



Impact of COVID-19 on the development of ''Spain Internship'' company's remote internships

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The objective of the thesis was to develop Spain Internship's new programme of remote internships by using qualitative and quantitative research methods. It will help the company's adaptability to COVID-19 situation and has a large advantage over competitors in the industry. In addition to that, it expands the company's supply, and thereby increases the number of customers. Development task was presented by Spain Internship. The company wanted to know more information about the target markets' (international students') eagerness of taking a remote internship instead of "normal" internship abroad. They were interested how much money could the students pay for a remote internship. Further, the company needs to know what kind of documents the students need in their target countries. The target countries for Spain Internship are Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Germany, The Netherlands, France and Croatia. The knowledge base consists of topics that are beneficial for the company's continuous developing. It has theory about company operations during crisis situation, telecommuting, cross-cultural communication, developing company's services, research process and its' methods. As mentioned above, the methods were quantitative and qualitative research. More specifically, they were a survey and interview directed at students, with the aim of answering the problem questions desired by the company in the broadest and most analytical way possible. 40 international students responded to the survey, and one from each target country participated in the interviews. The most significant difference in the results of working abroad and telecommuting internationally was that 82.5% of students responded that they were either interested or very interested in working abroad. In telecommuting, the corresponding percentage was 72.5%. 12,5% of students would pay over 500€ to have an internship abroad, whereas only 2,5% would pay the same amount for a remote internship. Interviews showed that in a large number of target countries, only a learning agreement or a work placement agreement is needed for teleworking. All in all, this thesis gives the reader a broad understanding of the differences between teleworking and internships abroad from the perspective of students from different European countries.

Keywords: telecommuting, research, marketing development, survey, covid-19

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1 Introduction

The thesis is implemented in a collaboration with Spain Internship. Spain Internship is a company located in Spain that offers university students and recent graduates a possibility to have internships abroad or remotely in an international environment. The title of the thesis is presented by the working life partner: Impact of COVID-19 on the development of "Spain Internship" company's remote Internships. The choice of topic is based on timeliness and usefulness, as in crisis situations many companies end up changing their work to telecommuting. Underlying is the need for the partner company to understand how much the students are willing to pay for a remote internship or internship abroad in different countries, and what kind of documents students require in order to carry out the internship. In addition to that, the overall willingness to work abroad and work remotely was asked. The aim is for the company to have a better understanding of the international operating environment from which they can continue the company's sustainable development despite the COVID-19 crisis.

The thesis is realized as a dissertation, which uses surveys, interviews, and existing statistical data. In addition to that, various articles, such as news articles related to the topic, help the progress of the thesis. The survey is aimed at students of the company's international partner schools and identifies their interest in working remotely for a foreign company and how much they would be willing to pay to get to the telecommuting place they have dreamed of. The interview is as well for foreign students, who report on the documents required by their home country to go on e-work internship.

The thesis is divided into five sections. The first section reviews the relevant theory for the company, as well as the research, that is done for this thesis. The second section deals with research, its methods and implementation. It reviews how both studies progressed, by what means it was conducted and as well the target group for the research. The third section includes the publication of the results as well as their analysis. The fourth section is results-based conclusions and development proposals. The last section is the evaluation, in which the reliability of the research is considered and the performance during the thesis is evaluated.

2 Company operations during crisis situation (COVID-19)

From a business perspective, a crisis can be described as a surprising happening or process that is seen as a threat to a company's tangible or intangible values. In other words, a crisis situation can be seen as any happening that threatens an organization's reputation, operations, trust, or people. Such situations may arise from the organization's own operations or for reasons beyond its control. Global crises affect companies, regardless of their size, location or industry. It is impossible to identify the effects of a crisis in advance or during it, but with the right kind of operating methods, an organization can limit their effects on business and personnel. Crisis situations are always different, and their effects can be company- or sector-specific, even global. Globally, one of the biggest crises at the moment is COVID-19. In addition, potential crises for business may be caused by, for example, changes in the security environment, accidents and crises related to social media or cyber security. According to Launiainen, a significant part of the situations threatening business operations are exceptional situations belonging to the industry, which, if poorly managed, could lead to a crisis. (Launiainen 2020.)

COVID-19, which is currently tormenting the world, is affecting both students and Spain Internship. Studies and possible internships will be transferred to telecommuting, and companies will have to develop new ways of getting the job done. Spain Internship is currently working on a new telecommuting program. To help with this, research is done in this thesis. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, it is necessary to prepare for the fact that students' enthusiasm for internationalization will decrease for a while.

In crisis management situations, organizations find themselves in an abnormal situation, which often requires immediate solutions to ensure business continuity. In a crisis situation, the task of the organization's management is to ensure the safety and well-being of employees and at the same time limit the effects of the crisis situation on business operations. Although crises have the greatest impact on a company's management, crises are always reflected in the entire company and its personnel. (Launiainen 2020.) In crisis situations, organizations should act quickly as a whole, but in a coordinated manner. It is impossible for an organization to avoid situations that threaten its operations, but it is essential to prepare by creating common operating models and methods for them. (Deloitte 2020.)

It is often the most challenging for business to anticipate the occurrence, duration and impact of crises. Digitalisation, and the opportunities it brings, support companies' preparedness for crisis situations. One way for an organization to prepare for future crises is to develop an environment that supports telecommuting and other alternative working methods. (Lehtonen 2019.)

Like COVID-19 in 2020, global crises will have a significant impact on the performance of organizations now, but also in the future. If a company has encouraged its employees to work autonomously, ie the autonomous work, the threshold for switching to teleworking is always lower if necessary. If independent work is not the norm for the organization, it should be supported, and its implementation facilitated in the event of a crisis. (Neeley 2020.)

The crisis resilience of companies is measured in crisis situations. According to Launiainen (2020), a company that is well prepared for crisis situations manages the factors related to crisis management in a variety of ways. The figure below shows the components of a company's crisis resilience.



Figure 2-1: Areas of the company's crisis resilience (Launiainen 2020.)

It is important for a company to face crises and their effects together. It is important that all staff have the crisis capability so that potential crises can be identified quickly and responded correctly. Crisis management is also strongly linked to staff risk identification and the ability not to cause organizational crises, such as reputational crises. If a crisis situation arises, it is essential that the entire organization knows who is responsible for the decisions.

Responsibilities need to be clear to everyone so that the organization has the ability to respond quickly. The role of management is growing in special situations. Management must be able to identify risks and respond to them appropriately quickly enough. Not all risks or crises can be avoided, which is why the organization must regularly review the situation, how probable the risks arising from inside or outside the organization are. Even if planning for

crisis situations is at a good level, preparation for and training in them is also essential. Through training, an organization's agility to cope with crises in the future grows. (Launiainen 2020.)

It is inevitable for Spain Internship to familiarize the new trainees how to work safely and in accordance with the new rules arising from a COVID-19 crisis. On that account, the new programme of remote internships is an ingenious idea to maintain the number of trainees, while keeping them safe and healthy. This is particularly important in Spain due to the exceptionally high number of cases. To explain this, Spain was one of the countries with the largest number of infections and a high mortality rate during the COVID-19 epidemic. The virus's danger and pandemic's effects have a noticeable effect on citizens' mental health. High levels of anxiety regarding COVID-19, increased drug use, and isolation were the strongest predictors of depression, while gross annual incomes and loneliness were the strongest predictors of well-being. Companies need to understand the struggle employees might have on their motivation of working remotely, when they are not actually meeting the colleagues. But working remotely is the best option for company and its' personnel to maintain the operations rather similar, same time as taking care of everybody's physical health.

During the crisis situation, Spain Internship should give new employees and trainees information about the COVID-situation and how it is evolving. By giving an identification of the current crisis and potential other crisis, students know what they might face and learn their responsibilities when it comes to working professionally and under possible pressure. This thesis is about the impact of COVID-situation for Spain Internship's development. By making sure for students the possible effects, such as situation getting worse and forcing employees to work remotely, it increases future interns' readiness to start. When they are well prepared, the crisis situation does not give as big shock for the employees and continuing and developing the operations is easier. Because of the following reasons, well organized company resilience for Spain Internship is mandatory.

3 Developing company's services

Prior to commissioning the thesis, Spain Internship introduced a new service to their company portfolio. This new service is a telecommuting programme for students. The introduction of the new service was influenced by the prevailing Covid-19 virus. One of the purposes of the thesis is to support the development of a new service and to discover new approaches to potential problems. Company's new service, "REMOTEBAY" started its' operations in 2020. Their way of offering internship for students is the same as Spain Internships, by making a profile on the company's website, receiving vacancies, setting preferences to the vacancies,

having an interview and once accepted, moving to further negotiations with the company collaborating.

In development work, it is important to know and be able to use different methods. Methodological expertise related to development is not about mastering individual data acquisition and analysis methods, such as the ability to conduct good questionnaire or interview research. Methodological knowledge is much broader and consists of a number of skills and knowledge. Methodological expertise is already needed to identify a genuine and interesting development target. In order to successfully define the development task, it is necessary to master the key concepts and know the existing knowledge related to the topic. The development process requires a wide range of information acquisition skills, the ability to distinguish the essential from the irrelevant, the ability to build usable solutions, and the ability to innovate. Methodological expertise also includes sharing the results of development work through various presentations and documents. All of this emphasizes systematicity and a critical appraisal of one's own thinking and action, as well as the knowledge acquired and the solutions developed. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2014, 11.) Generating innovation as well as using creativity are also essential factors in being able to compete in today's business. Environmental change is rapid, so companies need to remain along with it. (Solatie 2009,17.) Innovation means a product, concept, process or service that is successful from a commercial point of view (Fogelholm 2009, 13).

In the 2020s, Spain Internship has operated in a revolutionary environment due to Covid-19. The company needs knowledge of the renewed business environment as well as a new way of thinking more than ever before to cope with the threat posed by the crisis.

The rapidly changing, digitalizing, networking and globalizing operating environment has created major needs for change in corporate operations. Society and the activities of companies are increasingly based on knowledge and its management, so as the amount of information in companies increases, completely new thinking is needed. The importance of research data has thus grown to be more significant than it has ever been. (Ojasalo etc. 2014, 13-14).

Innovation can also mean ways of doing things differently or new practices. Innovation can take advantage of technology or technical methods, but it is not a necessity. The softer things of innovation, such as organizational and business model renewal, often come to the fore in innovation. For example, services operate close to the customer and seek solutions to the customer's problems. The customer's role is central to the creation of service innovation, and generating benefits for both the customer and the service provider is the goal that development and renewal aim to achieve. (Ojasalo etc. 2014, 13-14).

