

# Business' Students Industrial Training: Performance and Employment Opportunity

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**Abstract-** Industrial training program refers to the experience obtains in the real working environment that has been identified as part of aid to prospective employment. This paper reports the perception of 187 industrial supervisors on the 307 business students' performance and their employment opportunity during industrial training. The results show that the students' performances are excellent in the areas punctuality, honesty, teamwork, and relations with colleagues. However, there is a sign of lacking in the job related skills such as the ability to identify and formulate the job problems, efficiency in completing task as well as knowledge of current development related to task/job. In term of employment opportunity is high to medium. As an implication, the equal partnerships between university and employers are crucial to increase students' employability skills and employment opportunity.

**Index Terms-** Industrial Training, Interpersonal Skills, knowledge and technical skill, Soft Skills, Employment opportunity

## I. INTRODUCTION

Industrial training is a significant method for combining theoretical education and practical working world. Tovey (2001) stated that the industrial trainings are not only a benefit for the students but also a kind of mutual benefits for both students and industries. Industrial training really does benefit industries, like inexpensive sources of competent assistance, highly motivated present employees, and the chance to cultivate prospective employees (Coco, 2000). Often jobs are readily available, but the graduates lack what is needed to get and keep jobs. As such, it is crucial to study the employer perception on skills and standard of students that they perceived performed, so higher learning institutions may restructure their syllabus that match with need of industry.

Malaysia is now said to be at the mid-point in its journey towards Vision 2020 and is transforming to become a developed nation. To be recognized as an economically developed country Malaysia needs to restructure its workforce by having highly skilled workers that has to be able to cope with the changing nature and demands of works. Currently Malaysia still faces problems on high unemployment rate among graduate. Survey discovered on 2008 about 60,000 Malaysian Graduates were unemployed due to a lack of experience, poor English, poor communication skills and because they had pursued studies irrelevant to the market place. As the result, their employment opportunity is low and employer having similar problems in getting employees that match with their needs. Therefore, it is the

duty of higher learning institutions to ensure that their students are well-equipped with employability skills and give them expose to industry through industrial training.

This paper would like to identify the industrial perception on business students' performance during the practical training and their employment opportunity. More specifically, this paper attempts to investigate if the undergraduates' core competencies are able to meet with the requirements set by the employers.

This study focuses in a private university in Malaysia. Currently this university has more 83 programs range from foundation to post graduate programs. Industrial training s compulsory for all diploma and bachelor students. The sample of the study is students from Faculty of Business (FOB) with five programmes involve, they are Bachelor of Accountancy (BOA), Bachelor of Finance (BOF), Bachelor of Marketing (BOM), Bachelor of Business Management (BBM) and Bachelor in Industrial Management (BIM).

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of study are to identify the industrial's perception on performance of business' students during industrial training and to identify the employment opportunity of UNISEL business' students during industrial training.

Previous research shows that internship will give benefits to both organization and student. Organization most valued on their interns was communications; knowledge of the host organization, its structure, function and purpose; flexibility and fulfilling requirements above and beyond the necessary standard (Adam J. 2007). Meanwhile Callanan G. and Benzing C. (2004) showed that an internship was linked with finding career-oriented employment and securing career-oriented employment at the time of graduation, gain valuable real-world experiences (Neuman, 1999), acquire additional expertise and confidence in the specific area that they expect to target when they seek permanent jobs. Finally, Beenen G. (2008) student appears to be more satisfied, and more likely to both receive and accept job offers. Study done Hodges D and Burchell N. (2003) revealed that 79% of employers considered that it was important for graduates entering business roles to have some business work experience prior to completing their tertiary study and they want graduates to be more 'work-ready'

Meanwhile, Lam, T., & Ching, L. (2007) said industrial training can assist students to bridge the gap between the academic learning process and the practical reality. According to Cannon, J. A., & Arnold, M. J. (1998), internship may pave the way for permanent employment upon graduation as well as providing an in-depth understanding of actual business practice.

Industrial training able to give students benefit such as improvements in career-related direction, gaining practical experience, improved marketability of graduates, job expectations, interpersonal skills, leadership and understanding of the business applications of classroom learning (Muhamad, Rusnah, et al. 2009). Personal and interpersonal skills are characteristics and “soft people skills” that relate to attitudes and behaviour toward work (commitment to quality and efficiency), that include integrity and ethics, and the ability to attract others to your well-seasoned and logical point of view (Siam, John J. 2005).

Previous study on industrial found out that event though mainly employer satisfied with the performance of students but there are some areas need improvement. Gunadevi K. Jeevi Subramaniam and Raja Nor Safinas Raja Harun (2013) revealed that employers found that the internship’ students lacking in public speaking in particular when dealing with customers and they put emphasis on the importance of communicating with customers in English. Nurliana M.A (2013) study on pharmacy students, found out that 82% of students performance is excellent during industrial training but still need improvement on entrepreneurial and managerial skills. Finally, Nor’ Aini Yusof, et al (2013) study on 179 employers, indicated a satisfactory level of students’ performance during the training. Most employers were willing to recruit the students in future. Technical skills were ranked as needing the most improvement by students.

In summary, past research has viewed industrial training as a positive developmental experience for university students and proved with some favorable outcomes as improved ability to secure a career-oriented position. Previous study also shows that

still many areas need to improve in order to increase the students employment opportunity. This study will study in depth skills that employers perceive lacking on the students during industrial training.

