

## How Internship Experience Mediates Career Decision? Insight from Business Institutions

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Received for publication: 28 July 2016.

Accepted for publication: 25 April 2017.

### Abstract

This research paper aims to examine business graduates' pre-employment decisions relevant to pursue a satisfied and successful career after going through internship training. Subjects were the students who have undergone through an internship program and data was analyzed by using SPSS software. A five point Likert Scale has been used to examine the relation of dependent variable person career (PC) fit and independent variables (job attributes, PO-fit and PJ-fit). The internees degree of perceived pay, benefits, promotion as related to future growth opportunities, job location, peers' relationship, firm's image and job duties as major factors and key criterion to pursue a satisfied and successful career. The results also indicate that person job (PJ) fit contributes more than person organization (PO) fit towards person career (PC) fit. Offering internship programs and trainings allows employers the opportunity of exploring full time fresh graduates pool and best talent to recruit.

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

### Introduction

*"If you don't know where you want to go, you will never get there"*. People who have not so far seriously think about the career options, perhaps today they have a good time to do so. Here is a description of some extensively used career growth interventions which can be used to put light on various career growth practices. The students will be able to get a preliminary sense of career in their area of interest by doing internships. Internships play a vital role in visualizing and evaluating the career options for students. They can also get an experience of what interventions might work and what interventions might fail. Career growth activities can be helpful for students to explore and recognize their professional interests, fortes, development potential, implement career goals and to improve themselves. Over the Last two decades, internships have become more and more prevalent way as to shift from the classroom to the practical world (Coco, 2000). Internships enable the students to have clear understanding about the real world things as;

- Preference and clearance of job attributes.
- Student's characteristics alignment to the organizational settings.
- Nature and requirements of job for successful career option.
- Gain competencies mediating interested career option
- Deal with trade-offs between career alternatives

In this universe nothing can be done without planning. Planning about the career makes available the supervision that what you want to do and how can you do so. Career objectives clearing up the opportunities consideration, facilitating the career planning, obliging as an observing

instrument to evaluate development and recognizing obstacles to achieve career satisfaction. In history, advising psychologists have accentuated the attainment of understanding about the profession, career assessment and growth (Gottfredson, 2002). Career accomplishment and eloquent work life are the basic objectives of career assessment (Flum *et al.*, 2000). Career accomplishment is explained as hoard of encouraging work as well as psychological consequences subsequent from person's work experiences (Seibert *et al.*, 2001). Away from the persuasive aspects of internships, the assigned tasks and packages offer students with higher extent of sureness over their mixed bag of skills. In the grounds of "OB" and "HRM", study about PO-fit, PJ-fit and apt amongst features of persons and those of their jobs and firms worked for is dominant (Werbel,2001). Studies exposed that magnitude of individual's apt with institute and work relates to output and employees' loyalty. Most of the theoreticians have believed that good fitting amongst organization and an individual is vital (Sekiguchi, 2003). So it is believed that internships provide students a chance to explore a more perfect self-concept and trial for a match between their distinct abilities, values, understanding, concern and other features and to gauge the work settings of real world organization.

Theoretically, by winning this individual's awareness, as characterized by skills, interests, character and daily life favorites, and its contrast with consideration of diverse work settings signified by job demands and duties, one must capable to evaluate and visualize the possibility of fit-in. Normally, it is considered that business correspondences delivers graduates such awareness and proficiencies to become a worthy manager; likewise with professional accomplishment and successful career (Baruch,2005; Pfeffer *et al.* , 2002). This research is about exploring and investigating career selection among business graduates. The current study looks for inspecting the formerly described factors that mediates to pursue career in management (Ozbilgin, 2005). In accordance of this specific concern, research is concentrated on business graduates who are commonly assumed to have truthful self-concepts and certain career paths but facing trade-off among various career options. Based on the prior studies it can be concluded that alignment of peoples' work and organizational understandings with their requirements, concern, values and life-style favorites, their selected career and jobs make them more satisfied.

### **Literature review**

#### ***Job Attributes***

The factors attracting employees toward organizations are the job attributes (Turban, 1998). A list of attested attributes including "pay", "career forecasts", "work settings", "assigned duties", "relations with management", "job safety" and "participation in decisions" indicates that business graduates have great concern while assessing jobs which are offered to them (Toe, 1999). Graduates Employment Survey (2001) has also declared the importance of these attributes. Some attributes like compensation plans, benefits and growth opportunities are attracting factors for job searchers. In another research rather than pay some non-tangible factors like job safety multiplies employees' attraction towards a firm (Hsu, 2003). Before starting internship, an internee hardly owns enough understanding of job and its features. Employees' perception about job as providing congruence with their values is satisfying and vice versa (Lopez, 1999). Interactionist studies recommend that an employee's satisfaction and loyalty with organization are the consequences of the association of job attributes with values needed in that condition. A longitudinal research has shown that graduates' views changed after employment (internship) and that difference of opinion about job attributes causes dissatisfaction. So job attributes incongruence may reduces the satisfaction and success of a person.

