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Revising a Summer Internship Course using Student Evaluations

I. Introduction

Many academic programs in recreation, tourism, and hospitality utilize the internship experience as an opportunity for students to gain practical experience and to explore possible career paths. In fact, the accreditation standards put forth by the Council for Accreditation in Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Related Professions (COAPRT) require a 400-hour comprehensive internship for all students graduating from COAPRT-accredited programs (COAPRT, 2013). Internships are an important part of the curriculum because they give students the opportunity to network with professionals; develop professionalism; demonstrate, refine, and acquire competencies; prepare to secure an entry-level position upon graduation; and bridge the gap between theory and practice (Beggs & Hurd, 2010).

This study was based on existing curriculum requirements in an accredited recreation and leisure studies program at a public university in upstate New York. In this program, students are required to complete a 200-hour summer internship experience as a prerequisite to the 400-hour, semester-long internship. Students may have a paid or unpaid internship experience. The summer internship course is designed to provide students with an early work experience so that they can begin the process of applying concepts from the classroom to a professional setting. The course learning outcomes relate to knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) such as leadership, programming, time management, ethics and professionalism, professional development, and goal-setting. Achievement of these learning outcomes is dependent upon successful completion of course assignments as well as effective guidance from the on-site internship supervisor. Course assignments include: an orientation statement to be completed at the beginning of the internship; a statement of goals and objectives; a daily journal; mid-point and final performance evaluations from the internship supervisor; and a reflective paper articulating personal and professional growth and an assessment of whether stated goals were accomplished.

Students also complete a course evaluation at the end of their summer internship. The 30-item, closed-ended evaluation comprises three areas: 4 items about the academic experience (e.g., syllabus, faculty supervisor, assignments), 12 items about the sponsoring agency (e.g., supervisor's communication and assistance), and a 14-item self-appraisal (self-assessment of improvements in professionalism, programming skills, leadership, and other areas). In the past, student course evaluations have only been used informally (e.g., to guide discussion during post-internship exit interviews).

The summer internship experience examined in this study has been a required course in the program since 1984, but it has never been significantly revamped, nor has it ever been objectively assessed. In this study, the course evaluations from students who completed their summer internships in 2012 were objectively examined. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the summer internship experience from the students' perspective to determine whether they achieved course learning outcomes.

The theoretical framework that served as the foundation for this study was social exchange theory. Barcelona and Bocarro (2004) explained that “[s]ocial exchange theory provides a useful theoretical perspective in that it has been used to explain how groups and organizations come together to solve a problem” (p. 5). The collaboration between faculty and practitioners is essential for equipping students with the skills they need to handle the issues they will encounter as future leaders. Practitioners provide guidance as to which skills are most important (as well as which need the most improvement), and faculty are responsible for

reinforcing these skills in the classroom and through structured assignments during the internship.

II. Literature Review

The Value of an Internship Experience

Internships have become the standard practice in a variety of academic disciplines. Specific to the field of recreation, parks, and tourism, internships provide students with hands-on opportunities to practice skills learned in the classroom. A positive internship experience can offer validation of a career choice that matches academic and personal interests. Alternatively, internships can provide students with the feedback that perhaps they should consider a different career path. There are many benefits students achieve when completing an internship, such as the transfer of knowledge into professional competencies, the development of strong teamwork skills balanced with the growth of individual responsibility, expansion of professional networks, and establishing their reputation as capable professionals (Kauffman, 2010).

Internships can be described as the transition phase into one's first full-time career role (Jewell, 2001). In a study involving preferences of recreation professionals in a hiring position of entry-level professionals, a majority indicated that the candidate's internship site affected their hiring decision (Ross & Zabriskie, 2001). This finding underscores the value of the internship experience for securing future employment.

In another study, Tse (2010) conducted a content analysis of students' post-internship written evaluations to determine what they found to be most important about their internship experiences. Tse identified nine themes, including students' working relationships with colleagues, personal growth, experience with leadership, and relevance of internship to academic program and future career, among others. Tse concludes by stating the "nine themes could be used by hospitality internship organizations to better prepare them to enhance the student work experience they provide" (pp. 260-261). Students in Tse's study found internships to be a worthwhile component of their hospitality training.