A new practice that Spain Internship is about to introduce is remote internship. When students are unable to go on exchanges around the world due to the crisis, the internship can also be done remotely from their own home. This is how Spain internship tailors its services to customers. To develop this new remote internship programme, the thesis team did three research with different methods. Benchmarking the competitors of Spain Internship to get necessary information, such as prices and remote opportunities. Doing a survey for international students, asking about how much they would pay for a remote internship in comparison with internship abroad etc. And finally, interviewing students across European Universities to know what kind of documents they need for a remote internship.

3.1 Sustainable development

In addition to develop Spain Internship's services, it is essential to make sure the development is sustainable. IUCN (1980) presented sustainable development as a compromise between development and conservation, two aims previously thought to be irreconcilable. It offered optimism that humanity might continue to progress socially and economically while also protecting the life-support systems given by the global environment, which are critical to human well-being. (Purvis & Grainger 2013, 12).

For a company, sustainable development involves implementing business plans and actions that fulfil the demands of the company and its stakeholders today while also conserving, preserving, and improving the human and natural resources that will be required in the future. Certain types of development are both environmentally and socially sustainable. They lead to a better environment and development that does not deplete our environmental capital, rather than a trade-off. This is what sustainable development is all about: a radical change in how we think about these concerns. While business has always relied on accuracy and pragmatism to guide its planning efforts, sustainable development is a notion that defies easy categorization. It's fluid, and it shifts over time as more knowledge becomes available and society's priorities evolve. (Balisacan, Chakravorty & Ravago 2014, 5-8.)

For making the new programme of remote internships sustainable, it is essential to plan the future and be aware of the changes. As an example, the United Kingdom recently resigned from the European Union, which occurred Spain Internship problems regarding having an internship in Spain, as the students need visa. Remote programme is beneficial for this example, as it reduces the unnecessary travelling during the situation, as well as makes the process of students from the United Kingdom easier. Reducing the travelling is as well environmentally friendly. To keep the resources inside the company stable, it is important to have the remote option for new employees, as well as to have interns, reducing the budget when it comes to payroll.

3.2 Benchmarking

In order to be able to improve the company's performance better than its competitors, benchmarking was carried out for Spain Internship. It helps the company to take the best qualities from each competitor and thus improve its own advantage in the internship market.

Benchmarking is a systematic and continuous process that can be used to measure and analyse the performance of products, services, and processes. Performance is compared and learned from the best, so that the lessons can be utilized in the development of company's own activities. In order to take advantage of benchmarking, the company must be humble to perceive that the competitor is better in some area. It is important to be wise enough to learn how to reach the same level and to be even better. (Niva & Tuominen 2011, 5.)

In practice, benchmarking can also be applied between units in the same concern or between companies in their own industry. It is also possible to learn from a whole different industry, which is a great way to develop completely new ideas. Benchmarking is intended to develop the company's operational as well as strategic efficiency. This is used to apply things that competitors do better to their own operations. (Ahola 2016, 120.)

Benchmarking has also been said to mimic, but it does not have to be that. Better described, it is a lesson learned. Alongside the concept of benchmarking, a new concept has also been developed, called "benchlearning". (Ahola 2016, 120.) The benchlearning method allows companies and organizations to determine the efficiency of their operations and the need for change, as well as to compare their own operations with a role model and learn something new from this. The model's approach is not intended to be used as such in company's own activities, but the new approach is intended to be applied from the obtained ideas and information. (Hulsebosch 2012.)

Benchmarking is a great tool for streamlining resources. It can be used to see the manufacturing and work processes where the company has room for improvement. By looking for other companies and organizations that perform similar processes with high quality, the aim is to measure the processes of these companies. After that, the company's development work towards better operations is started. The goal of the development process is to increase the efficiency of its operations as well as the use of resources. (Ahola 2016, 121.)

Comparing strategic choices in company's own field will help you understand the nature of the field. A comparison with a different field can reveal interesting and new ways of working. If the strategic choices are not right, then there is no point in developing operational activities. If the company focus only on the comparison of individual steps, it will get only minimal results. The comparison must take into account the whole process in order to have the widest possible results. Examining the whole process, on the other hand, can be too

demanding, in which case it is necessary to find those critical parts and operating principles of the process that have a more significant impact on the outcome of the process. (Niva & Tuominen 2011, 12-14.) Figure below identifies the benchmarking process and its stages.

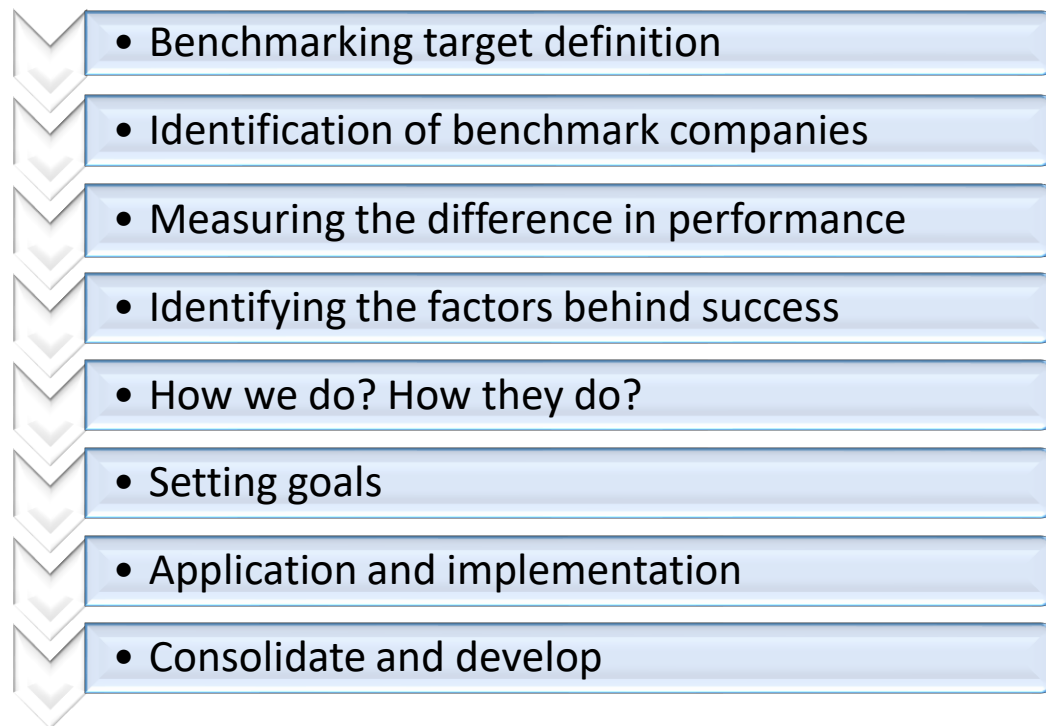


Figure 3-1: Stages of the benchmarking process (Niva & Tuominen 2011, 35.)

The benchmarking process begins with identifying something important to a company's success that would simultaneously increase customer satisfaction and internal efficiency. The next step is to identify the benchmark companies, that is, to identify the best, or at least better, companies in that case than your own company. The aim is to create benchmarking partnerships where both parties benefit. The best is selected using performance indicators. It is important to get to know the company's performance and how fast it has developed and how fast it is expected to develop. (Niva & Tuominen 2011, 35-45.)

Identify the factors behind the company's success. The competence and process by which improvements have been achieved, there may be one or more of these things. It is important to understand company's own skills in order to make a comparison and learn from the better. To enable comparison, one must look at the best process chosen, on the same principle as one who got acquainted with the process of one's own company. Setting goals leads to successful research, which is one of the key parts of the benchmarking process. The preparation of an implementation plan and timetable will assist in implementation and deployment, after which progress will be completed as planned and the set objectives can be achieved. (Niva & Tuominen 2011, 35-45.)

Productivity benchmarking is intended to seek excellence in areas that guide operational resource inputs. Productivity is related to measures that minimize the inputs used to generate value. Quality, on the other hand, is mainly a means of generating great value for customers. Quality thinking is very closely related to benchmarking. Quality can be viewed from either the customer's or the company's internal perspective. Overall quality includes all the functions of a company, not just the product. (Ahola 2016, 120.)

The idea of benchmarking was to give Spain Internship advantage over their competitors. The aim was to find tips for marketing, company operations and give Spain Internship information of the other companies' prices, remote possibilities, destination countries and fields. By doing the benchmarking for Spain Internship, they have an overall view of the market they are in. After the benchmarking Spain Internship realises how to continue developing their services better and with the beneficial information they know what are the things on their company they should focus on improving the most. The research and results can be found in Chapter 8.

4 Telecommuting before and now

The outbreak of the pandemic showed that there were major variations in the prevalence of telecommunications across EU Member States, industries and occupations. Large-scale telecommunications preparedness is higher in the ICT- and knowledge-intensive industries, and generally for high-skilled workers, but with large gaps across EU countries. More than half of the workers who have started working from home since the pandemic have had no previous teleworking experience in many EU countries. The uneven ability to scale up telecommunications could lead to widening inequality across countries, businesses and employees if past patterns are a guide. (Telework in the EU before and after the COVID-19: where we were, where we head to 2020, 1.)

In the 10 years prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, telework evolved steadily, but mainly as an occasional work pattern. In fact, just 5,4% of workers in the EU-27 typically worked from home as of 2019, a proportion that has remained remarkably constant since 2009. Over the same period, however, the proportion of employed employees working from their homes at least occasionally increased from 5.2% in 2009 to 9 percent in 2019. Working from home was slightly more prevalent among the self-employed than dependent workers, but over the past decade it has risen in a similar way for both groups. Almost 36% of self-employed citizens in the EU-27 were often or generally working from home in 2019, up from 30% in 2009. The prevalence of telecommunications among dependent workers in 2019 was just above 11%, up

from 7,5% in 2009. (Telework in the EU before and after the COVID-19: where we were, where we head to 2020, 1.)

Figure 4-1 below illustrates the Share of working people between 15 and 64 years of age who often or generally work in selected European countries from home in 2018.

