality, corporate, and service sectors. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study focuses on interns' short-term experiences of management support, communication, autonomy, and work environment, while acknowledging limitations related to the industry scope and reliance on self-reported data.

Although sufficient research exists on various aspects of internships, particularly in professional development, fewer studies focus on the role of management support and specific practices in influencing the internship experience. Research has highlighted opportunities to improve the recognition of management practices that create excellent internship conditions and how these practices influence student satisfaction and motivation. This study addresses the gaps by providing a more nuanced view of intern experiences. A mixed-methods approach offers a richer analysis of the factors shaping intern satisfaction and motivation in statistically significant and personally impactful ways for the individual interns studied. Specifically, this study explores how interns perceive and evaluate the support received from management, organizational communication, autonomy, and work environment quality during their internship experience; it also aims to assess how interns experience five key management factors—management support and leadership, communication and feedback, autonomy and trust, work environment and well-being, and satisfaction and motivation—within internship programs; to determine which factors influence intern satisfaction and motivation based on management handling; and to examine the correlation between specific management practices and interns' overall

satisfaction and motivation. This integrated approach facilitates a deeper understanding of the complex, multifactorial nature of the intern experience and the managerial factors that contribute to a successful internship. Building on these objectives, the following research questions are proposed to guide the inquiry and uncover the key elements that shape internship satisfaction and motivation.

Research Question

1. How do interns experience the five management factors—management support and leadership, communication and feedback, autonomy and trust, work environment and well-being, and satisfaction and motivation—in their internship programs?
2. How are the five management factors (management support and leadership, communication and feedback, autonomy and trust, work environment and well-being, and satisfaction and motivation) related to internship programs' overall experience?
3. Is there a significant relationship between management practices (support, communication, autonomy, and work environment) and interns' satisfaction and motivation?

Review of Literature

Management Practices in Internship Programs

Professional development through internships helps students turn book learning into actual practice applications. Internship outcomes benefit considerably from adequate management support, which provides mentors to guide interns and teach them professional conduct while enabling their success. The development of interns into potential organizational successors is mainly accomplished through senior managers' involvement in succession planning. When working with interns, management should implement structured delegation alongside flexible communication systems that benefit interns who need specific support (Remington *et al.*, 2021). However, most internship managers face ongoing difficulties, primarily within the vocational and academic realms, despite the essential need for proper managerial backing. Three main obstacles in internship management include insufficient pre-internship preparation, lack of mentor support, and wrong alignment between internship assignments and future career aspirations. The internship experience becomes complex because of inadequate feedback and poor communication both during the internship and afterward (Guo, 2024). Resolving these problems will fundamentally enhance the overall quality standards of internship programs.

In response to these concerns, multiple solutions have been proposed to deal with the challenges faced. Developing effective pre-internship learning combined with enhanced mentoring programs and tasks that adhere to career ambitions represents essential solutions. Implementing efficient communication channels and feedback processes creates extraordinary advantages for the complete internship program (Guo, 2024). However, studies about employee job satisfaction linked to leadership styles have become common, yet few researchers have studied the direct effects of leadership styles on satisfaction and engagement among interns. In contrast, most studies analyze regular employees instead of interns while ignoring the unique character of internship conditions (Lama *et al.*, 2024; Aprillina *et al.*, 2024). Moreover, the generalization of leadership effects fails to account for industry differences, even though research suggests these business sectors require unique leadership methods to enhance intern satisfaction (Gunawan, 2023). Additionally, the data shows conflicting evidence about the authoritarian and collaborative supervisor communication approach, producing superior outcomes for intern learning and satisfaction. Thus, a substantial gap remains unclear about interns' supervisor expectations and supervisors' beliefs about methods of guiding intern learning (Urquia-Grande & Estebanez, 2020).

