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Bridging Academia and Industry by Improving Internship Readiness

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Abstract

Internship programs play an important role in preparing students to start a career. However, university should ensure the quality of the curriculum and training. Students' perceptions about the internship readiness were analysed based on program structure, industry alignment, support system and industry engagement. Data were obtained through questionnaires and analysed using a comparison of the average internship readiness scores. The results showed that postgraduate students had the highest readiness, while 3rd year students had the lowest readiness. In addition, there were significant differences in perceptions of internship readiness between levels of study, indicating that longer academic experience and industry exposure contribute to increased readiness. These findings indicated the need of curriculum revision by incorporating internship preparation modules, increasing professional skills training, and increasing industry involvement in the learning process. In addition, the role of academic supervisors should be strengthened to provide more effective guidance during the internship program. The implementation of practice-based training and industry case studies could also improve students' understanding of the real working life. Theoretically, this study contributed to enriching the literature on student internship readiness and provided practical implications for universities in formulating educational policies that are more relevant to industry needs. It is therefore, the effectiveness of internship programs could be improved thus optimally support students' transition to the working life. The results of this study could be used as the basis for developing strategies for improving the curriculum and closer collaboration between academia and industry.

Keywords: Internship readiness, curriculum, internship effectiveness, industry engagement, internship preparedness