How They Perceive Their Internship Programme: An Empirical Analysis on Undergraduates of B.Sc. Accounting (Special) Degree Programme of University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Dissanayaka Mudiyanselage Gayan Lahiru Dissanayaka

Index No.: CPM 9577

Registration No.: MC 66501

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of B.Sc. Accounting (Special) under the subject of Research Report in Accounting (ACC 4326), Department of Accounting, University of Sri Jayewardenepura,

January, 2016

Abstract

Purpose: An internship programme is an important aspect of an academic curriculum in higher learning institutions for Accounting disciplines. The objective of this empirical study is to evaluate the perceptions of undergraduates on the internship programme of Department of Accounting, University of Sri Jayewardenepura and to identify whether an expectation gap exists in relation to the internship programme from different dimensions (i.e. Internship unit[1], Internship provider[2], Financial compensation[3], Personal capacity skills[4], Managerial decision making skills[5], Finance and accounting related skills[6], Future career and Job marketability[7], Academic participation and performance[8], Knowledge, attitude and theoretical application[9] and Moral responsibilities and life-long learning[10])

Design/methodology/approach: The study is an empirical study on positivist approach by using cross sectional design and data was collected through self-completion questionnaires. A systematic literature review was conducted in the research arena without placing a time restriction.

Findings: Even though the undergraduates positively (above average) perceive the internship programme, an expectation gap exists in every dimension, which is statistically significant based on the t-tests and One-way ANOVA analyses. The regression results indicated that there is a significant association among finance and accounting related skills and job marketability and future career and overall satisfaction of undergraduates regarding the internship programme.

Value: In the local context it is observed that there is a lack of research related to internship programmes in academic degree programmes and this study is expected to fill such research gap. Further, this study will assist to improve the Accounting internship programme of University Sri Jayewardenepura and internship programmes in other contexts.

Keywords: Accounting Degree programmes, Expectation Gap, Internship programmes, Skills

Declaration of the Student

"The work described in this research report was carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. A. R. Ajward and a report on this has not been submitted in whole or in part to any university or any other institution for another Degree/Diploma."

15.02.2016

Signature of the Student **Date**

Declaration of the Supervisor

"I certify that the above statement made by the candidate is true and that this research report is suitable for submission to the university for the purpose of evaluation."

…… **…….**

Signature of the Supervisor **Date**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research project report is dedicated specially for my research supervisor, Dr. Roshan Ajward, the Head of the Department, Dr. W.G.S. Kelum, to my parents and to my sister, to the Department of Accounting in University of Sri Jayewardenepura and to all those who supported to make this a success. And I make this an opportunity to pay my gratitude to the whole society for being generous to provide free education for undergraduates.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Table of Figures

List of Abbreviation

American Accounting Association	AAA
Centre for Accounting Internship and Skill Development	CAISD
Certified Institute of Management Accountants	CIMA
Certified Public Accountants	CPA
Chartered Accountancy	CA
Degree of Agreement	DA
Degree of Importance	DI
Department of Accounting	DOA
Faculty of Management Science & Commerce	FMSC
Grade Point Average	GPA
Skill Development Program of Intern Accountants	SPDIA
University of Sri Jayewardenepura	USJP
Work Based Learning	WBL

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

Internships are popular element in almost all education programmes: Accounting, Medicine, IT, Tourism, Law and etc. At present internship training has taken a crucial part in university courses for undergraduates as it sets out the practical application of theoretical knowledge. Considering the importance of learning through experience (Work Based Learning, WBL), undergraduates are encouraged to undergo such training as it allocates credits for the degree program. For some courses it has been made compulsory to undergo internship training, in order to develop a fully versatile graduate. According to Titley (1984), as cited by Kasli and Ilban (2013) an internship encapsulates following features:

1. It is a learning experience that deals with the reality of professional practice
2. It follows other theoretical and practical aspects of preparation
3. It is normally a terminal experience - the last stage before the granting of full professional status
4. It is an experience that is subject to evaluation by qualified practitioners
5. Though under supervision, the internship must also entail full-fledged decision making and its concomitant professional responsibility (p.81)

Most of the degree programmes required their undergraduates to attend in an internship before completing their course unit as it will smoothen the transition from the academic world to the corporate world.

The “Accounting internships” within the context of “Internships” are also having the same characteristics mentioned above. The formal accounting internships were dated back to 1940s (Thompson, 2011). The accounting education should give the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to accounting undergraduates, where internships will assist for such motive. As per the American Accounting Association (AAA, 1955) the three objectives of an accounting internships programme are: enabling the student to approach learning with a greater sense of purpose and value, allowing the student to gain maturity and confidence and helping the school place graduates and providing a desirable trial period to the advantage of both intern and internship provider (Thompson, 2011). The Accounting Education Change Commission (AECC) in United

States has identified that the accounting education should lay down the foundation for lifelong learning.

The current empirical study was conducted with a view of identifying the perception of accounting undergraduates regarding their internship programme and identifying whether there is expectation gap regarding the internship programme. The study is limited to the accounting internship programme of University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJP).

1.1 The Accounting Internship Programme of University of Sri Jayewardenepura

The University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJP) is a government university which offers free education and it consists of five faculties. The cream of the cream from G.C.E. Advanced Level examination in Commerce stream enters the Faculty of Management Science & Commerce (FMSC) and it is known for generating quality graduates. There are twelve departments in FMSC. The Department of Accounting (DOA) offers Bachelor of Science (special) Degree in Accounting.

The internship programme of DOA was named as "Skill Development Program of Intern Accountants (SDPIA)" (Department of Accounting, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, n.d.). The initial programme was started in 1994 and SDPIA is an extended version of the original programme developed as per the requirement of the interns. The SDPIA is conducted by the Centre for Accounting Internship and Skill Development (CAISD) and the following broad skills are emphasised under the programme.

1. Accounting and financial management (subject specific) skills
2. Management and personal capacity skills
3. Communication skills
4. Knowledge seeking and learning to learn skills

The accounting internship programme is a part of the of the SDPIA. The undergraduates are allowed to start an internship from third year first semester onwards and it is mandatory in last three semesters. The minimum required internship hours per semester, is 400 hours and the marks are allocated to a single course where method of

evaluation is based on a training record book, evaluation by internship provider at the end of semester and reflective journals. The mode of evaluation differs based on the skills identified above. The full course contains 12 credit hours of the total 120 credit hours of the degree (Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, 2012). The marks allocated for the Internship programme within the SDPIA course differs from among semesters. During the internship period the lectures are held from 6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. during weekdays and tutorial classes are held 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. on Saturdays. The semester-end examinations are conducted during weekends. Therefore, it is not recommended to obtain an internship in outstation organizations during the degree course. Interns are required to meet an internship coordinator at least once a month (Department of Accounting, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, n.d.).

Most of the undergraduates participate for the internship at the beginning of third year. The CAISD assists undergraduates to find internship opportunities. The undergraduates have the option to select their internship provider. In Sri Lankan context it is not common to see that business organization are providing structured internship programmes for undergraduates. But there are structured internship programmes in blue chip companies. Nonetheless everyone does not get such opportunities. For most of the business firms as well as for undergraduates it is a mere employment contract. As the internship provider, most of the undergraduates opted public practice while others are engaging in non-public practice. In practical context all most all undergraduates continue with internship at a stretch for two years (third & fourth year). They cover internship hours well ahead of the minimum requirement. The internship plays a vital role in undergraduate life during the degree period, where it may have a behavioural effect on undergraduates. Undergraduate spends nearly 40 hours per week for the internship but only 18 hours are allocated for the lectures within a week.

1.2 Problem Statement

The research problem, “How the accounting undergraduates perceive their internship experience?” was selected for the current study. The selection the research problem regarding accounting undergraduate internship programme was driven by the personal experience, the researcher gained during the two years of internship period as an

accounting undergraduate (Bryman, 2012). It is seen that undergraduates encounter different issues during the internship period such as obtaining lower academic results, lack of concentration in academic studies, leaving the degree programme and etc. In despite of these hardships, the accounting internships are demanded by the accounting undergraduates. Therefore, it was decided to cover up possible dimension of perception on accounting internship programmes from the view point of the intern. With the personal experience coupled with the conflicting perception of individual interns and the perception of interns at large, the researcher was motivated in selecting the "Perception" aspect of the accounting interns. It is assumed that the perception would assist in describing the phenomena of "Accounting undergraduate internship".

In this study the main motive was to describe the internship programme based on undergraduate perception. As a secondary motive the researcher was interested in identifying an expectation gap between expectation and real experience. It is believed that the two questions are related to each other and it would not harm the focus of the researcher (Bryman, 2012).

1.2.1 Evaluation of the research problems

The selected two research questions are strongly related to each other. First, the perception was identified based on current experience and then the non-congruency of expectation was addressed with related to perception and expectation. There are number previous studies conducted in this arena and they are lack in covering many dimensions, and the researched accounting internship programme was different from the accounting internship model adopted by Department of Accounting in University of Sri Jayewardenepura. It is believed that a reasonably significant contribution was made to the research area as per the number of dimensions covered and the identity in internship programme (Bryman, 2012).

With the aim of addressing the questions more meaningfully dimensions of the perception were identified. Then for answering the research questions the dimensions were used. The main research questions were further drilled down and the following four specific research questions were identified.

1.3 Research Questions

With reference to the problem statement following research questions were identified as it guides the research objectives related to the B.Sc. Accounting (Special) Degree programme of University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

1. What are the dimensions of the internship programme as perceived by interns in an academic degree programme?
2. Do the accounting undergraduates of the Department of Accounting, University of Sri Jayewardenepura positively perceive the accounting internship programme?
3. Is there an expectation gap arise due to the difference between the current experience and the expectations on the accounting internship programme?
4. Does the perception on the accounting internship programme significantly differ based on the demographical factors?
5. What are significant dimensions of the accounting internship programme that affect overall satisfaction on internship?

1.4 Research Objectives

The following research objectives were identified based on the research questions. It is assumed that the following objectives will guide the Literature review and the Data analysis.

1. To identify the dimensions of the internship programme as perceived by interns in an academic degree programme
2. To identify the dimensions that are positively perceived by the accounting undergraduates attached to the accounting internship programme
3. To identify the internship expectation gap with relevant to the dimensions.
4. To identify the significant differences in expectation gap based on the demographical factors
5. To identify the significant dimensions that are affecting the satisfaction on the accounting internship programme.

1.5 Significance of the study

The significance of the study is discussed under following sub topics.

1.5.1 Theoretical

There is a lack of research in the area of undergraduate internships in developing countries. Even though some studies were conducted in Malaysia, the researcher observes that there is a lack of research in other developing countries. Therefore, it is believed that this research would fill the gap to a certain extent as Sri Lanka is being a developing country.

1.5.2 Empirical

Education plays a vital role in developing a versatile graduates and workforce. Sri Lanka is considered as a country high literacy in lieu of free education. Universities play an important role in tertiary education in Sri Lanka. In tertiary education internships are important in developing competent graduates. There is a lack of research in the area on undergraduate internships in local context.

1.5.3 Practical

In local context, only a single study was conducted to identify the expectation gap regarding accounting internship programme and it was not strong. None of these studies have considered the perception on effective academic participation and academic performance from the view point of intern. With reference to previous studies conducted in other countries it is clear that policy decisions on better implementation of internship programs are essential to gain the benefits out of the internship programme, as mixed results were obtained through research. A strong foundation is required to make a social discussion regarding the internship programme under consideration. It is believed that the study will assists in taking a step ahead to make a social discussion about the internships. And further, it is believed the study will be useful to improve the future accounting internship programmes in University of Sri Jayewardenepura and quality of academics as USJP is being one of the major institute providing management studies in Sri Lanka.

1.6 Scope of the study

The scope of the study is limited to 4th year undergraduate interns in Department of Accounting of University of Sri Jayewardenepura and the accounting internship programme was evaluated from the perspective of the intern. The data collection was limited to self-completed questionnaires.

1.7 Chapter framework

This chapter emphasize on introducing the study, including stating the problem, to the reader. The second chapter systematically reviews of the existing literature in the research arena. The third chapter is about the methodology and methods applied in answering the research question. The fourth chapter consists of extensive analysis of the gathered data and the fifth chapter briefs the findings and conclusion.

Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review identifies how contributions to the literature relate to each other and to reported research, and then it synthesises the findings. The technique of systematic review [1] on existing literature in the arena was used, rather than concentrating on Meta-Analysis [2] or Meta-Ethnography [3]. Both the qualitative and quantitative studies are considered in this review. The main objective was to identify different dimensions of the research domain and to identify the variables for the research questionnaire. No time restriction was placed for the literature review.

2.2 Definitions

As per Oxford dictionary an internship is "The position of a student or trainee who works in an organization, sometimes without pay, in order to gain work experience or satisfy requirements for a qualification". It is an active learning experience in which students learn by taking on a responsible role as a worker in an organization (Magd & Al Ghazo,2009).

The Oxford dictionary defines perception as "The neurophysiological processes, including memory, by which an organism becomes aware of and interprets external stimuli". There are different methods to study about perception such as arguments, introspection, experimental psychology, neuroscientific methods and computer modelling (Stufflebeam, 2006).

"An accounting internship is a temporary, entry-level accounting position with a company or firm sponsor (Billiot, n.d.)". An accounting internship means that the intern

[1] Systematic review 'aims to minimize bias through exhaustive literature searches of published and unpublished studies and by providing an audit trail of the reviewer's decisions, procedures and conclusions' (Tranfield et al. 2003: 209) as cited by (Bryman, 2012)

[2] Meta-Analysis is a systematic review that considers only quantitative research.

[3] Meta-Ethnography considers only qualitative research in the arena.

gets the chance to enter the real professional world of accounting while in college (Anon., n.d.).

2.3 What are the benefits of internship programmes?

Accounting internships offer benefits for the intern, internship provider and as well as to the university. Benefit to the accounting students were highlighted by American Accounting Association (1952). The identified benefits are,

1. Broader exposure to accounting techniques and problems that are not encountered in the classroom
2. Improving understanding of the business world
3. Improved ability to evaluate and assimilate classroom experiences
4. Getting a better understanding of the theories leaned

Benefits to the interns has been emphasised by many researchers. The increase in subsequent academic performance after the internship placement was highlighted area in this arena which later discussed in the literature review. Both the intern and the internship provider were positively gained through internship (Schambach & Dirks, 2002; Renganathan, et al., 2012). Mihail (2006), through his empirical research claims that co-operative education can be used as a vehicle for linking theoretical knowledge and practice, and enhancing student employability upon graduation. McCombs et. al (1994) claims that active participation in an effective internship arrangement offers more advantages and few disadvantages to an employer. The trend of participating for internships have been increased in recent past. Thompson (2011) identified two main reasons for the increasing trend. Namely, the rise in cost of living including educational cost has persuaded the undergraduates to participate for an internship to cover up living cost. Secondly, the number of hours of training required for the graduation has been increased. The benefits that are gained from the internships, is also having a part to play in this regard.