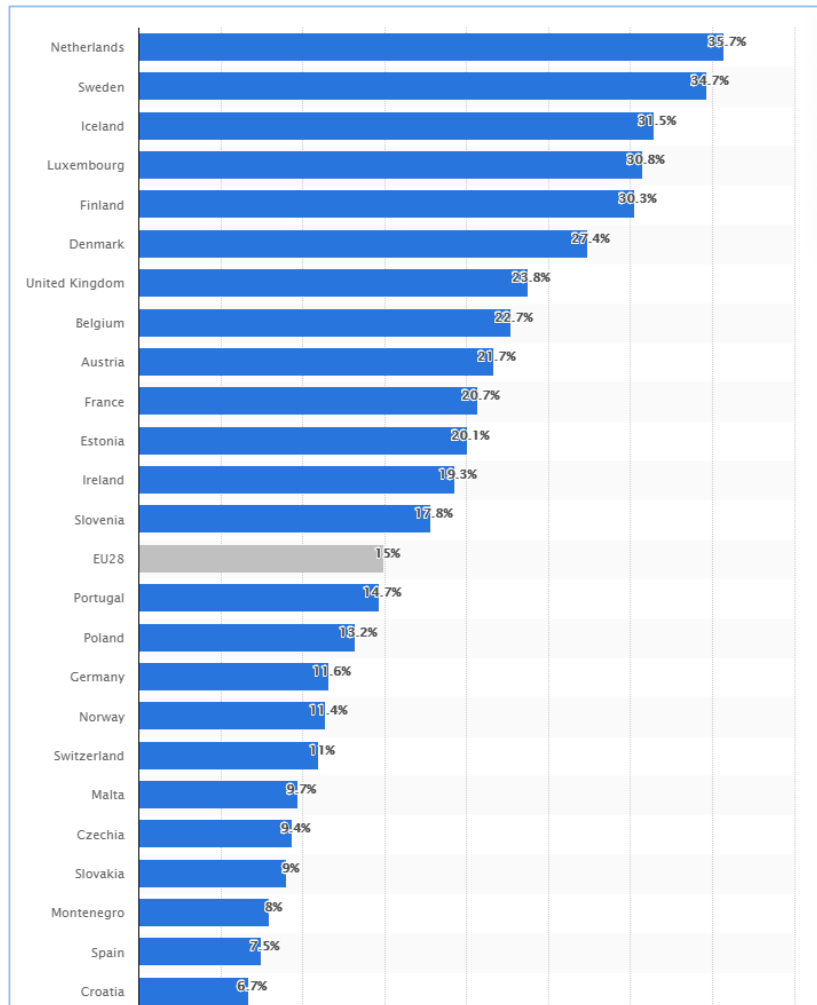


Figure 4-1: Share of employed people aged between 15 to 64 that sometimes or usually work from home in selected European countries in 2018 (Eurostat 2020).

Telework has reached a tipping point with the outbreak of the pandemic, as more and more businesses and institutions have introduced this work arrangement in an effort to keep their staff safe while ensuring the continued delivery of critical services. Nevertheless the transition to telework may have been more difficult for some workers, employers and EU countries than for others, given the large differences in previous experience with telework and other factors discussed in this brief. In the immediate aftermath of the outbreak, for example, many businesses without the right ICT infrastructure would have found it difficult to reorganize their work from home. Moreover, the fact that more than half of those actually

telecommuting have no previous experience in many EU countries is arguably making the move even more difficult. This at least in the short to medium term, has significant consequences for jobs, the competitiveness of businesses, and the well-being of employees. Policies to facilitate the transition to more widespread remote work would need to carefully examine the possible benefits and costs of work-life balance and mental wellbeing for productivity, job quality, and staff. (Telework in the EU before and after the COVID-19: where we were, where we head to 2020, 8.)

4.1 Telecommuting

In difficult COVID-19 times, many companies have to switch to telecommuting. Spain Internship is no exception, especially since many of their employees either are, or are coming to work from abroad. Due to the global crisis, students often have the option of either cancelling, transferring, or working on an internship remotely. The last option of these help the company to maintain their amount of employees.

Telecommuting, also known as e-work, is a form of work organization. The Framework Agreement of the European Social Organizations (2002) defines it as a way of organizing or carrying out work on the basis of an employment contract, using information technology. Information technology is used in a way where work is regularly done outside the employer's premises, even though the same work could be done on the employer's premises. (Akava 2020.)

According to the Government's decision-in-principle, e-work means both telecommuting and work organization in general, which utilizes electronic telecommunications connections. Telecommuting is a means for both companies and public service organizations to modernize the organization of work and to increase productivity and competitiveness. It creates an opportunity for employees, from their point of view, to better reconcile work and leisure, while being more independent in the performance of their duties. Information and communication technology can be used to create the conditions for work organization methods in which work and related interactions are not tied to a common workstation in the organization. However, technology is not at the heart of telecommuting, but is seen purely as a prerequisite for it. The essence of e-work is a better way of organizing work than before. (Työ ja Elinkeinoministeriö, 2020.)

In telecommuting, therefore, the work takes place outside the normal place of work. It is often thought of as working from the employee's home, but new types of information and communication technologies have made it possible to move it elsewhere. The work may take place entirely remotely or in such a way that the work is partly divided between the

workplace and, for example, the home. However, it is important to emphasize that telecommuting is not meant to be additional work for the employee outside the workplace at the end of the actual working day. E-work is specifically defined as work that is done in another alternative location instead of the actual workplace. Nowadays, telecommuting is possible in many different work tasks, as often the work is no longer necessarily tied to a specific place or time. It is a good idea to agree on the rules for e-work separately if the organization decides to apply it in different work tasks (Salli 2012, 95.)

In principle, e-work has no effect on an employee's position in the workplace. As a general rule, the same provisions of labour law and collective agreements must apply to e-work in the employment relationship as to similar work performed on the employer's premises, with a few exceptions that are mentioned later. Telecommuting is not a separate form of employment, just a different way of organizing the way work is done. It alone cannot place a worker in a different position from other workers in terms of fringe benefits based on workplace practice. Labour law applies to telecommuting, provided that it is an employment relationship with a specific company and not, for example, work as a self-employed person, a freelancer or any other similar form. (Salli 2012, 95; Harvard Business Review Press 2016, 21-25.)

Although telecommuting is subject to collective agreements and labour law, it raises some specific issues that should be agreed between the employer and the employee before the employee moves on to it. These types of issues include working hours, reporting to the employer, the costs of e-work and the duration of the telecommuting arrangement. You can see more specific issues related to it in figure below. (Salli 2012, 95; Harvard Business Review Press 2016, 21-25.)



Figure 4-2: Special issues of telecommuting

The figure highlights various issues that it would be important for the employee and the employer to agree on either in the employment contract or in a separate e-work agreement. The duration and revocability of a telecommuting arrangement refers to how long the

employee is intended to work remotely and under what conditions the opportunity to work remotely can be revoked. E-work can be agreed for an indefinite period or tied to a specific deadline. A fixed-term arrangement may be better if the employee is trying e-working for the first time or if it is, for example, a project for an employer. The revocability of e-work should be agreed, especially if it is intended to be carried out as a permanent arrangement or the agreed deadline for the arrangement is considerably long. Agreeing on revocability is also worthwhile when the employee was originally hired to work remotely. There are no general rules for cancelling e-work, which is why it is particularly important that matters are agreed between the employer and the employee before starting it. (Harvard Business Review Press 2016, 23-27; Akava 2020.)

The remote workplace can be located in a space where the employee has all the tools and connections they need. A telecommuting location can be a permanently defined specific location or it can vary according to the changing needs of employees. Places can be, for example, the employee's own home or another telework office, where employees of other employers can also work. In the contract, it is a good idea to agree on the place of work or to define the boundary conditions for the place when the employee is free to choose his or her working location. (Salli 2012, 98.)

The most common reason for switching to e-work in part or in full is working time flexibility. Thus, in telecommuting, special attention should be paid to working time. It often gives the employee the opportunity to decide for themselves the start and end times of the work. The employer does not necessarily control the timing of the work at all, but the most important thing is that the work must be done. The nature of the work to be done mainly determines how much the employee can influence his or her own working hours. Certain work tasks, such as customer service tasks, may require clear, predetermined working hours that may not be fully influenced by the employee. (Harvard Business Review Press 2016, 15)

In addition to working time, one of the most important things to agree on in e-work is the distribution of the costs involved. It can incur costs for either workspaces or tools. The cost of workspaces is always dependent on the remote workplace. For example, if an employee already has his or her own work room at home, there may not be any additional costs for the workspace. If the workspace causes additional costs, the employer and the employee must agree on the distribution of costs. Additional costs may arise from, for example, heating, cleaning and electricity costs, as well as any necessary security arrangements, such as locks. In principle, the employer is responsible for the additional costs caused by teleworking compared to normal living. (Akava 2020.) The tools required to perform the work must be assessed separately by the employer and the employee on a case-by-case basis. The general agreement covers all the tools needed by the employee to carry out the work, such as a computer, mobile phone, software, modem, and printer. (Akava 2020; Salli 2012, 100.)

It is important to take liability issues into account in a e-work agreement. Details of work equipment in insurance coverage should be verified directly with the insurance company before starting to work remotely. It is the employer's responsibility to organize information security and he or she chooses the means to be used to protect the information. It is the employee's responsibility to follow the instructions given by the employer. The e-worker's operating methods have a significant effect on the implementation of the policy. Security arrangements are particularly important if the employee handles confidential information in the course of his or her work, in which case attention must also be paid to, for example, the preservation of the information. (Akava 2020.)

Communication with the workplace is important for work-related reasons as well as for the reason that the e-worker is not isolated from the rest of the work community. When switching to telecommuting, it would be a good idea to record how often and in what way the employee is in contact with the workplace and which meetings he or she should attend. (Hiila, Tukiainen & Hakola 2019; Rose 2016, 76.)

Talking about the topics several of them are very current for Spain Internship. Due to time differences between countries, working hours may have a decisive influence on a trainee's decision to work for the company. For example, in China and the United States, the time difference may be so decisive that the e-work would have to be done in the middle of the night. That also affects the communication to the workplace. The place of work can also be an issue if, for example, the trainee's home does not have all the required supplies to do the work.

5 Cross-cultural communication

Cross-cultural communication has become electronic, especially as a result of Covid-19, but at Spain Internship it has not become a new thing. Usually, the company is always in contact with candidates from different countries via electronic platforms (WhatsApp, Skype, Google meets) or by phone. It can thus be said that Spain Internship is a pioneer in intercultural communication. Research problem by Spain Internship was to know how much students would pay for a remote internship, and what documents would they need. By using good cross-cultural communication in the research methods, the research problem was sorted.

A strategically significant cross-cultural connectivity for companies has been generated by the growth of global business, technology and the Internet. For any company with a diverse workforce or a global business implementation strategy, it is important to understand cross-cultural communication. This kind of communication requires an appreciation of how the

world around them is spoken, expressed and understood by people in various cultures. (CCCK Online, 2018.)

