

# Experience Beyond Borders through International Internship: Impact to Career, Culture and Life

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## Article Info

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## Abstract

This study analyzed the impact of the J1 - USA Internship Program among newly graduates in the Philippines on their career development, cultural understanding and life. The study utilized the available data gathered from the accomplished evaluation form (qualitative and quantitative) of the returnees for the last three years (2016, 2017, and 2018). A total of 251 respondents (153 females and 62 males) graduated from fifty (50) Philippine Higher Education Institutions were included. Data showed that they had positive general point view on the process, objectives and expectations on international internship and found them beneficial for their future career, better cultural understanding and life expectations. In the qualitative themes, majority of the respondents confirmed the positive impact to their start-up career and career development; they were able to adapt with the diverse culture and business standards at same time shared their culture to their team; and showed positive attitude towards various challenges in life they encountered during their stay. Negative responses were addressed during their program and considered for further improvement of the program.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the presence of social media and World Wide Web, people can travel virtually. It is inevitable to learn from the experience of other people through the internet highway by which we are creating our digital self. In this juncture, that people are not only satisfied by experience brought by the internet but eager to experience the real world. In fact, the internet serves as the trailer to a brand-new real-life experience. Being globally competitive is a challenge to our youth today. In fact, this is one of the educational goals set by the Higher Educational Institutions in the Philippines. After graduation, some of the Filipino graduates of the Hospitality Programs either landed to work or participate in the Internship or Traineeship Programs. The J1

Internship and Traineeship Program provides structured training program for graduates and young professionals who wanted to have cultural understanding, international business practices exposure and living independently in the USA. In connection with this, the aimed of this study was to present an empirical data to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the J1- Internship Program.

The J1 Internship and Traineeship Program provides structured training for graduates and young professionals who wanted to have cultural understanding, international business practices exposure and living independently in the USA. In connection with this, this aimed to present an empirical data to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the J1- Internship Program facilitated by POEC through collaborations with Higher Education institution as partners. This study

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analyzed the impact of the J1 - USA Internship Program among Filipino newly graduates on their career development, cultural understanding and life.

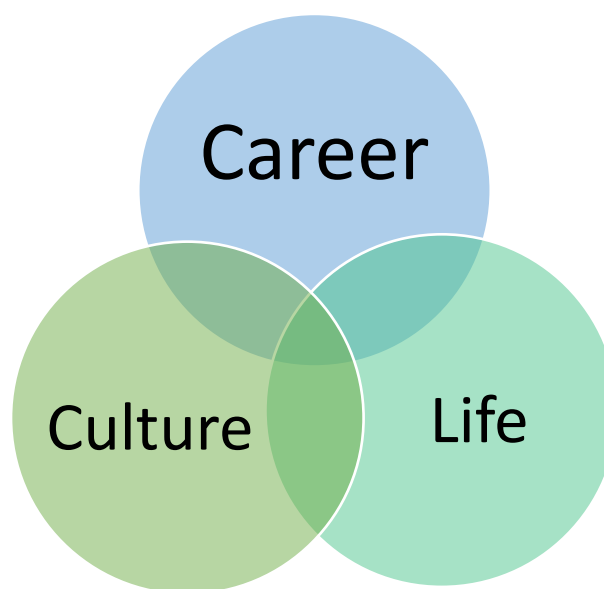
## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Today, one in four of the world's young people are neither in employment nor in education or training. Globally, three out of four young people who do find a job, are working in the informal economy – and in developing countries the number reaches nineteen out of twenty (ILO, 2017). Young people continue to suffer disproportionately from decent work deficits and low-quality jobs measured in terms of working poverty, low pay and/or employment status, but also in terms of their exposure to occupational hazards and injury. New and emerging forms of 'non-standard' employment are coming to dominate young people's early labour market experiences (ILO, 2016). Amongst these, internships are increasingly becoming an integral part of the school-to-work transition. Although initially introduced in high income countries, internships are now becoming more common also in low- and middle-income countries. In the USA, where internships first originated, recent estimates suggest that around 1.3 per cent of the entire US labour force are interns and around one half of college students report completing an internship as part of their studies (cited O'Higgins N. and Pinedo L. (2018). Evidence indicates that internships improve students' employability, academic outcomes, and career crystallization

The J1 Internship and Traineeship Program provides structured training for graduates and young professionals who wanted to have cultural understanding, international business practices exposure and living independently in the USA. Further, this is also to enhance the skills and expertise of program participants in their academic or occupational fields through guided work – based programs (USDS, 2018).

