

## The Influence of Problems Faced During Internships on Interns' Views of Their Profession and Their Intention to Work in the Tourism Industry

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### Abstract

*Problem Statement:* The problem of this research is identifying the difficulties that undergraduate students experience during their internships and assessing their future intention to work in the tourism industry.

*Purpose of Study:* This research aims to identify the problems undergraduate students encounter as interns in tourism programs and to document their views on the tourism sector after their internships. The paper also focuses on whether the problems experienced during the internship program affect the students' intention to work in the tourism business in the future.

*Methods:* All research constructs were measured using multiple-item, five-point Likert scales. Third- and fourth-year undergraduate students from two different universities who had completed their internships were selected for the study. Balıkesir and Canakkale universities were selected by convenience sampling, and the surveys were conducted with 330 of the 550 available students.

*Findings and Results:* Internship problems have four dimensions, though from a business perspective, the problems can also be viewed from two sub-dimensions. The findings of this study reveal that interns are given only very basic employee rights, that interns are viewed as cheap labor,

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and that the service business does not contribute to the professional development of interns. All these issues negatively influence interns' motivation. The results of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) show that problems encountered during internships negatively affected the students' attitudes toward tourism-related jobs, which in turn undermined their intention to work in this business in the future.

*Conclusions and Recommendations:* The findings of the study indicate that the problems faced during internships have implications both for universities and businesses. Contemporary internship practices necessitate reconsideration by universities. Moreover, the findings show that the business sector does not provide the necessary attention, compensation, and professional conditions to trainees. Collaboration with educational institutions is necessary in order to improve the relationship between interns and tourism enterprises. The managers of tourism enterprises should understand that the interns are required to be there by their schools and that their opinions are shaped by this fact. Consequently, the managers should adopt a more friendly approach to interns, which will yield more positive responses and make the students feel more comfortable in the work place. The study was limited to third and fourth year undergraduates from Schools of Tourism and Hotel Management in Balıkesir and Çanakkale because of time and cost issues, which also influenced the data collection.

*Key Words:* internship problems, intention to work, higher education, tourism industry

Through internships, undergraduate students take their first steps into a profession and begin to apply the theoretical knowledge acquired during their education to real life situations. The skills taught at school do not go beyond theories unless they are practiced. However, students may not know how to use the knowledge gained from a specific subject, and knowledge that is not used is forgotten. Internships provide students with opportunities to practice what they have learned in the classroom, gain a greater understanding of the industries' requirements, test career choices, and develop important hands-on workplace skills (Walo, 2001). Through internships, undergraduates can gain perspective on their future career. Additionally, the internship can be regarded as a complement to their education. Hence, it is essential that the internship process be elucidated as part of students' education and experiences. If the students gain experience through the two parts of their education, then educational goals will be easier to achieve and students will be better prepared to enter their field. Studies about internships are insufficient. Identifying the problems that undergraduate students experience during their internships is a necessary first step to solving such problems and will help to maximize the contribution an internship can have to a university education.

An implication of the issues faced by interns is the development of negative perceptions of the business and thus an unwillingness to work in the tourism industry after graduation. Student interns who were interviewed stated that, given

the problems they encountered, they would not work in the tourism industry after graduation (Hacıoğlu, Kaşlı, Şahin & Tetik, 2008). If these problems are identified and the findings shared with the businesses' representatives, then students' internship problems can be lessened. This may lead to positive changes in perception of the tourism sector. Consequently, an important national resource for university education will be saved, and better tourism services will be available from individuals working in their own area of expertise. An internship is defined as an activity in which one practices training related to a profession or skill and gains experience. According to Titley (1984), an internship encapsulates these features:

1. It is a learning experience that deals with the reality of professional practice.
2. It follows other theoretical and practical aspects of preparation.
3. It is normally a terminal experience - the last stage before the granting of full professional status.
4. It is an experience that is subject to evaluation by qualified practitioners.
5. Though under supervision, the internship must also entail full-fledged decision making and its concomitant professional responsibility (p. 87).

Internships are an important activity for potential employees, enabling interns to prepare for future jobs while they are in school. According to research on internships, benefits include learning about business life, gaining experience, and developing problem solving skills (Abeysekera, 2006; Chang & Chu, 2009; Barr & Busler, 2011). Internships provide trainees with their first hands-on experience in the work place. Whether positive or negative, the images acquired during this period will affect future years spent in the profession. Trainees' negative experiences during an internship will thus undermine their plans to work in the tourism sector (Zheng, 2008).

