

Exploration of Internship Experience and Satisfaction Leading to Better Career Prospects among Business Students in UAE

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Abstract Internships have been perceived to play an important role in providing work experience to the students along with their academic coursework. Students gain a firsthand experience of working environment, and application of theoretical principles to the real world problems. The internship experiences are perceived to be formed of a number of factors, such as the supervisory support, working environment, level of tasks, and learning gained from the same. These dimensions are relatively unexplored with respect to the practice of internship in UAE, thus the present research was undertaken. The researcher found the result synonymous to previous findings, wherein the validated constructs of comfort with work environment, positive work environment, personal traits, and developed new skills were found to have a positive impact on internship experience. Also, the satisfied students were found to be more positive and enthusiastic with respect to expectations for future job prospects.

Keywords: UAE, Internship, satisfaction, job skills, work environment

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1. Introduction

The present millennium age is witnessing revolution in every aspect of human life, and sphere of education has not been left untouched. The achievement of success in one's career is not limited to academic intelligence anymore. The definition of intelligence has broadened over the time, and has come to include other dimensions such as emotional intelligence, competence at interpersonal level, social and self-awareness [1]. The students need to be inculcated with soft skills, complementing the hard skills, as these skills play an important role in shaping the personality, and thus these are required to accentuate the technical knowledge acquired during the course of study [2]. Imparting internship training has been found to be an effective way in improving student's soft skills, preparing them better for the future endeavors [3].

1.1. Conceptualizing Internship

Internship is not subject to a formal definition rather it has been conceptualized by different authors over the time. It was stated to be "structured and career-relevant work experience obtained by students prior to graduation from an academic program" [4]. It has been found to assist students to refine their career goals, develop professional skills, and clarify their workspace values [5]. These have been postulated to engage students in service based activities which provide them with hands on experience,

which enhances learning and understanding of issues, relevant to the study area of students [6]. Gault, Leach, & Duey, 2010 [7] conceptualized internship a practice wherein the students were employed in a organization for part time and received academic credit for their contribution to the workplace. The practice of internship has been perceived as a positive strategy for the institutions also, through which they can promote a comprehensive curriculum, equipped with a offer of real time practical experience. This attracts both the students and the prospective employers, as well organized internships help in acquiring relevant professional skills [8].

1.2. Importance of Internship for Business Students

Internships are rendered as important learning experiences, not only for students, but also for the host organizations. The practical on hands experience availed during an internship, helps in abridging the gap between academic preparation and application of the theoretical knowledge. For example, the statistical principles taught during the business programmes, are applied to real life research or data, teaching students how to clean, reorganize, and structure the data, deriving relevant research questions from the same [9]. Internships have been perceived to contribute highly to the learning process by students, with simulated business scenarios, case analysis and discussions, proving to be highly effective [10]. Internship programmes prove to be useful for the

students as it has been observed that they are able to obtain the first positions, receive higher monetary compensation, and attain greater level of job satisfaction [11].

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The present study was aimed at exploring the role of internship experience and satisfaction resulting in better career prospects among the students studying business in UAE. To fulfill the proposed aim, following objectives were defined:

- To identify the factors which influence the satisfaction level of students with respect to internship training programmes.
- To explore the role played by internship in inculcating soft skills among students.
- To assess the role played by internships in defining the workplace related satisfaction among students.

1.4. Need for the study

The present study was undertaken to address the foremost objective of contributing to the lack of literature on internship effectiveness and satisfaction levels, with respect to the scenario in UAE. The study of proposed nature is essential so as to assess the degree of importance regarded by the students to the internship programmes, in developing their soft skills. Internship programmes are especially important for the students studying business, so as to allow them insights in the industry, allowing them to modulate their hard and soft skills as per the industry requirements. Through the analysis of internship experience the researcher will be able to throw light on how the students perceive such opportunities, and how do the satisfaction levels promote their level of participation and future career prospects.

2. Statement of Problem - Research Hypothesis

The universities in UAE offer internship programmes to the students, allowing them to gain sufficient skills, in their respective field of study. However, a survey conducted in 2016, showed that 52% of the graduates and students felt that the universities had not focused on generating employability [12]. The inculcation of appropriate skills is imperative for the holistic functioning of businesses and prospective employees, with skills matching to the job requirements being crucial. It has been observed that the UAE landscape, although a hub of both blooming and well established business, has not been investigated upon with respect to the intern scenario. Hence, the present research study aims at putting forth the factors which define the student’s satisfaction levels, which could guide both the companies and prospectives inters, in better aligning with each other’s needs. This would help in counteracting the prominent issue of skills mismatch.

To address the aforementioned problem statement, the following hypotheses were designed:

Table 1. Hypotheses structure

Null hypotheses	Alternative hypotheses
H _{0.1} : Student’s satisfaction levels do not impact their interest in employment opportunities.	H _{1.1} : Student’s satisfaction levels impact their interest in employment opportunities.
H _{0.2} : Internship opportunities do not have an impact on soft skills of the student.	H _{1.2} : Internship opportunities impact the development of soft skills of the student.
H _{0.3} : High satisfaction levels do not have any positive impact on the career prospects.	H _{1.3} : High satisfaction levels positively impact the career prospects.

3. Literature Review

As seen earlier, Internship can take up different definitions, as per the comprehension of different researchers. However, the activity of internship, irrespective of the field, has certain benefits associated to it. Interning in an organization, first and foremost allows the students to avail a conducive and practical learning environment, allowing exploration of real world environment. Such an opportunity also helps them in understanding the reality of professional commitment, allowing them to encounter both the positive and negative sides of the job. The assessment of strengths and weakness at the disposal of practitioners’ of the field could provide valuable insights with respect to one’s potential for the career of interest. Internship is often a two way screenings process wherein, both the students and the professionals of the field counter evaluate each other for the degree of suitability. Interning also adds experience to the student’s resume, which helps one in overcoming the entry obstacles, allowing the invaluable work experience to act as an initial thrust to career [13]. The researches in the past have also indicated student’s interest in internships, where the findings showed that the students agreed that interning allowed them to surpass the traditional learning of the classroom, imparting them the sense of overall professional scenario, besides helping them develop presentation and people skills [14]. Thus, it is imperative to explore the literature regarding the determinants of internship effectiveness and the possible outcomes of such effectiveness.

