



Received: 25 December 2024

Revised: 20 February 2025

Accepted: 23 February 2025

INTERNSHIP SUCCESS IN THAI TOURISM: THE INTERPLAY OF PARENTAL SUPPORT, PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT, AND INTERNSHIP QUALITY

Thannicha SINGKALA¹ and Paithoon MONPANTHONG^{1*}

¹ Graduate School of Tourism Management, National Institute of Development
Administration, Thailand; thannicha.sing@stu.nida.ac.th (T. S.);
paithoon.mon@nida.ac.th (P. M.) (Corresponding Author)

Handling Editor:

Professor Dr. Wing-Keung WONG

Asia University, Taiwan

(This article belongs to the Theme 1: Business & Economic in Industry 5.0)

Reviewers:

1) Professor Dr. Vinita SINHA

Symbiosis International University, India

2) Assistant Professor Dr. Naksit SAKDAPAT

UTCC, Thailand

3) Assistant Professor Dr. Raed AWASHREH

A'Sharqiyah University, Oman

Abstract

This study investigates the key factors influencing internship satisfaction among Thai tourism students in Phuket. Employing a quantitative approach with 300 participants, we examined the impact of parental support, person-organization fit, and internship quality on internship satisfaction. Exploratory factor analysis revealed distinct dimensions within each construct: parental support (emotional, verbal, and career-related), person-organization fit (work environment, personality, and value congruence), and internship quality (mentorship, student benefits, and program organization). Multiple regression analysis demonstrated that all three factors significantly predicted internship satisfaction, with Internship Quality exhibiting the most decisive influence. While significant, parental support had a minor effect on person-organization fit and internship quality. These findings highlight the importance of creating supportive family environments, fostering organizational alignment, and providing high-quality, structured internships to enhance student experiences and career preparedness in Thai tourism. The study offers valuable insights for families, educational institutions, and industry stakeholders seeking to optimize internship programs and ensure student success in tourism. Further research could explore qualitative perspectives and expand the geographical scope to enhance generalizability.

Keywords: Parental Support, Person-Organization Fit, Internship Quality, Tourism Students

Citation Information: Singkala, T., & Monpanthong, P. (2025). Internship Success in Thai Tourism: The Interplay of Parental Support, Person-Organization Fit, and Internship Quality. *Asian Administration and Management Review*, 8(1), Article 19. <https://doi.org/10.14456/aamr.2025.19>

Introduction

The tourism industry plays a vital role in the global economy, creating numerous career opportunities, particularly for students pursuing degrees in tourism and hospitality. Tourism is one of the most significant contributors to the national GDP in Thailand, with a growing demand for skilled professionals (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2023). As the industry expands, a skilled and committed workforce must maintain service excellence and global competitiveness. To meet these demands, tourism education programs are designed to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge, with internships as a crucial component of their professional preparation. Internships bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world application, allowing students to gain hands-on experience in the field. A critical factor influencing students' successful transition into the workforce is the quality of their internship experiences (Giousmpasoglou & Marinakou, 2021). However, transitioning from academia to professional careers is challenging as many students struggle to transition from internships to long-term careers, with issues related to job misalignment, dissatisfaction with internship experiences, and lack of industry commitment (Qu et al., 2021). Worse than that, some students even change their career intentions and leave the industry (Robinson et al., 2016). Despite the numerous benefits of internships, challenges such as mismatched expectations, inadequate support, and limited alignment between students' competencies and organizational needs persist (Goh & Lee, 2018). These issues may lead to unsatisfactory internship experiences, negatively affecting students' perceptions of the industry and reducing their willingness to pursue careers in tourism. As the tourism sector of Thailand relies heavily on a competent workforce, the effectiveness of internships is essential for sustaining industry growth.

Several factors significantly influence how students perceive and engage with their internships, with parental support being one of the most pivotal. In Thailand, where family relationships are deeply rooted in cultural values, parents serve as emotional and financial supporters and as mentors and motivators. The research of Wong and Liu (2010) highlighted the importance of parental involvement in fostering student confidence and resilience, enabling them to overcome challenges and maximize learning opportunities during internships. Another crucial factor is person-organization fit (PO fit), which refers to the alignment between a student's values and the organizational culture of their host company (Kristof, 1996). Several studies indicated that a strong PO fit boosts engagement, satisfaction, and a sense of belonging, ultimately enhancing career commitment and shaping positive professional attitudes (Dawis, 2002; Murphy, 2021). Furthermore, the internship quality remains a decisive factor in shaping students' experiences. Effective internships go beyond assigning routine tasks and instead offer meaningful responsibilities, mentorship, and a collaborative work environment. On the other hand, poorly structured internships—lacking mentorship or developmental opportunities—can lead to dissatisfaction and uncertainty, discouraging students from pursuing long-term careers in the tourism industry (Wang et al., 2014).

