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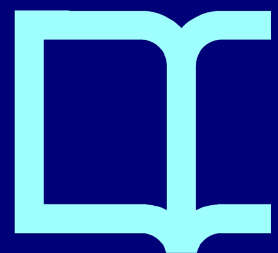
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Competencies assessment and learning results in tourism internships: Is gender a relevant factor?

Purpose

The aim of this article is to provide evidence about how the acquisition of competencies through internships influence student learning process results, and about whether learning process results are affected by the gender differences, by considering two sustainable development goals (SDG) of the 2030 United Nations' Agenda: Gender Equality (SDG 5) and Quality Education (SDG 4).

Design/methodology/approach

The study was carried out on a sample of 273 interns and their supervisors on the bachelor's degree programme in Tourism and Hospitality Management at the X University who carried out curricular internships during the 2016-2020 academic years. The university internship and mobility service sends supervisors a questionnaire, the purpose of which is to rate how well students have acquired the competencies and achieved the learning process results during their internship. The supervisors complete and return the questionnaire once the student has completed the internship.

Findings

The findings confirm that learning results appear to be positively influenced by certain competencies, especially personal ones such as orientation towards achievement and initiative and entrepreneurial spirit. Other results show the effect of the gender differences, as female students obtain better learning results than male students. Supervisors' gender also seems to affect results.

Practical implications

The research will help improve the design of internship-based programmes of study.

Originality/value

The analysis provides an innovative research and contributes knowledge on the relation between competencies and learning results in the tourism and hospitality education sector in the field of internships and on the role of the gender dimension.

Keywords: competencies, gender, internships, learning assessment, higher education.

Introduction

World Tourism Organization data show that in 2019, international tourist arrivals reached 1.461 billion, with an average annual growth of 5.1% over the past 10 years. In a context of global economic slowdown, tourism spending has continued to grow, and this worldwide growth in tourism and related industries has brought about a rapid rise in higher education courses in tourism. The main objective of higher education in tourism is to provide industry with highly qualified graduates equipped with suitable competencies (Dhiman 2012). Research into tourism education includes a number of studies analysing the most important competencies in the sector (Busby 2005; Munar and Montaña 2009; Tribe 2006) and whether programmes of study reflect industry demands and provide students with the skills and training needed to successfully enter the labour market (Bushell et al. 2001; Churchward and Riley 2002; Gunn 1998). Tourism sector is highly dependent on quality human resources, with an emphasis on enhancing the skills of people employed in tourism. (Stacey 2015)

Combining learning and experience has proved to be an effective way of teaching, providing an important link between what is learned in the classroom and the reality in industry. Authors as Wall and Hindley (2018) state that forms of work-based education can have transformative impacts in relation to working towards some of the Sustainable Development Goals, specially in the topics of sustainability, ethics and responsibility and also can stimulate transformational changes.

Internships are one of the most effective experiential learning models in the world of education. They are part of almost all tourism and hospitality programmes worldwide and are universally recognized as an essential component in tourism and hospitality education (Zopiatis and Theocharous 2013). Internship training is a frequent requirement for many tourism and hospitality qualifications, where it plays an essential role in accelerating the learning curve and providing appropriate experience for graduates in the tourism and hospitality sector (Francis and Elangkovan 2017). For many tourism schools, internships are not considered an opportunity but a necessity, and it is not unusual for students to engage in several internships during their bachelor's degree studies. Internships offer students an initial contact with the tourism and hospitality industry and an opportunity to gain relevant experience, as well as the chance to develop realistic career expectations (Hergert 2009).

Most studies agree that internships are a highly valuable part of programmes of study, although research on achieving learning results and on how competencies developed during internships might influence these outcomes is still limited. The relationship between learning results and competencies has been the subject of earlier research with regard to tools such as business plans (Author et al. 2020) and business simulators (Author et al. 2018), although conclusions differ depending on the learning methodology involved.