3.1. Determinants of Internship Effectiveness

The literature has indicated eight factors which act as predictors of effectiveness of internship, which are as follows [15]:

Working environment: The working environment is composed of several factors such as learning opportunities, opportunities for career development, support from on site supervisors and co-workers, organizational satisfaction and opportunities to form networks [16]. These factors help the interns in forming supportive relationships with co-workers and thus contribute to the level of satisfaction. Support from supervisor is indeed very important, as the support extended from the senior provides the interns with adequate direction and encouragement, which could lead to intern feeling valued by the supervisor, thus producing

high levels of satisfaction [17,18]. A positive work environment where the interns receive support from the co-workers and supervisors also proves to be least stressing and frustrating. Also, a well structured organizational support helps the newcomers in establishing positive social ties and identity within the group, contributes to satisfaction [19].

Academic preparedness: determines the extent up to which the students are able to transfer and apply the knowledge acquired in the university to internship. The coursework taken by the student influences the level of interest in the internship programme, and the also the ability to effectively transfer the knowledge to the practical internship scenario. Academic preparedness could be fragmented into general coursework, functional knowledge and administrative preparation of the student [20].

Self-initiatives: Positive attitude and self initiatives, contribute to the individual factors, which determine the level of internship satisfaction. The interns having more realistic and positive expectations from their internship are more likely to have high level of satisfaction. Self initiatives also help in reducing the negative effects possibly arising from a poorly structured internship programme [21]. Also, the personal traits of the intern such as maturity, tendencies of initiative and responsible attitude, also enhance the level of satisfaction [22]. The behaviors of self initiatives such as information seeking behavior, ability to negotiate, tendency to build relationships, and adjust in workplace, incite the feelings of accomplishment, task clarity, feeling of mastering the task and belonging to workplace, result in positive experience [19].

Challenges on-job: Internships expose the students to the same set of variables as experienced by a full time employee during work. The on job challenges define the satisfaction experience, which is determined by the level of competence of the intern, with respect to the assigned task. A task, for which the intern might be overqualified, could result in high competence, but low level of satisfaction. Thus, care must be taken so as to allocate such tasks which are challenging enough, thereby requiring an intern to exhibit his/her skills sufficiently [23].

Effectiveness of supervision: D'abate, Youndt, & Wenzel [16] showed that interns reported higher level of satisfaction in taking up challenging tasks when provided with appropriate supervision and support. The supervisors support has been found to impact the intern's satisfaction levels, besides providing better learning opportunities. The students have also been reported to gain higher benefits in the internship programmes where they received positive experiences, perceiving them to improve their job prospects [24]. Also, high leader member exchanges have been found to result in positive outcomes of an intern's commitment to organization and improved psychological perceptions [25].

Task clarity: The supervisory support helps in ascertaining the level of clarity with respect to the tasks to be performed. Task clarity has been perceived to improve the level of internship experience, whereas a lack of work and poorly planned work assignments often result in frustration among the interns, eliciting the feelings of dissatisfaction [26].

Compensation: Monetary compensation indeed has a positive impact on the internship experience. Beebe, Blaylock, & Sweetser [27] in their survey study found the paid interns to report higher level of satisfaction, than those were not paid. However, unpaid interns were not unsatisfied rather they too exhibited higher levels of satisfaction with respect to interning experience. Thus, compensation does not solely define the internship satisfaction. McHugh [28] in his study based upon analysis of significant predictors of internship satisfaction, found that supervisor support and mentoring, had a higher impact on satisfaction levels, regardless compensation. Thus, it could be inferred, although compensation could result in higher positive response, it does not necessarily define the internship experience.

3.2. Outcomes of Internship Effectiveness

As internship imparts relevant practical experience to the students, it is necessary to take into consideration the outcomes of effectiveness. Internships are perceived to impact the educational institution, students and the employers. The outcomes of effectiveness of internships for students have been discussed.

Better career: The studies conducted by different researchers have shown that internship experience increases the marketability of students, and students with such experiences also receive higher salaries. It has been observed that such students get job offers earlier than others, exhibit better preparation for career and improved skills of critical thinking [11]. These students also have well developed soft skills of management, communication and self discipline, which make them desirable candidates (Wesley & Bickle, 2005). The interns during the course of internship work with different types of people in a variety of environments, which allows them to get along better with others, and interrelate the theoretical concepts learned in classroom with practical work (Cook et al., 2004). Internship was found to influence the student's career choices, allowing them to inculcate a better understanding of surrounding world, and giving them the flexibility to adjust in the work environment, following the transition from academic environment Divine et al. (2007).

Academic performance: The academic outcomes from internship include the educational achievements attained upon inculcation of relevant practical skills from the internship. This sphere of internship impact was found to be relatively unexplored with studies dating back to reporting contradictory results. Robert W. Koehler (1974) and Knechel and Snowball (1987) reported that no significant improvement in grades of the accounting students occurred post internship. Whereas Kwong and Lui (1991) reported an increase in GPA of students irrespective of availing internship, however those who had undergone internship showed a slight higher increase in their scores. [29] studied the impact of student employment on academic achievement and reported academic achievement was not impacted by student employment. Thus, it could be concluded that internship experience has not been found to significantly improve the grades.

Degree completion: The impact of internships is also relatively unexplored with respect to completion of degree. However, the studies which have explored this dimension, have reported a positive relationship between internships and degree completion. The students who opted for

internships showed higher tendencies to complete the degree programs [30,31].

