

DEMYSTIFYING THE MYTHS ASSOCIATED WITH PLACEMENTS

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Abstract: *The aim of this study is to find out the myths related with the perception and the challenges of campus placements by management professionals during their final year at b-schools. Campus recruitment provides a platform for the organizations to meet the aspirants and pick up intelligent, committed youth from various colleges and education institutes who have the requisite enthusiasm and zeal to prove themselves. In order to find the right candidates, organizations employ various recruitment and selection procedures. With the advancement of technology, the need for talented and self-motivated young people who can work tirelessly has grown. Thus, organizations do not confine themselves to only the selected institutes but spread their net far and wide. This study was done at selected b-schools which have good placement track records. The research give importance to various activities involved in campus recruitment and see how much the candidate is aware about recruitment. It also includes the candidate's viewpoint on job vacancies and the interview challenges they faced. This research is based on the primary data which was collected as per the sample size which is 39. The study concluded with findings and suggestions that would help to know the challenges faced by management professionals during the time of campus placements*

Key Words: *Campus Placements, Job Vacancies, Skill Sets, Pay Scale, Interview Challenges*

1. INTRODUCTION

A decent B-school everyone will say will assure placements with lots of hard work, assignments, live projects, competitive atmosphere. The two year stint at a good B-school is a self-discovery journey, with live projects, assignments, research works, presentations with appropriate testing and evaluation. The failures and achievements going hand in hand since failures are stepping stone to success. The product comes out more shiny and bright, more tough and resilient and above all, much more dynamic and flexible, and by the end of academics, most students realize what they exactly want from life and what not. But if the career choice is a dilemma, solve it with logic and heart both, without getting swayed away by opinions. The most challenging phase of a b-school student is time of placements. A knowledge aspirant who joins the management schools with projected ambitions coupled with expectations makes the task difficult during the time of placements. Needless to say even the most reputed b-schools are facing problems of placing the right candidate at the right organization. The study here tries to demystify the myths associated with student perception about placements. Nearly 39 samples were collected from management professionals who got placements from reputed b-schools. The different variables like source of job vacancies, job expectation, grooming, pay scale, skill sets etc are examined.

2. OBJECTIVES

- i. To find out the challenges faced by management professionals in the job market.
- ii. To find out the relationship between placement assistance and interview clearance.
- iii. To identify the causes for not clearing the job interviews.

3. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Placements at the reputed b-schools with the average pay package on offer are expected to be limited. The trend is visible both at the established and new b-schools where administrators are hopeful of a better placement season. Most of the companies have huge expectations which are not at all par with the academic standards. The research here tries to establish the relationship between campus placements and the candidate skills especially the soft skills and technical skills and also the challenges faced by them during the time of interviews.

4. LITERATURE FRAMEWORK

Extracurricular activities like events, arts, sports and games, have an impact on the personality of students which indeed helps in increasing the employability of the students. Quality of teaching and medium of instruction are important which helps to nurture technical skills. The percentage of drop outs in the first (aptitude test) and second stage (group discussion) is the highest in the selection process. The level of interest of students in campus placements differs based on the pay package and perks offered. There is a clear association between number of placement drives attended by the students, percentage marks obtained by the students, the number of times the candidate have cleared the group discussion (N, K, & Sundaram, 2013).

Good recruitment practices helps to achieve organizational excellence in terms of outcomes. Successful recruitment and selection practices are key components at the entry point of human resources in any organization. The duty of new generation HR manager is to recruit right person for the right job through sources like campus placements, pool drives, data banks etc. Evaluating the candidate's skills, knowledge and abilities is challenging and attracting candidates through pay packages is also difficult. It is good to adopt latest interview techniques to recruit prospective employees (Sudhamsetti.Naveen & Raju, 2014).

Intense competition in the higher education sector in Malaysia has forced many universities to become "entrepreneurs" and implement marketing strategies in recruiting students both locally and abroad. The objective of this paper is to develop a conceptual framework to explore the institution factors that influence students' college choice decision in Malaysia. The independent variables that have been identified to have influenced of students' college choice decision are location, academic programme, college reputation, educational facilities, cost, availability of financial aid, employment opportunities, advertising, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), representatives and campus visit (Ming,2010).