Another aspect lacking sufficient empirical evidence is the possible influence of certain factors, such as gender, on learning results and competencies. In 2015, the United Nations approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Sustainable Development Goals 2021), an opportunity for countries to embark on a new path towards improving people's lives whilst leaving no one behind. The 2030 Agenda has 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and this paper strongly supports two of them:

Gender Equality (SDG 5) and Quality Education (SDG 4). Gender differences have been the subject of attention in the field of education, where their influence on faculty experiences (Bronstein and Farnsworth 1998), students' learning (Vecchione et al. 2014), performance (Chen et al. 2016) and competencies (Harris and Harper 2008; Wolfle and Williams 2014) has been demonstrated. However, as argued by Munar and Montaña (2009), although the literature contains relevant studies on the topic of competencies in the field of tourism and hospitality (e.g. Baum 1995; Christou and Sigala 2001), there is still a need for more in-depth research into issues associated with specific competencies in tourism higher education and, more specifically, how they relate to gender.

There is a clear lack of consensus on the influence of gender differences in education, which is why more empirical evidence is required. Our study aims to fill this gap in the literature by providing valuable data to help improve both the experience of internships for all parties involved and our understanding of the role of gender in education. To achieve this goal, company supervisors' assessments of learning results among intern students will be analysed, focussing on the role played by tourism competencies and gender in these assessments.

Our final aim is to contribute to previous research by providing evidence about how the acquisition of competencies through internships influence student learning process results, and about whether learning process results are affected by the gender differences. These will contribute to a better understanding of the role of internships over students' learning process and contribute to progress on the roadmap of the United Nations' SDGs.

Theoretic background and hypotheses

The importance of internships

According to Swail and Kampits (2004), internships are generally coordinated activities and agreements that allow students to work in a workplace for a significant period of time. Including internships in programmes of study has provided students with opportunities to increase their knowledge, improve their performance, develop competencies and autonomy, and gain experience in a complex professional environment (Chang and Chu 2009; Dhevabanchachai and Wattanacharoensil 2017; Donina and Luka 2014; Sanahuja Velez and Ribes Giner 2015).

The literature agrees on the positive effect of internships on the process's three main parties: students, educational institutions and receiving organizations. The students' training is reinforced and internships enable them to apply the skills and knowledge acquired in their studies, further their professional and personal development and strengthen their acquisition of knowledge, professional abilities and attitudes, demonstrating their skills and competencies in the working environment (Ali and Muhammad 2018; Franks and Oliver 2012; Hurst et al. 2014). And teachers are given the ideal environment in which to develop and assess the professional competencies their students need to acquire (Mareque and De Prada 2018). In addition, industry can see whether competencies have been acquired by students and whether they match job requirements, moreover, will benefit to use students for a variety of tasks and projects (Wentz and Trapido-Lurie 2001).

Although the benefits of internships have been well described, little research focusing specifically on tourism programmes has been done. Seyitoğlu and Yirik (2015) showed that tourism students were satisfied with both the experience of participating in internships and the positive impact they had on their professional development. Other

studies have researched competency development in tourism programmes where internships are considered a tool for acquiring the competencies. As Author et al. (2020) point out, among the competences that are most frequently mentioned in the tourism and hotel industry are those relating to management, the application of knowledge to practice, critical and logical thought, ethics, human resources, problem solving, decision-making, customer service, addressing uncertainty, oral and written communication, interpersonal communication, command of foreign languages, addressing customers' problems efficiently, strategic planning and thinking, creativity, self-confidence and social and emotional competences. Author et al. (2019) showed that student competency levels measured at the end of tourism internships were very good. Jack et al. (2017) examined internships as a vehicle for both identifying students' acquisition of management competencies and checking possible deficiencies in the process, with the aim of tackling industry concerns regarding how universities might better prepare graduates for successful careers. Along the same lines, Francis and Elangkovan (2017) explored the knowledge and skills transfer that takes place during tourism students' internships. In addition, Lee (2014) showed that skills development is the most influential factor in determining the quality of internship programmes in the tourism and hospitality sector, followed by supervisor leadership.

