

BENEFITS OF INTERNSHIP ACCORDING TO POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS

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Abstract

A step has been taken in higher education towards the specialization of universities. In line with this step, a trend towards internship applications has started in the political science and public administration departments of universities. There is a gap in the literature on studies related to internships in these departments. The present study aims to fill said gap. The purpose of the study is to explore the benefits of internship through the opinions of political science and public administration students. The study was conducted descriptively employing the qualitative research method with a single case design. The participants of the study were identified using the purposive sampling method and typical case sampling. The participants were students of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Aksaray University. The internship program in the department had been recently initiated at the request of the students. Seven students out of a total of ten students who had completed their internship were the participants of the study. Observations, interviews and document analysis were used as data collection tools. Semi-structured interview questions were used in the interviews. The collected data were transferred to the Maxqda 2022 software for coding. Categories were generated based on these codes and themes were identified based on the categories. At the end of the study, the benefits of internship were grouped under two themes. The first theme is "Benefits of internship for students" and the second one is "Benefits of internship for the faculty".

Keywords: Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Student, Internship Training, Benefits of Internship.

SİYASET BİLİMİ VE KAMU YÖNETİMİ BÖLÜMÜ STAJ ÖĞRENCİLERİNE GÖRE STAJIN KATKILARI

Öz

Üniversitelerin ihtisaslaşması yönünde yükseköğretimde bir adım atılmıştır. Bu adım doğrultusunda üniversitelerin siyaset bilimi ve kamu yönetimi bölümlerinde staj uygulaması yapılması yönünde bir yöneliş başlamıştır. Bu bölümlerdeki staj konusunda literatürde boşluk bulunmaktadır. Bu araştırma, o boşluğu doldurmaya yöneliktir. Araştırmanın amacı, siyaset bilimi ve kamu yönetimi bölümü öğrencilerinin görüşleriyle staj uygulamasının katkılarını keşfetmektir. Araştırma,

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nitel araştırma yöntemi, tekli durum deseniyle betimsel biçimde yürütülmüştür. Amaçlı örneklem yöntemi tipik durum örneklemesiyle katılımcılar belirlenmiştir. Katılımcılar, Aksaray Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü öğrencileridir. Bölümdeki staj uygulaması, öğrencilerin isteğine bağlı şekilde yeni başlatılmıştır. Bugüne kadar stajını tamamlamış toplamda on öğrenciden yedi öğrenci, araştırmanın katılımcıları olmuştur. Araştırmada veri toplama araçları olarak gözlem, görüşme ve doküman incelemesi kullanılmıştır. Görüşmelerde yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme sorularıyla veriler toplanmıştır. Toplanan veriler, Maxqda 2022 programına aktarılarak kodlamalar yapılmıştır. Bu kodlardan kategoriler oluşturulmuş ve kategorilerden temalara ulaşılmıştır. Araştırmanın sonucunda stajın katkıları iki temada toplanmıştır. Bu temalardan biri “Stajın öğrencilere katkıları” ve diğeri “Stajın fakülteye katkıları”dır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü, Öğrenci, Staj Eğitimi, Stajın Katkısı.

Introduction

An internship is a learning period that a prospective professional spends working in certain departments of an organization in order to increase their professional knowledge. An intern is a person who engages in an internship. In addition to professional knowledge, internship is the process of learning unwritten rules, procedures, customs, information about professional life, professional structure, professional discipline and professional ethics in an environment where the specific profession is practiced.

Internship is classified into two types in the literature: “Compulsory internship” and “Voluntary internship”. Compulsory internship is considered as a part of the education provided by educational institutions. It is compulsory to complete and subject to grading. The intern's insurance premium is covered by the educational institution where the intern is studying. Voluntary internship does not share the same qualities as compulsory internship and is left to the intern's own will.

There is also the concept of “Voluntary Work”, which is similar to compulsory or voluntary internship, but has certain differences. It is implemented in organizations established to benefit humanity and society. Its main purpose is not training. It is the acquisition of knowledge, skills, experience and behaviour in line with the objectives of organizations known as humanitarian organizations (Dost & Bilgin, 2020, pp. 125-126).

There is also an internship practice known as “Fake internship”, which is not mentioned in the literature and is a specific problem area. This is a type of internship where interns, in agreement with the place of internship, do not complete the required working days to complete their internship or do not even go to the place of internship, and the internship is made to appear as if the internship has been completed on paper by the place of internship. The study conducted by Koçyiğit, Alyavuz, and Bildirici (2011) on this type of

internship revealed that 24% of the interns who were to complete their compulsory internship received fake internship offers from the organizations where they would do their internships (Dost & Bilgin, 2020, p. 131). There is no doubt that this fraudulent form of internship, which only appears to be completed on paper, has no meaning in the literature.

Internship provides various benefits for interns, places of internship and institutions that require internships. The benefits to the intern may include communicating with the staff and customers of the organization (Duran & Dolmacı, 2017, p. 257), experiencing the profession before entering the profession (Yücekaya et al., 2016, p. 235), understanding the realities of the profession that are not covered in textbooks, improving employability, facilitating the transition from school life to professional life, and gaining self-confidence. The benefits to the organization where the internship is done may include finding employable individuals easily, evaluating potential employees in without risk, reducing labour costs (Demir & Demir, 2014, p. 31) and improving employee motivation. As for the benefits that internship provides to the organization, these may include organizing education programs with the feedback received from interns, supplying more competent graduates to the job market, making it easier for graduates to find a job, providing interns with services that cannot be offered during their academic life, and keeping up-to-date with current developments in business life (Dost & Bilgin, 2020, pp. 127-129).

