



QUALITY ASSURANCE MODEL FOR ASSESSMENT OF WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the prospects of work integrated learning of the students at the higher education institutions of Pakistan. Outcome based approach to teaching and learning depends on integration of “Academic” and “work place” thereby preparing students for the world of work. Work integrated learning Model provides opportunities for meaningful interaction of three Role Players. (1) Students (2) Higher Education Institutions and (3) Industries. Students need to develop such knowledge, skill and attitude that can enhance their employability profile. Higher Education institutions need to develop curriculum content and structure in such a way that should ensure integration of academic and work based learning. The third role player, should give her demand to Higher Education Institutions for preparing students accordingly. Academic learning includes, Orientation, Subject Syllabi, Assessment Methods, Teaching Methodology, Bridging Programmes, Libraries, Laboratories, Tutorship and Extended Programmes. Whereas workplace is a place for productivity and profit. Five types of workplaces from five different industries namely, Textile, Pharmaceutical Engineering Goods, Electronics Goods and Telecom will be analyzed for the prospects of working of the students in these industries while they are specializing in three main disciplines of Business Administration (HRM, Finance and Marketing).

Key words: Outcome based Education and Training (OBET), Higher Education Institutions (HEI) Employability profile and Quality Assurance.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The educational system is an excellent starting point to change values that are often associated with new thinking and actions during the learning process. Unemployment rate is increasing day by day, because of non-availability of proper opportunities. Due to higher inflation, greater percentage of the people has come down from the “poverty line” in Pakistan. The link between unemployment, poverty and high crime among all levels of society may perhaps be linked to the world of work.
- 1.2. In developing countries such as Pakistan, the acquisition of additional skills was recommended to raise the levels of new venture start up through **entrepreneurial** training. The role of academic programmes is to develop students mind set in starting business enterprises. The learning endeavors need to play a role in developing skills and providing support as well as legitimacy. Pakistan has dire shortage of skills. Employers find it hard to find the skills they need and job seekers are frustrated when they do not qualify for the available jobs.

- 1.3. The number of qualified people is increasing but their qualifications are not appropriate for the work place. This unused talent of un-employed individuals tell us that higher education needs to synchronize its efforts for more integrated programmes with industry in order to alleviate the problem. Higher education needs to equip students to enter the professional world by delivering skills with relevant training, a strong technological background coupled with on the jobs experience. “Work Integrated Learning” is a crucial aspect of any course that requires experience of the work place.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- 2.1 Cooperative education is an educational philosophy that advocates the formal integration of work experience into theoretical curriculum. Co-operative education is a structured educational strategy that progressively integrates academic study with learning through productive work experience in the field related to student’s academics or career goals. Co-operative education is an umbrella term for the learning from work place. New challenges and opportunities have emerged for work integrated learning as a teaching and learning methodology. Experiential learning has, in some respects, struggled to emerge as a transformative force in higher education institutions. Experiential learning is also referred to by a variety of terms, namely experiential training, in service training, work place learning, Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and “Internship” etc.
- 2.2 **Work Integrated Learning, Industry and Community:** Work Integrated Learning (WIL) must be understood and in-curriculated in partnership with relevant external partners from industry and community. Decision making for students to participate in off campus work based learning in industry or the community should be based on the assessment criteria and optimal evaluation of possible outcomes.
- 2.3 The assessment of the critical skills should underpin the knowledge and discipline contents and should attract academic credits aligned to **Quality Assurance**. The overall benefits of such a quality management approach, along with effective curriculum design strategies, will enhance the ability of universities to comprehend and to enhance education and training based learning as an academically viable pedagogy for career-focused qualification. The implications for curriculum development create opportunities for re-curriculation that should promote new paradigms and approaches to teaching and learning, assessment and service delivery.
- 2.4 Pakistan’s economy is characterized by acute shortage of skills on the one hand and high unemployment rate on the other hand. Govt. has not yet formulated such policies, which integrate Academic Institutions, Employers and students. Older education models and practices appear to be out of fashion, as they do not cater for the new requirements, new institutions and new delivery options.
- 2.5 Co-operative education provides opportunities for experiential learning and “WIL” and integrates higher education with work place learning experience. Further integration, academic study and work, should be promoted. For maximum benefit of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) should include a proper design as an integral part of academic programme. It should be planned, guided and controlled by anticipating and assessing learning outcomes properly. It should be developed

