

RESHAPING THE EARLY CAREERS BY BUSINESS GRADUATES THROUGH INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES

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ABSTRACT

The purposiveness of this research paper is to examine business graduates' pre-employment decisions regarding to pursue a satisfied and successful career after going through internship training. Subjects were the students who have undergone an internship program and data was analyzed by using SPSS software. A five point Likert Scale has been used to examine the relation of dependent variable (PC fit) an independent variables (job attributes, PO fit and PJ fit).The internees perceived pay, benefits and promotion as related to future growth opportunities and job location, peers' relationship, favorability for firm's image and job duties as major factors and key criterion to pursue a satisfied and successful career .The results also indicate that person job (PJ) fit contribute more than person organization (PO) fit towards person career (PC) fit.To facilitate the students, the university coordinators can organize a face to face meeting of students and firms assisting them to get awareness of internees' selection criterion to increase the opportunities to be selected their interested firms. Offering internship programs and trainings also allows to employers the opportunity of exploring full time fresh graduates pool and employment potential for recruitment. This research shows significance of transitional career choices among business graduates. Further it authorizes the stimulating factors directly and indirectly influencing students' career selections and therefore how organizations can make better these conditions for future recruitment.

KEYWORDS

Job attributes, Person job fit, Person organization fit, Person career fit, Career development, Meaningful work life, Graduates employment survey.

INTRODUCTION

People who have not so far seriously think about the career options, perhaps today they have a good time to do so. Here is a description of some extensively used career growth interventions which can be thought to put light on various career growth practices. The students will be able to get a preliminary sense of career in their area of interest. Internships play a vital role in visualizing and evaluating the career options for students. They can also get a felt of what interventions might work and what interventions might fail. Career growth activities can be

helpful for students to explore and recognize their professional interests, fortes and other features, development and implement career goals, and improve themselves.

Over the Last two decades, internships have become more and more prevalent way as to shift from the classroom to the practical world (Coco, 2000). Internships enable the students to have clear understanding about the things as;

- I. Preference and clearance of job attributes.
- II. Student's characteristics alignment to the organizational settings.
- III. Nature and requirements of job for successful career option.
- IV. How to deal with trade-offs between career alternatives?
- V. Difference between post internship and after internship competencies.
- VI. Are gained competencies mediating interested career option?
- VII. How to attain goals in accordance to successful career?

In this universe, nothing is going on without planning. Planning about the career makes available the supervision that what you want to do and how can you do so. Career objective clear up the consideration facilitating the career planning and oblige as an observing instrument to evaluate development and recognize obstacles to yet to come satisfaction. In history, advising psychologists have accentuated the attainment of understanding about the profession and self in career assessment and growth (Gottfredson, 2002). One of the basic goals of career assessment is to find career accomplishment and eloquent work life (Flum and Blustein, 2000). Career accomplishment is explained as the amassing of encouraging work and psychological consequences subsequent from person's work experiences (Seibert and Kraimer, 2001).

Away from the persuasive aspects of internships, the assigned tasks and packages offer students with higher extent of sureness over their assortment, so it is thought that internships provide them the chance to explore a more perfect self-concept and trial for a match between their distinct abilities, values, understanding, concern and other features and what the work setting of practical-world demands. In the grounds of "OB" and "HRM", study about PO fit, PJ fit and apt amongst features of persons and those of their jobs and firms worked for is dominant (Werbel and Johnson, 2001). Studies have exposed that magnitude of individual's apt with institute and work relates to output and employees' loyalty. Most of the theoreticians have believed that good fitting amongst organization and oneself is vital (sekiguchi, 2003). Lately a number of investigators have found by doing meta-analysis that PO and PJ apt relates to abundant optimistic distinctive results and signify that while recruiting people both have to be well-thought-out (Hoffman and Woehr, 2006).