According to Lee, Lu, Jiao, and Yeh (2006), an internship outside the academic calendar can be called "co-operative training" or "joint training". As a result of this co-operative/joint training, companies have access to the manpower in schools and can develop it according to their needs. At the same time, schools help familiarize students with the business world and train them to meet business demands. Part of the joint training is undertaken as practice lessons at school and part as internships on the job. The objectives of an internship are to practice theoretical knowledge in a business setting and learn new practical skills (Emir, Arslan & Kılıçkaya, 2008). Internship activities provide on-the-job training, help senior students mature, provide the market with manpower, and allow an individual to gain expertise (Busby & Gibson, 2010). Busby and Gibson (2010) and Ross and Elechi (2002) identify the benefits of internship activities as:

- Learning to complete tasks, engage in proper conduct, take responsibility, and manage others
- Gaining experience in management and management methods
- Developing maturity and self-esteem

- Recognizing problems and determining solution standards
- Offering opportunities and career choices for the future
- With all the efforts spent to train new manpower, businesses gain employees with substantial previous experience

There have been other studies on the problems encountered by student interns in different fields (Hauck, Allen & Rondinelli, 2000; Ross & Elechi, 2002; Lee et al., 2006; Ko, 2008), Beggs, Ross, and Goodwin (2008) studied travel and tourism internships from the perspectives of both a trainee and a practitioner. Schambach and Dirks (2002) studied how students perceive their internship experiences. They discovered that a majority of students in their study found their internship program beneficial and believed it would contribute to their professional lives. Hauck et al. (2000) studied whether there was any change in the academic performance of students who were involved in structured internship programs versus those who were not. Their findings indicate that there are no connections between academic performance and participation in structured internships. Nevertheless, the students stated that an internship significantly contributed to their professional lives and career plans.

Lee (2006) conducted comparative research to determine the perception of the students in tourism management, a program which included school time and internships. Lee's study of 681 participants from a tourism management program divided students into groups by career development, achievement of academic functions, and development of professional and individual skills. The study revealed that joint training programs developed students' social skills. Those trainees who participated in internships gained higher levels of self-esteem and practical knowledge while improving their skills and increasing their job prospects. This study also found that the students doing internships developed skills that enabled them to adapt to change and gave them leadership and financial management skills. They also demonstrated more realistic career plans because organizational functions were better understood. Ko (2008) investigated the factors associated with hospitality students' satisfaction with internship programs and the relationships between training, job satisfaction, and confidence about future careers. This study showed that training satisfaction played a positive role as a predictor of participants' job satisfaction and confidence about future careers. Also, this study revealed that the effect of satisfaction with training on participants' confidence about future careers was mediated by their satisfaction with the internship.

Lee (2005) studied whether the characteristics of students in tourism management internships, the working conditions of the internship, and the leadership features of the administrators in the workplace affected students' intention to work in the business. Lee's research findings show that working conditions (including wage, working hours, workplace, etc.) and the management style of the administrators directly affected the trainees' plan to work in the tourism sector. Additionally, Lee found no connection between gender and the intention to work in tourism. However, a positive relationship was found between department (food-beverage and rooms), part time previous employment, and willingness to work in the tourism sector.

Yıldırım (2002) carried out a study to identify hotel managers' expectations of trainees. According to the study, one of the major complaints of hotel managers was that tourism schools have varying periods for internships that were typically less than 90 days in length. The findings revealed that the hotel managers saw trainees as cheap labor and as part of the business rather than as possible future employees who were still in school. Moreover, hotel managers tended to assign interns to busy departments instead of assigning them to sections that would better parallel the goals of the internship.

Henry, Rehwaldt and Vineyard (2001), by identifying internship problems, attempted to explain how internship programs can be carried out efficiently and effectively. In this study, involving both trainees and researchers, internship problems were categorized as "work place," "working hours," "insufficient supervision," "ignorance about importance of working," and "wages." Although the study was carried out in a different field, it was noted that similar problems occurred in tourism-related internship programs (Busby & Gibson, 2010; Lee et al., 2006). In their study of the benefits of internship programs for applicant nurses, Holdway, Corbeil, McPherson, Oremush, and Murray (2005) found that internships enabled students to adapt easily to the nursing career, develop organizational skills, and gain high self-esteem. The authors also concluded that the trainees were willing to participate in internship programs in subsequent years, and smooth internship periods positively affected their attitude toward the nursing profession.