Culture is, in a wider sense, a collection of beliefs, principles, standards, practices, rituals, habits, morals, laws and customs held by individuals who engage in a specific area of society. All is affected by his or her cultural surroundings. Thus, members' behaviour, emotions, and thought are all closely connected to their culture. Thus, as individuals from different cultural backgrounds engage with each other, there is intercultural contact. (The business communication, 2019.) Rather than their cultures distinguish countries and continents. Countries vary in three ways: identity, values, and institutions, all of which are rooted in history. Identity is explicit: The question "To which group do I belong?" is answered by identity. It is also embedded in a person's language and/or religious affiliation, and it is noticeable and felt by both those who possess the identity and those who do not share it. Values are implicit: they are part of our minds' software. It's difficult to talk about our own values because it requires us to examine our motivations, emotions, and taboos. Our own culture is like air to us, while another culture is like water— and surviving in both requires special skills. Countries also have traditionally developed institutions, which include regulations, legislation, and organisations dealing with family life, colleges, health care, industry, government, athletics, media, art, and science. Some people, including a number of sociologists and economists, assume that these are the true causes of country-to-country variations in thought, feeling, and behaving. (Hofstede 2010, 22-23.)

Spain Internship has employees around the world. For that reason, cross-cultural communication is essential in its operations. As an international company, the environment is multicultural and because of that, the standards and behaviour are set to suit everyone. In this thesis is also necessary to approach international students culturally open, which means that, when interviewing, possible cultural differences must be taken into account.

5.1 The need for effective cross-cultural communication

One of the most critical points of an organization is communication. It is not too far to claim that an organization's success depends on good internal and external communication. As companies grow bigger and more competitive in different markets, they are increasingly facing cross-cultural communication challenges. Company success in the modern age relies mainly on multinational clients. A business must be able to listen to and consider the needs of different customers to provide the best service for each global client. To this end, in terms of national heritage, buying preferences, religious views and values, the citizens of an organisation should have a diverse awareness of cultural differences. Understanding these

cultural factors can allow businesses to market and enable businesses to understand their global customers better. (The Business Communication, 2019.)

5.2 The challenge of groups and teams in multicultural work

This section deals with possible problems of cross-cultural communication that may arise in the activities of the Spain Internship as well. Knowing the challenges makes it easier to act in the best way possible, and it is important for the company's employees to bring out their own cultures so that the company's operating environment can be designed as pleasing to everyone as possible. Those who come to the company for an internship usually want to get to know new cultures, which is good for Spain Internship. In this case, they are already prepared for possible intercultural conflicts, and thus act really politely.

In general, the successful performance of working groups is influenced by six sets of factors: the external or contextual constraints placed on the group, the resources of the members of the group, the group structure, the group mission, the method of the group, and the group composition. Via three distinct yet interrelated mechanisms, cultural diversity in working groups affects the group through the cultural standards of group members, cultural diversity, or the amount of different cultures represented in the group, and the degree to which group members vary culturally from each other. (Thomas & Peterson 2015, 82.) The various approaches to dealing with conflict are obvious; what the negotiating partners do not understand are the behaviours and beliefs that underpin them. These variations, on the other hand, help us appreciate the actions of others, maybe display more patience, and create new practices, communication styles, and processes that might be more effective in achieving negotiating objectives. (Haghirian 2012, 16.) Furthermore, the essence of the mission and the structure of the group influence the degree to which its processes and results are influenced by the cultural diversity of a group. The creation of work groups with geographically distributed structures that function across electronic networks is one direction in which many organizations address the challenges of globalization. These global virtual teams give the chance to pick the best members without regard to their venue, but they also present an extra set of challenges. Their ability to work effectively depends on overcoming the additional challenges posed by discontinuity and electronic mediation between group members. The level of managerial support, the degree to which individual benefits come from the group, the status afforded to the group, the amount of training offered to the group, and the degree to which the company empowers the group are key organizational factors that affect the effectiveness of the work group. In short, handling multicultural work groups means trying to find ways to enhance both homogeneity and diversity's positive effects while mitigating their negative effects at the same time. (Thomas & Peterson 2015, 182.)

5.3 Tips for cross-cultural, remote and multinational teamwork

Internal contact is one of the most critical elements of cross-cultural management. Any mode of communication (voice, e-mail, text, etc.) between two people from different cultural backgrounds is referred to as cross-cultural communication. The main aim is to communicate the message's content and importance from one person to another. The way this message is expressed, selected, and communicated varies depending on the community. (Haghirian 2012, 94.) In communication between remote and virtual team members, webinar platforms play a critical role. It is important, however, to check that the platform of choice across all locations is fit for purpose. In meetings, what is acceptable or not acceptable will vary across cultures. For instance, in relationship-driven cultures, taking calls during meetings may be perfectly appropriate. In direct contact cultures, as soon as someone else finishes talking without making a delay, it may be acceptable to speak. The pace at which many native English speakers talk is a key challenge for many team members who do not have English as a first language. This is particularly challenging as interactions take place online as signs that could be relied on have been removed in a face-to-face context, such as body language. In many cultures, relationships and confidence between team members are highly valued. Owing to the lack of physical interaction, relationship building is even more important in remote teams. As such for small talk, it's a good idea to provide time before each remote or virtual meeting. (Commisceo-global, 2020.)

6 Research process and methods

In response to Spain Internship's research problems, two methods were planned. The research problem of students' interest in paying for remote work internships was answered with a survey, and the research problem of students' documents to complete the remote work internships was answered with interviews.

Research is a carefully designed process that seeks to obtain answers to a specific research problem. Research can be seen as a step-by-step process, with each step having its own meaning and value. The research process proceeds from the planning of the research to the publication of the research and the development ideas arising from it. Although the research process is a step-by-step concept, research is never a completely linear entity. During the research process, it is essential to return to the previous work stages so that the research and its results achieve the highest possible quality result (Lumen Learning.) Vilkkä (2005) describes the research process as a five-stage entity. However, the stages often take place in

part at the same time, intertwining. Figure below shows the five different stages of the research process.

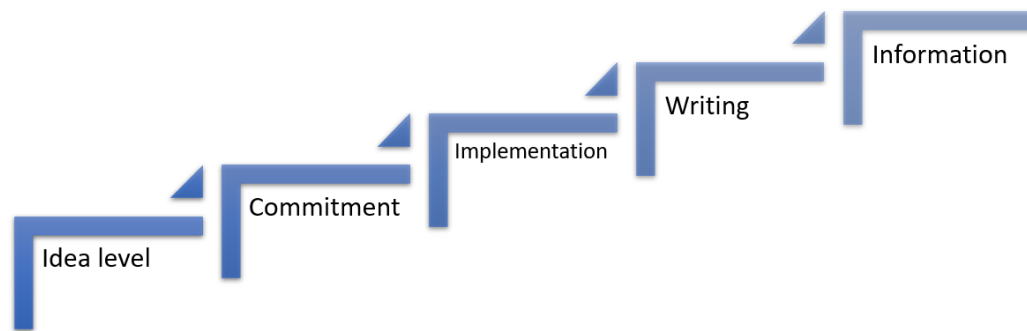


Figure 6-1: Stages of the research process (Vilkka 2005, 42-43.)

Mäkinen (2006) states that already at the beginning of the research it is necessary to be aware of what the obtained research results are used for and how they are archived. High-quality design is the single most important step in research. Poorly designed research may produce unusable research material, even if other phases of the research have been successfully completed.

Commitment to research begins when research design is so advanced that the research is more concrete, and the researcher knows what the research is aiming for and by what means. Features of the commitment include, for example, drawing up a research plan or clarifying research permits and acquiring them. Once the design of the study is completed, the implementation phase of the study begins. (Vilkka 2005, 42-43.)

The implementation of the research includes the acquisition of research material using selected research methods, the structuring, analysis and interpretation of the material. Once the research material has been collected, the analysis of the research results begins, which requires a lot of resources and time. A comprehensive understanding of research results provides the ability to develop important conclusions and development proposals for research. (Vilkka 2005, 42-43.)

Designing the research and deciding on the method to use in the research are crucial. This stage entails deciding the most suitable research design for achieving the research's objectives. This is the stage in the research where the researcher chooses which research method to use to collect the necessary data, also known as method selection. (Oflazoglu 2017.)

Once a sufficient amount of high-quality research material has been collected through the implementation phase of the study, it has been analysed and conclusions have been drawn from the results, the writing phase of the study begins. This means, for example, creating research results in a presentation format, such as research text. This is essential because it is important for the research that the research results are easily understood on behalf of people outside the research. The final stage of the study is information, which includes the publication and archiving of the results. The results should answer the questions and themes set in the design of the study. It is also important that the information obtained from the research can be used in the future as well. (Vilkka 2005, 42-43.)

Research that is carried out on its own or by an employed person is called primary research. Primary research provides answers to a specific need or problem for which it would not be possible to obtain similar help from previous research, in this case it helps Spain Internship to develop their new programme of remote internships and its marketing. The aim is to bring out new information for the programme. Previous studies are essential to utilize in the design of the research process, but seldom do previous studies fully fit the requirements of the current research problem. The most commonly used methods of primary research are, for example, surveys and interviews or observation. The following methods are used in this thesis. Primary research gives the researcher freedoms to find new perspectives on the organisation's development targets. The weakness of primary research can be seen in that it requires resources such as time and money from the researcher. (Devault 2019.)

By using survey and interview as research methods to solve research problems, the thesis team managed to get reliable and developmental responses from the perfect target group, the students themselves. Analysis of the responses were made, and from that, development proposals for the new programme of remote internships were given. These methods were used because for the question "How much money would you use to get a remote internship you desire?", it is needed to have as many answers as possible, to get quantitative responses. Whereas, for the question "What documents do you need for a remote internship?", it is not necessary to have as many answers, just at least one from every target country. So, the interview was implemented to get the research a qualitative and more reliable view. In interviews the answers are longer and they are actual cross-cultural conversations, that are fitting perfectly to the theme of Spain Internship, as well as this thesis.

6.1 Quantitative and qualitative research

In general, two methods are commonly used in marketing analysis studies to obtain accurate and credible information. There are two types of analysis methods: qualitative and quantitative. Depending on the content and structure of the analysis, some researchers may

combine these two approaches (mixed method). The aim of this section is to highlight unique facets of the qualitative approach in comparison to the quantitative method, which is commonly used to include accurate and credible evidence in marketing analysis studies, and to examine the advantages of the qualitative method to marketers. (Olfazoglu 2017.)

