



Employers' Satisfaction on The Effectiveness of The Student's Internship Program Klang Community College: A Survey for Two-Months Duration Internship Program

Salamon Zailah^{1*}

¹Collaboration and Entrepreneurship Unit, Kolej Komuniti Klang, No.2680 Persiaran Tengku Ampuan Rahimah, 41200 Klang, Selangor, Malaysia

*Corresponding author: zailah@kkklang.edu.my

Please provide an **official organisation email** of the corresponding author

Full Paper

Article history

Received

15 February 2024

Received in revised form

24 March 2024

Accepted

23 April 2024

Published online

15 May 2024

Abstract

A two (2) month internship program is a short period for students to experience real work in a field or industry. This quantitative study was conducted with 36 respondents who are employers of internship students enrolled in the Computer and Network System Certificate Program at Klang Community College. This questionnaire consists of two parts, namely part A and part B. Part A has 7 items on employer demographics, and part B has 21 items covering aspects of knowledge, skills, and soft skills. Overall, the results show employers' responses a high interpretation of the effectiveness of the two-month duration internship program. This study has implications for the institution to maintain momentum and improve on these aspects so that students are ready to perform internship program with full commitment and explore new knowledge.

Keywords: - Effectiveness, employer, duration, internship

© 2024 Politeknik Mukah. All rights reserved

1. Introduction

Industrial or practical internship programs are compulsory at all levels of higher education in Institutions of Higher Learning (IPT) including Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor level. The objective of the internship program is to give students the opportunity to experience the real world of work, to be able to apply what they learned in college and to develop their interpersonal skills (Norhidayah, 2021).

The effectiveness of an internship depends on the duration of the placement that the student needs to commit to. This refers to a six-week study of the internship directed by the MOHE of Pakistan, which became an issue for the effectiveness of the internship program. The achievement of internship objectives depends on various factors as soon as the internship is planned and implemented. (Nauman & Hussain, 2018).

The benefits of the training period are dependent on the learning outcomes of the program that the student needs to achieve. Employers who take internship program will assess students on their mastery of knowledge and skills as well as the readiness of students with real jobs throughout the placement. (Tarmizi, et al., 2023). For employers, this is also an opportunity to engage students or employees in real work experience, giving them the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills learned and develop students' talents and potential to improve their employability. A study by Ghani (2020) stated that graduates should be prepared with social skills, and employers expect future graduates to master communication skills at work.

1.1 Study Problems

The duration of the internship program found that lecturers were concerned about the effectiveness of students' internships for the two-month duration in a field or industry. The study involved about 41 students in an internship program for a two-month (8-week) duration in the final semester. It was essential to look at the quality of internships delivered by students to achieve industry expectations on knowledge, skills, and soft skills. Students were able to integrate their workability and performance into a real work environment to prepare themselves for employability after graduating from their studies. Therefore, this study was conducted to obtain feedback from employers on the effectiveness of the eight (8) weeks internship program.

1.2 Study Questions

The study involved industry responses in three (3) areas of knowledge, skill and software, which students implemented during the duration of the internship program. Satisfaction in the industry to have the internship program's effectiveness on the curriculum over two (2) months is as follows:

1. Employers respond to aspects of knowledge that students have developed and practiced.
2. Employers respond to aspects of practical skills that students master and practice.
3. Employers provide feedback on the aspects of soft skills practiced by students.

1.3 Objectives of The Study

Based on the question of the above study, this study focuses on three (3) objectives as below:

1. To find out the employer's feedback on the effectiveness of the internship program from students who were undergoing the internship program from the aspect of knowledge.
2. To find out the employers' feedback on the effectiveness of the internship program from students who were undergoing the internship program from the aspect of practical skills.
3. To find out the employers' feedback on the effectiveness of the internship program from students who were undergoing the internship program from the aspect of soft skills.

1.4 The Importance of The Study

This study is very important to all parties who are directly or indirectly involved in ensuring that the performance of internship program students will bring satisfaction to employers or industries. Some of the parties who will benefit from this study include:

1. Collaboration and Entrepreneurship Unit (UKK) Klang Community College
 - The output of the research provides data for UKK about the level of satisfaction of employers on the

effectiveness of the internship. Therefore, enhancement activities for students can be planned to meet the employers' expectations.