- by including the inputs of professionals and employees in that particular field of study.
- 2.6 The curriculum model of “WIL” is a tool that will enable higher education institutions to proactively and productively engage with the world of work (employer, industry and professional association alumni) to structure skills development programmes, thereby contributing to the reduction of skills shortages and the alleviation of unemployment and poverty.
- 2.7 Work Integrated Learning (WIL) refers to learning in the workplace to provide students with relevant work and business experience. “WIL” allows students to gain experience in the professional field during their studies and empowers them to begin their careers with knowledge of the market place, organizational structure and employers expectations. The “WIL” provide students with practical and creative scope and personal growth in the chosen field.
- 2.8 **“WIL” and Entrepreneurial Opportunities:** Very few people in Pakistan have the necessary orientation and skills to create new business enterprises. Entrepreneurship is regarded as a way of thinking, reasoning and acting that is opportunity oriented, holistic in approach and has balanced leadership.
- 2.9 “WIL” is therefore a very important aspect of learning that can expose students to entrepreneurial opportunities. If employment is not available then a small business could assist towards alleviating un-employment.
- 2.10 The main beneficiary of a “WIL” programme is the student. The primary goal is, student’s learning and experience in the work place. Work integrated learning also meets the need for industry to stay abreast with latest theoretical developments. Experiential learning thus also serves a need for industry. Higher education institutions need to become more responsive to the needs of society. Universities should contribute more meaningfully to social and economic development through their training programmes. Universities have been positioned to play an important role in this regard, first, by offering technical and professional higher education and second, by conducting research that contributes to social, economic and industrial development. Institutions should offer career focused education and research that rewards entrepreneurial skills of staff and students and in collaboration with industry, strive to solve real world problems. Career focused education has the potential to meaningfully addresses the social, economic and technological needs of Pakistan. Cooperative education, as an educational model will be affected by legislation and national policies. It will ensure quality in all stages of work integrated learning.
- 2.11 Education is widely accepted as the key to prosperity and social mobility. More than ever before, education is perceived as being integrated for the people to lead meaningful, fulfilling lives with economic well being while professional enter the market place, criteria for gainful employment such as relevance of knowledge and applicability of skills are increasingly becoming important determinants of employment. This should provide greater learning opportunities for the students to gain skills, be more competent, more employable, more employer centered and take training of the work place.
- 2.12 This study investigates needs of the students, opinions, and perceptions of the lecturers and employers, regarding work integrated learning. The objective of the study is to equip students for the work place and to understand and describe how Work Integrated Learning (WIL) training can be enhanced and made more work

relevant. Is duration of 6 – 8 weeks sufficient for required skills needed for work place.

- 2.13 **Industry and Higher Education:** We cannot expect to achieve or sustain excellence in career focused education if the necessary and useful experience through work placement in industry is not successfully obtained Higher Education Institutions will need to continue to refine their roles and adjust their continue programmes in order to address the demands and needs of industry and commerce. “WIL form integral part of professional education, particularly in applied sciences, engineering and business. The work place is present in these programmes both as a learning resource and knowledge production and studies are simultaneously a cultured into academic and work force knowledge system. While these have been acknowledgement of the role of the work place but there has been no attempt to theorize how work based knowledge differs from academic knowledge. How work and academic system might interact. Consequently, the role, of higher education claims to play in the development of work place, it has strived away from researching the world of work and has very little explicit discussion of the theory of work based learning and practically no evaluative research to trace the impact of career focused programmes. Before HEC can ensure that students are adequately (prepared, supported, supervised) for the life in the work environment. Academic themselves need to understand how to integrate experiences, across different areas of learning while enabling students, to read their full personal and career potential legislation, education institutions and industry and business sector alike. Adherence to government legislation is not negotiable and this legislation changes periodically.
- 2.14 **The Learning Programmes have to be in an Outcomes Based Format along with Assessment Criteria:** Keeping in view requirement, Higher Education (HE) has to contribute to the development of the HE system, which should be characterized by equity, quality, responsiveness to economic and social development needs and effective and efficient provision of management.
- 2.15 Higher education should equip the potential workforce with the necessary skills and abilities. Cooperative Education, as the umbrella under which the “WIL” model falls, enables higher education institutions to engage with the world of work to structure skills development programme so the HE contributes to the reduction of skills shortages and the alleviation of un-employment.
- 2.16 **Legislation pertaining to the World of Work:** The main purpose of the above legislation is to advance economic development, social justice, labour education, peace and democratization of the work place. Companies should hire the right staff because the law makes “Dismissal” difficult. Ideally the most competent person for the job should be hired; this is where cooperative education is pertinent as HE can ensure that entry-level staff is adequately prepared for employment.
- 2.17 A positive aspect of cooperative education is that the companies may retain students who were placed in the workplace for “WIL” after the learning period. The skills of the students are known to the employer and likewise, students already know the company, its policies, work methods and the jobs. Legislation offers opportunities for students and employers alike. These opportunities lead to training and further skills development for the work and re skilling the work force, allowing employers to claim rebates for training or accepting students for training. Government’s imperatives for higher education has articulated the purpose of HE to meet the learning needs and aspiration of individuals through