### ***Person Job fit***

PJ-fit is congruence amongst person's abilities and job requirements or an achievement of person's demanded job attributes (Kristof, 1996). For a person to attain apt or constancy with work setting, it is essential to have know-how of one's own features and prospects along with understanding of different work settings (Greenhaus,2005).As a type PJ-fit may be the abilities-demand apt that is similarity of person's competencies and particular job demands. It refers to whether the individual possess required competencies to perform the job. When employees have such competencies, they show higher degree of performance to meet supervisor's expectations and to attain job safety (Lopez, 2009).Absence of good suitability between person's competencies and job demands causes declined performance, higher absenteeism, turnover and further increased human capital difficulties (Mathis,2003). Past studies pointed out that, candidates are employed by companies on the bases of their observations of PJ-fit because it affects significantly to job contentment and workers' intent to leave the firm an achievement of person's demanded job attributes (Lauver,2001). Consequently students think through PJ-fit as a key influencer in career selection to be successful.

### ***Person Organization fit***

PO-fit is emphasized degree of person and organization sharing identical features and respect each other's requirements (Sekiguchi, 2004). PO-fit explains the essential psychosomatic process caused by the routine experiences of job seekers, workers, and owners (Verquer, 2003). However PO-fit relates to a several variables comprising job choice, applicants' desirability, recruitment decisions, worker job tenancy and career accomplishment (Goodman,1999) and psychosomatic welfare of workforces (Kristof-Brown,2005). Research in the past two decades constantly supported the valuable consequences related to improve PO-fit (Verquer, 2003). More explicitly, similarity of the firm with workers' own individualities indicated their satisfaction and better performance (Bright, 2006). Greater PO-fit indicates lower intention to resign along with higher job satisfaction by opposing those relations to be right as well (Kristof-Brown, 2005; Verquer, 2003). Despite the fact that weak PO-fit intended to reduced job contentment and consequently causes people to quit (Wheeler et al., 2005). A long-drawn-out meta-analysis (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005) the consequences explain robust relations among PO-fit leading to job satisfaction and reduced intention to resign. Nevertheless, they also mentioned slight variability of job contentment and concentrating to quit. So, PO-fit shares robust positive relation to job satisfaction and weaker negative relation with intention to leave.Studies describes that Job searchers lay more emphasis on PO-fit at the time of seeking job and PO-fit serves as a predictor of job choices. So, the drawn conclusion is career selection can be more satisfied, consistent and secure if the-PO fit is good.

### ***Person-Career fit***

Research have explained self-efficacy as an individual's judgmental ability to achieve designated sorts of performance. Self-efficacy affects work performance (Judge, 2007) and it is compulsory and significant feature to attain future success (Beck *et al.*,2008). PC-fit has been demonstrated as an important criterion in career selection and students did claim that internship improved their career related self-efficacy which defining their career fit. Thus it is believed that internship programs assist students to explore career. Self-exploration offers information that to what extent one's abilities and interests apt to particular professions and therefore assisting career realization. As going through internship programs and supportive education coursework one can improve his career decision making and make stronger manifestation of occupation (Ballout, 2007) and enable him to attain job related skills.

The current research pursues to determine the factors priory described to effect career selection in management (Ozbilgin *et al.*, 2005). As a result numerous students are considering to

do an MBA degree for the sake of increasing their employment chance and to have a fast track career (Hay *et al.*,2006; Mihail,2006). By a general consideration career is decided by family in communist nations (Ma *et al.*,2005; Shea *et al.*,2007). It is also claimed that career decisions dependent to others' hopes creates difficulties (Rehfuss *et al.*, 2006). Thus, it is suggested that business studies have no correlation to career success. Purposively to know the career options of business graduates, a deep inside of their minds is significant to examine what sort of factors affect career options and how their beliefs influences their career decisions. Furthermore in choosing career students could enhance their competencies with the experience of training and then evaluate the degree of confidence compared to the career's requirements to evaluate opportunities (Ghani *et al.*,2008). It is characterized by way of PC-fit as it is believed that if students observe that they can match their career on the basis of (Job attributes, PJ-fit and PO-fit) well, they will select that vocation instantly upon completing graduation as they have an increased confidence over their career success. Based on the above discussion following are some hypothesizes:

*H<sub>1</sub>: Job attributes effects Person-Career fit positively and has significant influence to peruse satisfied career.*

*H<sub>2</sub>: Person-Job fit effects Person-Career fit positively and has significant influence to peruse satisfied career.*

*H<sub>3</sub>: Person-Organization fit effects Person-Career fit positively and has significant influence to peruse satisfied career.*

### **Methodology**

The aim of this research is to examine business graduates' pre-employment decisions relevant to pursue a satisfied and successful career after going through internship training. Study is quantitative and descriptive in nature.

