

ORGANIZATIONS' PERCEPTION OF INTERNSHIP/TRAINING PROGRAM FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN OMAN

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the actual mindset of the leading organizations in the Sultanate of Oman, offering internship opportunity for students in higher education institutes. The study has focused on the importance of internships and training programs of 48 organizations, major challenges the organizations are facing and ways to overcome them. These organizations are found to face difficulty with the large number of trainees, trainees' knowledge and technical skills, sensitivity of work and information in some organizations and inability to train students for long period of time. The study found that more than one third of the organizations offer training positions as part of their corporate social responsibility. The benefit of the training programs is not limited only to the skills and knowledge gained by the trainees but also the fact that trainees are injecting new ideas into the organization. As a result majority of the organizations consider the trainees as an asset for them. However, there are some areas that need improvement, such as orientation of the trainees, before joining the organization, and developing their trainee's personal skills. A detailed training plan for the trainee prior to joining the organization has also been found to be of significance.

KEYWORDS: Higher Education, Internship, on the Job Training, Industry-Institute-Interface, Training, Challenges, Interns

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher Education (HE) forms the backbone of a nation as it helps in nurturing the professionals across sectors, domains and levels. Higher Education Institutions (HEI) are playing a pivotal role in churning out efficient and ethical manpower, professionally qualified, socially oriented and futuristic in their approach. The students of today are the professionals of tomorrow and, therefore, the need to ingrain the right blend of theory and practice forms the base of all Higher Education Institutes. The need for making a Higher Education program effective and result oriented lies in blending it with the adequate proportion of theory and practice. HEI would strive to provide the best quality of education, however, the absence of a healthy and objective oriented Industry-Institute-Interface, would only lead to a half-baked approach on the part of the institution. Despite the best education provided on campus, the students ought to be exposed to the industry through internships, volunteering and summer jobs, and On the Job Training (OJT), to enable them to take on the challenges head-on once they take the career plunge. This in turn calls for a symbiotic relationship between the academia and the industry, in order to bridge this gap. Internship or OJT provides the requisite solution, a win-win proposition for the institution as well the industry. OJT forms the element to introduce the students to the dynamics of the industry. OJT forms the basis for Institutes of Higher Education to test industry expectations.

The need for an inside-out and outside-in approach in terms of looking within the institution and then outside to the industry and vice-versa has never been felt more than the contemporary period. The reasons for it are manifold, starting from the transition economic models across nations are witnessing, the need to have newer skills in their prospective employees, to harness the entrepreneurial and entrepreneurial abilities, preferring proverbial jacks rather than single domain masters to name a few. All these attributes are ever-changing, courtesy, variable needs on the part of the organizations. The theoretical insights imparted within the four-walls of the institution might lead to academically brilliant minds; however, the expectations on the part of the industry might completely differ especially when it comes to the training of the interns that might also lead to placement of the future graduates. Industry expectations in terms of the duration, contents, challenges, opportunities, collaboration, supervision, goes a long way in making the training a win-win proposition, both for the Institution and the Industry. The closely intertwined relationship between theoretical learning within the campus along with the industry exposure plays a cascading role in the career building of the graduate.

The paper makes an effort to understand the industry perspective related to the OJT in the Sultanate of Oman. As per the bylaws of the Colleges of Technology in the Sultanate of Oman, OJT has been defined as the process of students working in the industry to gain credits for the program. The OJT is a professional practicum which is implemented by arranging for students to gain actual experience through working in industry. Through practical experience, students learn the characteristics of jobs and develop advanced skills.