2.4 Are there any drawbacks in internship programmes?

In despites the advantages of the internship training, an undergraduate may sustain numerous issues and hardships during the internship due to few drawbacks that persists in certain areas. Those issues sometimes may cause disruptions to the course itself, even

to the student or to academic life. On the other hand, as per the experience it seen that undergraduates are engaged in full time employment even though they are labelled as internships or training. The accountability and responsibility in a full time employment could be higher than that of an internship. The full time employment also could be a reason for the drawbacks in internship programmes. Rehwaldt and Vineyard (2001) in their study, categorize the internship issues in to five categories: work place, working hours, insufficient supervision, ignorance about importance of working and wages.

When it comes to stress levels that undergraduates are facing during internship periods, Auburn (2007) titles that it cannot be taken for granted. There might be issues with the internship that may make problems in university studies. Especially in the areas of public practice and even mercantile sector the work load in peak times may create lot of health issues for undergraduates. Even though there are lot of claims towards the benefits gained through internship programs, the perception of the students about the internship programmes are not always positive.

The organizations that provide internship opportunities take it for granted (USM, 2010). Bullock et al. (2009) have argued claiming that using the usual academic criteria it is difficult to trace the benefits of the internship training. In contrast, it was argued by Mansfield (2011) that the effect of the internship on academic performance showed mixed results. As per the studies it is not always proven that internships are advantageous and it is debatable. Calvo (2011) expresses three major issues of internship programmes.

1. The effect of the internship upon academic performance is not clear (p.15)
2. The debate about whether or not skills learned in one context can be transferred into another (p.16)
3. Lack of an accepted model for evaluating the outcomes (p.16)

Further, Calvo (2011, p.18) claims that “Many internship programmes are plagued with problems that apart from making the experience unfulfilling leave a bad taste in the intern’s mouth and deter others from applying in the future”. Kaslı and Ilban (2013, p.2) claims that “the business sector does not provide the necessary attention, compensation, and professional conditions to trainees”.

Empirical studies in the UK have found that even part-time work in combination with class assignments might consequence in feelings of pressure and a sense of being pulled in two directions (Watts & Pickering, 2000; Curtis & Williams, 2002). The accountability and responsibility in a full time employment is higher than that of an internship. The full time employment also could be a reason for the internship issues. Mihail (2006) claims that internship puts a lot of pressure on the intern and at the same time discourage the corporate commitment to the particular internship and further emphasize that full-time employment causes negative impact on their studies. Watts and Pickering (2000) claims that undergraduates face lot of issues, due to fulltime employment with full time studies. The issues were; students were unable concentrate on studies (Holmes,2008), some were not able to participate in extracurricular activities and had caused loss of social relationships. From the above findings, it is clear that internship is not suitable for every context and it has mixed advantageous and as well as disadvantageous results. Therefore, in this study the perception of accounting undergraduates about university internship programme was addressed based on University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

The main research question was "How the accounting undergraduates perceive their internship experience?". The perception could be based on different dimensions. The literature shows mixed result of favourable and unfavourable perception related to different dimensions of the undergraduate internship programme. Those dimensions were discussed with reference to existing literature.

2.5 Dimensions of an internship programme

The dimensions identified based on the literature survey are discussed below

2.5.1 Application of theoretical knowledge in practice

The application of theoretical Knowledge learnt in practice plays an important role during an internship, where the intern thoroughly understands the theories during application and they are highly benefited (Schambach & Dirks, 2002). Even though many argue that internship is a better way to achieve it, there are contradictions. Renganathan, et al. (2012) claims that lesser percentage of undergraduates highly rated the ability to apply theoretical knowledge with practices in industry and further elaborates that application theoretical knowledge in practices was not easily perceived

by undergraduates (Beck & Halim, 2008). The exposure provided by the host company was not always adequate (Warinda, 2013)

2.5.2 Job marketability and future career prospects

When it comes to the decision of attending for internship the undergraduates have high expectation on the effect that it has on their future career. In most of the cases the undergraduates believed that the internship added value to their career life and their expectations were achieved (Muhamad, et al., 2009; Warinda, 2013). The acquisition of industry work culture in adapting to future working environment plays a major role in career and the internship assist for such purpose (Renganathan, et al., 2012; Bakar, et al., 2011). Students received good job offers at the end of internship and it helped to choose the right career path upon graduation (Schambach & Dirks, 2002; Martin & Wilkerson, 2006; Bakar, et al., 2011). Further, due to the internships the undergraduates were able build up good rapport and networking with people in the job market, which increases their job marketability (Muhamad, et al., 2009; Warinda, 2013; Schambach & Dirks, 2002). During recent times the purpose of attending an internship programme has changed from learning through experience to gaining a competitive edge over other competitive job seekers in the market. A meaningful internship would gain that competitive edge over others (Cannon & Arnold, 1998).

2.5.3 Knowledge enhancement

Previous studies on undergraduate perception on internship observed whether the undergraduate knowledge relevant to the accounting, auditing and taxation enhanced due to the internship. Muhamad, et al. (2009) claims that the knowledge in above fields enhanced except for the knowledge in auditing and not getting exposure to technology. Similar studies were carried out by other reserachers where the ratings were less than career and skills related dimensions in study of (Bakar, et al., 2011) . The expectations were exceeded on ehnhancing knowledge of information systems and corporate finance (Warinda, 2013).

A qualitative exploratory study based on interviews, was carried by Holyoak (2013) and four internship categories (Figure 1) were identified: optimal conditions for learning, intern non-development, supervisor frustration and mutual dissatisfaction. In

his study he comprehensively explains the four internship categories based on the below diagram.

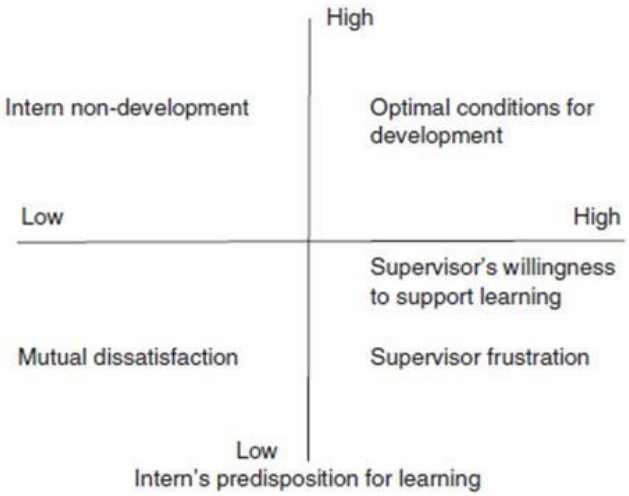

Figure 1 Internship Categorisation
Source : Holyoak (2013)

2.5.4 Host company

During an academic semester the undergraduates spends most of the time within a day in the internship organization. The quality of the internship programme is highly dependent with the selection of quality firms to host the interns (Liu, 2012). In that case the support given by the internship provider is crucial to the success of internship. The working conditions, experience, availability of structures training programme, opportunities for training etc. considered to be important factors on perception of internship (Renganathan, et al., 2012; Karunaratne & Perera, 2015). According to the studies the host company was rated above average, lowest ratings available for well-structured training programme and the undergraduates believed that they had a real job experience (Renganathan, et al., 2012). In some cases, the organization support was inconsistence due to higher variability in the ratings (Karunaratne & Perera, 2015).

2.5.5 Internship unit and pre-placement operations

The operations of Internship unit play major role in internship programme. It begins its operation even before commencing the internship. The Internship Unit provides briefings and guidelines to the undergraduates before selecting an internship provider, facilitate to find internship opportunities and evaluate the internship in each semester

based on the feedback provided by the host company supervisor. The commitment of programme administrators to make the internship a success, is admirable. As post placement operations the it need to attend the arising issues promptly, and maintain a good rapport with students and the internship provider. As per the previous studies it claims that the perception on Internship unit and efficiency of its operations were positive (Renganathan, et al., 2012; Karunaratne & Perera, 2015).

2.5.6 Skills developed through an internship programme

The skill set developed through internship, as an outcome includes Technical, Managerial, Interpersonal, Analytical and other Soft skills. A comprehensive study on skills developed through Accounting internship programme is essential to identify what skills are developed through the internship. The technical skills include skills such as preparation and evaluation of financial statements, applicability of relevant accounting standards and Tax related skills. Computer skills continuously has been becoming an essential skill for any profession including Accountants.

The soft skills, as defined by Oxford dictionaries, are "personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people". Soft skills as essentials refers to the soft behavioural skills required in the workplace. Soft skills are defined as the "interpersonal, human, people or behavioural skills needed to apply technical skills and knowledge in the workplace" (Weber et al. 2009, cited in Ilias, et al. 2012,p.1). Among the soft skills developed through internship, teamwork plays a vital role. The skills relevant to coordination, decision making, leadership, interpersonal skills, adaptability and communication were considered under single umbrella term of Teamwork (Ilias, et al., 2012) , some researchers have considered the same as separate skills (Ruhanita, et al., 2014). Soft skills include, but not limited to, ability to meet deadlines, time management, problem solving, ability to cope with stress, creative thinking and active listening etc. While some people consider soft skills the intangibles, these skills are quickly becoming a requirement that drives tangible and measurable increases in personal productivity and directly translates to sustainable competitive advantage in a global marketplace (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007).

Ruhanita et al. (2014) claims that all three groups of stakeholders: Student, University and Employer, perceived that students benefit from the internship where both the

technical and soft skills required in the marketplace were developed. However, the mean score and ranking differ among the parties. In her study the students perceived time management, oral communication and working in group as the highly developed soft skills due to internship.

2.5.7 Compensation during the internship programme

Schambach and Dirks (2002) in 'Student Perceptions of Internship Experiences', has stressed that a unanimous favourable feedback were received from undergraduates on their internship experience, though majority (52.9%) did not strongly agree on the financial compensation (averagely $40,000 per year) received (Bakar, et al., 2011). In Sri Lankan context since labour is considered being cheap, in practical scenario a correlation could not be seen between the work performed and the compensation received during an internship.

2.5.8 Academic performance

Most of the studies that were previously conducted are based on the assumption that the internship would improve the Academic results due to the benefits gained out of the internship. Studies on the effects of student performance, as measured by Grade Point Average (GPA), have been limited and have mixed results (Walker, 2011). Positive correlation between the subsequent academic performance and the internship can be seen in recent studies.

As per the first most existing record on a study regarding internship and academic performance, it tested the hypothesis that when measured by GPA students improve academically following participation in internship Programme (Koehler, 1974). The study was conducted based on 226 undergraduates and GPA at graduation and GPA prior to internship were measured. The result was that Pennsylvania State University students, both accounting and general grades improved following an internship experience.

An empirical study on effects internship on academic performance of selected accounting subject areas, by forming a control group, was conducted by Knechel & Snowball (1987) and it was found a significant decrease in academic results (cumulative GPA) of both intern and non-intern groups due to motivational effects. The

only area that was benefited by the interns is Auditing subject (Duignan, 2005). The control group (non-intern) was selected based on a paired matching method by comparing three criteria. The matched paired method of selecting the control group was used to overcome the inherent academic differences between the two groups (Ebied, 2004). The GPA of Accounting, Business and Non business courses were obtained for pre and post internship and analysed with internship hours. There were instances contradictory where GPA of accounting courses showed significantly increase during post internship period for the intern group (Ebied, 2004).

Further research elaborates that there is a positive impact on GPA of students who participate in internship, despite the hardships & issues during the course when compared to that of full time undergraduates (Surridge, 2009; Walker, 2011; Thilakerathne & Madurapperuma, 2014). Different factors were correlated with the academic performance: Gender, High school performance, Type of course and two interactive term results. internship participation and timing of internship. Gender, Internship marks, Advance Level Z-score and Up to 3rd year Average GPA**.**

As per the empirical study conducted by Koh and Koh (1999), 'The determinants of performance in an accountancy degree programme', it was shown that the working experience has a significant positive correlation with the academic performance of accounting undergraduates. As per his study the determinants of academic performance are gender, prior accounting knowledge, academic aptitude, mathematics background, previous working experience and age. The choice of an internship placement during the degree programme is claimed as a wise decision (Mandilaras, 2004). His study was based on economic undergraduates where the factors that influence academic performance is tested while disbursing special attention to the role of industrial placement. Variables included placement, Advanced level subject choice, gender, prior study of mathematics, prior study of economics and nationality.

The academic performance when correlated with internship participation the results were mixed in different situations (Duignan, 2005). *Learning Environment Placement architecture,* the subsequent academic performance of the undergraduates was significantly different from those who had not attended placement; under the *working environment placement Architecture,* the subsequent academic performance of the

undergraduates was not significantly different from those who had not attended placement. Under learning environment all the support from preparing resume (curriculum vitae) to solve internship issues were given by the college and the evaluation was comprehensive. Under work environment only a report was provided at the end of placement period (Duignan, 2005).

2.6 Theoretical framework of the internship model

Different key roles are played by different parties in making an internship programme a success (Figure 2). The key players include university/department, undergraduate and the employer. The department is responsible for initiating, maintaining the programme while improving it. The undergraduates have to ensure that they making the correct decision as per their career objective. Employers provide an effective learning programme to the undergraduates. (Divine, et al., 2008; Ruhanita, et al., 2014).

When deciding on the internship programme the department need to consider following philosophical aspects of the internship (Divine, et al., 2008): required vs. elective, managing/not managing the placement process, pass/fail vs. graded internships, full-time vs. part-time internships and placement assistance.

