

# APPLYING CIPP MODEL TO EVALUATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIP IN A VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITY

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**Abstract** - International internship has become popularised these days due to its great benefits. The University of Danang-University of Foreign Language Studies (UD-UFLS) has organised several international internships including the one in Thailand. To have a comprehensive picture of the implementation of the internship in Thailand, the evaluation applying CIPP model was conducted. The study applied the qualitative method with document review and interviews as the instruments. Participants are students of Faculty of English, UD-UFLS who underwent the internship in Thailand in 2024. The evaluation reveals that the internship generally met its intended outcomes regarding cultural competence and professional development, and it was properly implemented. Yet, it would be better if careful design selection of the activities, detailed instructions, and better preparation for pre-departure were taken into consideration.

**Key words** - Internship; CIPP model; professional development; cultural competence

## 1. Introduction

According to constructivist theories, active learning in various authentic contexts should be prioritised in education. Active learning is encouraged in all kinds of education [1]. One of the most common kinds of active learning is learning through experience. In higher education, internship is considered to be a kind of experiential learning, which encourages students to enhance both personal and professional development [2]. Internship either in a long or short time provides students with chances to apply what they learn in real-life situations and experience what they cannot have from university learning.

In today's modern world, international internship is increasingly becoming more popular as it is a form of active learning in a very diverse cultural setting which enhances students' professional development as well as cultural competence development. During the internship abroad, students participate in various activities from ones designed by the organisers related to their curriculum to spontaneous ones in new cultural settings. Therefore, the outcomes of international internships vary from professional development to cultural competence development [3].

To enhance students' experiential learning, University of Foreign Language Studies has organised international internships for its students in many Asian countries like Thailand, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan for many years. For language students, the opportunities to be in areas where they can be actually exposed to situations for their learned language to be used are extremely precious.

To have an understanding of how well the internship is implemented, the study was conducted. The research

applied Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) model developed by Stufflebeam to evaluate the implementation of the international internship in Thailand in 2024. CIPP model is a popular one to evaluate the implementation of educational programs, courses, and even activities or projects [4], [5]. The model was selected for the study as a framework because it is a model that provides chances for improvement. Context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation, and product evaluation were carried out to study how well the implementation of UD-UFLS international internship was done.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. CIPP model

CIPP model was first developed in the late 1960s, which aims to evaluate educational programs, projects, courses, and so on [4]. The model has been continuously revised over the years [5]. CIPP model is "a comprehensive framework for conducting formative and summative evaluations of programs, projects, and evaluation systems" [5, pp. 31]. The model is based on "learning by doing" [4]. The major purpose of the evaluation is "not to prove but to improve" [6]. The four dimensions of the model are context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation, and product evaluation.

Context evaluation is used to assess needs, problems, assets, and opportunities [6]. "Needs" are the necessary things that fulfill the purpose of the programs or projects. "Problems" are obstacles that need to be solved to achieve the purpose of the program or project. "Assets" means accessible services and expertise to achieve the targeted purpose. "Opportunities" include fundings, or supports to meet needs and overcome problems. Context evaluation can be used before the implementation of the program to assess needs, opportunities, assets, and problems so that the program designer can have background information to decide how the program is built and carried out. Context evaluation is also applied after the program finishes so that improvements can be made to the program later. In this study, context evaluation was used to seek the actual needs of students for the international internship, estimate the problems that may arise during the internship, and prepare budgets and support for the international internship. The evaluation was done after the internship ended.

Input evaluation involves the planning steps, which identify and assess alternative approaches, procedural plans, staff support, budget, and potential cost-effectiveness to achieve the target outcomes [4]. Similar to context evaluation, input evaluation can be used to prepare a

proposal for a program or to evaluate an existing one. In this research, input evaluation evaluates how well the university prepared for the implementation of the internship, and how well students were equipped for the internship.

Process evaluation is a continuous check of how the program is implemented [7]. It is often used to judge how well the program is implemented and whether the implementation of the program actually reflects the plan. In the study, the relevant program strategy, work plans, budget, and any prior background were reviewed to assess the implementation of the program.

Product evaluation is the final dimension of CIPP model which is used to measure, interpret, and assess the outcomes of the program [4]. The feedback obtained from this evaluation is useful for checking whether the program can achieve its intended outcomes. Based on the information of product evaluation, decisions on what to improve, and how to improve can be made. In this study, product evaluation was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the internship program implemented by UD-UFLS.

The four dimensions can be applied for one program evaluation or they can be used individually to serve some specific purposes. For example, to identify the actual needs, problems, opportunities, and assets of an educational program, context evaluation is used. Product evaluation can be utilised to check whether the achieved outcomes meet the expected ones. In this study, all four dimensions were applied to have a comprehensive picture of the international internship in Thailand organised by UFLS after the internship finished.