The Role of Communication and Autonomy in Intern Experience

According to research on Malaysian interns, studies based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT) show that autonomy-supporting actions produce enhanced intern feelings of well-being and engagement with concurrent reduction of emotional exhaustion (Gu, Liu, & Bolt, 2021). According to research by Beenen, Pichler, and Levy (2017),

supervisory autonomy-based interactions with MBA interns facilitate proactive feedback pursuit, enhancing their workplace adaptation and performance. Similarly, mentor feedback plays a vital role in shaping the learning experience of student interns, according to [Kramer-Simpson \(2018\)](#), who researched this topic. In addition, medical education research shows that sub-interns achieve higher satisfaction when displaying increased autonomy, provided they receive proper supervision, preventing negative occurrences ([Khawaja, Greene, & Darling, 2023](#)). Thus, the research evidence demonstrates that giving students autonomy and encouraging feedback is crucial in achieving positive results for intern satisfaction alongside long-term career development. While research about communication usually investigates educational and workplace environments, there is a lack of direct evidence about how various supervisory communication styles influence intern motivation and job satisfaction, according to [Dmitrenko and Budas \(2023\)](#). Moreover, most research about feedback is focused on structured educational surroundings and fails to address the distinctive aspects of internships ([Kramer-Simpson, 2018](#)). Finally, research has established that employee engagement relies on autonomy, yet investigating this connection for long-term intern career development remains scant ([Gu, Liu, & Bolt, 2021](#)). Additionally, research by [Khawaja, Greene, and Darling \(2023\)](#) failed to explore how autonomous work arrangements influence interns' decision-making and problem-solving competencies.

Intern Satisfaction, Motivation, and Overall Internship Quality

Herzberg's Hygiene-Motivation Theory demonstrates that intern satisfaction stems primarily from workplace support, supervision, and clinical exposure, yet is diminished by poor management combined with high stress and insufficient mental health support, according to [Isaacs et al. \(2020\)](#). Furthermore, research studies show that intern satisfaction with sports management roles leads to stronger perceptions of both personal advancement and career advancement, according to [Sauder and Mudrick \(2017\)](#). Similarly, this research on startup internships demonstrated that job features with learning possibilities and supervisor backing determine how satisfied interns become ([Maaravi et al., 2020](#)). In addition, research in vocational education confirms that structured internships with solid feedback, flexible scheduling, and organizational backing considerably strengthen intern satisfaction ([Vukic et al., 2020](#)). Moreover, [Wingerden et al. \(2018\)](#) established through their study that applying Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory with Self-Determination Theory (SDT) revealed how supervisor support, combined with autonomy and learning opportunities, enables intern engagement, leading to performance enhancement. Notably, intern satisfaction depends heavily on supervisor support and clear task instructions because these elements strongly affect motivational behaviors and self-initiative ([To & Lung, 2020](#)). Recent studies have examined the diverse influences of management methods on both intern satisfaction and motivational levels. For example, the research from [Anseel et al. \(2015\)](#) studied how leaders impact how interns seek feedback because it influences their learning experiences alongside motivational changes. Additionally, studies conducted by [Tessema et al. \(2020\)](#) analyze the relationship between transformational leadership and employee work performance and burnout, thus revealing which leadership methods affect staff motivation and job satisfaction. Despite this, there is a dearth of studies examining multiple management approaches in conjunction with understanding their united effects on intern satisfaction and motivational levels. Therefore, a combined analysis of the factors would provide expanded knowledge about their collaborative effects on internship experiences.

The connection between how managing interns during their training phase affects their future job performance has not been thoroughly investigated. Specifically, the experimental study conducted by [Kucel et al. \(2021\)](#) evaluates how work internships affect job acquisition possibilities after students graduate and reveals the internship's role in influencing career pathways. However, research has not established the precise correlation between leadership and feedback approaches during internships and the eventual outcomes of long-term career success. Consequently, future employment outcomes require thorough research to establish how management practices affect intern motivation because this understanding determines how internships affect career development.

