

# **Impact of The Internship Program on the Professional and Personal Development**

## **(Special Reference to Art Faculties in Sri Lankan State Universities)**

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### **1. Introduction**

The transition from a student to a professional level is not always easy. Because of that, students must adapt to their new work environment by using their conceptual understanding. When students begin their professional careers, they have to face several obstacles (Anjum, 2020). The shortage of professional and personal qualifications is a major one of these obstacles. An internship program aims to help students gain knowledge and skills for their future careers. The UGC (2008) states that internship training probably provides the first opportunity for students to get exposed to a work environment while they are reading for their university degrees. UGC considered it essential training that should be facilitated by universities today. And also, UGC (2018) said that internship training gives students a certain degree of confidence to enter suitable employment after graduation. A majority of art graduates are struggling to find their first job. The UGC shows that through "The Tracer Study of Undergraduates in Sri Lanka-2018", there was a lower employment rate (45.6%) for graduates produced by arts streams. Furthermore, according to UGC statistics (2018), arts stream graduates have a professional qualification rate of less than 50% (23.8%). Most of the research regarding the success of internship programs and unemployment is available, but there is a lack of research on the combination of the concept of internship programs and unemployment. Furthermore, there is a shortage of research on undergraduate internships in developing countries. Therefore, as Sri Lanka is a developing country, it is expected that this research will fill the gap to some extent.

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## **2. Objective of the study**

The key question of this study is ‘How does the internship program impact the professional and personal development of art faculty undergraduates in Sri Lankan state universities?’. What are the professional and personal skills needed for art graduates? are the sub questions of this study? According to the research question, the objective of this study is to identifying the impact of the internship program on professional and personal development. Identifying the professional and personal skills needed for an art graduate can be identified as other objectives to be fulfilled to reach the main objective.

## **3. Materials and Methods**

This study is quantitative research and the target population of this study is art graduates of Sri Lankan state universities in the year 2020. All the universities were selected as the population, except Eastern University and Rajarata University. The reason for that is that both universities did not hold main examinations in the year 2020. The sample size is selected using the Yamane/ Solving method. The sample size is 98 from the population of 5625. Accordingly, the samples are selected using the random sampling method. The author used closed-ended questions to collect primary data through the questionnaire. Data is collected by using five-point Likert scales, which were given choices for respondents arranged in order of priority scale. The Likert Scale ranged from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating “Strongly Disagree”, and 5 indicating “Strongly Agree”. The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first one is demographic information; the second part is information regarding professional development; and the third part is information regarding personal development. Ordinal logistic regression is applied to see if there are any differences between internship program and professional and personal development. Proportional odds and multicollinearity assumptions are tested. Cronbach’s alpha is used to measure internal consistency.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

The main objective of this study is to identify the impact of the internship program on professional and personal development, which is discussed in two parts. First, identify the impact of the internship program on

professional development. According to the table of model fitting information the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it can be concluded that internship program has impact on professional development.

Internship training with six month or more than has odd ratio is  $\exp(1.303) = 3.68$  has a greater chance of developing professionally compared to internship training with less than six months. This suggest that the internship training with six month or more is having 3.68 times more impact than internship training with less than six months. The odd ratio of receiving an internship from the public sector is 6.14, have a better chance of developing professionally compared to receiving an internship from the semi-public sector. This suggest that the receiving an internship from the public sector is having 6.14 times more impact than receiving an internship from the semi-public sector. The odd ratio of receiving an internship from private sector is 39.09 and it has a greater chance of developing professionally compared to the semi-public sector. And this is also suggesting that the receiving an internship from the private sector is having 39.09 times more impact than receiving an internship from the semi-public sector. The odd ratio of finding an internship organization on their own is 3.62. It has a better probability of developing professionally when compared to finding an internship organization with the help of the department. This suggest that, finding an internship organization on their own is having 3.62 times more impact than finding an internship organization with the help of the department.

