

## Psychological Dynamics of Travel Business Students' Adaptation to Internships: An Interpretive Study in Indonesia

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### Abstract

Industrial internships are a key component of vocational higher education, particularly in the tourism sector, as they bridge academic learning and workplace practice. However, students often encounter challenges when adapting to professional environments. This study aims to examine the psychological dynamics shaping students' adaptation to industrial internships. This research adopts a small-scale qualitative interpretive approach based on in-depth structured interviews with 10 travel business students undertaking internships at travel agencies in Yogyakarta and Bali, Indonesia. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns in students' experiences. The findings reveal two major thematic groups influencing adaptation: facilitators and barriers. Facilitating factors include supportive work environments, positive interpersonal relationships, and clear internship structures, which enhance students' confidence and sense of belonging. In contrast, barriers such as unclear job instructions, strict organizational cultures, logistical constraints, and language challenges generate stress and hinder adjustment. The adaptation process generally unfolds over one to two months, with an initial phase of role clarification followed by deeper social and cultural integration into the workplace. These findings highlight the importance of organizational and psychological support in internship design. While limited in scale, this study provides insights into how tourism students navigate early professional experiences and underscores the need for structured and supportive internship environments in the tourism industry.

**Keywords:** tourism internships; student adaptation; psychological dynamics; vocational education; qualitative study; Indonesia



## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Industrial internships constitute a fundamental component of vocational higher education, particularly in the tourism sector, as they function as a bridge between classroom-based learning and real-world professional practice (Wan et al. 2013; Aqli et al. 2019). In tourism education, internships are not only intended to enhance students' technical competencies but also to foster soft skills such as communication, adaptability, and service orientation, which are critical in customer-oriented industries. Recent studies highlight that experiential learning through internships significantly improves students' employability, professional identity formation, and readiness to navigate dynamic workplace environments (Alp et al. 2022; Ariansyah et al. 2024).

However, the transition from academic settings to professional workplaces is often accompanied by significant adjustment challenges. Particularly in the tourism industry—characterized by high interpersonal interaction, unpredictable work conditions, and strong service expectations—students frequently encounter psychological pressures during their early internship period. Recent research emphasizes that adaptation to internships is not merely a technical process but also a psychological and social one, involving emotional regulation, identity negotiation, and workplace integration (Tan et al. 2022; Surawattanasakul and Kiratipaisarl 2024). These dynamics are especially relevant in developing country contexts such as Indonesia, where organizational cultures, infrastructure, and workplace expectations vary widely.

Despite the growing body of literature on internships, existing studies in Indonesia have largely focused on outcomes such as work readiness (Munfaati 2017; Afriyulaniza 2019), student satisfaction (Sembiring et al. 2020), and institutional or

industry support (Fatah 2021). While these studies provide important insights, they tend to overlook the processual and psychological dimensions of how students adapt to internship environments. In particular, limited attention has been given to how students experience and negotiate psychological challenges during the early stages of workplace integration, as well as how these experiences shape the trajectory and duration of their adaptation.

Addressing this gap is important for both academic and practical reasons. From a theoretical perspective, understanding adaptation as a psychological process allows for a more nuanced interpretation of internship experiences beyond measurable outcomes. From a practical standpoint, insights into students' psychological dynamics can inform the design of more supportive and structured internship programs in the tourism sector. Therefore, this study aims to explore the psychological dynamics that facilitate or hinder students' adaptation during industrial internships and to identify the typical duration and phases of this adaptation process.

### Research Objectives

This study addresses two primary research questions: (1) How do the psychological dynamics experienced by students during industrial internships influence their adaptation process? and (2) What is the typical duration required for students to adapt to their new environment successfully during industrial internships?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Internships are widely recognized as a key mechanism for enhancing students' employability, particularly in vocational and tourism education, where experiential learning plays a central role in bridging academic knowledge and professional practice (Silva et al. 2018; Ariansyah et al. 2024). Beyond technical skill development, internships contribute to the formation of professional identity and

workplace readiness by exposing students to real organizational settings and expectations. However, while much of the existing literature emphasizes the outcomes of internships, less attention has been paid to the process through which students adapt to these environments.