There are some studies, published in different parts of the world, had addressed the benefits and associated challenges with OJT programs (e.g. Hagen and Suzanne, 1981; Davies, 1990; Neuman, 1999; Fox, 2001; Collins, 2002; Weisz and Smith; 2005; Mihail, 2006; Lam &Ching, 2007; Beggs, Ross, and Goodwin, 2008; Patrick et al, 2009; Coll et al, 2009; Elizabeth et al, 2010; Powell and Short, 2013). These studies provided lots of insights, perspectives and directions. However, they are conducted in the USA, Europe, and South East Asia. No literature pertaining to OJT is found in the Arab world in general and Oman in particular. Therefore this study is designed to fill this gap and to enable the major stakeholders (the industry, the institute, and the interns) to understand and overcome the major challenges to make OJT program a win-win for all concerned stakeholders. Objectives of this paper are to understand the industry perception of OJT program; to understand and overcome the major challenges acting as a barrier to the OJT program and to look for areas of collaboration between the institutions and the industry for improving the OJT program. Results from this paper would provide valuable data for colleges, internship organizations and vocational/technical education agencies to assist with developing better approaches and comprehensive system for planning internship programs. This paper is divided as follows: Literature review related to benefits and associated challenges with OJT (Section 2); research method (Section 3); findings (Section 4), conclusion (Section 5).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Higher Education (HE) forms the backbone for a progressive society. The holistic development of a nation depends on the successes attained by Higher Education Institutes in collaboration with the industry. A major goal of HE is to groom students for prospective career opportunities (Santiago, 2009). The colleges and universities offer education which is more relevant from a theoretical background. In spite of possessing the top attain grades and wealth of knowledge and information, a graduate often finds it challenging to acclimatize to the needs of the industry.

This in turn calls for a symbiotic relationship between the academia and the industry, in order to bridge this gap. OJT has therefore become the viable route for filling this gap by preparing the students of today into the professionals of tomorrow. OJT prepares the students with work related skills and provides them with necessary tools so as to handle future professional challenges.

2.1 Benefits of Internships/ OJT Program

OJT provides undergraduates a real understanding of the application of classroom based learning with necessary customization. This helps the student in knowing the challenges and opportunities existing outside the four-walls of the classroom. It provides trainees with the opportunity to discover their job interests and objectives through real work experience under professional guidance. Most of the time the student explores their latent potential while pursuing an internship program under the guidance of an industry expert. The intern pursuing the OJT understands the practical nuances of adding value to different stakeholders, including the society. According to Beggs, Ross, and Goodwin (2008), internship provides learning opportunities for undergraduates to experience professional practice and activities associated with knowledge application. This helps the students to understand the theoretical standing in terms of knowledge attained while completing the academic program and also imbibe the practical aspect pertaining to a specific profession. Fox (2001) opined internship is an opportunity to close the gap between learned theory and practical reality.

Some of the main values students gain from OJT experience is the importance of social skills, professional networking, commitment, and value systems. Thus, the need for the development of key attributes pertaining to interpersonal skills, critical self-reflection, analytical abilities, and decision making often forms the key purpose of OJT program. This contributes largely towards a healthy Industry-Institute-Interface benefiting both the institutions of learning and the prospective employers. The institute internalizes the exact requirement sought by the employers from their graduate, which enables them to adjust their teaching-learning aspects, whereas the industry gets to know about their prospective employees, first hand and align them with the exact requirements for the future (Collins, 2002). Internship sows the seeds for a successful career voyage for the intern after graduating. Fox (2001) stated that students indulging in satisfying and fulfilling internship program gains in-depth career perspectives, thus providing them an edge over their counterparts who did not undergo an internship program (Neuman, 1999). Davies (1990) added that internship happens to be the right place for the integration of knowledge and skills. Internship forms an integral part of the overall learning of the student. The experience from an internship programs impacts the students learning outcomes and career attitudes towards their growth and development. It contributes in a very big way to the students learning career development with numerous positive impacts on the student (Lam & Ching, 2007). Real life experiences, comprehending and solving routine professional matters are often the most important takeaways for the educators from an internship program. A study by Mihail (2006) pointed out that while students are still in college, internships can help them to develop the critical core skills demanded by global markets including: communication, time management, self-confidence and self-motivation.

