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# Based on Work Value to Discuss the Effect of College Students' Corporate Internship on the Employability

Jianning WANG<sup>1</sup>, Merissa H. LEE<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

Employment in enterprises is getting flexible and international in past years. Along with the stricter employment market, the employment of college graduates is concerned. When getting into workplace, university new graduates have to face fiercely international competition and rapidly changing industrial structure; the changing employment market is also encountering strict test. Employability has been the highly emphasized issue in advanced countries that the promotion of students' employability is listed as a major objective in the educational reform of universities, where employability is listed as a core objective. Taking college graduating students in Hebei Province as the empirical objects in this study, 297 valid copies of questionnaire are retrieved, with the retrieval rate 83%. The research results conclude 1.corporate internship would affect work value, 2.corporate internship would influence employability, 3.work value presents significantly positive effects on attitude and ability in employability, 4.work value shows remarkably positive effects on planning and learning in employability, and 5.work value reveals notably positive effects on knowledge application in employability. According to the results, suggestions are proposed, expecting to enhance college students' employment after the graduation and assist in the lifelong employability.

*Keywords:* work value, university graduates, corporate internship, employability.

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## **Introduction**

Under the impact of globalization, labor market is fiercely changing in past years. Employment in enterprises becomes flexible and international. Along with stricter employment market, the employment of college graduates is largely concerned. University graduates would face the challenge of imbalanced supply and demand in the labor market after the graduation. When getting into workplace, university new graduates would encounter the fiercely international competition and rapidly changing industrial structure, and the changing employment market becomes stricter. For this reason, the implementation of off-campus internship systems and the promotion of students' employability through practicum courses are the urgent tasks for universities. Since college students are generally lack of practical experience, do not understand future workplace environment, and change the learning attitudes in past years, there are serious connection in the employment bridge. A lot of universities promote corporate internship programs to the students, allowing the graduates tripping off the text learning to accumulate practical experience in "learning by doing" to eliminate the industry-university gap and cultivate the workplace employability. In the workplace experiencing process, the accumulation of learning experience could promote self-efficacy to found the advantage for formal employment opportunities in the future. Nevertheless, due to low birth rate, students have few siblings and are excessively protected by the parents to result in low frustration tolerance. Fresh graduates in employment market are therefore highly concerned by the public. Business owners evaluate modern young people's work attributes as inadequate stress resistance, unstable work, and high employment turnover rate.

Finally, employability has become the highly emphasized issue in advanced countries that students' employability is listed as a major objective in the educational reform of universities. It is expected to enhance the international competitiveness of higher education and graduates' employability through various mechanisms. Employability is also listed as a core objective to reinforce the identifiability and comparability of graduates' degrees. The learning outcome should be correlated to market liquidity needs and stress on promoting students' lifelong employability so as to face the challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Based on work value, this study intends to discuss the effect of college students' corporate internship on the employability, expecting to enhance students' lifelong employability.

## Literature review

### *Corporate internship*

Yang, Cheung, & Song (2016) regarded corporate internship as the teaching activity with direct experience as well as the condition to generate experience and the growth of learner experience. The learning outcome relied on what students did and learn. Such an idea was then broadly applied to various learning fields and stressed on the importance of “practice” and “problem solving”. It allowed learners appearing certain interaction and connection with the living environment through work or activity for the exploration and reflection through experience. Anikina, Ivankina, & Tumanova (2015) mentioned that corporate internship emphasized learning by experience; students experienced and learned practical knowledge in industries through role played during the corporate internship to understand the work properties and contents in future workplace. Rothman & Sisman (2016) stated that, in addition to education purpose, corporate internship also covered skill learning, interpersonal relationship, and self-growth; the meanings of internship were diversified. Gbadamosi *et al.* (2015) regarded corporate internship as a university, in order to cultivate students’ professional practical abilities and early experience in workplace environment, cooperated with businesses for arranging students, after learning professional courses to some degree, to business institutions related to the expertise for internship so that students could practice the special ability in workplace to enhance the employment competitiveness and enhance instructors’ teaching effects. Hamaideh, Al-Omari, & Al-Modallal (2017) considered that off-campus internship could connect universities and the society. Although students’ cognition in internship still focused on learning, the process could promote the professional skills and advance the interpersonal interaction that it was the employment competence required for social workplace. The off-campus internship promoted by Ministry of Education insists on students’ “learning through doing, learning by doing” and emphasizes the importance of the combination of learning and doing.

