

Reducing Unemployment Rate in South Africa through Establishment of Graduate Internship Programmes (GIP)

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Abstract—South Africa is faced with unemployment crisis. Statistics South Africa reports unemployment rate between 2000 and 2015 as follows,

The jobless rate in South Africa increased to 25.5 percent in the third quarter of 2015 from 25 percent in the previous period. The number of unemployed rose 3.6 percent while employment went up at a slower 1.1 percent and more people joined the labor force. Unemployment Rate in South Africa averaged 25.27 percent from 2000 until 2015, reaching an all-time high of 31.20 percent in the first quarter of 2003 and a record low of 21.50 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008.

One of the key contributing factors to the issue of unemployment is lack of work experience required by organizations. This requirement often impact newly graduated students who are looking for employment. Government institutions and private organizations are addressing this challenge by instigating graduate Internship programmes to provide work experience to newly graduated students. These Internship Programmes are designed to close the gap between theory learned at the University and workplace requirements. This paper aims to explore conceptual possibilities available to enhance the effectiveness of Graduate Internship Programmes while contending the significance of increased unemployment rate in South Africa.

Index Term—Graduate Internship Programmes, Unemployment, Graduates, Organizations.

I. INTRODUCTION

Graduate internships are programmes intended to provide graduates with an opportunity to gain work experience in a professional environment in order to enhance academic and professional knowledge. In GIP's, graduates are granted with a platform and resources to put into practice what they acquired from at the University.

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Reference [1] conducted a survey of North East employers aiming to locate skills gaps and shortages. They discovered that skills that cross sectors such as customer handling, problem solving, team-working, and communication, critical thinking, leadership and management are key to graduates' development. Furthermore graduates are expected to have high personal standards around issues like punctuality and workplace etiquette. They reported that a recurring issue with these respondents was the speed of change within the workplace, reflecting a rapidly developing world. The uncertainty of the requirements of future job roles emphasizes more than ever that current graduates must be adaptable as the speed of change and sectors developing, increases exponentially.

I. OBJECTIVES OF GRADUATE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMMES (GIP)

The following points are among the list of GIP objectives;

- 1) Providing graduates with opportunity to obtain work experience in relevant field;
- 2) Providing work exposure to graduates;
- 3) Creating a pool of skills set readily available for permanent employment;
- 4) Reducing a number of unemployed graduates;
- 5) Assessing graduate's ability as an employee;
- 6) Graduates development and increasing their confidence level

II. EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING

According to reference [1] work experience allows graduates to put into practice what they have learned from universities. It furthermore creates transferable and employability aptitudes inside of a genuine work environment. Experiential learning connections learning with action, 'learning and doing cannot be isolated and thusly to utilize information to its fullest potential it must be actualized, performed and upgraded as part of a cooperative. They further state that graduate internships do not need to be sent on arrangements to encounter the work environment; for

sure they are priceless in bringing data and information in light of genuine life employability, from their work environment, into the institute.

She argues that the graduate businesses are subsequently confronted with the test of giving support and advancing fitting types of work experience (genuine instead of thought up) for new graduates. Reference [2] maintains that projects to help graduates to flourish in this present reality setting of the work environment, giving chances to amplify the benefits they get through the college experience will advance their fruitful move into organizations.

III. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Professionalization is the social process by which any trade or occupation transforms itself into a true "profession of the highest integrity and competence." It aims at keeping members knowledgeable about operational and strategic plans implemented globally and locally. It enforces code of ethics and ensures certification of professional qualifications.

Reference [3] stated that professional and specialized training assumes a dynamic part as a labor preparing device in deciding the general public's welfare level.

Reference [3] mentioned that the objectives that make professional and specialized training financially mandatory can be recorded as follows;

Meeting the market needs, expanding the effectiveness in production and quality, lessening unemployment, delivering less expensive and quality goods and administrations, expanding the intensity in both household and worldwide markets, utilizing the assets as indicated by the standards of proficiency and level headedness, observing and understanding of current innovation and it's appearance on the merchandise's generation and administrations and emerging quick steady and solid monetary development.