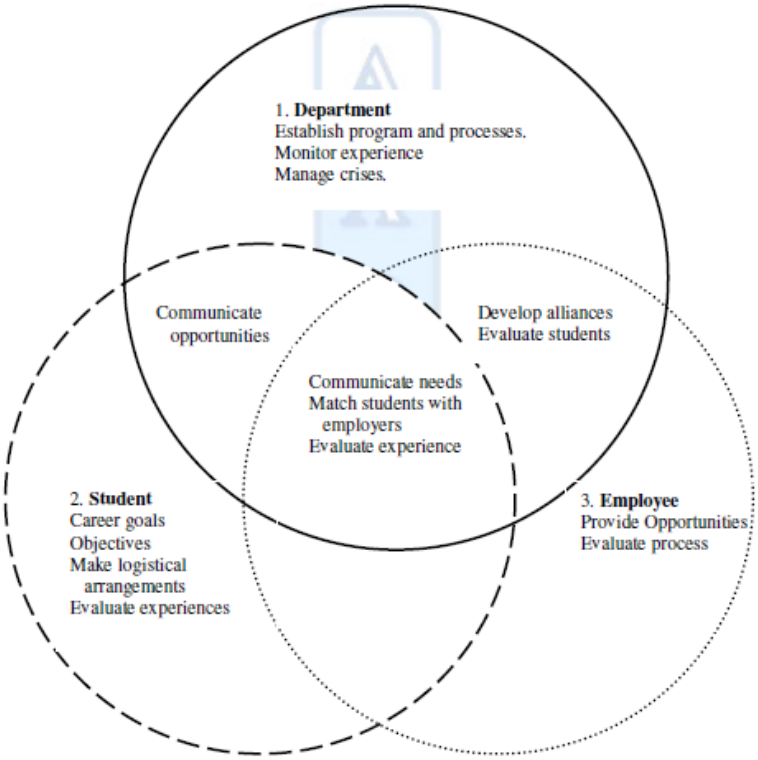

Figure 2 Roles of university/department, student, and employee in an internship programme
Source: Divine, et al.(2008)

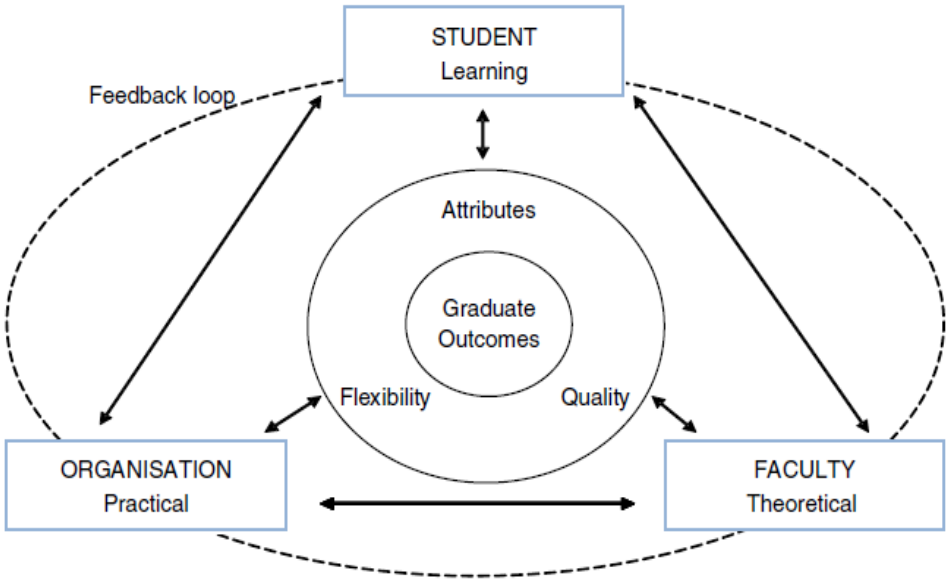

Figure 3 Model of internship programme
Source: Clements and Cord (2011) as cited by Ruhanita, et al.(2014)

This model was introduced by Clements and Cord (2011), and this explains the interrelationship among the relevant parties to an internship programme. The overall performance of the undergraduates is dependent on learning, practice and theory. The communication among the three parties is the key to success of the internship programme, where the feedback loop represents the communication (Ruhanita, et al., 2014). The researchers have consistently depicted the importance all three parties in making the internship a success. The present study identifies the need to observe the student perception about the internship programme from different dimensions. Only the perspective of intern was selected for the study due to time and resource limitations.

2.7 Satisfaction of the intern regarding internship programme

D'Abate, et al. (2009) stated that gender, GPA and class year were not significant on deciding the undergraduate satisfaction on internships and the undergraduates showed a relatively high satisfaction about their internship. In this study the satisfaction was measured based on detail list of variables related to job satisfaction, job characteristics, work environment and contextual factors. The job characteristics and work environment had placed a significant contribution in deciding the internship satisfaction. Further study claims that the students are satisfied with the Certified Public Accountants (CPA) firm accounting internship, as they feel comfortable with the internship schedules and perceive the learning and socialization effects of their CPA intern practices very favourably. The survey was based on Structural Equation Model (SEM) to describe the student satisfaction.

2.8 An employment or an internship?

As per the nature of accounting internship under consideration, rather than an internship it could be characterized as an employment. In another angle the employment/internship of undergraduates might be driven by various reasons: finance, attitude, values, life style and etc. Either the undergraduates may desire to engage in an employment or they may have to cover up the cost of living. In recent times undergraduate employment has become a permeant feature of university system, where society could not regret it (Holmes, 2008; Callender, 2008). Most of the undergraduates are engaged in employment to cover up their basic essentials. Some are coping well with both roles.

> "…..some students are not coping with these dual roles and it is now the responsibility of universities to support students in these changing times." (Holmes, p.312, 2008)

The academic education is being changing to a complex nature and the academic system is fundamentally different from what existed recent past (Watts, 2002). When the universities recruit undergraduates who are deprived in a certain level, it must ensure that the universities have the systems to resolve the issues. Some undergraduates were frustrated that they could not do best during their academics due to the employment. But not everyone perceives the things in same (Watts & Pickering, 2000; Manthei & Gilmore, 2005).

2.9 Expectation gap and changes in perception regarding internship programme

There were only limited number of research conducted in order to identify an expectation gap on internship programme. In certain studies, it was found that the undergraduate expectation was met with regards to academic performance, career and knowledge (Muhamad, et al., 2009; Martin & Wilkerson, 2006). But in those studies the dimensions were not explicitly mentioned. A longitudinal study based on perception on four dimensions: career, soft skills, incentives, and knowledge-practical/technical competence, enlightened that the most of the undergraduate expectations were not met through the internship, especially on career (Warinda, 2013). Further claims that,

> 'The institution of internship was the source of significant variations on questions to do with technical and functional skills with respect to cost accounting and control where accounting/auditing and non-governmental organisations fared badly in providing students with valuable hands on experience.' (p.795)

A study on potential benefits and challenges faced by undergraduates was conducted by Bukaliya (2012) and stated that there are benefits as well as challenges with regard to internship placement. (Kasli & Ilban, 2013) suggested that there is no significant evidence to say that problems faced during internship had a bad perception on intention to work in tourism industry. But a significant negative relationship was found between problems faced during internship perception about profession.

Study carried out on internship of management undergraduates following suggestions were made to improve internship placement (Kim, et al., 2012).

1. Make the internship course a required course (or required elective course)
2. Students should have permission to waive an internship course instead of taking one
3. Encourage employers to actively participate in the internship programme
4. Make students write weekly journals
5. Have a classroom presentation on problem solving experiences in internship work
6. Establish appropriate prerequisites to enhance student's internship experience
7. Fully dedicated instructor to supervise interning students (p.705)

2.10 Summary

Even though there are number of research studies conducted in this regard, they have not considered the Academic dimension of the Internship when identifying the perception of internship programme. On the other hand, research regarding expectation gap of accounting internship were lack. Many studies have found that the academic performance have improved due to the internship. But, the structure of the internship programme under research was completely different from previous studies under consideration.

Chapter 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to understand the perception of the undergraduate internship programme offered by Department of Accounting of USJP. The methodology used is a deductive form where theories and hypotheses are tested in a cause-and-effect analysis. Concepts, variables, indicators and hypotheses are chosen before the study began and will be remained fixed throughout the study. The ultimate intent of the study is to cultivate generalizations that would underwrite to improve theory and enable to understand, forecast and enlighten the scenario. We assume that the conclusion of the research would provide support in deciding on internship programmes for course designers and undergraduates to take a better choice on internships participation.

3.1 Methodology

This chapter gives the idea about how the research question was addressed and the assumption that researcher made about social world. Positivistic or quantitative research methodology was used for the research and it is based on hypothetical deductive method. The main research problem was “How the accounting undergraduates perceive their internship experience?”.

Among the philosophical assumptions it is believed that the present study is more curved towards the constructivism-ontological position as it is seen that perception on the accounting internship is not external to intern, but are built up and constituted in and through social interaction called engaging in getting on-site work experience as part of degree programme. There for it is assumed that the perception on internship may change from intern to intern and the intern create his/her own reality based on the experience gained through engaging in an employment while remaining as an undergraduate. The perception about the internship was obtained through statements relevant to different dimensions and it was quantified.

3.2 Conceptual Diagrams

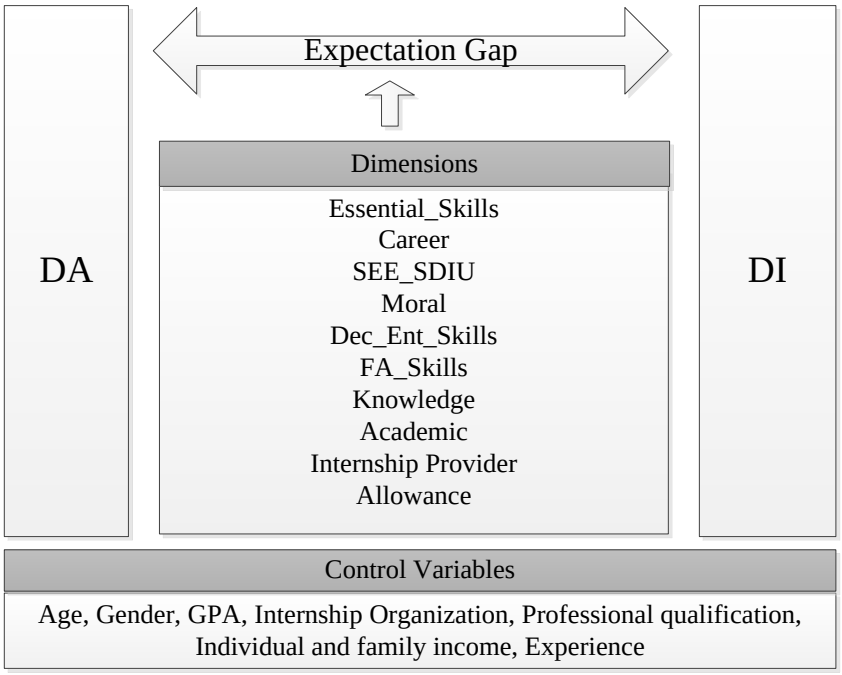

Figure 4 Expectation gap on the internship programme with relevant to dimensions
Source: Author constructed

The above figure explains how the expectation gap was identified with regard to the dimensions. The difference between the Degree of Agreement (DA) and the Degree of Importance (DI) was identified as expectation gap. The demographical factors were considered as control variables.

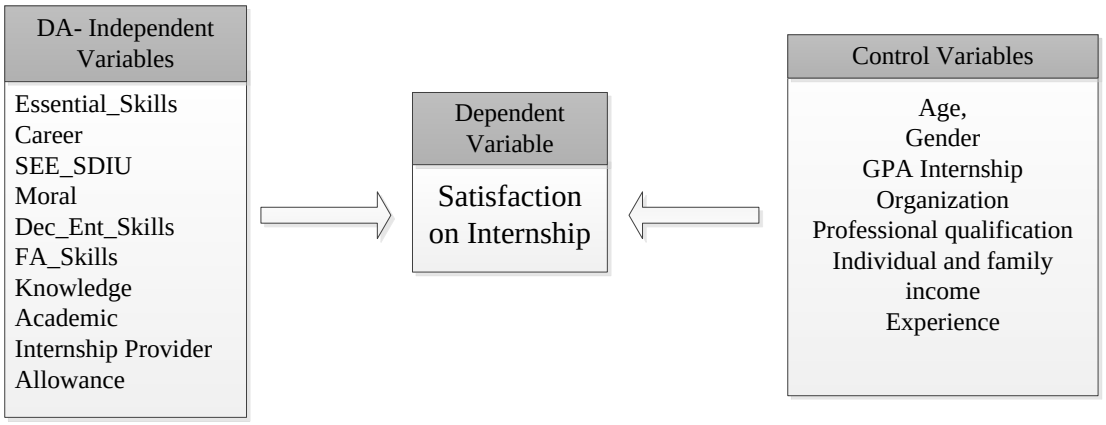

Figure 5 The relationship between the dimensions and satisfaction on accounting internship programme
Source: Author constructed

Figure 5 explains regression model of overall satisfaction of interns regarding the accounting internship programme and the dimensions, and the demographical factors

were identified as control variables. Figure 6 shows the relationship between the overall satisfaction of interns regarding the accounting internship programme and the expectation gap.

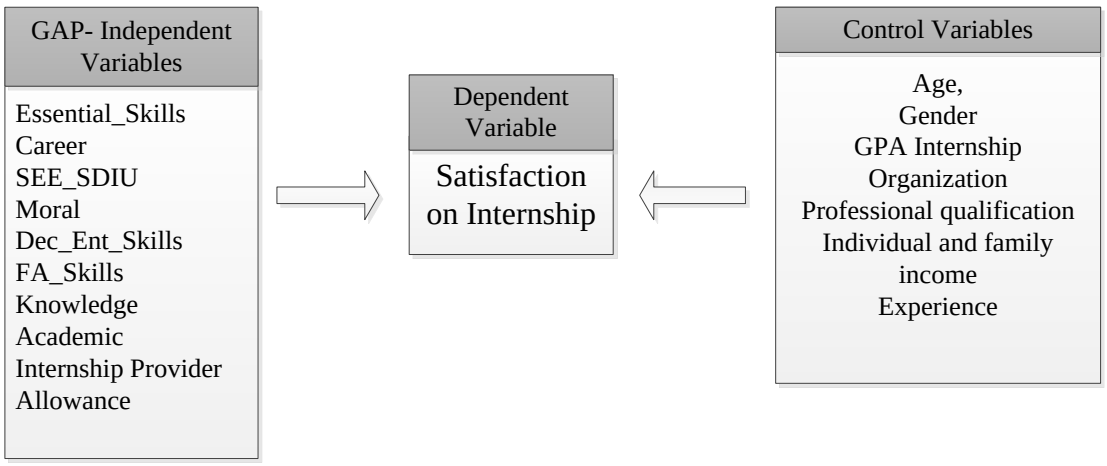

Figure 6 The relationship between the satisfaction and Expectation GAP on the internship programme
Source: Author constructed

3.3 Design

The research design used is cross-sectional design that surveys many participants at a single point in time. The major reason for use of cross sectional design is the inability to control the variables as per the requirement of the researcher. In a cross-sectional design, the data could be easily quantifiable and analysed, then relationships can be generated. The study takes the form of "Descriptive statistical study". The cross sectional design was selected due to the limitations on controllability of variables and resources.

