

NATIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME AND ITS EVALUATION: A CASE STUDY OF PUNJAB REGION

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ABSTRACT

Universities and colleges provide education, however it is found that education alone is not enough to achieve the high performance indices in practical work environment. Against this background there is a growing trend among the educational institutions and research houses for providing mentoring and internship opportunities to university graduates and undergraduate students. An ideal internship provides graduates with job opportunities in their field of interest and major. As a consequence of such programs, students gain practical experience with high work ethics and confidence in their interpersonal and communication abilities. The present study is conducted to find the outcomes of National Internship Programme (NIP) introduced in Pakistan for graduates during 2006 to 2010. A questionnaire survey was conducted, which included a total number of 90 graduate internees who availed this internship in different educational and public organizations all over the Punjab.

Key words: National Internship Programme, Punjab, mentoring programs

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly progressing world, employers are seeking university graduates who can show creativity, remarkable and future-oriented thinking, technical expertise and the ability to adapt to change. Universities have been criticized, however, for just providing the students with merely an official document, which may be gradually losing its value as more and more graduates enter the workforce. Research has found that employers consider that students need the necessary practical and negotiation skills, tolerance for uncertainty, knowledge and eventually real-world preparation. In reality, it is discovered, through analyzing textbooks used in business free enterprise, that there was slight connection between entrepreneurship education and what was in fact required by individuals when actually starting a new business.

The internship as defined today is a part-time job for specific period, paid modestly or unpaid, in which the interns gain knowledge while contributing to the organization. For students, an internship provides an understanding of a real business situation, but with supervision and support. Internships connects the gap between theory and practice and between classroom education and real industry life presenting a more precious learning experience improve the importance of the academic program and form the view of personal and social usefulness. Internships appear in a variety of forms and are called by a series of names; for example, externships, practicum, etc. Normally, an intern is a student or a person who is working in a temporary arrangement with an emphasis on education rather than employment. An internship is same in a number of ways to an apprenticeship. The word internship will be used to tell all work-base learning experiences

In 1990's there was a boom in internship industry and due to this detonation there has been more qualified and experienced candidates competing in the market today. Experts agree that dropping into the internship battle is almost a necessity for finding a job today. A study from water-cooler site Vault.com comments that 86% of college students have completed at least one internship and 69%

of students have completed more than one. According to Job Outlook 2003, a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, human-resources recruitment managers agrees that their own internship programs are their finest sources of full-time employees among recent graduates. A recent survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers found that employers propose full-time jobs to nearly two out of three of their interns. Research shows internships help the youth get prepared for the world of work in other fine ways. "Even the mental stress of work on youth might have a lasting positive effect, helping them better cope with stress when they entered the real work world", says Jeylan Mortimer, (sociologist at the University of Minnesota and author of *Working and Growing Up in America*).

Many countries around the world are introducing different internship programs in different fields of life. Universities, government sector and private firms want new creative students to come in front and work for them. Internship programs have been approximately since 1906, but a small number of colleges of business need them for all students. Only 6% out of the 180 schools responding to this survey need internship practice as a condition of graduation for all students.

The broad objective of this study includes assessing the effectiveness of national internship program (NIP). NIP provides innovative approaches to communication, education and provides employment opportunity to the young graduate and post graduate students. With help of this study we wanted to see that whether this program has reduced the unemployment rate and were this program beneficial for the students. We have conducted a questionnaire survey to find out the result of this program. Further, the study is organized as follows chapter 2 is a brief introduction on National internship program (NIP). Chapter 3 consists of literature review. Chapter 4 is about data and methodology Chapter 5 is analysis of results and in the last it is chapter 6 about conclusion and recommendations.

National Internship Programme (NIP)

In Pakistan, President Perwaz Musharraf have introduced a program in 2007, National Internship Program (NIP) where fresh unemployed graduates from all over the country will get one year practical experience with government organizations nationally and emerge as an even better human resource for the country's economy. All unemployed post graduates and graduates must have completed 16 years of formal education in any discipline. Applicants must have completed education from HEC recognized Universities/Colleges and must be 25 years or less of age. The interns was required to join the programme on full time basis and follow given rules and regulations of the concerned organizations including execution of office working time and confidentiality requirements etc.