Despite the recognized importance of internships, there is limited research on the factors that influence the quality of internship experiences among Thai tourism students, particularly in key tourist destinations like Phuket, one of Thailand's most prominent tourism hubs, for offering students a dynamic and immersive environment. While most existing studies on tourism internships have primarily focused on internship satisfaction, career intention, and general challenges faced by students (Qu et al., 2021; Hussien & Lopa, 2018; Seyitoğlu & Yirik, 2015; Robinson et al., 2016), research specifically addressing the contextual factors influencing internship experiences in Thailand remains scarce. Furthermore, limited attention has been given to understanding the fundamental dimensions influencing internship experiences, specifically parental support, person-organization fit, and internship quality. This gap underscores the need for a more comprehensive investigation into the determinants of a high-quality internship experience within the context of Thai tourism education. To bridge this

gap, this study empirically examines the influence of parental support, PO fit, and internship quality, providing insights into their impact on internship satisfaction. By identifying key predictors of a high-quality internship experience, this study contributes to understanding factors shaping students' career development in the tourism industry in the Phuket area, a major tourism hub in Thailand, for valuable contextual insights relevant to tourism education and industry practices in similar settings. Understanding how these factors contribute to internship experiences can benefit various stakeholders, including educational institutions, industry professionals, and parents. For instance, understanding which aspects of internship quality affect students' industry commitment can help organizations develop more effective internship programs. Accordingly, this study aims to (1) identify the key dimensions of parental support, person-organization fit, and internship quality; (2) examine the influence of parental support, person-organization fit, and internship quality on students' satisfaction with internship programs in the tourism industry; and (3) provide theoretical contributions and practical implications for improving internship experiences and preparing students for successful careers in the tourism industry.

Literature Reviews

Parental Support

Parental support is widely acknowledged as a critical factor influencing students' academic achievement, career aspirations, and well-being. In collectivist cultures such as Thailand, family plays a central role in shaping students' educational choices and professional development (Pimpa, 2004). Parental involvement can take many forms, including emotional encouragement, financial support, and guidance in decision-making, all of which contribute to students' motivation and resilience throughout their educational journey (Spera, 2005). The significance of parental support can be better understood through the Social Support Theory developed by House (1981), which suggests that people who receive strong support from their social networks, particularly family, experience lower stress, higher resilience, and greater overall satisfaction in their personal and professional lives. This theory categorizes parental support into four key dimensions: emotional support, which fosters motivation and confidence; instrumental support, such as financial aid and career resources; informational support, which guides decision-making; and appraisal support, which reinforces self-efficacy. In tourism education, these forms of support help students navigate high-stress environments, persist through challenges, and remain dedicated to their long-term career goals. Despite its significance, research on the specific impact of parental support within the tourism and hospitality industry, particularly in Thailand, remains limited. Anyhow, studies in China, a country with a similar collectivist culture, provide valuable insights. Zhang et al. (2017) developed a theoretical model highlighting the impact of parental factors on students' career choices in hospitality. Their study found that students who receive strong parental reinforcement exhibit higher career commitment, whereas those whose parents perceive the industry as unstable or low-status tend to have lower motivation. Similarly, Ho & Law (2021) pointed out that in Asian cultures, expectations from parents and family strongly impact education and career paths. They inserted that students whose parents positively perceive the hospitality industry are more likely to pursue a hospitality degree with confidence and long-term commitment. In the tourism and hospitality sector, where students often engage in demanding work environments and customer-facing roles, parental support fosters motivation and career persistence. By reinforcing students' confidence and resilience, parental encouragement helps them navigate internship challenges, adapt to industry demands, and develop a stronger commitment to their professional aspirations.

Based on the literature, this study hypothesizes that H1: Parental Support positively influences Internship Satisfaction.

Person-Organization Fit

Person-Organization Fit (PO Fit) refers to the alignment between an individual's values, personality, and goals, as well as the culture and objectives of an organization (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). This concept is particularly relevant in the tourism and hospitality industry, where positive experiences during internships can directly influence students' decision to continue pursuing a career in the industry. On the contrary, poor supervision, ineffective communication, and lack of confidence may indicate a misalignment between students' expectations and their internship experience, negatively impacting PO Fit (Ahlawat, 2024). Such mismatches can lead to frustration, disengagement, and, in some cases, the decision to leave the industry altogether (Othman et al., 2024). The Person-Environment Fit Theory (Lewin, 1951) provides a foundation for understanding PO fit, emphasizing that alignment between individual and organizational values fosters satisfaction, commitment, and retention. In tourism internships, this alignment is important as the industry demands employees who can engage with diverse customers, work in high-pressure environments, and adapt to specific cultural and organizational norms. Previous studies in hospitality management indicate that when interns experience high PO fit, they demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Ahlawat, 2024; Jufrizen et al., 2023; Cui et al., 2024). Moreover, in a study of hotel interns in Singapore, those who felt a mismatch between their values and company culture experienced higher turnover intentions after their internships (Song & Chathoth, 2011). Similarly, internships in customer-facing roles require students to adapt to the organization's service culture, policies, and operational demands, and a lack of alignment in these areas can lead to job dissatisfaction and disengagement (Gupta et al., 2012). These findings underscore the critical role of universities and employers in assessing PO Fit during internship placements. Internship programs can facilitate more meaningful learning experiences and enhance long-term commitment to the tourism industry by ensuring that students are matched with organizations that are aligned with their values and career goals. With the above literature review, the hypothesis is proposed as H2: Person-Organization Fit positively influences Internship Satisfaction.

