

Taikichiro Mori Memorial Research Grant Report 2013

Name of the Research Project:

Incentive formation platform for internship program: Improving Asian student readiness for future career in multinational company

Name of the Research Project Leader:

Supanimittrakul Supanuch

(Master Program of Graduate School of Media and Governance)

Research background

Most multinational companies agree that the challenge is in finding experienced people who can match the value and culture of organizations. (Martin-Chua, Elizabeth 2009). “In developing societies, work motivation is a topic of serious concern.” And “two main factors in low productivity are a) obsolete technology and poor infrastructure like communication networks b) an ‘unwilling to work hard’” mentioned by Kanungo and Mistra (1994). Platform is defined as a tool and the structure, which become the base of the communication to promote collaboration when a variety of main subjects collaborate. In platform design, there are 5 points that we have to consider including communication pattern design, roles design, trust formation mechanism design, incentive design and management of the change of internal participants (Kokuryo, 2011). Improving effectiveness means that we have achieved better results with the same costs (Kearsley, 1987). The individual performance equation may start as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Productivity or performance outcome} = \\ \text{Individual attributes} \times \text{Motivation to Put in Effort} \\ \times \text{Organizational support} \end{aligned}$$

Kanungo and Mistra classified rewards into two types; a) intrinsic rewards (such as, autonomy, recognition, challenge assignments) and b) extrinsic rewards (such as pay, benefits, praise from supervisor).

Research problems

School On Internet Internship Program (hereafter SAIP) has utilized satellite infrastructure and global education platform of 28 universities in Asia to provide the matching opportunity between Japanese company and Southeast Asian students.

Participants: three types of participants including students, industry and universities

1. Students: refer to students from Southeast Asia region focusing on Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam
2. Industry: focuses on companies in industry who are planning to expand their market in ASEAN market
3. University: refer to targeted universities from 3 countries under SOI Asia platform including:
 - Brawijaya University (UB, Indonesia),
 - Chulalongkorn University (CHULA, Thailand), and
 - Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM, Malaysia).

Results of SAIP Fiscal Year 2012

- 5 months of selection period including 3 months observation, satellite interview, and face-to-face interview
- Total 21 students applied for internship program in 2012
- 50% of came to Japan for three-day internship program on 17-19 January 2013
- 20% of students came to join one-month internship program in Japan on 14 February- 13 March 2013
- 10% of students got opportunity for entering recruitment process
- Total expenses approximately 3,000,000 yen was spent for SAIP 2012
- Unclear performance assessment but students received positive feedbacks
- Overall, program was satisfied and went beyond the expectations of Japanese company

With the high expense, SAIP faces the difficulty to sustain and continue. To achieve the purpose of internship program, SAIP aims to figure out how to provide win-win-win incentive for all participants with the cost-effective activities from the fiscal year 2013 onwards.

Research objectives:

1. For better understanding the needs, available capacity and resources of multinational companies, university and Asian students
2. To analyze how SAIP affects and make changes to multinational companies, university and Asian students
3. To improve the activities of SAIP in terms of intrinsic incentive platform

Research Questions:

1. How do activities of SAIP affect and make changes to Asian students, universities and multinational companies?
2. Which activities should be continued, cancelled, or adjusted for student skills readiness preparation?
3. What factors should be the assessment criteria to select students that match to multinational environment?

Research Result report:

Table 1: Process, schedule and purpose

Date	Activities	Purposes
2013/05-10	Internship preparation	
2013/11/07-28	A. Virtual internship	For company: meet large amount of talents, performance evaluation For students: work experience
2013/11/12,19	A.2) Weekly supervision	For project improvement of students
2013/11/07/25, 26	A.3) Final presentation	For report the outcome of students
2013/12	B. Selection	For onsite interns selection
2014/01/20-02/07	C. Onsite internship (UB, Indonesia)	For company: assessing student for recruitment For students: explore career in real environment
2014/02/18	E. Feedback of internship program and performance evaluation	For improvement of internship program

A. Virtual internship

Virtual internship is defined as the **experiential learning** opportunity provided to students with supports of **ICT infrastructure** (Videoconferencing system, Internet, E-mail, agreed communication tools) under the minimum online **supervision** company representatives.

Key components of virtual internship

In this virtual internship, key components are below

- **Schedule:** 2013/11/07-2013/11/28
- **Duration:** 3 weeks
- **Summary of participating students**

Out of 18 applicants, 12 students completely participated this program by submitting final report and prototypes. It is considered 66.67% of total applicants. 33.33% are dropouts with the following reasons:

- Time conflicted with academic activities (examination or research from university): 3 students
- Difficult topic which is not related to their field of study: 2 students
- Late final report submission: 1 student

Table 2: Amount of students by university

	Country	Applicants	Report submitted virtual interns	Dropouts	Successful onsite candidates
Chulalongkorn University (Chula)	Thailand	14	9	5	3
University of Brawijaya (UB)	Indonesia	3	3	2	3
Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)	Malaysia	1	0	1	0
Total		18	12	6	6

- **Work assignments**

In this virtual internship, two assignments were announced to students via videoconferencing workshop on November 7th, 2013.