2. Academic Unit
 - As a result of this study, the Academic Unit can identify aspects of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum that improve the formulation of learning and teaching activities.
3. Students
 - This study provides important information to students on aspects that will be evaluated and emphasized by employers. In turn, it provides an initial overview to students who will commit to the internship program to prepare themselves better in various aspects before stepping into real employment.

2. Literature Review

An appropriate duration of an internship program can be the best mechanism to increase employment opportunities for graduates. The adequacy duration of the internship program may vary depending on the students' performance during the internship. Students can participate themselves, adapt with flexibility, learning new skills to accomplish the task and learning curve. Such exposure finally guarantees employment after graduation (Gomez et al., 2023).

This duration should be taken into consideration to prevent students from experiencing boredom, fatigue, and exploitation. It needs to be well planned with coordination from the institution so that students can achieve the learning outcomes of the program and have the internship program effectively (O'Higgins & Pinedo, 2018).

It is natural for students to know the perspectives of employers who want to expose them to the real work environment. These perspectives vary according to the type, size, and culture of the organization, as well as the role and functions of the work. Perspectives are generally related to mastering technology skills, applying generic skills, and adhering to safety regulations and good practices (Noor & Abdullah, 2020).

The industry is interested in knowing the level of knowledge and skills of students in institutions as this factor helps them in finding skilled workers to minimize training and advertising expenses as well as reduce time effectively. Employers will look for experienced and skilled graduates who fulfil their business purposes. Educational institutions that conduct and implement internships for students are aimed at equipping them with employment skills and maximizing their employability (Yusof & Mohiddin, 2018).

3. Methodology

The study is carried out quantitatively. The 36 responders who supervised 41 students filled out the online questionnaire on "Google Form" for Certificate of Computer and Network Systems, Klang Community College students in Session II 2022/2023. This questionnaire is taken from the Ministry of Higher

Education's Internship Program Implementation Handbook Edition 2022.

The questionnaire contains two parts. i.e., Parts A and B. Part A consists of 7 industry demographic items, and Part B consists of 21 items covering knowledge, practical skills, and soft skills. The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale ranging from (5) representing "strongly agreeable" to (1) representing "strongly disagree" on each item designed to determine the level of effectiveness of LI by the employer.

All data obtained will be processed using the formula in the computer provided on the "Google Sheet". Analysis from this study will be able to assess employer feedback on the effectiveness of the internship program.

Table 1. The interpretation of the mean score (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994)

Mean Score	Interpretation
1.00 to 2.00	Low
2.00 to 3.00	Medium Low
3.00 to 4.00	Medium High
4.00 to 5.00	High

4. Finding

4.1 Respondent's Background

A total of 36 responders are industry supervisors comprising of position, supervisor, and percentage as in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by position

Position	Number of Supervisors	Percent
Director/Manager	6	16.67
Supervisor	26	72.22
Head of Department /Head of Unit	3	8.33
Human Resources Officer	1	2.78
Summary	36	100

Next, the questionnaire divides the types of industries into two (2), namely the service industry and the manufacturing industry (refer to Table 2). The service industry consists of four (4) types of industries, while the manufacturing industry consists of two (2) types of industries (refer to Table 3).

Table 3. Types of industry under manufacturing industry and service industry

Type of Industry	Numbers of Service Industry	Number of Manufacturing Industry	Number of students
Information and Communication Technology	15		23
Research And Development	1		2
Pembinaan	1		1
Safety	1		13
Machinery and Services		1	1
Engineering Support		1	1
Summary	18	2	41

A total of 11 students in the industry have a staff of less than five (5) staff. Meanwhile, the industry has a staff of between 20-50, placing 17 internship students, shows the largest number (refer to Table 4).

Table 4. Number of students in industry by number of staff

No of Staff /Industry	No of Industry	No of Student
<5	10	11
6-19	6	11
20-50	2	17
51-150	0	0
151-500	0	0
>500	2	2
Summary	20	41

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

4.2.1 Knowledge Aspect

The score for knowledge aspects shows the highest mean score of 4.44 as illustrated on Table 5.