Quantitative research is a methodological trend in scientific research that is based on describing and interpreting the object under study using numbers and statistics. Quantitative research is interested in different classifications, cause and effect relationships, comparison, and explanation of the phenomenon based on numerical results. The quantitative methodological trend involves many different statistical and computational methods of analysis. (University of Jyväskylä 2015.)

A pair of quantitative research is considered to be qualitative research, it aims to understand the quality, properties and meanings of the research object holistically. The difference between qualitative and quantitative methodological trends is often emphasized, although both of these trends can also be used in the same study and both trends can explain the same research topics, but in different ways. (University of Jyväskylä 2015.)

Quantitative research requires a sufficiently large sample, more commonly used standardized research forms with ready-made answer options used to collect the data. Quantitative research is able to understand the existing situation but is not able to adequately determine the causes of things. Qualitative, in turn, helps to understand the research subject, and the reasons for its decisions and behaviour. Qualitative research is often limited to a small number of subjects. The goal, then, is to understand, not to quantify. Information is gathered through, for example, in-depth interviews or group discussions. (Heikkilä 2014). The figure below illustrates the most significant differences between quantitative and qualitative research.

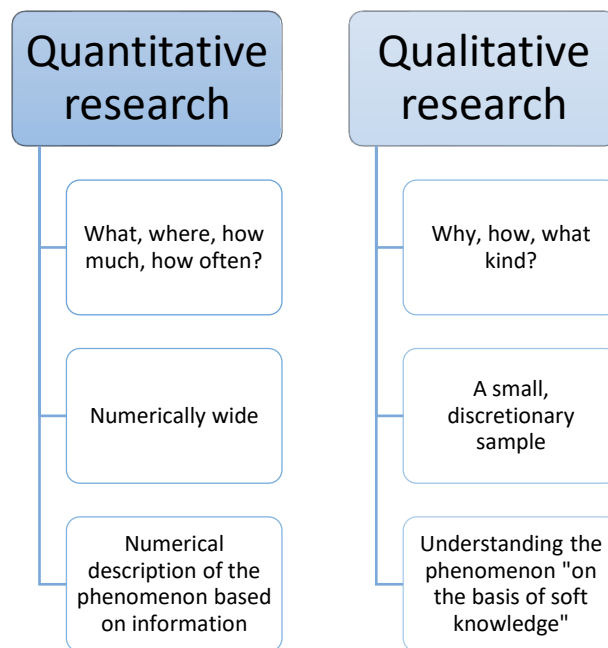


Figure 6-2: The differences between quantitative & qualitative research (Heikkilä 2014.)

The chosen approach in one analysis is closely linked to how the sample is calculated in another. The qualitative approach relies on the accuracy of the measurements used in the analysis rather than the numerical scale, since the quantitative method involves a sample with the ability to quantify numerically greater numbers. As a result, the questionnaire paradigm used in qualitative research experiments is called as the "purposeful sampling". (Olfazoglu 2017.)

This thesis consists of quantitative and qualitative researches for Spain Internship. The quantitative research is a survey about the international students' willingness to work abroad or to work remotely for an international organization. It gives Spain Internship answers from target countries so that the company has an understanding which students from each country are willing to work in Spain, and which students are more interested in working for an international company, no matter where they are located. The qualitative research is based on interviews for international students. The answers tell Spain Internship what documents the students need to apply for a remote internship in each country.

7 Research implementation

The study began when Spain Internship commissioned a research to look at how much money students from different countries could spend to get the international remote internship they want. In addition, the company had an interest in obtaining information on the necessary

documents for students from different countries regarding telecommuting. The research for Spain Internship was conducted using several methods: survey, interviews, and benchmarking.

The survey was designed at the end of September 2020 and was shared at the start of October 2020 for international students in Europe. Link was sent to international students, who have been or are planning to go on an Erasmus via WhatsApp, Instagram and email. Survey has responses from 40 students, mainly from German, French, Finnish, Swedish, Dutch, Croatian, and British students. It consisted of seven questions regarding the interests about going to work abroad compared to working at home remotely for a foreign company. The questions were designed in collaboration with Spain Internship and they guided what they wanted to find out. At the start of the survey, students were asked where they are from, and what is their field of study. Then the willingness was compared between international internship abroad and international internship done remotely. In addition to that, students answered what kind of company they would like to work in, and how much money would they pay to apply for an internship abroad and for a remote internship. Results were collected throughout October, and analysis began in early November.

Spain Internship needed also deeper information about the student's insights regarding remote internships and the documents they need for doing it. We decided to do interviews for gaining the information from the students. The interviews were planned after the survey design was done. The goal was to interview a student from each target country who could answer the questions related to the documents they needed from their university to complete the remote internship for a foreign country. The students from Finland, Sweden, UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Croatia were interviewed during October and the analysis began already by the end of October. The interview had questions regarding student's home country, the university where he or she is studying, the subject, the documents he or she needs for telecommuting for a foreign company, and the telecommuting tools he or she knows. In addition to this, they were asked about possible development proposals for e-work programs.

Spain Internship wanted to know how other similar companies are pricing their services and arranging internships, as well as the possibility of teleworking. To solve Spain Internship's research problem, benchmarking was started on the 21st of October, when different internship webpages were searched. After ten competitors with similar operations and services were found and information were written, analysis about the pros and cons of every company's activities was put into action. The criteria for benchmarking was mainly around the competitors' possibility of remote internship, as well as offered countries and the prices of the internships. After all, ten similar companies were closely monitored. Based on the activities of the companies, development proposals were created for Spain Internship.

8 Results

This information below is the results of a questionnaire, interviews, and benchmarking that addressed the partner's research problems and sought to overcome them with additional information. The results are reliable, and the questionnaires did not fall into the hands of those who provided incorrect information. To ensure this, survey required the respondent's email address. It also guaranteed only one response from each respondent.

8.1 Survey

The survey was conducted in October, and 40 responses were received. Students were found in all target countries, in addition to which students from Poland, for example, responded to the survey. The survey consisted of 7 questions. Below the questions are analysed one by one. One notable point is that the majority of respondents were former exchange students, so there is a very high level of interest in working abroad. Admittedly, this survey would not be so likely to be answered by individuals who are not interested in international affairs at all.

Where are you from?
40 responses

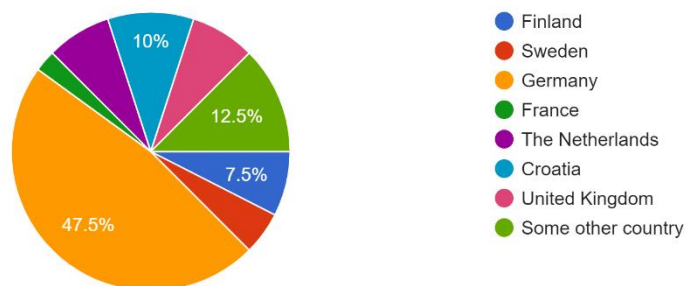


Figure 8-1: Nationalities (2020)

The first question asked the students where they are from. The answers show that the Germans responded enthusiastically to the survey. 47.5% of the answers were from Germans, whereas only 2.5% from France. Other target countries were between 5 to 10% of the respondents. The answer: "Some other country" (12.5%) included students from Bulgaria, Poland, and Norway.

What is your field of study?

40 responses

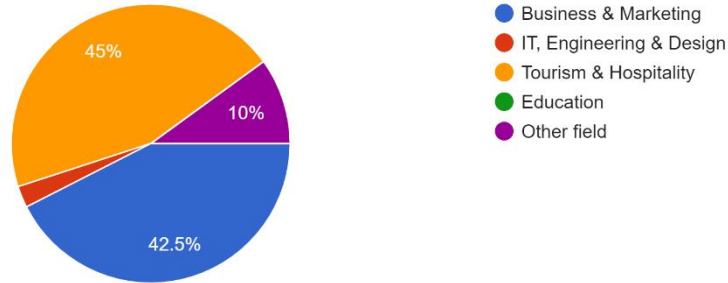


Figure 8-2: Fields of studies (2020)

The second question asked was the field of study of the students. The fields of study were broken down according to the Spain Internship website to make it easy for the company to combine which fields require the most attention, and which fields are most in demand. As the answers note, the majority of respondents were either business and marketing, or tourism and hospitality students. It should be mentioned that 2.5% were engineering students and 10% of students in other fields. The survey did not reach a single education student, as it is not as common in their field to go on an exchange abroad let alone work remotely. Most of tourism and hospitality students were German, and business and marketing respondents distributed to the rest of the target countries.

What is your willingness to work abroad?

40 responses

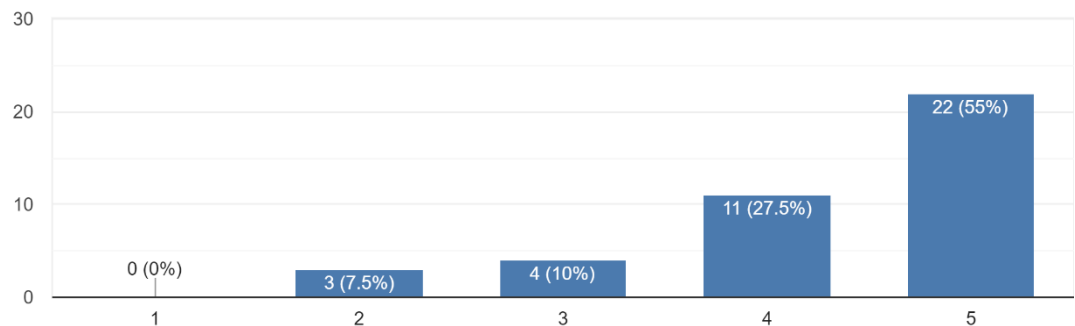


Figure 8-3: Willingness to work abroad

In the third question it was asked that how interested the students were to work abroad. It was rated on a scale from 1 to 5. Number 1 meant the respondent is not at all interested, and

number 5 meant he/she is really interested. Number 3 respondents consider that it is possible to work abroad. Based on the responses, 82,5% of the international students are interested in working abroad, it should also be noted that 10% may be potential employees as well. 7,5% of the respondents do not plan to work abroad, at least in the near future. One reason could be that the 7,5% were Germans, and the country has one of the best job opportunities in Europe.

What is your willingness to work remotely for an international company?