The supervisor's assessment

Student interns are generally assigned a supervisor from among the members of the organization providing the internship. These supervisors conduct regular assessments of the tasks carried out by students. Such assessments help improve communication and relations between the different agents involved in the experience (Henry et al. 2001), and the information gathered provides perspectives from both students and intern supervisors, which has helped boost and improve internship programmes (Beard 2007). This

assessment of interns' learning is identified as one of the common components critical to the success of internship programmes (Goad 1998).

The literature includes frequent studies analysing internships, taking into account the figure of the supervisor and, more specifically, their assessments. One of the most common types of study focuses on analysing the differences between supervisors' and interns' performance assessments, in which the studies provide similar results. Thus, McDonough et al. (2009) show statistically significant differences in the ratings of intern performance, as students tend to rate their performance higher than their employers do. Arnold and Davey (1992) reached similar conclusions, as the results of their study showed that students' self-assessments had higher ratings than those of the supervisors' and that they differed depending on the competencies and organization. Swank (2014) compared supervisors' and students' assessments in counselling competencies in a practicum course; pairwise comparison showed that the counselling supervisors' ratings at midterm and at final evaluation were significantly different from the counselling students' self-ratings.

Despite studies on the topic, the conclusions are hardly definitive and knowledge regarding competency acquisition in the work environment and supervisors' assessments is limited. Many studies consider competencies as a learning result in themselves (for instance, Correa et al. 2013; Robles and Zárraga-Rodríguez 2015); however, learning results are a separate aspect deserving separate analysis. Particularly interesting is the link between competencies and learning process results. Such analysis has been conducted in previous research involving other learning methodologies, such as business simulators (Author et al. 2015; Author et al. 2018) and business plans (Author et al. 2020). The results of these studies vary greatly and the influence of competencies on learning results differs depending on the type of competency, some of which show a closer link. However,

we have found no previous study that links competencies with learning results in relation to curricular internships.

In short, there is a lack of knowledge of how competencies impact on learning process results, particularly in an environment as important as internships. Therefore, we believe more empirical research on this subject is required, with the aim of throwing some light on such an important topic in education and work. This need leads us to pose the first of the research hypotheses:

H1: Competencies acquired through internships impact positively on learning process results.

Gender, competencies and internships

The role of gender and how it relates to competencies has been an academic topic for some time. Previous studies found that gender influences certain competencies; for instance, mathematical and scientific skills are more closely associated with men (Kahn 2009), while social, communication and organizational skills are generally associated with women (Archer et al. 2001; Harris and Harper 2008; Kahn 2009). In higher education, differences have also been found between men and women with regard to their process and performance (Harris and Harper 2008; Wolfle and Williams 2014) and their competence achievement (Author et al. 2021). Such differences also exist in perceptions of learning. Marks et al. (2018) concluded that both male and female interns generally receive similar assessments from supervisors. From the point of view of self-perception, female students give themselves lower ratings than their male colleagues.

Other studies focus on the tourism and hospitality industry and show differences between men and women, where the number of women employees has increased in recent years. Thus, Petrović et al. (2014) found gender differences among hotel employees, where procedures were more important for men, while service and customer orientation

and emotional control were more important for women. Along the same lines, Yoonjoung Heo et al. (2018) concluded that trust and commitment influence the quality of relationships with employees among women, while Ng and Pine (2003) found that women managers tended to minimize difficulties and favour their personality.

In addition, a recurring theme in research on dissimilarities between supervisors and subordinates is the possible negative impact of gender difference between the two (Duffy and Ferrier 2003). Specifically, gender differences are associated with greater difficulty in establishing and maintaining relations between supervisors and interns (Dreher and Ash 1990; Ragins and Cotton 1999) and lower quantity and quality of the mentoring received (Dreher and Cox 1996; Feldman et al. 1999; Richard et al. 2019; Scandura and Williams 2001).

