Effectiveness of Online Internship by Mba Students in Select B-Schools

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Abstract

One of the special features of doing an MBA programme in Management B-Schools is practical exposure to the industry as a part of the curriculum through an internship programme. Due to the recent shift in the education system owing to advancement in technologies and massive outburst of the pandemic this internship programme also started operating via online mode. This research article is initiated by the researcher to find out the effectiveness of the same. Thus, to find out the online internship effectiveness the three variables online assistance provided by the company, industry guides competency & instructional guidelines were considered. The end result after incorporating with PLS-SEM indicated that if online assistance provided by the company, Instructional Guidelines and Industry guides competency are provided well then, the online internship will reap effective outcome for the interns.

Keywords: Online Internship effectiveness, Industry guides competency, SEM-PLS, online assistance

1. INTRODUCTION

The pedagogical system of the modern-day has found a new roof under the online platforms which are available today matching with the current trends. In this regard, one of the -key features of pursuing an MBA in recognized B-Schools is getting into the Internship programme just to get exposed to the corporate lifestyle. As like the drift in our own pedagogical system today. We have also got adrift in the Internship Programme where students were asked to take up an internship programme online. The idea behind this article from the researcher is to highlight how effective were these internship programmes in benefitting the student fraternity

The researcher has found a few areas wherein he has desired to find out the effectiveness of this online internship. The factors which are considered for the current study include Online assistance, Industry guides competency, Instructional guidelines. With these three factors as an independent factor and online internship effectiveness as the dependent factor, the author has framed a questionnaire that was circulated among MBA students from B-schools across different colleges. A total of 137 responses were collected and analysed using SEM-PLS to validate and acknowledge the results. We will further discuss the same in this article below.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Most of the previous literature has been designed on the basis of training activity which takes place over Physical mode. Considering the Internship programme offered by top companies very few research activities have been initiated. Thus, to find out the effectiveness the author has used a few factors as below

Online Assistance

The prime motto of the internship programme offered by companies is to assist potential interns to provide hands-on experience of the work which is undertaken. As the internship is part of the MBA curriculum over many B-schools. It is considered as one part of academic training while dealing with same the research article by Jason Rhode and his colleagues aim the importance of designing Personalised Online Teaching which speaks about assistance provided by the faculty (Rhode et al., 2017). Similarly, the Research article of Arfin Djaksaputra deals with providing online assistance in making promotional measures to improve the service quality of the car wash business which they are doing. Where the researchers of the paper have said that Online Assistance is one key factor to increase service quality.(Arifin djakasaputra, Sanny ekawati, 2021) considering the aforesaid points this variable is been identified by the researcher

Instructional Guidelines

The other key factor to address the effectiveness of any activity is in providing proper guidelines to the person involved in the same. This fact is supported by the research article of Florence Martin and his colleagues which deals with the importance of the online instructor and their roles. The researcher has picked 8 award-winning online faculties and surveyed them to find out the same.(Martin et al., 2019). Similarly, The Research article by Patricia & Deborah clearly speaks about the perceptions and how online courses work and how instructors develop skills in online teaching is discussed.(McGee et al., 2017) considering the aforesaid points, this variable is been identified by the researcher

Industry Guides Competency

The trainer's competency is considered as one of the factors in finding out the training effectiveness in most of the research works reviewed thus far. In this current article, the author is quoting the industry guide as the standard trainer as he is the person who trains the interns in the organisation. Francesca and Christine in their research article titled Aligning Teacher Competency framework to 21st-century challenges stated the competency needed to teach online& they have explored the competency required for the same which very well supports the idea of the researcher to find out the competency of the Industry Guide (trainer). (Caena & Redecker, 2019) considering the aforesaid points, this variable is been identified by the researcher

Online Internship effectiveness

The prime success of educational institutions depends on how far they provide effective knowledge to students. The study is about to find out the effectiveness of doing an internship programme online. Since the target set of respondents belongs to MBA students and their internship is part of their curriculum. The researcher has identified the variable as Online Internship Effectiveness which is supported by a few scholarly articles. The Research article by ChanLin & Hung on Evaluation of an online internship journal systems for Interns has clearly stated that "Providing students with opportunities for both experiential and theoretical learning is very important for professional development in higher education"(ChanLin & Hung, 2015). One such area was experiential and theoretical learning which happens in Internship programme keeping this fact in mind the researcher has selected this variable.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The ideal purpose of this research is to find out and establish the relationship between the independent variables Online Assistance (OA), Industry Guides Competency (IGC), Instructional guidelines (IG) with the dependent variable Online Internship Effectiveness (OIE). The conceptual framework of this study is portrayed as shown below in Fig 1.