Internship Quality

Internship quality is an important factor influencing students' overall experience and success in the tourism industry. According to Chen et al. (2011), internship quality is defined by several key elements, including the opportunity for skill development, the level of mentorship, and the alignment of tasks with students' career goals. These factors are essential in ensuring that students gain practical knowledge and build the confidence and resilience needed to succeed in their future careers. A well-structured internship can bridge academic learning and professional application, providing students with real-world experiences that enhance their understanding of the tourism industry (Waryszak, 1999). Quality internships also contribute to students' overall satisfaction and commitment to the field, as they offer a supportive environment that fosters professional growth. Conversely, internships that lack clear objectives, mentorship, or meaningful tasks can lead to dissatisfaction and decreased motivation (Zopiatis & Theocharous, 2013). Also, poor internship conditions and lack of support lead to student burnout, which can negatively impact career commitment (Yin et al., 2022). Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) (Kolb, 1984) reinforces the role of internship quality by explaining how students learn best through direct experience, reflection, and active experimentation. According to ELT, an effective internship enables students to progress through the four learning stages: concrete experience (performing tasks), reflective observation (analyzing experiences), abstract conceptualization (connecting theory to practice), and active experimentation (applying new insights). When internships facilitate this learning process, students develop stronger problem-solving abilities, professional confidence, and readiness for the industry, making internship quality a crucial factor in shaping their career

trajectories. Empirical studies highlight that structured internship programs incorporating mentorship and skill development lead to higher job satisfaction and retention rates in tourism and hospitality. For instance, a study on intern students in Japan found that well-structured internships help students develop clearer career expectations and professional growth (Sekiguchi et al., 2023). Additionally, Dhevabanchachai and Wattanacharoensil (2017) found that in-house internships shape students' expectations, experiences, and career direction in the hospitality sector, proving that structured training programs positively impact internship satisfaction. Moreover, Qu et al. (2021) explored the factors affecting hotel interns' satisfaction and career intention in China. They summarized that the influential factors were the internship achievements, curriculum requirements, hotel internship programming, and mentorship and assessment. These findings underscore the importance of internship programs that actively support students' intrinsic motivation and professional growth, ultimately fostering a more substantial commitment to the tourism industry.

Based on the above literature review, the hypothesis is proposed as H3: Internship Quality positively influences Internship Satisfaction.

Research Methodology

This research adopted a quantitative approach to exploring the factors influencing internship experiences, with a specific focus on parental support, person-organization fit, and internship quality. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire.

Population and Sample

The target population consisted of 349 Thai students enrolled in the hospitality and tourism bachelor program in Phuket Province between 2020 and 2022 who had completed an internship in the hotel industry. The sample size was determined to be 300, following the guidelines of Hair et al. (2012), which recommend a minimum of 300 samples for studies with seven or fewer constructs. The study employed purposive sampling, selecting participants based on their relevance to the research objectives. Purposive sampling was employed as participants were selected based on their enrollment in the tourism program, majoring in hotel business, and completion of an internship. Additionally, convenience sampling was adopted to reach participants who were readily accessible and willing to participate.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire distributed both in-person and online. The questionnaire comprised four sections: section 1, demographic information, and sections 2-4, question items related to the study variables. A five-point Likert rating scale was applied to measure the level of respondents' perceptions as follows: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

Before distributing the questionnaire for data collection, the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) and reliability tests were conducted to assess the quality of the question items. The IOC result was 0.96, higher than the criteria 0.5 (Turner & Carlson, 2003), and Cronbach's alpha was 0.799, greater than 0.70 (Kline, 2016), both acceptable reliability indicators.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were applied to analyze the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify the underlying dimensions of the constructs measured in sections 2 through 4 of the questionnaire. This analysis included evaluating factor loadings to determine how each variable relates to each factor, using eigenvalues greater than 1.0. Additionally, an orthogonal rotation, specifically the Varimax method, was applied within the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) technique to facilitate the interpretation of the factors. Before extracting components and rotating axes, the adequacy of the sample size and the suitability of the indicators were assessed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of

Sampling Adequacy was calculated and required to be at least 0.50, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity needed to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). These measures confirmed that the dataset was appropriate for factor analysis. The criteria for organizing or grouping components included the following: eigenvalues greater than 1.00, at least one indicator per component, factor loadings of each indicator at a minimum of 0.40, and a cumulative variance explained by all components of at least 50%. Following the factor extraction process, multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of parental support, person-organization fit, and internship quality on internship satisfaction. This analysis determined the extent to which these factors contribute to variations in students' internship experiences. The regression analysis assumptions, including linearity, normality, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity, were tested to ensure the validity of the results.