The inconclusive results of previous research make a more detailed study necessary in order to understand the role gender plays in acquiring competencies and achieving learning results for students on in-company curricular internships. Despite all the studies on diversities between supervisor and intern, as of yet, none has been done to analyse how gender might affect supervisors' assessment of their interns. These aspects raise the question of whether gender is a determining factor in an environment as important as the assessment of students' competencies. Additionally, unlike other studies, we break the gender dimension down into different factors, such as students' gender, supervisors' gender and student-supervisor gender difference, each of which might separately influence learning process results and require specific analysis. In this context, the question arising is whether supervisors' assessments of learning process results achieved by students on curricular internships are affected by the gender dimension and to what extent tourism competencies influence learning results. This question leads to the second set of research hypotheses:

H2: Students' assessments of their learning process results are influenced by the gender dimension.

This hypothesis may be divided in three:

H2a: Students' assessments of their learning process results are influenced by their gender.

H2b: Students' assessments of their learning process results are influenced by their supervisors' gender.

H2c: Students' assessments of their learning process results are influenced by gender difference.

H3: The gender dimension moderates the relationship between competencies and learning process results assessment.

This hypothesis may be divided in three:

H3a: Students' gender has a moderating effect on the relationship between competencies and learning process results assessment.

H3b: Supervisors' gender has a moderating effect on the relationship between competencies and learning process results assessment.

H3c: Gender difference has a moderating effect on the relationship between competencies and learning process results assessment.

Method

Data collection

The study sample came from students on the Bachelor's Degree programme in Tourism and Hospitality Management at the X University who carried out curricular internships during the 2016-2020 academic years.

The purpose of the course of internships is that students carry out a real professional experience that allows them to put into practice all the knowledge acquired throughout the previous courses. The subject has 30 ECTS that are developed during the second semester of the third year and represents approximately 900 hours that combine student workload and work at the company. The internships and other courses are associated with a set of competencies which were assigned when the degree's programme of study was drawn up. Each intern is assigned a supervisor from the company, to accompany and guide the student during their work placement. During the student's internship, the company supervisor provides an assessment of the competencies employed. The university internship and mobility service sends supervisors a questionnaire with a Likert-style scale (where 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree), the purpose of which is to rate how well students have acquired the competencies and achieved the learning process results during their internship. The supervisors complete and return the questionnaire once the student has completed the internship. The questionnaire is divided into six parts. Part 1 deals with general information about students and supervisors, such as the name of the company, department, location, students' and supervisors' gender, previous experience in internships and typology of internships, whether they are developed in hotels, restaurants, travel agency, events or somewhere else. Part 2 corresponds to basic competencies; part 3 to personal cross-disciplinary competencies; part 4 to social and relationship cross-disciplinary competencies; part 5 to management cross-disciplinary competencies; part 6 to specific competencies. The competencies assessed are taken from the sections in the White Paper of the Bachelor's Degree in Tourism (ANECA 2004) and the official report on the Bachelor Degree programme in Tourism and Hospitality Management at the X University. There is also an item on students' learning process results in terms of the level

of achievement of learning objectives, learning results and internship development rated by supervisors.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the results, supervisors are also sent rubrics providing a detailed description of the assessment criteria for each competency acquisition level (Stevens and Levi 2013). For the purposes of our study, a total of 273 questionnaires were collected from the supervisors, corresponding to all the students who took internships, a compulsory part of their bachelor's degree.

Table 1 shows the variables that were used.

[Table 1 near here]

Dependent and independent variables

To reduce the number of variables, it was decided to use a composite index that considers competency subgroups as a set. These indices were calculated using a factor analysis with varimax rotation for the different types of competencies, as shown in Table 2. Factor 1 includes basic competencies (F1) and explains 61.132% of total variance. Factors 2, 3 and 4 refer to the personal (F2), social and relationship (F3) and management (F4) cross-disciplinary competencies and explain 62.699%, 83.374% and 61.974% of total variance, respectively. Finally, factor 5 includes specific competencies (F5), explaining 71.347% of total variance.