Most of the reputed companies opt for social media like LinkedIn, Facebook, etc., for getting quality placements. Old methods of placements through advertisements, employee referrals, recruitment agencies, etc are wiped away due to technological advancements. It helps the companies to acquire quality employees at minimum cost (Vinita and Priya).

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A sample of 39 management professional who got placements from reputed b-schools where selected from a population which comprises of 2013, 2014, 2015 pass out students from a cluster of different b-school who have great track record with respect to placements. The sampling used here is stratified sampling where the population is divided into different strata (b-schools with good placement track records) and from each strata random samples are taken.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

The following section deals with the data analysis. Statistics of job vacancies and challenges along with hypothesis and related issues are also covered one by one.

6.1 Source of Job Vacancies

Table- 6.1 (a)Source of Job Vacancies

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid College Placement Cell	17	43.6	43.6	43.6
Friends/References	4	10.3	10.3	53.8
Job Portals	7	17.9	17.9	71.8
News Paper Advertisements	10	25.6	25.6	97.4
Others	1	2.6	2.6	100.0
Total	39	100.0	100.0	

Most of the respondents have an opinion that college placement cells help them in getting quality placements. It should be noted that a notable percentage (25.6%) give acknowledgement to the Newspaper advertisements.

6.2 First Job Challenges

Table- 6.2(a)First Job Challenges

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Challenging work environment	9	23.1	23.1	23.1
Lack of knowledge to do job	9	23.1	23.1	46.2
Rules & Regulations / Leave Policy	3	7.7	7.7	53.8
Work Life Balance	6	15.4	15.4	69.2
Work Pressure/ Stress	12	30.8	30.8	100.0
Total	39	100.0	100.0	

The 30.8% respondents cite that they are facing work pressure as well as stress and around 23.1% site challenging work environment and lack of job knowledge as the main challenges.

6.3 Reasons For Not Clearing Job Interviews

Table- 6.3(a)Reasons For Not Clearing Job Interviews

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Difficulty in clearing aptitude test	9	23.1	23.1	23.1
Lack of communication skill	13	33.3	33.3	56.4
Lack of confidence	7	17.9	17.9	74.4
Lack of Interest/motivation	5	12.8	12.8	87.2
Lack of subject knowledge	5	12.8	12.8	100.0
Total	39	100.0	100.0	

Even in this post modernization era still some of the respondents feel lack of communication as the main reason for not clearing interviews. Even though hindrances like difficulty in clearing aptitude tests, lack of confidence, motivation and subject knowledge are there.

6.4 Hypothesis 1: There exists significant relationship between placement assistance and interviews cleared.

Table- 6.4(a)Placement Assistance X Cleared Interviews Cross Tabulation

Count

		Cleared Interviews				Total
		Cleared all	Cleared less than 50 %	Cleared more than 50 %	Not cleared any	
Placement Assistance	1.0	0	1	4	1	6
	2.0	0	4	2	0	6
	3.0	0	4	4	1	9
	4.0	2	3	2	0	7
	5.0	1	2	7	1	11
Total		3	14	19	3	39

Table- 6.4(b)Chi-Square Tests 1

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.651 ^a	12	.039
Likelihood Ratio	13.530	12	.033
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 19 cells (95.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .46.

Since the P Value (0.039) is less than 0.05 the hypothesis is accepted. That means there exists a significant relationship between placement assistance and cleared interviews.

6.5 Hypothesis 2: There exists significant relationship between employability enhancement training and interviews cleared.

Table- 6.5(a)Employability Enhancement Training * Cleared Interviews Cross Tabulation

Count

		Cleared Interviews				Total
		Cleared all	Cleared less than 50 %	Cleared more than 50 %	Not cleared any	
Employability Enhancement Training	No	0	5	4	1	10
	Yes	3	9	15	2	29
Total		3	14	19	3	39

Table- 6.5 (b) Chi-Square Tests 2

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.082 ^a	3	.055
Likelihood Ratio	2.778	3	.042
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 6 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .77.