Research Results

Respondents' Profiles

Most respondents were female, comprising 190 individuals or 63.3% of the total, followed by male respondents at 74 individuals (24.7%) and LGBTQ+ respondents at 36 individuals (12%). Regarding the marital status of respondents' parents, most were married, representing 217 individuals (72.3%). This was followed by those with unspecified marital status (39 respondents, 13.1%), separated, divorced, or widowed parents (37 respondents, 12.3%), and single parents (7 respondents, 2.3%). Regarding study year, most respondents were 2nd-year students, accounting for 147 individuals (49%). This was followed by 1st-year students (75 respondents, 25%), 3rd-year students (57 respondents, 19%), and 4th-year students (21 respondents, 7%). The majority of respondents attended Phuket Rajabhat University, with 121 individuals (40.3%), followed by Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus, with 117 respondents (39%), and Phuket Vocational College, with 62 respondents (20.7%). Regarding the department where the internship was conducted, respondents were distributed across 11 departments. The Food and Beverage department had the highest representation, with 72 individuals (24%), followed by the Front Office (51 respondents, 17%), Finance and Accounting (42 respondents, 14%), Recreation (29 respondents, 9.7%), Administration (24 respondents, 8%), Housekeeping (23 respondents, 7.7%), Human Resources (19 respondents, 6.3%), Kitchen (17 respondents, 5.7%), Sales and Marketing (12 respondents, 4%), Spa and Wellness (6 respondents, 2%), and Information Technology (5 respondents, 1.6%). In terms of internship experience at the undergraduate level, the majority of respondents had 3-5 months of experience, with 145 individuals (48.3%). This was followed by those with less than 3 months of experience (77 respondents, 25.7%), 6-8 months of experience (59 respondents, 19.7%), and 9 months of experience (19 respondents, 6.3%).

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and agreeable levels of the constructs within three variables: Parental Support, Person-Organization Fit (PO Fit), and Internship Quality (IQ). The interpretation of each variable considers the mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, and corresponding agreeable levels. The findings highlight the strong influence of parental support while suggesting some opportunities for enhancing perceived organizational fit and improving the quality of internship experiences.

Table 1 Mean, Standard Deviation, and Interpretation of Related Variables

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Agreeable Level
Parental Support					
PS1	4.626	0.395	-.801	.033	Extremely Agreeable
PS2	4.623	0.408	-.806	-.180	Extremely Agreeable
PS3	4.196	0.461	-.632	2.014	Extremely Agreeable

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Agreeable Level
PS4	4.558	0.408	-.710	.157	Extremely Agreeable
Overall	4.500	0.302	-.628	1.227	Extremely Agreeable
Person-Organization Fit					
PO1	3.896	0.524	0.299	-0.170	Agreeable
PO2	4.011	0.543	-0.175	0.121	Agreeable
PO3	4.122	0.514	-0.383	0.285	Agreeable
Overall	4.010	0.454	0.034	0.115	Agreeable
Internship Quality					
IQ1	4.014	0.532	0.322	-0.333	Agreeable
IQ2	4.038	0.523	0.040	-0.223	Agreeable
IQ3	4.125	0.508	-0.022	-0.018	Agreeable
Overall	4.059	0.465	0.395	0.125	Agreeable

Note: PS1-4 refers to the items for Parental Support, PO1-3 refers to the items for Person-Organization Fit, IQ1-3 refers to Internship Quality.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

From the 35 questions included in the questionnaire, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) identified 9 components. For Parental Support (PS), 14 indicators were initially developed to measure the variable. However, the EFA revealed that 4 indicators could not be effectively grouped due to cross-loading issues, where the indicators exhibited significant loadings on multiple components. Consequently, 10 indicators remained and were categorized into three components based on the grouping criteria: verbal encouragement (PS1), emotional support (PS2), and career-related modeling (PS3). For Person-Organization Fit (PO), 10 indicators were initially developed. The EFA identified 2 indicators with cross-loading issues, preventing effective grouping. As a result, 8 indicators remained, which were categorized into three components based on the grouping criteria: work environment congruence (PO1), personality congruence (PO2), and value congruence (PO3). For Internship Quality (IQ), 11 indicators were developed to measure the variable. The EFA revealed that 5 indicators could not be effectively grouped due to cross-loading issues. Therefore, 6 indicators remained and were categorized into three components based on the grouping criteria: mentorship (IQ1), student benefits (IQ2), and internship program organization (IQ3).

Furthermore, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and reliability tests were conducted for key constructs to ensure the robustness of the measurement model, as shown in the following details. Construct Validity: The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure for sampling adequacy was 0.790 for Parental Support, 0.880 for Person-Organization Fit, and 0.851 for Internship Quality, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Kaiser, 1974). The Chi-square values for Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were 667.749 for Parental Support, 648.320 for Person-Organization Fit, and 480.604 for Internship Quality (all with a significance of 0.000), confirming that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Factor loadings for Parental Support ranged from 0.538 to 0.829, while PO Fit ranged from 0.539 to 0.868, and for Internship Quality, they ranged from 0.614 to 0.887, indicating strong convergent validity (Hair et al., 2012). Reliability Analysis: The Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs exceeded the 0.70 threshold, demonstrating acceptable internal consistency.