Internship is the period during which interns are introduced to the profession in which they may be employed in the future. In this period, the intern forms their initial opinions about the profession (Pelit & Güçer, 2006, p. 140). Interns find the opportunity to learn about and use the technical tools which they will use in the future to practice their profession (Erden & Gök, 2017, p. 45). They acquire a certain social network related to their profession (Kara & Demir, 2018, p. 102).

Interns gain professional experience through internship (Çiftçi et al., 2013, p. 165). They get to a turning point related to their career choice (Akay & Şittak, 2019, p. 762). They can see whether the profession suits them or not. They can show their internship as a reference in their resume (Olcaç et al., 2015, p. 325). They also develop work ethics and work discipline (İşleyen, 2019, p. 4).

The first place where interns take responsibility in their professional careers is the organizations where they do their internship. Internship contributes to the intern's self-confidence, happiness and sense of professional belonging (Bostancı, 2011, p. 56). The intern achieves personal development through the internship (Çiftçi et al., 2013, p. 173).

Internship is essential for interns to be able to compare theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge and to adapt to business life (Karacan & Karacan, 2004, p. 174). It allows for easier adaptation to business life and provides the opportunity to apply academic competencies in business life

(Kayakuş et al., 2017). In this respect, it is important for the intern to have a mindful internship period. One of the most significant benefits of a mindful internship period is learning the competencies required in business life by experiencing them first hand (Demir & Demir, 2014, p. 31).

It is obvious that internship provides valuable benefits to interns (Yazarkan & Yılmaz, 2016, p. 289) however, there are also some undesired issues experienced by interns during internship. These include the lack of sensitivity regarding the intern's adaptation to the organization and the intern's request for a change of place in the organization (Olçay et al., 2015, p. 326), the staff at the place of internship not valuing the intern by disregarding the intern (Kaysi & Aydemir, 2018, p. 128), the intern's inability to access sufficient information and documents at the place of internship (Duran & Dolmacı, 2017, p. 265), and the intern's inability to do the internship for a longer period (Uysal & Savaş, 2021, p. 1673).

Recently, there has been a tendency to initiate internship programs in public administration departments of faculties of economic and administrative sciences at universities. Aksaray University's Department of Political Science and Public Administration also started an optional internship program for junior students. For the first time, ten students completed their internship as part of this program. Since this practice is new in public administration education, there is a gap in the literature. The purpose of the present study, which is intended to fill this gap, is to explore the benefits of internship according to the views of the students of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration in Aksaray. A qualitative case design and the descriptive method were used to this end. Seven out of ten students who had completed their internship were the participants of the study. The Maxqda 2020 software was used to analyse the collected data.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature revealed that there are studies on topics similar to the that of the present study. The first of these studies is a survey on the issues experienced by interns published by Kozak and Okumuş in 1991. In 2011, Bostancı conducted a study on the internships completed by local government program students in municipalities. In 2013, Çiftçi et al. conducted a content analysis of the internships completed by the students of the Office Management and Executive Assistant Training Program based on the example of Atabey Vocational High School.

In 2017, Hora and colleagues on “What do we know about the impact of internships on student outcomes?” reviews the present literature work and current practices. In 2018, Kara and Demir investigated the views of students in the Department of Banking, Finance and Insurance on internship based on the example of Gevaş Vocational High School. Again in 2018, Yalçinkaya and Saydam's study revealed the impact of internship processes on students'

professional expectations. In 2019, İşleyen examined the changes caused by internship on FEAS students at Van Yüzüncü Yıl University.

In 2020, Dost and Bilgin conducted a study to reveal the value of gaining experience through internship in the labour market, to find an answer to the question of whether completing an internship makes it easier to be employed, to determine whether the employment start times of those who completed an internship show significant differences compared to those who did not complete an internship, and to evaluate the opinions of those who completed an internship regarding internship. There are other similar studies and other researchers in the literature on the subject of the present study. Table 1 shows these studies.

Table 1. Studies with Similar Subjects to the Present Study and Their Researchers

Studies with Similar Subjects	Researchers
Master's theses and doctoral dissertations	Afşin (1988), Üte (1990), Dağlı (1991), Tuncer (1993), Aydın (1994), Ayar (1996), Bozkurt (1998), Avşar (1999), Koçer (1999), Balbay (2000), Bizati (2001), Mehmetoğlu (2002), Aydoğan (2002), Korkmaz (2003), Şahin (2004), Öztürk (2004), Gören (2005), Çelik (2005), Turgay (2005), Parlak (2005), Bila (2006), Çelik (2006), Metin (2006), Keskin (2007), Kızıldağ (2007), Sarı (2007), Soltay (2007), Candemir (2010), Demir (2010), Tutan (2010), Türkan (2010), Yener (2011), Hoş (2012), Türkseven (2012), Raştana (2012), Genç (2013), Yazıt (2013), Ekmen (2014), Başçı (2015), Karsli (2015), Soyumgürbüz (2015), Sürme (2015), Çeber (2016), Koçak (2016), Kulaksız (2016), Yortanlı (2016), Alnajjar (2017), Mahmoudi (2017), Uğurlu (2017), Balıkcı (2018), Özkan (2018), Özdemir (2018), Üstün (2018), Bayer (2019), Durmaz (2019), Gedik (2019), Özdemir (2019), Görgülüoğlu (2019), Sertkaya (2019), Yıldırım (2019), Alp (2020), Demir (2020), Dinçer (2020), Bekar (2021), Çekok (2021), Demir (2021), Erden (2021), Kale (2021), Kıyıcı (2021), Süvari (2021), Şen (2021), Takmaz (2021), Usta (2021), Kurnaz (2022).
Articles	Karacan & Karacan (2004), Çetin (2005), Uzay (2005), Pelit & Güçer (2006), Emir et al. (2008), Emir et al. (2010), Güzel (2010), Çetinkaya & Kurşun (2011), Kaplanoğlu (2014), Demir & Demir (2015), Kaya et al. (2015), Olcay et al. (2015), Titrek et al. (2015), Chou et al. (2016), Chou et al. (2017), Ibrahim et al. (2016), Korucu (2016), Mohammed & Rashid (2016), Yazarkan & Yılmaz (2016), Yücekaya et al. (2016), Duran & Dolmacı (2017), Erden & Gök (2017), Karaman et al. (2017), Kayakuş et al. (2017), Kraiem et al. (2017), Olcay et al. (2017), Akay et al. (2018), Akın (2018), Dalkılıç & Ebeoğluligil (2018), Kaysi & Aydemir (2018), Temizkan & Arı (2018), Yıldırım et al. (2018), Akay & Şittak (2019), Çokal et al. (2019), Koçak et al. (2019), Oğuz & Ustasıleyman (2019), Öztürk & Kırac (2019), Arslanbaş (2020), Boyraz (2020), Coşkun & Gürer (2020), İzadpanah et al. (2020), Nalçakan (2020), Kılıç et al. (2021), Koska et al. (2021), Parlak & Atik (2021), Pek (2021), Uysal & Savaş (2021), Yavaş et al. (2021), Aydın & Karasu (2022), Mon et al. (2023).