Since the P Value (0.055) is less than 0.05 the hypothesis is accepted. That means there exists a significant relationship between employment enhancement training and cleared interviews.

6.6 Hypothesis 3: There exists significant relationship between skill sets and interviews cleared.

Table-6.6(a) Skill Sets * Cleared Interviews Cross tabulation

Count		Cleared Interviews				Total
		Cleared all	Cleared less than 50 %	Cleared more than 50 %	Not cleared any	
Skills & Interviews	Communication skills	1	8	9	1	19
	Logical / Problem solving skills	0	2	2	1	5
	People management skills	1	0	6	1	8
	Technical skills	1	4	2	0	7
Total		3	14	19	3	39

Table-6.6 (b) Chi-Square Tests 3

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.858 ^a	9	.045
Likelihood Ratio	12.026	9	.021
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 14 cells (87.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .38.

Since the P Value(0.045) is less than 0.05 the hypothesis is accepted. That means there exists a significant relationship between skill sets and cleared interviews.

6.7 Hypothesis 3: There exists significant relationship between certification courses and interviews cleared.

Hypothesis 1

Table-6.7(a) Certification Courses * Cleared Interviews Cross Tabulation

Count	Cleared Interviews	Total

		Cleared all	Cleared less than 50 %	Cleared more than 50 %	Not cleared any	
Certification Courses	No	0	11	13	2	26
	Yes	3	3	6	1	13
Total		3	14	19	3	39

Table-6.7(b)Chi-Square Tests 4

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.919 ^a	3	.037
Likelihood Ratio	7.582	3	.045
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 5 cells (62.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.00.

Since the P Value (0.037) is less than 0.05 the hypothesis is accepted. That means there exists a significant relationship between certification courses and cleared interviews.

7. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

7.1 Findings

1. Most of the respondents have an opinion that college placement cell help them in getting quality placements. It should be noted that a notable percentage (25.6%) give acknowledgement to the Newspaper advertisements.
2. Majority of the respondents are facing work pressure as well as stress where others site challenging work environment and lack of job knowledge as the main challenges.
3. Some of the respondents feel lack of communication as the main reason for not clearing interviews. There are also common problems like difficulty in clearing aptitude tests, lack of confidence, motivation and subject knowledge etc.
4. From the statistical tests it is clear that all the factors like placement assistance employability, enhancement program, certification courses etc contributes to get a job.

7.2 Suggestions

1. College Placement Cells should work like employment hubs where student explore the world of opportunities.
2. Universities/Educational Institutions/College should focus on job based academic curriculum.
3. It is the duty of the placement cell to give training which focuses on updating student's knowledge, skills and attitudes.
4. Majority of the respondents are facing work pressure as well as stress where others site challenging work environment and lack of job knowledge as the main challenges.

5. Some of the respondents feel lack of communication as the main reason for not clearing interviews. There are also common problems like difficulty in clearing aptitude tests, lack of confidence, motivation and subject knowledge etc.
6. Academic curriculum should accommodate enhancement program, certification courses etc which helps the students in getting quality placements.

8. CONCLUSION AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Campus recruitments no longer follow a anticipated path. HR managers sit across the table with students, engage them in set-format interviews or group discussion is no longer available in the scenario. Shortlisted candidates out to dinner or administering psychometric tests to assess their leadership styles, organizations are lining up unique strategies to hire the best candidate in the shortest possible time. Innovative practices like case studies, hiring 3.0., reality checks, psychometric assessments, TAT (Thematic Apperception Tests) etc are used. From a traditional recruitment style of-what candidate don't know to a modern style of-what candidate know have been trending. It helps the candidate to prove his skills, with full of confidence and authority. The study can be elaborated in other fields and branches of educational industries. It will help the companies to recruit the right man for the right job.

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