IV. INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCIES: SOFT BUSINESS-RELATED SKILLS

One of the challenging areas with technical graduates is the lack of soft skills. These graduates focus on the technical aspect while overlooking the significant requirement of soft skills / non- technical skills. Graduates encounter challenges when they are supposed to communicate and engage on a professional level. This has been identified as a risk, because communication is a prerequisite to get through to technical part of the business. Soft skills prepare graduates with ability to engage, and communicate to address everyday predicaments within scope (ethical, social, legal, technological, relational, and cultural) central to the graduate's focus. In addition, with these skills graduates increases understanding level of ethical values central to the communication discipline. Soft skills provide graduates with following set of skills;

- 1) Analyze communication variables in personal, professional, and community settings
- 2) Propose competent communication strategies

- 3) Speak in public settings
- 4) Advance decision-making processes within groups
- 5) Negotiate and collaborate
- 6) Apply theory to justify conclusions, hypotheses, research questions, and/or need for study
- 7) Write informatively and persuasively
- 8) Write with clarity and precision
- 9) Understand the value of respect for diverse societies
- 10) Understand the value of public participation
- 11) Understand the value of freedom of expression

Reference [2] indicates that graduates developed verbal correspondence, self-inspiration, collaboration and objective directedness as the most essential delicate aptitudes for graduate employability. Further research conducted by reference [2] states that results demonstrated that the specialized aptitudes added to an extensive amount to the graduate's internship programme. All things considered, reference [2] maintains that Graduate Internship Programmes concentrates on the greater part of employability delicate aptitudes required for the obtaining and maintenance of ability.

Reference [4] concur by alluding that the benefits of utilizing a business graduate in appreciation of the estimation of discipline focused learning and know-how were talked about by a significant number of the businesses. Another key closeness in businesses' desires identified with graduates' critical thinking capacities. Such capacities were showed by what businesses saw to be a capacity to think in a critical and diagnostic way.

V. GRADUATES RETENTION

Although organisations never commit to retain graduates at the end of the Internship Programme, the challenge continues when graduates who participated in such programmes are supposed to go back to unemployed state. Such predicaments raise concerns in terms of the role and value-add of the programme.

In an article, The Relationship between Skills Training and Retention of Graduate Interns in a South Africa Information, Communication and Technology Company reference [2] mentioned that the issue of graduates retention is intensified by the way that organizations are and not ready to utilize new graduates to fill their aptitudes necessities on the grounds that most graduates have the capabilities however not the viable abilities and experience. Graduates are not suited for master positions, suitably talented staff is regularly robbed by different organizations and graduates are not of a sufficiently high quality.

Reference [2] added that the retention of new graduates is a challenge to numerous South African organizations. Turnover among recently qualified graduates is high because of their capacity to seek after and discover option available and the lack of talented representatives in the business sector.

Recently graduated workers discover it simpler to leave and are always paying special mind to better prospects and all the more compensating employments in legitimate firms and prestigious settings.

Reference [4] discussed the matter of graduates' retention and mentioned that different studies have found that nearly two-thirds of every single graduate vacancy is interested in alumni from any order with the type of abilities required upon the part to be done inside of a particular organisation. They maintain that it is apparent that employability is complex, and somewhat inexplicit, that is both hard to verbalize and characterize.

VI. WHY GRADUATE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMMES?

As per reference [5] Internships are defined as programmes where graduates are involved in tasks to offer them hands-on experience intended to increase their knowledge in a certain area of study. Bukaluya, together with reference [6] they noted that internships is a managed work practice where graduates participate in work related programmes, during which period they get to managed by experienced employees. Internships are therefore any supervised work or experiential training in which graduate has planned developing objectives. From a number of existing researches, the goal of graduate's internship programmes is to benefit both graduates and the employer. However, graduates are the most benefiting parties from the programmes. In GIP's, graduates are offered an opportunity to apply and put to practise knowledge acquired from the University, that enables them to advance the skills and knowledge required in the workplace. Personal development - Graduates learn decision making skills, critical thinking skills, increased confidence and self-esteem.

Reference [7]'s research demonstrated that the income gap kept on extending after graduation, with the normal graduate respondent who had been out in the work power a few years reported procuring around 17% more than the non-intern graduates. According to reference [7], the assistant graduated class likewise reported getting a charge out of a more elevated amount of occupation fulfilment and a quicker advancement rate to positions of expanded obligation than their no intern partners.