Bartlett's test of sphericity was used to assess the applicability of the factor analysis on the competencies analysed. The model is significant for all factors at a significance level of 5%, and thus the factor analysis may be applied (Table 2).

[Table 2 near here]

As well as competencies, our model includes gender-related variables as independent variables, thus students' gender, supervisors' gender and student-supervisor gender difference are included in this analysis. Students' and supervisors' gender were

measured as a dichotomous variable, where 0 indicates male and 1 indicates female, while student-supervisor gender difference was encoded as 0, where the student and supervisor were the same gender, and 1, where they were a different gender.

The model also includes three control variables: students' prior experience with internships and whether the internships were international or not, which were measured as dichotomous variables, where 0 indicates absence of the characteristic and 1 indicates presence; and the type of internship, by location: hotels (value=1), restaurants (value=2), travel agencies (value=3), events (value=4) or other (value=0).

Table 3 shows the distribution of the sample with regard to gender and the control variables.

[Table 3 near here]

Results

Table 4 shows the means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations. Variance inflation factor (VIF) analyses are included for each model to check for problems of multicollinearity between independent variables (Table 5). The VIF is under the upper limit of 10, thus corroborating the absence of multicollinearity.

Regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses, as shown in Table 5. The regression analysis considers three models. Model 1 includes the control variables and explains 1.9% of variance in the data. Model 2 includes gender-related variables and competency factors; this model explains 60.3% of the variance. Model 3 includes the interaction terms between the competency factors and the gender-related variables; this last model explains 59.7% of variance in the data.

Hypothesis 1 suggests that competencies obtained during internships have a positive impact on learning process results. The analysis of Model 2 (see Table 5) partially corroborates this hypothesis, as most of the competencies have a positive and

significant impact on learning process results. Only management and social and relationship competencies are not statistically significant, although they have a lower impact on learning results, as shown by the low standardized coefficient values (0.118 and -0.065, respectively).

Hypothesis 2 establishes the effect of the gender dimension on learning process results. The outcomes confirm the prediction of Hypotheses 2a and 2b, whereby student and supervisor gender significantly influences learning process results, although this is positive in the former and negative in the latter. In relation to gender difference, the impact of this variable on the learning process results is negative, although not statistically significant; hence Hypothesis 2c is not supported (see Table 5).

Hypothesis 3 establishes the moderating effect of the gender dimension in the relation between competencies and learning process results, although this is not supported by the outcomes. As can be seen in Model 3 (see Table 5), the coefficients of the interaction terms included in the gender dimension are not statistically significant.

Discussion and conclusions

Perception of competency acquisition in higher education has been a recurring theme in research in recent years. Prior studies have viewed competencies as a learning outcome in themselves, without focusing on the relationship between competencies and learning results, which can be analysed separately to establish the role played by competencies in students' success in learning. Thus most studies in this field focus specifically on investigating whether students' self-assessments match those of their supervisors (Mareque and De Prada 2018; Marks et al. 2018; Swank 2014).

Our study presents two innovations compared to previous studies. Although work has been conducted analysing the impact of competencies on learning results in different teaching methodologies (Author et al. 2020; Author et al. 2015), to our knowledge, there

is no previous study on their impact in a professional environment such as curricular internships. Including different dimensions of gender in the study is also novel compared to previous research. Previously, studies included students' gender as a variable with a potential influence on learning results and competencies (Author et al. 2020). We go further than this and examine other gender dimensions that might affect these variables, such as the supervisors' gender and the impact of gender relations between supervisors and students.