3.3. Systematic Review

Table 2. Empirical review of the previous studies

Year	Author		Study focus	Sample Size	Variables			Findings
					Major	Gender	Age	
1998	Cannon & Arnold	USA	Student expectations of collegiate internship programs in business: A 10-Year update	164	Undergraduate marketing majors			Students agreed that internship experience was invaluable and that the department should offer higher number of internships. Students also perceived internships as opportunity for gaining competitive edge in job market, essential for obtaining job post college. Students with lower GPA paid more importance to internships.
1999	Knouse et al	USA	The relation of college internships, college performance, and subsequent job Opportunity	1117	Accounting = 268 Business administration =302 Economics = 22 Finance = 223 Management = 179 Marketing = 123 Insurance = 11	Women = 581 Men = 536	25	Academic performance: Interns had higher GPA than non-interns. Employment opportunities: Most business graduates who completed internships found jobs quickly with respect to those who did not underwent any internship training programme. However, the internship advantage lost its advantage after 6 months of graduation.
2004	Callanan & Benzing	USA	Assessing the role of internships in the career-oriented employment of graduating college students	163	Economics = 32 Marketing = 64 Accounting = 26 Management = 41	Women = 75 Men = 88	23.04	The findings suggested that internship experience proved to be useful in helping the students secure a career oriented position post graduation. 58% of the students who had completed an internship received jobs at graduation, whereas only 13% of those who did not opt for an internship received a job. However, no difference was found with respect to a student's perception of their degree of fitness for a job, owing to an internship experience.
2005	Watanabe	University of Central Florida	The Effects of College Student Employment on Academic Achievement	298		Women = 174 Men = 124		The findings of this study were unique, wherein no relation was found to exist between internship and academic achievement.
2009	Ting	Taiwan	Satisfaction with supervision as a function of the supervisory working alliance and self efficacy among Taiwanese master-level internship	127	Students enrolled in the first semester of internship in Taiwanese master-level counseling or related programs	Women=97 Men = 30	28.15	The study aimed at finding the significance of alliance between supervisors and trainees in ascertaining the level of satisfaction. The findings suggested positive relationship between trainee's evaluation of agreement of the task of supervision, goals of supervision, and emotional bond with the

Year	Author		Study focus	Sample Size	Variables			Findings
					Major	Gender	Age	
			students					supervisors to be positive predictors of level of satisfaction. The evaluation of task supervision formulated the trainees' perception of the supervisor's personal qualities and performance. The evaluation of goals resulted in judgment of own behaviors, and emotional bond with supervisors allowed them to express ideas comfortably.
2009	Beebe et al	USA	Job satisfaction in public relations internships	290	Communication students	Women=229 Men = 61	21.27	The study focused upon the compensation factor. 45% of the respondents worked in paid internships. The JIG and JDI scores were used to test the research hypothesis and answer the research questions. The mean of JIG scores for both the groups indicated satisfied behaviors however satisfaction was higher among the paid interns, than unpaid ones. Also, the nature of work and skills acquired during internship, relationship with supervisor and advancement beyond decided salary, were found to be significant factors of evaluation of internship experience by students.
2011	Lord et al	USA	Satisfaction determinants in business internships	160	Graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in majors of marketing, human resource management, and information system			Intern's satisfaction with the organization was found to have highest impact on overall satisfaction reaped from the internship. The level of experience was indicated to be associated with the fit between skills and designated tasks, closer the fit higher the level of satisfaction. An intern's personal qualities were also found to have influence on satisfaction level. A unique statistical finding of this study was the emergence of negative relationship between an intern's performance and satisfaction with internship. Also, the ability to express opinions and accomplishment of goals was also found to have positive relationship with internship satisfaction.
2011	Walker	USA	Business internships and their relationship with retention, academic performance,	113	Full-time, new-to-college students with a declared business degree	Women=60 Men = 33	18.07	Internships were found to have a positive impact on students GPAs, as the sample population exhibited improvement in scores post internship. However, it was also

Year	Author		Study focus	Sample Size	Variables			Findings
					Major	Gender	Age	
			and degree completion					indicated that an internship does not necessarily improve the GPA in the specific area of study. Also, internship experiences improved the likelihood of a student completing the degree. The study results also indicated that it was appropriate for the students to take up internship during 4.5 to 6 semesters of course.
2013	Benson	USA	Effects of supervisors' communication styles on interns' satisfaction and learning	63	Communication = 23 Business = 12 Journalism = 8 Environmental Studies = 4 Political Science = 3 Economics = 1 Sociology = 1 Other = 12		21	The findings indicated collaborative style of communication was the dominant style opted by majority of the supervisors, which was perceived to influence high levels of satisfaction among interns. The authoritarian style, in which cases found to positively influence satisfaction, was perceived to exhibit such a response, as the supervisors opting for this style of communication often imparted detailed instructions making tasks more meaningful for the interns. Thus, both the styles were found to be strengthened, with alternative use of both styles.
2013	Warinda	Zimbabwe	Accounting student's evaluation of internship experiences from a skills perspective	85	Undergraduate accounting students	Women = 21 Men = 64		The students who took part in this study were not satisfied with their internship experience, as they felt an adequate hand on experience was not provided. Also, geographical variations led to variations in development of students technical and soft skills. The students who underwent internship in Masvingo and Bulawayo were well exposed to technical and soft skill development than those placed in Harare or other location.
2014	Cheong et al	Malaysia	Internship experience: An in-depth interview among interns at a business school of a Malaysian private higher learning institution	4	Final year business students			The in depth interviews with the interns reveal significant information regarding their internship experience. All the students indicated that internship's practical hands on training exceeded the traditional classroom teachings. They adopted a broader vision, and the training improved their people and presentation skills. Within a period of 10 week they felt more independent.

4. Research Methodology

A well defined research methodology is a pre-requisite to ensure the timely initiation and swift completion of different research tasks. The present study followed the research design as discussed below.

4.1. Study Design

4.1.1. Geographic Area

The geographic area of study was United Arab Emirates, an amalgamation of seven emirates, namely Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Umm al Qaywayn, Ajman, Al Fajayrah, and Ras al Khaymah. UAE is spread across a geographic area of 83,600 square kilometers, having rolling desert as the principal topography, and oil and natural gas as primary natural resources [32]. The region also demonstrates impressive educational statistics, with 90% literate population, and dedication five year plans, Education 2020, to bring qualitative enhancement of education system. The programme involves special focus on smart learning modules, codes for teachers, evaluation systems, revision of curriculum, and other initiatives, to make its students competitive in global market place [33]. Thus, UAE was selected to be the geographic area of interest, to check the status of interactive internship programmes among business graduates.

4.1.2. Study Duration

The study extended from a period of January 2017-June 2017, to complete all the tasks. The relevant tasks included identification of research gaps, definition of objectives, identification of study population, designing and validating data collection instrument, data collection and analysis procedures, all of which were completed in a period of 6 months.

4.2. Data Collection Approach

The data collection procedures included collection of both primary and secondary data for fulfilling the designated research objectives. The secondary data collection was performed utilizing the published and validated sources of information such as journal articles, newspaper and magazine articles, and validated reports. The primary data was collected using the survey strategy.

4.2.1. Study Population and Sample Size

The study population composed of the students enrolled in business programmes in universities across UAE. The sample size of 70 students was selected, with 14 students from 5 different universities, who had undergone internship training programmes during the course of their studies.

