

A study on significance of internship program for under graduate students

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Abstract

The rising awareness and demand of students for internship programs can encourage education institutes and business organizations to incorporate internship programs. The purpose of this study is to understand the views and opinions of colleges, undergraduate students and business organizations in terms of offering internships to undergraduate students. By adopting convenience sampling technique samples 50 respondents have been taken from by using well-structured questionnaire and the data was analyzed by using the SPSS software and various statistical tools and techniques such as frequency and percentage, factor analysis and cross tabulation.

Keywords: internship programs, undergraduate students

Introduction

What is an Internship?

Internship is a program basically designed for under - graduates and graduate students in order to enhance their skills and provide them with specific work experience. The program can be for about 2 months to 12 months and can be paid or unpaid. The benefit to under - graduates and graduate students of this program is an exposure to “real life” work experience, learn skills and knowledge, an opportunity to develop a relationship with the potential employer and preparing for career proactively.

An internship program does not benefit only one side, the employers that employ these young youths are also benefited in various ways such as (1) they receive new ideas and perspectives from these young employees, (2) employing under - graduates and graduate students is an inexpensive way of recruiting highly motivated people, (3) it is a short term opportunity to fill in a temporary vacancy, (4) organizations are able to maintain good public relations as they are being seen investing into the future, (5) low risk of recruiting long term employees as no commitments for the long term has been made and so on. (University of Chichester, 2013)

Rationale

Internship is an Industrial linkage for education institute and provide practical exposure to the under graduate students. The reason for choosing this particular topic is that during the course of graduation, majority of the students are not clear about their career choice and hence an internship program prior to their graduation could help these students to identify their skills and interests. Hence, the aim of this research is to study the opinions of the students in order to understand the extent to which they support internship programs and discuss as to why these programs should be integrated into the course curriculum of colleges and why business organizations should avail this opportunity for students.

Objective

1. To understand the significance of internship programs and encourage such programs

2. To understand the views and opinions of the respondents in order to promote the Internship
3. To understand the rising demand of students for internships before pursuing their career.

Research Methodology

a) Primary Data

1. **Universe of the study:** Students studying in undergraduate colleges in Mumbai.
2. **Sampling unit:** -Students and Teachers in undergraduate programs in Mumbai.
3. **Sample size:** -50 (39 students & 11 teachers)
4. **Sampling technique** - Non – probability Convenience Sampling
5. **Data instruments used:** - Structured Questionnaire
6. **Techniques of data collection** -: Primary method of data collection was used by collecting data through Questionnaires and Interview.

b) Secondary Data

SecondaryData will be collected from journals, books, internet and other relevant information for the said study.

Literature Review

Donald G, et al, (2004) ^[8] Based on a study conducted in the year 1978 and 1992 it has been proven that there is a need for education and training. The study was carried out to understand the attitudes of interns in terms of their career choices in the business world and also to observe their work experiences and how it impacted on their perspective towards their career choices in the future. The results of the survey supported actual work experience which was not available to people due to a decline in the industry. The reason for the unavailability of work experiences was due to lack of “local training” and “existence of prevailing problems in the industry”.

Sitkiye K (2009) ^[5] emphasizes on the “power of internship programs”. According to the author, internships expand and develop the overall growth and development of students when they act as interns. He carried out a study through which he was able to collect a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data

in order to analyze the viewpoints of people on his proposed research. The research therefore brought out quite impressive and positive results as these people do believe in the power and effectiveness of internship programs in helping students grow in knowledge and personality. *Gallagher (2007)* ^[3] claims that there are more sophisticated options to approach higher education for students. Through higher education that the students prevail, they will be able to acquire higher jobs. According to Gallagher, modernized examination system is more effective in developing the knowledge of students the study is in contrast with the previous study conducted by *sitkiye*

Although *Gallagher (2007)* ^[3] holds a different opinion, *Lynton, et al (2004)*, claims that “knowledge is only theory unless it is put into practice”. They emphasize on merging work experience and education together to enhance the knowledge and skills of interns. Lynton believes that if interns are offered work experiences then in this way one can test the potential of these interns to its fullest and can utilize the capabilities of the interns. *Lynton quotes that “education can be translated into practical knowledge only up to the extent it is digested and imbibed into one’s personality and then analyzed and understood by the students.”*

Angus, et al, (2003) ^[2], emphasizes on the effectiveness of internship programs by stating that internship aim to make students “job proficient” as the program involves training the students and enabling them understand the different skills and help them develop these skills and gain work related knowledge and experience. Through internship programs the interns are able to understand and identify the various choices they have with respect to career decisions to set their personal goals. The author describes the emphasis on the effectiveness of internship as it makes the interns “market ready”.