Theoretically, by winning this individual's awareness, as characterized by skills, interests, character and daily life favorites, and its contrast with understanding of diverse work settings, as signified by job duties and demands, one should be capable to evaluate and visualize the possibility of fitting. Normally, it is considered that business correspondences deliver to graduates such awareness and proficiencies to become a worthy manager, and likewise with professional accomplishment and successful career (Baruch et al., 2005; Pfeffer and Fong, 2002). This research is about exploring and investigating career selection among business graduates. The current study looks for inspecting the formerly described factors that mediates to pursue career in management (Özbilgin et al., 2005). In accordance of this specific concern, research is concentrated on business graduates who are commonly assumed to have truthful self-concepts and certain career paths and façade trade-off among various career options. Based on the prior

studies it can be concluded that alignment of peoples' work and organizational understandings with their requirements, concern, values and life-style favorites, their selected career and jobs make them more satisfied.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As nothing is constant in the universe same managing career is ongoing process through the whole life of a person. Selecting a career is the entire time puzzling task. Career choice takes in electing one vocation by giving up the other one. Hence, the matter of "career choice" has to be resolved by two essential conditions: accessibility of other career alternatives; and one's fondness among these accessible career alternatives (Özbilginet *al.*, 2005). A person's career selection is probably affected by certain factors, comprising subjective values, family, culture and career prospects etc. A variety of factors influencing students' career selection has been determined by doing research in various cultural backgrounds (Özbilginet *al.*, 2005; Ozkale *et al.*, 2004; Kyriacouet *al.*, 2002).

Somewhat, decisions about career among students are affected by self-awareness of their competencies and character (Earl and Bright, 2007), as well as work settings (Durr and Tracey, 2009). Work setting awareness enhances undergraduates' ability to select career (Bright and Earl, 2007). In this sense students get many benefits by going through Internship programs. These internship programs enable the students to experience working relations with managers and colleagues, and award them with the chance of learning about the work types that they are given. In this way students are mediated and motivated to consider the field where they will have to go after the completion of graduation in the future. Successful completion of internship program provides various benefits to students in initial career days, like enhanced job fit perceptions, more satisfied job, more successful objectives and more stability in job in the initial career (Gaultet *al.*, 2000). Talking about job satisfaction, it is the consequence of match between an individual and organization. Studies have shown that job satisfaction supports career security. As greater the fit more the employee is expected to stay on (Liu *et al.*, 2010). Concluding with the support of prior studies, when peoples' work and organizational understandings are aligned with their values, wants, interests and daily life favorites they feel more satisfaction with the selection of career and jobs (DeFruyt, 2002; Ton and Hansen, 2001). Dawley *et al.* (2010) says that to some extent job fit stimulated by observed support of supervisor and organization. It means career decisions are influenced by these stimulating factors significantly. This research has to explore stimulating factors related to career decisions by drawing students' opinions about internship know-how in the organizations.

Job Attributes

The factors attracting to employees to organization are the job attributes (Turban *et al.*, 1998). A list of attested attributes including "pay", "career forecasts", "work settings", "assigned duties", "relations with management", "job safety" and "participation in decisions" indicates that business graduates have great concern while assessing jobs offered to them (Teo and Poon, 1994). Graduates Employment Survey (2001) has also declared the importance of these attributes. Some attributes like compensation plans, benefits and growth opportunities are attracting factors for job searchers (Ganesan and Weitz, 1996). In another research rather than pay some non-tangible factors like job safety moreover attracts employees to a firm (Hsu *et al.*, 2003). Before starting internship, an internee hardly owns enough understanding of job and its features for particular vocation. Employees' perception about job as providing congruence with their values is satisfying and vice versa (Lopez, 1999). Interactionist studies recommend that an

employee's satisfaction and loyalty with organization are the consequences of the association of job attributes with values needed in that condition. A longitudinal research has shown that graduates' views changed after employment (internship) and that difference of opinion about job attributes causes dissatisfaction. Furthermore job attributes incongruence and dissatisfaction resulting turnover. This can be explained as high turnover.

Person Job fit

PJ fit is congruence amongst person's abilities and job requirements or person's needs to job attributes (Kristof, 1996). For a person to attain apt or constancy with work setting, it is essential to have know-how of one's own features and prospects along with understanding different work settings (Greenhaus et al., 2000). As a type PJ fit may be the abilities-demand apt that is similarity of person's competencies and particular job demands. It refers to whether the individual possess required competencies to perform the job. When employees have such competencies, they show higher degree of performance to meet supervisor's expectancies and to attain job safety (Lopez and Babin, 2009). Absence of good apt between person's competencies and job demands causes declined performance, higher absenteeism, turnover and further increased human capital difficulties (Mathis and Jackson, 2003). Past studies point out that candidates are employed by companies on the base of their observations of PJ fit because it affects significantly to job contentment and workers' intent to leave the firm (Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001). Consequently students think through PJ fit as an key influencer in career selection.

