

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The Hospitality Management students of Universitas Pelita Harapan Medan have been given the chance to experience the real world of the hospitality industry through the university's internship program which is mandatory for students to participate in as a requirement for them to attain their degree. Internship is a way for students to get to know the practical side of their majors, and to prepare them for their future career in their respective fields after university. Especially in the hospitality industry, guest satisfaction is the most prioritized and fought for. However, it turns out that internships do not always provide a pleasant experience for trainees.

With this research this paper then analyzes the level of satisfaction in the interns or trainees instead of the guests. In an internship period, what has been evaluated all this time was the intern's knowledge gained from the internship experience and with it, a score evaluation was given to the intern by their supervisors. Regardless of the knowledge and experience gained by the interns, it has never been known whether these knowledge and experiences are enough or worthwhile for the interns, whether they fulfill the intern's expectations of their internship. And so, there is a need to look at the factors that contribute to the intern's satisfaction working in a hotel. Which aspect of the internship has the most impact to the intern's level of satisfaction and which has the least impact.

According to Mendoza (2022) as quoted from Salatan (2016), a lot of intern students have doubts regarding pursuing their future careers in the industry due to a dissatisfying internship experience. Students feel as though there is a lack of training and development opportunities as the work that they are assigned to do were usually repetitive and monotonous with limited responsibility in addition to the limited time of the internship. The quality of the internship experience has also been regarded as dissatisfying as students feel like their employers or supervisors simply do not give enough attention to ensuring that the interns are properly learning and helping them to be potential employees, rather they care for only that the interns are there to assist with their labor shortage problem.

A study done by Hussein & Lopa (2018) on students' satisfaction with the internship program in the hospitality industry in the United States discovered that feedback, autonomy, university supervisor support, academic preparedness, flexible working hours, student self-initiatives, location, and skill variety are significant factors that affect internship satisfaction. Meanwhile, findings from Marinakou & Giousmpasoglou's (2021) study of hotel internship satisfaction as an important determinant towards career intention of students conducting internships in hotels in Greece and several other countries in the EU stated that working conditions and learning experience are the most important factors that determine internship satisfaction. Internship dissatisfaction is generally caused by long working hours, poor pay and the lack of coordination or supervision, however internship satisfaction is stated to be achieved by the students' acknowledgement that the

internship allows themselves to connect what they have learned theoretically to the real world.

Universitas Pelita Harapan (UPH) is one of the universities that has a campus in the city of Medan. UPH has several study programs, one of which is hospitality management. To equip its graduates with skill and abilities in the hospitality sector, UPH requires its students to do internships at companies. Internships can be done in semester 6 during their third year starting the first month of the year. The minimum duration of the internship would be 4 months; however, it varies depending on the agreement between the student intern and the company.

Research by Bao and Fang (2008), as quoted by Salatan (2016), investigated the level of satisfaction of students interning in the hospitality and tourism industry and the underlying factors behind the level of satisfaction. The research concluded that the overall satisfaction levels were low and that the most prominent factor discovered to have influenced the students' overall satisfaction towards their internship experience is the "Job itself" factor which includes the following items: "opportunity for work rotation", "nature of the job you perform", "interesting and challenging work" and "work environment. This finding indicates that it is important for internship programs to provide autonomy and job rotation for interns so that students be more motivated and challenged, hence increasing their satisfaction towards their internship experience. These findings of the underlying factors behind the satisfaction levels are like the factors of the job characteristics model brought forward by Hackman & Oldham (1974), wherein five job

characteristics namely “skill variety”, “task identity”, “task significance”, “autonomy” and “feedback” are the main factors influencing job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is a matter that concerns organizations a lot these days as it is one of the main indicators of effective organizational performance. Higher job satisfaction reaps higher work efficiency and productivity. Loyalty of employees towards the organization will be high and will then decrease the risk of high turnover (Lee et al., 2016 as cited in Bourne, 2023). Hence, it is imperative for job satisfaction and the factors that lead to fulfilling job satisfaction to be studied, and in this case of job satisfaction in interns, another advantage studying and fulfilling job satisfaction will produce is that the organization earns a potential employee recruit due to that there is a higher chance that the interns are willing to pursue their future careers in the organization if they are highly satisfied with their jobs there. Especially since many hospitality and tourism students eventually lose interest in pursuing their careers in the same industry because of a dissatisfying internship experience, research needs to be done on their satisfaction levels with their internship experience and the factors that may contribute to it to prevent this from happening (Mendoza, 2022).

