

ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS THROUGH INTERNSHIP TRAINING: FOCUS ON TOURISM AND HOTEL MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the improvement in students' entrepreneurial skills through internship training in tourism and hotel industries. A sample of 350 students was selected using non-probability convenience sampling. This study examined the opinions of students in tourism and hotel management institutions regarding the improvement of entrepreneurial skills through internship training, the extent of improvement in entrepreneurial skills among students of hotel management through internship training, and the relationship between student factors and improvement in entrepreneurial skills through internship training. The collected data were analyzed using the chi-square test, correlation coefficient, and factor analysis. This study analyzed the evaluation of an internship training program conducted among tourism and hotel management students.

Keywords: Graduate; Entrepreneurship; Training; Industry Studies; and Tourism & Development.

INTRODUCTION

Industry Linkage expresses the relationship between the manufacturing/service industry (Loeb, 2015) and higher educational institutions that provide entrepreneurial and employability support to students. Educational institutions fulfill the expectations of the industry regarding the right employee (DuPont & Craig, 1996) for the right job (Stewart et al., 1996). Teaching and training (Smith, 1996) are the two sides of the coin of education. Space for teaching is available in educational institutions (Vijay and Nair, 2022). On-the-job training facilities (Kenworthy, 1996) are available in industrial units. Teaching and training must be interlinked (Sigurjonsson et al. 2015). Students should learn theoretical concepts from the industrial units. This learning environment must be made available to students and industrial units. The shortage of skilled employees is a problem faced by the industrial units.

There is dynamism in the labor requirements of industrial units, whereas there is a static in the academic curriculum taught to students (Zlotkowski, 1996) in educational institutions. It is a

mismatch. It does not meet the labor requirements (Mair et al., 2012) of industrial units. This raises the following research question. What are the plans needed to make students of higher educational institutions employable in industrial units, matching employment requirements and entrepreneurs (Ng & Burke, 2010) on their own? Further research is required to address this question. It is presumed that industrial linkages create employment and entrepreneurial competencies (McCuddy & Peery, 1996) for students in higher educational institutions. It is the responsibility of higher education to teach, train, and practice (Malhotra & Miller, 1999) students to acquire the four factors of production for developing industries in a country. Industrial development contributes to employment development (Ricks & Williams, 2005).

Engineering, hotel management, and arts and science colleges obtain a degree for the years they spend there. (Zhimin et al., 2016) However degrees and higher grades do not provide employment, and self-employment becomes difficult. Basic subject knowledge and the ability to express oneself are essential requirements for students. The basic subject knowledge a student can learn from the classroom and library (Slager et al. 2020). Participation in seminars, competitions, and cultural programs (Valle et al., 2019) helps students express their learning in the classroom and other related aspects. Thus, classrooms alone cannot create versatility. Knowledge prevails outside the classroom (employment opportunities and skills needed to obtain employment) and contributes to a major part of graduates' career determination and success (Chandra and Jin 2022).

The industry should communicate the manpower shortage/skill shortages (Kim et al., 2019) in educational institutions. Educational institutions should take immediate steps to fulfill the requirements or demands of industrial units related to manpower requirements (Hartog & Frame, 2004). The grooming of students for employment should match the industrial unit demands. (Phillips et al., 2019) The educational institutions and industrial units are not mutually exclusive (Valor, 2012). These results were in agreement with each other. This behavior will enhance entrepreneurship (Kenney, 1987) another important part of industrial linkage is that the teachers should work for three months a year in industrial units and industrial experts should work for a similar period in educational institutions (Xie & Wu, 2022). It must be a university-industry knowledge transfer (Ali & Cottle, 2021). The research activities of educational institutions should be application-oriented to solve problems of industrial units and enhance their efficiency (Solymossy & Masters, 2002).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Industrial Linkages can play a vital role in developing the skills that students need to enter and survive in entrepreneurship and achieve business success. These skills include Communication skills (Ahmad, 2015), Teamwork (Johnson, 2000), Analytical and problem-solving skills (Daddi et al., 2020), personal management skills (Doniña, 2015), Interpersonal skills (Balu, 2020), Computer literacy (Ganfieri, 2013), Leadership skill (Matteson et al., 2016), Learning skill (Jack et al., 2017), Ethics & work values (Lambe & Bones, 2006), Accounting skill (Chevis et al., 2011),

Administrative skill (Chinomona & Surujlal, 2012), Organization skill (Sarri et al., 2010), Self-motivation (Clements, 2010), Self-confidence (Mihail, 2006), Creativity, Innovation skill, Presentation skill (Peters, 2005), Decision-making skill (P. MaertzJr et al., 2014), flexibility and adaptability (Rowold, 2008), and research skills (Streumer & Kho, 2006) were extracted from an extensive literature survey.