### **Research Instrument and Sample**

To measure Person-Career fit of the students as dependent variable, the researchers took questionnaire comprising of 19 questions and three portions from "D.Y.K.Tong & X.F.Tong, 2012". First part contains six questions explaining the demographical features of students. Second part consists of ten questions explaining one variable (job attributes). Third part is comprised of three variables and each contains three items. The researchers have composed some introductory sentences in the questionnaire to make clear the purposiveness of the research to the subjects. Five-point Likert scale had been used for items 1-5 "1=Definitely Not to 5=Definitely Yes" and for items 6-10 "1=Very Unfavorable to 5=Very Favorable" establishing perceived (clarity and favorability) job attributes during internship by student. For other three variables the same scale has been used as "1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree" which establishes students' PC fit.

### **Procedure**

**Table 1 Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
job_attributes	3.5366	.63615	112
person_organization_fit	3.2500	.54341	112
person_job_fit	3.5506	.68402	112
person_career_fit	3.5982	.94825	112

In this research the data was collected specially from students studying in the field of business administration. All the subjects were from final semester because all of them had

undergone through an internship of at least eight weeks. For the purpose of data collection, 130 students were asked to fill the questionnaire. Some students did not contribute to survey. So, total 117 students finished the survey, but 5 surveys were excluded because of incomplete and biased responses. Finally 112 questionnaires remained valid for analysis.

### Results

First of all the valid data is analyzed by using SPSS software to find an insight of the subjects' responses. The reliability of data measured through Cronbach's Alpha which is 0.795 which is usually acceptable for the data to be considered reliable. Further to reach the objective of the study descriptive analysis has been used for measuring the frequencies of all items relevant to demographic characteristics.

#### *Demographic Profile*

In all the cases, 75.9% segregated as males while the remaining 24.1% segregated as females. From all the respondents 55.4% students have the age of 18-21 years and 44.6% have of 22-23 years or older. The respondents reported their area of interest as 15.2% in HRM, 30.4% in marketing and 54.4% in finance. Perhaps it is due to most of the people did their internships in banking sector. A total of 16.1% respondents worked in small organizations, 56.3% in medium size organizations and 24.1% in large scale organizations while the differentiating percentage of subjects did not respond to this question. 75% got no allowance while 12.5% got Rs.5000 or less and same the ratio was for the subjects getting more than Rs.5000 as stipend. From all 29.55% subjects stated that their career is influenced by their family, 8% by friends and teachers and 54.5% by themselves and 1 participant did not respond to this question. The ratio of self-decision makers is highest in accordance to their better self-assessment rather than the others. Mean and standard deviation in descriptive statistics are calculated to check the inclination of respondents. Table 1 showing that mean values for Job attributes, Person organization fit, Person job fit and Person career fit are 3.53, 3.25, 3.55 and 3.59 respectively. Similarly standard deviation values for all above mentioning variables are 0.63, 0.54, 0.68 and 0.94.

**Table 2 Model Summary**

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

Table 2 indicates the whole summary of results. The results indicate the degree of variance due to independent variables in dependent variable by adjusted R<sup>2</sup> 0.258 as a whole. It demonstrates that independent variables have 27.8% influences the dependent variable. To check out the influence and variation due to independent variables on dependent variable a linear regression has been conducted by using Durbin-Watson regression analysis. The Durbin-Watson value 2.104 falls in acceptance region and states the absence of auto correlation among variables.

Table 3. P-value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 and acceptable with the indication of strong influence of job attributes, PJ-fit and PO-fit on PC-fit. Table 4 indicated the impact of all independent variables on the dependent variables individually by beta value. Results shows that job attributes has great impact on person-career fit with beta value .335 explaining the 33.3% variation in PC-fit due to which it is significant at 0.000 and support H1. Similarly PJ-fit also has contributory impact to PC-fit with the beta value .294 indicating the 29.4% degree of variation in the dependent

variable which is significant at .002 and support to H2. The PO-fit with the beta value .047 demonstrates positive impact by 4.7% but weaker than the other two independent variables.

