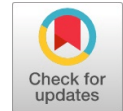


# Internship: A Realistic Job Preview and Selection Mechanism

Urvashi Srivastava, Namita Mohanty, Jitendra Mohanty



**Abstract:** This paper aims to put forward the benefits and utility of internship programmes for organisations, employers and interning students. It suggests conceptualising internship as a realistic job preview experience for interns. It questions if “being in the situation” gives a new set of relevant reference points for future pragmatic decisions to an intern and the organisation in assessing work environment and benefits attached for self-development. It also underlines the importance of increasing the information quality in an internship programme to improve recruitment image of an organisation and create employability of an intern in the industry, which are mainly affected by the dynamic concepts of economies and employment. **Approach:** The paper adopts a discursive analysis to present the importance of increasing the information quality in internship programmes and increasing its contribution to recruitment and selection process and employability of individuals. **Findings:** Information quality in a general management sense emerges as the key to provide deeper meaning and contributes value to the processes created for transfer of skills and knowledge, and add value to the recruitment exercise, especially in nonlinear economies. **Practical Implication:** High-quality information programmes contribute to employability, career development for the intern and recruitment brand image for the host in the digital age.

**Originality:** The relationship between internship, realistic job preview experience and information quality is one which bear the same cohesive structural functionality and are based on the utility for the emerging demands of the market.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Intention; TPB, Perceived Behavioral Control; Personal Attitude; Subjective Measures.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the current scenario of fast technological changes, it is important to understand how organisations can improve the return on investment (ROI) on old programs and processes instead of dumping them and yet stay competitive. To do so, stakeholders of the job market should look inwards to enhance their contribution by improving the system in a manner that it weeds out mechanisms that are old and do not contribute much to its development. Assessing organisations and their relationship with centres of education is of great importance because both of them directly affect the quality of talent in the job market (Wikramsinghe and Parera, 2010).

Job markets continuously face changes in the nature of work, products, services, new trends, employment rules and recruitment methods. Jobseekers driven by ambition, expectation and hope and having necessary skills, talent and opportunities, need to carefully utilize the emerging market opportunities to get the best jobs where their potentialities are optimally channelized. Changes in the economies and business trends hugely affect the job markets. Job seekers need to adjust to these macro changes by developing skills that differentiate and increase their employability, which is critical to economic and social change (Finch et al., 2013). Organisations heavily depend on the educational centres/institutes to develop programmes and courses, which supply workforce with right skills to the market and reduce the existent skill gap in the job market. Internship seems to be a possible solution to the issue. The objective of this article is to put forth how interns can have a richer experience of learning and enhance employability if they undergo an internship programme, which is of high information quality. The most common and overt goal of an intern is to procure a job at the host organisation, but scholars like (Hurst and Good 2010) and (Finch et al., 2013), have stressed that learning to increase employability in the industry should be an equally important objective of an internship programme. This article considers that internship is a realistic job preview experience (RJPE) because of the fact that the interns experience the varied aspects of a job, which in a realistic job preview (RJP) are communicated through written and/or audio-visual material by organisations, (Knouse et al., 1999). Internship provides an insight into what a job could be, what could be its demands, what would be the salary and other benefits, what could be the options for career mobility, besides providing a fair knowledge about its drawbacks. RJP helps a job seeker to understand a job better and stay grounded. An internship experience for a student has the same functional value as an RJP to a job seeker. The utility of an RJP/internship for an intern and a job seeker shall differ to a large extent in terms of job expectations. A not so rich experience for an intern should be a cause of concern for the organisation’s recruitment objective, because they may not then intend to participate in the recruitment process of the host organisation at all. Such a situation shall be more harmful to the organisation than an applicant backing out after rejecting an RJP because applicants, who do not participate in the recruitment process cannot be made a part of it later (Breugh and Starke, 2000). The intern–organisation transaction affects an organisation’s image and, therefore, it is in the interest of the organisation to provide for meaningful engagements to interns. It also substantiates its contribution towards stakeholder relationship in an internship programme (Hoyle and Deschaine, 2016).

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For a job seeker, RJP is a source of knowledge about the job and a tool for setting realistic expectations; similarly, internship provides a learning platform for the students (interns) so that they engage meaningfully with the host organisation. It leads to acquiring information and skills, transfer of knowledge and work experience, which are important for career development (Coco, 2000). Internship also allows a student to acquire a new sense of self, use of one's resources in perception, analysis and decision making (Moustakas, 1995).