Adaptation to the workplace is a complex and multidimensional process, often conceptualized in terms of workplace socialization, where newcomers learn the norms, values, and expected behaviors of an organization (Ashforth and Saks 2017). This process involves not only cognitive adjustment—such as understanding roles and tasks—but also emotional and social adaptation, including building relationships and managing expectations. In internship contexts, students frequently experience role ambiguity, particularly when job expectations are unclear or inconsistent across supervisors, which can increase uncertainty and reduce confidence (Lomanto 2012). Such ambiguity has been identified as a key barrier to effective adaptation, especially during the early stages of workplace entry.

In addition, the adaptation process is closely linked to psychological stress and coping mechanisms. Interns often face pressures related to performance evaluation, customer interaction, and organizational demands and values, particularly in service-oriented industries such as tourism (Seyitoğlu 2019; Djabbar et al. 2025). These pressures may lead to emotional strain, especially when combined with unfamiliar work cultures or logistical challenges. Recent studies suggest that successful adaptation depends on students' ability to develop psychological resilience, defined as the capacity to cope with stress and adjust positively to new environments (Tan et al. 2022; Surawattanasakul and Kiratipaisarl 2024). A supportive work environment and clear communication have been shown to reduce stress and facilitate smoother adaptation.

Another important dimension of adaptation is its temporal nature. Adaptation

is not a one-time event but a staged process that unfolds over time, often beginning with initial role adjustment and progressing toward deeper social integration within the organization (Baard et al. 2013). However, despite recognition of adaptation as a dynamic process, empirical studies rarely examine how long adaptation takes or how students experience different stages of adjustment during internships.

Although prior research has provided valuable insights into internship benefits and challenges, several gaps remain. First, there is limited understanding of internship adaptation as a psychological process, particularly in terms of how students experience and negotiate emotional and cognitive challenges. Second, existing studies rarely explore the temporal dimension of adaptation, including how adaptation unfolds over time. Third, research focusing on tourism internship contexts in developing countries such as Indonesia remains scarce, despite the sector's unique characteristics, including high interpersonal demands and variable organizational conditions. This study addresses these gaps by examining the psychological dynamics shaping students' adaptation during industrial internships in the tourism sector and by identifying the duration and phases of the adaptation process.

## METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative interpretive design to explore the psychological dynamics shaping students' adaptation during industrial internships. An interpretive approach was chosen because the study seeks to understand how participants subjectively experience, interpret, and make meaning of their adaptation processes within specific workplace contexts. This approach is particularly suitable for examining psychological adaptation, which involves complex emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measures.

The research was conducted at 10 travel agencies in Yogyakarta and Bali, Indonesia, which were selected purposively due to their role as internship providers for students in the travel business program. Purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants who met the following criteria: (1) students aged 20–21, (2)

currently enrolled in a travel business study program, and (3) having completed at least one month of their internship. These criteria ensured that participants had sufficient exposure to the internship environment to meaningfully reflect on their adaptation experiences. A total of 10 participants were included in the study (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** The Participant List

No	Participants Initial	City Origin	Internship Location
1	A	Banjarnegara	Yogyakarta
2	B	Cilacap	Yogyakarta
3	C	Magelang	Yogyakarta
4	D	Lampung	Bali
5	E	Kulon Progo	Yogyakarta
6	F	Yogyakarta	Yogyakarta
7	G	Yogyakarta	Yogyakarta
8	H	Cilacap	Yogyakarta
9	I	Yogyakarta	Yogyakarta
10	J	Palembang	Yogyakarta

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted via the Zoom platform between February and June 2023. An interview guide was used to ensure consistency across participants, while still allowing flexibility for probing and follow-up questions to capture

richer insights into participants’ psychological experiences. The interview questions focused on two main areas: (1) psychological dynamics during the internship and (2) the adaptation process over time (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** List of Structured Interview Questions