40 responses

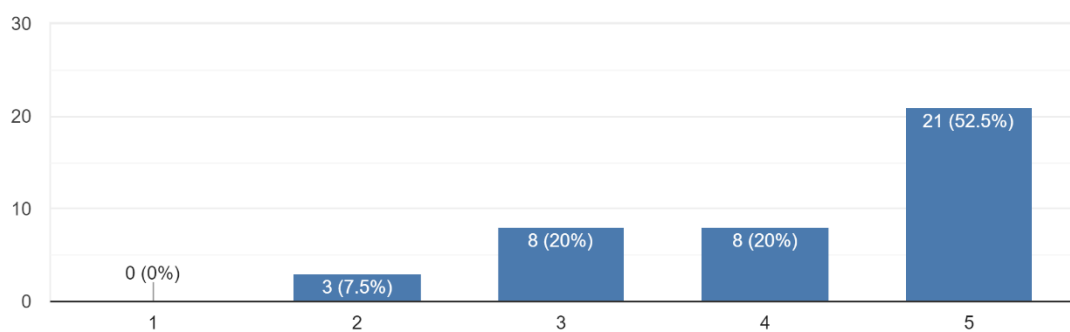


Figure 8-4: Willingness to work remotely (2020)

Fourth question was made to compare the interests between working abroad and working remotely for an international company. The answers have only slight difference, but regarding to the survey, working abroad is bit more interesting for international students. Still, over half of the respondents answered that they are really interested to work remotely for an international company, which is a good sign, especially during the COVID-19-situation. Also, respondents studying tourism are interested to work remotely, despite their interests often include lots of travelling and going abroad.

What kind of Company would you prefer to work in?

40 responses

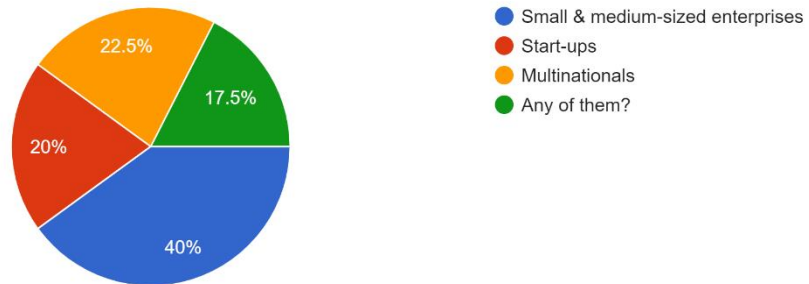


Figure 8-5: Preferred size of the company (2020)

Question number five is asking the students to tell what kind of companies they would prefer to work in. Seven persons told they do not consider it as the most important point how big the company is, if they get their dream placement. For example, if the job itself is so interesting that they just want to take the opportunity. 40% of the respondents identified small and medium-sized enterprises as the most suitable options for them. Reasons for that could be, for example, the possibilities inside the company. On start-ups it is possible that the company is not doing so well as expected, and everything is started from the scratch, whereas in multinationals it the internship presents you with a well-known brand, which can help you when you are applying for the next internship or a full-time job and shows you how large companies operate. Start-ups can also have the positive sides as you get to see all the operations of a company from close, when in multinational you get to see only your own department. For now, students prefer to go between these examples, with the safest option.

How much money would you pay to get the international internship you desire?

40 responses

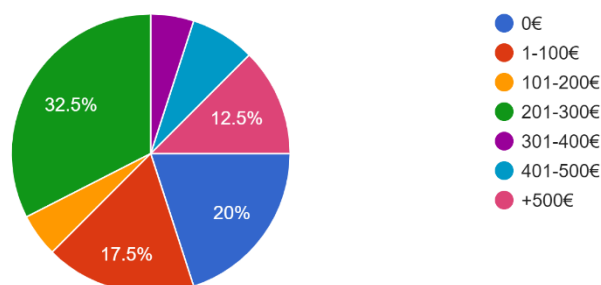


Figure 8-6: Money to get internship abroad (2020)

The issue of how students spend money on international internships will be addressed next. Every fifth respondent is not ready to pay for an internship, but still one in eight respondents could pay as much as +500€. According to the survey, 201-300€ is a suitable price for a dream internship abroad. Asking for money from students to get the internship is not a bad option, because 80% of the respondents are willing to pay at least something to get the placement. The home country of the student does not affect the willingness to pay for the internship. The respondents who answered 0€ to this question came from all over Europe (Germany, The Netherlands, Poland, UK).

How much money would you pay to get the international REMOTE INTERNSHIP you desire?
40 responses

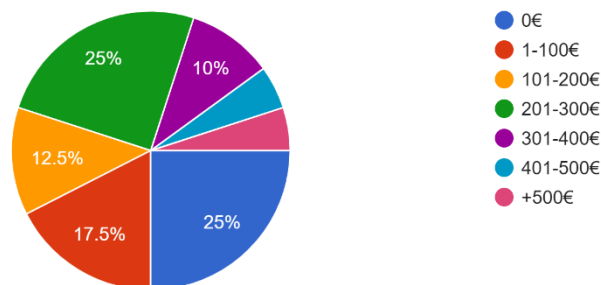


Figure 8-7: Money to get remote internship (2020)

Comparing the answers to recent question, the students are willing to pay a little bit less money for remote internship. Every fourth student is not willing to pay any money to get the remote internship they desire. Still, 75% are willing to pay at least something. Talking about paying 500€ or more, only two students from 40 are ready to pay that amount, which is a lot less compared to internship abroad.

8.2 Interviews

The thesis team interviewed students from 7 target countries, including Finland, UK, Sweden, Croatia, Germany, France and the Netherlands. The main task was to sort out the information about the needed documents for remote internships. Next, the results for each country are introduced. Table 1 below illustrates the results of the interview.

| | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>Finland, LUT University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •If internship is paid, contract of employment is needed •If internship is unpaid, a training agreement is needed •Skype for Business, Microsoft Teams, Google Meets & Zoom |
|  | <p>United Kingdom, Loughborough University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Work placement agreement is needed •Skype for Business & Zoom |
|  | <p>Sweden, Kristianstad University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Students have no knowledge of international internships regarding their studies •Skype for Business |
|  | <p>Croatia, University of Split</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Training agreement is needed •Skype for Business & Zoom |
|  | <p>Germany, WORMS University of Applied Sciences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Job description & labour contract before internship are needed •Job reference & report after internship are needed •Skype for Business, Discord & Zoom |
|  | <p>France, University of Tours & University of Nantes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learning agreement, internship convention & transcript of records are needed •Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Lifesize, Rooms & Blackboard |
|  | <p>The Netherlands, NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learning agreement & motivation letter are needed •Enough credits for University studies •Skype, Google Meets & Microsoft Teams |

Table 1: Results from the Interview (2020)

This first interview is based on business and management student from LUT University in Lappeenranta, Finland. For Finnish students, if the internship is paid, they need to have contract of employment. If the internship is unpaid, a training agreement is needed to be done between the student and the company. The student knew Skype for Business, Microsoft Teams, Google Meets and Zoom as the remote tools.

The student who was interviewed next attends Loughborough University in UK. His field of study is international business with economics. British students need work placement agreement for their remote internship. The remote tools he knew were Skype for Business and Zoom.

After that, the thesis team interviewed a marketing student from Sweden. She attends Kristianstad University, and did not know what documents they need for remote internships. After contacting another Swedish student, the thesis team got told that remote internships as well as internships abroad are very rare for Swedish students. The remote tool the student uses is Skype.

Next interviewed is a tourism student from University of Split in Croatia. The remote tools he knew that are most commonly used are Skype and Zoom. He answered that students from their university only need a learning agreement to complete a remote internship.

In German University of Applied Sciences in Worms, a business and tourism student answered with a wide information about the internships. The documents that the German students need before the internship are job description and labour contract, and after the internship job reference and report about the internship. The remote tools she knew were Skype for Business, Zoom and Discord. In addition to that, she gave development proposals for remote internships. In her opinion, the remote internships should be more clearly advertised. For example, the job offer should state exactly that it is a remote internship or that there is a possibility to perform the internship from distance. Also, she stated that it should be easier to find such an internship, for example by using a database or a website to search for remote internships.

France had two exchange students interviewed, one attends the University of Tours and the other University of Nantes. They study International relations and languages. The documents French students need for remote internship are learning agreement, internship convention and transcript of records. The remote tools French people knew were Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Lifesize, Skype, Rooms and Blackboard. The student from University of Tours stated that it would be beneficial to set up a principle of videoconferencing with coordinators to maintain oral contact.

The final interviewed was for Dutch student attending NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences. She studies tourism and knows Skype, Google Meets and Microsoft Teams. The documents the Dutch students need are learning agreement and motivations letter. In addition, they need to have enough credits. The development proposal is to give out more information for the students, so that they are not unclear of what is happening.

Based on the interviews, Spain Internship know how they should continue developing their actions regarding the remote internships, what is the knowledge of international students regarding different remote platforms and what kind of documents universities need in each target country for a remote internship. Interviews were planned to solve the research problem of Spain Internship's new programme REMOTE BAY, that was to know what kind of documents do students need for remote internship and if there are possible differences compared to an internship abroad.

8.3 Benchmarking

The thesis team examined the activities of ten similar companies. When it comes to similar companies to Spain Internship, these benchmarked companies offer students internships abroad and some as well remotely. So their target market is the same, young international prospects from universities. The main subjects of research were prices, job sectors, teleworking opportunities, and target countries. Each company is evaluated separately, and key issues are highlighted as to what should be improved, as well as things that Spain Internship will do much better in relation to the situation. Companies painted in the green are the most similar companies to Spain Internship, and therefore the most important benchmarks for development. Yellow-painted companies have some similarities with Spain Internship and thus comparable. The benchmarking also includes companies painted in red. It means that the companies operate in the same industry, but are very difficult to compare, as these companies differ a lot from Spain Internship, for example in pricing or that they do not offer the opportunity to work remotely.

Go Overseas

- **Location:** USA, Portland
- **Countries offered:** Worldwide, 100+ countries
- **Prices:** 0-5000€, depending on where to travel
- **Fields of work:** Most popular: Business, communications, education, marketing, tourism
- **Benefits:** Some of the internships are paid, possible to apply in almost every country in the world
- **Remote:** Yes, 0-500€



Figure 8-8: Go Overseas (2021)

The first web platform to be analysed is Go Overseas. It has many similarities to Spain Internship, as it offers various business and tourism related internships with a fair price. The platform offers internships remotely for free, but there are also placements that cost up to 500 euros. Go Overseas is located in USA, but it operates with over 100 countries, which is the biggest difference in comparison with Spain Internship. We noticed a link on Go overseas's website that led to a review of your internship. This page allowed for a review of your own internship experience and it can be published later on the company's website. Such a similar one could be on the Spain Internship website. It would be very important to own content like this in the development of a new service. It could create credibility towards teleworking and at the same time negative reviews could teach you how to do things differently.

