

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The requirement for employees in the tourist industry to possess specialized knowledge and abilities to adapt to the diverse demands and desires of participants in different tourism forms is driving the creation and expansion of educational programs across the world (Štetić and Šimičević, 2013). In the tourism industry, fast and accurate information is necessary to facilitate travelers' getting to their destination. The tourism industry offers a number of commercial options, including the e-commerce industry. The use of electronic commerce (e-commerce) to market a variety of products and services in both physical and digital form is one form of technology placement that can boost business competition and product sales. A travel agency is a type of commercial business that facilitates and controls group travel with the main objective of providing travel services. Due to the strong demand for travel, a number of travel agencies are attempting to satisfy consumer demand (Dharmanto, Komariah, Handayani, Suminar, and Untari, 2019)

Every element of human life, including tourism, has been altered by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of a pandemic or after it has ended, policies and travel restrictions put in place in a number of nations have affected how tourists view tourism. Findings from research conducted with respondents in Indonesia indicate that most of the study's participants are interested in traveling after the pandemic and show anxiety-reduction strategies. They have also scheduled their travel, with a preference for nature tourism and a timeframe of 0–6 months after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on Wachyuni and Kusumaningrum (2020) findings, it can be concluded that travel is essentially a modern human need.

According to other studies, tourists' perceptions of tourist destinations can be negatively impacted by safety, security, and health risks. As a result, they are more likely to search for destinations that have the necessary infrastructure in place, both in terms of quantity and quality, and that follow health regulations (Wen, Kozak, Yang, & Liu, 2020). The tourism sector needs to be able to quickly adjust its short-term business plan to take financial risks into account while maintaining a high priority on visitor health. After the pandemic for a year, the tourism sector is predicted to recover (Assaf & Scuderi, 2020).

The business world is quite competitive these days, particularly for companies offering tourism services. Increased rivalry serves as a warning to all businesses that, to thrive and expand, they must strengthen themselves through innovation and better business management. Due to intense competition in the online travel agency business, every company needs to be able to accurately map its target market for all policies about the business plan to be implemented with accuracy.

Because of the dynamic relationships that have been formed in the tourism market, there is a constant need for new skills and knowledge in the tourism sector, and the industry is aware of these needs. The most effective means of combining formal and informal tourism education programs are internships that emphasize the practical skills (Lam and Ching, 2007) that are essential for managers and operators in the tourism sector. "Short-term periods of practical work" is how internship programs are described (Zopiatis and Theocharous, 2013; Koc et al., 2014). An internship experience is defined as "a structured and career-relevant supervised professional work/learning experience, paid or unpaid, within an approved hospitality agency/organization/corporation, under the direct supervision of at least one practicing

hospitality professional and one faculty member, for which a hospitality student can earn academic credit" (Zopiatis and Theocharous, 2013).

As students enter the workforce, students must overcome numerous obstacles. Through the implementation of their conceptual knowledge in the new workplace, they must adapt to the professional setting. Academic internships serve as a link between theory and practice by requiring participants to engage in supervised, scheduled work, according to Gault et al. (2010). These internship programs enhance students' professional development and experience in addition to their personal skill set.

To have a comprehensive understanding of the challenges encountered by the travel agency industry, the writer was able to participate in a two-month internship program at Kirana Tour and Travel, one of the travel agencies in Malang, which ran from September to October 2023. Established in 1996, Kirana Tour and Travel is a travel agency located in Malang, East Java. Kirana is now growing several divisions, including the Air Asia ticketing business, PergiRameRame as the tour division, and a travel division that has been growing since the company was established.

During the internship program, the writer gained a variety of real experiences that were closely related to the learning material taught in the classroom. Not only were various amazing experiences gained, but during the internship program there, the writer also learned about several problems that often occur there, such as high incidences of human errors; for example, an error when entering a customer's name when want to issue a ticket and difficulties in scheduling drivers on duty due to drivers frequently choosing routes based on the driver's personal preferences.

Therefore, through this internship program, the writer learns that human resources play an important role in the world of travel agents.

1.2 The Objective of the Internship

The objective of the internship is to gain comprehensive insights into the workings of the travel and tour industry, with a specific focus on acquiring knowledge about becoming a tour leader and ticketing. The primary aim is to apply the practical experience gained as a tour leader during the internship to real-world scenarios in the future.