### *Work value*

Sun *et al.* (2016) explained value as individual persistent preference or judgment standards of specific affairs, behaviors, or objectives; such preference presented the reference beliefs of cognition, affection, and intention to guide individual behaviors, satisfy individual needs, and achieve individual objectives. Beaumont, Gedye, S., Richardson. (2016) pointed out work value as a part of overall value system, showing the tight correlations between all attributes of value and social value system, social environment, working essence, or occupational structure. Besides, individual work value seemed to change with social context, social value, and ideology. Latif & Nor (2016) pointed out work value as individual inner

needs at work and the work attributes required for activity engagement. Alvarez & Romani (2017) regarded work value as individual performance on preferred work. Velez & Giner (2015) considered that work value was the goal related to work, individual inner needs, and work attributes pursue when an individual engaging in occupational activity; work value would form inner motives to affect individual occupation choice and career planning. Goleman (2011) regarded work value as individual agreement and respect to work activity defined with work demand and work satisfaction. Work value could reflect the conditions which an individual pursued in the working situation and satisfy such conditions. Syu, Wu, & Hou (2015) pointed out work value as a subjective value judgment about the work, work history, or work outcome that it was the reaction of feeling, attitude, or affection. The importance relied on the gap between value actually acquired at work and expected value acquired.

Referring to Lu & Kuo (2016), work value contains the following dimensions in this study: (1) *Intrinsic orientation*: interest, creativity, expertise development, performance, and application of learning; (2) *Extrinsic orientation*: income, welfare, right & status, prestige, friendship exchange, being respected, service, and cooperation opportunity; (3) *Integrated orientation*: opportunity cost, life meaning, self-fulfillment, independency, responsibility.

### *Employability*

Li, Pan, & Tsao (2016) pointed out employability as individual occupational knowledge, skills, and value in workplace. The meaning of employability did not simply stress on professional skills, but would emphasize self-value performance. Ang (2015) combined the meaning of employability with attitude, skills, and all factors in individual performance on labor market. To cope with rapidly changing demands in the market, an enterprise had to employ more short-term and flexible temporary workers for producing products and service. The labor market was gradually changing; employability at the time was explained as individual ability to accumulate human capital for self-marketing in labor market. Segal, Jaffe, Smith (2011) defined employability as certain character presented for enhancing organizational performance. Hallsten, Edling, & Rydgren (2017) pointed out the essence of employability as the ability to acquire a job, keep the job, and do well the job after the learning process. Yıldırım *et al.* (2017) mentioned that employability could consolidate oneself and benefit the skills, knowledge, and personal traits for the development in workplace. İatagan (2015) defined employability as a set of skills, knowledge, comprehension, and personal attributes to have an individual be complacent to the occupational choice and acquire satisfaction and sense of achievement.

Referring to Dong & Zhang (2016), the following dimensions are used in this study for measuring employability: (1) *Attitude and ability*: including good work attitudes, stability and stress resistance, teamwork capability, understanding and

obeying professional ethics and moral; (2) *Planning and learning*: containing learning willingness and plasticity, career planning ability, understanding industrial environment and development, seeking a job and self-marketing ability, innovation ability, and leadership; (3) *Knowledge application*: covering communication ability, ability of digging out and solving problems, professional knowledge and skills, basic computer application skills, foreign language ability, and application of theory to practice.

## Research hypothesis

Yoon *et al.* (2015) indicated that internship was the simulation process of college students attempting the career selection; students' work value of internship was the work value of a university' correct establishment of guidance for the basis of the future occupation intention. Boeren & Holford (2016) proposed that students' learning experience acquiring in the internship process would to some degree affect the learning outcome and work value of future employment. Pasban & Nojehdeh (2016) stated that internship allowed a student directly acquiring a job and leaving deep impression to the potential employer to build the confidence in seeking a job, enhance work value, and establish social skills, which would benefit the future recruitment interview. For instance, internship had a potential employer understand students' ideas and problem-solving abilities at work. Yang & Wen (2016) indicated that many students regarded the most reliable of internship as learning work experience from real environment. Experience in internship could help students focus the occupational selection, train the working skills, stress on individual work value, and reduce the anxiety about seeking a job. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