The internship experience can also be valuable to the supervisor and the sponsoring agency. Many employers consider internship experience in the hiring process (Ross & Zabriskie, 2001), and may look to their own interns as the best potential candidates for full-time positions.

The Role of Internship Supervisors

The role of an internship supervisor can be rewarding. Supervisors often enjoy managing student interns as many of them began their own professional careers as interns themselves. Internship supervision is an opportunity to pass on knowledge, to build the profession, and to help keep alive a philosophy thought to be important (Knemeyer & Murphy, 2002).

One advantage to hiring interns is that staff members can recognize and upgrade their own skills while orienting and training new interns. This can provide a healthy source of challenge for current staff. Other benefits include strengthening partnerships between educational institutions and the agency; and contributing to good community relations and workforce development (Kauffman, 2010).

On the other hand, some supervisors may view intern supervision as an inconvenience since students require more time, detailed directions, regular one-on-one meetings, and required academic paperwork on student progress (Knemeyer & Murphy, 2002).

Theoretical Framework

Social exchange theory was chosen as the theoretical framework for this study, as it explains the nature of the relationship between universities and recreation, tourism, and hospitality agencies that hire student interns. The primary characteristic of exchange theory is reciprocity. According to Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), “reciprocity or repayment in kind is probably the best known exchange rule” (p. 875). Applying this rule to the context of internships, universities and agencies have developed reciprocal relationships over the years. Agencies provide high-quality internship opportunities, and in exchange, universities provide well-prepared students in search of practical learning experiences. Implicit in a reciprocal relationship is the element of interdependence, or a bidirectional transaction “which involves mutual and complementary relationships” (Cropanzano & Mitchell, p. 876). In his early work on social exchange, Blau (1964) also identified interdependence between the two parties as a necessary condition for exchange. Or, as explained by Barcelona and Bocarro, “the exchange must be oriented toward ends that can only be achieved through interactions with other individuals or groups” (p. 5). In the case of student internships, the two involved parties are universities and agencies. If faculty want students to gain practical experience, then they must maintain relationships with agencies who can provide those opportunities. If agencies want high-quality candidates to apply for their vacant positions, then they must rely on universities to train well-prepared students.

Applying social exchange theory’s defining characteristic of reciprocity, it can be argued that both faculty and practitioners need to understand students’ perceptions of the internship experience, and that this shared understanding can lead to benefits for both parties. Therefore, this study sought to answer the following two research questions:

1. “In what KSA areas do students perceive the greatest improvements as a result of the summer internship experience?” To answer this question, measures of central tendency, including mean, median, and mode scores and standard deviations, were calculated for each self-appraisal item on students’ evaluations of the summer internship course.
2. “Is there a correlation between self-appraisal scores and students’ evaluations of their sponsoring agency?” In other words, did students who reported higher self-appraisal scores also rate their on-site supervisor more favorably? To answer this question, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted.

III. Methodology

Participant Recruitment

All students ($n = 68$) completing summer internships in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at a public university in upstate New York were invited to participate in this study via email during the summer of 2012. In this specific department, students select one of three areas of concentration for their studies: Recreation Management, Tourism Management, or Therapeutic Recreation.

The recruitment email contained a brief description of the purpose of the study. Students were asked to grant consent for their course evaluations to be used in data analysis. An informed consent form was attached to the email, and students who wished to participate were asked to print a hard copy of the form, sign it, and return it by mail to their faculty internship supervisor. In the body of the email, the researchers reiterated to students that participation in the study was voluntary and that neither students’ names nor other identifying information would be linked to

their responses. Moreover, they were assured that their internship grades would not be affected by their decision to participate.

A follow-up recruitment email was sent to students at the start of the fall semester, providing students the opportunity to submit their signed informed consent forms in person once they were back on campus.

Procedures

All students were asked to complete a course evaluation at the end of their 200-hour summer internship. This course evaluation form is not a standard form used by the institution in all courses; rather, it was developed by the department specifically for the summer internship course. Using a five-point scale, with a score of 1 corresponding to the response option “strongly disagree” and a score of 5 corresponding to the response option “strongly agree,” students responded to evaluation items divided into three sections: the academic experience, the sponsoring agency, and a self-appraisal. (See Table 1 for a complete listing of course evaluation items.) These course evaluations were submitted by mail to faculty internship supervisors along with other internship course assignments. Only those course evaluations completed by students who signed and returned the informed consent form were included in the data set.