The conceptual framework below is drawn from the output extracted

from SEM-PLS. The variables are grouped and pathways are measured based on the responses from the respondent.
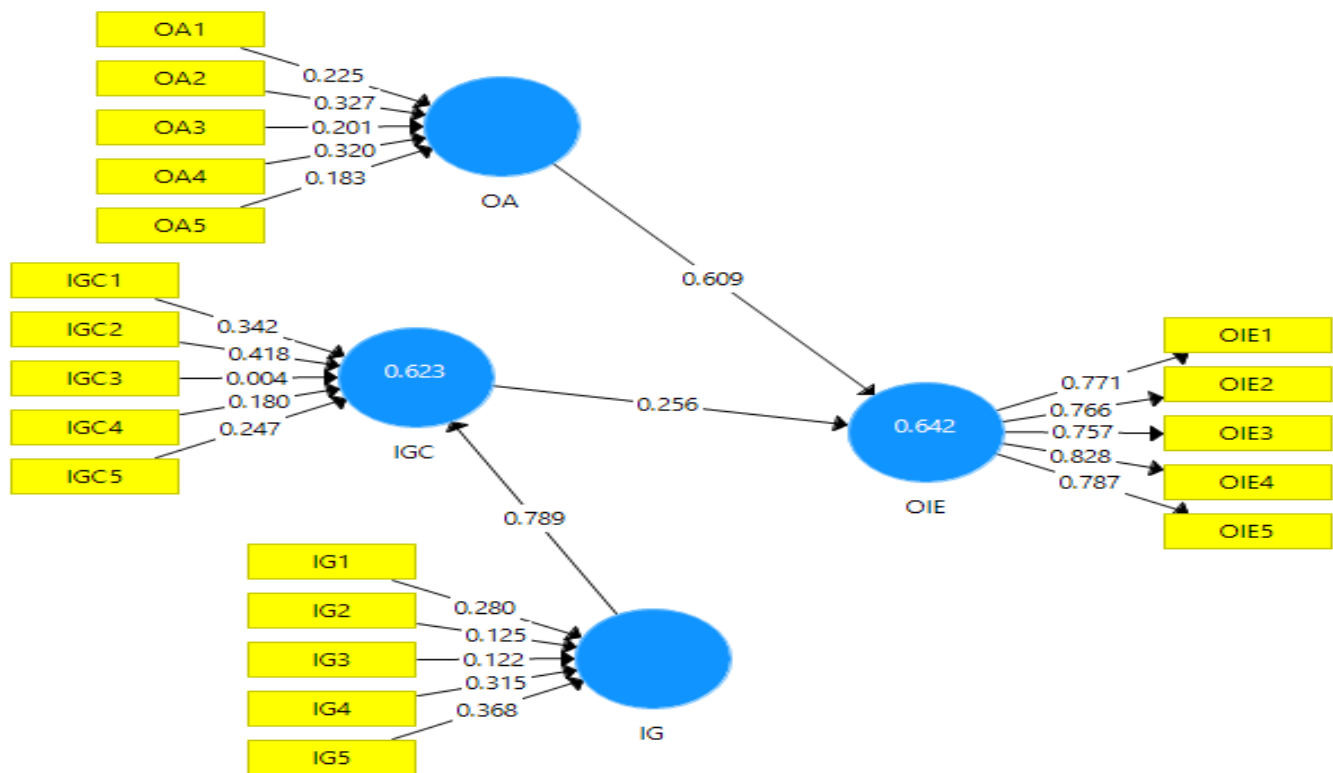

Fig 1: conceptual framework

2. METHODOLOGY

This research article is adopting quantitative approach. The Target audience of this study were MBA students who have taken up their Internship Programme online. Because of pandemic outbreak most of the companies started operating all their business activities in virtual mode. To find out its effectiveness the responses were collected from 137 respondents across different B-Schools in Chennai, Trichy & Coimbatore region respectively.