3.4 Population and Study Sample

The target population of this study is accounting undergraduates of University of Sri Jayewardenepura, who are following B.Sc. Degree in Accounting (special). First the population is stratified based on the academic year and the 4th Year accounting undergraduates were selected as the sample. The reason for selecting the 4th year undergraduates as the sample is that they are the most experienced undergraduates in

the Department of Accounting at the given point of time in terms of internship participation. There for it is believed that the initiation point is non-probability sampling technique where sample was selected based on judgment and rationalization.

3.5 Preparation of questionnaire

In preparing the questionnaire existing literature was used. Below table shows the sources of the statements and variables selected for the questionnaire. As per the literature review, the following (Table1) demographical factors are identified. The ethnicity/race was not considered in this study. Further, the position held as an intern, family and individual income level were considered as demographical variables.

Table 1 Sources of variables for the questionnaire

Section	Demographical variable	Researcher/s
Demographical variable(A)	Gender	Muhamad, et al., 2009; Hergert and Diego, 2009; Bakar, et al., 2011; Warinda, 2013; Ruhanita, et al., 2014
	Ethnicity/Race	Muhamad, et al., 2009; Ruhanita, et al., 2014
	Academic Qualifications/Results	Muhamad, et al., 2009; Ruhanita, et al., 2014; Bakar, et al., 2011
	Location/ Proximity	Muhamad, et al., 2009; Hergert and Diego, 2009
	Placement Organization	Muhamad, et al., 2009; Warinda, 2013
	Duration	Muhamad, et al., 2009
	Academic Year	Muhamad, et al., 2009
	Experience	Ruhanita, et al., 2014
	Position held as an intern	Author
	Individual income level	Author
	Family income level	Author
Perception(B)	Academic performance 1 to 7	Author
	Personal capacity skills 36-42	Ruhanita, et al., (2014)
	Specific skills 23, 45 to 59	Ruhanita, et al., (2014)
	Internship Unit and preplacement operations 15-21	Renganathan, et al., (2012)
	Host company support 10-14	Renganathan, et al., (2012)
	Financial compensation 9 and 28	Schambach and Dirks, (2002) Muhamad, et al., (2009)
	Knowledge and Attitude 24,25,28,34,35	Muhamad, et al., (2009) ; Martin and Wilkerson, (2006)

	Job Marketability and Future career 30,31,32,33	Muhamad, et al., (2009)
	Satisfaction 5,9,22,60,61,62	Author

Source: Author constructed

The questionnaire consisted of two sections: demographical information (Section A) and perception (Section B). The questionnaire (Appendix 4) was an outcome of several discussions under an expert and adjustments were made to the statements based on expert's opinion.

3.6 Data Collection

There are 198 4th year accounting undergraduates in DOA in 2010/2011 batch. The cross-sectional data is collected through a questionnaire distributed manually. First a pilot test of the questionnaire was carried out by distributing it to three participants. Based on the pilot test some question wordings were changed. It was decided to collect the data during a normal lecture time. Printed questionnaires were distributed among the undergraduates during the Advance Accounting Theory (ACC4324) lecture and separate time was allocated for filling the questionnaire. Further, questionnaires were distributed during interval times in the university. Out of the total sample of One Hundred and Ninety-Eight, the researcher was able to obtained respond from Ninety-Two participants. The respond rate was 47% and the collected data was adequate for the study.

3.7 Data analysis strategies

As a preliminary analysis a demographical data analysis was conducted in order to get an idea about the nature of the accounting undergraduates who were engaged in internship programme. The summary of the analysis is presented in respondent's profile. Then the core analysis of data was carried out in order to answer the research questions and to achieve the research objectives.

Table 2 Objectives and statistical techniques

Objectives	Statistical Technique

1. To identify the dimensions of the internship programme as perceived by interns in an academic degree programme	Literature review
2. To identify the dimensions that are positively perceived by the accounting undergraduates attached to the accounting internship programme	One-sample t-test
3. To identify the internship expectation gap with relevant to the dimensions	Paired-sample t-test
4. To identify the significant differences in expectation gap based on the demographical factors	t-test and One-way ANOVA
5. To identify the significant dimensions that are affecting the satisfaction on accounting internship programme	Linear Regression

All the data collected were coded according to the survey code book and for analysis purpose IBM SPSS was used. First the data were coded in MS Excel and the missing values were assigned with value "999". Then in SPSS the Variables were defined with the missing values and the data were imported to SPSS.

Next, 124 scale type questions were tested for Internal reliability[4] of the questionnaire, in measuring perception of undergraduates about the internship programme. The Cronbach's Alpha[5] value obtained was 0.973 which shows that the questionnaire is consistent measuring the perception of accounting undergraduates on the internship programme offered by Department of Accounting in University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

The questionnaire consists of 62 statements that covers many dimensions about the internship programme. The responses of undergraduates were obtained on statements,

[4] The Internal reliability states whether the questionnaire is consistent measuring what is expected to measure through the questionnaire

[5] A measure of reliability that calculates the average of all possible split-half reliability coefficients. Usually 0.8 is used as a benchmark.

regarding the "Degree of Agreement (DA)" and " Degree of Importance (DI)". Agreement is the perception based on the current experience of internship. Importance is the perception of accounting interns on expectation regarding the aspect covered by the statement.

The data is analysed in two different stages as supportive to the objectives identified in the study. First the dimensions of the internship programme were tested for validity using Factor analysis[6] conducted based on Varimax rotation in order to cluster the statements as a validity measuring technique. The Factor loadings less than 0.4 are excluded from the analysis. Then the reliability of the dimensions was tested by using Cronbach's Alpha. The validity and reliability test were carried out with reference to the DA as it represents the experience of accounting undergraduates.

3.8 Summary

This explains the methodology used to answer the research questions and the believes of the researcher about the social world. It includes the research design, selection of sample, preparation of questionnaire, data collection and the methods of analysing the data.

[6] Factor analysis is used either in relation to multiple-indicator measures to determine whether groups of indicators tend to cluster together to form distinct factors or to confirm the dimensions that exist (Bryman, 2012).

Chapter 4 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of discrete variables that includes the demographical factors are presented first and the core analysis of the study is presented thereafter. The analysis is guided by the strategy identified in the methodology.

4.1 Respondents' profile

The sample consisted of 67 females and 25 males where the sample represented the real scenario of the population within the university, as majority undergraduates were females (Table 3).

Table 3 Frequency analysis of demographical variables

Demographical Variable	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
Age in Years	23	10	10.9
	24	74	80.4
	25	8	8.7
Gender	Female	67	72.8
	Male	25	27.2
GPA	First Class	29	31.5
	Second Class(Upper)	38	41.3
	Second Class(Lower)	20	21.7
	General	5	5.4
Professional qualification	CA Sri Lanka	67	72.8
	ACCA	7	7.6
	CIMA	28	30.4
	CFA	7	7.6
	AAT	31	33.7
	IBSL	3	3.3
	CMA	5	5.4
	CIM	2	2.2
Details about the internship organization	Audit-Big 4	38	41.3
	Audit - Other firms	14	15.2
	Non-Audit	40	43.5
Total work experience in months	Less than 6 months	1	1.1
	6 to 12 months	6	6.5
	12 to 18 months	26	28.3
	18 to 24 months	55	59.8
	more than 24 months	4	4.3
Annual family income including any grants	No Fixed Income	6	6.5
	Less than 150,000	19	20.7
	150,000 to 299,999	13	14.1
	300,000 to 449,999	19	20.7

	450,000 to 599,999	7	7.6
	600,000 and more	28	30.4
Your annual individual income including any grants	No Fixed Income	8	8.7
	Less than 50,000	25	27.2
	50,000 to 99,999	20	21.7
	100,000 to 149,000	14	15.2
	150,000 to 199,999	13	14.1
	200,000 and more	12	13
Organization level at which current position is holding	Operational	69	79.3
	Lower management	15	17.2
	Middle management	3	3.4

Source: Author constructed

According to the sample the most of the 4th year accounting undergraduates were at the age 24 years. The mean Grade Point Average(GPA) of the accounting undergraduates was 3.4810 and most of the undergraduates were in the Second (Upper) class. The average annual individual income of accounting undergraduates was lying around Rs. 100,000 to Rs. 149,999 , where the annual family income was around Rs.300,000 to Rs.449,999. Most of the undergraduates were at the individual income level of "less than 50,000" and this may be due to most of them are engaged in public practice. As at the time where research was conducted (4th year 2nd Semester end) the undergraduates have a gained work experience of in between 18 to 24 months.

The accounting undergraduates have the option to choose any organization as they wish as long as it matches with requirements of the SDPIA. Therefore, they opted different organizations for their internship placement. Beginning of the 3rd year the Department of Accounting assist the undergraduates to find an internship. In other cases, most probably the undergraduates themselves find internship opportunities. Some organizations were maintaining good rapport with Department, specially audit firms. According to the summary statistics (Table 3), it can be seen that the around 56.5% of the undergraduates were attached to Audit firms for their internship programme. Among that 41.3% was attached to Big Four Audit firms (PWC, E &Y, KPMG, BDO). There is a belief among professionals as well as within society in Sri Lanka that the Audit firms would give a better exposure to their trainees than that of a Non-audit organization.

It is clear that the most of the undergraduates were choosing public practice firms as their internship provider. CA Sri Lanka was considered to be the most preferred professional qualification among the undergraduates and CIMA seems to be the 2nd preferred to CA Sri Lanka. AAT was considered as a basic qualification as most of the students are following AAT during their secondary education (Advanced Level). Out of the 67 undergraduates who were following CA Sri Lanka 45 were attached to audit firms and 18 out of 28 CIMA students were attached to non-audit organizations (Table 4).

Table 4 Professional qualification Vs. internship organization - cross tabulation

Qualification	Audit-Big 4	Audit - Other firms	Non-Audit	Total
Number of CA students	34	11	22	67
Number of CIMA students	9	1	18	28

Source: Author constructed

There was no significant difference in selection of an internship organization based on the family income level. But the individual income highly differentiated among the choice of different training organizations. This represents that low allowance was paid for the interns who are engaged in public practice. When compared to non-audit firms, the interns engaged in audit-firms get some other non-financial benefits.

The relationship between the GPA and the internship organization was significant. The difference in GPA was tested based on the internship organization. It was seen that overall difference is significant between the groups. There was a significant difference between Audit-Big 4 and Audit-other and as well as non-audit and audit-other firms (Table 5). The mean GPA of interns who are engaged to one of the Big 4 firms, was 3.5641. The lowest mean GPA values were available for undergraduates who are having more than 24 months of experience.

Table 5 One-way ANOVA for differences in internship organization based on individual income and GPA

Variable	**F Value**	**Internship Organization**	**Mean**	**Difference**
Your annual individual income including any grants	8.946**	Non-Audit	2.9737	Non-Audit is different from other two
		Audit - Other firms	2.5000	
		Non-Audit	4.0750	

GPA	5.885**	Non-Audit	3.5641	Audit - Other firms different from other two
		Audit - Other firms	3.2357	
		Non-Audit	3.4881	

Source: Author constructed

4.2 Definition of the variables

The variables used in the analysis are listed below.

Table 6 Definition of the variables

Dimension / Variables	Variable for Degree of Agreement (DA)	Variable for Degree of Importance (DI)
1. Personal capacity skills	DA_Essential_Skills	DI_Essential_Skills
2. Future career prospects and job marketability	DA_Career	DI_Career
3. Internship unit	DA_SEE_SDIU	DI_SEE_SDIU
4. Moral responsibilities and life-long learning	DA_Moral	DI_Moral
5. Managerial decision making skills	DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	DI_Dec_Ent_Skills
6. Finance and Accounting related skills	DA_FA_Skills	DI_FA_Skills
7. Knowledge, attitude and theoretical application	DA_Knowledge	DI_Knowledge
8. Academic participation and performance	DA_Academic	DI_Academic
9. Internship provider	DA_IP	DI_Assertive_IP
10. Financial compensation	DA_Allowance	DI_Allowance
11. Satisfaction on internship	DA_Overall_Satis	

Source: Author constructed

4.3 Testing validity and reliability of the dimensions/variables

First the validity of the of the dimensions with relevant to DA and DI were tested with Factor analysis. Then the reliability for the same was tested. The summary results of the validity and reliability are shown in below table. The extracted communalities of

Factor analysis for the statements are presented in Appendix 1. All the dimensions pass the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity[7].

Table 7 Validity and reliability test results for the variables

Dimension/Variables	KMO Test[8] value		Cronbach's Alpha	
	DA	DI	DA	DI
Personal capacity skills	0.897	0.927	0.928	0.954
Future career prospects and job marketability	0.881	0.854	0.916	0.911
Internship unit	0.874	0.885	0.893	0.923
Moral responsibilities and life-long learning	0.727	0.722	0.881	0.882
Managerial decision making skills	0.831	0.885	0.866	0.919
Finance and Accounting related skills	0.808	0.798	0.853	0.854
Knowledge, attitude and theoretical application	0.824	0.734	0.851	0.800
Academic participation and performance	0.786	0.805	0.809	0.823
Internship provider	0.737	0.769	0.826	0.829
Financial compensation	0.500	0.500	0.493	0.540
Satisfaction on internship	0.745	-	0.733	-

*The individual statements included within the dimension are available in Appendix 1
Source: Author constructed

4.4 The descriptive statistics of the dimensions/variables

The dimensions were placed ascending order of mean value. The definitions of variables are listed Table 6. Satisfaction was also considered as a variable for the further analysis purpose. The dimensions were tested for normality by using the Skewness, Kurtosis and Histogram (Table 8). None of the dimensions were perfectly normal as per the skewness measure, but the value was less than 3 for all the dimensions. The perception on degree of importance was tested for normality under the same dimensions and the summary is presented in table 8. The skewness statistic was less than 3 for

[7] Bartlett's Test of Sphericity tests for non-existence of an identity correlation matrix (H_1).

[8] Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure is a measure of the sampling adequacy for the data set (Benchmark-0.746).

importance perspective also. This ensure that the data set is eligible for performing Parametric analysis as the basic assumption of normality was existing.