No	Section	List of Questions
1	Psychological Dynamics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Please describe the travel where your internship takes place.</li> <li>2) What are the aspects you appreciate the most and find unfavorable about your internship location?</li> </ol>
2	Adaptation process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What were your emotions throughout the initial week of your internship?</li> <li>2) Does the internship include an introductory orientation or training at the beginning?</li> <li>3) What is your general impression after one month of internship?</li> <li>4) When do you feel most at ease at your internship site?</li> <li>5) What helps you settle in at the internship location rapidly?</li> </ol>

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the six-phase framework of Braun and Clarke (2019). An inductive approach was employed,

allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than being imposed a priori. The analysis involved several stages: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated

reading of interview transcripts, (2) initial coding to identify meaningful data segments, (3) grouping codes into potential themes, (4) reviewing and refining themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the final report (Braun and Clarke 2019).

To enhance analytical rigor and trustworthiness, several strategies were applied. First, coding was conducted systematically by the researcher, with iterative refinement of codes and themes to ensure consistency. Second, peer debriefing was employed through discussions with academic colleagues to review coding decisions and thematic interpretations. Third, thick description was used in presenting findings to ensure transparency and allow readers to assess the credibility of interpretations. Ethical considerations were upheld throughout the research process. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by using participant initials and removing identifiable information.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Psychological Dynamics Influencing Adaptation During Industrial Internships

The psychological dynamics experienced by students during industrial internships significantly influence their adaptation process. Several participants expressed appreciation for a supportive work environment, which plays a key role in promoting positive adaptation. For instance, Participant A highlighted the internship setting where both supervisors and staff provided unwavering support, treating interns as "junior trip advisors," fostering their growth and sense of value. In contrast, Participant B pointed out occasional high levels of pressure following task evaluations, which created a sense of dissatisfaction, suggesting that such stressors can hinder the adaptation process.

Participants also experienced challenges in adapting to unclear or conflicting instructions. Participant C discussed confusion caused by discrepancies in

directives from different levels of authority, such as Human Resources (HRD), supervisors, and directors. This inconsistency made it difficult for interns to understand their roles and tasks clearly. Similarly, Participant F mentioned the excessive strictness of the corporate culture, particularly in enforcing discipline, which, while promoting structure, created discomfort for the intern.

Furthermore, environmental factors were a notable influence on adaptation. Participant E expressed frustration with the remote location of the internship, where unreliable electronic communication services posed challenges, and Participant H described difficulties caused by the long distance between the internship site and the boarding house, along with traffic congestion. The location of the internship site was also a concern for Participant I, who mentioned the unpredictability of working hours and the frustration of overtime work without specific tasks to complete.

However, certain positive experiences helped mitigate these challenges. For example, Participant D found joy in touring Nusa Penida, appreciating the refreshing experience provided by the natural beauty of the area, which alleviated some of the stress associated with work. Similarly, Participant F highlighted the opportunity to cultivate professional contacts and enhance communication skills during MICE events, an aspect that contributed positively to their internship experience.

Overall, participants' accounts indicate that both supportive and challenging conditions shaped their adaptation experiences during internships. Several participants described how supportive supervisors, friendly colleagues, and clear guidance contributed to feelings of comfort and confidence in the workplace. In contrast, others reported difficulties related to unclear instructions, strict organizational rules, and logistical constraints, which created confusion, stress, and discomfort during their early internship period.

### **Duration of Adaptation to the Industrial Internship Environment**

The duration required for students to successfully adapt to a new environment during industrial internships varies, but most participants reported that the adaptation process typically takes between one to three months. In the first month, many participants noted that they began to feel more comfortable with their work environment and the tasks assigned. For example, Participant A mentioned that after one month, they were accustomed to the company's work pace, deadlines, and operational procedures, and began to enjoy their tasks.