These studies with a similar subject to the present study note that interns have difficulties in finding an internship and that the wages paid to them are insufficient (Kaplanoğlu, 2014, p. 281). It was found that approximately 83%

of the interns were able to find an internship on their own or with the help of their family members (Türkseven, 2012, p. 122). It was also found that organizations that can be used as places of internship are reluctant to hire interns (Kayakuş et al., 2017, p. 135). It was revealed that interns wanted to receive training that introduces them to the profession before starting their internship (Yazarkan & Yılmaz, 2016, p. 294).

In other studies, it was found that there was a significant difference between the pre-internship period and the post-internship period. It was noted that interns developed self-confidence after the internship and realized the meaning of the department they studied in life (İşleyen, 2019, p. 9). It was revealed that interns expect attention and appreciation from the members of the profession in their place of internship and they want to perform tasks other than routine office activities (Uzay, 2005, p. 78).

Other researchers found that there was no significant difference between the internship experiences of male and female interns. It was concluded that the wishes of both groups were similar in their career choices (Akay & Şittak, 2019, p. 775). No statistically significant difference was found between the opinions of interns about internship training by their gender and the type of business they completed their internship (Olçay et al., 2015, p. 330).

Some other researchers suggested that theoretical courses should be associated with practice that internships should be conducted in a controlled manner and that students who are to do internships should be informed in advance. It was understood that internships enabled interns to make suggestions about which courses they benefited less from and which ones they benefited more from during their internships, which courses should be added or removed from the education plans, or which course topics should be added to or removed from the relevant course's content. It was suggested that the education plans developed based on these suggestions could increase the likelihood of students being employed in the industry after graduation (Çetin, 2005, pp. 167-168). No study investigating the same topic with the present study was found in the literature review

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In line with the purpose of the study, the qualitative research method was used to reveal the benefits of internship according to the students of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration. For this, permission was obtained from Aksaray University Human Research Ethics Committee with the protocol number 2022/07-13 on 25.10.2022.

2.1. Research Design

The study was conducted using the single case study design, which is a qualitative research approach. Case study design is a qualitative research approach in which a specific situation within a limited time of life is revealed

by processing, thematizing and describing the data collected with the help of data collection tools in detail and in depth (Subaşı & Okumuş, 2017, p. 420). In the case design, a structured situation with defined boundaries is explored by describing it in depth (Merriam, 2018). In this case study, the benefits of internship were identified based on the views of the participants.

2.2. Study Participants

The study included seven students out of ten students who had participated in and completed their internship as part of the newly introduced internship program at the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Aksaray University. The participants were selected through typical case sampling, which is one of the purposive sampling methods used in qualitative research design. Typical case sampling is a type of sampling used to show specific, ordinary, normal or average situations (Baltacı, 2018, p. 246). There is no generally accepted criterion for sample size in terms of validity and reliability in qualitative research. Rather than the number of participants, the degree to which the result reflects the object of study determines the validity and reliability of said study (Tutar, 2022, p. 120).

It was aimed with the purposive sampling method that the students who would contribute to the study with their views would reflect different situations. The students were contacted and their voluntary participation was ensured as part of the research process. The data were collected through interviews with the participants. Table 2 provides information about the participants.

Table 2. Personal Information of the Students Participating in the Study

Participant	Gender	Age	Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)	Grade
P1	Female	22	3.32	4
P2	Female	23	3.26	4
P3	Male	26	3.92	4
P4	Female	23	3.23	4
P5	Male	22	3.19	4
P6	Female	21	3.26	4
P7	Female	24	3.13	4

2.2. Data Collection Process

Observations, interviews and document analysis were used as data collection tools. Interview is the activity of understanding the feelings and thoughts of the participants of the study on a certain subject. Its main purpose is to try to understand the participant's point of view. Thus, an attempt is made

to understand the thoughts, attitudes, experiences and intentions of the participants on the subject under investigation (Karataş, 2017, pp. 76-77).

Semi-structured interview questions were asked in the interviews with the participants. The reason for using semi-structured interview questions is to analyse the answers of the participants in depth and to establish cause-effect relationships.