Person Organization fit

PO fit is emphasized degree of person and organization sharing alike features and encounter each other's requirements (Sekiguchi, 2004). PO fit explain the essential psychosomatic process caused by the routine experiences of job seekers, workers, and owners (Verquer et al., 2003). However PO fit relates to a several variables comprising job choice, applicants' desirability, recruitment decisions, worker job tenancy and career accomplishment (Goodman and Svyantek, 1999) and psychosomatic welfare of workforces (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Research of nearly prior two decades constantly support the valuable consequences related to improved PO fit (Verquer et al., 2003). More explicitly, similarity of the firm with workers' own individualities indicates their satisfaction and better performance (Bright, 2007). Greater PO fit leads to higher job satisfaction and lower intention to turnover, with opposing those relations to be right, as well (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Verquer et al., 2003). Despite the fact that weak PO fit intended to reduced job contentment and consequently causes to quit (Wheeler et al., 2005). A long-drawn-out meta-analysis by Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) of the consequences explains robust relations among PO fit to job satisfaction and intending to quit. Nevertheless, they also mentioned slight variability of job contentment and concentrating to quit. So, PO fit shares robust positive relation to job satisfaction and weaker negative relation with intending to turnover. Studies describe that Job searchers more lay emphasis on PO fit at the time of seeking job and PO fit serves as predictor of job choice intents. So as conclusion, career selection can be more satisfied, consistent and secure if the PO fit is good.

Person-Career fit

The researches have explain the self-efficacy as an individual's judgmental ability to achieve designated sorts of performance. Self-efficacy affects work performance (Judge et al., 2007) and it is compulsory and significant feature to attain future success (Beck and Halim, 2008). PC fit has been demonstrated as an important criterion in career selection and students claimed that internship improved their career self-efficacy which defines their career fit. Thus it is believed

that internship programs assist students to explore career. Self-exploration offers information that to what extent one's abilities and interests apt to particular professions, and therefore assisting career realization (Ballout, 2007). As going through internship programs and supportive education coursework have been observed to improve individual's career decision making and make stronger manifestation of occupation (Brooks et al., 1995) and enable to attain job related skills (Gravan and Murphy, 2001).

The current research pursues to determine the factors priority described to effect career selection in management (Özbilgin et al., 2005). As a result numerous students are considering to an MBA degree to increase their employment chance and to have a fast track career (Hay and Hodgkinson, 2006; Mihail and Elefterie, 2006). By a general consideration career is decided by family in communist nations (Ma and Yeh, 2005; Shea et al., 2007). It is also claimed that career decisions dependent to others' hopes to create difficulties (Rehfuss and Borges, 2006). Thus it is suggested that business studies have no correlation to career success (Pfeffer and Fong, 2002). Purposively to know the career options of business graduates, it is significant to go inside their heads to examine what kind of factors affect career options and how their belief may influence career decisions. Furthermore in choosing career students could enhance their competencies with the experience of training and then evaluate the degree of confidence compared to the career's requirements to evaluate apt (Ghani, 2008). It is characterized by way of PC fit as it is believed that if students observe that they match career on the basis of (PJ attributes, PJ fit and PO fit) well, they will adopt that vocation instantly upon completing graduation as the career success will be confident for them in coming era. Based on the above discussion following are some hypothesizes:

- H₁: Job attributes effects Person-Career fit positively and has significant influence to peruse satisfied career.
- H₂: Person-Job fit effects Person-Career fit positively and has significant influence to peruse satisfied career.
- H₃: Person-Organization fit effects Person-Career fit positively and has significant influence to peruse satisfied career.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Tool\Instrument

So as to measure Person-Career fit of the students as dependent variable, the researchers took questionnaire comprising 19 questions and three portions from "D.Y.K.Tong&X.F.Tong, 2012". First part contains six questions explaining the demographical features of students. Second part consists of ten questions explaining one variable. Third part is comprised of three variables and each contains three items.

The researcher has used five-point Likert scale for items 1-5 "1=Definitely Not to 5=DefinitelyYes" and for items 6-10 "1=Very Unfavorable to 5=Very Favorable" establishing perceived (clarity and favorability) job attributes during internship by student. For other three variables the same scale has been used as "1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree" which establishes students' PC fit.