Employee’s job satisfaction in the workplace has widely been researched on and is also the subject of research of the job characteristics model, however intern’s or apprentice’s job satisfaction has not been widely researched on, especially in developing countries such as Indonesia. (Anjum, 2020). Therefore, this study contributes to adding to the existing knowledge accumulated so far regarding internship satisfaction as well as the job characteristics model. Fulfilling the job

characteristics gives rise to higher motivation, better work outcomes and higher job satisfaction. Therefore, it is important that research is done on the job characteristics model so that organizations can better design their jobs to ensure that their workers are satisfied with the job they offer (Adiarani, 2019). By integrating the job characteristics, the tasks of employees as well as interns would be more varied, interesting, and challenging which will lead to higher job satisfaction (Anthia, 2020).

The job characteristics model alongside the dispositional theory (Staw and Ross, 1985) have received the most empirical support so far. (Hassard et al., 2018) The job characteristics model has a definitive set of variables. On the contrary, the dispositional approach has no definitive set of variables, as seen in the various research using the theory done with different sets of variables. One research by Levin & Stokes (1989), as quoted by Hassard et al. (2018), studies the influence of negative affectivity and task design towards job satisfaction. Another research by Judge et al. (2002) as quoted by Hassard et al. (2018) analyzes the relationship between the more notable Five Factor Model theory of personality or disposition with job satisfaction, the variables being neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Due to this, the researcher has opted to use the job characteristics model as it has received the most empirical support and has a definitive set of variables. The researcher also aims to focus on aspects of the job or work that has been done themselves and their impact towards internship satisfaction instead of focusing on individual dispositions or personalities of the interns.

## **1.2 Problem Limitation**

1. The study is limited to the internship experience of the students majoring in Hospitality Management in UPH Medan.
2. The study is limited to the internship done by the students within the first half of 2023.

## **1.3 Problem Formulation**

The problems formulated with this study are:

1. What is the effect of skill variety on internship satisfaction?
2. What is the effect of task significance on internship satisfaction?
3. What is the effect of autonomy on internship satisfaction?
4. What is the effect of feedback on internship satisfaction?
5. What is the effect of skill variety, task significance, autonomy, and feedback simultaneously on internship satisfaction?

## **1.4 Objective of the Research**

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To determine the effect of skill variety on internship satisfaction.
2. To determine the effect of task significance on internship satisfaction.
3. To determine the effect of autonomy on internship satisfaction.
4. To determine the effect of feedback on internship satisfaction.

5. To determine the effect of skill variety, task significance, autonomy, and feedback simultaneously on internship satisfaction.

## **1.5 Benefit of the Research**

### **1.5.1 Theoretical Benefit**

This study contributes to providing further empirical research evidence of the Job Characteristics Model by Hackman and Oldman which in turn could be a means to test the model's validity. This would then pose as a resource for future researchers who could do further research on the topic. The study also contributes to the development of management theories, regarding job satisfaction theories in particular. This could help academic institutions to determine which theories to best educate their students on.

### **1.5.2 Practical Benefit**

This study benefits both Universitas Pelita Harapan Medan Campus and the internship establishment in way that both would gain insights of what pushes their interns to gain intern satisfaction while doing their internship. The university could use this information to better provide resources for their students. The internship establishment or internship host will be aware of what satisfies the interns who intern with them and adjust aspects of the job to fulfill these characteristics or qualities that would lead to satisfaction for both their interns as well as their employees.