The interview form included questions such as “Why did you want to do an internship?”; “What did you learn during your internship? Can you explain what you gained?”; “Was there any difference between what you learned at school and what you learned at the internship, can you compare them?” and “Are there any courses or subjects that you think should be included in the curriculum during or after your internship, can you discuss them?” The opinions of the participants were collected with the research questions asked. Interviews were conducted with the participants on a previously designated day and time. Each of the participants gave consent for the opinions they expressed in the interview to be used in this research. Aksaray University Ethics Committee also approved the research.

2.2. Data Analysis

The opinions received from the participants were summarized and transferred to the Maxqda 2022 software. Open, axial and selective coding was performed using the software. The codes were identified by using the participants' opinions in the form of sentences. The categories were identified by evaluating the similarities and differences between the codes. The categories were created with an inductive approach. The categories were compared and themes were revealed through holistic review.

Descriptive and contextual analysis was performed with the constant comparison technique in the analysis of the data. Descriptions were frequently made with direct quotations from the participants in order to accurately reflect their views. In the quotations, the same or similar views and similar discourses of the participants were incorporated into the research in line with the purpose of the study.

3. FINDINGS

Internship Guidelines of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences of Aksaray University defines internship as “Applied works to be carried out by the students within the boundaries of the country in order for them to have work experience to enhance their theoretical knowledge and professional competencies, to familiarize with and experience the principles of functioning and organizational structures of public and private sector organizations, to have preliminary knowledge to help them choose their field of work in the post-graduation period, to learn about their responsibilities, employee-employer relations, organization, production and occupational safety systems in the organizations where they will be employed in the post-

graduation period” (AUFEAS Internship Guidelines, 2023, p. 2). According to the students who completed their internship in compliance with the internship guidelines, the benefits of internship are grouped under two themes. The first theme is “Benefits of internship for students” and the second one is “Benefits of internship for the faculty”.

3.1. Benefits of Internship for Students

The benefits of internship for students fall into six categories as follows:

- 1) Finding opportunities for personal development;
- 2) Taking responsibility;
- 3) Building competence;
- 4) Experiencing the profession;
- 5) Taking a career step;
- 6) Impact on employment.

3.1.1. Finding Opportunities for Personal Development

In the finding opportunities for personal development category, P1 explained that when she started her internship, she was told that she could do her internship in a single department, the municipal police directorate, but when she said that she would like to do her internship in other departments, she was told that they would reconsider the situation after she spent the first week in that department. After stating that in the first week in that department, each and every staff member attended to their own work and that she was not assigned any task. She explained her situation at that time as “I was just standing idle most of the time”. P1 described her situation during the first week saying “I felt a little bit like I was left out”. Continuing her statement, P1 stressed that as of the second week of the internship, she started to see contributions to her personal development and that personal development was an important reason why she wanted to do an internship in the first place. P1 believed that what she learned during the internship will definitely benefit her in one way or another while making decisions about what she wants to do in the future.

P4 stated that one of the reasons why she did the internship was to gain personal experience and that she learned how to communicate effectively during her internship. P2 said that thanks to the internship, she found the opportunity to compare her school life with real life and saw her shortcomings. Similarly, while expressing similar thoughts, P3 emphasized that thanks to the internship, he had the opportunity to meet, talk and chat with the deputy governors at the provincial governorship where he did his internship, and this event was important for him and he considered this as one of the advantages of the internship.

As a student who completed an internship both as part of the Presidential Human Resources Office Career Gate National Internship Program and at a separate institution, P2 believed that there were differences

between these two internships. P2, P5, P6, P7 enjoyed her internship as part of the Presidential Human Resources Office Career Gate National Internship Program more. P4 also stated that if she is accepted for an internship in the Presidential Human Resources Office Career Gate National Internship Program, she would like to do an internship there as well, because she would have the opportunity to get to learn about the profession more since that internship is done in governorships.

In this category, the participants mentioned benefits such as being able to communicate effectively, comparing school life with working life, realizing their own shortcomings, and meeting competent people in their profession. When the participants compared the internship as part of the faculty's program with the internship as part of the Presidential Human Resources Office Career Gate National Internship Program, they liked the latter more.

3.1.2. Taking Responsibility

In the taking responsibility category, P1 reported that she was assigned to the human resources unit in the third week of her internship based on the responsibilities she took in the organization where she did her internship, and that two other students continued their internship in that unit. P5, P6, P7 stated that they had a hard time finding an internship place. P2 said that she had a lot of difficulty in finding a place of internship that the internship taught her to take responsibility, that she realized that no matter what the job is, it requires "doing it right" and thus she learned responsibility.

In this category, P4 explained that she completed his high school education at a vocational high school, that she did an internship while she was in high school and that she realized how useful internship was while she was in high school, therefore, she also wanted to do an internship as part of her higher education and saw it as an opportunity. Moreover, P4 explained that she applied to the Presidential Human Resources Office Career Gate National Internship Program, but she was not approved for an internship there, that she will apply again and seek approval because that internship is a more comprehensive program since it is conducted at governorships.

Similarly, P1 described one of the reasons for doing an internship as "taking responsibility". She noted that during her internship, a civil servant assigned her the responsibility of transcribing the audio and video recordings of the parliamentary meeting by allocating a computer to her. She transcribed the audio and video recordings of the meeting and transferred the text to a computer and then she and the civil servant prepared a summary of the parliamentary resolution.

