

A Study to Evaluate the Effectiveness of the Summer Internship Programs by B-Schools

Dr. Sonali Khurjekar

Assistant Professor, Bharati Vidyapeeth's Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship Development, Pune

Dr. Ranpreet Kaur

Assistant Professor, Bharati Vidyapeeth's Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship Development, Pune

ABSTRACT

The objective of Masters in Business Administration (MBA) education is to create Global Managers to handle the intricacies of the complex business. Internships play a vital role in achieving this goal. Internship helps a student to learn by doing and having hands on experience of the industry. The best B Schools leave no opportunity to offer multiple short duration internships besides the mandatory sixty days summer internship to their students.

However, in spite of all the efforts taken by the Institute and the Industry, the summer internships are not fetching the expected outcomes. The quality of the projects done by students post internships is not up to the mark. The percentage of students securing a pre placement offer is as low as 5-6 % i.e. almost negligible.

This research paper explains the importance of internships and its benefits to all the stakeholders. The researcher tries to ascertain the quality of projects done by students post internships and also understand the challenges faced by students, institutes as well as the companies during these summer internships. The paper also attempts to explore the reasons for the inability of the students to secure pre placement offers in the company of their internship.

Keywords: B- School, Summer Internships, Placements, MBA, Projects, Company, Institute

1. INTRODUCTION

What is Summer Internship Project (SIP): Internships are a fundamental aspect of any professional education like Medicine, Charter Accountancy, Company Secretaries, Cost Accountancy and Pharmacy. Management education is no exception. The objective of Masters in Business Administration (MBA) education is to create Global Managers to handle the intricacies of the complex business. Internships play a vital role in achieving this goal. Human Resource Management also emphasises on internships as an important method of training and development. Internship helps a student to learn by doing and having hands on experience of the industry. Interns have the opportunity of watching the experts, seniors, experienced people in action. A lot of learning takes place by observing them too. It would not be exaggeration to state that Internship provides the students a golden opportunity to play and practise with the champions and avail a world class coaching, if done with heart and soul. In fact today the best B Schools leave no opportunity to offer multiple short duration internships besides the mandatory sixty days summer internship to their students. The objective is to bridge the gap between academia and industry, introduce the students to corporate culture, make them industry – ready, secure pre placement offers for the interns and thus reduce the cost and time involved in placing them at the end of MBA program.

However, in spite of all the efforts taken by the Institute and the Industry, the summer internships are not fetching the expected outcomes. The quality of the projects done by students post internships is not up to the mark. The percentage of students securing a pre placement offer is as low as 5-6 % i.e. almost negligible.

This research paper explains the importance of internships and its benefits to the students, institutes and the companies. The researcher tries to ascertain the quality of projects done by students post internships and also understand the challenges faced by students as well as the companies during these summer internships. The paper also attempts to explore the reasons for the inability of the students to secure pre placement offers in the company of their internship.

Importance of Summer Internship Program (SIP):

The Indian education system focuses on the pre-conditioned classroom teaching. Professors try to give the feel of the industry to the students by way of real life examples, case studies, simulation techniques, role plays etc. However hard they may try, the classroom cannot be transformed to experience the actual industry feel. This type of environment may not help in Management education where exposing the students to their prospective work place from the very beginning is utmost important.

MBA aspirants have to accept the fact that summer internships are a stepping stone to prospective career in the industry. The sooner they accept this, the better it is for them. Every B School and Management student will authenticate the reality that summer internship is a crucial stride to enhance student's credentials and help him land in a full time job. It helps the candidate to attain an edge over his fellow students and augments the scope for his employability.

Interns need to understand that - “Companies are not just looking for interns, but for potential full-time hires. So, you need to convince them that you're a good fit, not for three months, but for three years,” as quoted by Jeanne Chan, a 2008 graduate of Olin Business School, Washington University.

Benefits of the SIP:

Summer internships if done seriously, will ensure a win-win situation for all the stakeholders i.e. students, management institutes and the company.

For the Students -

Summer Internships give the interns a platform to interact with the experts, observe the corporate work culture and many a times identify their area of interest. Students develop better knowledge, competencies and understanding of the work culture. In the course of their internship, students may find their mentor who may support and guide him thus giving rise to the concept of corporate mentorship. Such corporate mentors can be instrumental in giving the right assistance and shaping the career of their mentee.

