

Conference Paper

Composing Professional Human Resource: The Necessity of Excellent Internship Mentoring System

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Abstract

University is primarily being a wide place or facility to produce capable, intelligent and professional workforce. Students are equipped with various kinds of knowledge theoretically as well as trained through the internship process. However, the findings on graduates who don't reflect some aspects of professionalism, less competent in each of their fields or even their soft skills should be classified as urgent issues at any rate. Driven by these contrary sides, we highlighted that the less maintained students' internship period might be a variable for the problems. We started by collecting previous studies on the dissatisfactions from employers about trainees/interns from universities, analyzed the solutions, and triangulated the solutions we proposed by exploring internship masterplan at a university in Indonesia. From all of these steps, we found that appropriate, intensive mentoring ways in the students' internship period are the main points to create the skills that meet any employers' demands. We believe that the results of this study will be very useful for those who need answers to the best ways to improve the quality and capabilities of higher education graduates.

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1. Introduction

In 2017 the public was shocked by a report survey in the United Kingdom, regarding a third of employers are unhappy with the behavior of graduates (CBI & Pearson Education, 2017). The employers dislike graduates' lack of self-management skills, cultural awareness, even customer awareness. Through some interviews conducted by The Telegraph, Professor Cary said that some graduates lack social skills and abilities to conduct direct conversations. Young graduates are still enthusiastic to learn, but they have less interest in staying at the same company. In line with that, Crescens George, chief operating officer of Be Wiser Insurance group, was told that graduates are not prepared for "the real world of work", and often require "ego-massaging". He

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also expected that university education would teach some basic business etiquette, and certainly communication skills (Carr, 2017).

As one of the countries with world-leading labor, Indonesia also experienced similar problems. Deputy Chairperson of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry for Labor and Industrial Relations, Anton J. Supit, assessed that Indonesian workers failed to meet the competencies demanded by the industry, both those filling in the domestic and foreign markets (Basith, 2018). He recommended that a good internship program be the answer. The internship program is also a medium to train optimal skill and mental workmanship. The two were mentioned by the Indonesian Minister of Manpower, Muhammad Hanif Dhakiri as the main instruments that should be owned by workers (Soejatmiko, 2018). The existence of these phenomena should be enough to trigger the efforts of educational institutions as forming a professional workforce in the millennial era to work harder.

Higher education institutions such as universities are certainly a place to study at an advanced level for professional candidates. In the teaching and learning activities at well-implemented universities, students are not only invited to formally meet with their lecturers in the classroom. The process of acquiring knowledge is also carried out through outdoor learning activities, including internship activities. All universities that organize internship programs certainly expect additional student competencies, so that they can become versatile graduates: excel in science skills, including having good mental management or soft skills.

Thus, it can be said indirectly that lecturers or teaching staff who become internship mentors are the main pawn in solving the problem of lack of competence of the workforce. Regular meetings between academic staff and companies to discuss and find solutions related to career development and student motivation (Negrut, Mihartescu, & Mocan, 2015), lecturers as main mentors certainly do not only play a role in forming science alone. These whole activities can only be implemented well if the university has an excellent internship mentoring system. Higher education that provides an excellent internship mentoring system can definitely be a superior producer of human resources.

Continuing the previous description, it is even natural that the university competes to improve the internship system which is very good for students. On the other hand, an excellent internship system can also be used as an indicator in evaluating the reputation of the university. So the questions are, how can the internship system be declared as excellent? What is the main thing that must be done to make the internship system in the university becomes excellent?

We intend to provide answers to the questions above by implementing integrated research through the presentation of this paper. We have conducted a literature study on several studies and important phenomena surrounding student internships, human resources and the things that cover them, analyzed them, and conducted a number of important interviews in depth to support the credibility of our research. Our interviews were conducted at a university in Indonesia which was pioneering the reshuffle of the new internship system for its students, as an effort to enrich the results of research and a triangulation on the analysis and solutions that we proposed. We believe that this research presents novelty in the science of education by presenting solutions to the development of human resources through this excellent internship system.