Moreover, the employer derived a lot of advantages from participating in an internship program. Most of the benefits hovered around recruitment and selection of employees, as the no-obligation look towards the prospective employee allowed the organization to polish the talent as per their specific requirement, without long term commitment and associated monetary and non-monetary benefits. Successful internship programs also contribute towards positive word of mouth advertising within the campus amongst the whole range of future employees. The transition from a project in which the trainee is working as an intern to that of a full time employee is smooth, reducing the chances of

employer-employee mismatches. The internship also provides an organization to test fresh raw ideas from an intern which might not be available within their own employees owing to patterned way of thinking and decision making. Add to it the almost non-existing liabilities on the part of the employer, as most of the interns either work for free of cost or get a little amount as stipend, only adds to the overall fund of the organization. Vacation fill-ins, trainees for mystery shopping support function handling for peripheral tasks during new product launches, reorganization of the working environment could be few of the areas where the trainees can offer substantial benefits. The absence of compensation benefits on the part of the company only adds to the ever-increasing list of benefits accrued by the organization, from an OJT trainee.

2.2 Challenges Associated with Internships/ OJT Program

Hagen and Suzanne (1981) pointed out problems like insufficient task instruction, and insufficient feedback about task performance in an OJT were found to be at the peak (In terms of intrapersonal and interpersonal problems, "intern unclear about learning objectives" was ranked as the most frequent and important problem by faculty members and as the most important by interns. Lack of feedback ranked as the next most important and frequent problem from the intern's perspective, and both faculty members and interns felt that job supervisors occasionally failed to solicit feedback from interns.

Powell and Short (2013) stated that the most significant challenge facing the National Internship program in Botswana is the increased competition for workplaces. In part, this reflects the small industrial base within Botswana and the rising demand for work readiness skills. Another significant constraint that is closely related to the lack of placements is the increasing number of internship programs in Botswana and their lack of coordination. This could help ensure that a continuous and systematic approach to developing work readiness skills occurs at all levels. In addition, through cooperation it will help ensure that resources are used more effectively, particularly through the sharing of learning materials and reducing the duplication of effort. Simulation has also been tried in some countries as a means to substitute to OJT, like it happens in Indonesia, where students test software for multinational corporations.

This would reduce the opportunities available for full-fledged internships, although the major challenges would lie in arranging adequate resources and involvement on the part of the institution, in line with the expectation of the industry/company. Elizabeth et al (2010) opined that having international students as trainees added to the diversity and richness of an organization, although there were quite a few areas, calling for attention. These challenges were encountered while operationalizing and implementing the students' internship programs and were issues related to pedagogy, resources, roles, workload, participation and nomenclature in Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia.

The reasons for the challenges were to keep the increasing list of stakeholders happy. Industry partners were keen to participate in an internship program but were not interested in the fine detail surrounding pedagogical approaches or compliance requirements. Students just wanted 'work experience' and the broader the range of opportunities the better. Students wanted diversity and felt that it was the responsibility of the university to develop a range of training opportunities. Patrick et al (2009) recommended integrating internship into the academic program in order to optimize the learning opportunity.

According to Weisz and Smith (2005) "Cooperative education programs provide learning opportunities for students that enable them to integrate their work and their academic experiences" (p. 606) and many universities claim this as one of the key benefits for students. However, Coll et al (2009) claim that little is done to formally integrate the

knowledge between the university, workplace and vice versa. Coll et al (2009) suggest that programs should ensure that there is a connection between the formal university setting and the informal workplace learning. Academic staffs developing new programs such as internships need to explicitly address this issue in their curriculum design and proactively work to develop learning opportunities that integrate university theoretical models with the workplace learning.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study included representatives from some of the industries in the Sultanate of Oman, covering regions in the Sharqiya and Muscat Governorates. It also covers organizations of all stature, Large, Small and Medium Enterprises (SME), along with companies from the public and the private sectors.