The researchers have composed some introductory sentences in the questionnaire to make clear the purposiveness of the research to the subjects. The researchers have removed some items from base paper survey, one item from PO fit variable and two items from PJ fit variable. The

researchers have also altered the word “peers” with “colleagues” in item “L” related to job attributes variable. The appendix has the questionnaire.

Sample and data**Profile of subjects**

In this research the data was collected specially from students studying in the field of business administration. All the subjects were from final semester because all of them had undergone through an internship of at least eight weeks as it was mandatory and equate to three credit hours. For the purpose of data collection, 130 students were asked to fill the questionnaire. Some students did not contribute to the survey. A total of 117 students did complete the survey, but 5 surveys were discarded due to incomplete and biased response. Finally 112 questionnaires remained valid for analysis.

Gender

Out of the 112 subjects’ 85 were male students and 27 were female students as shown in the following table.

Table 3.1: Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	85	75.9
Female	27	24.1
Total	112	100.0

Age

From all the respondents 62 students have the age of 18-21 years and 50 have of 22-23 years or older shown as under:

Table 3.2: Ages

	Frequency	Percent
18-21 years	62	55.4
22-23 years	50	44.6
Total	112	100.0

Area of Specialization

The respondents reported their area of interest as 17 in HRM, 34 in marketing and 61 in finance. Here is the frequency table.

Table 3.3: Area of specialization

	Frequency	Percent
HRM	17	15.2
marketing	34	30.4
Finance	61	54.5
Total	112	100.0

Allowance

Out of all the subjects 84 got no allowance while 14 students got Rs.5000 or less and same the ratio was for the students getting more than Rs.5000 as stipend shown in the table as under.

Table 3.4: Allowance

	Frequency	Percent
No allowance	84	75.0
3000-5000	14	12.5
More than 5000	14	12.5
Total	112	100.0

Career is influenced

From all 33 subjects stated that their career is influenced by their family, 9 by friends and teachers and 59 by themselves and 1 did not respond.

Table 3.4: Allowance

	Frequency	Percent
Family	33	29.5
Friends	9	8.0
Teacher	9	8.0
Personal decision	59	52.7
44.00	1	.9
Total	111	99.1
Total	112	100.0

Size of organization

A total of 18 respondents of the sample worked in small organizations, 63 in medium size organizations and 27 in large scale organizations. Frequency table is as under.

Table 3.5: Organization size

	Frequency	Percent
Small	18	16.1
Medium	63	56.3
Large	27	24.1
Total	108	96.4

Statistical Tools**Software**

First of all the valid data is analyzed by using 20th version of SPSS software to find an insight of the subjects' responses.

Cronbach's Alpha

The researchers have checked the reliability of data by using Cronbach's Alpha which is 0.795

Descriptive analysis

Descriptive analysis has been used by the researchers for the frequencies of all items relating to demographic characteristics of students.

Statistical Inferences

So as to find out the relations between the variables the researchers have conducted the following two forms of analysis.

ANALYSIS

Regression Analysis

To check out the influence and variation due to independent variables on dependent variable a linear regression has been calculated by using Durbin-Watson regression analysis.

Table 3.6 Regression Durbin-Watson

Model	R.	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.527 ^a	.278	.258	.81671	2.104

Correlation Analysis

The second type of analysis used by the researchers is Two-Tail Pearson Correlations of the variables under consideration.

Table 3.7: Correlation

		JA	PO fit	PJ fit	PC fit
JA	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	112			
PO fit	Pearson Correlation	.297**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001			
	N	112	112		
PJ fit	Pearson Correlation	.287**	.394**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000		
	N	112	112	112	
PC fit	Pearson Correlation	.434**	.263**	.409**	1**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.005	.000	
	N	112	112	112	112

JA = job attributes

PO fit = person-organization fit

PJ fit = person-job fit

PC fit = person-career fit

DISCUSSION

This research explores business graduates' experiences gained from internships and perception about job attributes, person job fit and person organization fit which consequently define person career fit and stimulate as a mediator to pursue a successful career.