Goals and Objective of NIP

The goal of the programme was to connect the power and enthusiasm of educated youth as paid interns in the public sector. Through this program, the following objectives were expected to realize. Provision of financial relief to young degree holders; Enhancement in the performance of public sector through internship of young, educated and aggravated youth; improved employability and aptitude of fresh graduates for a better proficient future.

Main features of the programme

The interns was working on various assignments in the Ministries, Divisions, attached departments, autonomous, bodies and corporations of the Federal Government and Provincial Governments suitably located near to their hometown so far as convenient. The post with a range of government organizations will be based upon the academic qualifications of the interns and matching the broader academic disciplines with broader serviceable classification of jobs within the government.

Duration:

The internship was of one year duration. The interns however, had freedom to leave the program at any stage on 15 days with an advance notice. Though, such interns will neither be allowed for

internship achievement certificate nor will they have any right to obtain monthly stipend for the remaining period.

Stipend

The interns were permitted to a monthly stipend of Rupees ten thousand during the track of internship. There was no penalty, in case internship is discontinued on explanation of a reason suitably communicated to the organization. Though, the payment of stipend was automatically discontinued from that date.

Some other issues related to NIP:

There were some issues raised after this program was implemented. The first issue was of age as the unemployment level is very high in Pakistan, lot of fresh and old students are unemployed. So the new government (President Zardari) gives an age relaxation for the youth of Sindh province (rural) 28 years or less in last year (2010). At the start this offer of age relaxation was only for Sindh province but later on, the National Assembly Standing Committee on Youth Affairs approved two years age relaxation for the youth for National Internship Programme (NIP) all over the country. Now the youth with age 28 will be able to participate in the NIP. The committee has also accepted to the suggestion of NIP for two-year duration.

According to "*The Express Tribune*" on October, 9, 2011. "After the devolution of the Ministry of Youth Affairs under the 18th Amendment, the future of the National Internship Programme (NIP) is up in the air", The programme has been discontinued by all four provinces before the completion of one-year tenure of most of the internees. This means that the nuisance of unemployment has once again wedged up with the thousands of the graduates.

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) was earlier in charge for the operations of the NIP, but later the project was hand over to youth affairs ministry. At present, the Ministry of Professional and Technical Training is in charge for managing the programme, which is operating able only in the federal capital.

Moreover, the issue of overdue payments is still distressing the internees, even in Islamabad. Students from International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) and National University of Modern Languages (NUML) are among the sufferers. "President Musharaf started the internship programme last year, since that was an election year, and he simply wanted to attract the youths vote bank by doing so", said Nadeem Tariq, an internee from the first batch, who had finished his internship and is awaiting for certificate and is dues.

"They are very much occupied with the political issues like return of judges and accusation of the President; they are least bothered about the future of youth and do whatever suits them politically", added another internee Afzal Tarrar.

NIP Director General Intizar Khan confirmed the progress and said that the issue of delayed payments would be resolved soon. He said that the second NIP batch would be able to begin work from the next month. Responding to a question, he said that the salary issue for the month of June is a serious issue, but explained, "Due to change of heads (ministries) we could not release cheques on time." The provinces shelved the project, and "only Baluchistan wants it to continue it, the province has even required funds for NIP and all the four kinds of NIP operations have been stopped, but the students were not told on time," he said. Under Aghaz-e-Haqooq Baluchistan, there was repose of age and education for students of the province. A student from Baluchistan province was eligible for the program with 14 years of education and the age limit was 28, as opposed to 26 in the rest of the country. The study is organized as follows; Section two presents the literature review and Section three outlines the methodology of the study, section three present results and discussions and the last section, i.e. section four, deals with the conclusions and recommendation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Beckett (2006) wrote a three-page article in *People Management* discussing internship issues for human resource departments in the United Kingdom. The spring 2006 issue of the *Baylor Business Review* had two articles discussing the ways marketing internships assists their students and it should be promoted. Many colleges keep supervision. After completing the internship for employers, the internee becomes a talented labor which they can pick and make a permanent employ.