During the first month, other participants, such as Participant B, experienced ease in adaptation due to the supportive atmosphere and strong sense of camaraderie at the internship site. They felt involved in social activities with colleagues, which contributed to creating a comfortable environment that supported their adaptation process.

As participants entered the second month, their adaptation continued to improve. Participant C stated that by the second month, they had gained a deeper understanding of their tasks and were more familiar with the staff, which made them feel more comfortable and confident in performing their duties. Similarly, Participant E felt fully acclimated to the work environment, company culture, and working hours by the beginning of the second month and felt accepted by their colleagues.

Some participants reported that they only felt fully integrated after two to three months. For example, Participant D

mentioned that within two to three months, they had gained a solid understanding of the work environment and colleagues and began to feel comfortable with the situation. Likewise, Participant F felt greater comfort by the end of the second month, thanks to social activities outside of work, which further strengthened their relationships with colleagues and helped accelerate their adaptation process.

Overall, these findings suggest that most students need about one to two months to adapt to their internship environment, with the second month being a critical period for most participants in terms of task understanding and social interaction at the workplace.

These contrasting experiences highlight the variability of internship environments and how students navigated different workplace conditions during their adaptation process.

### **Discussions**

This study explored the psychological dynamics experienced by vocational higher education students during their industrial internships and how these dynamics influenced their adaptation processes. The adaptation process is inherently challenging, and this study found that it is shaped by several key psychological factors, including the work environment, organizational culture, clarity of instructions, work-time balance, and language proficiency. The results show that while most interns are able to adapt within one to two months, there are distinct phases of adaptation that involve both task-related competencies and emotional adjustment.

**Psychological Dynamics Interns Experience****Table 3.** Significant Statement Extraction of Psychological Dynamics

<b>Significant Statement</b>	<b>Extraction</b>
<p>... what I like the most is the internship environment where both the superiors from the office and the employees are all supportive, and everyone supports the interns to develop, even there we interns are not considered as interns but are considered as Tripadvisor Juniors... Then what I don't like about the environment My internship was because it was probably the European market, then most of the programs, if not English, were German, so my friends and I were quite struggling... (Participant A page 1 line 10)</p>	<p>An internship environment with supportive employees is preferred</p> <p>The requirement to speak a foreign language is a challenge</p>
<p>What we don't like is that sometimes the pressure is quite intense, especially after we have done something that will be evaluated... (Participant B page 1 line 18)</p>	<p>Great work pressure becomes a challenge</p>
<p>Maybe if it's uncomfortable... about this, sir, there are differences... orders from superiors. Maybe here we have HRD, Supervisors and Directors, and if they give orders... everything will be different. .... Well, that's where there's confusion between the interns who are given the assignment (Participant C page 1 line 13)</p>	<p>Unclear task instructions are frowned upon</p>
<p>What I like the most, sir, is probably to tour Nusa Penida because the nature of Nusa Penida is beautiful, sir, so this is something... which is new, sir, especially since I'm from Jogja... and what people don't like is related to the way people work. -people, some people can't control their emotions... (Participant D page 1 line 14)</p>	<p>The experience of having the opportunity to visit a new place is loved</p> <p>The friendly attitude of co-workers is a consideration for comfort</p>
<p>... the disadvantage of my internship is that e...it is located in a village where e... in terms of e... communication services are still disrupted.. (Participant E page 1 line 14)</p>	<p>Limited communication access hinders performance</p>
<p>What I like the most is that the events that are often held are MICE, so far the clients handled are VIPs. .... There I can gain relationships, learn communication to provide good service to VIPs. .... What I don't like is that the corporate culture is good but in my opinion it is quite strict regarding discipline (Paritisan F page 1 line 9)</p>	<p>New experiences during internships are of interest</p> <p>The strict work culture is a challenge</p>
<p>What I don't like about the location of my internship is that it is quite far from my boarding house and I have to go through a road that is often congested and has lots of large vehicles like trucks</p>	<p>Access that is far from accommodation is an obstacle</p>