- development of their intellectual abilities and aptitudes. This includes the higher-level knowledge and skills requirements for growth and prosperity through economic development.
- 2.18 There has been a repeated call for higher education to be more responsive, accountable, relevant and accessible. This implies a possible disjuncture between policy objectives and the ability of higher education institutions to deliver on their mandate. Learning equips individuals to make the best use of their talents and of opportunities offered by society for self-fulfillment. Higher learning is the key to providing the labour market. With knowledge driven high-level competencies and expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy. Higher education also needs to equip people to enter the professional world and pursue vocations in trade and industry.
- 2.19 Fulfilling academic requirements relates to the bottom line expectations of the Higher Education Institution. So that students and employer are satisfied. The major outcome of education is the delivery of adequately prepared, skilled workers to business and industry, with relevant training, storing technological and other skills coupled with on the jobs experience.
- 2.20 **Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Experience of the Work Place:** “WIL” combines theory with practice in the real world of employment and integrates the learning with practical experience and also assists where the theoretical entrepreneurial knowledge is to be practiced. Students need to be informed about what they are to experience in the work place.
- 2.21 In addition, there should be an explicit description of outcomes, skills may be developed relating to a positive interdependence, promotive. interaction individual accountability, social skills development and group processing with “WIL”. Work integrated learning (WIL) develops the students’ abilities to distinguish among roles, divide tasks synergies efforts and promote health and positive interdependence. If students are not equipped with necessary skills gained from the “WIL” experience, they may add to the unemployment statistics that are of great concern in Pakistan. A member of possible factors contribute to the current unemployment statistics, including insufficient training increasing new information technology, availability of qualifications, skilled labour and economic literacy.
- 2.22 **Cooperative Education Module:** Cooperative education presents itself as a means to grow the talent of the people. It is an educational philosophy that advocates the formal integration of work experience with theoretical curriculum. It is structured education strategy that progressively integrates academic study with learning through productive work experience in the field related to a student’s academic or career goals. The work experience involves a definite period of employment, supplementing full or part time study on campus. All participants perform the evaluation to the “WIL” experience.
- 2.23 **Co-operative Education and Higher Education Institutions:** Both full time and part time students should participate in “WIL” which should be monitored and evaluated by academic staff that should provide opportunities that represent a good strategy to promote students motivation, understanding and application. A continuous process of updating knowledge, skills and competencies is required to satisfy the need for education to be relevant and productive in society. Placement of students of HE become easier as relationships develop among employer’s professionals and students as prospective employees. “WIL” offers creative ways

to incorporate practical work place problems with theoretical learning. Practical problem solving skills are developed, as students are required to solve real problems during their onsite training period, with the highly skilled supervision of the academic staff. “WIL” requires that students undergo a period of **on the job training** (OJT) as part of the qualification with the period of placement varying from programme to programme and institution to institution and may be undertaken throughout the study period.

