

# Corporate Internships: An Effective Model to Develop Work Place Skills for Employability

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## Abstract

Corporate internships has proved to be an effective approach for the interns and the organizations as well. A time bound placement of interns in the organization gives the students an opportunity to students to apply their classroom learnings to the corporate world. On the other hand, the organizations are benefited by young innovative minds that infuse new and creative ideas and design solutions to solve problems. The organizations identify their future employees from this pool of interns. With these promising benefits for the students and corporates there lies an unanswered question? How effective are these internship programs.

The primary purpose of this paper was to examine the student's internship experience and determine whether it helped to enhance his or her ability to achieve the Learning outcomes of the internship program. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies was deemed appropriate for empirical analysis.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Every generation has exhibited varying characteristics that differentiates them from their predecessors; this applies to learning as well. Teaching today has evolved into a learning centric classroom with focus predominately on student learning through application. Learning and developing skills that make this result driven cohorts employable is the mantra of first step towards success.

Higher education programs have not left any stone unturned to create batches that are ready for the corporate world. Guest lectures, live projects and internships are some of the many ways in which education institutes worldwide are providing opportunities to students to transfer their classroom learning to corporates. However there is ever widening gap between expectation of industry and the education system. This gap between "real world"

situations and the classroom demonstrates the need for the application of knowledge.

Experiential learning (corporate Internship) plays an important role in the career outcomes of college graduates. Multiple benefits of the experiential learning has prompted education institutions to include internship as full credit course in the curricular of the institution/university.

The significance of internship learning is that hands-on experiences in authentic, real-world contexts are an important complement to academic programs and classroom teaching (Dewey, 1997). Internship provides students a real-world job experience, an opportunity to establish professional networks, opportunities to translate theory into practice, and employers get an opportunity to get inexpensive and educated interns that may be potential employees for the organization. Organization use internship as dominant strategy to solve "skills gap," such that

interns are offered pre placement offers to fill open positions. (Patil, 2016)

Corporate finds following qualities/skills in interns

According to Staples Business Hub (July 29, 2013), any intern who is aspirant to work with an organization should have qualities/skills as shown in following points.

• Initiative	• Positive Attitude
• and Eagerness to Learn	• Adaptability
• Professional Communication Skills	• Critical Thinking
• Self-motivated	• ready to learn and grow

Organization has to seek and analyses candidature of intern as employee and they are keenly planning to absorb interns in long run. Those interns proven their qualities through mentoring in organization, should be treated like asset in any organization.

### Structuring internship program

Organisations creates program and environment that allows interns to be prosperous and flourish make sure organization have structure set up so that they are continuously getting response and are on target with interns objectives. It is important phase in delivering a tailored experience hence essential for organization. As business and its operations, it is significant to be with the exact feedback then only organization may get the work done from interns to achieve their organizational goal.

Practices are aligned with organisational goals, so this is starting point of employee experience in the organisation. Internship program will be precise to your business and insightful of organization's standards. It's imperative to nurturerobust communication between intern and various functions, like mentors, managers, and other interns, and build a shared experience so that an intern can feel like their work backed and benefitted

to whole organization. By emerging bright young minds and nurturing ability in interns, in view of this organisation can create successful employees in future.

### Conceptual Framework

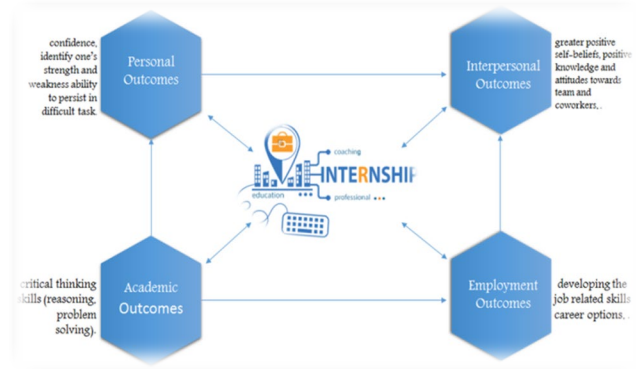


Figure no.1

### Literature review

Experiential Education, is not a new word used in the learning ecosystem, it includes all ways of learning used to expand the setting of learning experiences beyond the traditional school environment to occupational and Industrial settings and Experiential education serve the purpose of promoting cooperation between traditional educational institutions and business, industry,

It includes service learning internship, academic service-learning, community service-learning, cooperative education program, applied practicum, experiential learning, and, most commonly, internship program.