In addition to the primary goal, the writer has set several objectives, including gaining practical experience and competence aligned with their field of concentration. This encompasses developing the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate performance within the writer's expertise. Furthermore, the writer aims to seamlessly apply the knowledge acquired in college to the professional realm, aligning closely with the chosen field of specialization.

1.3 The Scope of the Report

This report is limited to providing specifics on the travel agent internship, with an emphasis on the activities completed during the internship, the location of the internship, and problems that occurred in the travel industry. General details about the writer's internship site are also included in this report, including the organizational structure that supports the company's operations as well as its goals and objectives. In addition, this report will go into the challenges that the writer faced during her internship, the solutions offered, and some theories discussed in relation to the problems as well as a possible solution.

1.4 The Significance

The writer is going to write down some significance from three different sides, i.e. the writer or the intern herself, the company where the intern did her internship program, which is Kirana Tour and Travel, and the University of the Intern, which is Universitas Ma Chung, especially in English Letters study program.

For the university, Universitas Ma Chung, this internship program recommends resources and an evaluation of the English Letters Study Program, which would be very helpful in developing the skills of the students. Additionally, the internship's success boosts the university's reputation and displays its dedication to both academic brilliance and preparing students for prosperous careers.

For the intern herself, this internship program gives her a lot of new knowledge, skills, and experiences related to the writer's major, which is in tourism, and also develops the writer's knowledge in how professional work setting. Moreover, the intern also had the chance to learn and experience how a tour leader works in real life which is a new experience for the writer because mostly the writer only learns the theories. In short, it helps the writer to gain new experiences through real application.

For the company, Kirana Tour and Travel, this internship program can bring fresh perspectives and innovative ideas to the company. The intern often brings the latest academic knowledge and trends, offering new approaches to problem-solving and contributing to the company's growth and development. In addition, this internship program contributes to workforce diversity by bringing in individuals with diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and skill sets. This diversity fosters a more inclusive and innovative work environment.

1.5 Operational Definitions of the Key Terms

Some key terms that will be mentioned frequently throughout this internship report are as follows:

1. Internship

An internship is a unique form of education that attempts to combine academics with organized, performance-based experience. In general, it is created to help recent graduates without jobs and postgraduates who have finished their fourteen to sixteen years of school internationally. The major objectives of the internship program are to help students prepare for their future careers by strengthening and developing their current skills. (Parveen, S., & Mirza, N, 2012)

2. Travel Agent

Travel agencies used to act as a middleman in the tourism industry between tourists and main providers. Travel advisors were the primary source of travel information for tourists, and travel agencies were the main source of tourism-related purchases in the past, which made travel agents highly in demand. But starting in the year 2000, the internet transformed the way that tourism was distributed, which in turn impacted the way that travel firms conducted business. The impact of digitalization on tourism is still present today. (Liao, R, 2020)

3. Human Resources

Human resources in travel agencies represent an especially valuable resource, which possesses the multi-disciplinary and highly specialized knowledge and skills in the field of selective tourism. The ability to provide products and services that offer consumers in certain market segments greater value is made possible by

human resources, which also helps to boost the profitability of the agency and gives companies an advantage over their competitors (Vučetić, 2012)

4. Tourism

Tourism can be understood as a social phenomenon, not a production activity; the total of all travelers' or visitors' expenses, not the receipt of a chosen set of establishments that are identical to one other; and an experience or process, not a product, and an incredibly varied experience at that (Davidson, T. L, 2012)

5. Hospitality Industry

Among the biggest and most significant sectors in the world economy is the hospitality sector. The common approach in the field of hospitality studies has been to see the hospitality industry as a crucial component of the service sector, with a particular emphasis on its managerial, business, and vocational aspects. However, most attempts to conceptualize the nature of hospitality and its varied meanings and implications for society have been very limited (Henning, Levy, and Ritchie 2005). The attempt to characterize and define hospitality is not only an academic exercise; it has significant implications for the hospitality sector as well as for the hospitality education system. Comparable discourses in related fields, primarily in leisure and tourist studies, have had a big influence on "the real world." (Pizam & Shani 2009)