The sample size for this study consisted of 48 different industries like utilities, oil and gas, banking, automobile, public undertakings, ministries, public bodies, secondary educational institutes, Information Technology regulator, Information Technology enterprises, aviation, infrastructure, services, manufacturing to name a few, thereby eliciting responses from a cross section of the industries engaged in imparting trainees to the students of Ibra College of Technology. The questionnaire consisted of twelve closed-ended questions and one open-ended question for the respondents to note their suggestions to improve OJT.

4. FINDINGS

The findings revealed after analyzing the filled-in questionnaire presented with interesting insights and perspectives regarding On Job Training vis-à-vis the organizations in the Sultanate of Oman. The sequential analysis of the questions brought in the following observations and findings:-

As it is evident from Table 1, a total of 48 respondents were bifurcated into 26 from the private sector and 22 from the public or the government sector. The respondents comprised of all major corporations in Oman, where students join for OJT and also get their final placement. The organizations targeted were Bahwa Veolia Water, Bank Muscat, Zubair Automotive Group, MO, Omantel, Oman Air, Genetco, Nawras, STFA, Mazoon Electricity Company, Oman LNG, Mideast Data Systems L.L.C., OAMC, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Bank Dhofar, Oman Chamber, PDO, ITA, Ministry of Education, OMIFCO, Ibra Hospital, Sinaw Hospital, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Housing, Al Attaa School, Bedeyah School, Samad School. Some of the organizations were covered from different places as students were often placed in those areas, owing to their preference in light of close proximity to their houses.

Table 1: Sector Wise Representation of the Respondents

Private	26	54%
Government	22	46%
Total	48	100%

The study was conducted as a representative one for the Colleges of Technology. Sixteen responds were placed in Muscat followed by ten from Ibra, followed by North Sharqiyah(7), Sur (4), Samad(3), Sinaw(3), Mudaibi(2), South Sharqiyah region(2) and one respondent did not state the region.

Table 2: Break-Up of the Number of Respondents along with Their Locations in Oman

Region	N	Region	N
Muscat	16	Sinaw	3
Ibra	10	Mudhaibi	2
North harqiyyh	7	SothSharqiyyh	2
Sur	4	No Answer	1
Samad	3		

Results in Table 3 show that 31% of organizations offer training opportunities as part of their corporate social responsibility and 27% of the respondents felt that OJT is at the peak of their priority list. Six percent (6%) considered it important only if trivial jobs were present in the organization and a minuscule 2% considered OJT important only when testing a new project and being at the bottom of their priority list, respectively. It is surprising that a large portion of the respondents, 31%, evaded this question.

Table 3: Priority List of OJT for the Organizations Recruiting Trainees

It is the most important priority.	13	27%
It is important only when some trivial jobs are present.	3	6%
It is important only when there is a new project need to be tested	1	2%
It is important as it is one of the Corporate Social Responsibilities.	15	31%
It is at the bottom of the priority list.	1	2%
No Answer	15	31%

In table 4, the respondents were asked to rate the four statements in a 5-points Likert scale with 5=always and 1=never. It can be inferred from the results in this table that organizations mostly felt OJT as a tool to inject new ideas into the organizational scheme as is evident from the weightage of 4.1. Some organizations are prepared with a plan and also allocate budget and resources to train students can be understood from the weightage of 3.6. This can also be correlated with the fact that most of the organizations consider it as part of their corporate social responsibility (Table 3). Students adding value got the third highest weightage of 3.4, followed by the opportunity to recruit new employees through OJT with 3.1 making it amply clear the importance of OJT for the organizations.