For the past decade, the fact sheet of J1 Program (Cepla,2018) over 310,000 individuals from more than 200 countries have visited the United States each year to participate in both work- and study-based programs. In the Philippines based from the data of Commissions on Filipinos Overseas Website, over 40,000 Filipinos Exchange Visitors Program participants for the past 10 years from 2007-2017 (IWG, 2018) Finally ,Cosentino D. (2016) mentioned in his article that employers in today's labor market rely heavily on resumes that illustrate a relevant work history, whether that's from internships, volunteer work, or actual job experience. Hence, having internships provides real life experience and exposure, opportunity to learn more about yourself, get connected and develop one's professional network, prevent CV from going to the trash and transition into a full-time position.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



**Figure 1. The Interconnected Impact of J1 Program to Career, Culture and Life**

The figure above showed the idea of interconnection of experiences during USA J1 Program. These experiences weaved into one connected impact that shaped and will shape their career, understanding

the culture and defining their lives as a professional and individuals as they faced the challenges of globalization now and in the years to come. According to the USA J1 Program goals, J1 Internship and Traineeship Program provides structured training program for graduates and young professionals who wanted to have cultural understanding, international business practices exposure and living independently in the USA.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This study determined the quantitative and qualitative impacts the of the J1 - USA Internship Program among Filipino newly graduates on their career, cultural understanding and life.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Higher Education Institutions- the results of this study will guide our school managers and academicians to help students develop their 21st Century Skills to prepare them in the more challenging career and personal life in the years to come.

Parents- this result can be communicated to the parents for them to appreciate the value of career exploration in the lives of their children.

Students – insights from this research will widen the understanding of them students on how valuable life experiences and its impact as a whole.

Training Providers- this will guide the training providers to have a clear-cut process and continuous improvement of the program the fact that generations' expectations vary from time to time.

Future Researchers- will use the study as a basis or reference in stating the possibility of other studies similar to the researcher's output.

### **SCOPE AND LIMITATION**

The study utilized the available data gathered from the evaluation of returnees for the last three years

(2016, 2017, and 2018) from various Higher Education Institution including First City Providential College. Respondents were J1 Internship and Traineeship in the Hospitality programs were only included in this study.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

This chapter features the methodology used by the researcher in accomplishing the study. Discussed here are the methods of research used, methods of collecting data, development of the research instrument, sampling design and statistical treatment. In this study the researcher employed the documentary analysis from the evaluation form submitted by the respondents. It included the descriptive method with quantitative and qualitative components to describe and summarize the various aspects on the respondents' experiences that impacted their career, understanding of culture and life. Qualitative responses used thematic analysis to identify common themes, such as ideas and patterns of meaning that came up repeatedly. It follows six steps process in thematic analysis: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and writing up. In this research, percentage of consistency were computed to number of frequencies of repeated responses (Verma, J.P,2019)

### **Sampling Method**

In this study, the researcher used the convenience sampling. A total of 251(153 females and 62 males) out of 552 participants completed the evaluation were the respondents graduated from fifty (50) Philippine Higher Education Institutions were included together with the alumni of First City Providential College. A proud partner of POEC Consultancy International for more than ten (10 Years).

### **Statistical Treatment**

The gathered information both from the interview and the questionnaire administered will be organize

and presented in tabular form. Statistical treatment will include the computation of the percentages of values.

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$$

In this formula, “F” stands for the frequency of the response and “N” is the sample size.

Mean – used to compute the average value of responses from the quantitative part of evaluation form

### Instrument

The instrument used was develop by the researcher for the purpose of evaluation of the participants .The evaluation tool was divided into two parts the quantitative using the rating scale (4 Point -Likert Scale) with ten (10) item indicators (on perception for process, objectives ,program expectations and over-all experience and qualitative where open-ended questions were used.

### Research Process

This study all participants before the end of their program they were asked to submit the evaluation from either in person or online. Retrieved accomplished forms were selected from the participants from 2016-2018. Those completed forms were included as respondents of the study. Data from the evaluation form were tabulated, summarized, analyzed and interpreted. Qualitative responses used thematic analysis to identify common themes, such as ideas and patterns of meaning that came up repeatedly.

### Research Locale

This study was conducted from various location in three offices located in Makati (Luzon Participants), Cebu (Central Visayas and Mindanao Participants) and Bacolod (Western Visayas Participants)

### Research Respondents

Respondents of the study were the returnees of J1 Program from 2016-2017 graduates of 50 Higher Educational Institutions in the Philippines. A total of 251 (153 females and 62 males) respondents were included in this study.