Table 5. Mean score for knowledge aspects

Questions	Score min	Interpretation
Knowledge	4.22	High
Put knowledge into practice	4.27	High
Mastery of Knowledge	4.44	High
Problem-Solving Abilities	4.13	High
Think Creatively	4.19	High

4.2.2 Skills Aspects

The score for skill aspects shows the highest mean score of 4.39 (refer to Table 6).

Table 6. Mean score for students skills

Questions	Score min	Interpretation
Appropriate Skills	4.33	High
Practicing Skills	4.33	High
Compliance with work	4.39	High
Meet Work Targets	4.34	High
Compliance with Safety Features	4.5	High

4.2.3 Soft Skills Aspects

The score for softskill aspects shows the highest mean score of 4.41 (refer to Table 7). All items show interpretations in high score. Only one result shows medium high or mean score 3.94 for students being able to communicate in English.

Table 7. Mean score for soft skills aspects

Questions	Score min	Interpretation
Accept Criticism	4.50	High
Adapt with work	4.41	High
Comply with the rules	4.50	High
Integrity	4.40	High
Capable to Plan	4.14	High
Work As a team	4.31	High
Leadership Characteristics	4.08	High
Able to Communicate	4.19	High
Capable to Communicate in English	3.94	Medium High
Able to work with minimum supervision	4.25	High
Optimize resources	4.36	High

4.2.4 Summary for From Mean Score from Each Aspects

The results from three (3) aspects are shown in Table 8. The conclusion for mean score for all aspects is 4.31, which is a high interpretation.

Table 8. Mean score per aspect of internship program

Aspects	Mean Score	Interpretation
Knowledge	4.26	High
Practical Skills	4.38	High
Soft Skills	4.28	High
Mean Score	4.31	High

5. Discussions

The findings from this study show that the industries' feedback on the effectiveness of internship program students who underwent eight (8) weeks of internship program in session II 2023/2024 was high. It was found that three (3) aspects measured, which are the knowledge aspect, skills aspect, and soft skills aspect, show a high mean score. According to this study, three (3) aspects of the internship program are not affected by the duration of the student's internship program.

The findings show that these three (3) aspects integrated into internship student programs are very significant for employers to be satisfied with students having internship programs in their place.

Therefore, early exposure during internship is beneficial for joining the workforce industry. Here, students are exposed to real concepts of working environment as well as theory blends with practice push them optimally. As a result, students will be equipped with knowledge, proficiency, and abilities for preparing themselves for the work market.

Therefore, the real essence of this internship is to give students the opportunity to step out of the campus environment to experience the changes and explore technological development in the country. (Yusof & Mohiddin, 2018).

The level of English proficiency among students scored a medium-high mean score compared to other mean scores. According to Zulkifeli et al. (2022), English proficiency is very important in today's needs because it is widely used to know current technology that demands students to coup the needs of the present. It can make students more knowledgeable and make it easier to communicate with individuals from all corners of the world and the most important thing is to increase students' chances of getting a good job nowadays. The findings of this study, supported by Mohamad et al. (2019) found that the failure of graduates to gain a place in the job market is often associated with students' weakness in mastering the English skills required by employers. In this regard, the institution is seen as a suitable place to apply English skills among students before becoming a graduate. Students who are provided with technical skills need to adapt that skill to a diverse industry ecosystem. The assigned tasks are varied depending on the industry and the needs of the organization. This requires students' skills to apply technical skills with a real working environment (Downs et al., 2024).

6. Conclusion

Overall, the industry is highly satisfied with the effectiveness of internship program students. This score needs to be maintained as these 8 weeks is a challenging period for students to apply and interpret skills during the internship program. Students need to prepare themselves as early as possible during their training and master the skills available in the industry quickly and efficiently to ensure that the three (3) aspects have a positive impact.

During the duration of the internship program, employers provide assignments related to the areas of the program that cause students to successfully apply their skills. Employers also play an important role by creating a work environment that aids the mastery of aspects and provides good guidance throughout the internship program. Collaboration between institutions, employers and students is very relevant to ensure the quality of internships prepares graduates of technical and vocational education (TVET) for the job market.