Cullen (2006), says internships are bringing change in the society. In summer students used to look out for easy and simple internships in local fast foods or at stations but now they are serious about their career and profession. So they seek out more career-oriented jobs. Different companies and firm hire the internees and train them and make them permanent. Now students are more competitive and well aware of progress around them.

Hering (2010), says in his article, if your resume is missing the factor of the internship then it would be hard for graduate student to get a desire job and if he or she has done an internship then the hope of gaining an advantage for future employment has increased both the number and quality of job. "Internships have become key in today's economy," says Melissa Benca, director of career services at Marymount Manhattan College in New York City. Graduating students with paid or unpaid internships on their résumé have a much better chance of a position leading to their career.

Donald (2001) explained in his writing that internships should be based upon formal learning objectives. Due to lack of information systems workers, especially in rural areas as well as those smaller and new set up companies which have rivalry with larger and more-established companies in urban areas, repeatedly has resulted in a blurring of the distribution between internships and part-time jobs. The nature of the internship loses its meaning to company, intern and school. Forging a comprehensive, more forceful plan for information system internships requires significant effort. Yet such a plan can result in meaningful internships that lead to part-time internship during college, and full-time post-graduation employment, and so overcoming shortages of information systems workers. This paper presents such a practical plan effectively implemented by far-sighted enterprises.

Hanson (1984) argued that regardless of all their possible benefits, internships also have their shortcomings. They have come under disapproval for a lack of careful planning, enough supervision, regular requirements and application of theory: problems that have brought into examination the internships' academic authority. Since internships are chiefly conducted off-campus, their full educational benefit may not be realized. According to Thiel and Hartley (1997) barriers to success are formed if students recognize that they are not engaged in meaningful work (the "intern making photocopies"), employers do not consider the internship a serious part of the business, and colleges does not view internships as part of the educational program due to a lack of strictness and they regarded it as unnecessary for academic purpose. And institutes/ colleges think that students are doing internship just to keep them busy in the vacation.

A study by Brooks and Greene (1998), established that non-profit organizations might propose internships to achieve a cost-effective technique for finishing special projects. The progress of the existing employees may also be improved, as they reflect on their own duties and events as part of their administrative role, which can guide to improvements in operations and actions. Organizations may also take part in internships to give something back to students and the community and show their obligation to improving the quality of the job. In their work Gault et al., (2000), said goals for internships from the university point of view are different. Often universities look for several of the similar benefits as students, such as apply in theory application, better job readiness, and enhanced employment scenario. There are extra goals though, diverse to the university opinion. Internships potentially correspond to a recruiting tool for universities to help them in attracting and retaining fresh students. According to Gault et al., (2008), research has shown three main groups that are having advantage from internships: students, employers and educational institutions. Higher starting salaries for graduates, higher job gratification later in employment more job offers that come sooner or later. That will help the graduating students to focus on their careers.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The methodology that has been adopted to conduct the research was questionnaire. Questionnaires are frequently used in quantitative marketing research and social research. They are a valuable method of collecting a wide range of information from a large number of individuals. We have taken the sample of 90 students who have been the part of the national internship program. We have taken their views regarding the program and its further continuity. Some of the questionnaires were sent by post to different cities of Punjab, some were conducted online through e-mails and rest personally.

Once all the questionnaires were collected it undergoes the process of sampling. Survey sampling describes the process of selecting a sample of basics from a target population in order to conduct a survey. A survey may refer to many different techniques of observation, but in the context of survey sampling it mostly involves of a questionnaire used to measure the characteristics, uniqueness or attitudes of people. Different ways of contacting members of a sample once they have been selected is the subject of survey data collection. For the purpose of ease, expression, relaxation, and effectiveness, the survey was conducted in Punjab region. The conductor's were encouraged to express their opinions freely. At the beginning of the survey, the researcher confirmed that if the conductor has completed its internship or still doing it, however, the conductor's other personal information was not asked.