*H1: Corporate internship would affect work value.*

Zhao *et al.* (2015) revealed that internship could connect theory and practice as well as enhance graduates' employability. Cook, Stokes, & Parker (2015) mentioned that internship could enhance working experience, support the learned theories, and assist in developing the global core skills, e.g. communication, time management, confidence, and self-encouragement. Payne (2016) stated that internship provided students with various advantages, such as improving the academic performance during the study and increasing the work opportunities after the graduation. Internship could help students, during the school years, develop immediate skills to improve the course performance, e.g. better time management, communication skills, better self-training, high activeness, and comprehensive self-concept, and better promote the employability after the graduation. Yilmaz (2016) indicated that a student with internship could faster find a job, after the graduation, than those without internship; students could acquire working experience in real

world to further enhance the employability. In this case, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

*H2: Corporate internship would affect employability.*

Li, Pan, & Tsao (2016) explained that corporate internship played a critical role in college students stepping into workplace; internship built the bridge between theory and practice and effectively established students' work value to help the preparation for entering workplace, promote students' employability, acquire better job satisfaction, and faster acquire a job and enter workplace than those without internship. Erosa, Fuster, & Restuccia (2016) discovered that the higher "self-growth" and "self-fulfillment" in university new graduates' work value would enhance the employability. Rafati *et al.* (2016) pointed out the higher university new graduates' employment market cognition and friend support, the higher employability. In regard to students' purposive work value, Dong & Zhang (2016) indicated that self-fulfillment would affect students' employability afterwards. The following hypotheses are therefore proposed in this study.

*H3: Work value presents significantly positive effects on attitude and ability in employability.*

*H4: Work value shows remarkably positive effects on planning and learning in employability.*

*H5: Work value reveals notably positive effects on knowledge application in employability.*

## **Research method**

### *Measurement of research variable*

#### (1) Work value

Referring to Tsai (2016), work value is divided into three dimensions of (1) intrinsic orientation, (2)extrinsic orientation, and (3)integrated orientation.

#### (2) Employability

Referring to Chen & Hou (2016), the following dimensions are proposed, including (1)attitude and ability, (2)planning and learning, and (3)knowledge application.

### *Research object and sampling data*

Taking college graduating students in Hebei Province as the research objects, 297 valid copies of questionnaire are retrieved, with the retrieval rate 83%; each retrieved cope is regarded as a valid sample. The retrieved questionnaire are

analyzed the data with SPSS, and factor analysis, reliability analysis, regression analysis, and analysis of variance are utilized for testing various hypotheses.

### *Analysis method*

Analysis of variance is applied to discuss the difference of corporate internship in work value and employability. Regression analysis is further utilized for understanding the relationship between work value and employability.

## **Results**

### *Reliability and validity analysis*

With factor analysis, work value in this study is extracted three factors of “intrinsic orientation” (eigenvalue=3.371,  $\alpha=0.82$ ), “extrinsic orientation” (eigenvalue=2.755,  $\alpha=0.84$ ), and “integrated orientation” (eigenvalue=2.538,  $\alpha=0.80$ ). The cumulative covariance explained achieves 79.622%.

Employability in this study, with factor analysis, is extracted three factors of “attitude and ability” (eigenvalue=3.526,  $\alpha=0.89$ ), “planning and learning” (eigenvalue=3.216,  $\alpha=0.92$ ), and “knowledge application” (eigenvalue=3.014,  $\alpha=0.87$ ). The cumulative covariance explained reaches 83.255%.

### *Effects of corporate internship on work value and employability*

#### *(1) Variance analysis of corporate internship on work value*

According to analysis of variance to discuss the difference of corporate internship in work value, *Table 1* shows that corporate internship presents significant difference in intrinsic orientation; college students with corporate internship (3.75) reveal higher intrinsic orientation than those without corporate internship (3.26). Corporate internship appears remarkable difference in extrinsic orientation; college students with corporate internship (3.98) show higher extrinsic orientation than those without corporate internship (3.31). Corporate internship presents notable difference in integrated orientation; college students with corporate internship (3.64) reveal higher integrated orientation than those without corporate internship (3.15).



Table 1: Variance analysis of corporate internship on work value

variable		F	P	Scheffe posteriori test
corporate internship	intrinsic orientation	7.511	0.000**	Yes (3.75)>No (3.26)
	extrinsic orientation	15.637	0.000**	Yes (3.98)> No (3.31)
	integrated orientation	12.288	0.000**	Yes (3.64)> No (3.15)

Note: \* stands for  $p < 0.05$  and \*\* for  $p < 0.01$ .

(2) Variance analysis of corporate internship on employability

Analysis of variance is applied to discuss the difference of corporate internship in employability. From Table 2, corporate internship appears remarkable difference in attitude and ability; college students with corporate internship (4.11) show higher attitude and ability than those without corporate internship (3.49). Corporate internship presents notable difference in planning and learning; college students with corporate internship (4.06) reveal higher planning and learning than those without corporate internship (3.34). Corporate internship appears significant difference in knowledge application; college students with corporate internship (3.89) show higher knowledge application than those without corporate internship (3.28).