The highest DA and DI can be seen in the variable of Essential_Skills and as per the standard deviation it is the dimension with lesser variation (Table 7/8). The lowest DA and DI is available for DA_Allowance and the highest standard deviation is also available for the same

Table 8 Descriptive statistics of dimensions based on perception regarding experience

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
DA_Essential_Skills	92	1.40	5.00	4.2783	0.6240	-1.248	0.251	3.405	0.498
DA_Career	92	1.29	5.00	4.2347	0.6831	-1.160	0.251	2.487	0.498
DA_Overall_Satis	92	1.60	5.00	4.0946	0.7218	-0.797	0.251	0.565	0.498
DA_Moral	92	1.67	5.00	4.0525	0.7695	-0.955	0.251	1.332	0.498
DA_FA_Skills	92	1.25	5.00	3.9212	0.8352	-0.732	0.251	0.297	0.498
DA_IP	92	2.00	5.00	3.7690	0.7606	-0.203	0.251	-0.569	0.498
DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	92	2.00	5.00	3.7022	0.7931	-0.078	0.251	-0.641	0.498
DA_Knowledge	92	1.33	5.00	3.6246	0.9113	-0.373	0.251	-0.706	0.498
DA_SEE_SDIU	92	1.13	5.00	3.5664	0.8214	-0.354	0.251	-0.141	0.498
DA_Academic	92	1.00	5.00	2.8714	0.8498	-0.021	0.251	-0.324	0.498
DA_Allowance	91	1.00	5.00	2.3956	1.2099	0.346	0.253	-0.938	0.500

Source: Author constructed

Table 9 Descriptive statistics of dimensions based on perception regarding importance

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
DI_Essential_Skills	92	1.40	5.00	4.5796	0.5786	-2.373	0.251	9.032	0.498
DI_Moral	92	2.00	5.00	4.5725	0.6159	-1.657	0.251	3.007	0.498
DI_Career	92	1.14	5.00	4.5336	0.6334	-2.272	0.251	8.228	0.498
DI_FA_Skills	92	2.50	5.00	4.4592	0.6358	-1.006	0.251	0.031	0.498
DI_IP	92	2.50	5.00	4.3859	0.6173	-0.988	0.251	0.718	0.497
DI_Dec_Ent_Skills	92	2.00	5.00	4.3275	0.7715	-1.244	0.251	0.956	0.498
DI_Knowledge	92	1.67	5.00	4.2862	0.7430	-1.146	0.251	0.891	0.498
DI_SEE_SDIU	92	2.13	5.00	4.2708	0.7058	-0.839	0.251	0.095	0.498
DI_Academic	92	1.00	5.00	4.1591	0.6933	-1.598	0.251	4.571	0.498
DI_Allowance	91	1.00	5.00	3.9780	1.0850	-1.076	0.253	0.694	0.500

Source: Author constructed

4.5 Degree of Agreement (DA)

Perception based on current experience for all the dimensions except for DA_Academic and DA_Allowance were higher than average (3) and were significant. As per the current experience regarding the accounting internship, the undergraduates were having the highest perception regarding the development of personal capacity skills through the internship (Table 10). Accounting interns believe that their skills were developed through the internship programme. The highest perception regarding the essential skills was obtained for the enhancement of computer skills (4.48) and the next was enhancing ability to meet deadlines (4.43).

Table 10 One-Sample t-test for the degree of agreement on internship programme

Dimension	t	Mean Difference
DA_Essential_Skills	19.647	1.2783***
DA_Career	17.336	1.2347***
DA_Overall_Satis	14.543	1.0946***
DA_Moral	13.120	1.0525***
DA_FA_Skills	10.578	0.9212***
DA_IP	9.697	0.7690***
DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	8.492	0.7022***
DA_Knowledge	6.574	0.6246***
DA_SEE_SDIU	6.613	0.5664***
DA_Academic	-1.452	-0.1286
DA_Allowance	-4.765	-0.6044***
Test Value = 3		

*p <.1, **p <.05, *** p <.01

*All individual statements are available in Appendix 2

Source: Author constructed

The lowest perception on level of agreement was obtained for the financial compensation and it was below average as well as significant. The lowest mean score was obtained for the statement “Financial compensation receiving is good (fair market rate)”, which was only 2.3946. The next lowest agreement was obtained regarding the dimension of DA_Academic, which was only 2.8714 (Table 10) and it was not significant. This explains that the undergraduates are experiencing bad taste regarding the academic studies/performance during the internship period. The undergraduates perceived that, to a certain extent, results for subjects other than the SDPIA, were satisfactory (3.29) and it was significant. But their belief regarding the improvement of academic results due to internship was very low (2.41) and the mean difference was

significant and they perceive that time allocated for studies during the internship was below average.

In dimension DA_IP the highest mean was obtained for DA10 (4.2). All three statements were above average and the differences were significant. For the dimension DA_Career, all the seven statements were above average (more than 4.1) and significant. The statement DA25 was obtained with mean value of 4.39. The perception for statement DA26-I am gaining high level of academic motivation due to internship was above average but it was not significant.

Out of the eleven variables, four variables were perceived with higher ratings (more than 4.00) by the undergraduates: DA_Essential_Skills, DA_Career, DA_Overall_Satis and DA_Moral. Out of the all Fifty-Seven statements, the mean scores of DA for Twenty-one statements were higher than four and the statements were within the dimensions mentioned above.

The undergraduates perceived that the internship programme was significantly important for them as well as they believe that it played an importance role in the accounting degree. The mean score for the importance was 4.3846. This emphasized that accounting internship programme was important to the undergraduates. But the satisfaction level on the internship programme was not relatively higher to that of importance (3.9022). Even though the satisfaction was relatively low, in absolute terms the satisfaction was high. The mean value for the overall satisfaction was 3.89 and it was significant.

4.6 The Agreement Vs. Importance – Expectation gap

The expectation gap was analysed based on the dimensions identified as it is more meaningful than isolating single statements for the purpose of analysis. For the analysis purpose, average value was obtained through “Transform(Compute)” functionality and Paired sample t-test (Table 10) was used to compare the perception mean differences in Degree of Agreement (DA) and Degree of Importance (DI) regarding the internship programme.

Table 11 Degree of Agreement (DA) and Degree of Importance (DI) on dimensions of the internship programme

Dimension	DA	DI	Mean Difference	t value
Financial compensation $_j$	2.3956	3.9780	-1.5824***	-10.020
Academic participation and academic performance $_a$	2.8714	4.1591	-1.2877***	-12.870
Internship Unit $_b$	3.5664	4.2708	-0.7044***	-8.263
Knowledge, Attitude and Theoretical application $_c$	3.6246	4.2862	-0.6616***	-8.815
Managerial Decision Making skills $_d$	3.7022	4.3275	-0.6254***	-8.724
Internship provider $_e$	3.7690	4.3859	-0.6168***	-7.967
Finance and Accounting related skills $_f$	3.9212	4.4592	-0.5380***	-7.678
Moral responsibilities and Lifelong learning $_g$	4.0525	4.5725	-0.5199***	-6.630
Personal Capacity skills $_h$	4.2783	4.5796	-0.3013***	-6.487
Future career and Job marketability $_i$	4.2347	4.5336	-0.2989***	-6.069

*p <.1, **p <.05, *** p <.01
Source: Author constructed

The hypothesises of the Paired sample t-test are listed below.

$H_{1\ a}$ – There is a significant difference between the DA and DI on the dimension of academic participation and academic performance during accounting internship programme

The null hypothesis that the perception on DA and DI regarding the academic participation and academic performance during the accounting internship programme do not significantly differ, was strongly rejected. The mean score for perception on DA was 2.8714 and mean score for perception on DI was 4.1591. The mean difference was 1.28768 for the dimension. It was so unlikely that perception on DA and DI regarding the academic participation and academic performance are drawn from same population.

The highest mean differences were obtained for this dimension. For each of the statements within this dimension the mean difference was more than 1.000 (Appendix 3). The highest mean difference (1.652) was obtained for the statements regarding the time allocation for studies during the internship period (DA2). This shows that even though the undergraduate interns place high importance regarding time allocating for

studies, they were not able to do so within the internship period. The second highest mean difference of 1.543 was obtained for the statement regarding improvement of academic results due to internship. Though, the undergraduate interns expected to improve the academic results due to internship programme, it seems that it was not the case. The least mean difference of 1.055 was obtained for statement regarding satisfaction on academic results for subjects other than internship subject (DA6).

$H_{1\,b}$ – There is a significant difference between the DA and DI on the dimension of internship unit with relevant to the accounting internship programme

The null hypothesis that the perception on DA and DI regarding support, efficiency and effectiveness of internship unit during the accounting internship programme do not significantly differ, was strongly rejected. The mean score for perception on DA was 3.5664 and mean score for perception on DI was 4.2708. The mean difference was 0.70439. It was unlikely that perception on DA and DI regarding support, efficiency and effectiveness of internship unit were drawn from same population.

Among the individual statements included within the dimension, the statement regarding the period of the internship programme (DA22), was obtained with lowest mean difference (0.522). Among the eight statements (Appendix 3) attached to the dimension the statement of "Internship unit staff is always attending to issues arising promptly (DA16)" was obtained with highest mean difference of 0.811. And the next statement was "Internship unit staff is always available when required" (DA15) with mean difference of 0.778. This shows that the support of internship unit(CAISD) was not sufficient to resolve the issues faced by interns. The undergraduates perceived that the guidelines provided by the CAISD was not adequate when compared with the importance (mean difference 0.750). The accounting undergraduate interns are expecting more support from the CAISD during internship programme. Further, the undergraduates place high importance on that the fact that CAISD plays a vital role in "Internship model" and its efficiency and effectiveness were highly appreciated by the undergraduates.

$H_{1\,c}$ – There is a significant difference between the DA and DI on the dimension of knowledge, attitude and theoretical application

The null hypothesis that the perception on DA and DI regarding the enhancement of knowledge, attitude and theoretical application through the accounting internship programme do not significantly differ, was strongly rejected. The mean score for perception on DA was 3.6246 and mean score for perception on DI was 4.2862. The mean difference is 0.66159. It was unlikely that perception on DA and DI regarding enhancement of knowledge, attitude and theoretical application are drawn from same population.

Out of the statements included in the dimension, the statement "DA26-I am gaining a high level of academic motivation due to the internship" was obtained with the highest mean difference (1.022). It seems that the internship did not provide expected academic motivation to the accounting intern undergraduates and this creating attitude issues to them. The lowest mean difference (0.402) within the dimension can be seen in the statement relating to applying the theories learned in the lectures to the working environment (DA24). There was a mean difference of 0.867 in the statement regarding the ability to advice on tax matters. It is believed that every accounting intern would not be getting the chance to touch on tax matters. It seems that the expectation towards the enhancement of knowledge in auditing was highly perceived by the interns when compared to actual experience (Mean difference of 0.630). The perception on DA and DI were significantly different for all the six statements at confidence interval 100%.

$H_{1\ d}$ – There is a significant difference between the DA and DI on the dimension of managerial decision making skills

The null hypothesis that the perception on DA and DI regarding the enhancement of managerial decision making and skills through the accounting internship programme do not significantly differ, was strongly rejected. The mean score for perception on DA was 3.7022 and mean score for perception on DI was 4.3275. The mean difference was 0.62536. It was unlikely that perception on DA and DI regarding this dimension are drawn from same population.

As the mean comparison for individual statements of this dimension, the highest mean difference (0.783) was obtained for the statement regarding enhancement of entrepreneurship skills (DA59). It is obvious that an accounting internship would not be much helpful developing such skills. The undergraduate perceive that the

information gathering and processing, integrating information systems for decision making and business analysis skills were not developed as per the expectation. The mean difference for all the items were above 0.538 which causes a significant gap among the perceptions.

$H_{1\ e}$ – There is a significant difference between the DA and DI arise as per the perception on the accounting internship provider

The null hypothesis that the perception on DA and DI regarding the internship provider do not significantly differ, was strongly rejected. The mean score for perception on DA was 3.7690 and mean score for perception on DI was 4.3859. The mean difference was 0.6168 for the dimension. It was so unlikely that perception on DA and DI regarding the internship provider were drawn from same population.

The focus of the internship provider on interns, was not sufficient as per the perception of undergraduates (Appendix 3). As per the high mean difference (0.848) on perception it could be seen that the internship providers were not having a well-structured programme for interns (DA12). The students believed that the internship providers were not supportive (DA14) when compared to the expectation they had. Among the individual statements included within this dimension, the statement regarding the soundness of the internship programme offered by the internship provider (DA11) was obtained with a mean difference of 0.522. The student perception is that the internship programme provided by the employer was not firm enough to meet their expectations.

$H_{1\ f}$ – There is a significant difference between the DA and DI on the dimension of finance and accounting related skills

The null hypothesis that the perception on DA and DI regarding the enhancement of finance and accounting related skills through the accounting internship programme do not significantly differ, was strongly rejected. The mean score for perception on DA was 3.9212 and mean score for perception on DI was 4.4592. The mean difference was 0.53804. It was unlikely that perception on DA and DI regarding enhancement of finance and accounting related skills were drawn from same population.

Among the statements included in this dimension, the statement related to ability prepare financial statements in accordance with applicable accounting standards

(DA23), was obtained with the highest mean difference (0.609). Most the of the interns get the opportunity to use accounting standards in public practice as audit trainees. Therefore, it is believed that the such skills would improve due to internship. The other skills included are interpreting and evaluating financial statements, providing solutions for accounting issues and information processing for accounting. The lowest mean difference of 0.446 was obtained for expectation gap on skill of interpreting and evaluating financial statements.

$H_{1\ g}$ – There is a significant difference between the DA and DI on the dimension of moral responsibilities and life-long learning

The null hypothesis that the perception on DA and DI regarding the enhancement of moral responsibilities and lifelong learning through the accounting internship programme do not significantly differ, was strongly rejected. The mean score for perception on DA was 4.0525 and mean score for perception on DI was 4.5725. The mean difference was 0.51993. It was unlikely that perception on DA and DI regarding enhancement of moral responsibilities and lifelong learning are drawn from same population.

The three statements included within this dimension the highest mean difference was obtained for DA57, which was regarding commitment to life-long learning. For all the items the mean differences were higher than 0.511. The undergraduate interns have highly valued the development of professional ethics and social responsibility behaviour through the internship programme. According to the mean differences, interns perceive that those were not developed as per their expectation.