From Table 2, the analysis of factor loadings revealed that the variance was adequately extracted, with values ranging from 0.538 to 0.887, all falling within the acceptable cut-off point of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2012). For Parental Support, the three factors (PS1, PS2, PS3) together explain 57.47% of the variance in the Parental Support construct. All factors show good factor loadings and acceptable Cronbach's alpha values, indicating a reliable measurement of Parental Support. For Person-Organization Fit, the three factors (PO1, PO2, PO3) account for 66.04%

of the variance in PO Fit. The factor loadings are strong, and Cronbach's alpha values suggest acceptable internal consistency, confirming that these factors reliably measure the Person-Organization Fit construct. For Internship Quality, the three factors (IQ1, IQ2, IQ3) explain 73.04% of the variance in Internship Quality, with strong factor loadings and good reliability, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha values. These results suggest that these three factors effectively measure the quality of the internship.

Table 2 Results from Exploratory Factor Analysis

Factor	Eigen Value	Cum. % of Variance	Range of Factor Loadings	Number of Measurable Items	Cronbach's Alpha
PS1	2.343	23.434	0.600-0.829	4	0.769
PS2	1.823	18.233	0.560-0.784	3	0.789
PS3	1.587	15.867	0.538-0.773	4	0.701
PO1	1.863	23.284	0.628-0.796	3	0.705
PO2	1.829	22.860	0.539-0.810	3	0.758
PO3	1.592	19.900	0.674-0.868	4	0.814
IQ1	1.611	26.843	0.805-0.829	4	0.811
IQ2	1.490	24.836	0.802-0.804	3	0.838
IQ3	1.342	22.369	0.614-0.887	4	0.766

Note: PS1-3 refers to the items for Parental Support, PO1-3 refers to Person-Organization Fit, and IQ1-3 refers to Internship Quality.

Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of Parental Support (PS), Person-Organization Fit (PO), and Internship Quality (IQ) on Internship Satisfaction. The regression model was statistically significant (F-statistic = 189.952, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the predictors collectively explained 65.8% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = 0.658$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.655$).

Table 3 Regression Analysis Results

Predictor	B	Std. Error	β	T	p-value
Constant	0.764	0.197	-	3.888	0.000
Parental Support	0.112	0.044	0.092	2.533	0.012
Person-Organization Fit	0.270	0.043	0.307	6.295	0.000
Internship Quality	0.435	0.040	0.527	10.968	0.000
Model Summary					
R^2	0.658				
Adjusted R^2	0.655				
F-statistic	189.952				

As shown in Table 3, all three independent variables had a statistically significant effect on Internship Satisfaction. Among the predictors, Internship Quality (IQ) had the strongest influence ($B = 0.435$, $\beta = 0.527$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that well-structured and supportive internships contribute the most to positive outcomes. Person-Organization Fit (PO) also played a significant role ($B = 0.270$, $\beta = 0.307$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the importance of value alignment between students and organizations. Hence, the students who align with their internship organizations tend to have more positive experiences. Parental Support (PS) had a smaller but significant effect ($B = 0.112$, $\beta = 0.092$, $p = 0.012$), indicating that while parental involvement provides emotional, verbal, and career-related support, its direct impact on

internship experiences is relatively lower than other factors. The adjusted R^2 value of 65% suggests that the model explains a substantial proportion of the variance in Internship Satisfaction, confirming the robustness of the theoretical framework.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study explored the key dimensions of parental support, person-organization fit, and internship quality and their influence on students' internship satisfaction in the tourism industry. Using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), the study identified distinct dimensions within these constructs, while Regression Analysis examined their predictive effects on internship satisfaction. The findings align with previous research and underscore the necessity of fostering strong parental encouragement, internship-organizational alignment, and structured learning environments to maximize the benefits of internship programs, which can be discussed in detail below.

Firstly, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to ensure construct validity, revealing a clear factor structure with nine extracted components with factor loadings ranging from 0.538 to 0.887. Eigenvalues were above 1.0, explaining a cumulative variance above 60%, which supports the factor structure. The cumulative variance explained was 21.96% average, demonstrating strong explanatory power. Moreover, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all constructs ranged from 0.701 to 0.838, indicating acceptable to high internal consistency. These results suggest that the measurement model is reliable and valid. For example, students rated statements such as "My parents provide financial support during my internship" (PS factor) and "My internship organization's culture aligns with my values" (PO Fit factor) highly, confirming the significance of these constructs. Also, the findings validate the theoretical framework, reinforcing the distinctiveness of Parental Support, Person-Organization Fit, and Internship Quality as predictors of Internship Satisfaction. Further, multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the direct effects of Parental Support, PO Fit, and Internship Quality on Internship Satisfaction.

Table 4 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Result
H1: Parental Support → Internship Satisfaction	Supported ($\beta = 0.092$, $P < 0.05$)
H2: PO Fit → Internship Satisfaction	Supported ($\beta = 0.307$, $P < 0.001$)
H3: Internship Quality → Internship Satisfaction	Supported ($\beta = 0.527$, $P < 0.001$)

From Table 4, the summary can be explained as follows.