### Components of Internship.

Integrating a real-world learning into higher education empowers students to not only acquire knowledge related to their chosen specialized area, but also the ability to apply it outside of the classroom. Research suggests that internship can be effective if it is possible to comprehend the connection between learning and personal efficacy. Internship also provides opportunities to enhance

personal efficacy. Markus, Howard, and King (1993) found that by combining applied experiences and knowledge from the classroom “student participation in internship can have a significant effect upon their personal values and orientations toward professional development.”

The researcher, through review of literature, has identified the following learning outcomes and benefits of internship. The institute organization partnership focus on developing the employable skills of the students and hence reduce the skill gap. It was found that a staggering 78% of the new college graduates lack business awareness and acumen. The paper also states categorically that organization faces mammoth challenge in hiring new college graduates with respect to skills such as communication skills, technical skills, and critical thinking skills among there's. New college graduates lack business awareness, confidence and commitment as well. New college graduates on the other hand lack opportunities to apply class room learnings. (Patil, 2016)

Internship contributes to learning experience and provides opportunity to transfer classroom learning to workplace scenario. The intended learning outcomes of internship are manifold, some of which are considered for the purpose of this paper.

### **Applied Learning Outcomes and Benefits**

Research suggests that an experiential education program's learning outcomes are categorized by these four areas: personal, interpersonal, academic, employment.

Personal outcomes/benefits are focused on an individual's thoughts, skills, and values that are enhanced post internship experience. The program is intended to improve and develop skills such as confidence of doing some work of value addition, identify one's strength and weakness and ability to persevere in difficult task.

Interpersonal outcomes focus on relationships with others and also our own personal beliefs and thoughts about individuals with whom we have relationships with. Research has shown initiatives like experimental learning improves social learning and develop interpersonal relationship. (Conway, Amel, & Gerwein, 2002), students demonstrate greater positive self-beliefs, positive knowledge and attitudes towards team and coworkers.

Academic outcomes for the purpose of this paper focus learnings that the intern has acquired while performing duties on the job during the internship. Markus, Howard, and King (1993) found that students who participated in an applied learning program received grades higher than those who do not undergo internship. Internship broadens critical thinking skills (reasoning, problem solving). These skills improves the students understanding of new concept thought in the classroom. It gives students a fair idea to conceptualize the theoretical concepts and develop clear understanding of such concept by relating them to real time scenario

Employment outcomes are most important outcomes of the internship program. The focus is primarily on developing the job related skills. It also provides interns clarification on the career options. Carla Howery (1983) defines the primary objective of internships is "to provide students with an opportunity to test abilities and attitudes toward particular material or career possibilities for the future" (p. 336). Students participating in experiential learning broaden their future career opportunities through networking and establishing positive working relationships with their employers. Internship is an intellectually stimulating and beneficial for building the skills needed for future employment..

### **Research Gap**

Internship has proved to be an effective approach for the interns and the organizations. The internship learning has helped the interns to adapt to the

corporate culture quickly on their first jobs. The benefits for the organization are also manifold. The companies are assisted in their temporary jobs, the student's knowledge is successfully used by the organization in understanding young millennial minds, their perception which have been effective insights in understanding future customs and future employees. Student's interns can also be used in reverse mentoring.

Thus internships are often seen as a win win proposition for the students and the organization. (Knemeyer & Murphy, 2002) Internships have been popular as an academic corporate partnership but very little is known about its effectiveness. The benefits are multifold but research and researchers have limited their work to exploratory study. A need to have dominant theoretical perspective depicting the relationship among stakeholders- student corporate and academic institutions is felt more than before. (O'Higgins, 2018)

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of the study is

1 To study the effectiveness of internship mentoring with respect to intended learning outcomes- personal, social, academic and employment benefits.