4.2.2. Measuring Instrument

The structured survey questionnaire was used as the measuring instrument used in the present study. The questionnaire consisted of three sections, with section A addressing the demographic profile of participants, section B contained questions on general background, and section C comprised of statements deemed fit by the researcher to

allow an insight into experience and satisfaction of students with respect to the internship.

4.2.3. Questionnaire Administration

The questionnaire administration was done through electronic medium, using online Google forms, which allowed the researcher to connect with interested participants belonging to colleges from different emirates. The participants were supposed to answer all the questions at one go, and the forms were password protected to ensure adherence to ethical principles of research.

4.3. Data Analysis Procedures

The raw data collected from the participants was coded appropriately, and subjected to analysis procedures. The data analysis followed the descriptive, factor analysis and inferential analysis procedures. The descriptive procedures included frequency distribution analysis to summarize the demographic profile of respondents. The factor analysis was performed to identify the interrelated factors which formed the different dimensions for experience and satisfaction. The inferential analysis followed the factor analysis, to identify the strength and nature of relationship of different dimensions with internship experience and satisfaction, which in turn defined the career prospects.

5. Data Analysis

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for the respondent population were coded and summarized using the frequency distribution and cross tabulation analysis. With respect to the gender and age distribution, higher proportion of females (57.10%) and respondents belonging to age group of 24-28 years (42.90%) were found to compose the majority of population, as shown in Figure 1a and 1b respectively.

The majority students who enrolled in internship training programmes amongst the respondent population were found to belong to senior year (40%), followed by gradual decrease in percentage, with students belonging to freshman year forming only 10% of the population, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 3 shows that the respondent population was fairly composed of students belonging to different majors, who underwent internship training. However, marketing majors composed majority of the population (25.70%), followed by banking and finance (20%), with other majors showing fairly equal distribution. Figure 4 shows a fair representation of the respondent population makeup with respect to the year of course and major of study. It was seen higher number of senior students from marketing major undertook internship programmes.

The respondents were questioned with respect to the nature, location and duration of internship programmes they underwent. As seen from Figure 5a, the majority of the respondents (57%) were not given any compensation, and the nature of internship was unpaid. Also, majority of respondents (65.70%) opted for internship programmes within the country as seen from Figure 5b, whereas 51.40% of the respondents opted for internship for duration of 2 to 3 months.

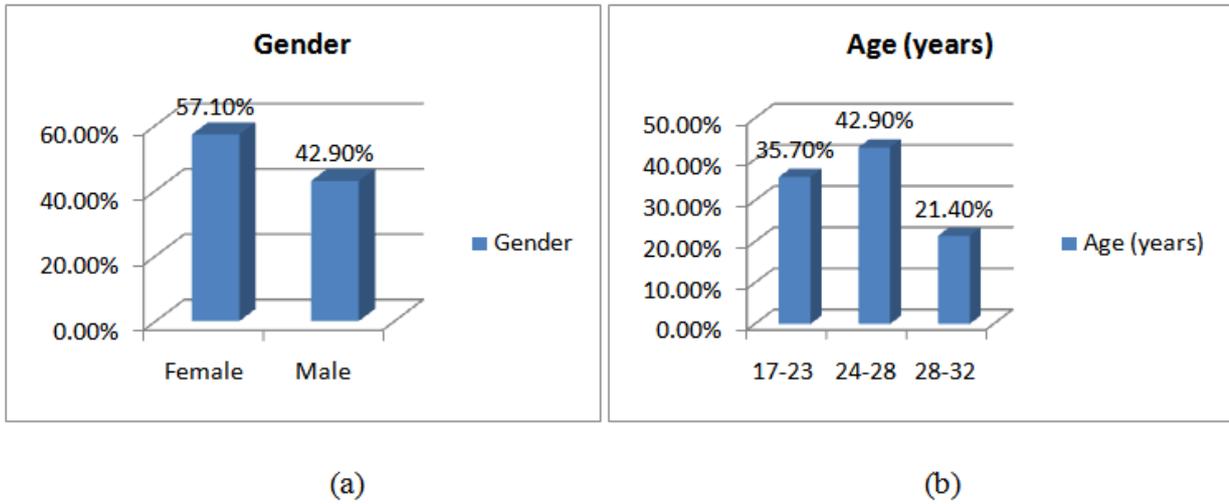


Figure 1. Percentage distribution of respondents with respect to (a) gender and (b) age