To emphasize the effectiveness of internship programs Chikering, et al, (2009), highlights the sentence “survival into the business world”. In his study, he mentions that education and human progress are interrelated as they both are essential to accomplish one’s personal goals in life. Internship programs, in his opinion help in developing skills like cognitive skills, interpersonal skills and etc which are important aspects of the business world. Leaders are successful because of the skills they possess

Internships are effective in the industry because in real life situation both the parties; the interns and the organization are showing great effort to impress one another. Interns are offering the organizations their skills and knowledge and organizations are offering interns training and experience. A research conducted by *Hao Z, et al, (2011)* ^[7] stated that 60% of the internships turned into job offers hence this is the major advantage of internship programs. The advantage to industries of internship program is that they can use this program as a

process of recruitment and selection where in they can select the best interns can offer them job offers based on their performance. Hence, organizations should continue to integrate willingness and openness into their system in order to allow interns to test their potential and gain work experience.

Jeff B, et al, (2007) ^[6], he compares the significance of internship in terms of demand and supply. He mentions that the supply for internship has grown immensely since 2002 however the demand is not being met. He states that organizations and colleges and other academic institutions should both understand the effectiveness of providing internship to undergraduates and hence they must make an effort and encourage the integration of internship programs in their system. He emphasizes on the issue that the supply for internship programs is increasing at a higher rate and hence more and more opportunities should be made available for undergraduates and employment for interns should be created.

Worldwide Perspective towards Internships’

The importance of internship in India seems to be still growing. The highlight over here is that colleges and other institutes are being forced to change their course curriculum and to incorporate internship programs in the course curriculum. In order to best explain the significance of internship in India, we can use demand and supply. In this study, it has been studied that there is an over - supply of internship in the market but the opportunities available to meet the over - supply is underrated. In other words, the demand for interns is low in the industry. Because there is an over - supply of labor in the market, the pay offered is also low. Industries in India often given first preference to their references in terms of job allocation and hence to conclude this, the job allocation is inefficient.

Data Analysis

1. Factor Analysis

The below mentioned factor analysis represents the outcome of the research conducted by the researcher. It shows which variable holds a higher weight age than other variables. “Internships are good hands – on experience” has an eigenvalue of.978 which holds a higher weight age than other factor suggests that this particular factor has a greater impact on the expectations of the students. “Internships help in developing enthusiasm and assertiveness among undergraduates” has an eigenvalue of.949 students expect this in their internships. The next factor “communication skills and other skills” with an eigenvalue of.924 and lastly “work quality” that affects the viewpoints of undergraduates with an eigenvalue of.885. The above four variables hold higher eigenvalue and hence higher weight age which suggests that these are the factors that the students have experienced and expect in their internship programs.

Figure 1: Factor Analysis

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
If you have ever worked as an intern, do you think it was helpful? If yes, then how? For example: you have improved your communication skills or improved in your task completion skills.	1.000	.924
Do you support internship programs?	1.000	.653
Internships are a good "hands - on" experience	1.000	.978
Internships help in developing enthusiasm and assertiveness among undergraduates	1.000	.949
Internship can enhance your work quality	1.000	.885
If you have had an internship experience, how was it describe in one word?	1.000	.665
According to you does interning help in making career decisions?	1.000	.778

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Figure 2: Cross Tabulation

Count				
		Do you support internship programs?		Total
		Yes	No	
Age	16-21	24	6	30
	22-30	18	0	18
	31-45	2	0	2
Total		44	6	50

In cross tab 1, the data interpreted shows that out of 50 respondents 44 of them support internships. The age category between "16 – 21" highly supports internships. Through this it can also be analyzed that undergraduate students highly support internships because of the age category and the result is 24/50 and secondly the age category between "22 – 30" also agree to the same which is 18/50 which also consists of undergraduate students. To conclude, undergraduates highly support internship programs and it is also a positive result for the researcher's research topic because majority of the respondents chosen were undergraduates and majority of them have responded positively.

Count					
		Internships are a good "hands - on" experience			Total
		Agree	Diasgree	Neutral	
Age	16-21	26	0	0	26
	22-30	4	4	5	13
Total		30	4	5	39

The cross tabulation data analysis mentioned below represents the results from a student's perspective.

In cross tab 2, the interpreted data shows that out of 39 respondents 30 of them agree to the fact that internships are good hands on experience. Through this it can be analyzed that undergraduate students have an opinion that internships are important as they provide experience and it is henceforth important to gain some kind of experience before pursuing their career and as 26 of the respondents fall into the age category of "16 – 21" it can be claimed that undergraduates understand the significance of gaining industry experience.