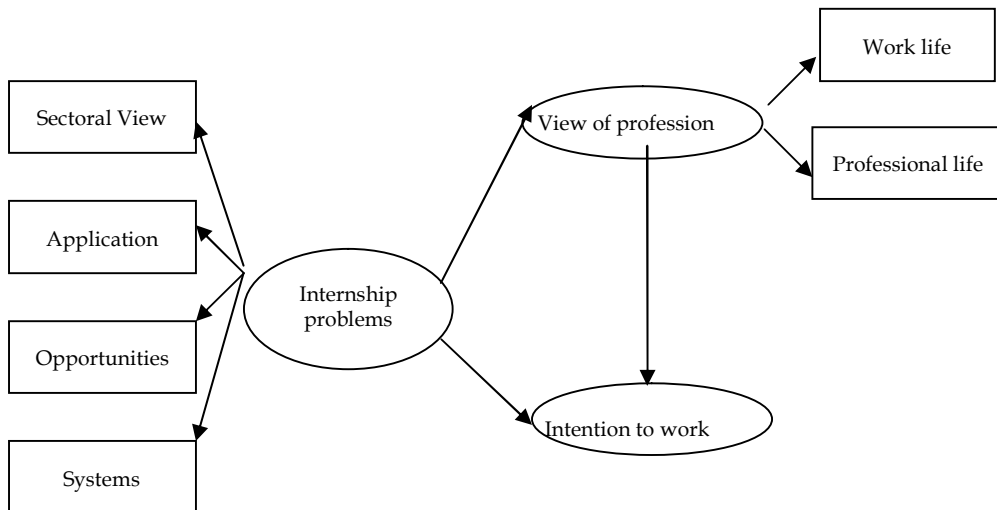


Figure 1. Internship Problems Model

The model presented in this paper was developed using studies carried out on internship problems and other studies based on internship interviews. It is suggested that the problems experienced by undergraduates studying tourism can be divided into the following groups: "sectoral view," "application," "opportunities," and "the system." The views of tourism undergraduates toward their profession can be classified as "perception of work life" and "perception of professional development". Based on the relevant literature and interviews with students, it is argued that problems experienced during internships affect students' opinions of the profession, and their willingness to work in the business is shaped accordingly. The hypotheses of the study are:

H<sub>1</sub>: IP→(-)VP There is a significant and negative relationship between internship problems and view of profession.

H<sub>2</sub>: IP→(-)IW There is a significant and negative relationship between internship problems and the intention to work in the sector.

H<sub>3</sub>: VP→(+ )IW There is a significant and positive relationship between view of profession and the intention to work in the sector.

### Method

The research study tested these three posited hypotheses. The following are the seven latent variables in this study: problems with sectoral view, problems with applications, problems with opportunities, problems with the system, perceptions of work life, perceptions of professional development, and intention to work in the tourism industry. According to the results, tourism departments generally occupy last place in student preferences due to negative perceptions of the tourism profession. Therefore, when the effect of internship problems on intention to work is researched, students' views of the profession should be taken into account, and as a result, a better model can be developed. This can also test the mediation effect of the view of profession.

#### *Measures*

All research constructs were measured using multiple-item, five-point Likert scales. All scales were adapted from previous studies, and "absolutely disagree" and "absolutely agree" anchor the scale. Two different group scales, adapted from Pelit & Güçer's (2006) study, were used. The first scale, entitled "internship problems," contains the following eight items: problems with sectoral view (two items), problems with applications (two items), problems with opportunities (two items), and problems with the system (two items). The second scale, entitled "view of tourism profession," contains the following eleven items: perceptions of work life (five items), perceptions of professional life (three items), and intention to work in tourism industry (three items).

Balikesir and Canakkale universities were selected by convenience sampling and third- and fourth-year undergraduate students were selected for the study. The surveys were conducted with 330 of the 550 available students. The goal of the study

was to determine internship problems and their effects on the students' intentions to work in the tourism industry.

A two-step process was followed in developing the survey form. In the first step, the draft survey was pre-tested on 63 fourth-year students in the Accommodation Management Department at Balikesir University. Because the pre-test results provided a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70, the second step, the application of the survey, could then be undertaken.