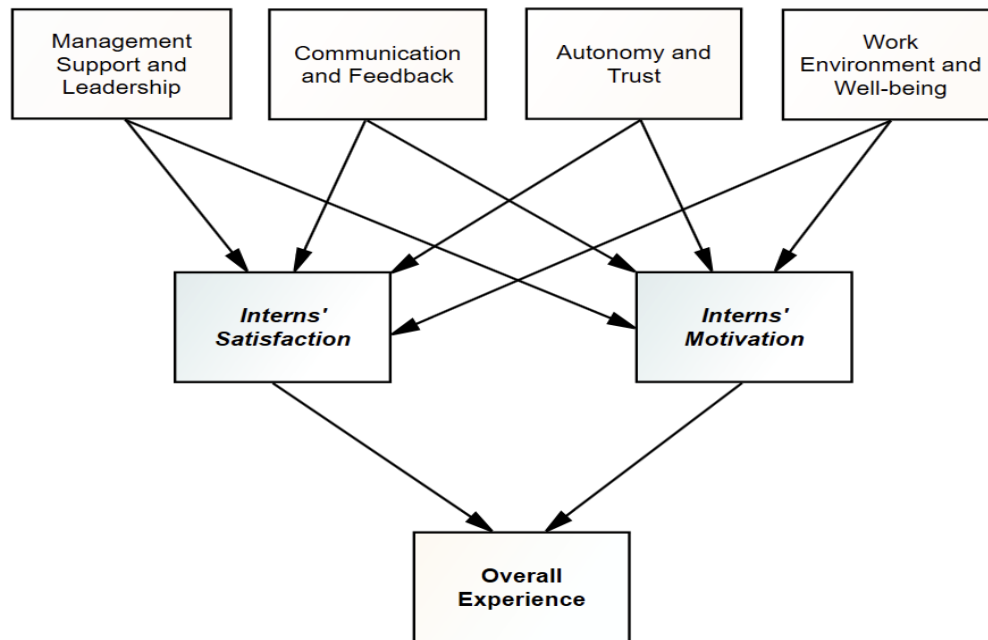
Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The research study, Interns' experience of management support and supervision in internship programs, applies several theoretical concepts related to its research goals and investigation queries. To begin with, the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory by [Graen and Uhl-Bien \(1995\)](#) evaluates the quality of connections between supervisory relationships and interns and their supervisory support effects on intern job satisfaction, motivational level, and job

experience quality. This theory is essential for comprehending how executive support, interaction, and leadership practice influence intern dedication and motivation levels. Importantly, the research study provides direct evidence to measure intern experiences regarding management support and supervision as part of the first research goal. Furthermore, job satisfaction and motivation depend heavily on the three elements of autonomy, competence, and relatedness demonstrated by the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by [Deci and Ryan \(1985\)](#). SDT specifically investigates psychological needs to determine how intern success depends on self-directed choices and supportive workplace conditions. Therefore, self-determination theory is essential for investigating the elements that affect intern satisfaction and motivation because it is the second main research goal. In this context, this work demonstrates which management methods enable motivation growth through independent work and constructive employee feedback. Moreover, workplace support and autonomy shape stress levels and overall well-being through the Job-Demand Control (JDC) Model developed by [Karasek \(1979\)](#). This model applies directly to this study because it explains the effects of management action methods, including task delegation and autonomy, and support organizations, on intern satisfaction and well-being. As a result, the study helps explain how management practices affect intern outcomes while supporting the research goal, which measures the relationship between management practices and intern satisfaction and motivation.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



The following figure illustrates the conceptual framework, representing how management practices function as independent variables to produce satisfaction and motivation results, dependent variables, in an internal context. Specifically, the core management practices include management support and leadership, communication and feedback, autonomy and trust, and work environment and well-being. Importantly, the reported variables strongly impact both intern satisfaction with their experience duration and their motivational levels during and following their internships ([Hackman & Oldham, 1976](#)). This framework defines how strong managerial methods are supposed to boost interns' satisfaction and motivation levels, thus influencing their complete internship journey.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study used a mixed methods design to examine the influence of management support, leadership, communication, autonomy, work environment, and other factors on intern satisfaction and motivation. A descriptive design was used to assess the impact of leadership and communication practices on interns' experiences across various sectors, including hospitality, food and beverage services, airports, customs, and tourism. A frequency correlation analysis was conducted to identify systematic correlations between management practices and interns' evaluation of their internship experiences. Additionally, multiple regression analysis was performed to assess the predictive influence of management factors on intern satisfaction and motivation. Qualitative data from open-ended survey questions were analyzed thematically to provide deeper insights into interns' personal experiences, perceptions of management practices, and motivational drivers, enriching the interpretation of the quantitative findings.