## Research Hypotheses

The researcher attempted to test the impact of internship characteristics on the intended learning outcomes. The internship characteristics considered for the purpose of this study was corporate mentoring and the availability of a corporate mentor during the internship.

### Hypothesis 1

H0: There is no significant relationship between of internship mentoring and intended internship learning outcomes – Personal benefits.

### Hypothesis 2

H0: There is no significant relationship between of internship mentoring and intended internship learning outcomes – Social benefits

### Hypothesis 3

H0: There is no significant relationship between of internship mentoring and intended internship learning outcomes – Learning benefits

### Hypothesis 4

H0: There is no significant relationship between of internship mentoring and intended internship learning outcomes – Employment benefits

## RESEARCH METHODS

Research methodology focuses on respondent selection and the methodological research design describes the survey instrument design and how it was constructed. It also throws light on how the data was collected.

### Respondent Selection

The study was conducted in management colleges in Pune conducts pre internship course to familiarize the students, how to conduct research through a full credit course. This course is conducted in the classroom setting. The outcome of the course is successful implementation of the core research concept in their internship in the 2nd semester.

The respondents of the study were students who have completed the 2 months internship. Questionnaire was circulated through mail to 120 students of the PM&HR batch, out of which 114 students completed the survey. The questionnaire consisted of statement relating to each of the four outcomes (Personal, Social, Academic and employment benefits). The statements covered skills that were acquired post internship. Likert scale on the scale of 5 was asked to measure the responses of the students, where 5 represented very true and 1 not at all true.

## Data Analysis

### Part I

#### Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.910	24

Table no.1

Shown in Table no.1 the reliability of the scale was assessed by calculating Cronbach's alpha. According to Nunnally (1978), an alpha greater than 0.70 is considered appropriate for internal reliability. Hence questionnaire on an effective model to develop work place skills for Employability retains an excellent reliability of .910 level of Cronbach's Alpha.

### Part II

The Chi-Square Test for Association was used as test to determine if there is any association between two variables. The researcher was interested to know if there is any association between the "mentoring" and "outcomes of internship" identified for the purpose of study. A total of 23 variables were identified to study if mentoring has any association with outcomes.

#### Hypotheses Testing

##### Hypothesis 1

H0: There is no significant relationship between of internship mentoring and intended internship learning outcomes – Personal benefits.

<b>Impact of Internship characteristics (Internship mentoring) on Personal benefits</b>			
<b>Association</b>	<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Satisfaction in doing worthwhile in my internship	.045	.122	yes
Ability to make a difference post internship.	.001	.000	yes
Open to new experiences post internship	.017	.017	yes
Capacity to be more productive post internship. .	.004	.094	yes
Recognize my personal strengths post internship.	.022	.274	yes
Recognize my personal weaknesses post internship.	.022	.207	yes
Sense of personal achievement post internship. .	.000	.015	yes
Ability to persevere in difficult tasks post internship	.029	.271	yes

Table no.2

### Interpretation

The above mentioned in tableno.2, shows that there is significant association between mentoring and Personal benefits. Internship mentoring plays an imperative role in guiding the interns and teaching them the practical way of performing in the organization. Internship provides interns an opportunity to identify their strength and weakness, thus helping the students to work on weakness before they enter the workplace. It was found that there was positive correlation between the Ability to persevere in difficult tasks post internship and

ability recognize personal weakness ( $r = .507, p = .005$ ). It is thus inferred that internship gives students an opportunity to recognize weakness.

Hence it is proven that: H1: There is significant relationship between of internship mentoring and intended internship learning outcomes – Personal benefits.