- 2.24 **Outcome Based Education (OBE) Relevance of the World of Work:** OBE is result-oriented education. This approach places the primary focus on the outcomes of the learning and moves away from the traditional content driven objectives. HEIs should ensure that assessment and evaluation of students learning experience is managed and measured with the same rigor and credits that apply to the theoretical component of the curriculum. Within a multidimensional approaches, Cooperative Education creates a setting where students engage in responsible, proactive and interactive learning activities. The elements to successfully attain the learning outcomes in the work place, where students explore and reflect on the variety of their learning while engaging in the activities of the work place.
- 2.25 **Work Integrated Learning and Curriculum Relevancy for Students:** The lack of requisite industrial attributes, such as high achievement, motivation, confidence flexibility, creativity and the ability to identify and solve problems through informal decision making, should not be viewed in the isolation but rather viewed with in the broader search for a relevant curriculum skills transferability, competencies, outcomes, and experiential learning are all indications that traditional definition of knowledge seems inadequate to meet problems faced by contemporary society. OBE is the learning approach of the curriculum and links closely with the view of what the learner should be able to do, know, understand or become. Based on the principles of outcome based education, it appears that more is necessary than a built in generic curriculum.
- 2.26 **Inter Action of Role Playful in “WIL”:** The success of a “WIL” model is dependent on the meaningful interaction of role players namely, Students, Higher Education Institutions and Industry, given their understanding and commitment to desirable learning outcomes. Successful work based learning is directly related to the educational management of service delivery that supports the environment and allows students to develop knowledge, skills and attitude that will enhance their employability profile.
- 2.27 **Value of the Study:** This study focuses on the crucial bridge (WIL) between higher education institutions and the world of work. Higher learning is the key to providing the labour market with the knowledge, review high-level competencies expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of the modern economy. A work force that is able to chart its own course in the global competitive world of the 21st century. The value and importance of the relevance of “WIL” can benefit **Career Focused Education** where there is need for work force experience.
- 2.28 The “WIL” module is a specific learning intervention that has significant benefits for students and academic staff. The challenge is to ensure that quality and adequate resources underpin service delivery and implementation so that the students obtain valuable additional knowledge through the work based learning as part of the curriculum.

- 2.29 **Work Integrated Learning as a Learning Tool:** Work integrated learning is now the prefer as it profiles and recognizes the need to ensure that the workplace learning is structured, planned, monitored and assessed at the correct level to ensure integration with the curriculum outcomes for the whole qualification. The aspect that distinguishes “work integrated learning” from pure work based or experiential learning, is the role that negotiation plays between the academic institutions, the students and the employers. The negotiation involves identifying achievable learning outcomes, which are meaningful and challenging to the individual, relevant to the employer and have academic creditability within institution aligned to the module or programme outcomes. It is accepted that learning at the HE is planned, resourced and structured to ensure an environment that supports the student expense of the workplace. Examples for such a structured module include orientation, subject syllabi, guidelines, assessment methods, timetabling and mentorship. As the workplace is not a learning institution but rather a place for productivity and profitability. Therefore, academic institution should ensure learning of students planning full responsibility for learning entirely to industry would be short sighted and irresponsible students did not have a formal preparation for “WIL”.
- 2.30 **Opinions Regarding their “WIL” Experience:** The principles of Work Integrated Learning state that the work periods must be an integral part of the student’s academic programme. Furthermore, the programme must be developed to ensure that the students are exposed to learning opportunities while being involved in work or real life situations. “WIL” is the link between learning and the work role, provided by appropriate on the job opportunities for training and learning. It is also a formulized educational module supervised by the educational institutions, which takes place in work-based environment.
- 2.31 Primary objective of HE is to design curriculum as well as the “WIL” module in such a manner as to ensure employability of students. They should be developed into capable individuals who will be effective in their chosen occupations. This means that greater opportunities should be presented for students to engage in top notch work related experience “WIL” experience means students are produced to meet the needs of industry far better than would have been the case if “WIL” were not under-taken.
- 2.32 **Placement Considerations within the Industry:** Placement of students in industry requires considerable thought and effort on the part of the lecturer in-charge of placement. It is imperative that students are placed in accredited industry where they can gain optimal experience. The lecturers Incharge and industry are to ensure that placement experience is as rewarding and fruitful as possible Industry plays a vital role in the success of the “WIL” module, as employer should be fully committed to provide a “WIL” environment and to expose the students to the vocational realities. This would include the responsibility of checking, coaching, confirming and collaborating with higher education or mentors in the programme. Students require greater technological literacy, research and development skills to enable them to be more productive and cater for the demands of industry.
- 2.33 **Mentoring and Visitation to Design ‘WIL’:** An additional theme that emerged from the research was that of mentoring. Mentoring is a very important aspect of the entire ‘WIL’ experience. Mentors should focus on the skills, which enable a student to perform better in the work place. The students, mentors and academic

should meet to monitor and discuss the progress of the student during “WIL” module.