P1 also mentioned that a civil servant informed her about the council meeting, that they wrote down the resolutions together based on the requests in the meeting, that they printed them out, had a copy signed by the members attending the meeting and sent them to the directorate, and that this made her happy, describing the time she spent in the clerical office that week as "a

productive and good week”. She said that she and some of the staff members were sent to the archive where the personnel files were kept, and they organized the archive by sorting and rearranging a room full of files on dirty shelves. She adds that she was given at least the filing tasks so that she would not be idle during her internship, but she was not instructed about the functioning of the department, she was also given the responsibility of figuring out which documents belonged to which files, and removing documents from old files and putting them into new files.

In addition, P1, P5, P6, P7 noted that after the internship, they were glad to have done such an internship. P1 said that the staff helped her a lot, only a few staff members in a few units could not help her because they were too busy with their own work. P1 stated that the staff who tried to help her assumed that she, as a student doing her internship, knew what they were telling her, and that she had to make a greater effort to learn more, and that the staff, seeing her effort, helped her more. In this regard, P1 believed that it would be more helpful if the staff trying to help would explain each aspect of the subject in detail and one by one.

In this category, the students felt that they benefited from taking on various responsibilities in their place of internship and fulfilling these responsibilities.

3.1.3. Building Competence

In the building competence category P5, P6, P7 as well as P4 have the same opinion. P4 expressed her opinion that the internship contributed to her knowledge, skills, experience and conduct by saying, “I continued the internship because I thought it was for my own benefit. What we learned at school and how things work at my place of internship were not the same; for example, there was favouritism. She gives an example of this situation by explaining that when someone whom a staff member knows comes to receive a service, that staff member takes care of it immediately by making phone calls to certain people within the organization, whereas when someone whom that staff member does not know comes to receive the same service, that staff member does not provide the necessary information to that person, and she expressed how that staff member serves that person by saying, “They are forced to go back and forth for hours, and staff members do not give the necessary information”.

P3 said, “I was actually in the provincial clerical office, they originally assigned me to the human resources department, but I went to the accounting department, I went to the record office, I was constantly going back and forth asking for work, I did a lot of work in this way”. He stated that in the record office, he learned how to figure out which documents would be sent to the governor and which to the deputy governor through the system and how to send them.

P3 also said that during his internship, he first learned how personnel files were prepared in the archive, how leave procedures were performed, how they were recorded in the system, and how they were filed. He said that it caught his attention that these records were made in three different ways, both in the system, in an excel file and in the personnel file, and he described his experience as “They always make certain of things, they are always on the safe side”. He explained that he saw how personnel travel allowances were processed, worked on preparing indexes for archive files, learned how to enter wage adjustments and clothing allowances into the system, and assisted with their processing.

P2 explained that in the first two days after she was accepted for the internship, she was introduced to the departments of the municipality, she met the deputy mayor, the mayor directed her to do her internship in the human resources management department and told her that she could observe any department she wished in order to see how each department functioned.

In the clerical office, which was one of the departments she was assigned to as an intern, P2 said that she was not shown classified correspondences, but that it was in this department that she learned how citizens could submit their complaints to the municipality through petitions. She explained that she learned how the leaves of the staff members were recorded in the system, that the wage of each staff member was calculated differently in the accounting department, that she was not allowed to perform certain tasks in some departments of the municipality, but that she was allowed to watch the tasks being performed and that she was given answers to the questions she asked.

“I realized that the municipality staff did not do their jobs according to the legislation,” said P2, adding that some tasks were not performed as they were taught at school, and that when she asked why they were not performed as they were supposed to be performed as she had learned at the faculty, she was often told that the rules were sometimes “stretched” due to the difference between theory and practice.

In addition to this internship, P2 said that she also did a 20-working day internship at the provincial governorship as part of the Presidential Human Resources Office Career Gate National Internship Program, and points out that her internship there was more productive. P2 said about her internship at the provincial governorship: “It was more productive there. I felt that I belonged there more. I was able to personally observe the units and departments and I was able to feel that I belonged there more.” K5, K6 and K7 evaluated their internships in the Presidential Human Resources Office Career Door National Internship Program as unproductive.

P2 explained that she had the opportunity to speak with the governor, they even assigned her as a secretary to the deputy governor and told her, “You are studying in this field, try it out, get a feel of the place, let's see if you are fit for it, is your soul fit for it, is your conscience fit for it”, and underlines that she was very satisfied with her experience there.

P2 emphasized that she wishes to be able to pursue her studies properly and to be productive when she becomes a civil servant in the future. She pointed out that in the places where she did her internship, she observed that the staff members did their jobs because they were required to do so, just to get by, in a sense, as a matter of conscience.

Based on these opinions, we can conclude that students who did an internship found the opportunity to add knowledge, skills, experience and conduct which cannot be acquired through the courses given at the faculty, but they must possess, to their competencies through internship.

In this category, the participants mentioned that realizing what they learned at school and what they observed in their place of internship were different, the knowledge, skills and experiences they acquired about the functioning of the institutions where they did their internship, learning to use the technological systems used by the institution in the service provision, understanding how accounting records are kept, and observing the conduct of the staff in service provision increased their competence level.

3.1.4. Experiencing the Profession

Concerning the experiencing the profession category, P1 considered one of the reasons why she was inclined to do an internship as experiencing the profession in real life. She explained that she chose to do an internship in order to see and learn the work done in different departments and units in the institution where she did her internship, to realize her own potential, to think about what she experienced in the internship environment in order to decide what she wants to do in future.

P2 stated that she chose to do an internship with the idea that the internship would contribute to her ideal of doing her job properly, and that during her internship, she experienced things that she did not and could not experience in school, and said, "I realized that it is not as easy as just writing what is in the textbook and passing the exam and sitting at a desk, listening lectures. The internship was very helpful for me. I realized that I can do it when I start working in the future." P3 also stated that he decided to do an internship to see whether he was ready for the job and that he would like to do an internship at a private company in addition to his internship at a public institution.