This paper content is divided into five parts. The first part of this paper contains an introduction to the description of the problem, and research's purpose. The second part then discusses the compilation of some of the research literature that we highlight and we map out the problem. The third part contains the analysis and proposed solutions to the problems that occur around the internship in students based on the study and mapping in the previous section. The fourth part contains triangulation of the solutions that we propose with excerpts from interviews we conducted at a university in Indonesia, and the last section contains conclusions and implications of this paper.

2. Internship Highlights and Problem Mapping

We started by collecting previous studies on the perceived problems that occur during the internship, both from students or employers. Many studies have raised the problems that occur related to the internship program, both from the perspective of employers (Liviú & Ana-Andreea, 2013; Negrut, Mihartescu, & Mocan, 2015; Pradhitya, Kuswandi, & Wedi, 2018; Sawani, Abdillah, Rahmat, Noyem, & Sirat, 2016; Sulindawati, Yudiantara, & Purnamawati, 2017) and students (Akomaning, Voogt, & Pieters, 2011; Cord, Bowrey, & Clements, 2010; Mulyani, Aryancana, & Yuliafitri, 2016; Negrut et al., 2015; Pradhitya et al., 2018; Sawani et al., 2016; Sulindawati et al., 2017). In this discussion we present the problems related to internship in two parts, problems perceived by students and problems perceived by employers. First, we will convey some of the problems felt by students during the internship.

- Students lack the practical ability to complete work (Adininggar & Wafa, 2016) due to several tasks given by employers different from the one received during the lecture (Sulindawati et al., 2017)

- Students feel they lack the provision of soft skills and competencies when entering the company (Adininggar & Wafa, 2016; Akomaning et al., 2011; Mulyani et al., 2016) including those who feel that they are unable to communicate with colleagues and leaders. In other words, students find it difficult to adapt to the work environment (Pradhitya et al., 2018)
- Students face many obstacles in the administration of internships, in addition, it was also difficult to find institutions for the implementation of internships (Adininggar & Wafa, 2016; Pradhitya et al., 2018)
- The student internship period is too short (Negrut et al., 2015) so that when students have just begun to adapt to the environment and work, when they are ready to absorb knowledge from the company, the internship period is over.
- The work provided by employers to students is not in accordance with the skills and competencies they have (Adininggar & Wafa, 2016; Pradhitya et al., 2018), thus causing students to be unable to adapt to the work provided (Cord et al., 2010)

Next, we will convey some of the problems that are felt from the perspective of the employer

- Employers feel that internship students lack practical knowledge and practical skills (Liviú & Ana-Andreea, 2013). Students are not technically equipped with competency skills needed by the company (Pradhitya et al., 2018; Sawani et al., 2016)
- Students do not have good communication skills (Sawani et al., 2016; Sulindawati et al., 2017), including the ability to adapt to the work environment, the ability to communicate with superiors and colleagues, and the ability to express opinions. They cannot observe the instructions given by the leadership properly. This shows that the university does not equip students with soft skills needed by employers.
- Employers feel the lack of coordination between the university and the company that causes communication regarding problems during the internship period cannot be conveyed. There are no facilities for communication, expressing opinions, or experiences that are felt by both students and industry (Negrut et al., 2015)
- The purpose of the internship is still unclear so that employers feel unclear the target expected by the university when students complete the internship program (Negrut et al., 2015) so that the period of implementation of the internship can be adjusted to the competency goals that students are expected to have after completing the internship.

From the problems described above, we group them into three main problems, that is lack of knowledge and practical skills, lack of soft skills, and university’s internship system. Mapping problems perceived by the students and the employers is depicted in Picture 1.