It is imperative to improve the design and scope of internship programmes by way of increasing the information quality of the exchanges interns hold with the mentor(s) and other departments. Interns observe day-to-day work life, handling of critical situations and receive information through word of mouth from employees, which helps them in decision making regarding job application even in retrospect (long after internship is over). Interacting with the mentor not only helps create a repository for the intern but also helps the managers to strengthen the feedback system by including the outcomes and insights gained. Such feedback mechanisms bolster relationship between the stakeholders and ultimately benefit the internship programme (Hoyle and Deschaine, 2016). This article utilises the information quality theory to explain the quality of realistic job preview, mainly because internships are expected to help individuals understand their abilities and shortcomings to develop the requisite capabilities (skill sets) for a job. It also helps to better assess host organisation, its work culture and get a generic idea of the industry. A high quality of information in realistic job preview/internship should provide a much detailed and rich experience (RJPE) so as to strengthen the intern's intention to apply for a job, if the host organisation offers one as well as increase their employability in the industry by way of better learning.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Organisations should be quite invested in developing a meaningful internship programme because it carries a substantial payback value in recruitment image and reputation building. Historically, internship programmes have been designed to provide real-time training or practice to students before they take up a job, as a part of a professional course. An internship programme acquaints them with the demands and pressures of a job, and is aimed to reduce the shock of transition from the realm of education to a full-time employment (Taylor, 1988).

The program contributes essentially towards two things. First, interns pick up skills of the jobs they wish to take up after the completion of their professional course. Second, they take back the experience to the student community and pass on the experiences and learnings, which enable the community to gain insight into the nature of the job, its challenges, expectations and the organisation—as a workplace, not as a brand. This helps the students distinguish the marketing image of an organisation from its recruitment image (Collins and Han, 2004). Organisations also gain long-term recruitment benefits—hiring interns is cost-effective and skill development is faster compared to freshers hired from market without any internship experience of the concerned industry (Maertz et al., 2013). Thus, we see that interns could increasingly be a natural choice for hiring with a large number of organisations because it helps in

hiring people with the right job expectations (Breaugh, 2014). Organisational decision-making is dependent on the utilisation of information it has at present or had in the past. In case of information systems, it is more about effective storage and the quality of information available to managers and others involved in the decision-making processes.

Information quality is a concept borrowed from information system whereby the data that are collected and stored are put to the right use in the most efficient way and the information that one seeks can be mined from the available data. Bits and bytes of data from systems and processes enable transformation of information to knowledge enabling required action to be taken. This helps organisations take actions on the basis of data available to attain desired results. Here, information quality is used in a general management sense. Information quality need not be restricted to the domain of system design, but any process that involves knowledge creation leading to knowledge transfer should have a high quality of information. Knowledge created within high-quality information environment helps one to take right decisions and actions.

The quality of the information that one has can be critical for the quality of decision one makes (Eppler, 2003). Improvement in the learnings and understanding of interns and organisation from an internship programme depends on their past experience of it and the future usage of the knowledge derived from it.

From a student's point of view, among the many reasons for preferring internship with or without pay or for a small amount of stipend, perceptions of work experience help to gain a better understanding of one's capabilities leading to refinement of skills and new skill development. It also helps them in furthering their career on the basis of internship experience (Gupta et al., 2010; Gault et al., 2010). Internship is expected to provide interns, through experiential learning, a deeper understanding about how the organisation and its various departments function, what are the pressures of the job and acquire realistic career expectations (Lee, 2007). It would equip them to adapt to different situations and enhance their management skills (Chen et al., 2009). These learnings can be effective depending on the nature, design and expected output of the internship project assigned and implemented or even how they are articulated to interns. Information contained or passed on should cover dimensions such as completeness, clarity, format, accuracy, timeliness and relevance of the content of the internship exercise (Miller, 1996). The quality of internship experience has a long lasting impact on the mental image of a job in particular and organization in general. Internships have always been important, but in the past twenty years it has grown immensely in value for the students as well as the organisations (Hurst and Good, 2009). Internships are usually the only work experience (if the student has no prior work experience) students carry to their entry level job application (Gault et al., 2000). It is an opportunity for them to assess the job expectations over a period and is in fact their RJP, which comes with no communication barriers (Maertz et al., 2013). For an internship programme to succeed, it should be so designed that it facilitates the interactive capacity and learning of the intern.