The results indicate the degree of variance due to independent variables in dependent variable by adjusted R² (.258) as a whole. After that the Durban Watson value (2.104) falls in acceptance region and states the absence of auto correlation. In this research it has been explored that job

attributes have positive correlation ($r=.434^{**}$) and overall has significant influence and more contribution ($\beta=.335$) to career selection decision than other independent variables by conducting regression analysis. The major factors associating with job attributes are job location ($\bar{X}=3.91$), peers' relationship ($\bar{X}=3.72$) and favorability for firm's image ($\bar{X}=3.71$) and job duties ($\bar{X}=3.71$) as the subjects responded these factors more than other factors with the expectation of successful career. As theoreticians state that person's satisfied and successful career depends on seeking a job consistent to his or her expectations (Feldman, 2002; Greenhaus et al., 2000). Considering about indirect influence of negatively perceived job attributes, it is inferred that internees may observe job attributes like pay ($\bar{X}=3.27$), benefits ($\bar{X}=3.24$) and promotion ($\bar{X}=3.22$) have connection to future growth opportunities. Generally fresh graduates pay and benefits are lesser than existing older employees in a firm. However they have long term edge of promotional opportunities and financial increments. If the perception about these mediators is positive then the graduates will pursue their career more likely and the firms will have to attract good potential of job applicants and vice versa. It has been examined that graduates' prior involvement in internship program and primary career accomplishment are correlate to incremental financial reward, career assistance and ultimately job satisfaction (Gault et al., 2000).

While observing the perception of students about PJ fit and PO fit relative to career selection there is weaker correlation of PO fit and career choice ($r=.263^{**}$) than PJ fit and career choice ($r=.409^{**}$). Furthermore some remarkable results have been found indicating overall more contribution of PJ fit ($\beta=.294$) than PO fit ($\beta=.047$) towards PC fit. From the PJ fit predictor as *PJf1* ($\bar{X}=3.73$) right KSAs possession, *PJf2* ($\bar{X}=3.5$) job demands and skills apt and *PJf3* ($\bar{X}=2.42$) personality and job apt, the higher value of *PJf1* of this variable points out that the extent of right and needed KSAs (knowledge, skills and abilities) possession to perform the job. While the value of PO fit variables's predictors as *POf1* ($\bar{X}=3.33$) person's and organization values similarity, *POf2* ($\bar{X}=3.55$) values maintenance and *POf3* ($\bar{X}=2.85$) preventing values from fitting in company. These results state that the impact of *PJf2* is more than other predictors indicating that internees have the ability to maintain fitting values with the firm and in such a condition they are considered to be satisfied. The overall more influence of PJ fit than PO fit towards PC fit is contradictory to internship study where PO fit was mentioned more significant than PJ fit in relation to career selection decision (Cable and Judge, 1996). Conversely this research response the suggestion to conduct research keen on the theory that PJ fit is more intensely correlated to PC fit in this case as dependent variable than PO fit (Lauver and Kristof- Brown, 2001).

Summing up, during this short term employment they gained experience in a firm is sufficient to improve graduates' awareness of job realization and career choice evaluation. More this training experience enables them to make initial perceptions about job attributes, firm's characteristics and job requirements towards their pre-employment career selection decision and should hence improve their capacity to make sensible decisions relating to pursuing a satisfied and successful career in their field of interest.

Managerial Implication

Offering internship programs and trainings allows to employers the opportunity of exploring full time fresh graduates pool and employment potential for recruitment. When students work in firms, they not only get training but also conveying themselves to firm for employment consideration upon completing graduation. As any vacancy occurs the firms prefer these internees to be hired because they don't require to be trained.

Feedback taken from the internees can help the organizations wishing to improve the internship programs. This improvement will lead to better training of undergraduates and understanding of practical work world. In this way, the graduates will select more satisfied and successful career and ultimately the turnover rate will be reduced. The university can also help the students in successful career selection decision by taking feedback from the students as internees about firms' internship programs and other characteristics. This feedback will be helpful for the other students about to do internship. They can get a preliminary understanding about the firms to improve their competencies in a better way which will be helpful to pursue a satisfied and successful career.

Finally, to facilitate the students, the university coordinators can organize a face to face meeting of students and firms. It will assist the students to get awareness of internees' selection criterion and foster the students' confidence. Thus, increase the opportunities to be selected their interested firms. Ultimately it will enable the students to have the knowledge about the practical work world requirements and their characteristics to enhance their competencies to fulfill the need of better career selection.

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