

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The hospitality and tourism industry remains one of the world's most rapidly growing and powerful, economic and social, industries. As reported by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2023), "the travel and tourism sector contributed 9.2% to global GDP and accounted for over 330 million jobs worldwide," the testament to its pivotal role to the world's growth. Similarly, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023) also reaffirms that "tourism is a key driver for economic growth, inclusive development, and environmental sustainability."

The hospitality Industry covering accommodation, food and beverage, transport, and recreation has evolved in response to growing mobility worldwide and consumer demands. "Today's hospitality is more than just service; it's about creating immersive experiences that leave a lasting impression," asserts the International Hospitality Institute (2022). This includes culture integration, personalization, and emotional connection in guest services.

This shift towards innovation offers priceless learning opportunities for students. According to Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education (Brown & Tesone, 2022), "real-life internships expose students to industry standards and encourage the development of key soft skills such as adaptability, leadership, and critical thinking." These are priceless in meeting the demands of modern hospitality, where speed, accuracy, and creativity are especially crucial in the kitchen environment.

As a student in Hospitality from Universitas Multimedia Nusantara, the writer is compelled to enter the Food and Beverage Production industry. The writer's aspiration is to begin this quest through an international internship, ideally in a hotel renowned for culinary innovation and excellence. Employing in such an environment offers the aspect of learning from master chefs, working under high-

stress kitchens, and exploring global culinary standards. As Ottenbacher & Harrington (2021) argue, “exposure to international food environments increases cultural sensitivity and professional sophistication among hospitality students.”

The writer’s future goal is to become an executive chef and own a restaurant. To achieve this, the writer has to recognize the importance of becoming technically and managerially excellent. An international internship will not only make me a better chef but also grow leadership, creativity, and resilience. Sigala (2022) concurs that “transformational learning in international internships fosters entrepreneurial thinking and broadens professional perspectives.”.

1.2. Purpose

The purpose of this Internship Program is to obtain hands-on exposure in a real-life professional hospitality environment. As a recent Hospitality graduate from Universitas Multimedia Nusantara, the writer wishes to implement and apply the acquired knowledge and skills obtained during the previous four semesters. The W Hotel Hong Kong Internship Program will also help the writer gain better insight into the international hospitality industry and mentally prepare him or her for a career in the Food and Beverage Production department. The experience enabled the writer to:

a. Adopt a World-Class Culinary Environment

Interning at The W Hotel Hong Kong exposed the writer to the practices and standards of one of the world’s most iconic hotels. As part of a high-performing kitchen, the writer learned to see how first-rate service, precision, and creativity combine to produce extraordinary guest experiences.

b. Develop Technical and Operating Capabilities

Throughout the internship, the writer honed basic kitchen skills like food preparation, sanitizing, organizing stations, and controlling time. Practical training from expert chefs provided valuable exposure to various world cuisines and advanced cooking methods utilized in five-star hotels.

c. Develop Professional Attitude and Work Ethics

The fast-paced and challenging environment at The W Hotel helped the writer develop extensive discipline, responsibility, and meticulousness. These traits are essential to building a long-term career in the culinary sector, especially in high-standard hospitality settings.

d. Develop an International Network and Cultural Sensitivity

By working together with professionals who have different cultural and culinary backgrounds, the writer succeeded in promoting cultural exchange and creating meaningful relationships. Such international interaction and shared experience not only enriched the writer's writing skills but also opened potential paths for future international career building.

1.3. Period and Procedures

The Internship Program is mandatory for all Hotel Operations students during their fifth semester and is one of the graduate requirements. The internship Program takes six months, from 21 July 2025 to 20 January 2026, with a minimum of 800 working hours or 100 working days. During this period, students have the freedom to choose any department according to their choice and wanted career. The writer chose the Kitchen Department (Food and Beverage Production) because of extreme fascination with food arts and long-time desire to become an executive chef.

Before proceeding with the Internship Program, the writer must be an active student, having acquired at least 75 SKS, and attaining a minimum GPA of 2.75. Having accomplished these, the writer attended the mandatory Internship Briefing conducted by the university. This briefing laid out the whole process for the Internship, from administrative procedures to practical preparations such as how to make a CV, conduct oneself well during interviews, and write professional emails and cover letters.

After completing the briefing, the writer began preparing the documents required and following the internship procedure:

- a. The writer drafted the Recommendation Letter, Curriculum Vitae, and Cover Letter to be sent to the writer's advisor and Head of Hotel Operations Program to be signed.
- b. The Recommendation Letter was then signed by the Head of the Hotel Operations Program by 1-2 working days.
- a. The writer submits the Cover Letter, Curriculum Vitae (CV) and the Recommendation Letter to W Hongkong HRD through email on 29 April 2025
- b. The writer received the response on 2 May 2025 and requested the first interview using Microsoft Teams.
- c. The first interview was conducted on 4 May 2025 with Ms. Ho, the Human Resources.
- d. The second Interview was conducted on 20 May 2025 with Chef Tony, the representative of the Food and Beverage Production department.
- e. The writer received an official letter of acceptance by W Hotel on 22 May 2025 and requested documents for the Internship Program.