Sample and Sampling Method

A total of 24 participants were included in the study as they were fulfilling their internship duties in hotel and F&B establishments, the airport and customs departments, and the tourism sector. A specific sample group of customer service interns was selected for this research through purposive sampling since the participants had to fulfill specific requirements from their customer service internship experiences. The particular sampling technique guaranteed participants who had undergone proper management direction and supervision, enabling the study to access meaningful data

Data Collection Method

A structured survey containing closed-ended questions was used to collect data related to the key management factors in the organizational work environment, which influenced elements of feedback quality, support accessibility, leadership styles, autonomy, and aspects of supervision. The survey instrument was an adaptation of [Kristensen et al. \(2005\)](#) and was reviewed by a panel of three experts before its use to ensure that its contents were relevant to internship settings; the questionnaire used was the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ). In this survey, participants could agree or disagree with every aspect of management or what their internship experience was like using a Likert scale.

Data Analysis

Data analysis has focused on answering the research questions in the following ways:

Descriptive analysis: This approach summarized the intern responses to determine how they rated management support, communication, autonomy, and the work environment. Descriptive statistics described how interns had rated the factors.

Pearson Correlation: The relationships between management variables (support, communication, autonomy, work environment) and intern satisfaction and motivation levels were explored using Pearson's correlation coefficient (r). This analysis identified the strength and direction of these relationships.

Multiple Regression Analysis: Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the effects of management practices on intern satisfaction and motivation. This approach assessed management support, communication, autonomy, and the work environment's predictive ability while accounting for all other variables.

Thematic Analysis: For the qualitative data, thematic analysis was applied to the open-ended responses. Recurring patterns and themes related to intern experiences, perceptions of management, and motivational drivers were identified and coded to support or deepen the interpretation of quantitative findings. The study explained the effects of management support and supervision on interns' satisfaction and motivation through statistical analysis using the SPSS program.

Ethical Considerations

The research upholds essential ethical standards to protect participants and maintain research integrity. The study's purpose, methods, potential risks, and benefits were clearly explained to participants, who voluntarily agreed to participate with the right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was strictly maintained, with all data used solely for research purposes. Participants could skip any survey question to avoid discomfort, and the study posed minimal risks. Customer service interns were selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevant and meaningful data without coercion. The research process was conducted with full transparency, avoiding any form of deception about its objectives. The researcher adhered to ethical research practices, having received proper training in data collection, analysis, and confidentiality protection. The study used SPSS to analyze the data, ensuring accuracy and reliability in the interpretation of results. Additionally, a thematic analysis was conducted to identify key patterns and themes within the interns' responses, providing a deeper understanding of their experiences. This qualitative approach helped uncover underlying factors and significant insights related to their customer service training. The study was conducted in a secure environment, following strict data protection protocols, and institutional approval was obtained before proceeding. These guidelines ensured that the study documented interns' experiences ethically while safeguarding their rights and well-being.

Results and Findings

Research Question 1

How do interns experience the five management factors—management support and leadership, communication and feedback, autonomy and trust, work environment and well-being, and satisfaction and motivation—in their internship programs? The study examines the experiences of 24 interns in customer service roles across numerous industries (hotels, F&B, airports, customs, and tourism). The mean and standard deviation for each management factor are presented in the following tables.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of management support and leadership

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Statement 1	24	4.333	1.007
Statement 2	24	4.333	.816
Statement 3	24	4.333	.916
Statement 4	24	4.250	.989
Statement 5	24	4.333	.816
Statement 6	24	4.208	.832
Overall Management Support and Leadership	24	4.298	.804

According to the collected data, interns view management support and leadership positively, as their statements receive mean scores between 4.208 and 4.333. The statement about motivation through leadership style (Statement 6) received the lowest rating at $M=4.208$ with a standard deviation of $SD=.832$, while still demonstrating a positive perception. Interns show positive experiences regarding their manager's support and guidance since their average response rate is $M=4.298$ in this category. The responses vary slightly between interns who evaluate how well their managers both listen to their concerns and motivate them. The study participants maintained positive attitudes towards

management support and leadership despite their slight disagreements, which showed an overall standard deviation value of .804.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of communication and feedback