Internships always add value to the resume of candidates and they may have an edge while changing jobs or can get the benefit over their competitors in early stages of their career. Companies look out for candidates with internship experience on their resume and they stand to fetch better jobs or more prestigious colleges for higher education than their contemporaries.

Monetary benefits are an added perk for students as these days some of the internships are offer handsome stipend too.

For the Company -

Companies look at summer internships as short term employment. They use summer interns as temporary employees. Most of the field work, data collection and market research work is accomplished through these interns.

The company people accept that they receive fresh perspective of outsiders to unravel their existing problems. The youngsters may have an innovative approach to problem solving.

By offering pre placement offers to the deserving interns, companies are able to reduce the cost and time in hiring new candidates later on. As the intern is already aware of the company culture, practices and values, he starts working from day one and is more productive than a new recruit. Thus the company saves on the time and cost of training when they absorb an intern.

For the Institute -

Summer Internships helps to enhance the employability of the students and the Institutes find it easy to place these students. The Institutes get the satisfaction of offering better products (students with internships) to the industry. Some of the Interns secure pre placement offers

thus reducing the burden on the Institutes of placing these students after their MBA program. Internships create good will among the students and thus help the Institute in brand building.

Challenges /Problems in SIP:

Though the summer internships are helpful for all the stakeholders, there are few challenges too in the way of its planning and execution. The students, institute as well as the companies have to face certain difficulties in the process.

For the Students – Most of the times the intern's work is overlooked and there is no appreciation for the work done. This discourages them in giving their best. Sometimes the Mentor is pre-occupied with his work and may not be able to devote time to the intern. Inaccessibility of these top executives is also a problem for the intern students. Inconsequential work, unrelated tasks or inadequate work are the common problems faced by interns. Seldom, students complain about long working hours and lack of instructions from the Mentor. All this creates a poor internship experience for the students.

For the Company – Not all the executives from the company can be a good guide or mentor for the students. They may be superior as professionals but are poor in guiding interns. Most of the times they are preoccupied in their own work and cannot devote quality time to the interns. There may be compatibility issues leading to communication gap. Lack of seriousness, lack of accountability, reluctance to work for long hours are some of the problems company faces with respect to the interns.

For the Institute - Students are keener on paid internship and hence the Institutes face difficulties in finding such paid internships. Many of the students are not serious about their SIP and prefer doing internships in their hometown or with some acquaintance. Lack of seriousness on part of the students during internships creates bad name for the Institute thus affecting their rapport with the company. It may also influence the future internship /placements equation with the company.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Researcher reviewed number of research papers, news articles, journals and web resources to understand the benefits and challenges of the summer internships from all the stakeholders. Discussions and interviews with the institute and the company guide also helped the researcher to get more insight into the topic. The research papers reviewed covered the following areas –Indian experience of summer internships projects, quality internship as one of the important factor while selecting a B School by students, quality in business education with Indian context and challenges in management education in India. Many news articles focus on topics like - 93 per cent MBA graduates are unemployable: Problems with management education in India, process of summer internships at premier B-Schools in India, tough lessons for MBA graduates from tier 2, 3 B Schools. Few MBA students from elite B Schools have shared their summer internship experience on various discussion platforms which gives an insight into the harsh reality.

The researcher observed that none of the research papers focussed simultaneously on the importance and benefits of summer internships to all the stakeholders and the challenges faced all of them during such internships, the reasons of very few internships leading to PPO (pre placement offer) and the measures to improve the quality of projects done by students after the internships. Hence the researcher selected this topic covering all the above parameters of summer internships and tries to suggest a workable solution to the challenges faced by all the stakeholders.

After the intense literature review and identifying the gaps, the researcher has framed the following objectives for the study-

Objectives of the study:

- To ascertain the quality of summer internship projects done by Management students.
- To study the conversion ratio of internships into final placements.
- To understand the challenges faced by students, companies and institutes during summer internships.
- To suggest suitable measures /workable solutions to overcome these challenges.

Hypotheses of the study:

H0: Summer Internship Projects done by the Students are effective.

H1: Summer Internship Projects done by the Students are not effective.

H0: All the Summer Internship Projects lead to final placements.

H2: All the Summer Internship Projects do not lead to final placements.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Researcher has reviewed 16 research papers, 5 research articles and few web resources which throw light on the gaps. With the help of these gaps researcher has formulated research problem and objectives for this study. Researcher wants to study the summer internship projects done by the Management students and also understand the challenges faced by students, companies and the Institutes during these SIP. The researcher also wants to know the conversion ratio of internships into final placements. For this purpose a questionnaire was addressed to MBA second year students who have completed their summer internships. Informal discussions were held with the faculty members from the management institutes who are the guides of these students. Unstructured interviews were conducted with the company guides who were the mentors of these interns.