Matteson et al. (2016) highlighted a judicious blend of hard and soft skills that is essential for achieving professional and leadership success. It implores not only to build hard skills but also to mind soft skills. They conclude that soft skills are essential for everyone from janitors to chief executives to achieve the desired outcomes. (P. MaertzJr et al., 2014) Institutions benefit from internships through the ability to advertise their relationships with the industry to potential students and parents, increase the school's visibility, and in the long term, help build loyalty from former students due to successful placements. (Chinomona & Surujlal, 2012) Internship experiences are observed to become more important every day in terms of the academic education of students and establishing their connection with the business world. (Lambe & Bones, 2006) Internships are especially helpful for enthusiastic students who want to gain some practical experience about the work of working in a business. (Chevis et al., 2011) Several taxonomies for skills and competencies are proposed in the education literature or studies on the accounting profession. This study focuses on a simple taxonomy that involves differentiating between technical and soft skills. The importance of building a learning capability is to enhance the learning talent chain (Clements, 2010). (Sarri et al., 2010) Entrepreneurs/owners and/or managers of micro- and small-medium enterprises in northern Greece are largely aware of the significance of creativity and innovation, believing that they are positively related to each other and interact in the development of their businesses. (Rowold, 2008) Non-technical training impacted subsequent soft skills and technical training predicted subsequent hard skills as well as job involvement. Moreover, employee participation in coaching has been found to predict job satisfaction. Mihail (2006) pointed out that internships can help students develop the critical core skills demanded by global markets, including communication, time management, self-confidence, and self-motivation. (Streumer & Kho, 2006) Internship programs try to merge students' learning gained in the campus-based environment with a real-work environment, thus terminologies used to describe this relationship between learning and work become important. (Johnson, 2000) Knowledge and experience obtained from classrooms differ from those gained during industrial internships.

Furthermore, communication is advantageous through various channels, such as e-mails, regular meetings, or face-to-face communication (Ahmad, 2015) Hospitality and tourism students do not consider the entrepreneurship module to be an important subject within their program, which poses a challenge for institutions seeking to integrate entrepreneurship education within a program of study. (Balu, 2020) The study aims to assess how grades obtained by students influence their entrepreneurial attitudes and skills. (Daddi et al., 2020) The authors compare the extent to which university-based entrepreneurship education programs in these countries use methods that

develop participants' ability to move from ideation to the implementation of something new. (Doniņa, 2015) The companies plan interns' job assignments during the internship based on an internship program and in 35.06% of the cases higher educational establishments do not contact internship companies for feedback at all. (Ganefri, 2013) The learning process had a positive impact on the entrepreneurial interest improvement assessed at the beginning and end of the semester. (Jack et al., 2017) The model is deemed suitable to be utilized in learning to improve the students' entrepreneurial interests. Peters (2005) organized flows of work, motivating employees, improving market development procedures and methods, modernizing old distribution channels, and discovering new ones.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Industrial training/internship/summer placement training/apprenticeship students have opportunities to communicate with and convince a large number of people. Through this process, students can learn about the intricacies or nuances of communication and convince others. They had to work with the team. It provides the ability to move with a team, learn compromises, adjust, and achieve goals, Materials, manpower, money, machines, and management are basic components of a business. If a problem emulates one ingredient, it affects other ingredients. Sometimes, trainees may create operational problems due to their lack of learning. During the internship, students can learn the causes of problems and analyze ways to solve them. Knowledge is medicine for all illnesses in business, and such knowledge can be acquired only through business experience. Experience refers to knowledge. Entrepreneurs require both personal and interpersonal skills.