#### *Methods of Data Analysis*

The analysis was conducted using a two-phase approach. First, a confirmatory factor analysis was used to measure the adequacy of the measurement model. In the second phase, the structural model was evaluated. The overall model fit in both measurement and structural models was evaluated using the following goodness-of-fit indices: chi-square/df ratio, CFI, GFI, AGFI, NFI, PNFI, RFI, IFI, and RMSEA (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Frequencies and percentages were used in the evaluation of the demographic variables. Data were analyzed using the statistical software SPSS 15 and Lisrel 8.

### **Results**

The distribution of the sample according to gender was nearly equal (50.3% male and 49.7% females). Most students (94.5%) were above 20 years old. A considerable number of students (81.8%) were graduated from high schools other than tourism vocational high schools. Therefore, it is apparent that the type of high school students graduated from had no influence on preference for studying Tourism and Hotel Management at the university level. The employment period in the tourism industry varied among the students. Fifty percent of the students worked in the tourism industry for three to six months. Considering the official internship period of four months, the internship was the first tourism work experience for some students, and the other fifty percent of the students had more than six months experience.

#### *The Measurement Model (CFA)*

The internship problems scale and the view of tourism profession scale were estimated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). As proposed by Khattree and Naik (1955), the multivariate normality assumption was evaluated. Because the multivariate normality assumption was not violated, the maximum likelihood method of estimation was used. The goodness-of-fit measures were used to assess the overall model fit. As indicated by the results of the study, the overall fit indices for the proposed/base model were acceptable, with the Chi square/df equal to 4.85, RMSEA of 0.10, NFI of 0.878, CFI of 0.899, GFI of 0.934, AGFI of 0.875, PNFI of 0.596, IFI of 0.900, and RFI of 0.820. All of the above fit indices for the measurement model indicated an acceptable fit (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998; Stevens, 2001).

#### *Evaluating the Measurement Model*

After achieving adequate overall fit indices, the measurement model was further evaluated for its reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Table 1 shows the results of construct reliability. In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) was used to assess convergent validity.

**Table 1**  
*Measurement Model Results*

Construct	Variables	Standardized loadings	SMC *	Construct reliability	AVE
<b>Internship problems (IP)</b>					
<i>Sectoral view problems (SVP)</i>	SVP1	0,81	0,71	0,93	0,82
	SVP2	0,88	0,74		
<i>Application problems (AP)</i>	AP1	0,80	0,67	0,89	0,82
	AP2	0,80	0,71		
<i>Opportunity problems (OP)</i>	OP1	0,77	0,66	0,90	0,77
	OP2	0,89	0,80		
<i>Internship system problems (ISP)</i>	ISP1	0,81	0,74	0,90	0,83
	ISP2	0,72	0,77		
<b>View of profession (WP)</b>					
<i>Perceptions of work life (PWL)</i>	PWL1	0,86	0,89	0,93	0,88
	PWL2	0,84	0,88		
	PWL3	0,67	0,58		
	PWL4	0,84	0,84		
	PWL5	0,92	0,87		
<i>Perception of professional life (PPL)</i>	PPL1	0,89	0,82	0,93	0,81
	PPL2	0,72	0,60		
	PPL3	0,87	0,73		
<b>Intention to work (IW)</b>					
<i>Intention to work tourism industry (IWTI)</i>	IWTI1	0,85	0,76	0,85	0,77
	IWTI2	0,84	0,76		
	IWTI3	0,72	0,57		

(\*) Squared Multiple Correlation.

The reliabilities of the constructs were above the threshold value of 0.70 (ranging from 0.85 to 0.93) and squared multiple correlation value of 0.50 (ranging from 0.57 to 0.89). AVE values ranged from 0.77 to 0.88, exceeding the 0.50 threshold value.



Thus, construct and convergent validity was not an issue. Comparison of the inter-construct correlations with the square root of AVE provided positive support for discriminate validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) (see Table 2). Moreover, because the Cronbach's alpha values for all factors were above 0.70.

**Table 2**

*Discriminant Validity Matrix*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. SVP	<b>0,91</b>						
2. AP	-0,54	<b>0,91</b>					
3. OP	-0,38	-0,04	<b>0,88</b>				
4. ISP	0,29	0,17	0,00	<b>0,91</b>			
5. PWL	0,01	0,00	-0,14	-0,10	<b>0,94</b>		
6. PPA	0,16	0,05	0,11	-0,38	-0,53	<b>0,90</b>	
7. IWTI	0,21	0,08	0,09	-0,32	0,12	0,21	<b>0,88</b>