The collected data examined through software SPSS version 17. The test that was applied was Chi-square and ANOVA. After running the test we got these results, the below is the analysis of result.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

¹³According to first question, Is NIP beneficial for graduate and post graduate 91% of internee disagreed, 6% where neutral in the opinion where as 2% people only agreed.

The processing time of the internship program was very time-consuming 90% of students agreed that proceeding time took months and 7% who's processing was fast they were neutral in the attitude only 2% disagreed on the view that processing took time.

91% respondents opposed on the question that they did not have NIP program easily. 1% only agreed to get the internship easily and 7% was impartial in the view.

Concerning the fourth question about the remuneration 25% respondent differ that it is not sufficient for the students and 37% students where contented on receiving Rs 10000 while 38% were impartial in the opinion.

Regarding the posting of the respondent only 30% agreed that they were posted in the desire department but 41% disagreed and 29% were neutral with the notion.

Assigning of the work by head of department was equal as a permanent employed 36% internees disagreed on this question according to them work is not distributed properly among the employed and internees. 22% students stayed unbiased and 42% were in agreement.

Duties assigned to the internees where according to the qualification, when this question was asked to the internees 44% strongly disagreed and 24% stood impartial in the opinion while 32% agreed that they were assign the duties according to their qualification.

Help from the head of institute was provided to the internees during the internship 36% internees disagreed that they were not helped by any one during the whole internship and 27% were happy to acquire help from the department where as 37% stayed neutral on the statement.

¹³ The tables could be provider on request by principal author.

Did government facilitated the internees with other financial benefits during the internship 70% disagreed and said they were not given any benefit during the internship though 17% only said that they where benefited and 13% gave no view and stayed neutral in opinion.

33% disagreed that age limit should be same all over the Pakistan where as 37% where neutral in the prospect and approximately 30% agreed that age limit should be increased.

Regarding check and balance that was observed by the government during internship 25% respondent said that check and balance was observed where as 30 percent disagreed and 45% stood neutral in the attitude.

22% surveyor agreed that the co-ordination with head and staff was satisfactory but 42% differed and said staff and head did not co-ordinate with the internees while 36% respondents remained unbiased.

When internees were asked the question should government increase the duration of the internship 37% willingly respond to it yes while 30% were against it and 33% remained neutral according to them they have to work, years didn't matter.

Evaluator were asked if government increase the stipend, 88% evaluators showed positive response towards it and 10% did not agreed on the idea for them it was too much amount for the internees while 2% remained neutral.

The minimum job experience that is required for any government job is two years, 64% internees said internship should be increased to two year but 13% respondents where against it and 23 percent respondents remained impartial.

66% internees did not agree on the thought that this program will be useful in the future jobs. As 25% stayed neutral in their opinion whereas 9% thought it might be useful in the future.

Regarding the permanent appointment of internees on the same job, approximately 67% of the responded agreed to provide them job opportunity on the same capacity, 31 % remained neutral while rest of 2 percent disagreed to the permanent employment.

When the question was asked whether this program is improving the skills and inventiveness in the students 52% disagreed with the idea and only 12% internees agreed on this notion where as 36% remained impartial.

65% of internees agreed on the idea that government should continue this program while 31% remained neutral and 4% internee disagreed with the idea of continuity of the program.

As far as the extension of age limit for provision on internship facility was concerned 51% internees agreed on the idea of increasing the age limit where as 15% thought government should not increase the age limit of the internship program while rest of 34% remained neutral.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The internship should be flexible and modified to the needs of both the student and the host organization. The internship should be planned so that the student is given the chance to narrow the gap between theory and practice. Furthermore, the internship is an opportunity to apply and blend knowledge for problem solving in the field and to contribute at a higher level of decision-making. A well-designed internship can be helpful to all concerned, especially to the student as they gain practical experiences to enhance their skills and balance their professional training. An internship allows the student to test their understanding, ability, and expertise as an instructional organizer. These practices will lead to a better equipped professional who will be able to manage the problems in the future. The purpose of the National Internship Program (NIP) was to create a pipeline of students into a professional work environment in which they may gain complete practical experience, training and education.