Learning generic and task-dependent skills increases an intern's expectation of receiving a job offer from the host organisation (Zhao and Liden, 2011) as well as increasing his or her capability. Interns receive instructions directly from their mentors or managers and, therefore, it is expected to carry high level of accuracy because there are no intermediaries involved and the mode of communication is direct. The credibility of the information is expected to be high because the source of the information here is the mentor or the HR manager. Source being the test for deciding the credibility of the information in terms of information quality (O'Reilly, 1982). The generic and specific knowledge acquired during the internship increases an intern's employability in the industry. Thus, internship, because of its quality of information experienced, could be compared with the RJP provided by the HR manager to fresh job applicants, and therefore the interns will have realistic expectations and will be the most realistic knowledge-bearing individuals in the applicant pool for a vacancy. Another reason for increasing the information quality is to ensure that the interns, irrespective of their level of efficacy and pro-activeness, should be able to acquire primary (skills, tasks making up the job) as well as secondary (values, politics and the culture) information about the job. These sets of primary and secondary skills are critical elements contributing towards employability in terms of understanding organisational climate and professional expectations (Major and Kozlowski, 1997).

### III. ORGANISATIONS' EXPECTATION FROM INTERNSHIP PROGRAMMES

Internship programmes comprise of the program stakeholders, namely higher education institutions, employers or internship providers and students who undergo internship training. For any internship programme to be successful and be of merit, it is imperative to observe major stakeholder associations for support, involvement for better clarity and alignment of needs and expectations (Hoyle and Goffnett, 2013). Organisations want to create a reputation, an image, a recruitment image, which attracts job seekers. Building an attractive but realistic employer image is important because it helps the formation of a respectable overall corporate reputation. Organisations can work upon symbolic and substantive cues through media and human capital investment (Highhouse et al., 2009). Organisations can invest in mentoring or using the interns for low-value assignments through internship programmes in which acquiring or resourcing information is an inbuilt feature. Although the day-to-day activities in an organization combine to create the source of information for an intern, it hugely depends upon the pro-activeness of the intern to utilise the available information. There are ample opportunities available to network with the employees around and get information which is trustworthy. They have the advantage of learning through unique experiences and critical issues at the workplace by observing the incidents. These learnings are high in accuracy, credibility and relevance because they are firsthand experiences. At times, interns may receive more information about a job than they seek at times, but its utilisation depends upon their interest in applying for the job at the host organisation or retaining it for improving their employability in the industry—another objective for the intern. Recruitment managers invest in an

internship programme based on the expectation that they provide an unobstructed assessment of the individual (Coco, 2000). This is an aspect HR managers would want to take forward, build on it and increase the contribution of internships towards organisational human asset building. The gains for the organisation and individuals are good enough to persuade them to maintain a continuous intake from such a source. Organisations do not have any investments in this arrangement but stand to gain in long term, overt and tangible benefits available to recruitment teams and managers. Interns could be the most likely candidates for the vacancies arising in future.

#### 3.1. Benefits of a High-Quality Realistic job Experience (Internship)

The stakeholder analysis (SA), which proposes a symbiotic relationship among the primary stakeholders—students, employers and the educational institutions—could provide a growth impetus to the internship programmes (Hoyle and Goffnett, 2013). A stakeholder's expectations from their contributions has to be realistic in order to make it successful. Unrealistic expectations or orientation/assessment can lead to debacle of any programme or slow paced development, internship being no exception. Interactions and exchanges between employers, students and educational institutions should provide high degree of information quality so as to minimize dissatisfaction. Similarly, a job market should provide realistic expectations to the job seekers. There exists a large amount of work on job expectations and few of them such as Breaugh and Billings, (1988); Breaugh and Starke, (2000); Breaugh, (2008) underline the importance of realistic job expectations. Job expectations allow a job seeker to decide in favour or against applying for a job. RJP helps an individual gain insight into the organisation's work culture, demands of the job, the role he may take up after employment and what would be his contribution towards the organisational goals. RJP helps both organisations and job seekers because with clarity about nature and role of the job, individuals would have realistic expectations towards their job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. This may lead to reduced turnover. In case an individual does not see compatibility between his and the organisation's expectations, he is in a better situation to self-select himself out of the recruitment process (Callanan and Benzing, 2004).