References

- Buang, Z., Mohamad, M. M., Ahmad, A., & Yuniarti, N. (2020). The earnings and employment of community colleges' graduates: Occupational field and gender analysis. *Jurnal Pendidikan Teknologi dan Kejuruan*, 26(1), 11-17.
- Downs, C., Mughal, F., Shah, U., & Ryder, M. (2024). Are undergraduate internships worth the effort? Time to reconceptualize work-based learning for building protean meta-competencies. *Studies in Higher Education*, 49(1), 84-97.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2023.2222147>.
- Ghani, I. A. G. A. A. (2020). Employers' expectation and preference of graduates in Malaysia. *Journal of Human Capital Development (JHCD)*, 13(2), 37-60.
- Gomez, M. P. J, Bojica, A., Martínez-del-Río, J., & Karaja, R. (2023). Designing successful internships: exploring the role of duration, formalization and motivational practices. *Education+ Training*, 65(3), 433-453.
- Malom, M., & Nasrul, F. (2020). The Internship Students' performance from The Perspective of Industry: Case Of Islamic Banking Students. *Journal of Islamic*, 5(28), 111-121.
- Mohamad, N. H., Ibrahim, B., & Selamat, A. (2019). Penerapan Kemahiran Komunikasi Bahasa Inggeris Menerusi Kursus Badan Beruniform Palapes UTHM. *Online Journal for TVET Practitioners*, 4(2), 58-71.
- Mohamad, N. H., Ibrahim, B., & Selamat, A. (2019). Penerapan Kemahiran Komunikasi Bahasa Inggeris Menerusi Kursus Badan Beruniform Palapes UTHM. *Online Journal for TVET Practitioners*, 4(2), 58-71.
- Nauman, S., & Hussain, N. (2018). Gauging the Effectiveness of Six-Week Internship Duration in Business Education in Pakistan: Implications for Policy and Practice. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 5(2), 45-59.
- Noor, M. A. M. (2023). Employability skills needed for TVET graduates in Malaysia: Perspective of industry expert. *Online Journal for TVET practitioners*, 8(1), 52-59.
- Noor, M., & Abdullah, N. (2020). Persepsi Majikan Terhadap Pelajar Kolej Komuniti Jempol semasa Menjalani Latihan Industri [Employer Perception of Kolej Komuniti Jempol Students during Industrial Training]. *BITARA International Journal of Civilizational Studies and Human Sciences (e-ISSN: 2600-9080)*, 3(4), 26-35.
- Norhidayah, M. H. (2021). Effectiveness of Internship Program on Final Year Students - A Review. *International Journal of Education And Pedagogy*, 3(1), 228-231.
- Nunnally, J. C. and Bernstein, I. H. (1994) The Assessment of Reliability. *Psychometric Theory*, 3, 248-292.
- O'Higgins, N., & Pinedo, L. (2018). Interns and outcomes: Just how effective are internships as a bridge to stable employment?. *International Labour Office*. Geneva.
- Tahrir, N. F., Nasir, N. A. M., & Radzali, N. S. A. A. (2023). Kebolehpasaran Pelajar Selepas Menjalani Latihan Industri bagi Program Diploma Teknologi Maklumat Politeknik Sultan Idris Shah: Era Pascapandemik. *Research and Innovation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training*, 3(1), 023-029.
- Tarmizi, M. L. M., Zaki, N. F. M., Nasharudin, S. N. S., Zahari, N. S., Romly, R., Afiqah, N., & Rahman, A. (2023). Perception of UiTM Students and Employers' Expectation on Practical Training During Covid-19 Pandemic.
- Yusof, M. M., & Mohiddin, N. H. (2018). Refleksi Pelajar Terhadap Keberkesanan Kursus Latihan Industri: Kajian Kes Pelajar Politeknik Muadzam Shah: Student Reflection on The Effectiveness of Industrial Training Courses: Study Case of Polytechnic Muadzam Shah Students. *Attarbawiy: Malaysian Online Journal of Education*, 2(2), 46-54.
- Zulkifeli, M. F., Mohd Ishar, M. I., & Abdul Hamid, M. Z. (2022). Elements of soft skills of TVET education students while undergoing practical training. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 7(8), e001659.
<https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v7i8.1659>.