**Table 3 ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	27.771	3	9.257	13.879	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	72.037	108	.667		
Total	99.809	111			

a. Dependent Variable: person\_career\_fit

b. Predictors: (Constant), person\_job\_fit, job\_attributes, person\_organization\_fit

**Table 4 Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.114	.591		.193	.847
	job_attributes	.500	.130	.335	3.844	.000
	person_organization_fit	.082	.159	.047	.518	.606
	person_job_fit	.408	.126	.294	3.246	.002

**Table 5. Correlations of the variables**

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

In table 5 the second type of analysis used by the researchers is Two-Tail Pearson Correlations of the variables under consideration. Results of Table 5 show that job attributes have positive correlation with the PC-fit valuing .434 significant at 1%. While observing the perception of students about PJ-fit and PO-fit relative to career selection there is weaker correlation .263<sup>\*\*</sup> of PO-fit and career choice than PJ-fit which is .409<sup>\*\*</sup>.



### Discussion

This research explores business graduates' experiences gained from internships and perception about job attributes, PJ-fit and PO-fit which consequently defines person career fit and stimulates as a mediator to pursue a successful career. Results also demonstrated that job attributes have positive correlation with the PC-fit significantly. So in this research it has been explored that job attributes overall has significant influence and more contribution towards career selection decision than other independent variables. The major factors associating with job attributes are (job location, peers' relationship, favorability for firm's image and job duties) as the subjects responded these factors more than other factors with the expectation of successful career. As theoreticians state that a person's satisfied and successful career depends on seeking a job consistent to his or her expectations. Considering about indirect influence of negatively perceived job attributes, it is inferred that internees may observe job attributes like (pay, benefits and promotion) and have a connection to future growth opportunities. Generally fresh graduates pay and benefits are lesser than existing older employees in a firm. However, they have long term edge of promotional opportunities and financial increments. If the perception about these mediators is positive then the graduates will pursue their career more likely and the firms will have to attract good potential of job applicants and vice versa. It has been examined that graduates' prior involvement in internship program and primary career accomplishment are correlate to incremental financial reward, career assistance and ultimately job satisfaction (Gault *et al.*, 2000). While observing the perception of students about PJ-fit and PO-fit relative to career selection there is weaker correlation of PO-fit than PJ-fit to PC-fit. Furthermore, some remarkable results have been found indicating overall more contribution of PJ-fit than PO-fit towards PC-fit. From the PJ-fit predictor as PJf1 ( $\bar{X}=3.73$ ) right KSAs possession, PJf2 ( $\bar{X}=3.5$ ) job demands and skills apt and PJf3 ( $\bar{X}=2.42$ ) personality and job suitability, the higher value of PJf1 of this variable points out that the extent of right and needed KSAs (knowledge, skills and abilities) possession to perform the job. While the value of PO fit variables' predictors as POf1 ( $\bar{X}=3.33$ ) person's and organization values similarity, POf2 ( $\bar{X}=3.55$ ) values maintenance and POf3 ( $\bar{X}=2.85$ ) preventing values from fitting in company. These results state that the impact of PJf2 is more than other predictors indicating that internees have the ability to maintain fitting values with the firm and in such a condition they are considered to be satisfied. The overall more influence of PJ-fit than PO-fit towards PC-fit is contradictory to internship study where PO-fit was mentioned more significant than PJ-fit in relation to career selection decision (Cable *et al.*, 1996). Conversely this research response the suggestion to conduct research keen on the theory that PJ-fit is more intensely correlated to PC-fit in this case as dependent variable than PO-fit.

### Conclusion

Selecting a career is the entire time puzzling task. Career choice takes in electing one vocation by giving up the other one. Somewhat, decisions about career among students are affected by self-realization of their competencies and character as well as work settings. During this short term employment, they gain experience in a firm and that is sufficient to improve their job realization and career choice evaluations. Moreover, this training experience enables them to make initial perceptions about job attributes, firm's characteristics and job requirements towards their pre-employment satisfactory career selection decision. Work setting awareness enhances undergraduates' ability to select career. When peoples' organizational understandings and work are aligned with their values, wants and daily life favorites they feel more satisfaction with the selection of their career and their respected jobs.

### Managerial Implication

Offering internship programs and trainings allows employers the opportunity to explore full time fresh graduates pool and world best talent to recruit. When students work in firms, they not only get training but also picturing themselves to firm for future employment consideration upon completing graduation. As any vacancy occurs the firms prefer these internees to be hired because they don't require getting the new one's to be train again. Feedback taken from the internees can help the organizations to improve the internship programs. This improvement will lead to better training of undergraduates and understanding of practical work world. Graduates can get a preliminary understanding about the firms to improve their competencies in a better way which will be helpful to pursue a satisfied and successful career.

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