$H_{1\ h}$ – There is a significant difference between the DA and DI on the dimension of personal capacity skills

The null hypothesis that the perception on DA and DI on personal capacity skills learned through accounting internship programme do not significantly differ, was strongly rejected. The mean score for perception on DA was 4.2783 and mean score for perception on DI was 4.5796. The mean difference was 0.30133. It was unlikely that perception on DA and DI regarding enhancement of personal capacity skills are drawn from same population.

The mean score for DA is strong when compared with the highest value (5), but the accounting undergraduate interns are expecting more essential skills to be developed from the internship programme.

As per the pared differences in individual statements contained within the dimension, the mean values for all the ten items are significantly different with regard to perception on DA and DI. Among the ten items (Appendix 3) the least mean difference was obtained for computer skills(DA36) and next was, ability to meet deadlines (DA37). The highest mean difference was obtained for statement regarding the ability to generate creative ideas (DA42), which is 0.505. With reference to the facts that obtained through the study, it is clear that the undergraduate place a less agreement than the importance they place on development of personal capacity skills through the internship.

H_{1j} – There is a significant difference between the perception on DA and DI on the dimension of future career prospects and job marketability

The null hypothesis that the perception on DA and DI regarding enhancement of future career prospects and Job marketability through accounting internship programme do not significantly differ, was strongly rejected. The mean score for perception on DA was 4.2347 and mean score for perception on DI was 4.5336. The mean difference was 0.29891. It was unlikely that perception on DA and DI regarding enhancement of future career and job marketability were drawn from same population.

The expectations regarding the enhancement of future career prospects and job marketability were higher when compared to the current situation. When individual statements included within the dimension are compared the least mean difference was obtained for statement regarding improvement of personal confidence and self-esteem (DA25-0.228). For all the items (Appendix 3) the mean differences were negative and significant at the confidence interval of 100%. The highest mean difference within the dimension was 0.424 with relevant to demonstrating a commitment to professional development(DA56).

$H_{1\,k}$ – There is a significant difference between the DA and DI on the dimension of financial compensation[9] received during the accounting internship programme

The null hypothesis that the perception on DA and DI regarding the financial compensation do not significantly differ, was strongly rejected. The mean score for perception on DA was 2.3956 and mean score for perception on DI was 3.9780. The mean difference was 1.5824 for the dimension. It was so unlikely that perception on DA and DI regarding the Financial compensation are drawn from same population.

The undergraduate interns perceived that financial compensation received (DA8) was not fair and the mean difference was 1.852. Rather than to the fair value of the compensation, their agreement was higher to the fact that the internship provide an opportunity to earn some money (DA29). But it was not as per the expectation (mean difference is 0.5). This would be a normal situation as public practice firms are paying only an allowance during the internship period. But the issue arises when the undergraduates had to work for longer period for a low allowance.

4.7 Demographical differences in expectation gap

The demographical differences were tested using t-test and One-way ANOVA under the topics listed below.

4.7.1 The expectation gap and gender

Based on the independent sample t-test, it is concluded that there is no enough evidence to say that the expectation gap significantly differs between males and females ($H_{1)}$. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Out of the ten dimensions, only the dimension GAP_Academic was obtained with a p-value lessor than 5%. It was also ignored as per the Levene's Test.

4.7.2 The expectation gap and internship organization

One-way ANOVA was conducted based on the hypothesis ($H_{1)}$ that expectation gap significantly differs among internship organizations. As per the results of One-way ANOVA, expectation gap in four dimensions were found to be different among

[9] As per the Reliability and Validity test, the dimension was not valid

internship organizations. The expectation gap for the dimension *Academic* was different between the non-audit firms and audit-big 4 and as well as audit-other firms. This might be due to the fact that audit firm give more examination leaves for the interns. But the interns in the mercantile sector are not eligible for such long leaves.

Table 12 Differences in expectation gap based on internship organization

Dimension	F	Organization	Mean	Differences
GAP_Essential_Skills	0.102	Audit-Big 4	- 0.324	
		Audit - Other firms	- 0.307	
		Non-Audit	- 0.278	
GAP_Academic	3.766**	Audit-Big 4	- 1.134	Non-Audit different to other two
		Audit - Other firms	- 0.879	
		Non-Audit	- 1.575	
GAP_Allowance	4.646 **	Audit-Big 4	- 1.421	Non-Audit and Audit Big 4
		Audit - Other firms	- 0.893	
		Non-Audit	- 0.713	
GAP_IP	1.055	Audit-Big 4	- 0.493	
		Audit - Other firms	- 0.607	
		Non-Audit	- 0.737	
GAP_Career	0.148	Audit-Big 4	- 0.270	
		Audit - Other firms	- 0.345	
		Non-Audit	- 0.311	
GAP_Dec_Ent_Skills	0.722	Audit-Big 4	- 0.707	
		Audit - Other firms	- 0.451	
		Non-Audit	- 0.609	
GAP_FA_Skills	3.428**	Audit-Big 4	- 0.414	Non Audit is different from other two
		Audit - Other firms	- 0.304	
		Non-Audit	- 0.738	
GAP_Knowledge	3.884**	Audit-Big 4	- 0.535	Non Audit is different from other two
		Audit - Other firms	- 0.369	
		Non-Audit	- 0.884	
GAP_Moral	0.398	Audit-Big 4	- 0.465	
		Audit - Other firms	- 0.441	
		Non-Audit	- 0.600	
GAP_SEE_SDIU	2.427*	Audit-Big 4	- 0.674	
		Audit - Other firms	- 0.321	
		Non-Audit	- 0.866	

*p <.1, **p <.05, *** p <.01
Source: Author constructed

The expectation gap for the dimension of *FA_Skills* was different in non-audit firms when compared to other two types of firms. This might be due to the fact that audit

firms engage in public practice. As well as the dimension of *Knowledge* was the same in terms of expectation gap and it was different in non-audit firms when compared to other two types of firms.

The expectation gap for the dimension of *Allowance*[10] was different between the audit-big 4 firms and non-audit firms. It is a known fact that audit firms pay a less allowance for the interns.

4.7.3 The expectation gap and individual income levels

The test was conducted on the hypothesis (H_1) that the expectation gap significantly differs among individual income levels. Based on One-Way ANOVA, expectation gap in none of the dimensions were found to be different among individual income levels.

4.7.4 The expectation gap and work experience

One-way ANOVA was conducted to test the hypothesis (H_1) that the expectation gap significantly differs based on working experience. The Post hoc tests could not be performed in order to obtain the differences among work experience and the expectation gap because at least one group has fewer than two cases.

4.7.5 The expectation gap and GPA

The test was conducted on the hypothesis (H_1) that the expectation gap significantly differs with GPA of the undergraduates. Based on One-Way ANOVA, expectation gap in none of the dimensions were found to be different with GPA and there is no enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

4.7.6 The expectation gap and organization level

One-way ANOVA was conducted on the hypothesis (H_1) that the expectation gap significantly differs among organizational levels. The expectation gap for the dimension of *Knowledge* was significantly different for lower management level when compared to operational and middle management levels. In the operational level the expectation gap was relatively high. This could be due to the exposure that interns gain at a higher level of management. At operational level most of the transaction processing

[10] The dimension was not valid as per the validity test

work is carried out by the interns. As well as for the dimension of *SEE_SDIU* there was significant difference in expectation gap in lower management level with operational and middle management levels. The dimension related to *Academic* was different in expectation gap with relevant to lower and operational management level. This might be due to the inability to effectively engage in academic work as they have higher level of responsibility and work load.

Table 13 Differences in expectation gap based on organization level

Dimension	F	Organization	Mean	Differences
GAP_Essential_Skills	0.726	Operational	- 0.321	
		Lower	- 0.280	
		Middle	-	
GAP_Academic	2.697*	Operational	- 1.219	
		Lower	- 1.845	Operational and Lower level
		Middle	- 1.280	
GAP_Allowance	0.494	Operational	- 1.735	
		Lower	- 1.333	
		Middle	- 1.333	
GAP_IP	2.059	Operational	- 0.616	
		Lower	- 0.900	
		Middle	-	
GAP_Career	0.463	Operational	- 0.297	
		Lower	- 0.380	
		Middle	- 0.097	
GAP_Dec_Ent_Skills	0.736	Operational	- 0.645	
		Lower	- 0.700	
		Middle	- 0.167	
GAP_FA_Skills	0.953	Operational	- 0.522	
		Lower	- 0.767	
		Middle	- 0.333	
GAP_Knowledge	5.007**	Operational	- 0.604	
		Lower	- 1.177	Lower with Middle and Operational
		Middle	- 0.167	
GAP_Moral	1.975	Operational	- 0.471	
		Lower	- 0.845	
		Middle	- 0.110	
GAP_SEE_SDIU	4.228**	Operational	- 0.663	
		Lower	- 1.223	Lower with Middle and Operational
		Middle	- 0.040	

*p <.1, **p <.05, *** p <.01

Source : Author constructed

4.8 Dimensions affecting the satisfaction on the internship programme

A Multivariate Linear Regression analysis was conducted in order to identify the relationship between the perceived satisfaction on accounting internship programme and the dimensions of the internship programme. The dimension of DA_Allowance was not used for the model as it is not valid.

Table 14 Regression results of satisfaction on internship programme

Variable	Coefficients	
	B	**T**
DA_Satisfaction	Dependent variable	
(Constant)	0.90**	2.22
DA_Essential_Skills	-0.07	-0.46
DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	-0.17	-1.64
DA_FA_Skills	0.27**	2.16
DA_SEE_SDIU	0.05	0.60
DA_IP	0.04	0.45
DA_Career	0.39**	2.53
DA_Academic	0.05	0.71
DA_Knowledge	0.14	1.38
DA_Moral	0.09	0.93
Adjusted R Square	**0.538**	
F Value	**12.876*** **	

*p <.1, **p <.05, *** p <.01
Source : Author constructed

The overall model is valid as per the F-test and only two dimensions were found to be having a significant relationship with the overall satisfaction. The identified dimensions account for 53.8% of the total variability of the dependent variable. The accounting undergraduate interns were strongly satisfied about the internship with relevant to the positive effect on their future career prospects. It seems that they pay more attention about the career, and a positive effect to the career would lead to a higher perceived satisfaction. As well as enhancement of finance and accounting related skills have a positive impact on the satisfaction.

Table 15 Demographical differences in satisfaction on internship programme

Variable	F	Organization	Mean	Differences
Gender	1.272	Male	4.2800	
		Female	4.0254	
GPA	0.643	First Class	4.1862	

		Second Class(Upper)	4.0092	
		Second Class(Lower)	4.1875	
		General	3.8400	
Internship organization	5.695**	Audit-Big 4	4.3776	Audit Big 4 and Non-Audit
		Audit - Other firms	3.9964	
		Non-Audit	3.8600	
Working Experience	0.562	Less than 6 months	5.0000	Post Hoc test was not performed
		6 to 12 months	3.9333	
		12 to 18 months	4.0231	
		18 to 24 months	4.1218	
		more than 24 months	4.2000	
Organizational level	3.577**	Operational	4.1609	Lower with Middle and Operational
		Lower management	3.6933	
		Middle management	4.6667	
Annual Family Income	1.115	No Fixed Income	3.6000	
		Less than 150,000	4.0816	
		150,000 to 299,999	4.0154	
		300,000 to 449,999	4.3579	
		450,000 to 599,999	4.0857	
		600,000 and more	4.0696	
Annual Individual Income	0.367	No Fixed Income	3.9250	
		Less than 50,000	4.0300	
		50,000 to 99,999	4.0400	
		100,000 to 149,000	4.2571	
		150,000 to 199,999	4.2269	
		200,000 and more	4.1000	

*p <.1, **p <.05, *** p <.01
Source: Author constructed

The satisfaction on internship differs significantly between audit-big 4 and non-audit. And also the satisfaction on internship programme significantly differs among the organizational levels: lower level with operational and middle level.

4.9 Expectation gap and satisfaction on the internship programme

As per the linear regression model it was identified that four variables are significant. The coefficient of the independent variables GAP_Essential_Skills and GAP_Dec_Ent_Skills, are negative. It is believed that expectation gap regarding the enhancement of personal capacity skills and managerial decision making skills would lead to decrease in satisfaction. The other two significant variables (GAP_Career and

GAP_FA_Skills) identified are inconsistent with the rationality and the coefficient is positive. The variability in independent variable, explained by the model is strong and it is 22.4%.

Table 16 Regression results for satisfaction and expectation gap

Variable	Coefficients B	T
DA_Satisfaction	Dependent variable	
(Constant)	4.29***	36.12
GAP_Essential_Skills	-0.49*	-1.82
GAP_Academic	0.04	0.37
GAP_IP	0.02	0.18
GAP_Career	0.47*	1.71
GAP_Dec_Ent_Skills	-0.27*	-1.87
GAP_FA_Skills	0.63***	4.01
GAP_Knowledge	0.11	0.65
GAP_Moral	-0.17	-1.25
GAP_SEE_SDIU	-0.01	-0.08
Adjusted R Square	**0.224**	
F Value	**3.926*** **	

*p <.1, **p <.05, *** p <.01
Source: Author constructed

4.10 Summary

This chapter consists of a thorough analysis of the collected data in accordance with the research objectives identified at the initial stage of the research. First the data were tested for validity and reliability. Then the perception of the undergraduates regarding the internship programme and the expectation gap were analysed. Finally, the overall satisfaction regarding the accounting internship programme was evaluated with relevant to the perception. In next chapter the major finding of the data analysis is discussed.

Chapter 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study was conducted with an aim of identifying the statistically significant dimensions of perception and then an expectation gap was identified regarding the current experience and the expectation. Further, the significant dimensions affecting the overall satisfaction on accounting internship programme was identified using regression modelling. Then the statistical significant differences in expectation gap was factored based on the demographical factors.

Positivist approach was used in addressing the research questions as mentioned in the introduction of the study and survey based design was used for data collection. Previous empirical research findings were used to assist the study. The study claims that there existing an expectation gap in the Internship programme of Department of Accounting in USJP, even though the undergraduates positively (above average) perceive the same based on current experience.

5.1 Conclusion and recommendation

The findings of the study were summarized below as per the objectives identified.

5.1.1 Dimensions of an internship programme as perceived by interns in an academic degree programme

Based on literature review following dimensions were identified: Personal capacity skills, Future career prospects and job marketability, Internship unit, Moral responsibilities and life-long learning, Managerial decision making skills, Finance and Accounting related skills, Knowledge, attitude and theoretical application, Academic participation and performance, Internship provider and Financial compensation

5.1.2 Dimensions that are positively perceived by the accounting undergraduates attached to the accounting internship programme

Perception based on current experience for all the dimensions except for *Academic participation and performance* and *Financial compensation* were higher than average (3) and were significant. On average the undergraduates do not agree that they favourably perceive the accounting internship programme based on above two dimensions.