#### 3.2. Quality of Information for Improving Internship Experience

Internship is an experience of gaining knowledge. In any internship programme,

the information is three-fold. It is knowledge about the process, knowledge generated during the process and the knowledge derived from the process (Eppler, 2003). Besides gaining knowledge, internships are also about experience. Quality of information can thus not only improve the knowledge gained but also the experience of it. Internships are routine or non-routine in nature depending upon their design. A good design utilising various dimensions of information quality like credibility, accuracy, relevance, timeliness and format in the framework can lend weightage to the monitoring, assessment and development of internship programme.

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Credibility is believability. Credible people are believable (Fogg and Tseng 1999). Credibility of individuals may come from perception of their position in organisational setup, proximity to event, people, decision or a source of information. Information received by interns from managers and mentors or other employees, is trustworthy because the source of information is credible due to their position and placement in the organisational setup. Information available when interns become a part of the applicant pool, is more relatable and credible. Hovland and Weiss (1951) state that source is a factor affecting information credibility. Sources which do not give trustworthy information are not considered serious by the receiver (Fogg and Tseng 1999). Therefore, during internship, when the intern receives information from a mentor or a manager, it is expected to be highly credible.

Besides credibility, the format of the information also matters and this leads us to the way RJP is presented. This article supports the idea that compared to the traditional RJP, given in written (booklet) or audio-visual vis-à-vis broadcast either through the website of an organisation, explained by the recruitment manager or by the mentor of the intern, and face-to-face communication would result in better understanding. O'Reilly (1982) states that in situations requiring critical thinking, individuals prefer oral instructions over written, possibly to speed up decision-making. Phillip (1998) and Colarelli (1984) state that a face-to-face discussion during the internship about the demands of and expectations from a job may be the best way to convey a job preview because the candidate has no distraction as such and has ample opportunity to clarify any issue that could arise. Such a method has often proved to be better than any other method of RJP communication.

Content, source and format of information are critical to its reliability. The available information is processed by individuals in both central and peripheral ways. For an intern, being within the organisation and experiencing the detailed information about the workplace allows him or her to centrally process the information and believe in the organisation. Van Hoyer and Livens (2009) state that organisations should communicate in such ways as to establish the credibility of messages about the job in the initial stages. Internship could be considered as the first interaction of a prospective job seeker with the organisation and hence internship done in an environment of high information quality provides a great conviction to the intern to believe the information and hold on to the self-created and assessed recruitment image.

High information quality improves the functional value of any process as it creates a knowledge bank for the decision-maker. Knowledge that is complete, accurate and relevant and in the right format leads to good decisions. Similarly, when realistic job previews with high quality information are presented to the applicants, those with internship experience would be able to comprehend their role in the organisation better. If an intern with high-quality instructions is compared with one with low quality instructions, the former shall prove to be a better job applicant than the one who has no or low-quality internship experience. An intern observes the employees of the organisation perform their job and internalises it over a period of time. His interactions with different stakeholders of the organisation create a recruitment image of the

organization which may strengthen intention to apply if a job is offered to him by the host organization.

What follows from the above referred process is broadly summarized below:

### i. Clarity of Role

Interns who work in high quality information environment have an advantage over the interns with no such environment, low information quality environment or applicants who did not intern at all, because an RJP experience as stated earlier empowers them with continuous communication with the HR manager, seniors, co-interns and other full-time employees. Such an enriching and vibrant environment reduces incoherence about what organisation expects from the individual. In case of any doubt, the intern can always crosscheck with their mentor or HR manager and get necessary clarification in respect of any aspect of the job. In contrast others with RJP in written or audio-video format or with no RJP experience would be in a one-way communication situation. They would have to wait till they get a response from the human resource team responding to their query. Although in the age of internet communication is exceedingly fast, it will not be fair to compare face to face communication with one over internet or mails.