H1: Parental Support positively influences Internship Satisfaction → Supported. The results indicate that Parental Support significantly positively affects Internship Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.092$, $p < 0.05$). This finding aligns with Social Support Theory, which suggests family encouragement provides emotional and career-related resources that help students cope with internship challenges. In addition, Parental support was identified as a crucial factor in students' success. High scores in the latent constructs, which include emotional support, verbal encouragement, and career-related modeling, suggest that parents' involvement helps students feel more confident and motivated throughout their academic and professional journeys. In Thai culture, where family ties are particularly strong, this support seems to be an important source of encouragement for students. A participant mentioned, "My parents always encouraged me to pursue my internship, and their advice made me feel supported during difficult times." These findings align with previous studies (Zhang et al., 2017; Ho & Law, 2021), confirming that parental involvement provides an emotional and practical foundation for student internship success. However, the effect size is smaller than Internship Quality and

Person-Organization Fit, indicating that while parental influence is beneficial, workplace conditions play a more dominant role in shaping student experiences.

H2: Person-Organization Fit positively influences Internship Satisfaction → Supported. The significant impact of Person-Organization Fit ($\beta = 0.307$, $p < 0.001$) suggests that students who perceive alignment between their values and the organization's culture experience higher internship satisfaction. This finding supports Person-Environment Fit Theory, which emphasizes that congruence between an individual and their work environment fosters job satisfaction and commitment (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Such alignment creates a supportive workplace where interns feel valued, motivated, and empowered to contribute, ultimately enhancing their internship experiences. However, the slightly lower ratings for the values alignment item (PO1) suggest that some students may feel their host organizations do not fully match their values, indicating an area for improvement. Additionally, this result aligns with previous studies (Ahlawat, 2024; Jufrizen et al., 2023; Cui et al., 2024; Sekiguchi et al., 2023) that organizational alignment influences job satisfaction and career choices in the tourism and hospitality sector and when interns feel the organization meets their needs, they perceive it as a more attractive and desirable workplace. This further reinforces the idea that PO Fit shapes internship experiences. Given these findings, internship programs should emphasize improving pre-internship screening and matching processes to ensure students are placed in organizations where they can professionally and personally thrive. Strengthening PO Fit in internship placements is essential, as a strong match between students and organizations leads to more meaningful and impactful internship experiences.

H3: Internship Quality positively influences Internship Satisfaction → Strongest Predictor. Internship Quality emerged as the strongest predictor of students' satisfaction with their internship experiences ($\beta = 0.527$, $p < 0.001$), emphasizing the significance of well-structured programs in shaping students' overall experiences. This suggests that internships offering mentorship, skill development, and meaningful work assignments contribute significantly to student engagement, learning, and professional growth. In contrast, internships lacking structure, guidance, or meaningful tasks may lead to dissatisfaction, disengagement, and a weaker connection to the industry. These findings strongly support Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984), which posits that hands-on, structured learning opportunities are essential for professional development. Specifically, internships facilitating the four learning stages, concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation, provide students with deeper insights into industry operations and career expectations. For instance, when students are assigned real-world responsibilities, such as guest interaction in a hotel or event coordination in a tourism firm, they gain practical skills and develop confidence in their ability to navigate workplace challenges. Conversely, if students are assigned menial or repetitive tasks without supervision or feedback, their learning remains superficial, limiting the internship's effectiveness. The results align with previous research highlighting the importance of Internship Quality in shaping students' satisfaction with their internship experiences and professional development (Qu et al., 2021; Sekiguchi et al., 2023; Dhevabanchachai & Wattanacharoensil, 2017), underscoring that internship quality directly influences students' future career decisions and the importance of structured internships that integrate mentorship, skill development, and alignment with academic curriculum requirements. Moreover, the high β coefficient (0.527) indicates that internship quality is not only one of several contributing factors but a primary driver of internship satisfaction. This underscores the necessity for universities and industry partners to ensure that internships are structured, well-supervised, and aligned with students' career goals to maximize their educational and professional impact. Without adequate support and meaningful engagement, internships risk becoming passive learning experiences rather than transformative ones, which

could discourage students from pursuing long-term careers in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Theoretical Contributions and Practical Implications

This study provides theoretical contributions and practical implications for improving students' internship experiences in the tourism industry. By examining the roles of Parental Support, Person-Organization Fit, and Internship Quality, this research offers a new comprehension of the factors influencing students' internship satisfaction.

For theoretical contributions, this study advances experiential learning theory by reinforcing that workplace conditions do not solely determine internship satisfaction but are also influenced by external support mechanisms. Identifying Internship Quality as a significant factor emphasizes the necessity of well-structured, engaging internship programs that facilitate skill acquisition and professional growth. This aligns with prior research on internship effectiveness while adding empirical support within the context of Thai tourism students in Phuket. At this prominent tourism destination, internship opportunities are abundant yet vary in quality. Besides, this study contributes to social support theory by emphasizing the role of Parental Support in shaping students' internship experiences. Unlike previous studies that predominantly focus on organizational factors (e.g., mentorship and supervisor relationships), this research highlights the psychosocial dimension of internships, demonstrating that parental emotional, verbal, and career-related support is vital for enhancing students' confidence, motivation, and overall satisfaction. This finding extends the literature on internship outcomes by incorporating family influences, which are often overlooked in internship research. Furthermore, the study strengthens the application of person-organization fit theory in the context of internships. The results confirm that students who perceive a strong alignment between their values and the organizational culture of their companies report higher internship satisfaction. This suggests that internship satisfaction is a function of training quality and how well students integrate into the work environment.