Erasmus Internship

- **Location:** Belgium, Brussels
- **Countries offered:** Worldwide depending the countries that are available
- **Prices:** Free, it's for Erasmus students
- **Fields of work:** 15 fields
- **Benefits:** Some of the internships are paid, benefit to be a student. Only students are applied
- **Remote:** Yes, out of costs



Figure 8-9: Erasmus Internship (2021)

The second company was the Erasmus Internship. It operates basically in every country in the world and the main office is located in Brussels, Belgium. The Erasmus Internship offers the internships free for students whether it is normal internship or remote internship. In addition, in some of the vacancies students get paid. The biggest difference between Spain Internship and Erasmus Internship is that Erasmus gets financial aid by the European Union. It is also needed to mention that students from EU countries get Erasmus support for going internship abroad and it can be placement that you have find yourself. The big difference compared to Spain Internship is that applicants who use the Erasmus Internship site know the company where they are applying, while with Spain Internship you do not know it in advance.

Hey Success

- **Location:** UK, London
- **Countries offered:** Worldwide, 150+ countries
- **Prices:** 3£ month for premium, which helps to get internships more easily
- **Fields of work:** No fields mentioned, placements are searched with key words, very laggy web page
- **Benefits:** Depending on the placement (Accomodation, food, paid internship etc.)
- **Remote:** Yes, Premium user 3£ month



Figure 8-10: Hey Success 2021

The last green coloured company is Hey Success. It offers vacancies around the world, with over 150+ countries involved. The company's head office is located in London, United Kingdom. Hey Success offers free internships, but in addition it has premium service that costs 3£/ month. It guarantees applicants to get more aid regarding vacancies. Difference compared to Spain Internship is noticed when searching for vacancies. There are no fields mentioned, and internships can only be found using keywords. The similarities to Spain

Internship as well as pros for both companies are the remote opportunity and possible benefits, such as accommodation and salary, regarding the placements.

Remote Internships

- **Location: USA, Canada, Philippines and Singapore**
- **Countries offered: Big companies around the world**
- **Prices: Only remote internships**
- **Fields of work: 12 different fields, most related to business (for example Marketing, Accounting, International business and HR)**
- **Benefits: Guaranteed internship placement, career coach, business skills training, post-remote internship training session etc.**
- **Remote: Yes, 3440\$ for the program**


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Figure 8-11: Remote Internships (2021)

Remote Internships is all about offering applicants vacancies that operate in telecommuting way. The company has collaborations with big enterprises related to business fields mostly. Unlike Spain Internship, Remote Internships' headquarters is located outside Europe, in Northern America and Asia. What makes the biggest difference is the price of the programme, which is over 3000\$. The price includes benefits such as coaching and business skills training. The Remote Internships website has a chat service through which you can contact us directly if you have any questions about the internship or if you need other information. Spain Internship does not have this service and it would be very important for people to be able to contact you as easily as possible.

Intern abroad HQ

- **Location:** New Zealand, New Plymouth
- **Countries offered:** Worldwide, 13 countries including Bali, Costa Rica, Spain, New Zealand etc.
- **Prices:** 1500-8000\$ depending on where to travel
- **Fields of work:** Animal sciences, Business, Creative Arts & Media, Environmental Sciences, Health Sciences, Social Sciences & STEM
- **Benefits:** Securing your internship placement, Personalization of your internship plan 24/7 in-country support, Airport pick-up, Program orientation, Accommodation, Meals (for selected programs), Experiential Learning Curriculum, In-country guidance for social and tourism activities, International reference letter
- **Remote:** Yes, 100 hours of work 948\$, 250 hours of work 1348\$, 350 hours of work 1,648\$



Figure 8-12: Intern Abroad HQ (2021)

Next benchmarked company was Intern Abroad HQ. It is located in New Zealand. Like Spain Internship, Intern Abroad HQ offers internships in Spain. But in addition to that, they provide internships to 12 other countries. Depending on the country to work in, the cost would be between 1500\$-8000\$, which is way higher than in Spain Internship. The variety in fields is fantastic, including vacancies in, for example, animal- and environmental sciences. However, despite offering remote placements like Spain Internship, the prices differ by a big margin (250 hours of work costs 1348\$ in Intern Abroad HQ). The site has clear information on the effects of Covid-19 on internships as well as the latest news. This information should also be on the Spain Internship website for applicants.

Capital Placement

- **Location:**UK, London
- **Countries offered:** UK, Singapore, India, USA
- **Prices:** 3000-6000\$ depending the length and place
- **Fields of work:** 16 different fields
- **Benefits:** Visa Application, Private Travel and Medical Insurance, Airport Pick-up, Regular Social & Cultural Event, 24/7 Emergency Support, Dedicated Program Advisor
- **Remote:** Yes, full-time internship 950\$ and part-time internship 915\$



Figure 8-13: Capital Placement (2021)

Like Spain Internship, Capital placement is a European enterprise. It is located in London and offers 4 countries that has English as one of their official languages. Depending on where to do an internship, the price is from 3000\$ to 6000\$. The amount of fields the company offers is 16, some of the fields are mostly remotely. The full-time remote internship price is little bit under 1000\$. The prices are much higher in here as well when you compare that to Spain Internship so that's why it is marked as yellow. Interesting in this site was that they have also information providing podcast for the applicants. The podcast is dedicated to bringing unfiltered and honest career advice to help applicants successfully launch or progress in their career.

StudiesAbroad

- **Location:** USA, Texas
- **Countries offered:** 28 countries worldwide
- **Prices:** 2000\$+ depending on place and length
- **Fields of work:** 26 different fields
- **Benefits:** Placement, other funds depending on the internship individually
- **Remote:** Yes, Around 1000\$ for one semester



Figure 8-14: Studies Abroad (2021)

Studies Abroad is an American company that offers internships in 26 different fields in 28 countries worldwide. In addition, it offers remote option, as does Spain Internship. However, the prices are notably higher. The price for an internship abroad is minimum 2000\$ and telecommuting internship costs 1000 for one semester.

The Intern Group

- **Location:** UK, USA & Australia
- **Countries offered:** Placements in every continent (South-Africa coming soon), 10+ countries
- **Prices:** 2000-20000€ depending on the length and country
- **Fields of work:** 25 different fields
- **Benefits:** Accommodation, 24/7 support, airport pick-up etc. Remote internship benefits: placement, career advancement training, keynoter speaker series
- **Remote:** Yes, 4-24 weeks of work 2529€



Figure 8-15: The Intern Group (2021)

The Intern Group is marked on red because the company varies a lot from Spain Internship. The internship prices are a lot higher. Although the services include things such as airport pick-up, that Spain Internship does provide as well. Unlike Spain Internship, The Intern Group has placements in every continent in 25 different fields, which raises the attraction of the possible trainees.


City Internships

- **Location: USA and UK**
- **Countries offered: 12 countries**
- **Prices: 4950\$-7750\$**
- **Fields of work: 9 industries**
- **Benefits: Work experience & Career coaching, Career Preparation & development, Career navigator course, Future leaders course, Optional features, Housing depending on placement**
- **Remote: Yes, +4950\$ 8-12 week**



Figure 8-16: City Internships (2021)

City Internship provides a lot of placement possibilities in the office and remotely, but the costs are considerably higher comparing to Spain Internship. The company offers 12 different countries and is located in the United States and United Kingdom. The benefits of City Internships are comprehensive. It includes plenty of help for the customer paying the company's service.



BUNAC

- **Location:** UK
- **Countries offered:** 8 countries
- **Prices:** From 685€ to 1300€ +
- **Fields of work:** No fields mentioned, placements are searched only with countries. Includes business, sports, teaching etc.
- **Benefits:** Benefits for young persons, some placements are from age 18 to 30
- **Remote:** No

Figure 8-17: BUNAC (2021)

BUNAC is from United Kingdom. It provides traineeships to 8 countries on a price-range of 685-1300€. The company does not offer remote internships, which varies from Spain Internship. In addition, BUNAC has some interesting differences regarding web pages and services. We noticed that BUNAC has a really good blog in their website. The blog posts were clear and it was easy to find out who has written them and when.



Spain Internship

- **Location:** Spain
- **Countries offered:** 28
- **Prices:** 0€ & premium service for a fee 490 €, VAT included. The costs depends also what program you will take, so it can be more.
- **Fields of work:** 10
- **Benefits:** May differ a lot from one type of placement to another. Housing plus meals, as well as in other fields a small salary or remuneration is usual
- **Remote:** Yes, Remotebay is the new program of Spain Internship who takes care remote internships. Price 0€.

Figure 8-18: Spain Internship (2021)

The figure above has been created for comparison to Spain Internship's competitors. The best aspects of Spain Internship are the cheap prices of their services and the possibility of having the internship completely remotely. They also offer premium service, that gives the possibility for applicants that are more specific on their requirements or want to have an internship in the United States, as an example.

Benchmarking brought a lot of new perspectives on what kind of services as well as prices other similar companies had. The colour codes help to identify how comparable companies and network platforms are to Spain Internship. The greens are the most similar companies, the yellows have some similarities, but some actions differ significantly and the reds have so many measurable differences, that they are almost impossible to call as "competitors". However, benchmarking shows that most companies offer much more expensive internship and telecommuting placements. At Spain Internship, the services are almost free unless you are a premium customer.

Benchmarking also brought new things to the surface, such as what competitors have and what Spain Internship is missing from the website. Today, websites play such an important role in providing a service that they should be fully developed. Several things such as the Spain Internship does not provide the information about the company name's the candidates are applying.

9 Conclusions and reflection

The conclusions and reflection are based on three different research methods: interview, survey and benchmarking. The following methods were planned to answer the research problems of Spain Internship, which were "How much would international students pay for remote internship?" and "What documents international students need for a remote internship?". The titles were split to these three ways of research, so that the reader can easily realise the conclusions and reflection when continuing to read this thesis.

9.1 Survey

The survey highlighted issues that determine students' interest in international internships as well as teleworking. Respondents were from all target countries and all are interested in international internships or have previously been part of student exchanges. However, it must be mentioned that the German respondents were clearly the majority of the answers (47.5%),

and as well students that have background from business / marketing (42.5%) and tourism / hospitality (42.5%) played a major role in this survey.