Table 1: Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.
Threshold	[Professional Development = 3]	.601	.755	.635	1	.426
	[Professional Development = 4]	5.295	1.092	23.499	1	.000
Location	[Duration=1]	1.303	.541	5.789	1	.016
	[Duration=2]	0 <sup>a</sup>	.	.	0	.
	[Host Company=1]	1.815	.715	6.435	1	.011
	[Host Company=2]	3.666	.830	19.509	1	.000

[Host Company=3]	0 <sup>a</sup>	.	.	0	.
[Finding Internship Placement =1]	1.286	.629	4.178	1	.041
[Finding Internship Placement=2]	0 <sup>a</sup>	.	.	0	.

*Source: Survey Data, 2022*

The second part of the main objective is to identify the impact of the internship program on personal development. The p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, according to the table of model fitting information. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it can be concluded that the internship program has an impact on personal development.

Internship training with six months or more than has an odd ratio is  $\exp(1.167) = 3.21$  has a greater chance of developing personally compared to internship training with less than six months. This suggests that the internship training with six months or more is having 3.21 times more impact than internship training with less than six months. The odd ratio of receiving an internship from the public sector is 4.8, has a better chance of developing personally compared to receiving an internship from the semi-public sector. This suggests that receiving an internship from the public sector is having 4.8 times more impact than receiving an internship from the semi-public sector. The odd ratio of receiving an internship from the private sector is 46.29. It has a better chance of developing personally compared to receiving an internship from the semi-public sector. And this is also suggesting that receiving an internship from the private sector is having 46.29 times more impact than receiving an internship from the semi-public sector. The odd ratio of finding an internship organization on their own is 4.19. It has a better probability of developing personally when compared to finding an internship organization with the help of the department. This suggests that finding an internship organization on their own is having 4.19 times more impact than finding an internship organization with the help of the department.

Table 2: Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.
Threshold	[Personal Development = 3]	1.615	.789	4.193	1	.041
	[Personal Development = 4]	6.944	1.249	30.908	1	.000
Location	[Duration=1]	1.167	.526	4.930	1	.026
	[Duration=2]	0 <sup>a</sup>	.	.	0	.
	[Host Company=1]	1.568	.663	5.595	1	.018
	[Host Company=2]	3.835	.965	15.796	1	.000
	[Host Company=3]	0 <sup>a</sup>	.	.	0	.
	[Finding Internship Placement =1]	1.433	.648	4.894	1	.027
	[Finding Internship Placement =2]	0 <sup>a</sup>	.	.	0	.

*Source: Survey Data, 2022*

## 5. Conclusion

According to the study's objectives, the findings are summarized below. six months or more internships to undergraduates, it is possible to improve their professional and personal development. As a result, while choosing an organization for internship training, it is more advantageous to choose a private sector organization and the public and semi-public sectors should concentrate on providing students with structured internship training. In this case, finding an organization for internship training on their own when compared with the finding internship training with the help of the department has positive impact on both personal and professional development.

Internships lead to the professional development of the students successfully and that more attention should be paid to the attitudinal development and behavioral development in order to be more successful. Internships help students develop their communication skill more effectively. Following that, it can be concluded that internship training contributes more effectively than time management skill, creative &

critical thinking and ability to think independently to the development of teamwork skills, leadership and problem-solving skill. As a consequence, organizations that offer internships should concentrate on offering training that helps interns develop problem solving, leadership skill, team work and ability to think independently. According to these findings, it can be concluded that internship training for art faculty undergraduates in Sri Lankan state universities has a significant positive effect on professional and personal development.

The following recommendations can be made to contribute to the departments in order to make the internship a success. In Malaysia, the internship program was designed to contain certain features that were critical. Hands-on practical training, project/ research-based assignment and activities, individual/ team projects and activities are all examples of these features. As in Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS (UTP) in Malaysia, Sri Lankan state universities can establish a structured assessment process that allows both the host company's industry supervisors and professors to evaluate students' performance throughout the internship. The National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority in Sri Lanka provides industrial training to some universities (University of Kelaniya, University of Moratuwa, University of Peradeniya) in Engineering Undergraduate, Information Technology, Quantity Surveying, Facilities Management, Microbiology, Biological Science, Zoological Science, and Applied Science, it can be more successful.

## **References**

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