The questionnaire comprised of 5 sections. Sec A contains demographic factors of the respondent which includes Age, Gender, MBA specialization, and the period of internship. Sec B, C, D, E consists of 5 questions each under the variable named as Online Assistance, Industry Guides Competency, Instructional Guidelines provided by the company, and Online Internship Effectiveness. All these questions were close ended type utilized with 5 points Likert scale ranging from 1-5 as "strongly disagree" – "strongly agree".(Ong et al., 2019)

As for the data analysis part Structural Equation model using Partial Least Square (i. e. PLS-SEM) were used since the researcher is likely to explore the influence of selected independent variables with dependent variable.(Ong et al., 2019). Based on suggestions from (Joseph et al., 2014) 1000 replications of samples (i.e. bootstrapping) were generated to find out the influencing factor.

H1: Online Assistance provided by the company has significant influence over Online Internship Effectiveness

H2: Industry Guides Competency provided by the company has significant influence over Online Internship Effectiveness

H3: Instructional Guidelines provided by the company has significant influence over Online Internship Effectiveness

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first section of the questionnaire deals with Demographic factors which is expressed below as pictorial representation. The below represented Fig 2 represents the age group of respondents in which almost 74.3% belongs to fresher category who fall under the age group of 21-23
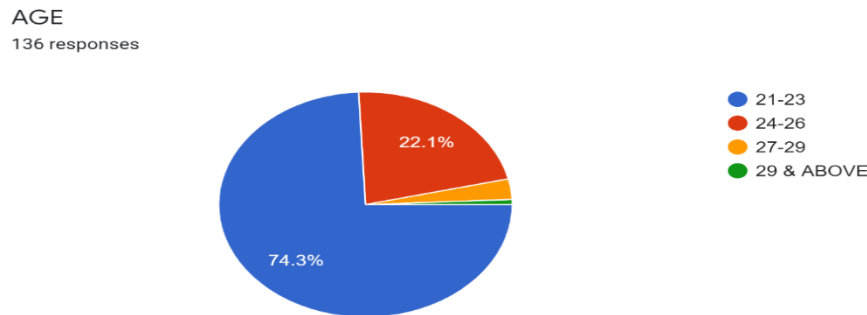
AGE
136 responses

Fig 2 Age group of respondents

The below chart projects the gender of the respondents where almost 60% were male and rest were female which is represented in Fig 3
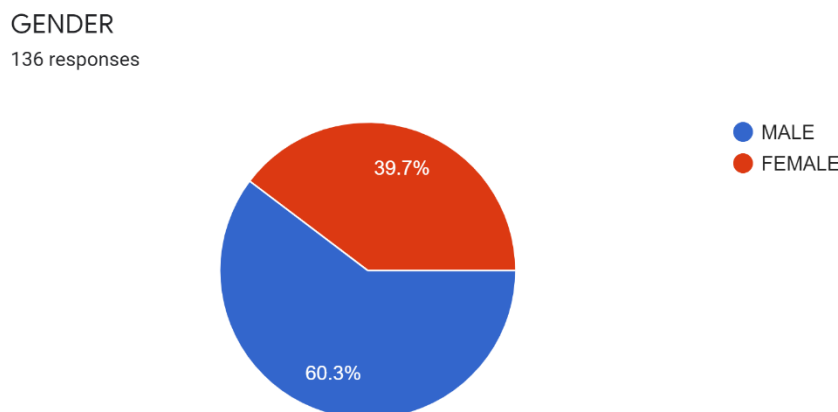
GENDER
136 responses