Table 4: Weight Age Displaying the Importance and Contributions of OJT for an Organization

The trainees are able to inject new ideas into the organization	4.1
The organization has a good plan with allocated budget and resources to train students.	3.6
The student trainees pursuing their training program in the organization are able to add value to your organization	3.4
New employees are recruited & selected through internship/training program in the organization.	3.1

In table 5, the respondents were asked to rate the attributes the organization consider mostly in offering a job opportunity for the trainees in a 5-points Likert scale with 5=strongly agree and 1= strongly disagree. It is visible from Table 5 that employees want only those trainees/interns to be converted into their employees if they have the ability to learn and gain new skills with weightage of 4.7, followed by result oriented and goal driven individuals with a weight age of 4.66, subsequently, they prefer those with the right mix of soft and technical skills at 4.57, professionals who can add value with 4.38 weightage and finally opting for perfect time manager at 4.30. Continuous learning in the era of high rate of obsolescence in terms of knowledge and information, along with the necessary skill-sets with a direction and goal driven attitude what differentiates top rung interns from mediocre ones and this is very clear from this finding.

Table 5: Attributes Mostly Considered by Companies While Handing Job Offers to OJT Trainees

Ability to learn and gain new skills	4.70
Result oriented and goal driven	4.66
Having a good mix of soft skills and technical skills	4.57
Ability to add value to the organization	4.38
A perfect time manager	4.30

In table 6, the respondents were asked to rate the challenges faced by the organization during the training period in a 5-points Likert scale with 5=strongly agree and 1= strongly disagree. This table consists of 19 challenges: the first ten are related to the trainees, the middle four are related to the organization and the last five are related to the educational institutes. It is noticed that trainees' lack of knowledge/technical skills and their inability to work independently are considered the most challenging factors for the organization. Factors like trainees inability to multi-task, absence of self-motivation, drive and urge to succeed, and lack of interpersonal skills were rated around 3. The least challenging factor is the trainees' inability to work as a team.

Among the four challenging factors pertaining to the organization sensitivity of work and information in some organizations is rated the highest (3.28) and lack of staff to supervise the trainees is rated the least (2.72). Among the four challenging factors concerning the institute, the organizations have rated the inability to accommodate a large number of trainees as the highest (3.66), followed by inability to train students for long period (3.24), subsequently by unpredicted number of trainees (3.19), and last lack of proper training plan (3.13).

Table 6: Rating of Challenges Faced by Organizations during OJT

Students related	Lack of knowledge /Technical Skills	3.53
	Inability to work independently	3.17
	Inability to multi-task	3.04
	Lack of interpersonal skills	3.04
	Self-motivation, drive and urge to succeed is often missing	3.00
	Inability to fit in as per the organizational culture and requirement	2.96
	Lack of dynamism	2.77
	They are goalless and directionless	2.76
	Inability to change as per the organizational requirement	2.70
	Inability to work as part of a team	2.38
Organization related	Sensitivity of work and information in some parts of the organization	3.28
	Timing of the training requested	3.09
	lack of department related to students' specialization	3.00
	lack of professional staff to train/supervise the trainees	2.72
College related	Inability to accommodate a large number of trainees	3.66
	Unable to train students for long period	3.24
	Unpredicted number of trainees	3.19
	Lack of proper training plan	3.13
	Request to assess the students and fill the evaluation forms	3.09

From the 19 challenging factors listed in the Table 6, it is found that the highest rated challenges is the large number of trainees (3.66), then trainees knowledge/Technical Skills (3.53), sensitivity of work and information in some organizations (3.28) and inability to train students for long period (3.24). This indicates issues related to logistics, formalities of OJT, along with few of the skills, attitude related traits poses more challenges than other behavioral aspects of the trainees. This finding can also be substantiated from the findings of Table 4.

In table 7, the respondents were asked to rate the recommendation to overcome the aforesaid challenges in a 5-points likert scale with 5=strongly agree and 1= strongly disagree. Table 7 makes it clear that orientation to the trainees before joining the OJT was opted the highest suggestion to overcome the aforesaid challenges with a rating of 4.72, followed by focusing on the personal skills of the trainees at 4.53. Industry-Institute consensus on the number of trainees, starting time, and duration period along with conducting series of seminars and workshops with active Institute-Industry collaboration for making the trainees productive, professional and efficient with another recommendation of participation in developing plans, goals, and outcomes of the training program were tied at 4.43. The last recommendation of collaboration with the institution to fix curriculum and assessment methods were rated at 4.13. Thus, it's apparent that the organizations want to quick-fix the issues which are directly posing challenges to the successful conduct of an OJT.