The effects of competencies on learning results

The first hypothesis examines how competencies could affect learning results. The results partially support Hypothesis 1, as learning results were positively affected by basic, personal cross-disciplinary and specific competencies, where personal competencies had the greatest influence on results. Thus competencies such as orientation towards achievement, initiative and entrepreneurial spirit, self-knowledge and emotional self-control and flexibility and self-confidence have a greater impact on learning process results, followed by competencies associated with acquiring, understanding, structuring and applying knowledge; searching for and managing information in order to solve problems; transmit reflective judgements and make decisions; and communication. Our results partially coincide with previous studies where other teaching methodologies are analysed. For instance, competencies related to information (Author et al. 2015) and applying knowledge (Author et al. 2015; Author et al. 2018) also have a positive influence on learning process results when students use a business simulator, although in the study by Author et al. (2018) these were more affected by generic competencies. By contrast, specific competencies did not affect learning process results in these teaching methodologies, while in internships, these types of competency take on special relevance and influence learning process results. The comparisons are not fully applicable, as

neither the learning results nor the competencies are the same.

A possible explanation for the greater influence of these types of competency lie in the field of study: tourism. The fact that internships take place in an environment closely related to the tourism sector might influence how supervisors' opinions of competencies affecting learning results differ from those of assessors in other specializations. Among the competencies identified as especially important for companies who use tourism graduates are communication and practical application of knowledge, foreign languages skills, entrepreneurial spirit, decision-making, problem-solving and recognition of operating procedures (Christou and Sigala 2001; Dhiman 2012; González and Wagenaar 2006; Luka and Donina 2012; Munar and Montaña 2009; Zehrer and Mössenlechner 2009), competencies which largely coincide with groups of competencies that significantly influence learning results in this study.

The effects of gender on learning results

The second group of hypotheses state how the gender dimension could affect learning process results. The results show that the gender dimension plays a very important role in learning process results, where the two variables of students' and supervisors' gender have an effect on results. With regard to students' gender, the results show female students achieve better learning results than male students. One possible explanation might be that women are more capable and develop better their skills in the field of tourism, hence learning results are more successfully achieved among women. The results contradict Author et al. (2020), who found that women reported poorer learning results than men when using business plans. The authors suggest this difference in results might be due to the poor entrepreneurial activity developed by women in comparison to men; by contrast, in tourism, women's activity has grown in recent years and is possibly not as affected by behavioural patterns that produce worse learning results than in the case of

business plans. Another possible conclusion is that supervisors systematically value men and women differently, despite a lack of empirical evidence to support this. Specifically, the results show that supervisors rate female students more highly, possibly because they perceive men's and women's performance differently. Consequently, supervisors' work performance assessments might be susceptible to stereotyped opinions based on students' gender, as suggested by Feldman et al. (1999).

In relation to the supervisor's gender, the results show that, in this case, female supervisors' assessments tend to rate students' learning process results lower than their male counterparts. Unfortunately, we cannot make a direct comparison with the literature, as this variable has not been used before as an explanatory variable in previous studies. However, a couple of points are worth making. We believe that differences in assessment are not due to differing assessment criteria, as these are clearly established by the academic institutions. At the start of the internships, supervisors are given guidelines that define each of the parameters for assessing competencies and to ensure certain assessment standards are met. The fact that women give lower ratings to students might be because they are stricter in their assessments, they are more objective and neutral than their male counterparts, their perception differs from men or for some psychological, neurological or social reason, as stated in some studies (Abraham 2016) that produced differing assessments by men and women. However, an additional study would be necessary in order to obtain the qualitative information that may allow researchers to make these kinds of inferences.