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Statement 1	24	4.125	.797
Statement 2	24	4.458	.779
Statement 3	24	4.429	.624
Statement 4	24	4.500	.589
Statement 5	24	4.250	.737
Statement 6	24	4.250	.846
Overall communication and feedback	24	4.312	.547

The results from Table 2 demonstrate that intern students experience mostly positive encounters during their internship programs. The mean scores from interns show that they agree to a certain degree with the statements, which vary between 4.125 and 4.500. The interns expressed the most positive feedback about manager feedback after mistakes by giving Statement 4 an average score of $M=4.500$. The evaluation frequency of statement 1, "*I receive regular feedback from my manager regarding my performance,*" shows a small decrease in satisfaction, $M=4.125$, yet interns still accept this statement.

A small amount of variation exists in the intern assessment of communication and feedback through standard deviations that fluctuate between $SD=0.547$ and $SD=0.846$. The overall mean score reached $M=4.312$, with a standard deviation of $SD=0.547$, demonstrating that most interns maintain positive views about feedback communication within their respective programs.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics of autonomy and trust

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Statement 1	24	4.291	.690
Statement 2	24	4.833	.701
Statement 3	24	4.088	.717
Statement 4	24	4.333	.761
Statement 5	24	4.416	.653
Statement 6	24	4.333	.637
Overall autonomy and trust	24	4.215	.467

Table 3 demonstrates that interns hold a favorable view regarding autonomy and trust. According to the mean scores, most interns fall within the provided ranges of $M=4.088$ and $M=4.833$. Research results indicate that interns experience the most freedom to make work decisions based on Statement 2, "*I am given the freedom to make decisions related to my work*", which received a mean score of $M=4.833$. The lowest rating was given to Statement 3, "*I feel that my opinions are valued by my manager when making decisions*", with a mean score of $M=4.088$, indicating that while interns generally feel trusted and empowered, there is some variation in how much they perceive their opinions to be considered in decision-making.

The responses show minimal variability as the standard deviations span from 0.467 to 0.761, while Statement 1 exhibits the most consensus with an SD of 0.690. The interns demonstrate an average trust level in being autonomous in their work activities while showing minor differences in subjective evaluations (M=4.215 and SD=0.467).

Table 4

Descriptive statistics of work environment and well-being

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Statement 1	24	4.375	.710
Statement 2	24	4.333	.868
Statement 3	24	4.291	.750
Statement 4	24	4.458	.658
Statement 5	24	4.291	.750
Statement 6	24	4.333	.701
Overall work environment and well-being	24	4.347	.623

Table 4's findings reveal an overall positive inclination towards the work environment and well-being fostered by management staff. To be more precise, the highest average score, M=4.458, for Statement 4, *"My manager respects my work-life balance during the internship,"* suggests that the interns perceive their personal time and health as being valued and respected by their managers. Statement 2, *"My manager creates a positive and supportive work environment,"* received a significant mean score of M=4.333, revealing that managers foster a supportive climate. Conversely, Statement 3, *"I feel that my work environment is conducive to learning and growth,"* and Statement 5, *"I feel mentally and emotionally supported by my manager,"* both record mean scores of M=4.291, indicating a slightly lower yet still positive perception.

The overall mean score across work environment and well-being is M=4.347, SD=.623, indicating that interns collectively report a favorable work environment with minimal variability in their experiences.

Table 5

Descriptive statistics of satisfaction and motivation

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Statement 1	24	4.375	.646
Statement 2	24	4.291	.624
Statement 3	24	4.375	.710
Statement 4	24	4.500	.589
Statement 5	24	4.416	.717
Statement 6	24	4.250	.675
Overall satisfaction and motivation	24	4.368	.555

The data in Table 5 reveal that the interns expressed high overall satisfaction and motivation regarding management practices. The mean for statement 4, *"I am satisfied with the feedback and recognition I receive from management,"* was the largest (M=4.500), which reveals that interns are especially satisfied with the feedback and recognition they received from their managers. Statement 1, *"I am satisfied with the overall management of my internship,"* was also positive, with M=4.375 on average, indicating that most interns are largely satisfied with the overall management of their internship experiences.