Table 7: Ratings of Recommendations to Overcome Challenges during OJT

Orient the trainees before joining the organization	4.72
Focus on developing personal skills of the trainees	4.53
Conduct series of seminars and workshops with active Institute-Industry collaboration for making the trainees productive, professional and efficient	4.43
Participate in developing plans, goals, and outcomes of the training program	4.43
Come to a consensus on the number of trainees, starting time, and duration period	4.43
Collaborate with the institution to fix curriculum and assessment methods	4.13

In table 8, the respondents were asked to describe the behaviors of the trainees at the OJT. It is clear that the students joining the organization for OJT display a proactive behavior as cited by 21% of the respondents, 58% felt the trainees were active, whereas 17% felt they were reactive and only 4% cited passive behavioral traits. This signifies a trend towards positive attitude, as it forms the precursor towards the behavior of an individual.

Table 8: Behavior of Trainees Joining the Organizations for OJT

Proactive	10	21%
Active	28	58%
Reactive	8	17%
Passive	2	4%

In Table 9, the respondents indicated their perception on the duration of the training: 63% of the respondents approved the existing tenure of OJT (at the Colleges of Technology) of 2-3 months, whereas, 10% opined it to be for 3-5 months and 27% for less than 2 months. Nobody thought it apt to have OJT for more than 5 months period.

Table 9: Duration of OJT

less than 2 months	13	27%
2-3 months	30	63%
3-5 months	5	10%
more than 5 months	0	0%

In table 10, the respondents described the trainees joining the organization. The results show that majority, 88%, of the respondents considered OJT trainees as an asset for the organization, with a negligible, 13% considered them to be as liabilities. This indicates the importance given to the contributions of the trainees.

Table 10: Asset-Liability Quotient of OJT Trainees

A Liability	6	13%
An asset	42	88%

4.1 Comments Given by the Organization Representative to Improve the Internship/Training Programs

The 48 organizations were given the opportunity to write down their suggestions to improve the managing and handling of the training programs. The organizations had given different recommendations to overcome some trainees' attitude toward the training by not being keen to learn as shown in the Table 11. Eight organizations have suggested the need to have a specific and detailed training plan, so trainees are aware in advance about what they are going to gain. Others have recommended grading the training by the organization. Thus, it is not sufficient to give it only pass or fail, marks on the basis of the training to be included in the degree audit as a force for the trainees to learn. Other organizations have recommended the trainees to submit a comprehensive journal of the training for the organization along with skills learned and difficulties faced. Recommendations were also related to securing training seats for the trainees in advance. Some respondents suggested conducting seminars to familiarize trainees with organization requirements. Others recommended increasing the industrial visits to the organizations while student are studying on campus so as to familiarize themselves with the corporate culture. Furthermore, some recommendations were about strengthening the engagement with the industry and build relationship with the key organizations.

Table 11: Comments given by the Organization Representative to Improve the Internship/Training Programs