In this category, P4 stated that while one of the staff members who is authorized and tasked to do a job provides the expected service to people, another who is authorized and tasked to do the same job avoids work as much as possible, that this is unfair and that this is not checked and supervised by superiors. She believed that there are deficiencies and disruptions in the services provided to the public because the relations between the staff and the functioning of the institution are not properly structured.

P4 expressed her opinion that the requests of the staff members to streamline the work are not taken into consideration by their superiors with

the sentences “They do not pay much attention to what the staff member said” and “They generally do not value what the lower-level units say too much”.

In addition, P4 explained that during her internship, managers did not or could not supervise the staff, which led to problems, and that in superior-subordinate relations, superiors gave some of the work that they could do themselves to their subordinates, and that staff members tended to leave some of the tasks to each other. While stating that some units do not provide solutions for the problems of citizens, she described the situation she observed about the performance of tasks by saying “They usually do things in a sloppy manner”. For this reason, P4 considered the lack of communication during the performance of the job as an important problem and suggested that the senior manager should hold a meeting with each unit at least once a month to solve this problem.

P5, P6, P7 agree with other participants about the category of experiencing the profession. In this category, students stated that they had the opportunity to experience the profession in real life, realize their potential in the profession, form an idea about which profession to choose, acquire some of the professional knowledge that cannot be acquired at school, and observe the professional relations among the members of the profession.

3.1.5. Taking a Career Step

In the taking a career step category, P4 stated that one of her reasons for doing an internship was that she wanted her internship to be included in her resume. P1 described one of the reasons for choosing to do an internship as taking a career step by saying “I thought that internship would be a small simulation of my career”. In this context, she underlines that she wanted to do an internship because she believed that internship would provide a great advantage for her career in working life.

P2 thinks that an internship can help the intern to figure out whether they are suited for the profession or not. She believed that the internship would enable her to make accurate decisions about which elective courses her department at the faculty offers she should choose for her career planning.

P3 pointed out that the internship provided him with an opportunity to see whether he would be able to work in the public sector. He noted that during the internship, he observed that the provision of services was always based on legislation, and that sometimes it was as if there was such a law, and that this situation should be taken into account and necessary courses should be included in the curriculum of his department at the faculty. In his opinion, by choosing the elective courses that are considered necessary, one can graduate better equipped and progress in one's desired career plan. According to P3, there are many elective courses at the school, but it is not possible to choose most of these courses because they are not open for selection and he felt this shortcoming during his internship.

Concerning taking a career step, “Doing an internship is a really important advantage to gain work experience” according to P1. Being aware of this advantage, she stated without hesitation that she would do another internship if she had the opportunity, even after completing a two-week internship at the district governorship and an additional two-week internship at the provincial governorship. “It was really nice to see different environments, to see institutions, it was really nice, I had good experiences,” said P1, emphasizing her satisfaction by stating that she would do an internship again if she could. Similar to P1, P2 is also glad that she did her internship. P2 said, “I am very glad that I did it, it was a good thing that I did it.” She also stated that she was able to see her shortcomings and realized what she needed to do.

In addition, P1 pointed out that what she learned during her internship contributed to her life, even if not to her career. For example, she stated that if she had a job related to the organization where she did her internship, she would have learned how to do that job in that organization. She underlines that she did her internship as part of both the Presidential Human Resources Office Career Gateway National Internship Program and the faculty's internship program, but they were very different from each other; therefore, it would be useful to do both internships.

In the category of taking a career step, P5, P6 and P7 have the same opinion as other participants. In this category, the participants stated that they intended to add the internship to their resumes, that they considered the internship as a simulation of their career in the profession, that the courses in the curriculum related to their future careers would affect their course selection, and that they gained a perspective to graduate from the faculty better equipped.

3.1.6. Impact on Employment

In the impact on employment category, P3 stated that experience is important for employment, that completing an internship is an important way to gain experience during one's school life, and that he thinks that the internship he completed will contribute to deciding the institution where he wants to be employed. He stated that thanks to the internship, he both experienced the institution where he could be employed and gained insights about his own situation from the perspective of the staff of the institution during the internship. With a similar approach, P1 stated that the internship has great value for students in terms of understanding how things work in business life.

In this category, after saying that she noticed that some of the staff in the municipal institution were employed even though they were primary and secondary school graduates because they were relatives of martyrs, and that she did not find this situation upsetting, and that she witnessed that there were staff in the institution who really did their job properly with the competence

they had, and she provides an assessment of the employment situation at the institution where she did her internship by saying “I saw that there were staff members who were not in the position they were in because of the education they had received or the diploma they had.”

On the same subject, P1 contemplatively explained that during her internship, she saw that the staff of the institution were mostly distance education graduates and that she learned that such staff members, after becoming civil servants, continued their education and training while doing their jobs and graduated from distance education undergraduate programs.

In the impact on employment category, P5, P6 and P7 agree with other participants. In this category, the participants noted that the internship played an important role in gaining experience for employment, was useful in determining the institutions where they could be employed, made them aware of the competencies of those employed in the profession and helped them understand their status in the profession.

3.2. Benefits of Internship for Faculty

The benefits of internship for faculty fall into two categories: “Benefits of internship for the department” and “Benefits of internship for the internship guidelines”.