Significant Statement	Extraction
and tourist buses passing by. (Participant H page 1 line 6)	
As for those who, er, don't like it the most, maybe... at my internship, I like to... wait for the time... the worker should have gone home at... five o'clock, but later it turns out, eee..., the worker it will be overtime until six o'clock even though there is nothing to do there, like that. (Participant I page 1 line 20)	Working time discipline is something that is preferred
.. they can be said to have work-life balance.. So far, for things I don't like, that's probably it from me, sometimes in the internship system, the interns are not organized like that. (Participant J page 1 line 15)	Work-life balance is preferred A clear apprenticeship system is preferred

Based on Table 3, interns' ability to adjust psychologically to their new work environments is critical for both their success and the overall outcome of the internship. The factors influencing this process can be broadly divided into facilitators and barriers. Facilitators include a supportive work environment, a well-structured internship curriculum, clear job roles, and opportunities for personal growth. In contrast, barriers such as strict organizational cultures, unclear job instructions, work pressure, limited facilities, and the need for foreign language proficiency can significantly hinder the adaptation process.

#### 1. Supportive Environment and Psychological Empowerment

A supportive work environment appears to play an important role in shaping interns' adaptation experiences. Participants who felt valued and accepted, such as Participant A—who was referred to as a “junior trip advisor”—described greater confidence and a stronger sense of belonging in the workplace. These experiences resonate with the notion of psychological empowerment, which has been associated with positive workplace adjustment (Saidah and Muhid 2021). In contrast, some participants reported that limited communication and challenging interpersonal relationships contributed to feelings of

discomfort and emotional strain. For instance, Participants D and G described situations in which negative interactions affected their ability to feel at ease during the internship. Such experiences are consistent with previous findings suggesting that workplace stressors may hinder adaptation and contribute to emotional exhaustion (Abdullah and Nor Azam 2021).

#### 2. Structured Internship Curriculum and Clarity

The clarity and structure of the internship curriculum are essential for reducing uncertainty and enhancing psychological well-being. Interns like Participant J, who experienced frustration due to unclear task assignments, faced difficulties in their adaptation, leading to confusion and stress. In contrast, interns who had clear job roles and expectations, even if diverse, such as Participant A, demonstrated a smoother transition and greater psychological readiness. Clear expectations not only improve job satisfaction but also help build interns' confidence and psychological resilience, facilitating their adaptation (Akomaning 2019).

#### 3. Work-Time Discipline and Psychological Well-being

The balance between work and rest significantly impacts interns'

psychological well-being. Participants like J, who had clear work hours and sufficient rest, found it easier to adjust to their new roles. Research by Surawattanasakul & Kiratipaisarl (2024) supports the idea that a clear work-rest balance correlates with job satisfaction and resilience. On the other hand, interns like Participant I, who faced forced overtime or unclear work hours, reported feelings of stress and frustration, which negatively affected their ability to adapt to the workplace and undermined their psychological resilience.

#### 4. Strict Organizational Culture and Emotional Strain

A strict or highly disciplined organizational culture can cause emotional distress that impedes the adaptation process. Participant F, for example, described experiencing a “shock” during her first week, where the high levels of discipline affected her ability to settle in. According to Tiomantara & Adiputra (2021), high demands for discipline and adherence to rules can induce anxiety and stress, which in turn slows down adaptation. However, organizations that foster a more supportive culture—where interns feel they have room for growth and learning—help interns develop emotional resilience. Participant F's ability to cope with the challenges of interacting with VIP guests despite initial discomfort is an example of how a supportive environment fosters psychological growth (Saidah and Muhid 2021).

#### 5. Unclear Instructions and Cognitive Load

Interns who are faced with unclear or conflicting instructions, such as Participant C, experience cognitive overload (Lomanto 2012). This mental strain can significantly impede their ability to adapt, as

interns must expend additional cognitive resources trying to interpret vague instructions, increasing stress levels and hindering their focus on task mastery. Cognitive overload disrupts the adaptation process, leading to lower self-confidence and heightened anxiety in the workplace, making it difficult for interns to acclimate to their new environment.