Learning by doing and doing by learning are both required to acquire computing skills. Internship training creates opportunities for learning by doing and doing by learning students, and they can learn learning and computing skills. Advanced developments in technology-oriented products and their applications can be learned only by business enterprises. However, the classroom environment does not provide this advancement. Leadership skills are required to lead a business. Industrial linkage builds leadership skills for students. The success of the business depends on work ethics and work values. The industrial experience allows learning the work values of the business. Work values will secure the confidence of consumers. Students can learn resilience in industrial training which is essentially required for sustainability in all walks of their life.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

This study examines the outcomes of internship training for students. Internship training is part of the curriculum of academic programs offered in higher educational institutions. This bridges the gap between theory and concepts through classrooms and practices followed by industrial enterprises. It is necessary to study the impact of internship training on improving trainees' entrepreneurial skills. This study answers the following research question:

- i. Does internship training improve entrepreneurial skills of students in tourism and hotel management?
- ii. What is the extent of improvement in entrepreneurial skills?
- iii. Is there an association between in-plant training and entrepreneurship promotion?

HYPOTHESIS

There is no association between gender, age, education stream, and entrepreneurial skills that students have in internship training to enhance their opportunities for the entrepreneurial system.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was both descriptive and analytical in nature. Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. Secondary data were collected from books, journals, magazines, published reports, business newspapers, websites related to entrepreneurship and internship training, and reports from the Union Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Skill Development. Primary data were collected from the respondents (students) using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was duly pretested with the help of entrepreneurship and internship experts. Necessary corrections and modifications were incorporated into the questionnaire based on their opinions. A pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect the primary data. *Sample and procedure:* A total of 350 internship students from various tourism and hotel management institutions in Tamil Nadu were taken as the sample for the present study. The respondents were selected using a convenience sampling technique, and a five-point Likert scale was used to collect primary data from the respondents. The study sample comprised 247 males and 103 Females. (49.9%) Of the respondents, 49.9% belonged to the 18-21 age group, (35.6%) of respondents belonged to the 22-25 age group, and the remaining (14.5%) respondents belonged to the above 25 age group. With regard to the annual income of the respondent's parents, (9.4%) were Rs. 1,00,000, (31.1%) were Rs. 2,00,000 to 3,00,000, (53.1%) were Rs. 4,00,000 to 5,00,000 and the remaining (6.4%) were above 5,00,000. This study was conducted from December 2022 to March 2023. *Statistical tools:* The collected data were analyzed using Chi-square, Correlation Coefficient (r), and factor analysis for arriving at findings and testing of hypotheses. *Statistical Packages:* SPSS 23.0 was used for analyzing the data and application of the above statistical tools.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The researcher made a modest attempt to study the improvement of students' entrepreneurial skills through internship training. The respondents agreed that entrepreneurial skills improved through internship training in manufacturing and service enterprises. This study analyzes the relationship between three important personal factors of respondents: i) gender, ii) age, and iii) education stream of respondents with opinions on the improvement of entrepreneurial skills.

Association between personal factors of students and improvement of entrepreneurial skills

Personal factors	Calculated value	df	Sig.	Results
Gender	35.342	30	0.230	Accepted
Age	42.579	40	0.030	Accepted
Education stream	31.796	38	.0751	Accepted

The chi-square calculated values were 35.342, 42.579, and 31.796, respectively, at a 5% significance level for two, six, and six degrees of freedom, which were 0.230, 0.030, and 0.751, respectively. The calculated values were greater than the table values. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. It was concluded that there is an association between personal factors and the improvement of students' entrepreneurial skills in students through internship training.