3.2.1. Benefits of Internship for the Department

Concerning the benefits of internship for the department, P2 said that she first applied to the district governorship to do her internship, but because she was asked implicit questions about her political leaning, she decided not to do her internship there and instead applied to the municipality. She explained that the municipality accepted her for an internship upon her application, but she was told that there was no department in the municipality where she could work in her field of study. In response to this statement from the municipality, P2 said that the municipality accepted her for an internship based on her insistence and determination to do an internship and after she told the official who would admit her for an internship at the municipality that she had taken local governments and public personnel management courses in her department at the faculty.

P1 said that in the institution where she did her internship, the staff were very busy due to their workload and each staff member worked very intensively. For this reason, P1 suggested that a unit should be established in such institutions to attend and provide guidance to students who are there to do their internships. In her opinion, such a unit would allow students to have more productive internships.

As one of her opinions at the end of her internship, P2 said, “I would definitely like to take a course on communication and understanding people as part of my studies.” P2 believed that such a course should be taught at school. She stated that during her internship, she noticed that there were

problems in communication between the municipality staff and the public, and for this reason, she suggested that a course such as “Public Relations” should be taught as a compulsory course at school. Also, K5 and K6 suggested that a course such as “Protocol Management” and “Correspondence Techniques” should be added to the department lesson plan.

P2 emphasized that at the time of her internship application, the human resources manager of the institution told her “You cannot do an internship here, you are not suited for this place, you can just stop by once in a while”, but when she told them “That is not acceptable, I want to do my internship properly” and when the human resources manager saw her determination, she was able to start her internship. P2 summarizes the significance of what she learned during her internship with the sentence “Not everything can be learned from textbooks, you have to go and breathe the air of that place, you have to be in that environment, and you have to learn how things work.” With this opinion, P2 supports the idea that it is absolutely necessary to provide internship opportunities for students of the department. On the other hand, P2 said “It was not a perfect internship, there were some shortcomings”. Similarly, K2 strongly recommends doing an internship to her friends by saying “I would definitely want them to see that environment”.

P3 noted that during his internship, he noticed that most of the civil servants there did not know their rights under the Law No. 657 on Civil Servants. In his opinion, what is taught in the accounting courses he had taken at school has nothing to do with the accounting practices of the institution where he did his internship. For this reason, he believed that a course such as “Public Accounting”, which explains the accounting practices in public institutions, should be included in the curriculum of the department he is studying. Similarly, as an intern, P1 suggested that “a course on correspondence techniques should be included” in the curriculum of her department.

In one of the statements, she used to explain her views, P4 said, “We don an internship as an applied program, I think we should take it as a course” and suggested that theoretical information about the internship should be given before doing the internship. In her opinion, “It should be explained in that course how to establish a good relationship, how to communicate and how to provide services” and students who will do an internship should have taken said course or another similar course related to communication and public relations. P4 also pointed out that students who will do an internship should be told what rights citizens have in relation to the services provided by the institution in which students will do their internship.

Again, P4 pointed out with the sentence “Most people did not show up for the internship” that some students from various departments of other universities in the institution where she did her internship faked their internships, since there was an attendance requirement. In addition, P4 underlines that during the internship, their department at the faculty should be in constant communication with the place of internship.

In this category, the participants provided feedback on the difficulties in finding a place for internship, the need to establish a unit in places of internship that will be in constant communication with the interns and the faculty, the need to add courses on communication, public relations, public accounting, correspondence techniques, theoretical internship to the department's curriculum, making internship compulsory in the department, and providing detailed information to students about the services offered in their place of internship.

3.2.2. Benefits of Internship for the Internship Guidelines

According to P3, the faculty's internship guidelines stipulate that the internship report must be written according to the template provided by the faculty's internship committee, but there is no such template provided by the faculty's internship committee. For this reason, after completing her internship, P3 had difficulties with how the report must be written. She said that she solved this problem on her own by using templates provided by other universities. P3 pointed out that in order to overcome this problem, a certain "sample internship report" template should be prepared and included in the guidelines.

On the other hand, P3 stated that according to the internship rules of the faculty, the internship file must be submitted to the faculty within 3 days after the end of the internship and this "3-day period" is very short. P3 expressed that he had difficulty in submitting the internship file to the faculty in this short period of time, and therefore this period should be extended in order to prevent other students from experiencing the same difficulty in the future. P3 suggested that this period should be at least "7 days". On the same issue, P4 emphasized that the internship rules stipulate that the letter of commencement of the internship must be submitted to the faculty "within 3 days", but there is no indication of how the document in question should be delivered to the faculty. Again, P4 stated that there is no information on how to write the internship report in the guidelines.

According to P1, the current internship period of 20 working days is too short. It is not possible to observe every unit in the relevant institution or organization and understand its functioning during the internship. Similarly, P4 did an internship for 20 working days and thinks that this period is not enough for an internship. With the sentence "There were areas of improvement for me", P4 emphasized again that the internship period of 20 working days was not sufficient for her. P2 also underlines the shortness of the internship period. "I would definitely want the internship to be longer than 20 working days", P2 pointed out that 20 working days is a short period of time and suggested that the internship should be at least 30 working days. K6 and K7 also have the same opinion.

The current internship guidelines do not allow students of the faculty to do hybrid internships. According to P3, considering the benefits of internship

for students, it would be reasonable and fitting for the faculty to allow hybrid internships with an amendment to be made in the guidelines. In this sense, P3 explained in a sad and contemplative manner that while he had the opportunity to do such a hybrid internship, he could not do the internship in question because he was not allowed to do it since there was no provision in the guidelines for such permission, whereas if he had done the internship in question, he could have been employed in that organization as soon as he graduated, but he missed that opportunity. Similarly, P4 expressed her wish that this type of internship should be allowed in the guidelines in the future, saying “I would like hybrid internship to be possible”.