*The Structural Equation Model*

The model was tested via structural equation modeling. The goodness-of-fit measures were used to assess the overall structural model fit. As indicated by the results of the study, the overall fit indices for the proposed/base model were acceptable, with chi-square/df equal to 4,85, GFI of 0.93, AGFI of 0.88, and CFI of 0.90. All of the above fit indices for the final model indicated an acceptable structural model fit. The findings of the research model are found in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Standardized Path Coefficient and t-Value for the Structural Model*

Structural paths	Standardized path coefficients	t -Value	Hypotheses supported yes/no
H <sub>1</sub> : IP→(-)VP	-0,190	-10,406	yes
H <sub>2</sub> : IP→(-)IW	0,195	8,527	no
H <sub>3</sub> : VP→(+)IW	0,170	9,121	yes

R<sup>2</sup> IW:0,342; R<sup>2</sup> VP:0,256.

The findings of this study suggest a significant negative relationship between the internship problems and view of profession (H<sub>1</sub>: IP→(-)VP, path coefficient= -0.19), and according to this result, H<sub>1</sub> was accepted. In addition, the internship problems variables explained 25.6% for view of profession variable variance. Results from the

current study indicated that the internship problems had a significant positive impact on intention to work ( $H_2$ :  $IP \rightarrow (-)IW$ , path coefficient= 0.19). The findings for  $H_3$ , which states that the view of profession is positively associated with intention to work, were also significant ( $VP \rightarrow (+)IW$ , path coefficient=0,17); accordingly,  $H_3$  was supported. The internship problems and view of profession variables explained 34.2% for intention to work variable variance.

### Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, a model was developed on the intership problems with 330 third- and fourth-year undergraduate students from two different universities in Turkey. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for internal consistency reliability of the whole scales were found to be above 0.70 in pre-test sample and for all factors. The scales were considered reliable (Nunnally, 1978). Following, CFA supported this two different group scales and showed a good fit with indices. After achieving adequate overall fit indices, the measurement model was further evaluated for its reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The results showed that there is an indication of acceptable reliability for all the constructs (Chen & Hitt, 2002).

The results of our study show that there is a positive relationship between internship problems and intention to work. The hypothesis stating internship problems negatively affect the intention to work cannot be supported. Therefore,  $H_2$  was rejected. Internship problems first affect the view of profession. Internship problems can affect the intention of work through the view of profession. Even though students experience problems during internships, these problems do not directly influence their intention to work. This influences the view of profession. As a result, students' negative perception of the tourism profession in general, tourism departments' low rankings in student preferences, and the unwillingness to attend universities of registered tourism students caused us to reject this hypothesis.

There are reports in the literature that internship problems influence the view of the profession and the intention to work in the business (Henry et al., 2001; Busby & Gibson, 2010; Lee et al., 2006). Research findings also indicate that internship problems directly affected attitudes toward the profession. No relationship was found between the problems related to internships and the intention to work in the tourism sector. However, the internship-related problems were (indirectly) found to affect plans to work in the sector by affecting the view of the profession. As a result, attitude toward the profession has been identified as an important mediator variable influencing intention to work in the field.

By identifying internship problems, Henry et al. (2001) attempted to explain how internship programs can be carried out efficiently and effectively. In this study, which involved both trainees and researchers, internship problems were categorized as "work place," "working hours," "insufficient supervision," "ignorance about importance of working," and "wages." Although the study was carried out in a different field, it was noted that similar problems occurred in tourism-related internship programs (Busby & Gibson, 2010; Lee et al., 2006).

The findings of the study indicate that the problems faced during internships have implications for both universities and businesses. Contemporary internship practice requires reconsideration by universities. Moreover, these findings also show that the business sector does not provide the necessary attention, compensation, and professional conditions to trainees. These represent important barriers for service quality, as most of the trainees working under poor conditions prefer other industries over the tourism industry after they graduate (Lee, 2005). To mitigate this loss, businesses must improve the working conditions of their trainees.

Based on the literature and research findings, the following section explains what needs to be done to reduce these problems and to provide undergraduate students studying tourism with a positive attitude toward the business and increase their interest in working in the tourism sector.

Collaboration with educational institutions is necessary to lessen the problems related to how tourism enterprises deal with interns. The managers of tourism enterprises should understand that the interns are required to be there by their schools and that students' opinions are shaped by this fact. Consequently, managers should adopt a friendlier approach to interns, which may yield more positive responses and make the students feel more comfortable in the work place. It should be remembered that internships are important in that they reinforce acquired theoretical knowledge; schools of tourism should develop their curriculum in collaboration with tourism enterprises. Thus, those students who are aware of the importance of the theoretical knowledge and who also have an opportunity to practice it will be more motivated to pursue a career in tourism.