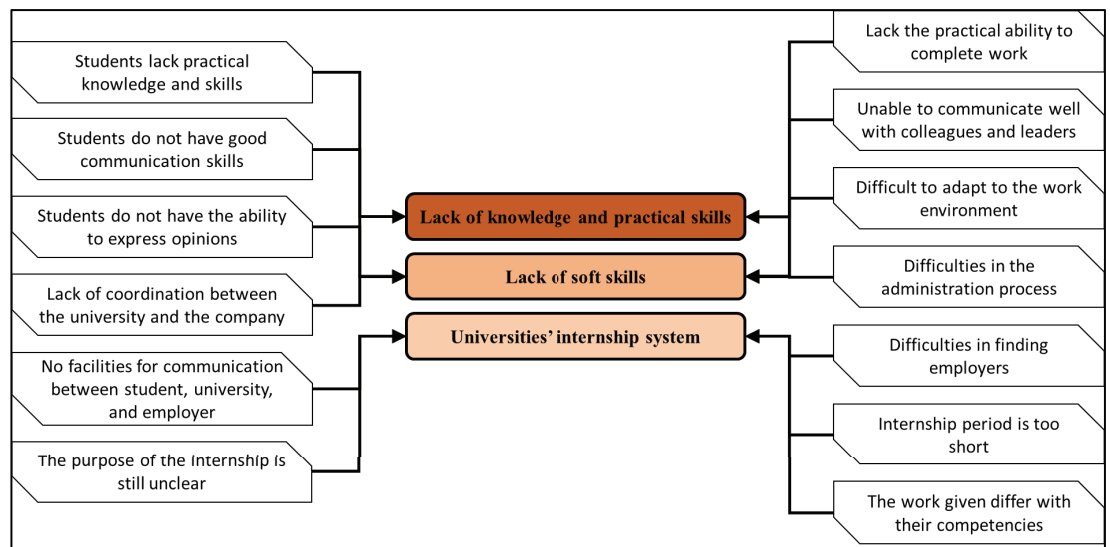


Figure 1: Internship Problem Mapping

3. Proposed Solutions

This study uses an exploratory study design. This design uses qualitative research methods. The empirical component of this exploration study was carried out in three phases. The first phase in previous section are identifying the problems regarding the implementation of internship based on the documentation of the researches from various countries. Furthermore, this section will provides solutions based on the mapped problems that have been found. The last third phase, is the triangulation phase of our solutions will be presented in the next section.

As stated earlier, we know that there are several alternative solutions to overcome the problems that arise. More details about the proposed solutions we provide are outlined in Table 1.

To put it simple, we recommend that mentoring in the internship program should be carried out more systematically and intensively similar to some teaching and learning activities in another courses. If the internship mentoring process is packaged in such a way, the meeting between students and their mentors can be done intensively. These solutions can be accompanied by implementing the following methods:

TABLE 1: Proposed Solutions for Internship Problems

No.	Problem Mapping	Proposed Solutions
1	Lack of knowledge and practical skills on scientific disciplines	<p>a. An internship mentor such as a lecturer can identify students' lack of competence in their respective scientific disciplines before the internship period begins, so that during the internship period students can be guided to explore the knowledge and practical skills they need.</p> <p>b. Students need some briefing and reflection of each courses in real life from their first semesters. In short, students will know about the implementation and usefulness of a course in the profession they are about to take when after graduate.</p>
2	Lack of soft skills (mental and social aspects)	<p>a. Students can be given a briefing about the mindset of professional workers before the internship, either through private sharing sessions with lecturers (mentors), or together through seminars, training, or workshops.</p> <p>b. Improving the provision of project based learning methods in each subject, so that students will get some real pictures of interaction varieties in the real work environment, as well as how to pick the clever ways to deal with problems that may arise in the work environment.</p>
3	Universities' internship system	<p>a. Internship students need more intensive guidance and assistance from their lecturers. The universities need to design an internship period with a system or mechanism similar to other scientific courses. It is expected that the time of consulting between students with their lecturers (mentors) before, during and after the internship will be more interwoven.</p> <p>b. The less maintained students' internship period might be a variable for the problems. Each faculty or department at the universities needs to carefully design the internship length or period according to the skills learned by each student.</p> <p>c. Universities have to seek appropriate placement of internship students in institutions and divisions, so that assignments can be given relevant to their scientific disciplines. This kind of solutions leads to the urgency on more collaboration between universities and the employers.</p>