Table 1: Items Included in Summer Internship Course Evaluation

Section 1: Regarding the College
1. <i>The course syllabus clearly defined the expectations and requirements of the course</i>
2. <i>The orientation meeting adequately addressed the placement process</i>
3. <i>The college supervisor of my course section provided assistance when needed</i>
4. <i>Assignments were relevant to providing a meaningful experiential experience</i>
Section 2: Regarding the Sponsoring Agency
1. <i>The interview was well conducted</i>
2. <i>The result of the interview was communicated in a timely manner</i>
3. <i>Supervisor provided guidance in response to resolving issues and challenges</i>
4. <i>Supervisor effectively communicated with me in a professional manner</i>
5. <i>Supervisor displayed interest in my professional development</i>
6. <i>Supervisor provided praise and criticism as appropriate</i>
7. <i>Supervisor showed fairness in evaluating my performance</i>
8. <i>I was able to learn from my supervisor based upon his/her display of knowledge and skills</i>
9. <i>Supervisor assisted in the development of my goals and objectives</i>
10. <i>My supervisor assisted in my professional development</i>
11. <i>I would recommend this agency to other students</i>
12. <i>I was empowered to make decisions for myself</i>
Section 3: Student Self-Appraisal
1. <i>I increased my understanding of professionalism & the responsibilities of being a professional</i>
2. <i>I improved my time management skills</i>
3. <i>I now feel more confident in my abilities as a leader</i>
4. <i>The overall experience has helped to shape my future career goals</i>
5. <i>I improved my recreation programming skills</i>
6. <i>I enhanced my professional philosophy of recreation and leisure</i>
7. <i>I enhanced my personal philosophy of recreation and leisure</i>
8. <i>I was motivated to work beyond minimum requirements</i>
9. <i>I increased my understanding of professional ethics</i>
10. <i>I learned new problem-solving techniques</i>
11. <i>I was able to apply programming principles learned in REL 308</i>
12. <i>I increased my ability to develop meaningful and accomplishable goals & objectives</i>
13. <i>I increased my understanding of the leisure delivery service system</i>
14. <i>I improved my writing skills</i>

IV. Results

Of the 68 students enrolled in the internship course, 29 students agreed to participate in the study, for a response rate of 42.6%. Of the participants, 69.0% ($n = 20$) were female and 31.0% ($n = 9$) were male. Within the sample, 62.1% ($n = 18$) completed their internships at recreation management sites (e.g., day and overnight camps, YMCAs, municipal recreation departments), 31.0% ($n = 9$) completed their internships at tourism management sites (e.g., country clubs, amusement parks, hotels, event planning companies), and 6.9% ($n = 2$) students completed their internships at therapeutic recreation sites (e.g., Special Olympics, summer camp for children with critical illnesses).

To answer the primary research question, “In what KSA areas do students perceive the greatest improvements as a result of the summer internship experience?”, measures of central tendency were calculated for each self-appraisal item, including mean, median, mode, and standard deviation. (See Table 2 for complete results.) The four items with the highest mean scores were, “I increased my understanding of professionalism & the responsibilities of being a professional” ($\bar{x} = 4.69$, $SD = 0.613$), “I improved my time management skills” ($\bar{x} = 4.66$, $SD = 0.619$), “I now feel more confident in my abilities as a leader” ($\bar{x} = 4.66$, $SD = 0.720$), and “The overall experience has helped to shape my future career goals” ($\bar{x} = 4.66$, $SD = 0.664$).

Of the 14 self-appraisal items included in the internship course evaluation, 13 had a mean score greater than 4.3. Only one item had a mean score below 4, which was “I improved my writing skills” ($\bar{x} = 3.79$, $SD = 0.910$). This item was also the only item with a mode of 4; all other items had a mode of 5. In terms of median scores, 11 out of 14 items had a median of 5. Those three items with the lowest mean scores had median scores of 4.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Student Responses to Self-Appraisal Items on Internship Course Evaluation