The survey shows that 82.5% of respondents are willing to work abroad and 10% are potentially willing. Only 7.5% are reluctant to work in the near future and they were all from Germany, where the labour market situation is at its best in Europe. The difference was when asked about the willingness to work remotely for an international company, 10% moved to potentially willing. Still, a large majority would be interested in working remotely as well and the same 7.5% were not interested. This is a good thing because people understand the future of telecommuting as a result of Covid-19 and are also willing to work without going to the destination country, even if they are very interested in travelling.

According to the survey, almost half of the respondents were eager to work in a small or medium-sized company. One-fifth of respondents wanted to work for an international company and another-fifth for start-ups. 17.5% of the respondents did not care which company they would work in and in this case one could say that it depends more on the internship place than on the size of the company.

The survey showed that the majority of students were willing to pay for international internships as well as international teleworking. Difference was that when asked about the remote internships there was 5% people who didn't want to pay about the internship. Both questions showed that if you are willing to pay, then most were willing to pay 200-300€

9.2 Interviews

Conclusion of the interviews are that the documents students need for remote internship are varying a lot in target countries. Learning agreement/training agreement is basically needed in every country, and as well Spain Internship requires it. In Germany, France and the Netherlands there are also other documents the students need to fill from their University. In Germany the students in WORMS University of Applied Sciences need a job description and a labour contract before the start of remote internship. After the internship it is obligatory to fill job reference and a report about the experience. In France the students need, in addition to learning agreement, an internship convention as well as a transcript of records. Dutch students need to write a motivation letter and check that the internship offers them enough credits to be accepted by the university. To add, in Finland if the remote internship is paid, universities need an official contract of employment from the company student is willing to work in.

When it comes to remote tools, Skype and Skype for Business are the most common platforms to work in remotely. These tools are followed by Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Google Meets. In

France, remote tools called Rooms, Blackboard and Lifesize were used, whereas in Germany students know platform named Discord.

9.3 Benchmarking

Overall, Spain Internship is in a good position when it comes to their competitors. Free service and a relatively cheap premium service is a key advantage when comparing to competitors. Their remote internship service REMOTE BAY is a genius addition to their operations as it offers students different service, which is beneficial for students especially during the crisis situation. The thesis team gathered some conclusions and development proposals based on the benchmarking.

When it comes to Spain Internship's website, many of the competitors has a chat-service on their website that Spain Internship lacks. Chat-service would help interns to get quick answers on their problems, for example how to make a profile, are some vacancies free or how the process progresses. For example, hiring an intern to handle that customer service role would be helpful to develop the pace of one student's process to get an internship. In addition, many of the vacancies are not up to date on the webpage. The vacancies have not been available in many months or even a year. Update to the website would avoid the confusion that students or even the workers might get.

Talking about the current COVID-19 situation, Spain Internship could as well tell students information about the situation in the countries they offer, especially in Spain. To have instructions and information how to get to Spain, how the situation is developing and what should the students take in notice would make students feel safe and ready for the new challenge. Even a link based on the newest information regarding the situation could be considered very helpful for students.

Some competitors have offered podcast on their webpage. By making podcasts Spain Internship could show even more professionalism for the students, same time attracting them to the company's services. As well, the blogs on the website could be improved by making them more aesthetical by the reader, also adding the dates when announced and writing them more frequently. When the thesis team read competitors' blogs, many of them were easier to read.

10 Evaluation

The thesis team wished more answers for the quantitative survey. They sent the survey for Spain Internship to share, but there were no more students reached. The amount of the students were an underperformance, but every single student reached was genuinely interested of international internships and Erasmus programme. Basically every student reached have done or are willing to do an abroad exchange during their studies, as the survey was sent to only respondents that has the interest of international studying and working services.

The communication during the thesis was good, but in some weeks it was too little. At the start of the thesis the topic was hard to understand and thesis team needed more explanation what the collaborator wants.

The result is making the team proud as they answered the research problems using different research methods and with students that answered the questions with interest.

Handling the whole thesis in a foreign language has improved the use of English language and the understanding of the market of international internships, both abroad and remotely. As the thesis team has also worked for the company, the views and opinions are shared with the most closest view possible. Interviews were beneficial for the team's cross-cultural communication skills, and results help Spain Internship to develop their actions.

For the benchmarking, team used long period of time to give Spain Internship the best development proposals possible. All in all, the benchmarking was a success and definitely gives the collaborator areas to develop their services and platforms.

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Appendix 1: Interview form



REMOTE BAY
by The Student Mobility Group

Documents required by international students for remote internship

* Required

Where are you from? *

Your answer _____

Which university are you studying? *

Your answer _____

What is your field of study? *

Your answer _____

What documents your university requires to do an international remote internship? (agreements etc.) *

Your answer _____

What remote work tools do you know? (Skype for business etc.) *

Your answer _____

Development proposals regarding remote internships?

Your answer

Submit

<https://forms.gle/VwGERu9ma9MibdyJ6>

Appendix 2: Survey form



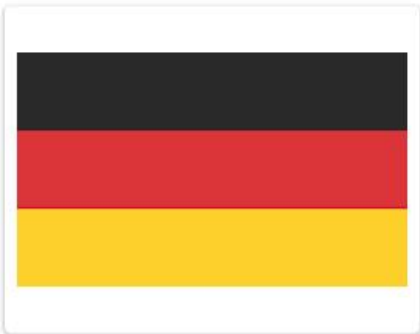
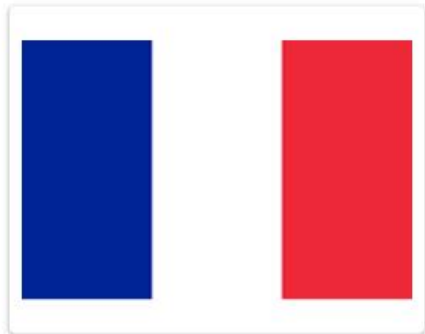
REMOTE BAY
by The Student Mobility Group

Attractiveness factors of Spain Internship

Spain Internship is an organization that helps international students find their preferred placement in Spain, but in addition to that, they have a wide variety of internship programs all over the world.

Background information

Where are you from?

 Finland Sweden Germany France The Netherlands Croatia



United Kingdom



Some other country

What is your field of study?

- Business & Marketing
- IT, Engineering & Design
- Tourism & Hospitality
- Education
- Other field

Internship

What is your willingness to work abroad?

I'm not interested at all 1 2 3 4 5 I'm really interested

What is your willingness to work remotely for an international company?

I'm not interested at all 1 2 3 4 5 I'm really interested

What kind of Company would you prefer to work in?

- Small & medium-sized enterprises
- Start-ups
- Multinationals
- Any of them?

How much money would you pay to get the international internship you desire?

- 0€
- 1-100€
- 101-200€
- 201-300€
- 301-400€
- 401-500€
- +500€

How much money would you pay to get the international REMOTE INTERNSHIP you desire?

0€
 1-100€
 101-200€
 201-300€
 301-400€
 401-500€
 +500€

Submit

<https://forms.gle/kN5pnaBRcvbR3EbdA>

Appendix 3: Benchmarking

| Company | Web-site | Location | Countries offered | Prices | Fields of work | Benefits | Remote | Remote internship price |
|--------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--|--------|-------------------------|
| Go overseas | https://www.gooverseas.com/ | USA, Portland | Worldwide, 100+ countries | 0-5000€, depending on where to travel | Most popular: Business, communications, education, marketing, tourism | Some of the internships are paid, possible to apply in almost every country in the world | Yes | 0-500€ |
| Erasmus Internship | https://erasmusintern.org/ | Belgium, Brussels | Every country that is available | Free, its for Erasmus students | 15 fields | Some of the internships are paid, benefit to be a student. Only students are applied | Yes | Free |
| Hey Success | https://www.hey success.com/ | UK, London | Worldwide, 150+ countries | 3€ month for premium, which helps to get internships more easily | No fields mentioned, placements are searched with key words, very laggy web page | Depending on the placement (Accommodation, food, paid internship etc.) | Yes | Premium user 3€ month |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|--|---|---|---|---|-----|--|
| Remote Internships | https://remoternships.com/ | USA, Canada, Philippines and Singapore | Big companies around the world | Only remote internships | 12 different fields, most related to business (for example Marketing, Accounting, International business and HR) | Guaranteed internship placement, career coach, business skills training, post-remote internship training session etc. | Yes | 3440\$ for the program |
| Intern abroad HQ | https://www.internhq.com/ | New Zealand, New Plymouth | Worldwide, 13 countries including Bali, Costa Rica, Spain, New Zealand etc. | 1500-8000\$ depending on where to travel | Animal sciences, Business, Creative Arts & Media, Environmental Sciences, Health Sciences, Social Sciences & STEM | Securing your internship placement Personalization of your internship plan 24/7 in-country support Airport pick-up Program orientation Accommodation Meals (for selected programs) Experiential Learning Curriculum In-country guidance for social and tourism activities International reference letter | Yes | 100 hours of work 948\$ 250 hours of work 1348\$ 350 hours of work 1,648\$ |
| Capital Placement | https://capital-placement.com/ | UK, London | UK, Singapore, India, USA | 3000-6000\$ depending the length and place | 16 different fields | Visa Application Private Travel and Medical Insurance Airport Pick-up Regular Social & Cultural Event 24/7 Emergency Support Dedicated Program Advisor | Yes | full-time internship 950\$ part-time internship 915\$ |
| Studies Abroad | https://www.studiesabroad.com/ | USA, Texas | 28 countries worldwide | 2000\$+ depending on place and length | 26 different fields | Placement, other funds depending on the internship individually | Yes | Around 1000\$ for one semester |
| City Internships | https://www.city-internships.com | USA & UK | 12 countries | 4950\$-7750\$ | 9 Industries | Work experience & Career coaching, Career Preparation & development, Career navigator course, Future leaders course, Optional features Housing depending on placement | Yes | +4950\$ 8-12 week |
| BUNAC | https://www.bunac.org/ | UK | 8 countries | From 685€ to 1300€ | No fields mentioned, placements are searched only with countries. Includes business, sports, teaching etc. | Benefits for young persons, some placements are from age 18 to 30 | No | - |
| The Intern Group | https://www.theinterngroup.com | UK, USA & Australia | Placements in every continent (South Africa coming soon), 10+ countries | 2000-20000€ depending on the length and country | 25 different fields | Accommodation, 24/7 support, airport pick-up etc. Remote internship benefits: placement, career advancement training, keynoter speaker series | Yes | 4-24 weeks of work 2529€ |