## **2.2. Internship and professional development**

Internship is an opportunity for students to undergo a real-life environment that is relevant to their major. The internship is a compulsory part of the curriculum for undergraduate programs in Vietnam. Often, the internship is organised at the end of the program so that students have enough knowledge and skills to perform certain kinds of tasks. This is a great chance for them to develop their profession. The internship links the theories and practices together [2].

With the fast globalisation in all fields, universities seek chances to send their students for international internships in which students are offered chances to develop both their professional abilities and cultural intelligence [2]. In addition, students can access various working environments and working styles that they may not see in their home country [1].

## **3. Research methodology**

### **3.1. Research design**

This is a qualitative research in which interviews and reviews of students' internship reports are the methods to collect data. During the internship, students were required to keep a record of all their activities and write a report on what they obtained from the internship, what they encountered, and what they suggested for an effective future international internship. Semi-structured interviews with prepared questions were conducted to employ how effective the internship was from students' perspectives.

### **3.2. Research participants**

The study collected data from 12 reports of UD-UFLS students in the Faculty of English. Interviews were carried out with five students, 4 females, and 1 male.

### **3.3. International internship in UFLS**

UD-UFLS has organised internal internships for its students for many years in several countries such as Thailand, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea. This year (2024) students of Faculty of English had their international internship at Udon Thani Rajahat University.

As students who graduate from the English language undergraduate program of UFLS are equipped with knowledge and skills to be translators/ interpreters, English teachers, tour guides, and so on, the activities in the internship are various, moving from working in the language centres as tutors/ teachers to working in hotels or translating centre. These activities were carefully designed by Udon Thani Rajahat University in collaboration with hotels and centres in the local area.

During the internship, students are required to keep records of what they do and submit a report at the end of the internship. In the report, students need to present what they obtain from the internship, their problems, what they do to overcome such problems, and suggestions for a more effective internship.

### **3.4. Previous studies**

Numerous studies on internships have been found in the literature [8]-[15]. According to a qualitative study conducted in France, the international internship forms the cornerstone for the professional development of students and it plays a very essential role in the curriculum when it provides chances for students to apply what they learn at university and to be exposed to the new working environment in a new country [8]. Similar findings can be found in other studies on international internships [1], [2], [9], [10]. Especially, according to these studies, students would develop their cultural intelligence and professional development when they do internships abroad.

International internships are not very popular in Vietnam; yet, research on internships in Vietnam has contributed to the understanding of internships in undergraduate programs. In a qualitative study, Vu [13] discusses the internship as a compulsory course of an undergraduate teacher education program, and activities to be implemented in the internship. The researcher suggests the model for the internship with the collaboration of universities and enterprises. Another study finds close links between some factors like teachers' guides, and support from schools with the quality of the teaching practicum in a university in the centre of Vietnam [12].

The quantitative study on the internship in a private university in Vietnam evaluates the effects of internships on students from the students' and enterprises' perspectives. The study finds that the internship has positive effects on students' employability and enterprises appreciate students' contribution to them.

Yet, little research applying CIPP model to evaluate

international internships has been found so far. The author of this paper wishes to contribute to the effectiveness of the international internship in Vietnamese higher institutions, and illustrates how CIPP model can be used to evaluate educational programs, courses, and projects.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Context evaluation

As revealed from the interview, students had the needs to be exposed to a real working environment in which they can improve both their professional and cultural competence. Students decided to take part in the internship in Thailand instead of the one in Vietnam because they wished to experience different cultural settings. According to students interviewed, being in another country is a precious chance for them to undergo differences in cultural aspects and working styles.

*"I decided to have my internship in Thailand because I wanted to go abroad so that I could be in a new environment. Even though Thailand is quite similar to Vietnam, I believe that differences between the two countries regarding cultures and learning, and teaching styles in Thai universities are what I can experience in the internship."*, cited from a student's replies to the question about what students wish to obtain from the internship in Thailand.

The review of students' reports shows that students met some challenges in the internship. Firstly, students found themselves to have insufficient soft skills such as time management, teamwork, and leadership. They also realised that they were not patient, careful, and tolerant enough to work together. Yet, their biggest concern is the cultural differences. Culture shocks occurred due to such differences. Misunderstandings and difficulties in communication are common problems stated in students' reports. Interestingly, no reports expressed students' financial difficulties. Such information is explained by the data from the interview that UFLS has a very clear guide on the cost of the internship and students were well-prepared in finance.

*"I have no problems related to money. The university has announced the estimated total cost for all kinds of expenses. And, it is quite cheap in Thailand."*, one typical response on financial problems from interviewed students.