Project:	Fast search system for Big Data	Visualization weather data
Number of individual students who submitted report per project	0	1
Number of team of students who submitted report per project	3 teams (8 students)	1 (3 students)
Total students per project	8	4

- **Communication channels:**

Table 3: Purposes and usages of communication channels

Tools	Email	Instant messaging	SOI Asia videoconference	Video call (Google Hangout/ Skype)	Google+
Schedule	Flexible time	Flexible	2013/11/07	2013/11/12,19,25,26 Every Tuesday (1800-1930)	Flexible time
Purpose	For Q&A to improve outcome	For Q&A to improve outcome	For introducing company and job assignment	For asking feedback, clarifying assignment, presenting outcome	For sharing information, announcement
Frequency of interaction between supervisors-students (% of students as users<N=12>)	1-2 times weekly (58.3%), 1-2 times in total (33%)	1-2 times weekly (16.7%), 1-2 times in total (16.7%)	1 time in total (83.3%)	1-2 times weekly (66.7%), 1-2 times in total (16.7%)	1-2 times weekly (16.7%), 1-2 times in total (33.3%)

B. Results of selection and performance evaluation

Selection procedure

Selection criteria which is used in measuring and choosing top performance students who are able to participate in onsite internship, are including three main assessments as below (see details of selection factors in Table 1):

1. **Academic assessment:** recommendation from professor and excellent academic background
2. **SOI Asia assessment:** logical communication test, application screening
3. **Corporate assessment:** performance evaluation and satisfaction to students evaluated by supervisors.

Table 4: Details of selection factors

	Assessment	Factors	Description	Total score	Max	Min	Average
1	Academic	Recommendation	Recommendation made by local professor Award received, competition participation	10	10	5	8.08
2	Academic	Technical skills	Skill matched with company requirements	10	10	7	8
3	SOI Asia	Logical communication skills	Essential business skills including logical input, logical thinking, logical output, planning and situation management skills	20	16	8	12.25
4	SOI Asia	Interest in job	Level of interest in applying job after graduation	10	10	5	7.92
5	Corporate	Performance	Including 8 factors (maximum 5 point per factor) [NO = Not Observed, 1 = Unacceptable, 2 = Improvement needed, 3 = Meet expectation, 4 = Exceed expectation, 5 = Outstanding]	40	35	20	29
		5.1 Feasibility of work	Possibility to continue project, and integrate with existing product/service/system of company	5	4	2	3.2
		5.2 Initiative/ Creativity	Seek out new assignments, propose improved work methods, suggest ideas, find new and better ways of doing things	5	5	3	4
		5.3 Job knowledge	Understand the purpose/objectives/goals, Able to apply knowledge and skills to meet the requirements of job	5	4	3	3.6
		5.4 Quality of work	Know how to improve the work, Achieve the project's goal(s) and agreement with supervisor	5	5	3	3.8
		5.5 Problem solving	Approach problem as challenges he/she was eager and able to solve, Keep inform of the status of solutions	5	4	2	3.4
		5.6 Ability to learn	Learning new material and skills quickly and completely	5	5	3	4.4
		5.7 Solutions	Report/Prototype's feature design, utilizing company resources (Information, technology)	5	5	2	3.4
		5.8 Benefits of outputs	Output can give benefits to users/customers and company for future development	5	4	2	3.2
6	Corporate	Satisfaction	Based on observation/ personal preference Rating scales: please rate 0-10 points [NO = no comment, 0 = strongly dissatisfy/ not recommend, 5 = neutral/ neither satisfy nor dissatisfy, 10= strongly satisfy/ strongly recommend for onsite internship]	10	9	7	7.6
		Total score		100	86	54	74.25

Results of selection of onsite interns

- Average total score of individual is 38 points out of maximum 40 points (76%)
- Out of 12 successful virtual interns, 6 of them (50%) whose score above average were selected for onsite internship in Japan.
- A team of three students of University of Brawijaya (Indonesia) and another team of three students of Chulalongkorn University (Thailand) are selected for three-week onsite internship at office in Japan.