Course Evaluation Item	Number of respondents	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
<i>I increased my understanding of professionalism & the responsibilities of being a professional</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.69	5	5	0.613
<i>I improved my time management skills</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.66	5	5	0.619
<i>I now feel more confident in my abilities as a leader</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.66	5	5	0.720
<i>The overall experience has helped to shape my future career goals</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.66	5	5	0.664
<i>I improved my recreation programming skills</i>	<i>n = 28</i>	4.64	5	5	0.679
<i>I enhanced my professional philosophy of recreation and leisure</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.62	5	5	0.560
<i>I enhanced my personal philosophy of recreation and leisure</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.62	5	5	0.559
<i>I was motivated to work beyond minimum requirements</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.62	5	5	0.766
<i>I increased my understanding of professional ethics</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.52	5	5	0.676
<i>I learned new problem-solving techniques</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.48	5	5	0.720
<i>I was able to apply programming principles learned in REL 308</i>	<i>n = 27</i>	4.41	5	5	0.863
<i>I increased my ability to develop meaningful and accomplishable goals & objectives</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.38	4	5	0.707
<i>I increased my understanding of the leisure delivery service system</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.31	4	5	0.739
<i>I improved my writing skills</i>	<i>n = 28</i>	3.79	4	4	0.910

To answer the secondary research question, “Is there a correlation between self-appraisal scores and students’ evaluations of their sponsoring agency?”, a bivariate Pearson correlation analysis was conducted using SPSS. To conduct this analysis, composite variables were created from the data collected from Section 2 and Section 3 of the course evaluation. (See Table 3 below for descriptive statistics for Section 2; refer back to Table 2 for descriptive statistics for Section 3). A bivariate correlation test revealed a strong positive correlation ($r = .672$, $p = .000$) between these two composite variables. Therefore, there was a statistically significant positive relationship between self-appraisal scores and students’ evaluations of their on-site supervisors at the agencies where they completed their internships.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Student Responses to Items Regarding Internship Site and Supervisor on Internship Course Evaluation

Course Evaluation Item	Number of respondents	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
<i>The result of the interview was communicated in a timely manner</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.83	5	5	0.637
<i>I was empowered to make decisions for myself</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.72	5	5	0.703
<i>Supervisor showed fairness in evaluating my performance</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.62	5	5	0.812
<i>The interview was well conducted</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.59	5	5	0.730
<i>Supervisor effectively communicated with me in a professional manner</i>	<i>n = 28</i>	4.50	5	5	0.863
<i>Supervisor provided guidance in response to resolving issues and challenges</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.48	5	5	0.852
<i>Supervisor provided praise and criticism as appropriate</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.48	5	5	0.963
<i>I would recommend this agency to other students</i>	<i>n = 28</i>	4.46	5	5	1.006
<i>I was able to learn from my supervisor based upon his/her display of knowledge and skills</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.45	5	5	0.921
<i>Supervisor displayed interest in my professional development</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.41	5	5	0.955
<i>Supervisor assisted in the development of my goals and objectives</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.31	4	5	0.850
<i>My supervisor assisted in my professional development</i>	<i>n = 29</i>	4.10	4	4	0.957

V. Discussion

Overall, information from students' summer internship course evaluations will aid in future course revision. First, students' responses to the self-appraisal section of the course evaluation were examined in order to learn more about their perceptions regarding 14 learning outcomes. Secondly, students' perceptions of the role of their internship supervisors were investigated, which, when correlated with the self-appraisal data, revealed a statistically significant positive relationship. The findings suggest that the students engaging in internships reaped a number of rewards from the summer internship experience. Social exchange theory, therefore, provided a useful framework for the study. Within the context of social exchange theory, Homans (1961) viewed social behavior in terms of rewards and punishments, whereby actions are motivated by a desire to maximize rewards. In the case of the relationship between universities and agencies, each involved party has the potential to gain from the exchange. Future research could investigate whether agencies also feel that they are receiving comparable rewards from sponsoring/hiring interns. Additional suggestions for future research are presented in the section labeled "Implications of the Study" below.