Count					
		Internships help in developing enthusiasm and assertiveness among undergraduates			Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Age	16-21	26	0	0	26
	22-30	5	3	5	13
Total		31	3	5	39

In cross tab 3, the data interpreted shows that out of 39 respondents 31 of them agree to the fact that internships help in develop enthusiasm and assertiveness. Through this it can be analyzed that undergraduate students have either experienced this or they either expect this from their internship programs. In either ways, it is beneficial for the researcher to come down to a conclusion in order to suggest and ways to improve internships. In the first case if undergraduates have experienced the certain developments than it can be said that internships are of significance and in the second case if undergraduates expect these developments then in colleges must include internships so that undergraduates are able to refine their skills.

Age * If you have ever worked as an intern, do you think it was helpful? If yes, then how? For example: you have improved your communication skills or improved in your task completion skills. Crosstabulation

Count

		If you have ever worked as an intern, do you think it was helpful? If yes, then how? For example: you have improved your communication skills or improved in your task completion skills.				Total
		Communication skills	Task completion skills	Interpersonal skills	Time management skills	
Age	16-21	9	5	11	5	30
	22-30	4	6	6	2	18
	31-45	0	1	1	0	2
Total		13	12	18	7	50

In cross tab 4, the interpreted data shows that the 50 respondents have claimed that internships help in developing certain skills like communication skills, task completion skills, interpersonal skills and time management skills. Majority of the responses claim that interpersonal skills are developed because developing interpersonal skills is significantly important in the growing businesses as it is the ability to understand one’s own emotion along with other people’s thoughts and feelings which can be developed through good hands on industry experience.

The cross tabulation data analysis mentioned below represents the results from a teacher’s perspective.

The data interpreted from the above analysis supports the positive view point of teachers as 11/11 teachers agree to the fact Mumbai colleges must include internship program in their curriculum. This response is useful for colleges and universities to incorporate undergraduate internship programs and also suggests that teachers also understand the importance of offering and incorporating internship programs.

The frequency data interpretation represents the results from a teacher’s perspective.

If your college provides internship programs to students then how has it helped your students and your college?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Sense of responsibility	1	9.1	9.1	9.1
	Enhanced skills	3	27.3	27.3	36.4
	Practical knowledge	4	36.4	36.4	72.7
	Attempt modules effectively	3	27.3	27.3	100.0
	Total	11	100.0	100.0	

According to you is interning helpful in making career choices for student?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	11	100.0	100.0	100.0

From the above data it can be clearly conveyed that according to the teacher’s perspective when undergraduate students are offered internships they tend to improve certain skills like sense of responsibility, enhanced skills and practical knowledge. The researcher received a 100% response to this question. Secondly the researcher received a 100% response on the view point that internships help students in career decision making which again is a positive response towards promoting and incorporating undergraduate internship programs

According to the researcher colleges and universities in Mumbai must focus on changing their education curriculum from “developing knowledge in classrooms” to “developing knowledge in the real world” by incorporating internship programs into their educational forum. As rightly stated by Lynton, *et al* (2004) that “knowledge is only theory unless it is put into practice”. Firstly, colleges can probably offer summer internship programs to students so that students can gain a good hands – on experience in the industry and work on refining their skills. Secondly, colleges can introduce subjects in their educational course which requires mandatory working experience from the students which would enable them and encourage the importance of student internships because this

Recommendation

From the above research it is evident that internships are of significance and benefit to the undergraduate students.

would be considered as a priority if presented to the students as a subject. On collecting information from PODAR WORLD COLLEGE the teachers stated that as majority of their subjects are based on practical knowledge so providing internships to students is extremely important for them to excel in their academic performance and at the same time gain experience from the industry. However, they claim that it is difficult for colleges in Mumbai to place their students in companies for internships because apparently not all organizations encourage providing internships to undergraduates.

India is yet a developing economy and incorporating diversified educational curriculum is going to be beneficial for the economy as a whole because with skills and experience students obviously get hired at higher pay levels as employees which raises their living standards, the literacy level of an economy increases and so on. In fact incorporation is easier in developing economies because they are yet growing.

Conclusion

The above data interpretation shows a positive response towards the Internship. It suggests that undergraduate students are willing to work as interns and organizations are increasingly promoting internship programs. Thus these views and opinions are helpful for colleges as it emphasizes on the importance of undergraduate programs and will encourage them to incorporate internship programs in their curriculum.

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