### Ethical Considerations

The respondents were informed that their responses will be utilized for various researches for the improvement of the program. Data privacy compliance was considered therefore, their names and name of their institutions were not declared except FCPC that was given prior consent for the purpose of this collaborative research.

## III. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The collected data are presented, analyzed and explained in the part of the research report. It also describes the results of the data analysis and detailed answers to the research. Qualitative responses used thematic analysis to identify common themes, such as ideas and patterns of meaning that came up repeatedly.

**TABLE 1**

**Profile of Respondents AY 2016-2018 in terms of Gender and Geographical Location**

	Male	Female	Total
<b>Gender</b>	<b>28.83%</b>	<b>71.17%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION</b>			
<b>LUZON</b>	<b>VISAYAS</b>	<b>MINDANAO</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>44.18%</b>	<b>46.51%</b>	<b>9.31%</b>	<b>100%</b>

A total of 215 (153 females and 62 males) respondents were included in this study. It showed that there more females participated in J1 Program than males. According to Tilley (2016) and

Novakova (2018) now a days women now a days travels more than men both leisure and work related travels. Participants were coming from various part of the islands. A total of 95 respondents (44.18%) from Luzon, 100 respondents (46.51%) from the Visayas and comprise the highest number of participants for the past three years and 20 respondents (9.31%) from Mindanao. According to the respondents their family in the United States served as an inspiration why they wanted to venture new experiences.

**Table 2**

**Quantitative Indicators and Mean on Experiences that Impacted Career, Culture and Life**

Indicators	MEAN	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
1. Training in accordance with the experience offered	3.55	Excellent
2. Payment sufficient to cover the cost of living and provide some pocket money	3.41	Good
3. Influence on the training program	3.54	Excellent
4. Relationship with management and other employees	3.62	Excellent
5. Knowledge in the required	3.57	Excellent

language		
6. Information provided by prior to departure own country	3.54	Excellent
7. Over-all performance of the Local Agency	3.52	Excellent
8. Over-all performance of your Host Company	3.53	Excellent
9. Credit for this experience	3.60	Excellent
10. Recommendation Internship program for aspiring Filipino.	3.94	Excellent
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

The average mean on quantitative indicators was 3.58, where item no.10 ranked the highest on degree of agreement with 3.94 (Would you like to recommend the internship program for aspiring Filipino youth) while item no.2 (cost of living) ranked the lowest with the rating of 3.41. The overall rating showed that they had positive general point view on the process, objectives and expectations on international internships and found them beneficial for their future career, better cultural understanding and life expectations. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) published an article last 2018 international internship has a high impact on employability and building long term job security after their program.

Legend:

4- 3.5 - Excellent



3.49-2.50 - Good

2.49-1.5 - Fair

1.49-1.0 - Poor

**Table 3**

**Qualitative Themes on Experiences that Impacted Career, Culture and Life**

**3.1 IMPACT TO CAREER**

<b>THEMES</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE CONSISTENCY OF RESPONSES</b>
positive impact to their start-up career	96.78%
exceeded their expectations	95.33%
learned in their field	98.06%
acquired excellent experience	98.45%
considered it as pathway to make them confident professionals	98.50%
improved their communication skills	99.50%
learned diverse business standards	98.67%
<b>Over- all Impact</b>	<b>97.89%</b>

Table showed the common themes on Career indicated where majority of the respondents confirmed the positive impact to their start-up career, it exceeded their expectations, learned in their field, improved their hard and soft skills, trained them to become competitive, acquired excellent experience, considered it as pathway to make them confident professionals, improved their communication skills, learned diverse business standards. As supported by Cosentino D. (2016) that employers in today's labor market rely heavily on

resumes that illustrate a relevant work history, whether that's from internships, volunteer work, or actual job experience. These implicated that such experiences can be a valuable resource in jumpstarting a career.

**3.2 IMPACT TO CULTURE**

<b>THEMES</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE CONSISTENCY OF RESPONSES</b>
Explored historical sites, national parks, museums, libraries, recreational places, food and places	98.89 %
Found the experience amazing, educational, once in a life time, fun and exciting	99.78%
<b>Over- all Impact</b>	<b>99.33%</b>

The above table indicated the impact to cultural understanding of the participants they were able to adapt with the diverse culture and business standards with the proper guidance, mentoring, assistance and coaching among the training supervisors. They were able to explore historical sites, national parks, museums, libraries, recreational places, food and places. Majority of them found the experience amazing, educational, once in a life time, fun and exciting. This was a realization of the program goals about cultural understanding according to USDS (2018).