- 2.34 **Professionalism:** Higher education institutions face many challenges as they strive to position themselves as key players in the development of human capital through qualifications that are responsive to technological, economic and social development needs. Students should be prepared for “WIL” during a number of lecturers, prior to the “WIL” experience. Students should be introduced to all aspects such as induction, orientation with ethics, work expectations and other similar requirements for the work place to help the transition period from HEIs to the work place.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 Qualitative research methodology have been chosen for the investigation of the opinions, perception of lecturers, alumni and employers. Qualitative method allows for in-depth investigations of the people’s experiences and perceptions. Participants are related in such a manner that would elicit their emotions, attitudes and experiences that comprise the human factor in social research. Qualitative research attempts to create descriptive analysis that emphasize deep, interpretive understanding of social phenomena. This study is aimed at understanding and making sense of the situation as presented by participants and involved interviewing a representative sample to understand how alumni experienced a non-credit bearing “WIL” models.
- 3.2 It is considered necessary to show a compassionate understanding of participant’s feelings, motives and thoughts in order to obtain meaningful findings. Words enable people to understand their circumstances as their worlds are created through words. Some people defend their arguments and hide behind words. Using the subject words better reflects the postulates of the qualitative paradigm.
- 3.3 The study was carried out in interpretive research design. The purpose of this design is to search for meaning and understanding of participant’s discussions. This study used the qualitative method because it was most appropriate for the investigation. The language of qualitative research is one of the interpretations where the researcher discusses the participants in their social contexts and develops ground theories that emphasize tracing the process and sequence of events in specific settings.
- 3.4 Qualitative methods were considered most appropriate for this study in order to investigate opinions/perception of the lecturers / employers regarding “WIL”. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth investigation of peoples, experiences and perceptions. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants for the study from “Alumni” who graduated in the years 2006–2008. These alumni were indentified from the database as having completed a non-credit learning “WIL” (Internship) “The Personal interview” method was used to gather data for the study, as this is the most appropriate method for in-depth investigations.
- 3.5 **Participants:** Participants were selected by “purposive sampling” purposive sampling is a method of sampling where researcher looks for people who are most suitable for the study and who can provide the most valuable information. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that participants were related because of their suitability and ability to provide rich information in order to learn a great

deal about issues of central importance for the research. 30 students who have completed their internship were selected. These participants were selected to provide and reflect a sample of diversity that represents the widest range of characteristics in order to gain wide perspective staff that work in the respective departments were also interviewed. Some students have undergone their internship in “Textile” some in Pharmaceutical some in Engineering goods, some in Electronics goods and some in Telecom industries.

4. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

- 2.1 Interviews were used as source of data collection. The face-to-face interview method was used for this purpose, as it is the most appropriate for in-depth investigation in this kind of research. 30 interviews were conducted with alumni and four with lecturer using an open-ended conversational style and questions to guide interviews. In these interviews, attempts have been made to obtain explanations of perceptions and opinions that were rich in detail and sensitive to content. In addition, probing questions were used to clear certain issues, which were unclear. These interviews were open-ended and participants were afforded the opportunities to talk comfortably in a conversational fashion. It is considered necessary to conduct two types of interviews, (1) informal interview (2) formal in-depth interviews.

5. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

- 5.1. Patterns within participant’s words and actions were located so that those patterns can be presented to others for examination. In analysis, reviewing the data three times was used. In order to uncover the meanings attached to participants discourse by searching for clues to the multiple meanings inherent in their course, it was necessary to work very carefully with the data. As coding, is the most difficult operation to understand and master.

6. FINDINGS

- 6.1 Skills and knowledge emerged as an important theme where students learned different techniques that industry uses in the manufacturing of products. Students could clearly distinguish and identify these skills as being different from what they have learned at university.
- 6.2 Employers value all competencies in students, which would include both technical competencies (hard and cognitive skills) and non-technical (soft or behavioral skills) the students “**horizons**” are broadened and knowledge bases are also expanded by discussion with both industry supervisors and mentors on pertinent issues in the work place.
- 6.3 A major theme that emerged was importance of practical skills, all the participants said that their experience in industry showed them how important the “WIL” component of their programme was. Participants claimed that they learned practical skills during “WIL” which complemented and enhanced their theoretical knowledge learned in their programme.