A low information quality interaction and no interaction may be equally unproductive. Being in the organisation or work setting along with individuals performing the actual task provides opportunity for first-hand information. Such uniquely rich hands-on-experience on the part of the intern just cannot be compared to job seeker's interaction with human resource teams interacting on behalf of department managers over the internet.

### Reliable Conception of Work Environment

An intern's experiences comprising of interactions, observations and action in a high information quality workplace immensely contribute towards substantive learning which in turn helps in taking much more realistic and sanguine employment related decisions. Such an enabling work environment characterized by high quality information exchange also helps augment intern's skill on critical thinking leading to much superior on-the-job performance. Personal experience always weighs over secondary source information emanating from websites, word of mouth, company brochures etc.

### ii. Clarity on Decision about the Job

An intern by virtue of having received RJPE at workplace before applying for the vacancy, decides from a vantage point. Interns, as mentioned earlier, with high information quality environment know the job and do not need a job description or an RJP to decide about applying for a job. Their decisions are based on high information quality RJPE and knowledge gained through it.

### iii. Contribution to Applicant Pool

Internship has quite a substantial effect on the quality of applicant pool for organisations that hire from educational institutions. Very existence of a high quality information internship program acts as an essential mode of information dissemination through word of mouth.

Research reveals that in case of a low information quality internship, negative review often put forth by a discerning intern will have larger audience than a positive review (Cable and Turban, 2001; Van Hoye and Lievens, 2005; Van Hoye and Lievens, 2009). However, such adverse observations stated by interns can hurt the first recruitment image of the organisation job seekers create for themselves.

### 3.3. Recruitment Benefits of High Information Quality RJP

Recruitment has always been a big challenge for organisations in terms of time, energy, resources utilized and cost incurred. Recruitment has always been an intriguing area for researchers involved in trying to find that one key variable that could be considered as the ultimate decision influencer. Since the recruitment process is a chain of events involving dynamic interplay of many variables, it often becomes extremely difficult to delineate the most salient criterion in the entire process. The significant ideas or concepts on which a successful recruitment exercise rests, as defined by the extant literature, include clear recruitment objectives, availability of RJP to the job seeker, complete and sensible usage of sources of recruitment, correct presentation, evaluation of the prospective employee's job expectation, and balanced and objective-oriented recruiter behaviour (Breugh, 2008). Each of these concepts has been thoroughly worked upon and covered by researchers.

RJP has been a part of the organisational studies since the 1950s and it gained much weightage in the 1980s and 1990s, which could be referred to as the golden period of RJP (Landis et al., 2014). Existing literature on recruitment and selection states that the cost of recruiting is more than the annual salaries organisations pay and, therefore, recruitment and selection departments primarily focus on talent acquisition with zero attrition possibility within a short period of time. The exercise entails many challenges and in order to avoid confronting surprises in the end, sensible and matured recruiters often split the recruitment process into manageable components like individual job fit analysis at the very commencement of the process, careful evaluation of the intern's skills and competencies to find out the culture fit and the probability of the intern's sticking to the organization and adding value for an acceptable length of time. If requisite attention coupled with seriousness is given to each step of the process, it would result in right choice of candidates, reduced attrition and greater organizational effectiveness.

Internship is an opportunity available to recruitment managers to increase recruitment effectiveness with minimal cost. Organisations utilise different resources for the recruitment process to create a pool of most eligible contenders for the job. A right applicant pool is the objective of any recruitment process. A high information quality internship presents one such unique opportunity for any organisation to create a pool of probable applicants who fit the requirement. It is possible for the organisations to clarify work expectations and maximise the fitment between the intern and the organisation. Mostly, a disparity between the initial expectations and those met in reality lead to a reduced intention of the intern to apply for a job at the host organisation (Baur et al., 2014; Hurst and Good, 2009). Internship is an RJP, which only interns can experience first-hand and is realistic in actual terms. Breugh and Billing (1988) have mentioned that RJP's need to be accurate, specific and should have credibility; internship programmes provide an opportunity for the organisation to present RJP's

with the highest information quality with accuracy in the most suitable and reliable format and specific manner with high-order currency.