Finally, it should be stressed that student-supervisor gender combinations do not have an impact on differing learning outcome assessments, as suggested by Marks et al. (2018). The results obtained contradict results from previous studies suggesting that interns assigned to a supervisor with a different gender are likely to receive less mentoring

than those assigned to a supervisor of the same gender (Dreher and Cox 1996; Feldman et al. 1999; Scandura and Williams 2001). Our results show that the gender difference variable does not influence learning process results and, therefore, a difference in student-supervisor gender does not affect learning outcome assessments. This study therefore answers an open question posed by Marks et al. (2018), and Feldman et al. (1999) before them, as it finds gender difference does not have an effect on learning results in internships, hence there are no advantages in associating students with supervisors who have similar demographic characteristics, such as gender.

The third group states that the gender dimension moderates the relationship between competencies and learning process results. In addition, the results provide no evidence that gender moderates the relation between competencies and learning results. These results are in line with previous studies where no differences were found between men and women when the students' gender is considered (Author et al. 2020), hence leading to the conclusion that no significant differences were observed between men and woman in terms of how these competencies influence learning results. Other studies focus on analysing competency acquisition in external internships, and find differing perceptions between male and female students and the supervisors regarding these competencies. Mareque and De Prada (2018) and Marks et al. (2018) concluded that the assessment of competencies acquired during internships differs with regard to students' gender, in both tutors and students, although this comparison considers only the student's gender and not the supervisor's, or the gender difference between both. Our study provides a more thorough analysis and not only considers competencies and gender, but also the impact of the gender dimension on competencies and learning results.

Practical implications and limitations

The aim of our study is part of the on-going process of assessing and improving internships. It attempts to bridge the gap in research on the relation between competencies and learning results in the tourism and hospitality education sector in the field of internships and to discuss the role of the gender dimension. In conclusion, our study broadens current knowledge of learning process results, competencies and other variables such as gender influence in an academic-professional environment like that of university internships. The results show that students' and supervisors' gender and certain competencies have a major impact on learning process results, while the learning outcome assessment process is not influenced by the supervisor's gender in relation to the student's.

The results suggest there are differences in learning outcome assessments, although the study has certain limitations, as on this point it is not clear whether the difference in assessments is due to differences in students' performance during internships, because the assessment is heavily dependent on the individual supervisor, to better quality or quantity of the tutoring received or to possible differences in supervisors' expectations. Nor does it consider other factors that might influence supervisors' assessments of students, such as the amount of contact between the two, the type of relationship, the frequency at which they meet and differences in other demographic characteristics such as nationality and age. These could be determining factors in the observed differences; therefore, further, more in-depth analysis of the causes of these differences would be worthwhile, so students may gain equal benefit from internships and supervision. There are also limitations to how far the results from this sample can be generalized. Although the current sample is bigger than those used in most empirical research, all the participants were students from the same university. It may be that

students from other subjects, universities or studies react differently during their internships.

The main conclusions from this study provide new perspectives that both organizations offering internships and universities should bear in mind when designing programmes of study. Thus, one of the key issues, in the light of learning results among female students, is how to strengthen training of female employees in the tourism and hospitality industry to empower women in this growing professional sector.

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Table 1. Competencies

Basic competencies

B1. Acquire, understand and structure knowledge

B2. Apply knowledge

B3. Search for and manage information in order to solve problems, transmit reflective judgements and/or make decisions

B4. Communicate information and/or knowledge in one's mother tongue, as well as in at least two foreign languages

Personal cross-disciplinary competencies

G1. Orientation towards achievement

G2. Initiative and entrepreneurial spirit

G3. Self-knowledge and emotional self-control

G4. Flexibility/adaptability and self-confidence

Social and relationship cross-disciplinary competencies

G5. Empathy and interpersonal comprehension

G6. Team work and collaboration

G7. Service orientation

Management cross-disciplinary competencies

G8. Planning and organization

G9. Personal development

G10. Change management

G11. Leadership

Specific competencies

E1. Knowledge of the operating procedures

E2. Know the specific vocabulary of the different areas of the tourism sector in at least two foreign languages