Survey results

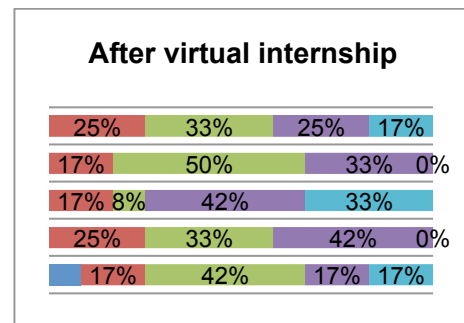
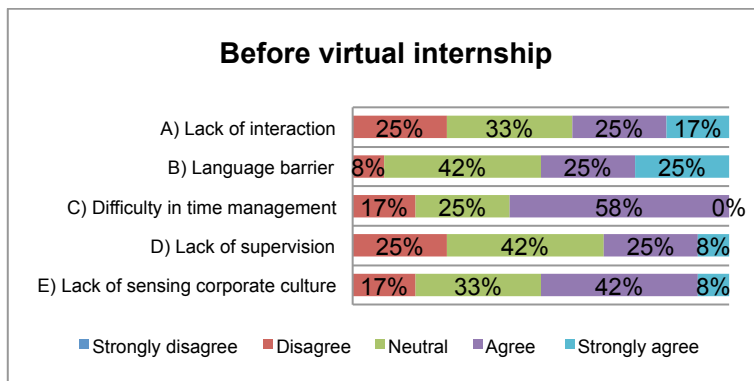
Out of 12 successful virtual interns, their opinions and feedbacks are gathered by online questionnaires and interview.

Key findings of virtual internship

- **Duration** of 3 weeks of virtual internship are adequate (agreed by students and company)
- **Suitable communication tools**
 - 75 % of interns preferred videoconference, e-mail
 - 58% of them preferred instant messaging
 - 50% of them preferred to use video call (Team- company)
- **Key challenges of virtual internship**

Out of 12 respondents, key challenges are

 - **Difficulty in time management** is the major challenges. (76%)
Because internship schedule is the same time with academic schedule at university.
 - Lack of interaction and supervision are also challenges.
At first, it was difficult to understand the assignment and found out expectation and details of requirements from company. Those were reason why they would like prompt feedback either negative or positive in order to narrow the work direction for the improvement of their work.
However, students mentioned that after a few days they can adapt and interpret the data by the received feedbacks. It is challenge but worth to do.



Key impacts on students

- **Personal impacts**
 - They were opened to new experience and recognize their weakness (100%)
 - They had sense of a satisfaction to do something worthwhile (91.7%)
- **Academic impacts**
 - They felt they have ability to work and learn independently (91.7%)
 - They acquired knowledge from job performed (100%), supervisors (66.7%)
- **Employment impacts**
 - They would like to work in this company in future (50% strongly agree, 25% agree)

Key findings of onsite internship

- **Key challenges of onsite internship**

Language barriers become the major challenge because colleagues and supervisors spoke in Japanese, which they do not understand. Those made them have willingness to study Japanese language course
- **Key impacts of onsite internship**

They strongly agree that they received an opportunity to explore a career and were able to develop the realistic ideas about the real working life and would like to work in this company in future.

- **Feedbacks about onsite internship**
 - Support from the colleagues that help to adapt in the new working field –
 - Teamwork is the most important thing because they have to trust each other that they can finish their job and help each other.
 - Time management: when we doing task, we have to create goal each day to complete our task
- **Overall feedbacks from supervisors**
 - This internship is very successful
 - It is first opportunity to have international interns from their home countries
 - Purpose of video call meeting is to let interns understand the subject
 - There are not really different in communication. Same tools (Google+) have been used.
 - Concern from company side is how to match culture
 - Preferred communication channels: Skype, email
- **Similar opinions of students and company**
 - Culture is more important than performance.
 - Performance is shown during virtual internship. But more importantly, it is how students can adapt to company culture and company staffs understand students' culture as well.
 - Social factors is important and affect performance and satisfactions (Key factors: real-time interaction, confidence to initiate conversation, interaction with other staff not only supervisor)
- **Other comments about virtual internship and onsite internship**
 - Virtual internship is important for showing performance and preparation for onsite
 - Virtual internship assignment should be clearly explained prior to starting internship
 - The most challenge is difficulty in time management because internship is ongoing in the same time of academic activities
 - Corporate culture is easier to understand when coming to office
 - After joining onsite, interest and confident in applying job is higher for students because one of interns feels reality by interview process with CEO.
 - Students are willing to pay for onsite if we cannot support. (After knowing the price, they said they would consider again because some may not able to have financial supports)

Key recommendations

- Training for virtual internship is required
- Conditions and schedule of the interaction should be specified prior to the virtual internship in order to creating student readiness
- Individual participation can make assessment easier
- Selection criteria should include communication skills, adaptability skills, interest in job, career plan and self-motivation
- Virtual internship should add workshops with purpose of clearly explanation of assignment and setting up and understand the common expected outcome
 - Once a week for formal supervision
 - Cultural online workshop or informal communication with aim at better understanding corporate culture and working style and environment
 - Company should share and start conversation

Limitation of this research

- Personal characteristics and emotional factors is difficult to control
- Various background of students may lead to the uncertainty of results
- Students have different goals of joining this internship which can affect their actions and results