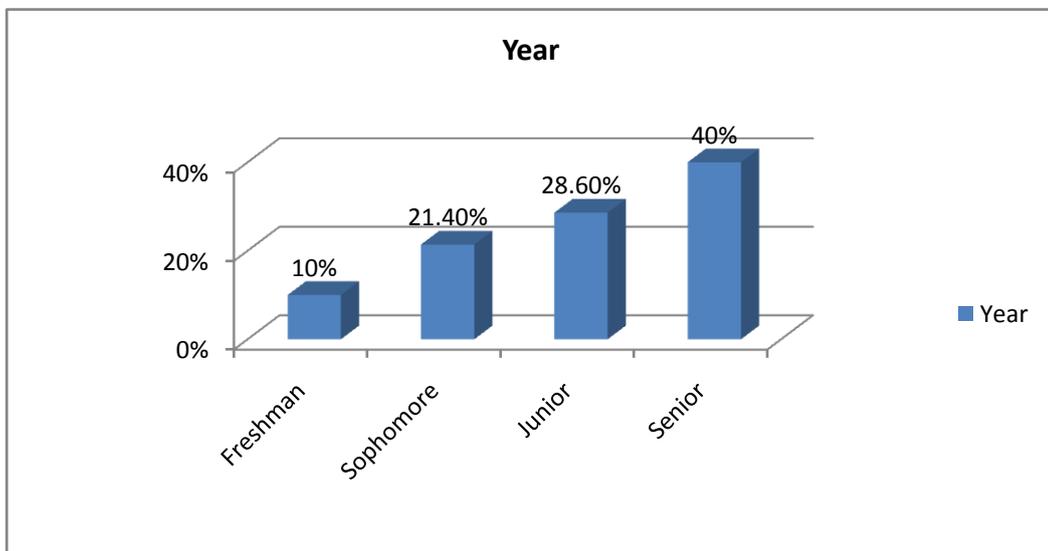


Figure 2. Percentage distribution of respondents with respect to year of course

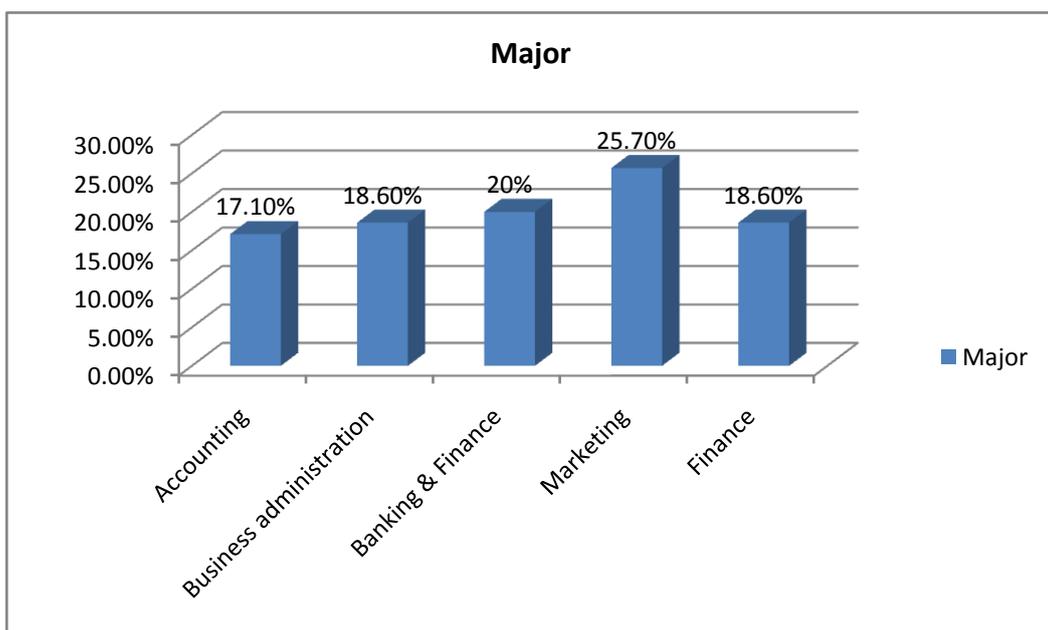


Figure 3. Percentage distribution of respondents across different majors

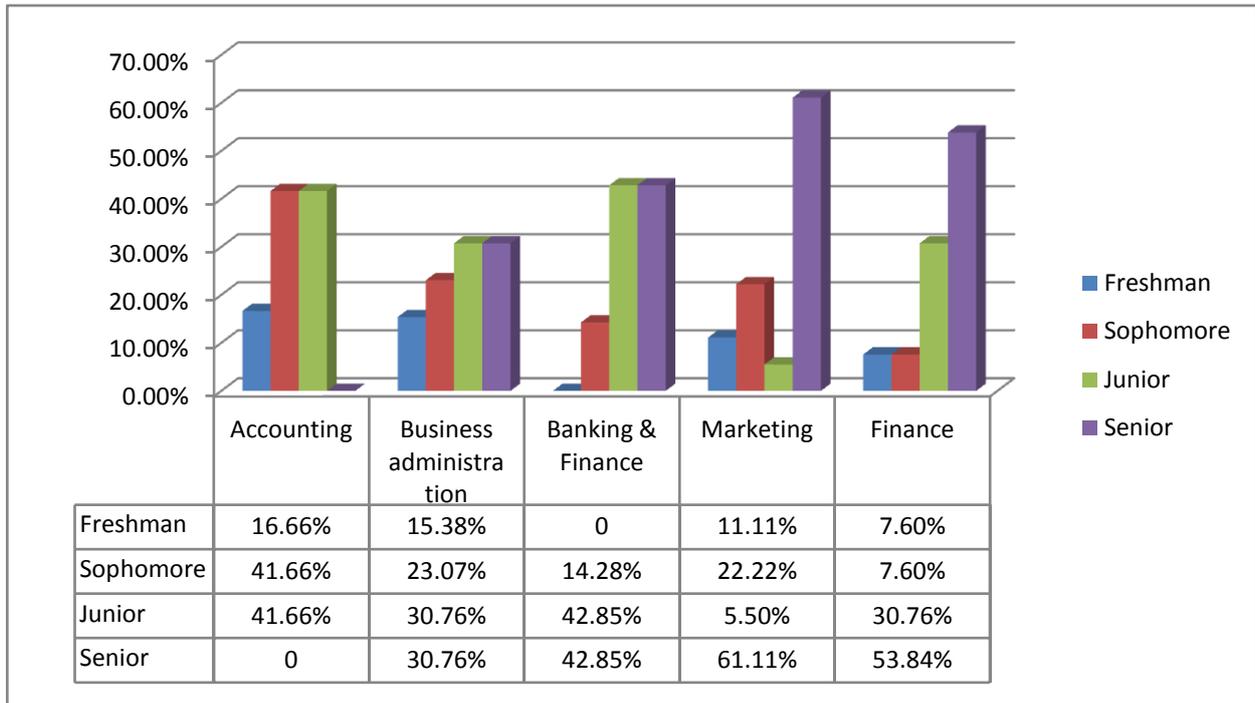
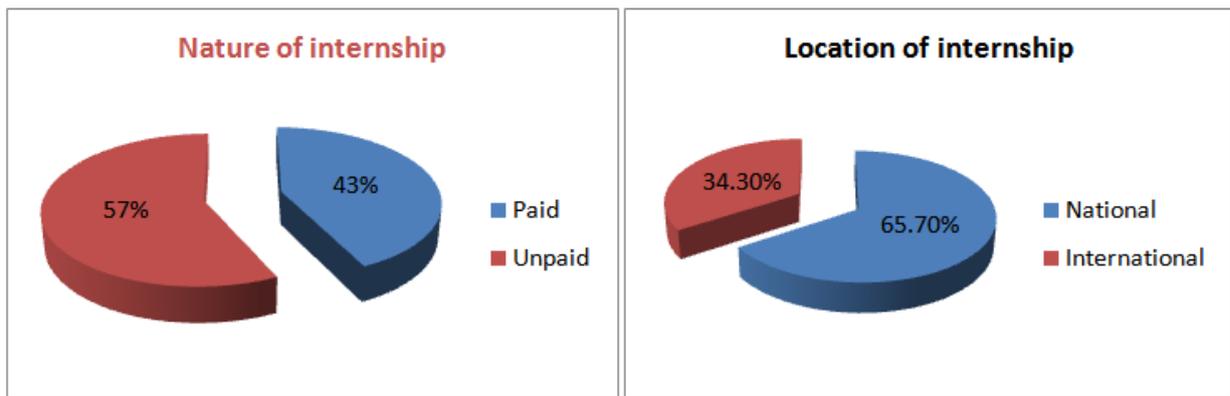
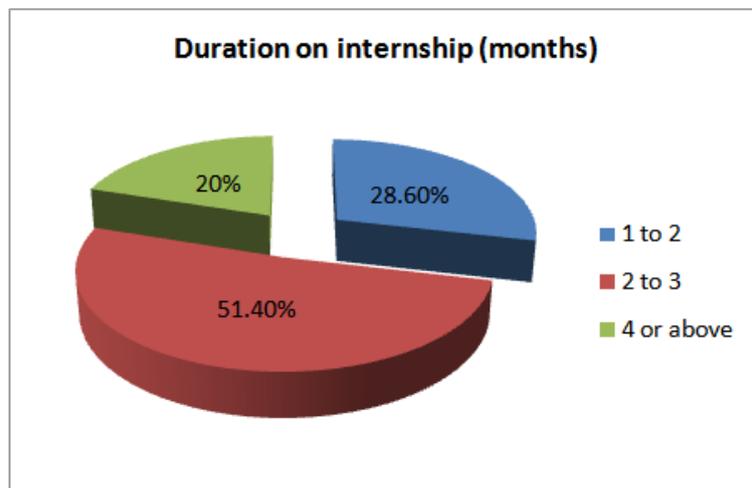