For practical implications, the study offers actionable recommendations for key stakeholders, including universities, industry practitioners, parents, and families, to enhance students' internship experiences. Firstly, the universities should develop pre-internship training programs that help students identify organizations that align with their career goals and personal values. Strengthening academic-industry partnerships can ensure that internship programs provide structured learning experiences and skill-building work assignments. Additionally, mentorship programs, where faculty members guide students in managing internship expectations and challenges, can further enhance the effectiveness of internships. Secondly, industry practitioners can improve internship quality by offering structured training, mentorship, and opportunities for skill development. Creating an inclusive and engaging workplace culture where interns feel valued and engaged can promote a better person-organization fit. Moreover, implementing feedback mechanisms to assess interns' experiences and improve future internship programs can contribute to developing a more skilled and committed future workforce. Finally, parents and families serve as an important support system for students during their internships. Emotional reassurance, career guidance, and verbal encouragement can help students cope with stress and uncertainties. Encouraging career discussions and industry exposure before internships can help students set realistic expectations. In addition, advocating for a balance between academic preparation and practical work experiences ensures that students develop theoretical knowledge and professional skills.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing students' internship experiences in the tourism industry, several limitations should be acknowledged and directions for future research. First, based on the research findings, the factor analysis results indicate that some constructs, such as Parental Support (PS3) and Person-Organization Fit (PO1), have

relatively lower factor loadings, suggesting potential measurement limitations. Future studies should refine these measurement scales by incorporating additional validation processes or alternative constructs to improve reliability and robustness. Second, the study employs a quantitative survey method, which helps identify statistical relationships and relies on student self-reported data. Future studies could incorporate employer or faculty evaluations of student internship performance to triangulate findings and strengthen validity. Third, the study focuses on tourism students in Phuket Province, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions in Thailand or different academic disciplines. Future research may expand the geographical scope to include students from various provinces or compare results across different tourism destinations to gain a broader understanding of internship experiences.

In conclusion, this study highlights the crucial role of parental support, person-organization fit, and internship quality in shaping Thai tourism students' internship experiences and future careers. The results show that students who feel supported by their parents, aligned with their internship organization's culture, and provided with quality experiences are likelier to have positive internship outcomes and more substantial career commitments. The findings suggest that universities, tourism organizations, and parents must work together to create an environment that nurtures these factors. Theoretically, the study expands the existing body of knowledge by emphasizing the role of parental support in career development, which has often been overlooked in previous research. The results reinforce social support theory, demonstrating that emotional, verbal, and career-related support from parents significantly influences students' ability to navigate the challenges of internships. Furthermore, the study confirms the importance of Person-Organization Fit and Internship Quality in creating positive internship experiences, aligning with experiential learning theories. Besides, from a practical perspective, the findings point out key areas where universities, industry practitioners, and families can take action to improve internship outcomes. Universities can enhance pre-internship training programs to help students identify organizations that align with their career goals. At the same time, industry practitioners should focus on providing structured training, mentorship, and meaningful work assignments to increase internship quality. Parents and families also play a crucial role by offering emotional, verbal, and career-related support to help students manage stress and uncertainties during their internships. Despite these contributions, the study has several limitations. First, the research focuses exclusively on tourism students in Phuket, limiting the findings' generalizability. Future studies should expand the sample to include students from different regions or countries to explore cross-cultural variations. Additionally, while this study employs Exploratory Factor Analysis and regression analysis, future research could utilize mixed-method approaches, incorporating qualitative insights to gain a deeper understanding of students' internship experiences.

References

- Ahlawat, A. (2024). Challenges for Student Satisfaction of Internship Program in Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Gurugram, Haryana-A Literature Review. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(1), 1561-1569.
- Chen, T., Shen, C., & Gosling, M. (2011). Factors influencing students' internship satisfaction: Evidence from hospitality programs. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*, 23(1), 45-56.
- Cui, Y., Huang, F., Zhao, Z., & Gao, F. (2024). Does fit matter? The impact of person-environment fit and internship quality on professional competence of TVET students: evidence from a large-scale competence assessment in China. *Education + Training*, 66(1), 89-106.
- Dawis, R. (2002). Person-environment correspondence theory. In D. Brown. (ed.). *Career choice and development* (pp. 427-464). California: Jossey-Bass.