#### 6. Physical and Logistical Challenges

Physical factors, such as the distance from the internship location and poor infrastructure, also contribute to psychological strain. Participants like H, who had to navigate long commutes and congested roads, reported increased stress due to logistical challenges. These stressors can reduce focus and make it harder for interns to perform well in their roles. As Hussien & La Lopa (2018) point out, such logistical challenges can delay the adaptation process, emphasizing the need for organizations to consider work-life balance when supporting interns.

#### 7. Foreign Language Skills and Confidence

Foreign language proficiency is another important factor influencing psychological adjustment. Interns who were required to use languages they were not proficient in, such as German (as reported by Participant A), often experienced anxiety and stress, which undermined their confidence and hindered their adaptation. Language barriers are not just task-related challenges; they also affect interns' self-efficacy, making them feel unprepared and less confident in their roles. In contrast, those who were confident in their language abilities experienced higher self-efficacy, enabling them to adapt more quickly to their roles (Idrus et al. 2010).

**The Adaptation Process in Industrial Internships****Table 4.** Significant Statement Extraction of Adaptation Process

<b>Significant Statement</b>	<b>Extraction</b>
<p>After one month, I started to get used to the company's work tempo, the deadlines given by the company, then the company's way of working, when an email was sent in the morning, then how many hours did it take to reply to the email to create a program and quote? After one month, I started to enjoy it. (Participant A page 2 line 8)</p>	<p>Adapting in the first month is characterized by getting used to the rhythm of work</p>
<p>In fact, in the first month you feel comfortable because here it seems like there are no boundaries between interns and seniors, and here everyone is like family. And usually, we have lunch together near the kitchen and there we chat a lot and joke around, ... here we really value openness so that if there is something we immediately tell the person. And that's what makes it even more...comfortable. (Participant B page 2 line 21)</p>	<p>Adapt in the first month because there are no barriers between permanent employees and interns</p>
<p>Maybe in the second month when we get to know the internship better. So, we already understand what our job actually is there, and we also know more about the employees. So, when we do activities we are much more comfortable. (Participant C page 2 line 4)</p>	<p>Start adapting in the second month when you get to know and be close to permanent employees</p>
<p>2 months to 3 months... so I already understand the characters of the people in the company, I'm starting to get used to catcalling, so I feel like I'm already comfortable, I understand the situation so it's no longer a headache... (Participant D page 2 line 12)</p>	<p>Start adapting in the second month because you already know the employee's character</p>
<p>I really felt comfortable when... in March after... there was a bonding event e.. getting to know each other e.. getting to know superiors, getting to know e... co-workers of the tour leader and e.. former e.. previous admin workers who still... there is still contact from the office and so we know that e... the AB Plate working system is like this. ...second month huh (Participant E page 2 line 11)</p>	<p>Started to adapt in the second month because more understanding boss's character</p>
<p>You could say I was comfortable at the end of February to March. So entering the second month until now I am completely comfortable with all environments. I feel like I have adapted to the employees, work culture and working hours... I also feel accepted by my fellow employees, I often chat, play, even eat together outside and that makes me comfortable. (Participant F page 2 line 7)</p>	<p>Started to adapt in the second month because he already understood the work culture at the company</p>

Significant Statement	Extraction
<p>During the first 1 - 1.5 months because they were treated well and given appropriate work standards starting from handling industrial visits, provision from Gama Multi, and various new knowledge and practices related to ticketing, reservations and bookings. (Participant G page 1 line 31)</p>	<p>Started to adapt in the first month because he was involved in carrying out operational tasks</p>
<p>Lately, yes, I'm not bored, I'm richer, I know I'll be finished soon, I feel like I want to finish quickly, I'm not bored like that..., I feel like I'm at the point of comparing myself to my friends... how come it's really good to be able to guide, you've got a lot of knowledge to offer. That's how it is, right, but we are constantly struggling to prepare the visa, so we feel like we want to, well, it feels like we want to finish it quickly, not bored but more like tired... (Participant J page 2 line 33)</p>	<p>Feeling bored in the last month because not having received assignments that have been done by other friends at other internships</p>