Table 2: Variance analysis of corporate internship on employability

variable		F	P	Scheffe posteriori test
corporate internship	attitude and ability	21.837	0.000**	Yes (4.11)> No (3.49)
	planning and learning	18.162	0.000**	Yes (4.06)> No (3.34)
	knowledge application	16.322	0.000**	Yes (3.89)> No (3.28)

Note: \* stands for  $p < 0.05$  and \*\* for  $p < 0.01$ .

Correlation analysis of work value and employability

(1) Correlation analysis of work value and attitude and ability

To test H3, the analysis results, Table 3, reveal remarkable effects of intrinsic orientation ( $\beta=2.344^{**}$ ), extrinsic orientation ( $\beta=2.011^{**}$ ), and integrated orientation ( $\beta=2.516^{**}$ ) on attitude and ability that H3 is supported.

(2) *Correlation analysis work value and planning and learning*

To test H4, the analysis results, *Table 3*, appear notable effects of intrinsic orientation ( $\beta=2.416^{**}$ ), extrinsic orientation, ( $\beta=2.247^{**}$ ), and integrated orientation ( $\beta=2.488^{**}$ ) on planning and learning that H4 is supported.

(3) *Correlation analysis of work value and knowledge application*

To test H5, the analysis results, *Table 3*, show significant effects of intrinsic orientation ( $\beta=2.386^{**}$ ), extrinsic orientation ( $\beta=2.413^{**}$ ), and integrated orientation ( $\beta=2.562^{**}$ ) on knowledge application that H5 is supported.

*Table 3: Analysis of work value to employability*

dependent variable→	employability					
independent variable↓	attitude and ability		planning and learning		knowledge application	
work value	$\beta$	Beta	$\beta$	Beta	$\beta$	Beta
intrinsic orientation	2.344**	0.223	2.416**	0.232	2.386**	0.227
extrinsic orientation	2.011**	0.192	2.247**	0.215	2.413**	0.233
integrated orientation	2.516**	0.241	2.488**	0.238	2.562**	0.246
F	19.732		24.588		31.622	
significance	0.000***		0.000***		0.000***	
R2	0.206		0.251		0.322	
adjusted R2	0.183		0.235		0.304	

*Note:* \* stands for  $p<0.05$  and \*\* for  $p<0.01$ .

*Data source:* Self-organized in this study

## Conclusion

The research results reveal that individual identity of value goal and pursuit of goal would affect individual performance, which is employability in employment. Students could establish and keep good work value with corporate internship, after which they are more familiar with industrial operation. For this reason, they are

capable of acquiring a job, keeping the job, and doing well of the job after the corporate internship. Universities therefore could plan internship related courses to enhance students' workplace competitiveness through internship and facilitate the integration of the learning with practice to shorten the industry-university gap. Moreover, internship could promote the future employability and assist students in faster finding out a job and reducing the anxiety about seeking a job. Corporate internship policies promoted by the education authorities could increase the benefits. The continuous promotion of relevant policies or programs would enhance university students' work value and employability to further achieve the policy promotion objectives and effectiveness.

### *Suggestions*

Aiming at above research results, the following suggestions are proposed in this study.

1. For the practice of relevant programs, internship related courses could be planned before the graduation of students when they do not completely disconnect with the universities. The promotion of policies to combined universities with industries should be drawn from long-term perspective to encourage employers continuously employing interns or provide the channel for a full-time job so as to create the maximal effectiveness of the entire employment market.
2. Universities should actively cooperate with enterprises to plan employment related courses. Short-term temporary work, internship, or special skill training could accumulate the practical experience. Furthermore, industry-university cooperation could cultivate talents required for enterprises and assist college students in acquainting the employment market for the employment preparation.
3. Education authorities could broadly subsidize students' overseas internship and supervise subsidized universities setting complete overseas internship guidance processes to positively encourage excellent students with the participation intention smoothly joining in overseas corporate internship to enhance the international vision and professional practical ability.
4. Authorities could make relevant awarding policies for internship institutions. Aiming at excellent business institutions which are identified by universities and willing to provide off-campus internship opportunities, internship salary allowance, and retention opportunities, proper rewards are offered to enhance the intention of long-term cooperation with universities to collaboratively cultivate excellent professionals.

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