A new approach should be developed to reduce problems of economic and social concern to the interns. The policy of providing insurance for trainees, which has recently been implemented by universities, should be continued. This practice has decreased the challenge of finding places for interns. Furthermore, guaranteeing economic benefits for trainees is essential. Internship agencies, examples of which can be found abroad, can be established in order to coordinate the relationships between trainees and tourism enterprises; these agencies can serve as a bridge between businesses and students. The enterprises that students have trouble with could then be identified by the agencies and the internship contracts terminated, if necessary. The length of internship programs with the same title and in the same academic period in tourism-related departments should be standardized. A committee of tourism studies, which will be founded in the Council of Higher Education, will contribute to establishing internship durations, among other issues.

Turkey has certain potential advantages in the tourism sector. These advantages can be turned into economic value by having high quality tourism services. High-quality services can only be provided by well-trained employees. Tourism schools have been opened across the entire country by using considerable resources. It is essential that every student in these schools be employed in the tourism business to ensure that these resources are used effectively. Only when these problems are solved will more undergraduate students choose to work in the tourism sector. One

of the major problems is related to internships. Once the problems experienced during the internship have been solved, undergraduates studying tourism will likely have a more positive attitude toward their profession, and their intention to work in the sector will be positively affected. Thus, they will be an important addition to the workforce. The goals of the study were limited to revealing the problems trainees face during internships and determining the relationship between the intent of the students to work in the tourism industry and the problems experienced during their internships. Further research focusing on businesses' expectations of their trainees can contribute to more effective internship practices through better coordination of universities and businesses. This study makes several contributions to the practice. First, the model developed in the study can improve conditions so that the firms can find highly motivated and qualified personnel. Second, the model can help incur positive changes in the view of the profession. Finally, it can help establish an effective internship system.

The present study has some limitations, so it can be repeated by further studies. The study was limited to third and fourth year undergraduates from Schools of Tourism and Hotel Management in Balıkesir and Çanakkale because of time and cost issues, which also influenced the data collection. The interaction between the internship problems of the students studying tourism at universities, their views of their profession, and their intention to continue to work in the tourism sector could be carried out with bigger participation, which might increase the level of generalization. Furthermore, studies comparing the view and intention of the students who do not participate in any internship and those who do would make a significant contribution to the related literature.

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## Staj Sorunları, Turizm Mesleğine Bakış ve Turizm Sektöründe Çalışma Niyeti İlişkisi

### Atıf:

Kaşlı, M., & İlban, M. O. (2013). The relationship between problems faced during internships and interns' view of profession and intention to work in the tourism industry. *Eğitim Araştırmaları-Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 52, 79-96.

### (Özet)

#### *Problem Durumu*

Üniversite düzeyindeki turizm eğitiminin teorik ve uygulama gibi iki önemli ayağı bulunmaktadır. Bu araştırmanın problemi, turizm eğitiminin uygulama ayağının önemli bir bölümünü oluşturan stajlarda yaşanan sorunlar ve bu sorunların turizm mesleğine bakış açısına ve turizm sektöründe çalışma niyetine etkileridir.

#### *Araştırmanın Amacı*

Bu araştırmanın amacı, üniversite düzeyinde turizm eğitimi alan öğrencilerin 60-120 gün arasında değişen zorunlu staj dönemlerinde yaşadıkları sorunları ortaya koymak ve bu sorunların turizm mesleğine bakışa ve turizm sektöründe çalışma niyetlerine olan etkilerini araştırmaktır.

#### *Araştırmanın Yöntemi*

Araştırma modelinin tüm boyutları için "kesinlikle katılmıyorum" dan başlayıp "kesinlikle katılıyorum" a doğru devam eden 5'li likert ölçekleri kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada kullanılan 2 farklı ölçek grubu bulunmaktadır. Bu ölçekler, Pelit ve Güçer (2006)'in çalışmasından faydalanılarak geliştirilmiştir.

Bu çalışmanın örneklemini olarak araştırmacıların ulaşım kolaylığı ve turizm eğitimi konusundaki köklü geçmişleri nedeniyle, Balıkesir Üniversitesi Turizm İşletmeciliği ve Otelcilik Yüksekokulu (BTİOYO) ve Çanakkale 18 Mart Üniversitesi Turizm İşletmeciliği ve Otelcilik Yüksekokulu (ÇTİOYO) öğrencileri seçilmiştir. Bu okullarda okuyan öğrencilerden ise, stajlarını tamamlama oranı yüksek olan ve staj yaptığı belirlenen 3. ve 4. sınıf öğrencilerinden veriler toplanmıştır.