**3.3 IMPACT TO LIFE**

<b>THEMES</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE CONSISTENCY OF RESPONSES</b>
Challenges in housing and transportation costs the first month of their program	77.75%

Maximized the use of the social media to get in touch with their family, friends and training provider for moral support, inquiries and assistance	99.99%
Participants should be physically and psychologically ready to meet the expectations of the program	99.45%
<b>Over- all Impact</b>	<b>92.39%</b>

The above table showed the themed responses of the participants. They showed positive attitude towards various challenges they encountered during their stay. Most of them responded that housing and transportation costs during the first month of their program were the most common concerns, after the adjustment period they were able to cope and learn to find ways on how to save. Further, they maximized the use of the social media to get in touch with their family, friends and training provider for moral support, inquiries and assistance. Majority of them suggested that future participants should be physically and psychologically ready to meet the expectations of the program. They should learn how to be independent, adaptable and open to life changing opportunities. Some of the negative responses were rooted from the lack of communication, failure to follow the training plans either the host companies or the participants, expensive housing and transportation concerns. These concerns were communicated to sponsors and partners while in the program. As a result, they gave a good evaluation in general about the program. This was supported by Consentino's claim that having internships provides real life experience and exposure, opportunity to learn more about yourself, get connected and develop one's professional network.

**TABLE 3.4**  
**SUMMARY OF IMPACT IN TERMS OF**  
**CONSISTENCY OF RESPONSES**

<b>IMPACT</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE CONSISTENCY OF RESPONSES</b>
CAREER	97.89%
CULTURE	99.33%
LIFE	92.39%
<b>OVER- ALL IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM</b>	<b>96.54%</b>

In summary, the study found out that international internships brought positive impact on the respondents' career development, cultural understanding and life as they journey beyond the boundaries of their places and comfort zones.

#### **IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION**

This chapter is an overview of the study and a brief restatement of the problem, the procedure, and the findings. Generalization supported by data, the determined practical implications and conclusions drawn from the study, as a whole, are presented here. Finally, recommendations that can be suggested based on the findings and conclusions are also enumerated in this final chapter to wrap up the full text of the report.

##### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study are the following:

1. A total of 215 (153 females and 62 males) respondents were included in this study. It showed that there more females participated in J1 Program than males. A total of 95 respondents (44.18%) from Luzon, 100 respondents (46.51%) from the Visayas and comprise the highest number of participants for

the past three years and 20 respondents (9.31%) from Mindanao.

2. The average mean on quantitative indicators was 3.58, where item no.10 ranked the highest on degree of agreement with 3.94

3. Would you like to recommend the internship program for aspiring Filipino youth) while item no.2 (cost of living) ranked the lowest with the rating of 3.41. The over- all rating showed that they had positive general point view on the process, objectives and expectations on international internships and found them beneficial for their future career, better cultural understanding and life expectations.

3.1 Common themes on Career indicated where majority of the respondents confirmed the positive impact to their start-up career, it exceeded their expectations, learned in their field, improved their hard and soft skills, trained them to become competitive, acquired excellent experience, considered it as pathway to make them confident professionals, improved their communication skills, learned diverse business standards.

3.2 In the impact to cultural understanding of the participants they responded that they were able to adapt with the diverse culture and business standards with the proper guidance, mentoring, assistance and coaching among the training supervisors. They were able to explore historical sites, national parks, museums, libraries, recreational places, food and places. Majority of them found the experience amazing, educational, once in a life time, fun and exciting.

3.3 They showed positive attitude towards various challenges they encountered during their stay. Most of them responded that housing and transportation costs during the first month of their program were the most common concerns, after the adjustment period they were able to cope and learn to find ways on how to save. Further, they maximized the use of the social media to get in touch with their family,

friends and training provider for moral support, inquiries and assistance. Some of the negative responses were rooted from the lack of communication, failure to follow the training plans either the host companies or the participants, expensive housing and transportation concerns.

3.4 In summary, the study found out that international internships brought positive impact on the respondents' career development, cultural understanding and life as they journey beyond the boundaries of their places and comfort zones.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based in the foregoing findings the following conclusions are formulated:

1. More women were empowered to join the workforce and took opportunities through international internships. Majority of the interns coming from the provinces were influenced by their families in the USA.

2. The over- all rating showed that they had positive general point view on the process, objectives and expectations on international internships and found them beneficial for their future career, better cultural understanding and life expectations.