After pointing out that the requirement in the internship guidelines that the internship must be done in the third year is appropriate because the internship would not be productive in the fourth year with the stress of the final exams, P4 suggested that the duration of the internship should be increased. Furthermore, according to P4, it should be possible to do the internship in the first, second and third years during the summer vacation for periods of twenty days each. In this regard, P2, who stated that the internship should be done in the second year, said, “I would not have wanted to do the internship in my last year, I would definitely not want that.” P2 suggested that the guidelines should be amended so that internship can be done in first, second and third year, and not the fourth year. According to P1, if internship could be done in every year, students would be able to plan their careers more accurately.

Stating that she wrote a graduation thesis and did an internship at the same time, P2 said, “If I had to choose between a graduation thesis and an internship, I would choose the internship” and strongly recommends that internships be made compulsory. “I wish it was compulsory, I wish the school had forced me to do an internship,” said P2, suggesting that the internship, which is “optional” according to the internship guidelines, should be “compulsory”.

In this category, as the benefits of internship for the faculty's internship guidelines, the participants suggested adding an internship report template to the internship guidelines, increasing the time period for the internship file to be submitted to the faculty from 3 days to 7 days, and adding a provision to the internship guidelines on how to submit the internship file to the faculty, increasing the internship period from 20 to 30 working days, introducing a rule of twenty days of internship during the summer vacation in all years except the fourth year, allowing hybrid internships in the internship guidelines, and requiring each student to do at least one internship in the guidelines.

Conclusion

In the present study, the benefits of internship were revealed in two themes according to the opinions of the students of the Political Science and

Public Administration Department who completed their internship. The first theme is “Benefits of internship for students” and the second one is “Benefits of internship for the faculty”.

The benefits of internship for students fell into six categories as follows: “Finding opportunities for personal development”, “Taking responsibility”, “Building competence”, “Experiencing the profession”, “Taking a career step” and “Impact on employment”.

In the finding opportunities for personal development category, the participants mentioned benefits such as being able to communicate effectively, comparing school life with working life, realizing their own shortcomings, and meeting competent people in their profession. When the participants compared the internship as part of the faculty's program with the internship as part of the Presidential Human Resources Office Career Gate National Internship Program, they liked the latter more.

In the taking responsibility category, the students felt that they benefited from taking on various responsibilities in their place of internship and fulfilling these responsibilities. In the building competence category, the participants mentioned that realizing what they learned at school and what they observed in their place of internship were different, the knowledge, skills and experiences they acquired about the functioning of the institutions where they did their internship, learning to use the technological systems used by the institution in the service provision, understanding how accounting records are kept, and observing the conduct of the staff in service provision increased their competence level.

In the experiencing the profession category, students stated that they had the opportunity to experience the profession in real life, realize their potential in the profession, form an idea about which profession to choose, acquire some of the professional knowledge that cannot be acquired at school, and observe the professional relations among the members of the profession.

In the taking a career step category, the participants stated that they intended to add the internship to their resumes, that they considered the internship as a simulation of their career in the profession, that the courses in the curriculum related to their future careers would affect their course selection, and that they gained a perspective to graduate from the faculty better equipped.

In the impact on employment category, the participants noted that the internship played an important role in gaining experience for employment, was useful in determining the institutions where they could be employed, made them aware of the competencies of those employed in the profession and helped them understand their status in the profession.

There were two categories under the theme of the benefits of internship for the faculty: the benefits of internship for the department and the benefits of internship for the internship guidelines. As the benefits of internship for the department, the participants provided feedback on the difficulties in finding a place for internship, the need to establish a unit in places of internship that

will be in constant communication with the interns and the faculty, the need to add courses on communication, public relations, public accounting, correspondence techniques, theoretical internship to the department's curriculum, making internship compulsory in the department, and providing detailed information to students about the services offered in their place of internship.

As the benefits of internship for the faculty's internship guidelines, the participants suggested adding an internship report template to the internship guidelines, increasing the time period for the internship file to be submitted to the faculty from 3 days to 7 days, and adding a provision to the internship guidelines on how to submit the internship file to the faculty, increasing the internship period from 20 to 30 working days, introducing a rule of twenty days of internship during the summer vacation in all years except the fourth year, allowing hybrid internships in the internship guidelines, and requiring each student to do at least one internship in the guidelines.

Instead of making internships compulsory and requiring internships during the summer vacation of each year, it would be appropriate to introduce the requirement of a 30-work day compulsory internship once during the summer vacation of any of year except the fourth year.

Considering all these benefits, it is understood that institutions seem to be reluctant to accept interns, but on the other hand, students are quite satisfied with their internships. Given the high satisfaction of the students with their internships, directing students to voluntary work is also an option.

On the other hand, internship protocols should be signed between organizations that will accept students for internship and the educational institution, and students should be required to do their internships in organizations with the signed an internship protocol. Institutions and organizations that will open their doors to interns can announce this on their websites and provide opportunities for students looking for internships. Organizations can also prepare a program for students and publish this program on the internet.

Finally, a comparison of the results of the study with the literature shows that the findings of the study are consistent with publications by Karacan & Karacan (2004), Pelit & Güçer (2006), Bostancı (2011), Çiftçi et al. (2013), Demir & Demir (2014), Olcay et al. (2015), Yazarkan & Yılmaz (2016), Erden & Gök (2017), Kayakuş et al. (2017), Kara & Demir (2018), İşleyen (2019) ve Akay & Şittak (2019). It can be suggested that future studies on the difficulties and problems experienced by political science and public administration students during internships will contribute to filling the gap in the literature.

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