It becomes a live preview as the interns actually work in real life situations aware of the positive and negative aspects of the job. Being within the organisational set-up provides the interns with the opportunity to observe how critical functions are performed, mostly through observing others or through anecdotal accounts of crisis management during informal chats and through minor details from the other employees about their day-to-day life. Interns usually develop a good network with the employees of the organisation and also get to know about benefits enjoyed and challenges faced by employees as a part of the organization. This enables interns to also get acquainted with the ways and means of how full-time employees handle their problems which can be termed as subtle learning. Thus, interns gain a good enough understanding and knowledge about a job and associated role, skills and career possibilities at the host organisation.

Internships do carry a fair amount of benefit for the organisation as it aids in recruitment. Managers can assess an intern's skills in a live situation over a period of time and then decide whether they would like to hire them or not (Gault et al., 2000). Organisations may benefit by choosing interns over job seekers with no internship experience because interns would have had learnt the job requirements to a certain extent which reduces the cost of induction and training.

### 3.4. RJP as a Tool for Enhancing Employability

Employability has been a difficult concept for scholars to define (Knight, 2001; Oliver, 2015; Cranmer, 2006; Pool and Sewell, 2007; Oliver, 2015). The concept has been best captured by Yorke and Knight (2004)

under the USEM (understanding skills, efficacy, beliefs and meta cognition) model along with the employability model given by (Pool and Sewell (2007) which considers dimensions such as career development, learning, experience of work and life, subject knowledge understanding, generic skills and emotional intelligence.

This leads one to an understanding of employability as a function of such components which enable an individual to stay competent in the job market (Andrews and Higson, 2008). This concept was taken forward by Smith (2010) by including training and networking, among other skills, which are quite important for individuals to traverse the turbulent markets. Networking is an easy job for an intern and it helps them to be in the loop, circulating information about oneself and seeking skill development opportunities; it also allows the intern to be closer to the industry news about jobs and changes. Employability can also be said to be impacted by the skill demand and supply in the job market.

A survey by McKinsey and Company in 2012 revealed that there was a gap between the skills required by organisations and the ones taught by education centres/institutes and colleges. By February 2017, McKinsey was still talking about how to develop workforce programmes that could close the gap (McKinsey.com, 2017). It is important for stakeholders to understand the job market in terms of skill and its category.

Finch et al. (2013) stated that skills can be classified as firstly basic education skills (i.e., communications, analysis, reasoning) secondly, basic pre-employment and work maturity skills (i.e., labour market knowledge, initiatives) and finally, job-specific skills (i.e., entry-level or advance functional skills).

On the other hand, work by scholars such as Knight, 2001; Oliver, 2005; Cranmer, 2006; Pool and Sewell, 2007; Oliver, 2015 consider skills as a part of employability feature; it constantly needs to be upgraded in line with the changes in the nature of the job market. Considering the importance of employability in a continuously changing market and reduced long-term employment contracts, internship should serve more towards employability in the industry. Internship programmes should also be developed to advance or improve the employability of interns.

The objective of the intern to get a job opportunity at the host organisation can only be a very short-term goal of the internship programme, although a very commonly perceived utility of an internship by the student community. This article agrees more with Smith (2010), who terms employability as an individual's exercise to learn how opportunity structures operates, to strategise how to access them, and invest time, mental energy, and financial resources to take advantage of them. In the face of changing concept of work, employment and long-term contracts, it makes more sense of transference of knowledge and skills in order to benefit from the available opportunities. Internship programmes seem to be the window that can help students learn from transference of conceptual knowledge to an assigned work, increase their experiential learning and help them cope better with changing needs of the job market.

There are some organisations in the industry for example of great internships programmes, which aim at long term benefits, such as ThoughtWorks India (STEP) and GE India (EID), which have internship programmes designed to motivate under graduates to engage in internship programmes and also work towards increasing employability.

These organisations put interns in real-time projects and work situation with full-time employees as mentors, enabling them to experience work life, work environment and organisational culture first-hand. The internship programmes are designed to engage interns in classroom sessions as well. On completion of the programme and qualifying a recruitment test, they get hired by the host organisations, which then at times enroll them for a full-time course in universities at its own cost. These organisations set good example of recruitment and employability-oriented internship for the industry.