Discussion of Research Question #1

To answer the first research question, "In what KSA areas do students perceive the greatest improvements as a result of the summer internship experience?", students' responses to the self-appraisal section of the course evaluation were examined. A descriptive statistical analysis of the data revealed that on the whole, students reported that they achieved course learning outcomes. For 13 of the 14 items, mean scores were above 4.3 (on a five-point scale). The item with the highest mean score, "I increased my understanding of professionalism & the responsibilities of being a professional" ($\bar{x} = 4.69$, $SD = 0.613$), suggests that the internship experience helped students to improve their understanding of professional competence. This finding relates to Kauffman's (2010) description of the benefits of an internship, which included the transfer of knowledge into professional competencies. Similarly, this finding echoes two of the benefits of internships reported by Beggs and Hurd (2010): to network with professionals and to develop professionalism. Therefore, the high mean score for the self-appraisal item regarding professionalism corroborates the existing research on the student benefits of an internship in understanding professional competence and developing an increased sense of professionalism.

Three items tied for the second highest mean score. The first of these three items was, "I improved my time management skills" ($\bar{x} = 4.66$, $SD = 0.619$). Tse (2010) conducted a content analysis of students' post-internship written evaluations to determine what they found to be most important about their internship experience. One of the nine themes Tse identified was, "personal growth perceived by the student intern" (p. 257), which included time management, problem-solving, and maturity/confidence, among other skills. Therefore, this finding is consistent with existing literature on improved time management as an outcome of the internship experience.

The next item with the second highest mean score, "I now feel more confident in my abilities as a leader" ($\bar{x} = 4.66$, $SD = 0.720$), also relates to Tse's (2010) theme of personal growth, with respect to confidence. Tse also identified a theme labeled, "student intern's learning from colleagues" (p. 258), which included attributes such as leadership, attention to detail, and complaint handling. These types of skills can be challenging to teach in a classroom, so college professors rely on internship supervisors to provide students with hands-on learning experiences and observation of "real-world" issues. Another of Tse's nine themes which relates

to this self-appraisal item is, “student intern’s experience with leadership” (p. 259). Within this theme, Tse categorized specific leadership traits into three groups: supporting colleagues (e.g., coaching, motivating, supervising), work ethic (e.g., hard-working, efficient, responsible), and personal qualities (e.g., patient, open-minded, organized).

The final self-appraisal item in the three-way tie for the second highest mean score was, “The overall experience has helped to shape my future career goals” ($\bar{x} = 4.66$, $SD = 0.664$). Again, this item relates to Tse’s (2010) content analysis of students’ post-internship evaluations. Specifically, this item relates to the theme named, “relevance of internship to study and future career” (Tse, p. 258). Within this theme, three specific attributes were identified: coursework helped student to better understand internship tasks, internship helped student to better understand coursework, and internship helped student become clear about future career. Based on follow-up conversations we had with students via an exit interview, it was clear that in some cases, the internship experience served to *reinforce* existing career goals, while in other cases, the internship served as a catalyst for a *reevaluation* and/or *revision* of career goals.

The only self-appraisal item with a mean score below 4.0 was, “I improved my writing skills” ($\bar{x} = 3.79$, $SD = 0.910$). This was a surprising finding as students were required to keep a daily journal as well as to write an orientation statement and final reflective paper about the internship experience. One interpretation of this comparatively low score was that perhaps students were recalling opportunities they had to improve their writing skills *while logging hours at their internship sites*, rather than the writing embedded in their associated course assignments. Many summer internships are hands-on, where the only required writing might come in the form of accident report forms, program supply requests, time sheets, or activity documentation with clients/customers.

Discussion of Research Question #2

To answer the secondary research question, “Is there a correlation between self-appraisal scores and students’ evaluations of their sponsoring agency?”, there was a strong positive relationship between students’ self-appraisal scores and their evaluations of their on-site supervisors at the agencies where they completed their internships. This finding suggests that internship supervisors play an important role when it comes to helping students achieve learning outcomes and improve their professional competencies. In Tse’s (2010) study, the most important theme identified was “student intern’s working relationship with colleagues” (p. 256), and he stated that “the way student interns are treated, the manner in which they are taught, and their feelings toward their colleagues constitute a large part of their recollection of the internship” (p. 256). The essential role of the internship supervisor will be further discussed in the sections on plans for course revision and future research, below.