3.

3.1 Respondents found positive impact to their start-up career, it exceeded their expectations, learned in their field, improved their hard and soft skills, trained them to become competitive, acquired excellent experience, considered it as pathway to make them confident professionals, improved their communication skills, learned diverse business standards.

3.2 Respondents were able to adapt with the diverse culture and business standards with the proper guidance, mentoring, assistance and coaching among the training supervisors. Majority of them found the experience amazing, educational, once in a life time, fun and exciting.



3.3 Most of them responded that housing and transportation costs during the first month of their program were the most common concerns, after the adjustment period they were able to cope and learn to find ways on how to save. Further, they maximized the use of the social media to get in touch with their family, friends and training provider for moral support, inquiries and assistance.

3.4 The study found out that international internships brought positive impact on the respondents' career development, cultural understanding and life as they journey beyond the boundaries of their places and comfort zones.

### **Recommendation**

Based from the conclusions the following recommendations were drawn:

1. The program should have more public awareness to diverse population to welcome participants in various groups and geographical location to make the program more inclusive.
2. Career Preparation through properly planned program on understanding the value of international internship in preparation in the challenges of globalization.
3. Every generation has unique understanding of what is out there due to influence of social media, media and advanced information technology. Therefore, intensive cultural orientation should be included in academic and co- curricular activities to have a wider perspective of the realities in dealing with companies outside the Philippines.
4. Participants in an international internship should have a better understanding about realities of life outside the Philippines, cost of living and day to day activities. They should also be psychologically and physically fit to combat stress and work expectations during the program. They should learn how to be independent, adaptable and open to life changing opportunities.

5. Since the research found out that there were positive impacts found out that international internships brought positive impact on the respondents' career development, cultural understanding and life as they journey beyond the boundaries of their places and comfort zones this can be brought to a larger public to get oriented about the program and opportunities available.

6. The study does not generalize the entire participants of the J1 Internship Programs and limited only the returnees of specific training provider. Results of the study were shared to the stakeholders and included in the program development of the organization.

7. Further research be made to include all or majority of returnees or alumni from other training providers and also explore the other variables not mentioned in this research.

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## APPENDIX

### PARTICIPANT'S PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM

This FORM is meant to help evaluate your INTERNATIONAL PRACTICAL WORK EXPERIENCE AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCE. You are requested to give your impressions about your traineeship.

(The report should be encoded or written in block letters)

C Country of training:

Year:

Program:

### Trainee

Name:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

University:

### Employer

Name:

Address:

No. of weeks:

From:

To:

Payment (in local currency):

Student or Graduate (if graduate include date of graduation):

**Directions: Please check your response in the appropriate column below:**

Indicators	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Training in accordance with the experience offered				
2. Payment sufficient to cover the cost of living and provide some pocket money				
3. Influence on the training program				
4. Relationship				

with management and other employees				
5. Knowledge in the required language				
6. Information provided by prior to departure own country				
7. Over-all performance of the Local Agency				
8. Over-all performance of your Host Company				
9. Credit for this experience				
10. Recommendation Internship program for aspiring Filipino.				

11. Please give a short outline of the work experience obtained:

12. How much is your tax deduction? \_\_\_\_%

13. Please give details of your accommodation and your level of satisfaction with the accommodation provided/assisted: (How much is your accommodation rental, and what's its inclusion?)

14. Please share something about your mode of transportation in going to work and back to your accommodation:

15. Any further comments:

## **PART II. Your International Practical Work Experience**

16. Who do you work for and what do you do?

17. What prompted you to accept the internship offer by this country, state, company?

18. When did you go? Who did you work for? What was the experience like? What did you gain from it?

19. What are the greatest challenges that you have encountered during your PRACTICAL WORK AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCE abroad? And, to whom did you get or received strength/support to win over challenges?

20. Any advices you can give to the incoming Interns/Trainees to be placed in your Host Company and for those who is coming in this country?

21. Is the training experience provided by your host company worth it?

22. How do you find the people, the culture, the food, the workplace and the people you work?

- A. PEOPLE
- B. CULTURE
- C. FOOD
- D. WORKPLACE
- E. MODE OF TRANSPORTATION
- F. PEOPLE YOU WORK WITH
- G. THE COUNTRY/PLACE
- H. OTHERS

23. How your International experience can impact in your life/career?

24. Is the over-all experience worth it?

25. Any further comments?

Your answers will be given full respect and identity confidentiality will be strictly applied.