VII. HYPOTHESIZED COMMON FACTORS FOR GRADUATE INTERNSHIPS PROGRAMME'S INEFFECTIVENESS

A. Inadequate Career Guidance

When the first year students register at the University, they demonstrate lack of knowledge in the field of their choices. Some do not know what to pursue when they finish matric. This challenge is due to lack of career guidance from early stage of a child. In South Africa, there are no careers assessments that analyse the interest of students to make informed decisions. Parents on the other hand try to influence the direction that their children follow in their careers. Students also follow their role models and their associates in deciding their careers. The challenge with this approach is

that when this student discovers they have followed the incorrect career path; it is usually late to execute changes where financial aspect and time is involved. Schools and Universities do not have connection with organisations. The focus is commonly on academic pathways disregarding providing information about employment and Internship Programmes. In addition, schools and Universities have adopted the approach of not informing students about career services available; they do not prioritize ensuring that students get guidance about job prospects available to them.

B. Scarcity of Career Mentors

There are no experienced people who come forward to assist students with career development. Mentors could play a pivotal role in guiding students to the right direction while demonstrating to them what it is like to prosper at work. Students in South Africa's government schools lack career mentors and in fact they are not aware of such possibilities.

C. Resource challenges

Students from rural areas and disadvantaged black communities are still facing challenges of resource shortages. The likes of computers and internet access, transportation and money to access publications with job advertisements are major setbacks in securing jobs and Internship Programmes.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12) The involvement of organisations is pivotal in providing recognized career guidance to graduates and students while they at schools and Universities.
- 13) Information should be made available to students, not only at University level but at schools as well. By doing so, students will be able to make informed decisions about their career paths at an early stage.
- 14) Government's support in career development initiatives and provision of funds where necessary is pivotal in mitigating challenges associated with unemployment in South Africa.
- 15) Grants through NGO's should also be considered to enrich black communities.
- 16) Platforms or projects should be made available to newly graduated students, perhaps opportunities to conduct research in their respective communities. Such initiatives will allow graduates a prospect to give back to their families and communities.
- 17) Career advice centres should be promoted and easy to reach, even to rural area students. Clear understanding of all available alternatives should be presented to them.

Government should consider employing school mentors who will walk the journey with students to provide guidance, particularly in disadvantaged black communities.

IX. CONCLUSION

Graduates have talents and renewed knowledge acquired

from many years of studying at the University. They embrace knowledge that lacks in organisations because of technology changes and advancements. On the other hand, South African economy is limping with high unemployment rate as one of the key contributing factors. What graduates are looking for, are organisations that will offer them work experience in exchange to the services they will offer in the organisation. They are keen to develop and grow in their fields.

Graduate internship programmes empower graduates with development and growth in their fields of study. Through Internship Programmes, where graduates put to practise what they learned at the University they often decide whether they want to pursue the relevant field of study or re-direct their careers to different career paths. Graduates gain confidence and better understanding of what they studied for, while developing business skills. Conversely, employers are looking for graduates who can apply innovative, improved ideas, technical skills and the capacity to adjust to change.

Reference [2] insists that the high rate of unemployed graduates in South Africa prompted the incorporation of a classification for new participants in the National Skills Development Strategy 2 (NSDS2), which was actualized by the Department of Labor (DoL) in 2005. This would clarify why the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) have enrolled and elevated Graduate Internship Programmes to strengthen the purpose set in the NSDS2. Also, the National Government has through the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) renowned empowering varieties, one of which is training and abilities advancement. Inside of this area, an inspiration for ensuring the NSDS lives up to expectations all the more productively to sustain monetary effort is acknowledged together with assertion of a test to plan youngsters for work all the more adequately.

Graduates Internship Programmes are advanced manners of creating jobs, and potential to reduce crime rate in South Africa. Growth of a nation depends to a large extent on employment; hence low unemployment rate keeps the inflation high which makes it difficult for people to provide for their families. I intensely consider, South Africa as a country, should support Graduate Internship Programmes and fight the unemployment challenges. Participating organisations in such initiatives should be supported and acknowledged. Our government, with its objective to ensure increased employment and price stability in the country; should prioritise the concept of GIP and provide funds to inspire small to medium organisations to give opportunity to inexperienced graduates.

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