Fig 3 Gender of the respondents

The other demographic factors which were collected from the questionnaire were MBA specializations and the period of internship the respondent have undertaken which is represented in fig 4 & fig 5 as below
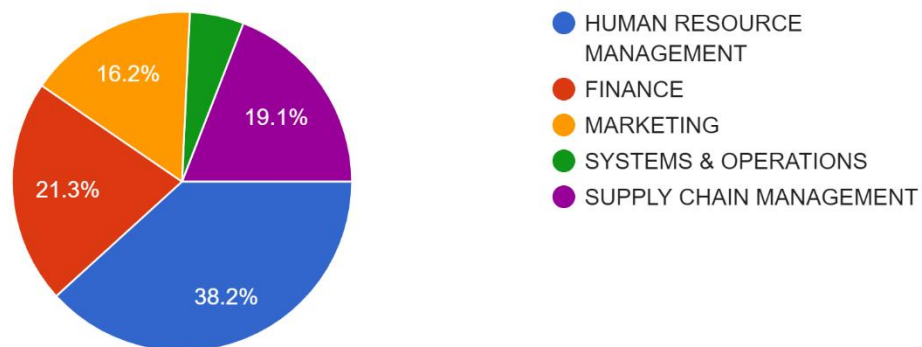
MBA SPECIALIZATION

136 responses

- ● HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
- ● FINANCE
- ● MARKETING
- ● SYSTEMS & OPERATIONS
- ● SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Fig 4 MBA specialization of the participants

PERIOD OF INTERNSHIP

136 responses
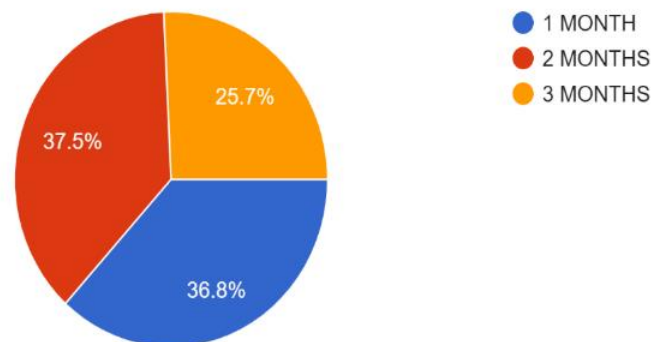

- ● 1 MONTH
- ● 2 MONTHS
- ● 3 MONTHS

Fig 5 Period of Internship appeared by the participants

The other part of the questionnaire was analysed using SEM-PLS to explore the influence of selected independent variables with dependent variable. (Ong et al., 2019)

The factor loading was marked as shown in the fig 6 and the result of bootstrapping 1000 replications of the same is show in the fig 7. It is done as to find out the path coefficient(Henseler et al., 2015)
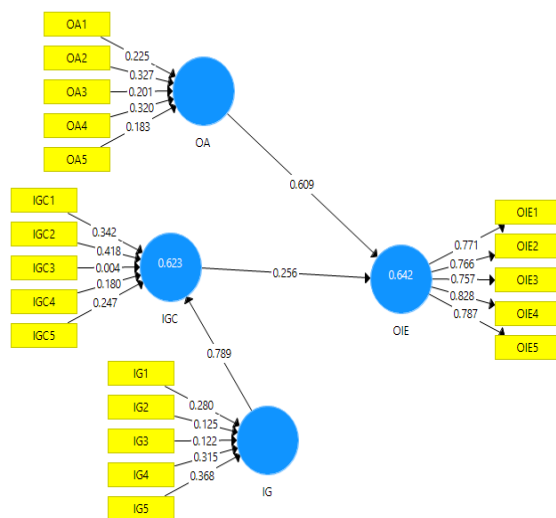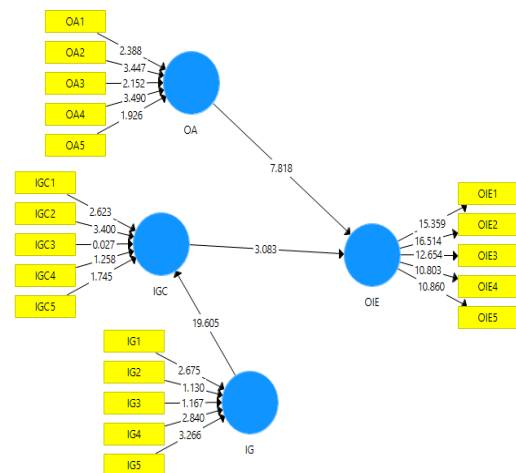
Fig 6 Factor Loading

Fig 7 Bootstrapping

Based on the findings derived from factor loadings and Bootstrapping assessment we can very well say that if Online Assistance (OA) provided by the company and Industry Guides Competency (IGC) and Instructional Guidelines (IG) are clear and functioning well the student will feel Online Internship is Effective (OIE). Further we can find from the path coefficient that Online Assistance provided by the company has more influences on Online Internship Effectiveness.