Figure 4. Cross tabulation showing distribution of different majors across different course years



(a)

(b)



(c)

Figure 5. Percentage distribution of respondents with respect to (a) nature, (b) location and (c) duration of internship

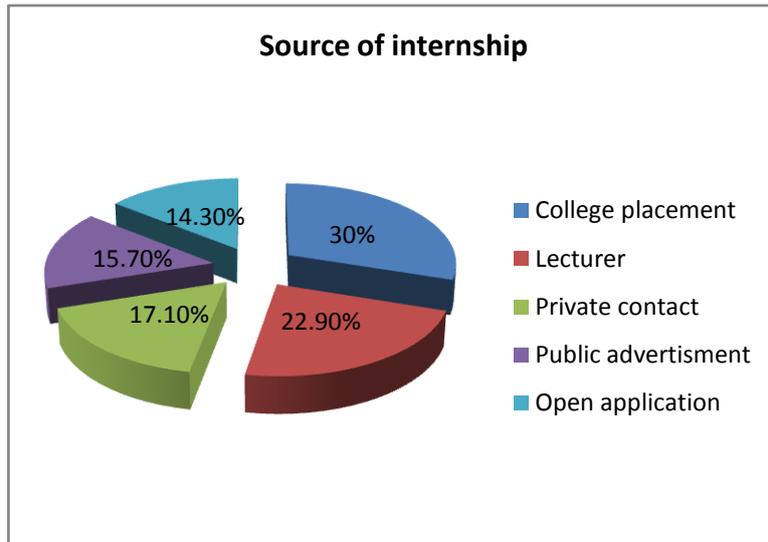


Figure 6. Percentage distribution of respondents with respect to the source of availing internship

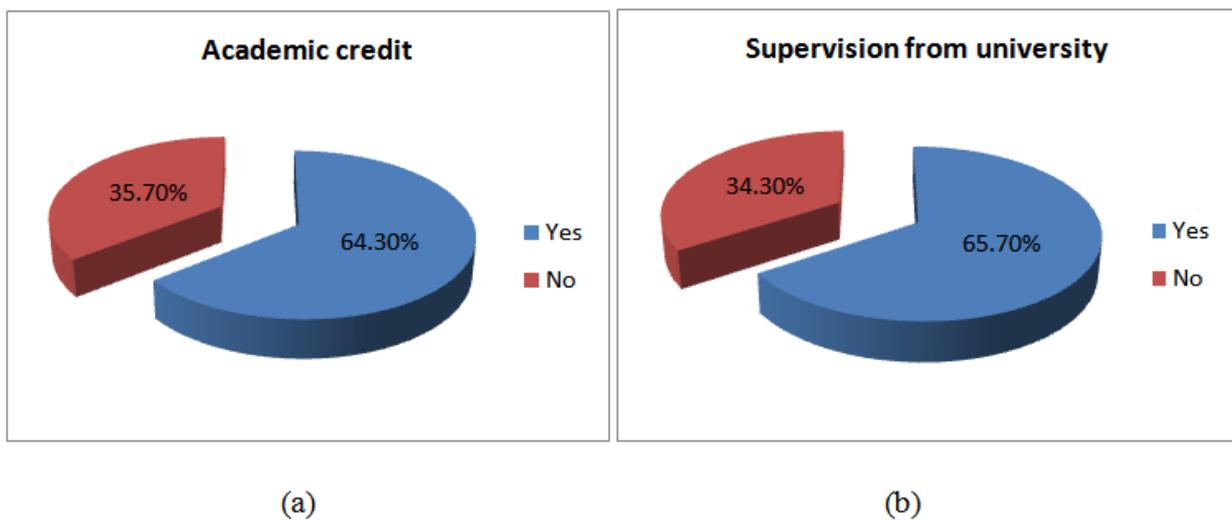


Figure 7. Percentage distribution of respondents with respect to (a) academic credit and (b) supervisory support from universities

With respect to the sources from where the students got the opportunity to avail internships, it was observed that 30% of the students gained internship through college placement, followed by 22.90% from lecturers, and only 14.30% of the students opted for open application, as shown in Figure 6. This showed that university structures were supporting enough to allow the students avail internship experiences.

Figure 7 shows (a) the reception of credit upon undergoing internship programme, and (b) supervision received from university during the course of internship. It was observed that 64.30% of the respondents received course credit upon undergoing a training programme, which seems to promote student participation in academic endeavors. Also, 65.70% students received active supervision from the universities while undertaking internship, which is crucial.

5.2. Construct Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The researcher opted for relevant measures to establish the construct validity and reliability of the measuring

instrument. The construct validity was established by the means of exploratory factor analysis, wherein the different statements belonging to the various constructs to be explored were investigated. The sampling adequacy and suitability of instrument was checked using the KMO and Bartlett's test. The KMO and Bartlett's test values were noted, as KMO value was found to be 0.687 indicating the adequacy of sampling, with significant Bartlett's test, further affirming to the feasibility of conducting further analysis, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. KMO test for Factor analysis

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.687
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	767.399
	df	276
	Sig.	.000

The factor loadings obtained for the various statements were obtained as shown in Table 4. This allowed the researcher to identify five different dimensions of positive work environment (PW), level of comfort of work environment (CW), personal traits (PT), new skills (NS) and job prospects (JP).