5.1.3 Internship expectation gap with relevant to the dimensions

The highest expectation gap was seen regarding the *effective academic participation and academic performance*. The undergraduates perceive that they expect to effectively involve in academic activities. But during the internship period as per their experience, the academic participation was very low. In order to develop quality academics, the accounting practice would be important but it is not universal to all. This could be seen as a major issue during the internship period. In previous studies regarding the internship and subsequent academic performance mixed results were obtained. Only the GPA of the undergraduate was considered in all these studies (Koehler, 1974; Knechel & Snowball, 1987; Koh & Koh, 1999; Ebied, 2004; Mandilaras, 2004; Surridge, 2009; Thilakerathne & Madurapperuma, 2014). In previous research where expectation gap was analysed based on perception (Muhamad, et al., 2009; Warinda, 2013) academic participation and performance aspect was not taken in to consideration.

The next highest expectation gap was found in *support, efficiency and effectiveness of internship unit (GAP_SEE_SDIU).* None of the previous studies (Renganathan, et al., 2012; Karunaratne & Perera, 2015) have considered the expectation gap regarding this dimension, only the perception based on current experience was obtained and analysed. The undergraduates expected more support and assistant with regard to the issues faced during the internship period and availability of staff to discuss matters regarding internship programme. The undergraduates favourably perceived the CAISD (Renganathan, et al., 2012) but their expectation was higher.

The lowest expectation gap was available for the *future career prospects and job marketability (GAP_Career).* The findings contradict with the previous studies where expectation regarding career and knowledge were achieved (Muhamad, et al., 2009).

The expectation gap can be seen in every dimension and all of those are significant. As per the objectives of the SDPIA, the internship programme was aimed to develop certain skills of the undergraduates. But, the undergraduates believed that those skills are not enhanced as per the expected level of the intern. It is recommended to adopt long-term solutions to reduce the expectation gap. The role of the CAISD is important in addressing the expectation of the undergraduates and its responsibility is to mitigate the issues arising during the internship period.

5.1.4 Significant differences in expectation gap based on the demographical factors

The differences in expectation gap were seen only regarding the type of the internship organization and the managerial level within the organization. The expectation gap regarding *academic participation and performance* was significantly higher in non-audit organizations than that of audit firms. The expectation gap regarding the enhancement of *financial and accounting skills* was significantly higher in non-audit organizations.

5.1.5 To identify the significant dimensions that are affecting the satisfaction on accounting internship programme

The accounting undergraduate interns are strongly satisfied about the internship with relevant to the positive effect on their *future career prospects, job marketability and the enhancement of managerial decision making skills*. There are differences in satisfaction based on type internship organization and managerial level. Even though there is an expectation gap regarding every dimension, the interns are satisfied about the internship programme. This poses a question in researcher's mind regarding the ultimate motive of the academic education: Is it merely taking competitive edge in the job market through experience or life-long learning and innovation?

5.2 Limitations

There are limitations inherent to the research design. One such limitation is that in cross-sectional design, internal validity is typically weak (Bryman, 2012). The reason is that it is difficult to establish causal relationship from the analysed data. When further elaborated, there may be lot of factors that affect the perception on the Internship programme except for dimensions identified. Bryman (2012, p.60) claims that "Cross-sectional research designs produce associations rather than findings from which causal inferences can be unambiguously made". Since much cross-sectional research makes a great deal of use of research instruments, such as self-completion questionnaires, ecological validity may be endangered because the very instruments disrupt the natural settings. (Cicourel 1982, cited by Bryman, 2012, p.61)

Due to the limitations in the sample taken, problems might occur when generalizing the results obtained in the study to the other contexts and it would lead to weak external validity. On the other hand, there are limitations to the research because there may be many factors that can affect a respondent's perception such as physical or mental conditions, exam stress, confidence level, the learning methods & grabbing the knowledge at the service point which are different from each respondent to respondent.

Another limitation is that respondent may diverse due to regions, economic backgrounds, ethical and family backgrounds. Ethical & ancient traditional believes of respondents may have an impact on the research findings.

5.3 Future direction

It is assumed that this study would provide a base for carrying out further research in this context. Future direction of the research would be what are issues faced by the interns during the internship period? why there is existence of an expectation gap? What is the ultimate motive of the academic education? (Is it employability or life-long learning) and Why the undergraduate interns are satisfied about the internship programme even though there is an expectation gap? Diverse research findings regarding accounting internship programmes would eventually guide a social dialogue regarding the arena and that would assist in developing comprehensive accounting internship programmes.

***

REFERENCES

Anon., n.d. 'Internship.com-The world's largest internship marketplace', viewed 15 July 2015, http://www.internships.com.

Anon., n.d. 'The Big 4 Accounting Firms', viewed 23 January 2016, www.big4accountingfirms.org

Anon., n.d. 'The challenges of establishing an internship programme: Policy, expectations and workloads', viewed 15 July 2015, http://www.waceinc.org

Anon., n.d. 'The Intern Advocate', viewed 12 August 2015, http://www.internadvocate.com

Auburn, T., 2007, Identity and placement learning: Student accounts of the transition back to university following a placement year, *Studies in Higher Education*.

Bakar, M. J. A., Harun, R. J., Yusof, K. N. C. K. & Tahir, I. M., 2011, 'Business and accounting students' perceptions on industrial internship programme', *Journal of Education and Vocational Research*, June, 1(3), pp. 72-79.

Bancino, R. & Zevalkink, C., 2007, 'The Skills for the Job', s.l.: www.acteonline. org.

Beck, J. E. & Halim, H., 2008, 'Undergraduate internships in accounting: What and how do Singapore interns learn from experience?', *Accounting Education*, 17(2), pp. 151-172.

Billiot, M. J., n.d. 'New accountant', viewed 23 January 2016, www.newaccountantusa.com

Bryman, A., 2012. Social research methods. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bukaliya, R., 2012, 'The potential benefits and challenges of internship programmes in an old institution: A case for the Zimbabwe Open University', *International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications*, 3(1).

Callender, C., 2008, 'The impact of term-time employment on higher education students' academic attainment and achievement', *Journal of Education Policy*, 23(4), pp. 359-377.

Calvo, J., 2011, ‘Internships between higher education and work: theoretical considerations and analysis for reflection, Kassel, Germany: Organization for Higher Education, Co-operation, Research and Development (OCIDES).

Cannon, J. A. & Arnold, M. J., 1998, ‘Student expectations of collegiate internship programmes in business: a 10-year update’, *Journal of Education for Business*, 73(4), pp. 202-205.

Christian, G. R., 2008, ‘Internship experiences for aspiring Ppincipals: Student perceptions and effectiveness’, Electronic Theses and Dissertations, p. Paper 1331.

Cook, S. J., Stokes, A. & Parker, R. S., 2015, ‘A 20-year examination of the perceptions of business school interns: a longitudinal case study’, *Journal of Education for Business*, 90(2), pp. 103-110.

D'Abate, C. P., Youndt, M. A. & Wenzel, K. E., 2009, ‘Making the most of an internship: an empirical study of internship satisfaction’, *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 8(4), pp. 527-539.

Department of Accounting, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, n.d. viewed 23 January 2016, http://www.sjp.ac.lk/fmsc/accounting.

Divine, R., Miller, R., Wilson, J. H. & Linrud, J., 2008, Key philosophical decisions to consider when designing an internship programme’, *Journal of Management and Marketing Research*, Volume 2, pp. 1-8.

Duignan, J., 2005, ‘Undergraduate work placement and academic performance: an investigation into the relationship between learning transfer and the architecture of the internship in a business undergraduate programme’, s.l.: s.n.

Ebied, H., 2004, ‘An empirical investigation of the impact of the student accounting internships on subsequent academic performance: the case of UAE University’, *Journal of Economic and Administrative Sciences*, 20(2), pp. 33 - 44.

Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, 2012, *Faculty Propectus 2011/2012*, s.l.:s.n.

Gammie, E., Jones, P. & Robertson-Millar, C., 2003, 'Accountancy undergraduate performance: a statistical model', *Accounting Education*, 12(1), pp. 63-78.

Gracia, L., 2009, 'Employability and higher education: contextualising female students', workplace experiences to enhance understanding of employability development', *Journal of Education and Work.*

Hergert, M. & Diego, S., 2009, 'Student perceptions of the value of internships in business education', *American Journal of Business Education*, November.2(8).

Holmes, V., 2008, 'Working to live: why university students balance full-time study and employment', *Education + Training*, 50(4), pp. 305 - 314.

Holyoak, L., 2013, 'Are all internships beneficial learning experiences? an exploratory study', *Education + Training*, 55(6), pp. 573 - 583.

Ilias, A., Razak, M. Z. A., Yunus, N. K. Y. & Razak, S. F. F. A., 2012, 'How accounting students perceived towards teamwork skills', *Journal of Education and Vocational Research*, 3(12), pp. 387-398.

Karunaratne, K. & Perera, N., 2015, 'Students' perception on the effectiveness of industrial internship programme', Bangkok, s.n.

Kasli, M. & Ilban, M. O., 2013, 'The relationship between problems faced during internships and interns' view of profession and intention to work in the tourism industry', *Egitim Arastirmalari-Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, Volume 52, pp. 79-96.

Kim, E. B., Kim, K. & Bzullak, M., 2012, 'A survey of internship programs for management undergraduates in AACSB-accredited institutions', *International Journal of Educational Management*, 26(7), pp. 696 - 709.

Knechel, W. R. & Snowball, D., 1987, 'Accounting internships and subsequent academic performance: an empirical study', *The Accounting Review*, October, 62(4), pp. 799-807.

Koehler, R. W., 1974, 'The effect of internship programs on subsequent college performance', *The Accounting Review*, April, 49(2), pp. 382-384.

Koh, M. Y. & Koh, H. C., 1999, 'The determinants of performance in an accountancy degree programme', *Accounting Education*, 8(1), pp. 13-29.

Lee, S., 2006, 'Comparison of student perceptions of learning in their co-op and internship experiences and the classroom environment: a study of hospitality management students',.

Liu, G., 2012, 'A survey on student satisfaction with cooperative accounting education based on CPA firm internships', *Asian Review of Accounting*, 20(3), pp. 259 - 277.

Mandilaras, A., 2004, 'Industrial placement and degree performance: evidence from a British higher education institution', *International Review of Economics Education*, 3(1), pp. 39-51.

Manthei, R. J. & Gilmore, A., 2005, 'The effect of paid employment on university students' lives', *Education + Training*, 47(3), pp. 202 - 215.

Martin, D. R. & Wilkerson, J. E., 2006, 'An examination of the impact of accounting internships on student attitudes and perceptions', *The Accounting Educators' Journal*, Volume 7, pp. 129-138.

McCombs, G. B. & VanSyckle, L. D., 1994, 'Accounting internships: a win-win arrangement', *Banking, Finance and Accounting*.

Mihail, D. M., 2006, 'Internships at Greek universities: an exploratory study', *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 18(1), p. 28 – 41.

Muhamad, R., Yahya, Y., Shahimi, S. & Mahzan, N., 2009, 'Undergraduate internship attachment in accounting: the intern's perspective', *International Education Studies*, November, 2(4), pp. 49-55.

Renganathan, S., Karim, Z. A. B. A. & Li, C. S., 2012, 'Students' perception of industrial internship programme', *Education + Training*, 54(2/3), pp. 180-191.

Ruhanita, M., Zakiah, M. M., Ramli, R. & Aman, A., 2014, 'Internship for accounting undergraduates: comparative insights from stakeholders', *Education + Training*, 56(6), p. 482.

Schambach, T. & Dirks, J., 2002, ‘Student perceptions of internship experiences. Barcelona’, s.n.

Stufflebeam, R., 2006, ‘Introduction to the methods used to study perception’, viewed 23 January 2016, http://www.mind.ilstu.edu.

Surridge, I., 2009, ‘Accounting and finance degrees: is the academic performance of placement students better?’, *Accounting Education*, 18(4-5), pp. 471-485.

Thilakerathne, P. M. C. & Madurapperuma, M. W., 2014, ‘An examination of accounting internship on subsequent academic performance’, *International Journal of Economics, Finance and Management Sciences*, 2(1), pp. 8-15.

Thompson, J. H., 2011, ‘A comparative empirical analysis of characteristics associated with accounting internships’, *International Journal of Business, Humanities and Technology*, 1(1).

Walker, R. B., 2011, ‘Business internships and their relationship with retention, academic performance, and degree completion’, s.l.: Iowa State University.

Warinda, T., 2013, ‘Accounting students’ evaluation of internship experiences from a skills perspective’, *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 3(3), pp. 783-799.

Watts, C., 2002, ‘The effects of term-time employment on academic performance’, *Education + Training*, 44(2), pp. 67 - 75.

Watts, C. & Pickering, A., 2000, ‘Pay as you learn: student employment and academic progress’, *Education + Training*, 42(3), pp. 129 – 13

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Testing Validity and Reliability

The below tables represents the resulted outputs of Principal Axis Factor analysis with Varimax rotation. "C" is the communalities of extraction. The factor loadings are not available, since only one rotated component is available.