- 6.4 Another theme that was identified from the findings is workplace experience. Students were enthusiastic as a result of the knowledge that they had gained. The contract of “WIL” has been considered relevant to real life applications.
- 6.5 In certain cases, students were not aware that they had the capacity to share skills however, there were a few students who indicated that they would have been happy to share their skills and knowledge. From the analyzed data, the theme of skills and knowledge emerged quite strongly. The students reflected on the skills learned and realized their own potential as individuals, which is part of the cross-field outcomes. The purpose of “WIL” is to engender a sense of civic responsibility in students, enabling them to share the knowledge, skills and attitudes learned during their studies with civic society. An other perception of the students was that informal industry was not sufficiently qualified to train them. Informal industry was reluctant to share their skills and knowledge or interact professionally since students were seen as a threat because of their intention as future entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship is a compulsory module, in the institutes. This module has been introduced to assist “STUDENTS” to establish their own small business, as jobs opportunities are limited. The staff was also positive that student, might start a business after the “WIL” experience or have ideas for an own business.
- 6.6 Responsibility and trust was another theme that emerged from the analyzed data because students indicated that industry did not give them sufficient responsibility. In the interviews, participants stated that during the “WIL” module they would have appreciated industry providing them with more responsibility and treating them as workers rather than mere observers.
- 6.7 The perception that industry does not give students responsibilities could perhaps be interpreted as industry’s lack of trust in the students, however it is feasible that industry to a certain extent, doubts the ability of the students placed in their care for “WIL” as this component of programme is currently not credit bearing. A formal structure to inform industry of the purpose of the “WIL” does not exist. This failure to inform industry about “WIL” could perhaps be a result of a lack of communication between the institution and industry regarding the ability of students and what is aspect of the mentoring.
- 6.8 It is necessary for lecturer to communicate with and inform industry regarding “WIL” the lecturer also indicates that he would welcome more information regarding the establishment of a business. There is perhaps a type of professional jealousy as these appears to be reluctant on the part of informal industry to share knowledge will aim at developing students life skills and awareness of personal, social cultural values and respect for and understanding of others thus leading to more responsible citizens “WIL” engages students in activities where both industry and students are primary beneficiaries and where the goals are to provide services to the community and to enhance student learning in reciprocal partnership. Therefore, “WIL” under the umbrella of Cooperative Education shares the goal to enrich the student understanding of course content and discipline. Students should be able to complete assigned tasks and they should also receive on the jobs training, as this will enable them to gain new insights. They will also be able to face the pressures of a real life work place environment.
- 6.9 Students complained that they were given menial tasks, only to service as an assistant to a worker.

- 6.10 Certain clients in industry did not treat them with respect and this was very demoralizing. This may be because they had not been introduced in the correct manner to the clients as a result clients were not aware of the students' abilities nor were they aware that these students could add value to the task.
- 6.11 The students who are not taking any interest and initiative and responsibility for their learning while on the "WIL" module was not properly briefed the lecturer Incharge.
- 6.12 Students voiced the opinions to be successful, the "WIL" training module, their needs for responsibility regarding the work in the work place must be planned or communicated for the optimum training experience.
- 6.13 Student perceived "WIL" as a bridge between HEIs and real working world to gain experience for employment.
- 6.14 The theme of the duration of the "WIL" emerged from data collected from both students and lectures much concern was expressed about the limited that students spent in industry. Because they believed that, they could not achieve much from the experience nor could they learn the entire operation of the business in the approximately six weeks that were allocated for non-credit bearing "WIL" module. The "time" constraint" limited their learning experience in that the various techniques regarding industry could not be mastered.
- 6.15 Some students believed that module should be scheduled early in the final academic year to gain from the experience in the industry and to apply knowledge in academic projects.
- 6.16 Others are of the opinion that "WIL" should be scheduled midyear. These students think that they would find better job placement as industry will know their ability and offer them employment.
- 6.17 **Liaison between Industry and Higher Education Institutions:** While industry has many needs, Educational goals remain the dominant factor for consideration when contemplating "WIL" practice. Industry and HEIs need to build more collaborative relationship with long term strategic vision.
- 6.18 **Employability and "WIL":** For higher education institutions to be regarded as providers of practical education they need to be training good members of society". Students having high-level skills are in great demand. The employability of student impacts on the reputation of university. They need to ensure that their students are equipped with necessary discipline knowledge and skills. The skills that students obtain should generic to an extent and should consequently be easily transferable. Ideally, students should have industry experience obtained through "WIL" modules. The theme of employability emerged strongly as this is the topic that concerns all the students. If students have had relevant work experience with industry and exposures to a strong entrepreneurial component they will be able to identify opportunities to establish their own businesses in case they have been unable to secure permanent employment.
- 6.19 **Placing for "WIL" in Recognized Organization:** If students are placed in recognized organization, on the experience gained in that industry they can get the job easily.
- 6.20 **Benefits of the "WIL":** Students gained certain valuable skills. They were exposed to different techniques, mass production, time management, work ethics and skills. These advantages may be clustered under the theme of the benefits of "WIL".