The adaptation process is a critical component of any internship experience. As interns transition into unfamiliar environments, they must navigate both task-related and emotional challenges. Based on Table 4, this study demonstrates that the adaptation process unfolds over time and is shaped by various psychological dynamics. While the overall duration of adaptation varies, the findings reveal that most interns are able to adapt fully within one to two months, with emotional adjustment often taking longer than task-related adaptation.

The study found that adaptation timelines differed across participants, with some interns, like Participant B, adjusting relatively quickly within the first month. Participant B reported feeling comfortable in the first month, describing how social activities such as shared lunches helped foster a sense of belonging and ease: "*Usually, we have lunch together near the kitchen and there we chat a lot and joke around.*" This indicates that a supportive and inclusive organizational culture, particularly through social bonding activities, can facilitate the adaptation process, making it easier for interns to integrate into the team.

However, for most interns, the adaptation process extended into the second month. This was primarily due to the need for a deeper understanding of the company culture, interpersonal dynamics, and job-specific expectations. For example, Participant D required additional time to adjust, especially due to external stressors like inappropriate behavior from colleagues in Bali. Despite initial discomfort, Participant D eventually adapted by understanding the behavior was not meant personally, which highlights how emotional resilience plays a key role in adaptation.

The findings suggest that the adaptation process can be divided into two distinct stages. During the first month, interns primarily focus on grasping the rhythm of the workplace, familiarizing themselves with operational tasks, and establishing their place in the work environment. Successful adaptation at this stage is often marked by increased confidence in handling responsibilities and developing rapport with colleagues. Participant A's experience exemplifies this: "*After a month, I became accustomed to the firm's work pace, the deadlines set by the company, and the company's operational procedures.*" This phase is characterized by role

clarification and initial confidence-building.

By the second month, interns begin to integrate more deeply into the organizational culture. They focus on understanding colleagues' personalities, leadership styles, and how to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics. This phase is crucial for emotional integration into the team. Participants C and E reported feeling emotionally connected to their colleagues, which played a significant role in their successful adaptation. Participant G also emphasized how emotional support from senior colleagues facilitated their comfort and adaptation: *"I received good attention and explanations while working."*

The social and emotional climate within the workplace also shapes how interns experience and navigate adaptation. Positive interpersonal relationships, as reported by Participants C and E, contributed to a sense of psychological comfort and belonging. Conversely, negative or unsafe workplace interactions created additional emotional challenges. One particularly important example is Participant D's experience of catcalling in the internship environment in Bali. This experience should not be understood merely as a minor discomfort, but rather as a form of gendered workplace interaction that can affect feelings of safety, dignity, and emotional well-being.

Such experiences may place an additional psychological burden on interns, requiring them to engage in emotional coping strategies beyond typical workplace adjustment. While Participant D eventually reported becoming accustomed to the situation, this should be interpreted cautiously, as adaptation in this context may reflect normalization of discomfort rather than full psychological adjustment. This finding highlights the need to consider issues of workplace safety and gender sensitivity when examining internship adaptation, particularly in tourism settings where interactions with diverse actors are frequent.

The study reinforces the importance of organizational culture in shaping

interns' adaptation processes, particularly within tourism workplaces that are highly dependent on interpersonal interaction and service delivery. Participants' experiences suggest that interns placed in supportive and inclusive environments—such as that described by Participant B, where colleagues interacted in a “family-like” manner—tended to feel more comfortable and were able to integrate more quickly into daily operations. In contrast, interns who encountered unclear expectations, hierarchical communication, or negative interpersonal dynamics reported slower adjustment and greater emotional strain.