Type of Research is Descriptive and Empirical in nature. Descriptive research includes fact finding enquiries and surveys. The main objective is to describe things as they are. This research too is descriptive as here the researcher has no control and he describes some facts

as they are. The researcher has simply collected the facts about the summer internship from all the stakeholders, analyzed the data and done a critical evaluation.

Empirical research is based on observations and experience rather than established theories. The record of one's observations and experiences can be analyzed either qualitatively or quantitatively. As this research involves the observations and experiences of the researcher about the various aspects of summer internships by the management students, it is an empirical research too.

Population of the study: The population of the research includes all the second year MBA students who have completed their summer internships from various companies. The students studying in various B-Schools in Pune city are considered for the study. Out of all the B Schools, category B Management schools are considered for the purpose of this study.

Sample of the study: Since it is difficult to calculate the exact number of students studying management in various B Schools in Pune city, we can consider the population as infinite. For an infinite population, the accepted sample size is 384. Hence the sample i.e. 500 students pursuing management education in various category B Management colleges in Pune are considered for the purpose of this research.

Primary Data:

- Questionnaire administered to MBA second year students
- Unstructured Interviews with the company guides
- Informal discussion with the internal faculty guides

Secondary Data:

Research papers, Journals, Articles, Newspapers, Web resources

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Researcher has made an attempt to involve varied section of the respondents in the collected sample. The data collected was abbreviated and entered in SPSS 20.0. Five point Likert scale is used to collect the data i.e. strongly disagree(1), Disagree(2), neutral(3), Agree(4), Strongly Agree(5) from the management students. Frequency tables are produced and observations based on percentages were recorded. Chi square test is used for the testing of the hypothesis and frequency tables are also generated.

For the research work, eight major parameters are identified to evaluate the effectiveness of the SIP, namely - pre placement offer(PPO), Learning of new managerial skills(LONMS), Problem solving attitude (PSA), communication and team work(CAT), Monetary Benefit (MB), Clarity of study (CS), Depth of Knowledge (DOK), Exposure to current

developments(ETDC). For the research work, data of 500 students who are pursuing management education in Pune is collected.

Table No-1:Statistics

		PPO	LONMS	PSA	CAT	MB	CS	DOK	ETCD
N	Valid	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table No-2: Frequency Table for the first parameter -Pre Placement offer(PPO)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	209	41.8	41.8	41.8
	2.00	49	9.8	9.8	51.6
	3.00	48	9.6	9.6	61.2
	4.00	120	24.0	24.0	85.2
	5.00	74	14.8	14.8	100.0
	Total	500	100.0	100.0	

From the above table , it can be stated that the major of the respondents do not get placement offer in Summer internship as 51.6 % respondents responded, strongly disagree (41.8 %) and disagree (9.8 %) for the same.

Table No-3: Frequency Table for the Second parameter - Learning of new managerial skills (LONMS)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.00	126	25.2	25.2	25.2
	4.00	259	51.8	51.8	77.0
	5.00	115	23.0	23.0	100.0
	Total	500	100.0	100.0	

From the above table , it can be stated that the major of the respondents agreed that they get exposure to learn new managerial skills during SIP as 51.8 % respondents responded agree and 23 % Strongly agree for the same.

Table No-4: Frequency Table for the Third parameter - Problem solving attitude (PSA),

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
3.00	69	13.8	13.8	13.8
Valid 5.00	431	86.2	86.2	100.0
Total	500	100.0	100.0	

From the above table, it can be stated that the major of the respondents agreed that they learn to develop problem solving attitude during SIP as 86.2% % sample responded Strongly agree for the same.

Table No-5: Frequency Table for the fourth parameter - Communication and teamwork (CAT)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
3.00	316	63.2	63.2	63.2
Valid 4.00	184	36.8	36.8	100.0
Total	500	100.0	100.0	

It can be observed from the above table that the major of the respondents were neutral that they improved communication and teamwork skills during SIP as 63.2% % respondents responded neutral response.