### Hypothesis 2

H0: There is no significant relationship between of internship mentoring and intended internship learning outcomes – Social benefits

<b>Impact of Internship characteristics Internship( mentoring) on Social benefits</b>			
<b>Association</b>	<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Concern for others	.000	.071	yes
Appreciate people with diverse backgrounds	.002	.035	yes
Work cooperatively with others	.000	.018	yes
Communicate effectively with others	.020	.064	yes
Ability to be a leader	.001	.045	yes

**Table no.3**

### Interpretation

The above mentioned table no. 3, shows that there is significant association between mentoring and social benefits. Social outcomes focus on relationships with others and also own personal beliefs and thoughts about individuals with whom we have relationships with. During the internship, Students demonstrate greater positive self-beliefs, positive knowledge and attitudes towards team and coworkers. It was assumed that when interns put in more working hours. Their ‘ability to work’ skills and ‘communication skills’ in the team improves.

Time spent on internship and ability to work in team are positive correlated. ( $r = .707, p = .005$ ).

Hence it is proven that: H1: There is significant relationship between of internship mentoring and intended internship learning outcomes – Social benefits

### Hypothesis 3

H0: There is no significant relationship between of internship mentoring and intended internship learning outcomes – Learning benefits

<b>Impact of Internship characteristics (Internship mentoring) on Learning benefits</b>			
<b>Association</b>	<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Broadened my critical thinking skills	.025	.028	yes
Ability to work and learn independently	.003	.080	yes
Classroom learning was enriched	.001	.025	yes
ability to connect academic subject matter to the “real world	.005	.089	yes

**Table no.4**

**Interpretation**

The above mentioned table no. 4, Critical thinking skills and ability to work independently are the most sort skills in the corporate world today. Students get an opportunity to develop these skills through internship. There is strong positive correlation between critical thinking skills and ability to connect academic subject to the real world. ( $r = .707$ ,  $p = .005$ ).

Hence it is proven that: H1: There is significant relationship between of internship mentoring and intended internship learning outcomes – Learning benefits

**Hypothesis 4**

H0: There is no significant relationship between of internship mentoring and intended internship learning outcomes – Employment benefits

<b>Impact of Internship characteristics (Internship mentoring) on Employment benefits</b>			
<b>Association</b>	<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Developed specialized technical skills for a specific job function(s)	.037	.021	yes
Broadened my future employment possibilities	.000	.009	yes
An opportunity to explore a specific career	.018	.066	yes
Developed realistic ideas about the work world	.011	.015	yes
Narrowed my future possible career choices.	.000	.015	Yes

**Table no.5**

**Interpretation**

The above mentioned table no. 5, through discussion with respondent it was found that students are exposed to various career options during internship.

There is positive correlation between knowledge acquired and development of technical skill at  $r=0.566$ .

Hence it is proven that: H1: There is significant relationship between of internship mentoring and intended internship learning outcomes – Employment benefits

### Findings

The key findings of the empirical research are presented below. As the research conducted is exploratory in nature with focus on students currently studying in their third semester the findings are tentative in nature and cannot be generalized for the post graduate management student community, however the findings provide in-depth insights to deepen the understanding into how the internship programs are perceived and can be used for future studies.

Through discuss with the students it was found that 100% of the respondents agree that internship is the best exposure to corporate work culture. Almost (74%) of the respondent preferred paid internship. According to regression analysis it was found that there was correlation between the two groups (Paid and unpaid interns) with respect to personal impact (4.3 and 4.2) respectively, social impact(4.1and 4.0) respectively, Academic impact (3.8 and 3.8) respectively and Employment Impact (4.0and 3.9) respectively.

### Discussion

According to analysis using chi-square technique it is proven that, there is strong and positive association between effectiveness of internship mentoring with respect to intended learning outcomes like personal, social, academic and employment benefits.

Hence it can be concluded that internship is an effective initiative to bridge the skill gap. It gives exposure to students and their involvement is responsible for the opportunity for both personal and professional growth. Interns have been much-admired for their assiduousness, work principle, and professionalism. Colleges are assured that

companies will find them a welcomed addition to their employee staff in future. Representatives from corporate and academic institution have come together to maintain and to boost students overall skill for keeping ultimate aim of employability. This study which is outlining the basic fundamentals consisted in crafting an internship program, and elucidate the benefits of endowing in a pragmatic learning program.

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