Study Limitations

There were some limitations to the present study. First, this was an exploratory study that relied on an existing data collection instrument (i.e., the summer internship course evaluation form). Therefore, we did not collect information on whether the internships were paid or unpaid was not collected from the students, which may have influenced the results. Secondly, this course evaluation was not a graded component of the course. As such, several students who indicated willingness to participate in the study were unable to, due to the fact that they did not choose to complete their course evaluation. However, students self-selected to be in the study, which may present an over-representation of high achievers in our sample (i.e., selection bias).

Moreover, the small sample size limited the capability for statistical analysis. For example, comparison of results across the three concentrations of recreation management, tourism management, and therapeutic recreation was unable to occur. Finally, the small sample size combined with a relatively low response rate limits the generalizability of the study. However, since this was an exploratory study, generalizability was not the primary objective.

VI. Implications of Study

Plans for Course Revision

Based on the findings of this exploratory study, a two-pronged approach to revising the summer internship course has been developed. First, one of the major assignments in the course will be revamped. Instead of a daily journal, students will be required to respond to a series of questions in the form of short response papers, to be completed at regular intervals over the course of the summer. Questions may relate to topics such as: problem-solving techniques observed and/or learned, opportunities for leadership development, and/or application of course material to the internship setting. This series of papers will require more formal written responses than the existing journal assignment. The assignment will still allow students to reflect on their day-to-day experiences at their internship sites, but it is hoped that the revised structure will result in students perceiving an improvement in their writing skills over the course of the summer. Regular, consistent feedback from the course faculty will be imperative in order to ensure student success.

Based on this study's theoretical framework of social exchange theory, improving the communication process between on-site internship supervisors and faculty members will be emphasized. Internship supervisors play a vital role when it comes to helping students achieve learning outcomes, and it is important that faculty members stay up-to-date on student progress at their internship sites. Therefore, regularly scheduled telephone conversations with internship supervisors will occur. At a minimum, conversations with each supervisor will be scheduled at the beginning, mid-point, and end of the student's internship experience. During these conversations, the course faculty will be able to answer any questions that the internship supervisor may have about their role in the learning experience. This method will provide formative feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of our students so that future curriculum revisions can occur accordingly. While it is logistically and financially unfeasible to schedule an in-person visit at each internship site, it is hoped that this series of telephone calls will serve a similar function in keeping the lines of communication open between on-site internship supervisors and faculty members.

Lastly, based on the multi-faceted conceptualization of leadership, together with findings regarding the high importance of leadership as an outcome of the summer internship experience, expansion of the self-appraisal section of the course evaluation to reflect the three categories of leadership identified by Tse is a consideration.

Future Research: Plans and Suggestions

Despite the limitations posed by the low response rate, once the above changes are made to the summer internship program, there is a plan to replicate the study to determine whether such curricular and administrative revisions will lead to improvements in students' perceptions of the internship experience (i.e., do they feel that they are learning more?). In order to better understand the learning outcomes of the summer internship course, additional data sources will be analyzed, particularly the quantitative and qualitative data collected from internship

supervisors via their mid-point and final evaluations of student performance. A content analysis of the transcripts of focus-group style exit interviews conducted with students about their summer internship experiences will also be performed. It is hoped that these interview transcripts will serve as a richer data source on students' perceptions of the summer internship experience.

In preparation for the present study, the authors found that existing research on the role of the internship supervisor was lacking. It is recommended that more research be conducted on internship supervision best practices and management techniques that supervisors can utilize in order to maximize the learning experience for student interns.

Finally, since this was an exploratory study, it is suggested that a future line of research examine the experiences of interns across the country in order to determine whether recreation and tourism internship programs are meeting the needs of all involved parties. A representative sample would allow findings to be generalized to a wider population.

Conclusion

The value of the internship cannot be underestimated in the academic curriculum. Internships are not only a training ground for students to apply concepts learned in the classroom, but they also provide access to job sources and professional networking opportunities. In this study, it was found that students generally agreed that they had achieved summer internship course learning outcomes, including (but not limited to): an improved understanding of the responsibilities of being a professional, time management, leadership, and career guidance. Moreover, internship supervisors play an important role when it comes to helping students achieve learning outcomes and improve their professional competencies. University faculty and internship supervisors must actively communicate with one another in order for students to reap the maximum reward from their internship experience. Social exchange theory provided a useful framework for the study as it explains the reciprocity between universities and agencies that sponsor interns, as well as the rewards sought by students through their internship experiences.

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