- 6.21 Industry needs to highly pragmatic and demonstrate real commitment to provide “WIL” opportunities that are meaningful for students.
- 6.22 Students are more likely to be work related when they complete “WIL” and more able to make a meaningful contribution to the society.
- 6.23 Employers have come to see the benefits of employing students who have “WIL” experience. Such students have an edge when applying for posts. It is also argued that although “WIL” has barriers in its implementation it is highly conducive to a quality education, provided that efficient student mentorship is undertaken and industry is serious about “WIL”.
- 6.24 **Communication:** Communication was a theme that emerged very strongly as students believed that they had gained more confidence as a result of communication in industry during “WIL” module “equipping students with skill to handle different people.
- 6.25 **Students, do not take ‘WIL’ experience seriously:** Learning during informal ‘WIL’ period is not formally evaluated, as this learning experience is not an outcome towards attaining credits in their degree programme.
- 6.26 **Credit Bearing ‘WIL’ Module:** The students may have better opportunities to work in the formal environment of industry with prescribed outcomes where they may experience the world of work, which in return, enhances their personal skills and knowledge in various activities.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Conclusions are drawn, that are based on the findings in the research. The purpose of this research was to outline an approach that would improve the design and delivery of Career Focused, Work Integrated Learning for the students. An attempt has been made to understand and interpret the bridge between education and the world of work. Generally, the students are placed in business environments where the managers are not formally trained and workers learned the trade over the years, this is a non-academic industry. In order to fully assure its responsibility and role course contents should be formulated as per the needs of industry. The growing importance of knowledge and applicable skills in the world today and the ever increasing number of people being educated and trained at higher level underlines the need to integrate theory and practical skills and experience through effective “WIL” modules.
- 7.2 Time should be enhanced to six months for optimal learning.
- 7.3 Shortage of skills and knowledge for “WIL” module.
- 7.4 Students prefer the opportunity to experience a renowned industry as they believe it can give permanent job placement.
- 7.5 There is limited number of mentors in industry and their availability to train student during experiential learning is not sufficient.
- 7.6 WIL advanced the gaining of life skills such as “Time Management” Team Building, Group Work and Communication.
- 7.7 Value of professionalism, being punctual at work and adhering ethos of the company.
- 7.8 WIL assisted in establishing contacts and opportunities for further employment.
- 7.9 Mentoring and visits were found to be insufficient.

- 7.10 Formal programme manuals should be developed for student's industry mentor and staff that give clear guidance on the roles each need to play and commitment to the learning endeavour.
- 7.11 The "WIL" guidelines should describe the responsibility of the learner, the employer and the academic 'WIL' lecturer. It is concluded that "WIL" manuals needs to include guidelines for placement and that HEI, an academic team to investigate industry before students are placed for their "WIL" experience.
- 7.12 Pre "WIL" training be provided to prepare the students for the work place and ensure that the learning experience in optimal.
- 7.13 The need for frequent visits by the WIL lecturers is another important aspect.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1. WIL manual be clearly formulated in order to provide guidelines as to and when students will be visited during their placement.
- 8.2. Duration of the WIL should be enhanced to six months.
- 8.3. A clearly formulated manual needs to be compiled for training, it should include guidelines for the students, industry, mentors in industry and staff members. These procedures for placement will assist and give guidance for the new WIL. Assessment guidelines should also be included for the assessment of the student learning experience in this document.
- 8.4. Students should be prepared in advance for the purpose, goals and evaluation requirements.
- 8.5. The relationship between the work place supervisor and student needs to be monitored by the academic institution.
- 8.6. Suitability of work place for WIL is evaluated first then students be sent there.
- 8.7. The role of lecturers, in this new paradigm moves provider of knowledge content, to the manger for learning process.
- 8.8. The growing importance of knowledge and applicable skills in the contemporary business world and the ever increasing number of people being educated and trained at a tertiary level has increased higher education's responsibility and influence with in society.
- 8.9. The committee of tutorial matters (CTM), a subcommittee of cooperative education should be formed which should ensure quality in all stages of experiential learning.

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