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
IG -> IGC	0.789	0.803	0.040	19.601	0.000
IGC -> OIE	0.256	0.258	0.085	3.012	0.003
OA -> OIE	0.609	0.603	0.081	7.557	0.000

Table 1 Path Coefficient of the proposed variables

The above table 1 of path coefficient shows that Online Assistance (OA) provided by the company has a significant influence over Online Internship Effectiveness (OIE) which is supported by H1. Industry Guides Competency (IGC) provided by the company has significant influence over Online Internship Effectiveness (OIE) which is supported by H2. Instructional Guidelines (IG) provided by the company has significant influence over Online Internship Effectiveness (OIE) which is supported by H3. Further P values Extracted from the table is less than $P < 0.05$ which indicates significant influence of the independent variable over the identified dependent variable.(Joseph et al., 2014)

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
OIE	0.888	0.888	0.887	0.612

Table 2: reliability and validity score derived from questionnaire

The Table 2 of Reliability test shows that both Cronbach's alpha & Composite reliability are more than 0.7 (i.e.) .888 & .887 respectively which is considered as

very high validity (Joseph et al., 2014). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is more than .5 which shows that measurement model meets the validity criteria as per unidimensionality concept.(Ong et al., 2019)

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.048	0.053
d_ULS	0.482	0.583
d_G	0.405	0.416
Chi-Square	270.001	275.241
NFI	0.867	0.865

Table 3: Output of Model fit analysis

The table 3 shows that the value of SRMR <0.08 (i.e.) 0.053 and d_ULS< HI95, d_G<HI95 , NFI is closer to 0.9 (i.e.) 0.865 which shows that the identified variables are fitting with the established model.(Benitez et al., 2020)

	IG	IGC	OA	OIE
IG				
IGC	0.789			
OA	0.759	0.657		
OIE	0.717	0.656	0.778	0.782

Table 4: Discriminant analysis derived from PLS-SEM

Discriminant validity is to find out whether the two latent variables are significantly sufficient to obtain the same we should get values below 0.85 hence we can assure that the variables are significantly sufficient as all values in table 4 is less than 0.85(Benitez et al., 2020)

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
IGC	0.623	0.62
OIE	0.642	0.636

Table 5: R Squared derived from PLS-SEM

The table 5 shows that R squared is greater than 0.5 which shows that the independent value has a significant influence over the dependent value as the values are above 0.6(Joseph et al., 2014)

	IG	IGC	OA	OIE
IG		1.655		
IGC				0.104
OA				0.588
OIE				

Table 6: F squared derived from PLS-SEM

The table 6 shows the output of F squared. Normally it is considered that if $f^2 < 0.020$: no substantial effect $0.020 \leq f^2 < 0.150$: weak effect size $0.150 \leq f^2 < 0.350$: medium effect size $f^2 \geq 0.350$: large effect size (Benitez et al., 2020) from the given table we can find that there is large effect size for OA .588 and IG 1.655

Thus, with the help of SEM-PLS we were able to obtain those results which clearly depicts that Online Assistance Provided by the company, the Instructional Guidelines given by the company and the Industry Guides Competency has significant impact on making the Online Internship Effective

SUGGESTIONS AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

❖ In order to make online Internship more effective Online Assistance should be given with proper care and concern

❖ In order to make online Internship more effective Instructional Guidelines given by the company should be clear and specific

❖ In order to make online Internship more effective Industry Guides Competency should be at par and he should be updated with the current trends in the market and should provide necessary information to the interns

❖ This research article has been tested with individuals who take up Internship programme online from MBA students alone it can be further studied with people taking up internship with other courses and streams

4. CONCLUSION

This detailed research article has shown positive results on the effectiveness of MBA students taking up online Internship. From the findings and suggestions, we can make a positive note that if the online assistance provided by the company scale up to the required knowledge level and skillset of students to perform their tenure of internship. The result will be an effective impact on online internship. Similarly, Industry guides competency level should match the required fulfilment of students to apply their theoretical knowledge with the practical exposure during Internship and they should also be motivated enough to perform and acquire vast knowledge from the industry to an optimum level which will help in making the Online Internship programme more feasible and successful in future.

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