Table No-6: Frequency Table for the fifth parameter - Monetary Benefit (MB)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.00	33	6.6	6.6	6.6
2.00	69	13.8	13.8	20.4
Valid 4.00	118	23.6	23.6	44.0
5.00	280	56.0	56.0	100.0
Total	500	100.0	100.0	

It can be inferred from the above table that the majority of the respondents stated that they desire to get the monetary benefit in SIP as 56 % responded strongly agree and 23.6 % stated agree for the same.

Table No-7: Frequency Table for the Sixth parameter - Clarity of study (CQ)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	213	42.6	42.6	42.6
2.00	80	16.0	16.0	58.6
3.00	7	1.4	1.4	60.0
4.00	81	16.2	16.2	76.2
5.00	119	23.8	23.8	100.0
Total	500	100.0	100.0	

From the above table, It can be said that the clarity of study is not there as 42.6 % responded strongly disagree and 16 % responded disagree.

Table No-8: Frequency Table for the Seventh parameter - Depth of Knowledge (DOK)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	306	61.2	61.2	61.2
2.00	75	15.0	15.0	76.2
3.00	42	8.4	8.4	84.6
4.00	76	15.2	15.2	99.8
5.00	1	.2	.2	100.0
Total	500	100.0	100.0	

It can be observed from the above table that depth of knowledge is not there in SIP Projects as 61.2 % respondents strongly disagree and 15 % disagree.

Table No-9: Frequency Table for the eighth parameter - Exposure to current developments (ETDC)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2.00	69	13.8	13.8	13.8
3.00	310	62.0	62.0	75.8
5.00	121	24.2	24.2	100.0
Total	500	100.0	100.0	

From the above table it can be said that most of respondents were neutral for the statement that they get exposure for the current developments during SIP as 62 % responded. and 24.2 % responded strongly agree for the same.

Testing of Hypotheses-

First Hypothesis-

H0: Summer Internship Projects done by the Students are effective.

H1: Summer Internship Projects done by the Students are not effective.

Test Statistics

	PPO	LONMS	PSA	CAT	MB	CS	DOK	ETCD
Chi-Square	182.620 ^a	77.092 ^b	262.088 ^c	34.848 ^c	285.392 ^d	225.400 ^a	568.020 ^a	193.012 ^b
Df	4	2	1	1	3	4	4	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Interpretation for the Hypothesis –

From the data analysis, it can be stated that the null Hypothesis is rejected and alternative Hypothesis is selected as chi- square value for the different parameters is significant at 0.05. Therefore, it can be stated that Summer internship project done by the students are not effective.

Second Hypothesis -

H0: All the Summer Internship Projects lead to final placements.

H2: All the Summer Internship Projects do not lead to final placements.

	Pre Placement Offer (PPO)
Chi-Square	182.620 ^a
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000

Interpretation for the Hypothesis –

From the data analysis, it can be stated that the null Hypothesis is rejected and alternative Hypothesis is selected as chi- square value is 182.620 which is significant at 0.05. Therefore, it can be stated that all Summer internship projects do not lead to final placements.

Scope of the Study:

The research is limited to the second year MBA students from the category B Management Institutes in Pune city. This study may assist in acknowledging the challenges faced by the stakeholders i.e. management students, institutes and companies to bridge the gap in expectations.

4. FINDINGS

All the students pursuing MBA education have to mandatorily undergo summer training program of sixty days in the industry.

Many of the summer internships are not with stipends and students prefer monetary benefit i.e. paid internships.

In addition to this, around 40% of the students also go for some additional internships or live projects which also do not involve any monetary benefits to the students. However such short internships give lot of exposure and experience to the students. Students take up at the most two internships /live projects in addition to the summer internship.

Most of the students confessed that they were not really satisfied with the quality of the project done by them as part of the internship. The reasons quoted were – lack of clarity, no in-depth knowledge, not being aware about what is exactly expected, no proper guidance from the company mentor, allotment of work unrelated to their area of specialization, confusion about topic selection and insufficient time for writing the thesis and submission.

Students were neutral about improvement in communication and teamwork and exposure for the current developments as there is lack of guidance from company mentors and unrelated work allotment. However, they accepted that they get to learn managerial skills and develop problem solving attitude.

During informal discussions, the faculty guide too complained about the poor quality of projects by the students. They stated that students lacked seriousness about the project. Very few of them looked at the internship as an opportunity for learning, gaining experience and fetching pre placement offer. Many of them prefer to do internships in their hometown or in a company known to them.