1. The support, efficiency and effectiveness of Internship Unit

Statement	C
DA15-Internship unit staff is always available when required	0.704
DA16-Internship unit staff is always attending to issues arising promptly	0.690
DA17-Internship unit is able to maintain a good rapport with the internship providers	0.537
DA18-Internship unit is able to maintain a good rapport with the students	0.756
DA19-The briefings and guidelines given on internship programme by the Internship unit is sufficient and informative	0.603
DA20-The placement procedures of the internship unit are efficient	0.553
DA21-The evaluation criteria of the internship are relevant, adequate and fair	0.605
DA22-The internship period attached to the internship programme is not too long	0.316

2. Internship provider

Statement	C
DA10-Training provided is related to my Degree	0.434
DA11-Employer provides maximum opportunity for training	0.641
DA12-Employer has a well-structured training programme	0.599
DA13-Employer provides a real job experience	0.538
DA14-Employer is supportive of the internship programme	0.304

3. Job marketability and future career prospects

Statements	C
DA25-The Internship experiences helps me to improve my personal confidence and self-esteem.	0.723
DA30-The internship experience provides me with the relevant knowledge and practical experience to assist me in adapting myself to my future working environment	0.737
DA31-The internship experience gives me the opportunity to build up rapport and networking with people in the industry and business arena	0.761
DA32-The internship experience provides me with the necessary job experience that can improve my chances to get a good job upon graduation	0.719

DA33-The internship experience provides me with the necessary information and experiences to choose the right career path upon graduation	0.687
DA35-The internship experience helps me to enhance knowledge in Accounting and Reporting.	0.617
DA56-The Internship experience enhances my ability to demonstrate a commitment to professional development	0.450

4. Personal Capacity skills

Statements	**C**
DA36-The internship experience enhances my computer skills	0.710
DA37-The internship experience enhances my ability to meet deadlines	0.720
DA38-The internship experience enhances my time management skills	0.717
DA39-The internship experience enhances my problem solving skills	0.669
DA40-The internship experience enhances my ability to cope with stress	0.682
DA41-The internship experience enhances my ability to generate practical ideas	0.742
DA42-The internship experience enhances my ability to generate creative ideas	0.420
DA52-The Internship experience enhances my ability to work collaboratively in a team	0.611
DA53-The Internship experience enhances my ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with different stakeholders	0.401
DA58-The Internship experience enhances my ability to demonstrate leadership	0.564

5. Managerial decision making skills

Statements	**C**
DA45-The internship experience enhances my ability to identify, classify, record, summarise and report socio-economic environmental factors which affect organisations	0.594
DA46-The internship experience enhances my ability to provide financial and non-financial information to help management in making business and organisational decisions	0.801
DA47-The internship experience enhances my ability to interpret and evaluate financial and non-financial information for decision making	0.744
DA48-The internship experience enhances my ability to use and evaluate information systems and technologies to achieve organisational objectives	0.585
DA51-The Internship experience enhances my ability to integrate other business and management applications accordance to the basic accounting competencies	0.582
DA59-The Internship experience enhances my ability to demonstrate entrepreneurship skills	0.396

6. Finance and Accounting related skills

Statements	C
DA23-The Internship experience enhances my ability to prepare financial statements in accordance with applicable accounting standards	0.601
DA43-The internship experience helps me to enhance my ability to prepare financial statements based on information/data extracted from variety of sources.	0.712
DA44-The internship experience helps me to have a better understanding in interpreting and evaluating financial statements.	0.755
DA50-The Internship attachment enhances my ability to think critically in the application of knowledge to suggest possible solutions to accounting issues	0.747

7. The academic participation and academic performance

Statements	C
DA1-Lecture participation during the internship period is satisfactory	0.614
DA2-Time allocation for studies during the internship period is satisfactory	0.577
DA3-Submission of assignments during the internship period is satisfactory	0.512
DA4-I am able to concentrate well on both the studies and responsibilities at work during the internship period	0.436
DA6-Academic results for subjects (except for Skill Development of Intern Accountants) during the internship period is satisfactory	0.488
DA7-My academic results improved due to internship	0.454

8. Knowledge, Attitude and Theoretical application

Statements	C
DA24-The Internship experience helps me to relate the theories learned in the lectures to the work environment.	0.506
DA26-I am gaining a high level of academic motivation due to the internship	0.636
DA27-The internship experience assists me to increase interest in accounting	0.701
DA28-The internship experience increases my desire for a career in accounting	0.662
DA34-The internship experience helps me to enhance knowledge in Auditing	0.469
DA49-The Internship experience enhances my ability to advice on tax matters	0.542

9. Moral responsibilities and Lifelong learning

Statements	C
DA54-The Internship experience enhances my ability to exhibit behaviour consistent with social responsibility	0.77508
DA55-Internship experience enhances my ability to exhibit behaviour consistent with professional ethics	0.85558
DA57-Internship experience enhances my ability to demonstrate a commitment to life-long learning	0.79568

10. Overall satisfaction about internship programme

Statements	C
DA5- If the internship was an elective in every semester still I would choose the internship	0.2838
DA9- I believe I am learning what I expect through my internship	0.2060
DA60- The Internship programme plays a highly importance role in the degree programme	0.7684
DA61- I place a high importance on the undergraduate internship programme	0.7299
DA62- Overall I am satisfied about the internship programme	0.7016

Appendix 2: t-test for statements on perceived level of agreement on internship programme

Dimension	Statement	t	Df	Mean Difference	Mean	Std. Deviation
DA_Academic	DA1	0.7306	91	0.0978	3.0978	1.2844
DA_Academic	DA2	-3.303	91	- 0.4022***	2.5978	1.1679
DA_Academic	DA3	-0.8379	91	-0.0978	2.9022	1.1198
DA_Academic	DA4	-0.6624	91	-0.0761	2.9239	1.1018
DA_Academic	DA6	2.2142	91	0.2935**	3.2935	1.2713
DA_Academic	DA7	-4.817	91	-0.5870***	2.413	1.1688
DA_Allowance	DA8	-4.7651	90	-0.6044***	2.3956	1.21
DA_Allowance	DA29	5.085	91	0.6413***	3.6413	1.2097
DA_IP	DA10	13.0588	89	1.1778***	4.1778	0.8556
DA_IP	DA11	8.6488	91	0.9130***	3.913	1.0126
DA_IP	DA13	9.3877	91	0.9674***	3.9674	0.9884
DA_IP	DA12	3.947	91	0.4457***	3.4457	1.083
DA_IP	DA14	4.5658	90	0.5714***	3.5714	1.1939
DA_Career	DA25	16.8309	91	1.3696***	4.3696	0.7805
DA_Career	DA30	14.4838	91	1.2283***	4.2283	0.8134
DA_Career	DA31	15.069	91	1.2826***	4.2826	0.8164
DA_Career	DA32	13.9619	91	1.2826***	4.2826	0.8811
DA_Career	DA33	12.8145	90	1.1429***	4.1429	0.8508
DA_Career	DA35	12.4466	91	1.1848***	4.1848	0.913
DA_Career	DA56	13.6248	91	1.1522***	4.1522	0.8111
DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	DA45	6.4787	91	0.7174***	3.7174	1.0621
DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	DA46	6.4834	90	0.6923***	3.6923	1.0186
DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	DA47	7.6531	91	0.8043***	3.8043	1.0081
DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	DA48	9.5353	90	0.8242***	3.8242	0.8245
DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	DA51	7.8163	90	0.7802***	3.7802	0.9522
DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	DA59	3.4289	91	0.4348***	3.4348	1.2162
DA_Essential_Skills	DA36	19.3313	91	1.4783***	4.4783	0.7335
DA_Essential_Skills	DA37	17.7652	91	1.4348***	4.4348	0.7747
DA_Essential_Skills	DA38	15.9023	91	1.3261***	4.3261	0.7998
DA_Essential_Skills	DA39	16.2452	91	1.2935***	4.2935	0.7637
DA_Essential_Skills	DA40	16.3534	91	1.3478***	4.3478	0.7905
DA_Essential_Skills	DA41	14.9965	91	1.2717***	4.2717	0.8134
DA_Essential_Skills	DA42	8.6388	90	0.9121***	3.9121	1.0072
DA_Essential_Skills	DA52	17.4731	91	1.3696***	4.3696	0.7518
DA_Essential_Skills	DA53	13.2383	90	1.1868***	4.1868	0.8552
DA_Essential_Skills	DA58	14.9669	91	1.1630***	4.163	0.7453
DA_FA_Skills	DA23	8.0629	91	0.9565***	3.9565	1.1379
DA_FA_Skills	DA43	9.0354	91	0.9565***	3.9565	1.0154
DA_FA_Skills	DA44	9.5018	91	0.9130***	3.913	0.9217
DA_FA_Skills	DA50	8.9444	91	0.8587***	3.8587	0.9208

DA_Knowledge	DA24	10.5549	91	1.0435***	4.0435	0.9483
DA_Knowledge	DA26	1.4724	91	0.1848	3.1848	1.2037
DA_Knowledge	DA27	7.356	91	0.8913***	3.8913	1.1622
DA_Knowledge	DA28	7.2833	91	0.8370***	3.837	1.1022
DA_Knowledge	DA34	3.2931	91	0.5000***	3.5	1.4563
DA_Knowledge	DA49	2.0797	90	0.2857**	3.2857	1.3105
DA_Moral	DA54	12.3439	91	1.0435***	4.0435	0.8108
DA_Moral	DA55	11.4196	91	1.1087***	4.1087	0.9312
DA_Moral	DA57	12.1488	90	1.0220***	4.022	0.8025
DA_Overall_Satis	DA5	7.3971	89	0.9778***	3.9778	1.254
DA_Overall_Satis	DA9	6.0277	91	0.7283***	3.7283	1.1588
DA_Overall_Satis	DA60	17.1232	90	1.4176***	4.4176	0.7897
DA_Overall_Satis	DA61	14.3416	90	1.3516***	4.3516	0.8991
DA_Overall_Satis	DA62	9.1835	90	0.9890***	3.989	1.0273
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA15	3.8929	90	0.4396***	3.4396	1.0771
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA16	3.9288	89	0.4778***	3.4778	1.1537
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA17	5.2759	90	0.5604***	3.5604	1.0133
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA18	5.3925	89	0.5778***	3.5778	1.0165
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA19	5.1194	91	0.5217***	3.5217	0.9775
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA20	5.3725	91	0.5217***	3.5217	0.9315
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA21	4.7715	89	0.6111***	3.6111	1.215
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA22	5.7919	91	0.8152***	3.8152	1.35

Test value = 3

*p <.1, **p <.05, *** p <.01

Source: Author constructed

Appendix 3: Expectation gap for each statement

		Paired Differences			
Dimension	Pair	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df
DA_Academic	DA2 and DI2	-1.6522***	1.3296	-11.9188	91
DA_Allowance	DA8 and DI8	-1.5824***	1.5060	-10.0232	90
DA_Academic	DA7 and DI7	-1.5435***	1.3458	-11.0002	91
DA_Academic	DA4 and DI4	-1.3261***	1.1870	-10.7155	91
DA_Academic	DA3 and DI3	-1.0870***	1.2194	-8.5501	91
DA_Academic	DA1 and DI1	-1.0870***	1.4725	-7.0804	91
DA_Academic	DA6 and DI6	-1.0549***	1.2144	-8.2870	90
DA_Knowledge	DA26 and DI26	-1.0217***	1.2665	-7.7383	91
DA_Knowledge	DA49 and DI49	-0.8791***	1.2278	-6.8304	90
DA_IP	DA12 and DI12	-0.8478***	1.2129	-6.7047	91
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA16 and DI16	-0.8111***	1.2076	-6.3720	89
DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	DA59 and DI59	-0.7826***	1.0036	-7.4798	91
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA15 and DI15	-0.7778***	1.0787	-6.8405	89
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA19 and DI19	-0.7500***	1.0755	-6.6891	91
DA_IP	DA14 and DI14	-0.7473***	1.0603	-6.7228	90
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA17 and DI17	-0.7253***	1.0548	-6.5593	90
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA21 and DI21	-0.7222***	1.1901	-5.7571	89
DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	DA46 and DI46	-0.6813***	0.8548	-7.6036	90
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA18 and DI18	-0.6667***	0.9944	-6.3604	89
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA20 and DI20	-0.6630***	0.9753	-6.5210	91
DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	DA45 and DI45	-0.6413***	0.9327	-6.5950	91
DA_Knowledge	DA34 and DI34	-0.6304***	1.1552	-5.2346	91
DA_FA_Skills	DA23 and DI23	-0.6087***	1.0478	-5.5719	91
DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	DA51 and DI51	-0.6044***	0.9647	-5.9765	90
DA_FA_Skills	DA50 and DI50	-0.5870***	0.8274	-6.8040	91
DA_Moral	DA57 and DI57	-0.5385***	0.8207	-6.2590	90
DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	DA48 and DI48	-0.5385***	0.7646	-6.7180	90
DA_Knowledge	DA27 and DI27	-0.5326***	0.8445	-6.0491	91
DA_SEE_SDIU	DA22 and DI22	-0.5217***	1.2178	-4.1093	91
DA_IP	DA11 and DI11	-0.5217***	0.9196	-5.4418	91
DA_Moral	DA54 and DI54	-0.5217***	0.8049	-6.2173	91
DA_Moral	DA55 and DI55	-0.5109***	0.8956	-5.4714	91
DA_FA_Skills	DA43 and DI43	-0.5109***	0.8956	-5.4714	91
DA_Knowledge	DA28 and DI28	-0.5109***	0.9664	-5.0704	91
DA_Essential_Skills	DA42 and DI42	-0.5055***	0.8350	-5.7751	90
DA_Allowance	DA29 and DI29	-0.5000***	1.0844	-4.4228	91
DA_Dec_Ent_Skills	DA47 and DI47	-0.5000***	0.8581	-5.5892	91
DA_Essential_Skills	DA53 and DI53	-0.4505***	0.7034	-6.1104	90
DA_FA_Skills	DA44 and DI44	-0.4457***	0.7612	-5.6155	91
DA_Essential_Skills	DA58 and DI58	-0.4022***	0.6300	-6.1229	91
DA_Knowledge	DA24 and DI24	-0.4022***	0.7119	-5.4186	91
DA_IP	DA13 and DI13	-0.3956***	0.9175	-4.1133	90

DA_Career	DA33 and DI33	-0.3626***	0.6239	-5.5447	90
DA_IP	DA10 and DI10	-0.3333***	0.7789	-4.0597	89
DA_Career	DA35 and DI35	-0.3297***	0.6676	-4.7108	90
DA_Career	DA30 and DI30	-0.3152***	0.5728	-5.2782	91
DA_Essential_Skills	DA40 and DI40	-0.3043***	0.6751	-4.3239	91
DA_Essential_Skills	DA39 and DI39	-0.2826***	0.6171	-4.3927	91
DA_Essential_Skills	DA41 and DI41	-0.2717***	0.6810	-3.8272	91
DA_Essential_Skills	DA52 and DI52	-0.2609***	0.5717	-4.3770	91
DA_Essential_Skills	DA38 and DI38	-0.2500***	0.5669	-4.2295	91
DA_Career	DA31 and DI31	-0.2500***	0.5055	-4.7440	91
DA_Career	DA25 and DI25	-0.2283***	0.6131	-3.5710	91
DA_Career	DA32 and DI32	-0.1739**	0.7502	-2.2235	91
DA_Essential_Skills	DA37 and DI37	-0.1630***	0.5981	-2.6146	91
DA_Essential_Skills	DA36 and DI36	-0.1304**	0.5182	-2.4144	91
DA_Essential_Skills	DA36 and DI36	-0.1304**	0.5182	-2.4144	91

*p <.1, **p <.05, *** p <.01

Source: Author Constructed

Appendix 4: Questionnaire