FACTOR ANALYSIS

The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) measure of sampling adequacy was computed to determine the suitability of the factor analysis. The values between 0.5 and 1.0 indicate that factor analysis is suitable or appropriate. The KMO value is 0.893, which shows that the sample is adequate for conducting an Exploratory Factor Analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity also shows a significant number of correlations among the statements. Thus, all of the parameters discussed above support the application of factor analysis to the data. The scale was also tested for reliability, and Cronbach's alpha value was 0.930. (Clinical Research Centre, Sarawak General Hospital, Ministry of Health, Sarawak, Malaysia et al., 2018) suggested that variables with loadings greater than 0.45 are practically significant and support acceptable levels of explanation. Hence, the criteria of 0.45 were considered for selecting the variables. It can be seen that Exploratory Factor Analysis revealed four underlying dimensions for the Internship skills improving the level of Tourism and Hotel Management Training. These five factors account for 46.436% of the total variance. The statements were categorized under the respective factors based on the rotated component matrix. The eigenvalues for Factor 1 are Practical Experience: Internship training provides students with the opportunity to gain practical experience in real-world settings. This hands-on experience allows them to apply the theoretical knowledge gained from their academic studies and develop a deeper understanding of the industry. Factor 2 is skill development, which can help students develop a range of entrepreneurial skills, such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, leadership, adaptability, and customer service. These skills are essential for success in the tourism and hotel management industries, where entrepreneurs often need to navigate various challenges and interact with diverse stakeholders. Factor 3 is Networking Opportunities: Students have the opportunity to connect with industry professionals, mentors, and potential future employers. Building a strong professional network can be valuable for career advancement and future entrepreneurial endeavors, Factor 4 is Industry Insights: Internships provide students with a first-hand understanding of the operations, challenges, and trends within the tourism and hotel management industry. This knowledge can be instrumental in identifying

entrepreneurial opportunities and developing innovative solutions. Factor 5 is Confidence and Self-Efficacy: Successful completion of internships can boost students' confidence in their skills and abilities, thus enhancing their self-efficacy as future entrepreneurs. This increased confidence motivates them to pursue entrepreneurial ventures in the tourism and hotel management fields at 8.687, 1.694, 1.391, 1.764, and 1.224, respectively.

RECOMMENDATION

The internship enables students to verify the theory acquired in the classroom and to improve their interpersonal and communication skills. The results of this study indicate that internships can help students learn from their mistakes and identify opportunities for improvement, thereby helping them perceive their future in their workplace. Internships help students identify skills that need to be improved before graduating and entering the workforce. This study strongly suggests that students should participate in internships before graduating. Moreover, it is recommended that any student whose future lies in a hospitality-related industry participate in an internship because doing so will facilitate success in their selected field.

SUGGESTIONS

The researcher studied the improvement in entrepreneurial skills through internship training. It was concluded that most respondents had a good opinion about internship training. It is suggested the educational institutions should accommodate internship training in their curricula. This helps them enter the entrepreneurship stage.

- Industrial units should allow students to acquire entrepreneurial skills through internship training. The industrial units should encourage internship training.
- Educational institutions should enter a memorandum of understanding with industrial units to provide internship training to students.
- Students should be actively involved in internship training to test the skills required for entrepreneurship. Teachers should provide counseling to students for internship training.
- The government should come forward to direct all high educational institutions to include internship training in their curriculum.
- Industrial aspects should be established in educational institutions to provide a wider scope to students for internship training and entrepreneurship.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the evaluation of an internship training program conducted with tourism and hotel management students. This research initially set out to offer insights and guidance for internship programs in several areas, including identifying expectations, promoting benefits, guiding preparation, and providing a benchmark for future research. All of these goals were achieved. In the future, it will be important to continue monitoring internship programs, minimize the potential disconnection between students and employers, and maximize the benefits

and opportunities for students (Grundy et al., 2017). This research demonstrates that students are well served by the current internship program, which is essential for their future.

RESEARCH GAP AND FURTHER STUDIES

A comprehensive study is needed to determine the extent of students' skill development before and after attending internship training in the selected industrial enterprises. Internship training adds value to graduates who have become marketable and employable. Industry linkages have become essential in grooming value-added graduates. Educational institutions, parents of students, academics, industrial enterprises, chambers of commerce, and industry come forward to support, create, and develop industry-higher educational institution linkages and industrial parks on the premises of arts and science colleges and universities.

Credit authorship contribution statement

Lingavel G: Conceptualization; data curation; formal analysis; investigation; methodology, modeling, validation, writing-original draft, writing-review & editing; **Dr. S. Ganapathy:** Conceptualization; methodology; modelling; supervision; writing-original draft; writing-review & editing.

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