The internship was well-designed by both UD-UFLS and Udon Thani Rajahat University. The activities were planned in advance and immediate support was provided by both universities in case students needed. Specifically, Department of Academic Affairs of UD-UFLS is responsible for necessary procedures and Faculty of English would deal with academic support.

All in all, the context evaluation of the internship in Thailand reveals that students have actual needs to develop both professionally and culturally. Even though some problems involving cultural differences and soft skills were identified, support and cost-effectiveness were recognized.

### 4.2. Input evaluation

The input evaluation conducted found that students were well-prepared for the internship. Before the internship, Department of Academic Affairs prepared a

detailed plan for the internship. The car trips to Thailand and return were carefully planned and lecturers/ academic staff would accompany students during the travel to ensure students' safety on the journey. All logistic activities were taken into consideration. Before the journey, to equip students with the necessary information, meetings were organised to provide students with information on the internship as well as guidelines for their stay in Thailand. All students were arranged to stay in the dormitory of Udon Thani Rajahat University during the internship.

The activities of the internship in Thailand could be divided into two groups: one to enhance students' skills and knowledge in the working environment such as interpreting activities, designing lesson plans to teach Vietnamese to Thai people, learning how to design posters, etc., the other one to equip students with cultural features of Thai society including learning some basic Thai language, being exposed to Thai arts and local culture. UFLS students reported that they enjoyed the various activities in the internship. The plan of the activities was sent to students before the internship so that they knew what they would do in advance.

All students interviewed replied that they were well-prepared for the internship. Yet, students also supposed that it would be better if they were introduced to some Dos and Don'ts before the internship to have more appropriate behaviors in communication.

*"I think we had good preparation for the internship. I was given very specific guidelines from what kinds of clothes to bring to the estimated amount of money I should have. But, I still had problems due to language barriers. I do not know any words in Thai language, and I think if I knew some Thai etiquettes, I could avoid doing some inappropriate behaviors like pointing to the other when communicating"* an extract from a student's interview.

To sum up, the input evaluation shows that UD-UFLS prepared their students well for the international internship though it is recommended that students should learn some Thai basic language and etiquettes for more effective input of the internship.

### 4.3. Process evaluation

Process evaluation aims to assess the actual implementation of the project or program to check whether it is carried out in conjunction with the plan and whether the implementation is effective in meeting the intended outcomes. In this sense, UFLS and Udon Thani Rajahat University performed well in the implementation of the internship. A very detailed plan makes the implementation more effective. A systematic plan leads to good performance. Both two universities functioned well according to the plan. For example, on the trip to and from Thailand, lecturers/ academic staff from UFLS would be responsible for accompanying students to Udon Thani Rajahat University while those of Udon Thani Rajahat University would receive students and take care of them on the way to Udon Thani Rajahat University. The activities in the internship were implemented by Udon Thani Rajahat University while monitoring internship activities, and controlling students were also performed online by UFLS lecturers.

The review of students' reports reveals that the internship's plan was strictly kept during the internship. Students' proposals at the beginning of the internship based on the plan and final reports reflect the implementation well matched the initial plan. Students highly appreciated the enthusiastic and continuous support and guidance of lecturers from both universities, especially ones from Udon Thani Rajahat University.

Yet, in the interview, students complained that some activities should not be included in the internship. Instead of making videos and taking a tour of some places, the internship should focus more on activities to develop their profession like interpreting and translating. Making lesson plans to teach Vietnamese should be replaced by some activities to teach English as a foreign language. Making jewellery or posters is just for entertainment and actually not very useful for students' employment. There should not be many activities in the first few days to give students time to adapt to the new environment. In addition, students should be informed in more detail of what activities are to be done. They did receive the plan for their internship in weeks, but it would be helpful to know what they were expected to do on specific days and especially, what would be considered for the final assessment.

*"Basically, the internship is good, but instructors should give us clearer, detailed, and regular instructions so that we understand what to complete and what activities are more important for assessment. This is very important because our final marks can be affected"*, cited from one student's interview.

*"I was overloaded with numerous activities on the first few days when I was not used to the new living environment. Some activities are not useful for me, for example, making videos, or learning how to teach Vietnamese. I suppose these activities should be removed and a more focus on skills for translation is useful"*, an extract from a female student's interview.

Basically, the implementation of the internship was performed well; yet, some minor changes such as the selection of activities, and detailed instructions should be made for a better and more effective implementation of the internship.

#### **4.4. Product evaluation**

To evaluate the achievement of the internship organised by UD-UFLS and Udon Thani Rajahat University, a product evaluation was conducted. 100% of students taking part in the internship agreed to recommend the international internship in Thailand to others in a quick survey. This illustrates that students were quite satisfied with what they obtained from the internship.