Table 4. Factor loading for various statements

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
I was given own projects to work on. (PW1)	.730				
I had the chance to apply theoretical concepts, learned by me in college, in my work (PW2)	.782				
I was satisfied with the work assignments I had during my internship (PW3)	.756				
My internship required me to use a number of complex or high-level skills.(PW4)	.822				
My internship provided me the chance to completely finish the pieces of work I began. (PW5)	.839				
The actual work itself provided clues about how well I am doing during my internship. (PW6)	.839				
I really liked the organization that I did my internship with. (PW7)	.796				
I was treated on the same professional level as the other employees (CW1)		.780			
My internship supervisor was easy to approach and always willing to answer questions. (CW2)		.921			
Site supervisors often let me know how well they thought I have performed on my job. (CW3)		.847			
My site supervisor was a good professional model for me. (CW4)		.759			
My site supervisor shared his/her personal experiences to give me an alternative perspective to my problems. (CW5)		.770			
I would like to work in a regular position for my internship organisation (CW6)		.893			
I often volunteered for tasks at my workplace.(PT1)			.851		
I proactively asked questions from my supervisor. (PT2)			.906		
I took the initiative to get acquainted with other employees. (PT3)			.822		
I proactively asked for feedback during internship. (PT4)			.853		
As a result of this internship, I am better prepared to enter the working world. (JP1)				.824	
I feel I can get a good reference from this organization. (JP2)				.762	
I would like to work in the same field in which my internship organisation / institution operates (JP3)				.905	
I now feel more confident in finding a job upon graduation. (JP4)				.840	
The results of my work significantly affect the lives and well-being of other people. (NS1)					.840
My internship taught me a lot of things that I would never have been able to learn in the classroom. (NS2)					.857
I had learned a lot about the people and communication skills through my internship experience. (NS3)					.780

The reliability of the measuring instrument was also ascertained, using the same sample of 50 respondents, whose results were utilized for checking construct validity.

The Cronbach alpha test statistic was found to have a value of .795, indicating the reliability of instrument.

5.3. Inferential Statistics

The inferential statistics were carried out to ascertain the nature of relationship between the dependant factor of satisfaction, and factors determining the internship experience. This allowed the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions to satisfy the research objectives.

5.3.1. Mean and Standard Deviation

The mean and standard deviation for the responses constituting the independent variables was calculates, as shown in Table 5, wherein it was seen that most of the factors were found to have a neutral outcome, with initiatives to get acquainted with employees, proactive inquiry about feedback and obtaining references from the co-workers for future prospects, recorded disagreement in defining the internship experience. The standard deviation for all the responses was also found to be minimal.

Table 5. Mean and Standard deviation for the distribution of responses

	Descriptive Statistics	
	Mean	Std. Deviation
PT1	3.21	1.454
PT2	3.24	1.429
PT3	2.93	1.386
PT4	2.91	1.442
PW1	3.10	1.446
PW2	3.34	1.423
PW3	3.29	1.495
PW4	3.19	1.516
PW5	3.34	1.382
PW6	3.24	1.469
PW7	3.13	1.493
CW1	3.19	1.458
CW2	3.19	1.544
CW3	3.34	1.503
CW4	3.30	1.478
CW5	3.31	1.490
CW6	3.46	1.471
NS1	3.43	1.399
NS2	3.29	1.405
NS3	3.26	1.520
JP1	3.43	1.420
JP2	3.24	1.469
JP3	2.87	1.434
JP4	3.44	1.490

5.3.2. Correlation and Regression

The responses from the final questionnaire administered to the respondent population were subjected to correlation and regression analysis.

Positive work environment: As shown in Table 6 all the statements for new skills attained during internship showed strong correlation with satisfaction. However, PW2, PW3, PW4, and PW6 showed a positive and significant regression relationship, whereas other three factors pertaining to allocation of projects to work on, to completely finish the pieces of work an intern began, and liking of organization, were found to have insignificant relationship with definition of a satisfied internship experience. Thus, it could be concluded that the aforementioned factors were not determinant in defining the satisfaction levels, and internship experience.

Table 6. Correlation and regression results for comfortable work environment

	Pearson correlation	Sig.	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
			Beta		
				-.245	.807
PW1	.624**	.000	.087	1.392	.169
PW2	.772**	.000	.230	3.071	.003
PW3	.780**	.000	.299	3.959	.000
PW4	.688**	.000	.157	2.381	.020
PW5	.711**	.000	.117	1.633	.108
PW6	.693**	.000	.237	3.938	.000
PW7	.674**	.000	.067	.956	.343

The regression model was found to be fit with adjusted R square value = 0.851, at Sig = .000, and F = 57.286, indicating good capability of the model to explain the similar phenomenon, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Regression model test statistics for positive work environment

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.866	.851	.531	57.286	.000 ^b

Comfortable work environment: As shown in Table 8 all the statements for comfortable work environment showed strong correlation with satisfaction, besides showing a positive and significant regression relationship. Thus, it could be concluded that the various factors identified played a significant role in defining the internship experience, and positively determined the experience levels. The student’s tendency to work for the same organization (CW6) showed strongest correlation (alpha = 0.876, sig = .000), with highest value of t (5.214, Sig = .000) indicated that upon reception of comfortable work environment the students tended to work for the same in future.

Table 8. Correlation and regression results for comfortable work environment

	Pearson correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
			Beta		
				.237	.813
CW1	.651**	.000	.093	2.109	.039
CW2	.771**	.000	.153	3.090	.003
CW3	.836**	.000	.237	4.318	.000
CW4	.742**	.000	.187	4.156	.000
CW5	.781**	.000	.193	3.831	.000
CW6	.876**	.000	.302	5.214	.000

The regression model was found to be fit with adjusted R square value = 0.925, at Sig = .000, and F = 142.278, indicating high capability of the model to explain the similar phenomenon, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Regression model test statistics for comfortable work environment

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.931	.925	.377	142.278	.000 ^b

Personal traits: As shown in Table 10 all the statements for personal traits showed moderate correlation with satisfaction, besides showing a positive and significant regression relationship. Thus, it could be

concluded that personal traits did not have a strong association with the internship experience however the personal traits exhibited by the respondents helped them in having a satisfied internship experience.