Similarly, statement 5, "My internship experience met or exceeded my expectations due to management practices," had a mean score of $M=4.416$, suggesting that the interns believed that their expectations had been significantly met due to current management practices. The lowest mean score was for statement 6, "All in all, I would recommend this internship program to others based on how management handles it" ($M=4.250$). The overall satisfaction and motivation mean score is $M=4.368$, with a standard deviation of $DS=.555$.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Management Factors and Overall Internship Experience

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall management support and leadership	24	4.298	.804
Overall communication and feedback	24	4.312	.547
Overall autonomy and trust	24	4.215	.467
Overall work environment and well-being	24	4.347	.623
Overall satisfaction and motivation	24	4.368	.555
Overall experience	24	4.303	.522

The overall experience of all 24 interns regarding five management factors has been summarized in Table 6. Their internship programs are generally perceived positively, as the results show. Specific results showed that interns received relatively high supervisor support ($M=4.298$; $SD=.804$). Interns felt that communication and feedback provided by managers were good, with a mean score of $M=4.312$ ($SD=.547$), and that overall perception was positive.

The respective mean for autonomy and trust, $M=4.215$ ($SD=.467$), indicated that interns felt trusted with considerable independence in their tasks. The mean score on work environment and well-being was $M=4.347$ ($SD=0.623$), reflecting that it is often supportive, favorable to intern well-being, and helpful to intern development work environment. Mean scores for satisfaction and motivation were $M=4.368$ ($SD=.555$), suggesting that interns scored on average on the upper part of the scale, which could largely be attributed to supportive management practices. Generally, the interns rated their experience at $M=4.303$ ($SD=0.522$), which suggests their satisfaction with the internship programs.

Considering the Likert scale definition interpretation, the scores achieved correspond to the "Agree" range (3.50 – 4.49), indicating that participants largely agreed with the statements and positive perceptions and satisfaction with all five management aspects and the overall internship experience. The findings indicate that the internship program was successful overall regarding management support, communication, work autonomy, work environment, and general satisfaction.

Research Question 2

How are the five management factors (management support and leadership, communication and feedback, autonomy and trust, work environment and well-being, and satisfaction and motivation) related to internship programs' overall experience?

To determine the relationship between the five management factors and interns' overall experience, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted, and the results are presented in the following tables.

Table 7

Pearson Correlation Matrix Between Management Factors and Overall Internship Experience

Variable	Overall Experience	Overall Management and Support, and Leadership	Overall Communication and Feedback	Overall Autonomy and Trust	Overall Work Environment	Overall satisfaction and Motivation
Overall Experience	1.00	.838**	.827**	.917**	.865**	.930**
Overall Management and Support and Leadership	.838**	1.00	.609**	.663**	.579**	.680**
Overall Communication and Feedback	.827**	.609**	1.00	.796**	.577**	.700**
Overall Autonomy and Trust	.917**	.663**	.796**	1.00	.785**	.844**
Overall Work Environment	.865**	.579**	.777**	.785**	1.00	.877**
Overall satisfaction and Motivation	.930**	.680**	.700**	.844	.877**	1.00

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results of the Pearson Correlation showed in Table 7 a strong positive correlation between interns overall experience and all five management factors ($p < 0.01$) of management support and leadership (0.838), communication and feedback (0.827), autonomy and trust (0.917), work environment and well-being (0.865), and satisfaction and motivation (0.930). This indicates that interns also have an increasing overall experience as these management factors improve. Namely, higher support, communication, autonomy, and satisfaction directly correlate with a better overall internship experience. The five factors all correlate positively, supporting the idea that a better placement in one dimension is likely to improve the remaining factors. Simply put, good management practices in all these areas improve the overall experience for the interns.

Research Question 3

Is there a significant relationship between management practices (support, communication, autonomy, and work environment) and interns' satisfaction and motivation?