- Dhevabanchachai, N., & Wattanacharoensil, W. (2017). Students' expectations, experiences, and career direction after in-house internship: the pedagogical role of the hotel training center in Thailand. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 17(2), 118-134.
- Giousmpasoglou, C., & Marinakou, E. (2021). Hotel internships and student satisfaction as key determinant to career intention. *Journal of Tourism Research*, 25, 42-67.
- Goh, E., & Lee, C. (2018). A workforce to be reckoned with: The emerging pivotal Generation Z hospitality workforce. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 73, 20-28.
- Gupta, N., Shaw, J., & Zajac, E. (2012). Person-organization fit and employee attitudes: The moderating role of work group commitment. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 33(6), 934-956.
- Hair, J., Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C., & Mena, J. (2012). An assessment of the use of partial least squares structural equation modeling in marketing research. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 40(3), 414-433.
- Ho, G., & Law, R. (2021). How parents and friends influence student preference in selecting a Bachelor's degree in Hotel and Tourism Management in Hong Kong. *ASEAN Journal on Hospitality and Tourism*, 19(3), 185-199.
- House, J. (1981). *Work stress and social support*. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.
- Hussien, F., & Lopa, M. (2018). The determinants of student satisfaction with internship programs in the hospitality industry: A case study in the USA. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 17(4), 502-527.
- Jufrizen, J., Khair, H., Siregar, A., & Hawariyuni, W. (2023). Person-Organization Fit and Employee Performance: Mediation Role Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment. *Jurnal Organisasi dan Manajemen*, 19(2), 360-378.
- Kaiser, H. (1974). An index of factorial simplicity. *Psychometrika*, 39(1), 31-36.
- Kline, R. (2016). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. 4th ed. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Kristof, A. (1996). Person-organization fit: An integrative review of its conceptualizations, measurement, and implications. *Personnel Psychology*, 49(1), 1-49.
- Kristof-Brown, A., Zimmerman, R., & Johnson, E. (2005). Consequences of individual's fit at work: A meta-analysis of person-job, person-organization, person-group, and person-supervisor fit. *Personnel Psychology*, 58(2), 281-342.
- Lewin, K. (1951). *Field Theory in Social Science*. New York: Harper.
- Murphy, D. (2021). *The Impact of Perceived Person-Organization Fit, Internship Satisfaction, and Personality Traits on Commitment to Teaching and Intention to Quit of Pre-Service Teacher Interns*. Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, Florida State University.
- Othman, A., Othman, N., Rashid, W., Saihani, S., Abidin, Z., Rashid, M., Rahman, M., & Kadir, M. (2024). The Mismatch between Individual Values and Organizational Values among Different Generations in the Workplace. *Information Management and Business Review*, 16(3(I)S), 211-218.
- Pimpa, N. (2004). The Relationship between Thai Students' Choices of International Education and Their Families. *International Education Journal*, 5(3), 352-359.
- Qu, H., Leung, X., Huang, S., & He, J. (2021). Factors affecting hotel interns' satisfaction with internship experience and career intention in China. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 28, 100311.
- Robinson, R., Ruhanen, L., & Breakey, N. (2016). Tourism and hospitality internships: influences on student career aspirations. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 19(6), 513-527.

- Sekiguchi, T., Mitate, Y., & Yang, Y. (2023). Internship experience and organizational attractiveness: a realistic job fit perspective. *Journal of Career Development*, 50(2), 353-371.
- Seyitoğlu, F., & Yirik, S. (2015). Internship Satisfaction of Students of Hospitality and Impact of Internship on the Professional Development and Industrial Perception. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 20(sup1), 1414-1429.
- Song, Z., & Chathoth, P. (2011). Intern newcomers' global self-esteem, overall job satisfaction, and choice intention: Person-organization fit as a mediator. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(1), 119-128.
- Spera, C. (2005). A review of the relationship among parenting practices, parenting styles, and adolescent school achievement. *Educational Psychology Review*, 17(2), 125-146.
- Tourism Authority of Thailand. (2023). *Annual tourism report 2023*. Retrieved from www.tat.or.th/en/about-tat/annual-report.
- Turner, R., & Carlson, L. (2003). Indexes of items-objective congruence for multidimensional items. *International Journal of Testing*, 3(2), 163-171.
- Wang, Y., Chiang, M., & Lee, Y. (2014). The relationships amongst the intern anxiety, internship outcomes, and career commitment of hospitality college students. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 15(1), 86-93.
- Waryszak, R. (1999). Students' Expectations from Their Cooperative Education Placements in the Hospitality Industry: An International Perspective. *Education + Training*, 41, 33-40.
- Wong, S., & Liu, G. (2010). Will parental influences affect career choice? Evidence from hospitality and tourism management students in China. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 22(1), 82-102.
- Yin, X., Yang, Y., Kim, H., & Zhang, Y. (2022). Examining the job burnout of Chinese hospitality management students in internships via the transactional model. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 973493.
- Zhang, H., Rashid, B., & Mohammed, A. (2017). A theoretical model of parental factors and students' career decisions to join the hospitality industry in China. *Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 19(1), 133-141.
- Zopiatis, A., & Theocharous, A. (2013). Revisiting hospitality internship practices: A holistic investigation. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 13, 33-46.

Data Availability Statement: The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted without any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. This is a fully open-access article distributed under the terms of the Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).