- Consultation/mentoring regarding the internship process can be facilitated by a mentor/lecturer per internship group and carried out online/offline through any platform
- Consultation/mentoring on the internship process can be done regularly every week, or adjusting the schedules of mentors/lecturers and internship students. With the calculation criteria: one time consultation equals one lecture meeting
- The requirement for each consultancy or mentoring activity is to have a log book filled by students as an internship journal/diary every day

- Mentors/lecturers are required to serve consultancy/sharing/provide soft skills materials while monitoring the ability of students' soft skills during the internship process

Some of these ways can be optimized by the university as the party designing the mentoring internship system. Because, basically the core of all kinds of problems will be resolved by a great or excellent design of a mentoring system. Through a good mentoring system, the process of identification and anticipation of graduate shortages can be carried out well.

4. Integrating Our Solutions' Validity: Interviews and Documentation

The fourth part of this paper contains triangulation (by interviews and documentation) for the solutions we proposed. We have conducted semi-structured interviews with several parties directly involved in the management of the formatting and designing of the internship masterplan at a department in a university located in Indonesia. The university that we have chosen is currently reforming the internship system based on the feedbacks and suggestions put forward by their stakeholders, in order to increase the competency and excellence of the graduates produced. They are also currently developing the mentoring system for internship program, so that the students' needs and problems could be identified immediately.

There were four informants we interviewed. Two informants included the chairman and member of the intership system development team. Separately, they stated that the main solution to increase the intensification of the mentoring internship process could be taken by making the implementation similar to the implementation of other courses. The following is an statement from the members of the internship system development team.

"As far as I know, in the past internships included elective courses. in the future, we want to include it in a course that must be taken by students. The implementation of this internship program was carried out as soon as possible, at least this month 35 companies had gathered. So that the next semester can be realized. The design is for students to take courses in the KRS, then the department plots students according to the company's quota."

Furthermore, the head of the internship system development program also told us that a more intensive and sufficient mentoring process needs to be improved in their

institutions. This is what lies behind the efforts to reform the mentoring system in their student internship activities.

The role of the supervisor in the student internship activities is to provide debriefing at the beginning of the activity, guiding internship students to compile reports and evaluate the internship activities by making visits to the internship location. However, the debriefing provided was felt by stakeholders as not enough to meet their needs. This is because the mentoring process is only carried out when the students have gone through a two-week internship period or are even nearing completion.

“In addition, based on these facts, students who carry out internship activities in agencies or companies are usually asked to do work that is not in accordance with their expertise. Although they have received a visit from their mentor, the work given to them are still not in accordance with the discipline of the students. This was revealed by one of the heads of departments at the university that we visited, and at the same time strengthened the opinion that an intensive mentoring system was needed”

One of the lecturer/internship mentors also revealed that the solution for providing project based learning methods for students had also been carried out by many lecturers at the university. This is to support the new curriculum applied by the Life Based Learning Curriculum. Students are asked to go directly and interact in the real work environment based on the problems faced and find solutions to problems that arise in the work environment. So, the problem based learning method can help students adjust to the work environment.

A series of interpretations of the results of interviews and documentation carried out indicate a match with the solutions we offer. Overall, these solutions were also applied (or planned to be implemented) at the university where the informants we interviewed. Thus, the solution that we propose can be seen as valid and indeed feasible to be applied in real terms.

5. Conclusion

This paper suggested that appropriate, intensive mentoring ways in students' internship period are the main points to create skills that meet any employers' demands. After several steps of researching, we recommend that mentoring process by the lecturer in internship should be carried out more systematically and intensively similar to some teaching and learning activities in another courses, so that the internship mentoring is

more scheduled and integrated. Improvement of the mentoring process is proven to be able to increase the quality of students when conducting an internship. Furthermore, students can communicate their obstacles during the internship program intensively. Those are the thing that have to be kept in mind to make the internship system in a higher education institutions such as university could be declared as excellent. That way, university as the composer of professional human resource.

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