Comments	Suggestion
<p>Few trainees are keen on learning and most have a passing attitude. Some trainees are interested in passing time rather than actual learning. Industries are like a pond where these trainees are sent to drink water even though they are not thirsty. Trainees are not attending and leaving on time</p>	<p>(8 recommended) Specific and detailed training plan. Trainees should be aware about what they are going to learn and what they need to know. so that they would know what kind of knowledge the trainee will gain OJT should be graded by the organization. Marks on the basis of these training shall be included in degree audit so as to force them to learn. If the company gives unsatisfactory remarks or the journal is not comprehensive the trainee shall be asked to do the training again. Trainee shall be asked to submit a comprehensive journal of the training for him to record each & every aspect of training (log book). Trainees give training report to training organizations along with skills learned and difficulty faced. Include more practical aspects in the curriculum so the trainee is a little more prepared once he/she join the organization. Coordinate in advance with the training organization (2) Training organization according to specialization (2) Trainee choose the organization Choose a small and focused area for the student for the training so will be skilled and focused (e.g. loans, bank teller) Not to combine study and OJT Give trainee some incentives</p>
<p>The students should come with self-motivation, they are not quite educated, elevated and passionate to outperform. In such conditions students need to have the habit to do themselves self and grow which is usually lacking (3) Trainees should prepare themselves with questions for the supervisor; they should not be passive and quite.</p>	<p>Conduct seminars to familiarize trainees with organization requirements (4) Increase industry visit to organizations to enable students to familiarize themselves with the corporate culture(4)</p>
<p>Some organization considers training just social responsibility and do not take personal interest.</p>	<p>Engage with the industry and build relationship with the key organizations (2). To improve the internship programs, the ministry of manpower has to play a role similar to what it is doing in employing the nationals.</p>

5. DISCUSSIONS

OJT is being given its due importance by the industry, not only as part of their corporate social responsibility, but also as a tool to hunt for future talent. Although, most of the trainee joining the program tries to carry forward the attitude of merely passing rather than actual learning, holistic development by involving the organizations in a bigger way is the need of the hour. The importance of orienting the trainees before stepping into the corporate world and the industry along with the crafting of suitable plans and measures, in collaboration with the institute would go a long way in negating the attitude that contributes to the downfall of the learner. Productive engagement of the trainees through a OJT specific plan commensurate with his area of specialization and domain of interest would facilitate in the trainee adopting holistic learning mechanism while pursuing the OJT.

The moot point is to inculcate the habit of relating the practical theories learnt within the institution into the practical situations while undergoing the OJT that in turn calls for an outward-in approach on the part of the institution. Active collaboration and regular consultation of the Institute and the Industry would provide solutions to many of the challenges being encountered, culminating in making the trainee-organization a more fruitful one.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The study presented in this paper has focused on three areas: the importance of internships and training programs for organizations, major challenges the organizations are facing and ways to overcome them. The study found that more than 30% of the organizations offer training opportunities as part of their corporate social responsibility. It is found that the benefit of the training programs is not limited only to the skills and knowledge gained by the trainees but also the fact that trainees are injecting new ideas into the organizations. As a result most of the organizations, 88%, consider the trainees as an asset for them. The 48 organizations, participated in this study, are found to face difficulties with the large number of trainees, trainees' knowledge and technical skills, sensitivity of work and information in some organizations and inability to train students for long period of time. This study has pointed out towards various aspects those are crucial for making the training program the ideal platform for all future employers and prospective employees to establish a relationship that can be cashed upon in the long run.

In order to make the training more effective, there should be a specific and detailed training plan for the trainees; so they are aware in advance about what they are going to learn and skills they will gain at the organizations. Orientation programs by academic staff and student affairs department as well by the employees are also important to make sure that students is play the right attitude and behaviors and are well prepared to handle the training. These orientation programs help in making impactful training by having better performing interns, culminating in getting final placement offers from the organizations. Furthermore, future employer would be able to handpick their prospective employees without much investment in terms of money and time, and more so the ones who are aware about the organizational culture and expectations. Moreover, to overcome some challenges encountered at the OJT higher education institutes and the industry need to have a symbiotic relationship between them.

7. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study has only focused on the organizations' perspective of the training programs. It did not cover all the stakeholders of the training such as the trainees, the college assessors and educational institutes by and large.

Therefore, in order to have a comprehensive view of the training challenges, further studies should be conducted to obtain perception from other stakeholders (e.g. the trainees, the college assessors and educational institute).

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