Table 10. Correlation and regression results for personal traits

	Pearson correlation	Sig.	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
			Beta		
				-.598	.552
PT1	.586**	.000	.373	4.577	.000
PT2	.505**	.000	.282	3.520	.001
PT3	.449**	.000	.372	4.713	.000
PT4	.421**	.000	.266	3.166	.002

The regression model was found to be fit with adjusted R square value = 0.640, at Sig = .000, and F = 28.947, indicating low to moderate capability of the model to explain the similar phenomenon, as shown in Table 11.

Table 11. Regression model test statistics for personal traits

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.640	.618	.850	28.947	.000 ^b

New skills: As shown in Table 12 all the statements for new skills attained during internship showed strong correlation with satisfaction, besides showing a positive and significant regression relationship. Thus, it could be concluded that inculcation of new skills indeed had a strong association with the internship experience, with learning of new skills helping in having a positive satisfaction experience.

Table 12. Correlation and regression results for new skills

	Pearson correlation	Sig.	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
			Beta		
				1.055	.295
NS1	.757**	.000	.353	5.099	.000
NS2	.747**	.000	.357	5.332	.000
NS3	.797**	.000	.358	4.756	.000

The regression model was found to be fit with adjusted R square value = 0.810, at Sig = .000, and F = 99.165, indicating high capability of the model to explain the similar phenomenon, as shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Regression model test statistics for personal trait

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.818	.810	.599	99.165	.000 ^b

Job prospects: As shown in Table 14 all the statements for future job prospects showed strong correlation with satisfaction, besides showing a positive and significant regression relationship. Only a single factor pertaining to student’s perception of getting a good reference from this organization showed moderate relationship with alpha = 0.529, Sig. = .000. Also, this factor did not share significant relationship with satisfaction level. Thus, it could be concluded that all the factors for job prospects except for referrals played a significant role in defining the internship experience of the respondents, and resulted in positive satisfaction.

Table 14. Correlation and regression results for job prospects

	Pearson correlation	Sig.	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
			Beta		
				1.294	.200
JPI	.798**	.000	.287	4.004	.000
JP2	.700**	.000	.110	1.648	.104
JP3	.592**	.000	.155	2.762	.007
JP4	.876**	.000	.521	6.935	.000

The regression model was found to be fit with adjusted R square value = 0.845, at Sig = .000, and F = 95.057, indicating high capability of the model to explain the similar phenomenon, as shown in Table 15.

Table 15. Regression model test statistics for personal traits

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.854	.845	.542	95.057	.000 ^b

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings from the analysis of the quantitative data allowed the researcher to gain a thorough insight of the internship scenario with respect to UAE. It was found that universities provided friendly and supportive infrastructure for the students to actively engage in the internship programmes. The students were provided with sufficient supervision, which made their overall experience quite satisfactory. With respect to the inferential analysis, all the dimensions were found to have significant impact on the student’s internship experiences. As the students progressed towards positive experiences, they felt more confident about their job prospects, were also found to be equipped with necessary soft skills. They felt more prepared to enter the working world, were willing to continue the same field of work as their internship, and also felt more confident in finding jobs upon graduation. Thus, upon the basis of such conclusions and findings, the following hypothesis was accepted, as shown in Table 16.

Table 16. Accepted hypotheses

Proposed hypothesis	Accepted hypotheses
H _{0.1} : Student’s satisfaction levels do not impact their interest in employment opportunities. H _{1.1} : Student’s satisfaction levels impact their interest in employment opportunities.	H _{1.1} : Student’s satisfaction levels impact their interest in employment opportunities.
H _{0.2} : Internship opportunities do not have an impact on soft skills of the student. H _{1.2} : Internship opportunities impact the development of soft skills of the student.	H _{1.2} : Internship opportunities impact the development of soft skills of the student.
H _{0.3} : High satisfaction levels do not have any positive impact on the career prospects. H _{1.3} : High satisfaction levels positively impact the career prospects.	H _{1.3} : High satisfaction levels positively impact the career prospects.

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APPENDIX I: QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Demographics

1. Gender

- Female
 Male

2. Age

- 17-23
 24-28
 28-32

3. Year

- Freshman
 Sophomore
 Junior
 Senior

4. Major

- Accounting
 Business administration
 Banking & Finance
 Marketing
 Finance

5. Nature of internship

- Paid
 Unpaid

6. Location of internship

- National
 International

7. Duration of internship (months)

- 1-2
 2-3
 4 or above

Section B: General Background

8. How did you find the internship?

- Through college placement cell
 Through lecturer

- Through private contacts
- Through public advertisement
- Through open application

9. Did you receive academic credit for undertaking the internship?

- Yes
- No

10. Did you receive sufficient supervision from the university?

- Yes
- No

Section C: Exploring experience and satisfaction during internship

11. Please indicate your satisfaction with the internship. (1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being optimally satisfied)

1	2	3	4	5

12. Kindly rate your responses for the present section on a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree.

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
I often volunteered for tasks at my workplace.					
I proactively asked questions from my supervisor.					
I took the initiative to get acquainted with other employees.					
I proactively asked for feedback during internship.					
I was given own projects to work on.					
I had the chance to apply theoretical concepts, learned by me in college, in my work					
I was treated on the same professional level as the other employees.					
I was satisfied with the work assignments I had during my internship.					
My internship supervisor was easy to approach and always willing to answer questions.					
My internship required me to use a number of complex or high-level skills.					
My internship provided me the chance to completely finish the pieces of work I began.					
The results of my work significantly affect the lives and well-being of other people.					
Site supervisors often let me know how well they thought I have performed on my job.					
The actual work itself provided clues about how well I am doing during my internship.					
My site supervisor was a good professional model for me.					
My site supervisor shared his/her personal experiences to give me an alternative perspective to my problems.					
My internship taught me a lot of things that I would never have been able to learn in the classroom.					
I had learned a lot about the people and communication skills through my internship experience.					
As a result of this internship, I am better prepared to enter the working world.					
I feel I can get a good reference from this organization.					
I really liked the organization that I did my internship with.					
I would like to work in a regular position for my internship organisation					
I would like to work in the same field in which my internship organisation / institution operates					
I now feel more confident in finding a job upon graduation.					

Any other comments? _____

Thank you for your time