### III. RESEARCH METHOD

**SAMPLE:** 307 students from Faculty of Business and 187 organizations participated in this exercise. The study was carried out after they have completed their training. The students were from five courses, they are Bachelor of Accounting (BOA), Bachelor in Business Management (BBM), Bachelor of Marketing (BOM), Bachelor of Finance (BOF), and Bachelor of Industrial Management (BIM). **TOOLS:** evaluation of student’s performance by industrial supervisor; ‘interpersonal skills’, ‘knowledge & technical skills’ and ‘soft skills’ that represent 18 different attributes. SPSS 16.0 is used to analyze the data by using SPSS 16.0.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Respondents Background.** As shown at table 1, almost two third or 79.68% students were practical in private sectors and mainly they are female (79%). In terms of race majority is Malay (63.2%) and they are from BIM (31.27%), next BBM (26.06%) follow by BOF (23.45%), BOM (13.03%) finally from BOA (6.19%).

**Table 1: Respondents Background**

Placement	N	%
Private	149	79.68
Government	38	20.32
Total	187	100.00

Gender	N	%
Female	242	79
Male	65	21
Total	307	100.00

Race	N	%
Malay	194	63.2
Indian	88	28.7
Chinese	10	3.3
Total	307	100.00

Programme	N	%
BIM	96	31.27
BBM	80	26.06
BOF	72	23.45
BOM	40	13.03
BOA	19	6.19
Total	307	100.00

**Performance of Business Students during Practical Training.** As the whole industrial supervisors satisfied with the performance of business students during industrial training, As shown in table 2; the 7 most skill rated as excellent and good by industrial supervisor, they are: punctuality (65%), team work

(60.9%), relation with colleagues (58.6%) and they also satisfied with students honesty, attitude, appearance and flexible/adaptable.

**Table 2: Top 7 most perform skills by students during industrial training**

N o.	Items	Good		Excellent	
		N	%	N	%
1	Punctuality	88	28.7	200	65.1
2	Team work	100	32.6	187	60.9
3	Relation with colleagues	114	37.1	180	58.6
4	Honesty	121	39.4	174	56.7
5	Attitude	125	40.7	162	52.8
6	Appearance	135	44	135	48.9
7	Flexible/adaptable	150	48.9	128	41.7

Even though result shows that organizations satisfied with students performance but on some areas especially in knowledge and technical skill and soft skills, organizations feel that students skill lacking as some of the students rated as satisfactory and below average. As shows in table 3 are the main 8 least perform skills by students during industrial training with the least skill is leadership (5.5%) students rated as below average and another

24.1% as satisfactory only. Mainly students were lacking on knowledge and technical skills, especially in the ability to identify and formulate the job problems, efficiency in completing task, product knowledge, and knowledge of current development related to task/job.

**Table 3: Top 8 least perform skills by students during industrial training**

No .	Items	Below average		Satisfactory	
		N	%	N	%
1	Leadership	17	5.5	74	24.1
2	Ability to work independently and proactive	9	2.9	48	15.6
3	Ability to identify and formulate the job problems	9	2.9	71	23.1
4	Product knowledge	8	2.6	78	25.4
5	Efficiency in completing task	6	2.0	42	13.7
6	Knowledge of current development related to task/job	5	1.6	65	21.2
7	Communication ability-written	5	1.6	49	16
8	Time management skill	5	1.6	47	15.3

**Employment Opportunities.** Result shows that employment opportunity for business students' is quite high, as shown in table 4 more than half (62,87%) of students hired after they finished they are practical training with most hired as full time staff ( 42.34 %) followed by students hired as a contract

staff (12.70%) and the least is student hired as part time staff. Students from students from BIM is the highest in term of employment opportunity (31.61%) followed by BBM students (24.35%), meanwhile the least students employ are from BOA (6.22%).

**Table 4: Employment Opportunities by Program Attend**

Employment Opportunities	Program Attend					Total
	BOA	BBM	BOM	BOF	BIM	
Hired as full time	10	28	19	28	45	130 (42.34%)
Hired as part time	0	5	0	0	2	7 (2.28%)
Hired as temporary	2	8	0	4	3	17 (5.54%)
Hired as contract	0	6	12	10	11	39 (12.70%)
Total	12 (6.22%)	47 (24.35%)	31 (16.06%)	42 (21.76%)	61 (31.61%)	193 (62.87%)
Not hired	7	33	9	30	35	114 (37.1%)

Base on above finding, it can conclude that as the whole, industrial supervisor satisfied with performance of business students' with excellent in the areas punctuality, honesty, teamwork, and relations with colleagues. It is as indicator that business students' accepted and their performance up to organizational standard but the study also indicated that students lacking in important skills, job related skills such as skills, in the ability to identify and formulate the job problems, efficiency in completing task, product knowledge, and knowledge of current development related to task/job and leadership. It is shows that students may have advance theoretical skills, but their practical skills are still weak. As for employment opportunity, even though more than half of student is hired but the number is still not encouraging.

The study results might also be helpful to academic institutions in the sense of better preparing students for business practical experiences by designing their courses of studies to be more practical. Case studies based on real-life examples should be incorporated in lectures and tutorials by means of classroom simulations and group work assignments. Taking advantage on the academic-industry cooperation practice, real cases at work could also be brought into lectures in order to enable the undergraduates to have a hands-on experience in tackling job task in their areas of studies at the real working world environment. The academic institution may invite expertise from industry to be industrial advisor as they can provide constructive feedback to the undergraduates as a means of sharpening their critical analytical skills, problem solving skills, decision making skills, oral communication skills, negotiating skills, and planning skills which are most sought after by employers nowadays.

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