All students in the interview expressed that the internship's outcomes met their expected ones at the beginning. The outcomes that students stated in the report and the interview can be divided into two groups: skill and knowledge development for their employment and experience in a new cultural setting. Soft skills including teamwork skills, leadership, and communication skills are enhanced through numerous activities of the internship. Students had chances to practice interpreting and translating skills, and teaching skills. They can apply their

knowledge to the real working environment while working in hotels and centres. Students also expressed that they could improve their ability to work creatively and find information for their projects.

*"I believe that the internship completely meets my expectations. I learned a lot from working with classmates to search for information individually. I think I am more creative and independent in work and life after the internship"*, cited from a student's report.

*"I am satisfied with the result of my internship. I can apply what I learn from school in the internship and get skills and knowledge that I think useful for my job later"*, a reply of one student in the interview.

Students were happy to be exposed to a new environment with many interesting cultural features. Students learned to properly behave in Thai society, and to avoid cultural misunderstandings. They also learned from their misbehaviors to be more culturally intelligent.

*"During the time in Thailand, besides the skills and knowledge for my career development, I could enhance my cultural understanding by contacting local people and taking part in activities provided by UFLS and Udon Thani Rajahat University"*, an extract from a student's report

However, students wished to have a longer internship so that the outcomes could be strengthened. They suppose that if the internship had been longer, the skills and knowledge they learned could be further enhanced.

*"The internship was short. And in such period, we cannot have sufficient time to enhance our skills"*, cited from a student's interview.

In short, the product evaluation reveals that the outcomes of the international internship generally meet its expected outcomes. Yet, if it is possible, the internship should be longer for students to develop their skills and knowledge, and cultural competence more sufficiently.

## **5. Discussion of findings**

The findings of the study show that taking part in the international internship brings students chances to develop their profession and cultural competence. This aligns with what is found in the literature when studies on the internship in France and America reveal that undergoing the internship abroad helps students not only enhance their professional skills and knowledge but also improve their cultural competence by being exposed to a new cultural setting [8], [2].

The link between instructions and the success of the internship is also shared findings of this evaluation and other research in Vietnam and other countries [12], [8], [15]. It is revealed that to achieve the intended outcomes of the internship are decided by factors like careful design of the internship, detailed instructions, and lecturers' support before, and during the instructions.

As shown in this evaluation, factors like cultural differences and language barriers should be taken into consideration before and during the implementation of the international internship as these elements may cause problems that embark the effectiveness of the internship

abroad. Those are also concerns found in other studies [16], [2]. Being in a new cultural setting is always a challenge for students when they have to be in both a real working environment and a new cultural setting.

In sum, what is found in this evaluation proves that the international internship brings students invaluable experience for their employability and cultural intelligence. In addition, factors that affect the effectiveness of the international internship like instructions, support, cultural differences, and language barriers are common challenges in international internships worldwide.

## 6. Implications and conclusion

### 6.1. Implications

Based on the findings of the evaluation, some recommendations have been figured out. First, in order to serve students' needs well, universities should do needs assessments to plan the internship. In this case, the proposal of the internship can specifically meet students's actual needs. In this study, students were concerned about cultural differences, and language barriers. Therefore, the university should take into consideration of students' needs to be equipped with some basic knowledge of Dos and Don'ts in Thailand before the internship to avoid problems that may arise. The careful evaluation of the context of the implementation of the internship is useful to predict problems and prepare make-up plans when needed.

Secondly, a detailed plan of activities to be done should be sent to students with specific guidelines on how the activities are conducted and what assessment is applied so that students know the requirements in advance [8]. In addition, the selection of activities should be carefully considered, especially when the internship takes place in a short time so that overwhelming situations will not occur, and students do not have to waste time on some unnecessary activities. Instant support is also the one to contribute to the success of the internship. Finally, the length of the internship and the number of activities need to be balanced to increase the effectiveness of the internship, especially when the international internship takes place abroad at much higher cost than the domestic one [9].

### 6.2. Conclusion

In conclusion, CIPP model was applied to evaluate the implementation of the international internship in Thailand organised by UFLS. The evaluation helps to realise students' actual needs, the internship's problems, and opportunities, assess, its design, implementation as well as its outcomes. Generally, the internship satisfies students' needs to develop their profession and cultural intelligence. Yet, some improvements like the more appropriate selection of activities, pre-departure preparations, and more detailed instructions should be made to improve the effectiveness of the internship.

Though the study provides a comprehensive picture on how the international internship, it could be better if the qualitative study is combined with the quantitative one so

that a large number of participants can be explored. Further studies applying individual dimensions of CIPP model would further contribute to the understanding of the implementation of the internship.

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