Anket formunun geliştirilmesi aşamasında 2 aşamalı bir yol izlenmiştir. Birinci aşamada taslak anket formu, ön teste tabi tutulmuştur. Ön test BTİOYO Konaklama İşletmeciliği Bölümü 4. sınıfındaki 63 öğrenciyle yapılmıştır. Ön test sonucunda Cronbach's Alfa katsayısının 0,70'in üzerinde olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bunun üzerine uygulama aşamasına geçilmiştir. Anket formları BTİOYO ve ÇTİOYO'da eğitime devam eden 550 öğrencinin (3. ve 4. Sınıf) 330 ile elden dağıtılarak doldurtulabilmektedir.

Verilerin analizinde iki aşamalı bir yaklaşım izlenmiştir. Öncelikle doğrulayıcı faktör analizi yapılmış ve örneklem yeterliliği değerlendirilmiştir. İkinci aşamada ise yapısal eşitlik modeli test edilmiş ve çok boyutlu modelin geçerli bir model olup

olmadığı iyilik uyum değerleriyle analiz edilmiştir. Demografik değişkenlerin değerlendirilmesinde ise frekans ve yüzdelere dayanarak yararlanılmıştır.

#### *Araştırmanın bulguları*

Staj sorunları ölçeği ve turizm mesleğine bakış ölçeği ilgili ölçme modelini tahmin edebilmek için öncelikle doğrulayıcı faktör analizi (DFA) yapılması öngörülmüştür. Bunun için öncelikle çok değişkenli normallik varsayımı değerlendirilmiştir. Ancak bulgular, ölçme modeli ile ilgili çok değişkenli normallik varsayımının sağlanmadığını gösterdiğinden maksimum olabilirlik yöntemine göre analiz yapılmıştır. Bu yöntemle yapılan değerlendirmede ölçme modelinin iyilik uyum değerleri: ki-kare/sd 4,85, RMSEA 0,10, NFI 0,878, CFI 0,899, GFI 0,934, AGFI 0,875, PNFI 0,596, IFI 0,900 ve RFI 0,820 olarak belirlenmiştir. İyilik uyum değerlerine bakıldığında modelin kabul edilebilir model olduğu görülmektedir.

İraksak ve yakınsaklık geçerliliği için Fornell ve Larcker (1981)'in önerdiği metodoloji kullanılmıştır. Buna göre, Tablo 1 ve Tablo 2'de görülmekte olan değerler ölçeklerin iraksak ve yakınsak geçerlilikleri ile ilgili tüm koşulları sağladığı görülmektedir. Diğer yandan tüm faktörlere ait cronbach's alfa değerlerinin 0.70 değerinden büyük olması ölçeklerin güvenilirliğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Hipotezlerin test edilmesinde yapısal denklem modelleme tekniği kullanılmıştır. Hipotetik ilişkileri kapsayan yapısal modelin LISREL programı ile analizinden elde edilen değerler ( $X^2/df$ : 4,85; GFI: 0,93, AGFI: 0,88; CFI: 0,90) modelin veriye uygunluğuna işaret etmektedir. Değişkenler arasındaki ilişkilere ait standardize edilmiş parametre tahminleri ve modelin değişkenlerdeki açıklayıcılık gücü Tablo 3'de toplulaştırılmıştır. Tablo 3'de de görüldüğü üzere mesleğe bakış açısı, sektörde çalışma niyetini pozitif yönde ve anlamlı bir şekilde etkilemektedir. Bu noktadan hareketle  $H_3$  hipotezinin geçerliği kanıtlanmış bulunmaktadır. Staj sorunları ile sektörde çalışma niyeti arasında anlamlı ve negatif yönlü bir ilişki bulunduğu dair  $H_2$  hipotezi ise reddedilmiştir. Staj sorunları ve mesleğe bakış açısı değişkenleri sektörde çalışma niyeti değişkenindeki varyansın %34,2'sini açıklayabilmektedir. Staj sorunları, mesleğe bakış açısını negatif yönde ve anlamlı bir şekilde etkilemektedir. Ulaşılan bulgular  $H_1$  hipotezinin geçerli olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Staj sorunları değişkeni, mesleğe bakış açısı değişkenindeki varyansın %25,6'sını açıklayabilmektedir.