The students also faced few problems during internships like –unrelated work, too much work and no credit for the work done by them. The company mentors were unable to give enough time to the interns, some did not have mentoring skills, some mentors expected performance from the students without giving them clear instructions about the work. Some of the mentors being top executives were inaccessible. The stipends and completion certificates of the interns were linked to the targets given to them by the company.

The company executives complained that many of the students were not serious about the internships. They lacked discipline, punctuality, sense of responsibility. Interns were not

willing to put in long working hours if required on some occasions. Some of the company mentors did not find the interns responsible and accountable.

5. SUGGESTIONS

All the students pursuing PG in Management should be made aware about the importance of the internships right from day one. The Induction program organized in the beginning of the MBA program should orient the students about the same.

The Management Institutes should frequently invite Corporate from the industry to highlight the role of internships in to understand the corporate culture and secure good placements.

The Institutes should conduct an orientation program for the students before they leave for summer internship covering the dos and don'ts during their stay in the company. The students have to be tutored about the acceptable behaviour, the required discipline and correct body language while on internship. They should be told about how these internships would give them an edge over their competitors and help them secure better placements.

As far as possible all the students should be encouraged to take internships from the college and not in the company they have chosen. This will automatically bring seriousness among the students about the internship.

The Institutes should be in touch with the company during the period of internship. This will keep a check on students. They will be more punctual, disciplined and serious about their work in the company.

The faculty guide from the Institute should be connected to the company mentor of their students. A visit by the faculty guide, wherever possible, in the company to discuss the progress of their students would fetch the desired results. This will improve the quality of the projects and some of them may land in final placements.

The companies who offer internships to the management students should assign a dedicated staff member to guide the interns. This member should be easily accessible to students, have good mentoring skills and keep himself available for any problems faced by the students. The company should understand that the students are unaware about the work culture and may need some instructions and guidance about work if they expect quality output from the students.

The students going for internship have to make the most of this learning opportunity given to them as part of MBA program. They need to develop the right attitude towards these internships and focus on quality projects, try to convert these internships into final placement.

All these measures taken collectively by all the stakeholders will create a win- win situation for the student, the company and the institute. The quality of the projects will improve, students and the faculty members will derive satisfaction, the companies will get quality output from these interns, the employability of such students will be enhanced and the

students may end up with good pre placement offers. All this will lead to good brand building for the Management institutes.

6. CONCLUSION

The objective of MBA education is to create Global Managers to handle the intricacies of the complex business Internships play a vital role in achieving this goal. Internship helps a student to learn by doing and having hands on experience of the industry. Interns have the opportunity of watching the experts, seniors, experienced people in action. Internship provides the students a golden opportunity to play and practice with the champions and avail a world class coaching if done with heart and soul. The objective is to bridge the gap between academia and industry, introduce the students to corporate culture, make them industry – ready, secure pre placement offers for the interns and thus reduce the cost and time involved in placing them at the end of MBA education.

However, in spite of all the efforts taken by the Institute and the Industry, the summer internships are not fetching the expected outcomes. The quality of the projects done by students post internships is not up to the mark. The percentage of students securing a pre placement offer is as very negligible.

Internships always add value to the resume of candidates and they may have an edge while changing jobs or can get the benefit over their competitors in early stages of their career. They develop better skills and competencies and their employability chances are enhanced.