Learning process results

R. The student has achieved the learning objectives, learning results and internship development

Table 2. Results of the factor analysis

Competencies	Factors				
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
B1	0.811				
B2	0.832				
B3	0.826				
B4	0.643				
G1		0.826			
G2		0.777			
G3		0.723			
G4		0.835			
G5			0.954		
G6			0.852		
G7			0.936		
G8				0.722	
G9				0.838	
G10				0.767	
G11				0.817	
E1					0.845
E2					0.845
Bartlett*	318.179	344.125	630.645	319.786	54.436

Notes: Basic competencies (F1), personal cross-disciplinary competencies (F2), social and relationship cross-disciplinary competencies (F3), management cross-disciplinary competencies (F4), specific competencies (F5). * $p < 0.05$.

Table 3. Distribution by *Gender* and control variables

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Students' gender	Male	86	31.5
	Female	187	68.5
Supervisors' gender	Male	112	41
	Female	161	59
Gender difference	No	167	61.2
	Yes	106	38.8
Experience	No	259	94.9
	Yes	14	5.1
Typology	Hotel	199	72.9
	Restaurant	8	2.9
	Travel agency	28	10.3
	Events	8	2.9
	Other	30	11.0
International	No	221	81
	Yes	52	19
Total		273	100

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix

Variables	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
1.Experience	0.05	0.221	1										
2.Typology	1.21	0.878	-0.056	1									
3.International	0.19	0.393	.395**	-0.118	1								
4.Students' gender	0.68	0.465	-0.093	0.074	-0.073	1							
5.Supervisors' gender	0.59	0.493	-.177**	0.066	-.240**	.172**	1						
6. Gender difference	0.39	0.488	0.019	0.098	0.073	-0.107	-.344**	1					
F1	0	1	-0.010	-.155*	-0.034	0.101	0.010	-.127*	1				
F2	0	1	-0.030	-.175**	-0.059	0.073	-0.017	-0.033	.767**	1			
F3	0	1	-0.038	-.145*	-0.044	0.104	0.018	-0.057	.788**	.787**	1		
F4	0	1	0.005	-.142*	-0.048	0.081	0.025	-0.083	.772**	.844**	.819**	1	
F5	0	1	-0.041	-.214**	0.017	0.072	-0.062	-0.069	.683**	.723**	.620**	.675**	1

Notes: N = 273; ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 (bilateral); * Correlation is significant at 0.05 (bilateral).

Table 5. Regression analysis: determinants of learning results

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	β	t	β	t	β	t
Experience	0.000	-0.002	0.005	0.114	0.011	0.243
Typology	-0.172**	-2.843	-0.021	-0.521	-0.023	-0.558
International	0.008	0.125	0.029	0.684	0.017	0.389
Students' gender (SG)			0.105**	2.682	0.105*	2.577
Supervisors' gender (SpG)			-0.131**	-3.051	-0.122**	-2.743
Gender difference (GD)			-0.017	-0.418	0.001	0.016
F1			0.227**	3.170	0.379†	1.653
F2			0.351***	4.278	0.484*	2.370
F3			-0.065	-0.862	-0.349	-1.498
F4			0.118	1.417	0.174	0.898
F5			0.198***	3.343	0.176†	1.614
F1*SG					-0.126	-0.906
F2*SG					0.043	0.287
F3*SG					0.175	1.212
F4*SG					-0.008	-0.056
F5*SG					-0.116	-1.165
F1*SpG					0.015	0.110
F2*SpG					-0.123	-0.839
F3*SpG					0.180	1.383
F4*SpG					-0.169	-1.204
F5*SpG					0.118	1.217
F1*GD					-0.071	-0.575
F2*GD					-0.088	-0.734
F3*GD					-0.013	-0.107
F4*GD					0.138	1.072
F5*GD					0.011	0.243
VIF	1.197		4.715		8.060	
Adjusted R ²	0.019		0.603		0.597	
F	2.768*		38.511***		17.104***	

Notes: All coefficients are standardised beta weights and t-values are also given.

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; † $p < 0.1$