#### *Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri*

Aday işgören olarak nitelendirilebilecek turizm eğitimi alan stajyer öğrencilerin stajlarda yaşadıkları sorunların temel olarak "sektörel bakış ile ilgili sorunlar", "uygulama ile ilgili sorunlar", "olanaklar ile ilgili sorunlar" ve "sistem ile ilgili sorunlar" alt başlıklarında değerlendirilebileceği ortaya çıkmıştır. Yaşanan sorunlara rağmen öğrencilerin staja bakışlarının olumlu olması ve stajın yararları konusunda öğrencilerin tamamına yakınının olumlu görüş bildirmesi dikkat çekici bir bulgudur. Bu sonuç, turizm eğitimi alan bilinçli bir kitlenin varlığını göstermektedir. Araştırma bulguları, stajın insan ilişkileri, koordinasyonlu çalışma ve mesleki açıdan kendine güven kazandırma konusunda önemli katkılarının bulunduğunu, yaşanan olumsuzlukların ise mesleğe ve turizm işletmelerine olan güveni azalttığını



göstermektedir. Araştırma bulguları, staj sorunlarının mesleğe bakış açısını doğrudan etkilediğini ortaya koymuştur. Staj sorunları ile turizm sektöründe çalışma niyeti arasında doğrudan bir ilişki bulunamamıştır. Fakat staj sorunları, turizm sektöründe çalışma niyetini mesleğe bakış açısı üzerinden etkilemektedir. Dolayısıyla mesleğe bakış açısının, turizm sektöründe çalışma niyetini etkileyen önemli bir aracı değişken olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Turizm işletmelerinin stajyer öğrencilere bakış açısıyla ilgili sorunların azaltılması için eğitim kurumları ile işbirliği yapılmalıdır. Turizm işletmelerinin yöneticilerinin staj yapan öğrencilerin eğitim kurumlarında uygulanan zorunlu staj nedeniyle işletmelerinde bulduklarını ve bakış açılarının buna göre şekillendiğini bilmeleri gerekmektedir. Bu nedenle yöneticilerin, stajyer öğrencilere daha sıcak bir yaklaşım sergilemeleri daha olumlu sonuçlar doğuracak ve öğrencilerin işletmeleri benimsemesi kolaylaşacaktır. Stajın, edinilen teorik bilgilerin pekiştirilmesi açısından önemi unutulmamalı, turizm eğitimi veren üniversiteler ile turizm işletmeleri ortaklaşa müfredat geliştirmelidirler. Bunun yanında stajyer öğrencilere sağlanacak ekonomik hakların da garanti altına alınması önemlidir. Stajyer öğrencilerin yurt dışındaki örnekleri gibi işyerleri ile ilişkilerini yürütebilecek stajyerlik ajansları kurulabilir. Belli bölgelerde kurulan bu ajanslar, işyerleri ile stajyer öğrenciler konusunda köprü görevi üstlenebilir. Bu ajanslar aracılığıyla, sorun yaşanan işletmeler belirlenerek bu işletmelere stajyer gönderilmesi uygulamasına son verilebilir. Araştırma zaman ve maliyet açısından Balıkesir ve Çanakkale illerindeki Turizm İşletmeciliği ve Otelcilik Yüksekokulu 3. ve 4.sınıf öğrencileriyle sınırlı tutulmuş ve araştırmadan elde edilen veriler bu şekilde sağlanmıştır. Bu araştırmanın katılımcılarının sayısındaki sınırlılıktan dolayı sonuç ve önerilerin sadece bu örneklem grubuna yönelik genellemesinin yapılması daha doğru olacaktır. Üniversitelerde turizm eğitimi alan öğrencilerin staj sorunları ile turizm mesleğine bakış ve turizm sektöründeki çalışma niyetleri arasındaki etkileşimler daha büyük çalışma gruplarıyla gerçekleştirilebilir ve çalışmanın genelleme düzeyi artırılabilir. Bununla birlikte staj yapmayan öğrencilerin mesleğe bakışı ve çalışma niyetleri ile staj yapan öğrencilerin karşılaştırılmasına yönelik yapılacak çalışmalarda yazına önemli katkılar sağlayabilir.

*Anahtar Sözcükler:* staj sorunları, çalışma niyeti, yükseköğretim, turizm sektörü