Table 8

Pearson Correlations between Management Practices and Interns' Satisfaction and Motivation

Factor	Correlation with Satisfaction and Motivation (r)	Significance (p)
Overall Satisfaction and Motivation	1.00	-
Overall Management Support and Leadership	.930**	.000
Overall Communication and Feedback	.917**	.000

Overall Autonomy and Trust	.877**	.000
Overall Work Environment	.827**	.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 8 reveals a correlation between management practices (support, communication, autonomy, and work environment) and interns' satisfaction and motivation. The most significant correlation between intern satisfaction and motivation is management support and leadership ($r=.930$, $p<.01$). This would indicate that the more supportive management becomes, the more motivated and satisfied the intern becomes. Autonomy and trust were the best in correlation ($r=.917$, $p<.01$), suggesting that interns experience considerably higher levels of satisfaction and motivation when they feel trusted and autonomous. Well-being also shows a high positive correlation ($r=.877$, $p<.01$), which indicates that the better the environment is, the more interns enjoy working there and the more motivated they are. Lastly, communication and feedback are less highly correlated with satisfaction and motivation ($r=.827$, $p<.01$).

In summary, the four management practices positively relate to interns' satisfaction and motivation to intern (support, autonomy, environment, and communication), with support being the most substantial relationship and communication being the weakest yet still significant, as revealed through Pearson's correlation analysis. To explore the strength and relative importance of each management practice in predicting interns' overall satisfaction and motivation, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. This analysis helps to identify which factors most significantly influence intern outcomes while accounting for the influence of other variables simultaneously.

Table 9

Model Summary & ANOVA

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sum of Squares (Regression)	df (Regression)	Mean Square (Regression)	F	Sig. (ANOVA)
1. (Regression Model?)	.922	.850	.819	.236	6.047	4	1.512	27.011	.000

Table 10

Multiple Regression Analysis for Predicting Intern Satisfaction and Motivation Based on Management Practices

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
Constant	.176	-	.387	.703
Overall Management Support and Leadership	.089	.142	1.161	.260
Overall Communication and Feedback	.120	.119	0.768	.441
Overall Autonomy and Trust	.264	.222	1.118	.278
Overall Work Environment and Well-being	.492	.552	3.778	.001

From the analysis shown in Table 9, the R-square value of 0.850 means that the model can predict 85% of the variance in interns' satisfaction and motivation, including management support, communication, autonomy, trust, and work

environment. Which means that 15% of the variance remains unexplained by this model. The Analysis of Variance shows that the regression model is significant ($F=27.011$, $p < 0.0001$).

Further analysis in Table 10 shows that work environment and well-being are the only factors significantly associated with intern satisfaction and motivation (p -value: 0.001). It means that for every 1 unit increase in work environment and well-being, there is a 0.492 increase in satisfaction and motivation. In comparison, management support and leadership, communication and feedback, and autonomy and trust have change rates of 0.098, 0.120, and 0.264. These factors failed to show significance with p -values of 0.260, 0.441, and 0.278, so they are not significant predictors of intern satisfaction and motivation. The most significant predictor in the model relates to work environment and well-being, which is important.

Discussion

Interns' satisfaction and motivation showed significance based on management practices. The findings are framed by several core theories that shed light on how leadership style, autonomy, communication, and work environment shape the intern experience. Drawing thematic insights from [Pouloudi & Whitley \(1997\)](#), which outlined different dimensions of leadership, breadth, and depth of autonomy, feedback, and work context, this study engages with the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory ([Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995](#)), which emphasizes the quality of the relationship between leader and followers as important in a leader-follower pair, in this case, the supervisor-intern pair. LMX Theory states that these relationships directly impact the intern's job satisfaction, motivation, and overall experience. Moreover, the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (1985) sheds light on how autonomy, competence, and relatedness affect an intern's outcomes, motivation, and satisfaction. Another theory contributing to workplace social support and autonomy in their experience is the additional theories of [Karasek \(1979\)](#) outlined in the Job-Demand Control (JDC) Model.

By integrating these perspectives, one can understand the impact of management practices on the outcome of the intern, especially where one deliberately isolates variables such as the support provided by the leaders, their communication style, level of independence of interns, or the formalized structure of tasks to perform. These frameworks become particularly relevant in exploring how management practices can impact intern satisfaction and motivation, and vice versa, and the nature of experiences leading to successful internships. This provides a foundation for the findings presented in this paper.