### IV. PROPOSITIONS

1. Employability oriented internship programmes can improve the organisation's recruitment image. Those organisations which can groom talent in an unbounded capability are likely to perform better in a disruptive market. Academic institutions should be able to help organisations in developing internship programmes so that maximum transference of knowledge to task takes place.
2. Quality of information should be the key to improvising internship programmes to increase the realistic perceptibility of a prospective job and/or industry

employability. The dimensions of information quality should be incorporated and the internship programme should be made a rich experience for the student.

3. By enlarging the concept of internship, it can be assigned a much bigger role than what it plays now; for example, by introducing short-term assignments with smaller remunerations for interns. At times students and educational institutes are not very serious about internship programmes and students are allowed to opt for extra courses in place of internship. An internship programme needs to be attractive enough to discourage such students and educational centres should be advised to abandon such practices.
4. Interning under programmes with high-quality information would allow the interns to have clarity about the positive aspects of job and a smaller list of compatible organisations to choose from while applying for a job (Dineen and Noe, 2009). Stake holders of internship programmes - colleges, organisations and students should hold annual exchanges so as to give voice to their expectations from the programme and every criticism should be heard so as to improve the programme.
5. High-quality information available to interns at the workplace helps them to overcome cognitive dissonance caused by discrepancy between a subjective fit and job pursuit intentions. Internship programmes design should be evaluated every now and then so as to make it compatible to the market and skill demands. It should be mandatory for colleges and organisations to constantly monitor and evaluate internship programmes in order to establish a quality benchmark.

### V. DISCUSSION

In the age of digitisation and fast changing business and employment scenarios, how do internship programmes cope with such fast paced changes? Digitisation is a new way of looking at things - binary.

Human resource systems need to define how the age-old concept of internship should play out amidst this. Changes in employment contracts, skills and technology, job markets are common so organisations need to bring in new dimensions to redesign old concepts or develop new ones. Internships would still hold strong because of their latent worth and value. In fact, it becomes more relevant for academic institutions and organisations in the face of stiff competition to create brand value and benchmark practices. It is predictable that future recruitment methods may be very different from the existing ones. With newer modes of communication and data mining about job seekers and job holders, organisations may look at the contributions made during each industry interaction (job) done and its net worth in terms of experience. With such possibilities, it is important for stakeholders - colleges, students and organisations to create avenues of contributions to enhance knowledge and employability. Information quality can go a long way in improving and making sense of internships as a process. In his dissertation, Hoyle (2013) states that in order to deliver a good and valuable internship programme, it is important for stakeholders to engage, interact and communicate.



Voice of the stake holders are important to be heard and worked upon so as to improve the programme.

Freeman et al. underline the importance of stakeholders when they state: "You have to see even the harshest critics as potential sources of valuable insight and innovation about your business (Freeman et al., 2007, pp. 167)". Stakeholders may disagree and may voice disapproval but they need to be heard because they present opportunities to improve. The basic question for any process or organization or system to add value to its existence should come from within (Freeman et al., 2007).

## VI. CONCLUSION

Internships are powerful tool available to organisations, students and educational institutions. It takes care of a large number of applicant-related issues at the recruitment front and supports organisation's recruitment image building process. It enables professional educational institutions to build an attractive image in the student community since a highly rated internship programme conveys a perception of good placements. A good internship programme is expected to provide students with opportunity to exercise theoretical concepts, undergo experiential learning and develop a sense of self. Therefore the opinion of all three stakeholders is critical for internship programmes as well because stakeholders are key elements and their interactions carry the potential to improve the quality of internship experience for not only an intern but also employers and educational institutions. The concept of internship needs a complete overhaul to widen its scope and make it more beneficial for all stakeholders.

This article has intended to put forth important contribution internship programmes are capable of. First being they have the potential to improve and add value to the traditional practice of realistic job preview to a large extent. Since interns can positively as well as negatively affect the opinions of the student community, better designed internship programmes can support organisation's employment image. Second internship programmes could be catalyst to a better relationship between centres of education, organisations and students. It is in favour of an organisation to develop internship programmes with inputs from colleges and students, where transfer of conceptual knowledge to day-to-day workplace skill requirement is easily possible and improves employability of interns. This makes internship worthwhile for the interning students. Lastly, it helps colleges to further their image of good seats of learning, grooming for excellence and getting employed in future. Thus, internship programmes, if conducted effectively should bring about long-term benefits to all stake holders

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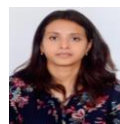
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