Students have many talents and qualities that benefit employers: enthusiasm, devotion to learning, and an eagerness to work and do a fine job. They are looking for opportunities that will motivate them and

provide real experience. A good internship program will guarantee the assignment of challenging projects and tasks. An internship is actually a partnership between the employer and the student.

When hiring the internees in any department the heads of those institutes should see that it is very important that interns be provided with a warm introduction to their organization. Not only are interns is new to their organization, in many cases, they are new to the professional world of work. Before interns arrive at work, make sure that they are provided with useful information regarding to housing, transportation, parking and dress code etc. Explain them to their work space and environment by introducing them to their co-workers. Interns should become familiar with their organizations. The internees should also know the level of their job authority and decision-making capabilities.

An internship can only be a true learning experience if constructive feedback is provided to the internees. Supervisors should take time to evaluate both a student's positive accomplishments and weaknesses. If an intern was unable to meet their learning objectives, suggestions for improvement should be given.

The students that were hired in the NIP program were carefully chosen by the departments. Most of students were given the department according to their degrees. Some of the students were hired as permanent employees after they finished their internship. Many students regarded this program as useful and beneficial for them. Some thought it could be a way through which government can reduce the unemployment from the country. Young graduate and post graduate students were given a chance to polish their skills and talents. It was a way towards better future of the students. Such programs should be appreciated and promoted by the government. And government should continue this program and consider on hiring those internees as permanent employees. As stipends were given to the internees, government should also provide other benefits for them. Other benefits can increase the efficiency level among the internees and before hiring the internee we should clear the interns;

- Internship job description
- Guidelines for posting internship positions.
- Assistance in increasing a job offer for the intern.
- Assistance in evaluating the intern's work.

Once everything is cleared to the interns they work in a stress free environment and give their best.

RECOMMENDATION

- a. Government should seriously work on the functionality and efficiency of this program.
- b. Internship should be made compulsory in college and universities.
- c. Government should encourage the bright students with different incentives.
- d. This program should not be stopped by any government.
- e. A well written documented learning objective provides a clear direction and targeted goals for the internees.

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APPENDIX**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Name: _____ Age: _____ Qualification: _____

Internship in Depts.: _____

This questionnaire is designed to conduct a research on evaluation of National Internship Programme (NIP). The research project has been assigned to a student researcher Zamara Batool.

S.No.	Statements	S.A	A	N	D.A	S.D.A
	NIP was beneficial for graduates and postgraduate youngster.					
	Is Processing time of internship long					
	The students with 16 years education got NIP easily					
	According to work load, the salary package Rs.10000/- is sufficient for internees.					
	The appointment in different departments is according to own choice. Of internee.					
	The work load assigned to internee is same as permanent employees					
	The duties assigned to internee is according to qualification					
	The senior members of institution/department help internees during the work					
	Internee avail the other financial facilities given by Government during job.					
	The age limited should same all over Pakistan.					
	The check and balance by government was observed during internship.					
	The coordination of head and staff with internee was satisfactory					
	The government may increases duration of internship					
	Pay Package given to internee should be above Rs. 20000					
	The minimum experience may count in Govt job is two year, so duration should be increased to at least two years					
	Is NIP is helpful for students in futures job					
	Should these internees be appointed as permanent employees?					
	Do you think such programs are improving the skills and inventiveness in the students?					
	What do you think should government of Pakistan continue this program?					
	Should government increase the age limit from 25 to 30 years?					

Key: Strongly Agree: S.A, Agree: A, Neutral: N, Disagree: D.A, Strongly Disagree: S.D.A