In the context of tourism, where interns are often directly involved in customer-facing roles such as handling clients, coordinating travel arrangements, or participating in MICE activities, the ability to adapt quickly is closely linked to service quality and professional performance. This suggests that organizational culture in tourism settings not only affects interns' psychological adjustment but may also influence the quality of service interactions delivered to clients. Therefore, fostering a supportive, communicative, and well-structured work environment is particularly critical in tourism organizations to ensure both effective learning experiences for interns and consistent service standards.

## CONCLUSION

The process of adjusting to a new work environment during industrial internships is deeply influenced by the psychological dynamics experienced by students, which can vary from individual to individual (Wartono and Mochtar 2015). This study demonstrates that multiple factors either facilitate or hinder the adaptation process, significantly affecting interns' psychological resilience and overall success. Key factors that support adaptation include a supportive work environment, friendly colleagues, a well-defined internship curriculum, clear work schedules, and opportunities for personal growth. These

elements foster a sense of security, confidence, and self-efficacy, all of which are crucial for interns to navigate the challenges of their internship effectively.

Conversely, certain psychological stressors create barriers to successful adaptation. These include a strict organizational culture, high work-related stress, unclear job instructions, remote work locations, insufficient infrastructure, and demands for foreign language proficiency. Interns facing these challenges often experience anxiety, role confusion, and psychological exhaustion, which can significantly slow their adaptation process and diminish overall work satisfaction and resilience.

The psychological dynamics experienced by interns evolve over time. Initially, in the first month, interns undergo a phase of role clarification, during which they familiarize themselves with work dynamics and begin to integrate into their new environment. This phase is marked by growing self-confidence and the ability to handle basic operational tasks. By the second month, interns typically focus more on building relationships with colleagues and understanding leadership styles and organizational culture. This deeper integration into the company culture enhances their psychological adaptation, fostering a stronger sense of belonging and comfort in their roles.

Organizational culture appears to play an important role in shaping interns' adaptation experiences, particularly in tourism workplaces characterized by high levels of interpersonal interaction and service expectations. A supportive organizational culture—reflected in clear communication, inclusive relationships, and structured guidance—was associated with greater psychological comfort and smoother adjustment among participants. In contrast, organizational environments marked by rigid hierarchies, unclear expectations, or inconsistent supervision tended to create additional stress and uncertainty. These findings are consistent with previous studies suggesting that organizational

culture significantly influences how students adjust to internship environments (Tiomantara and Adiputra 2021). In the context of tourism, where service encounters and teamwork are central, the quality of organizational culture becomes especially critical in shaping both the emotional and professional adaptation of interns.

This paper also reveals that the duration of the adaptation period can vary. On average, interns take one to two months to fully adjust, with the length of this adjustment phase largely depending on the organizational culture. During the first month, interns focus on understanding their tasks and the workplace dynamics. In the second month, they deepen their understanding of the organizational culture and leadership style, which enhances their psychological adjustment.

However, the paper has limitations. The small sample size and the focus on the tourism industry mean that the findings may not be generalizable to other sectors. Future research could expand the sample size and include other industries to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological factors influencing adaptation during industrial internships.

In conclusion, this study highlights how psychological dynamics—particularly related to support, clarity, and stress—shape students' adaptation experiences during industrial internships. The findings suggest that supportive environments and clear guidance are associated with smoother adjustment and greater psychological comfort, while unclear expectations and demanding organizational conditions may create challenges for interns. Although based on a small-scale qualitative sample, this study provides insight into how vocational students in the tourism sector navigate early workplace experiences. These findings underline the importance of designing internship programs that are not only technically structured but also psychologically supportive, in order to facilitate students' transition into professional practice.

## AI USE STATEMENT

The authors declare that artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in a limited capacity during the preparation of this manuscript. Specifically, ChatGPT was utilized to assist with language refinement, clarity of expression, and the organization of academic arguments. All empirical data, analysis, and interpretations presented in this study are original and based on the authors' fieldwork. No AI tools were used in generating data, conducting data collection, analyzing data, or deriving research findings. The authors take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the content of this manuscript.

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