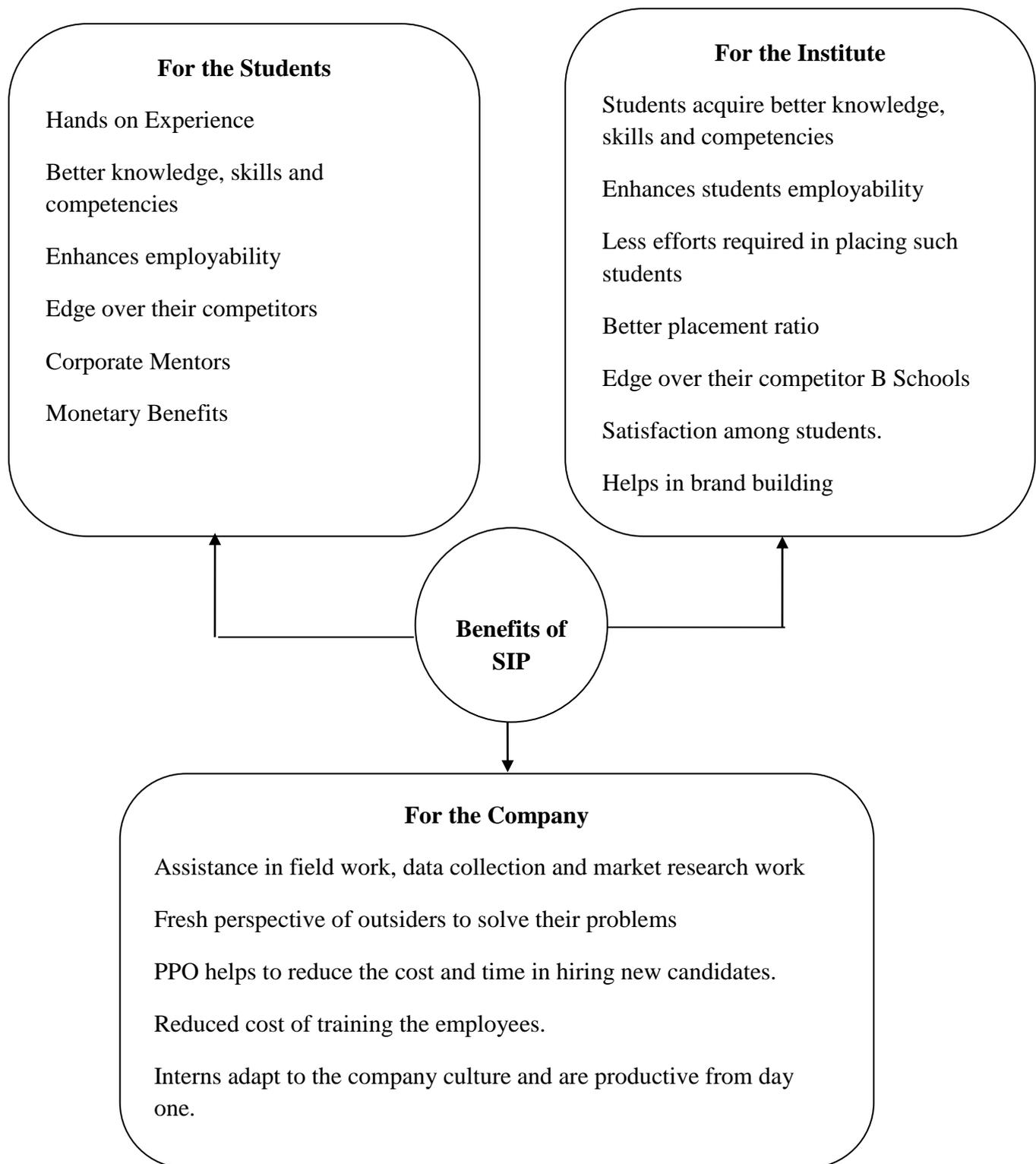
The companies have the advantage that most of the field work, data collection and market research work is accomplished through these interns. By giving pre placement offers to the deserving interns, the company can cut down on their hiring and training costs.

Summer Internships helps to enhance the employability of the students and the Institutes find it easy to place these students. Internships create good will among the students and thus help the Institute in brand building.

Thus we can conclude that summer internships if taken seriously by the students, institutes and the companies can be a win-win situation and yield good results for all the stakeholders.

7. OUTCOME OF THE STUDY

The following figure indicates the probable outcome of the research. It highlights how the suggestions if implemented can benefit all the stakeholders involved i.e. the management students, the companies offering summer internships and the management institutes where these students are pursuing their MBA education.



REFERENCES

- Mr. Sushil Chillar, A Study Factors affecting Selection of B Schools, Master of Philosophy Thesis submitted to D Y Patil University, August 2012.
- Ms. Sumedha Tuteja, Ms. Sonal Mehta, Challenges in Management Education in India, Researchgate.net, January 2015.
- Dhawan H, Only 10% of B School graduates get hired, Times of India, 31 January 2013
- Hundekar, S Hugar, Challenges Before Business Education in India, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2001
- How IIMA, XLRI, SPJIMR ensure students get good placements, Business Today, 22 October 2017
- C R Kothari, Research Methodology, Methods and Techniques, New Age International Publishers
- Dr Kirti S Gupta, Research Methodology, Nirali Prakashan.
- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228370809_Summer_internship_projects_in_management_education_An_Indian_experience
- <https://insideiim.com/shweta-shivhare-talks-about-the-challenges-during-summer-internships>