Several key factors emerged based on the thematic analysis of the open-ended responses, which showed intern satisfaction and motivation. Leadership style was one of the key themes that emerged. One participant mentioned, "It's easy to talk to my manager. He listens when I share my thoughts and even uses my ideas to improve the service." This suggests that the manager is calm and approachable and uses a transformational leadership approach to create a non-authoritarian and open environment where employees are comfortable sharing their thoughts and consulting. This encouraging messaging is by LMX Theory, which underlines the consistent support felt in higher-quality leadership and is typically positively correlated with job satisfaction and confidence.

Furthermore, how the manager solves the problem when things get confusing indicates a coaching leadership style. Besides clearing doubts, the manager also enabled employees to make decisions with confidence, which is aligned with self-determination theory (SDT) in that it promotes autonomy and competence, which are the prerequisites for motivating interns. The feedback provided to employees strikes a good balance between performance-based suggestions and higher-level personal growth critiques, aligned with the moderator Self-Determination Theory, as feedback is shown to nourish feelings of competence, leading to personal development and, hence, satisfaction.

Additionally, the job environment in a hectic hotel, food and beverage department is characterized by high workload demands strategy that introduces positive team interactions and managerial supervision to prevent excessive pressure. There are a few interpersonal conflicts here and there, and some team members have been described by the participants as selfish, which points to another area for improvement in team cohesion and communication. One intern mentioned,

“I feel quite comfortable, but sometimes there are some coworkers who are a bit selfish — they often make me do their tasks, don’t greet me, and don’t talk to me at all.” This highlights challenges within team dynamics that could be addressed to improve overall team cohesion and communication. Lastly, the manager's autonomy is consistent with SDT's autonomy principle that the more independent the work is, the higher the job satisfaction and performance. This freedom increases motivation through touchpoints, allowing interns to take charge of tasks and process autonomously. At the same time, the manager's confidence and belief in their capabilities create a basis for their eventual success.

The evidence presented is supported by earlier works, which indicate a strong positive effect of leadership on intern satisfaction, especially when feedback is supportive, yet the interns are provided with autonomy and trusted as equals (Beenen, Pichler, & Levy, 2017). The study findings demonstrate the significance of well-organized feedback together with autonomy and clear communication channels because these elements build positive workplace environments while boosting intern motivation, as supported by Gu, Liu, and Bolt (2021).

Conclusion

This study examined communication styles, autonomy-supporting behaviors, and leadership practices and how these impact intern satisfaction and motivation. Based on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, and the Job-Demand Control (JDC) Model, the results show that trust-based management, open communication, and structured feedback contribute to higher intern involvement and performance. Ultimately, the notes of feedback and autonomy have essential implications for well-designed internships that can increase career readiness. Further, given the role of peer dynamics and organizational culture in shaping intern experiences and long-term outcomes, this study opens the door for further research on how these systems interact with intern experiences.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The study used a total of 24 participants, which is, a relatively small sample size was included in the study as they were fulfilling their internship duties in hotel and F&B establishments, the airport and customs departments, and the tourism sector. Future researchers are required to use a larger sample and add more sectors to obtain objective results and to generalize the findings for better comprehension of the issue under investigation.

Recommendations

The study offers several recommendations to enhance internship outcomes for interns and organizations alike:

Feasibility of Peer Feedback: In future studies, peer feedback should be sought since co-workers are as important to the intern's satisfaction and success.

Logistics and Remuneration: Tactically approaching logistics — accommodation and fair wages for interns based in distant locations — will improve satisfaction and attract diverse candidates.

Structured Feedback and Career Alignment: All of these show that internship programs must align the tasks with the career goals of interns so that they can receive structured feedback and measure themselves against a particular benchmark.

Highlighting Autonomy and Working Alone: While interns should work collaboratively, encouraging them to work independently and make their own decisions will improve their internship experience.

Essential Pre-internship Training and Post-internship Assessment: Trainees should be trained like corporate employees to understand what they should and should not expect from the experience, and post-internship assessments will allow for a discussion about what worked and what did not.

Declarations

Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate: This study strictly adhered to the Declaration of Helsinki and relevant national and institutional ethical guidelines. Informed consent was not required, as secondary data available on websites was obtained for analysis. All procedures performed in this study were in accordance with the ethical standards of the Helsinki Declaration.

Consent for Publication: Not Applicable.

Availability of Data and Materials: Data for this study will be provided upon a written request to the corresponding author.

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