Experience of Makerere University Students who did Either Virtual or Physical Internship

Gloria Natuhwera

20/U/11295/EVE

Ninsiima Ameria

20/U/11672/PS

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Declaration

We, Natuhwera Gloria and Ninsiima Ameria hereby solemnly declare to the best of our knowledge that this thesis is our original work except where otherwise acknowledged.

Signature................................... Date...30.8.2023

Natuhwera Gloria

Signature................................... Date...30.8.2023

Ninsiima Ameria

Approval

This thesis has been approved for submission in partial fulfillment for the award of a

bachelor's degree in community psychology of Makerere University

Signature .... Date....35/08/2023...............................

Supervisor..

Dedication

To God almighty our Creator, our strong pillar, our source of inspiration, wisdom, knowledge and understanding, he has been the source of our strength through this program and on his wings only have we soared.

NATUHWERA GLORIA

To my mentor Tony Okello Onying who laid a good foundation in my Journey of success, Thank you for sharing your life experience with me, you have always given me the motivation I need. You inspire me to work hard and dream big. I am really thankful to have a genius mentor like you. With you in my life, I never fear to try again.

And

My Guardians Ian Mwesigye and Ninsiima Christine Mwesigye who made me forget the fact that I am an orphan; you will always be called my parents forever. God has blessed me by sending you in my life, your encouragements and support have always made me believe in myself which I struggled with before having you in my life.

I have thought of what I can do to pay back of all the sacrifices you have made in my life, but it has turned out as a lie because I can't reach the very happiness that you have put on my face.

To be honest, you are just like very angels in my life who have always given me each and everything I always wished for. Your care and Dedication helped me to get rid of all the pain I had before meeting you.

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To my Aunt Bulaali Sarah who has been there for me through it all

Thanks very much for your guidance you have been more like a mother. It has not been easy, but you never gave up on me and always believed in me even when I lost hope. I will forever be grateful of you.

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We are grateful for your support and hope you keep supporting young minds like us. God bless you always.

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List of Acronym

BCP……………………………. Bachelors in community psychology

BIOP…………………………bachelor's in industrial and organizational Psychology

Abstract

This study examined the experiences of Makerere University students who did either Virtual or Physical internship. It was a qualitative study with descriptive research design. It explored the experiences, found out the experiences of Students who did either virtual or physical internship. Sample of 16 students above the age of 18 years were selected by use of purposive sampling. We collected Data by use of individual face-to-face in-depth structured interviews and analysed data thematically, Identified, examined, and interpreted common patterns according to themes that were guided by the study objectives and research questions. We took note of deviations from similar patterns and made justifications for differences found.

While conducting our study, we found out that participants interest while choosing their internship placements was mostly based on the circumstances and accessibility since they were having internship and lectures at the same time. This made those who did physical choose places near to the University or campus and those of virtual decided to do it since they would have time to do their internship and attend their lectures in time.

We therefore conclude that internship being the first working experience for the students, the university should put more time in preparing students both physically and psychologically on some of the challenges and conditions that they will find in their places of work since lack of enough preparation affects their experiences for example one of the participants had little knowledge on how to use computers which made her experience negative.

The time given for internship, (four to eight weeks) is a short time for students who are in second year to put what they have learnt in two years in practice. The university should increase the time since students need time to adjust to the working environment and start the actual training since most of the first weeks are spent in adjusting to the culture of the working environment.

Chapter One

Introduction

Background

There are 235 million students enrolled in universities globally per year (Rawpixel/shutterstock, 2023). Most of these students do academic internships at a certain time of study which varies in the period depending on the institution where the internship is being done and their university Internship policy. Some do internship for only weeks ranging from 10 to 12 weeks or even a year.

In Africa with 54 countries as of today according to United Nations official statistics, 9million students are enrolled in universities every year and of these according to the research, 44.9% (Sub Saharan Africa; tertiary education, the docs world bank, 2020) of these do academic internship during their University study time. With the biggest problem in Africa being unemployment it's important to note that most African countries see this as a chance for employment as majority students get employed in institutions where they did their internship from.

As per the report in 2020, In Uganda 110,000 students are enrolled in university every year (Education System in Uganda, 2020). The parliamentary policy supporting internship was put in place meaning it's compulsory for all university students to do internship in their second year of their study to attain their degree (http://www.parliament.go.ug, n.d.). The numbers of students doing internship being this high, many questions come to mind as 'Do these students gain anything from the internship? Should it even be kept going on or it is another thing that is done just for marks?'

Makerere being the main university in Uganda this policy is followed by all students in all courses doing an academic internship during their university time. It enrolls 36000 undergraduates both local and international students per year (Katungulu, 2017). Although

no research has been made for people to know about the experiences of these students during this time by both the university and the companies where they do this internship from. With the changing ways in the university after the lock down due to the covid-19 outbreak, the university is now having both virtual and physical internships being done by the students and the problem is no one knows how their experiences are.

Problem Statement

With all university students having to do internship during their study, the students are expected to use what they have studied in class in the working environment, gain working experiences and new knowledge from the field. With the changing ways in the university after the lock down due to the covid-19 outbreak, Universities are now adopting to both virtual and physical internships although no research has been made about the experiences of these students during this time by both the university and the companies where they do this internship.

Therefore, this makes it hard for the internship to be taken as productive or effective as expected. Knowing the experiences of these students will show the productivity and effectiveness of internship.

Purpose of the Study

To explore the experiences of students doing either virtual or physical internship at Makerere university during their second year of study

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore experiences of students who did either physical internship or virtual internship.

2. To compare experiences of physical and virtual internship

3. To analyze the views of students towards physical and virtual internship with respect whether it is relevant in connection to their studies.

Research Questions

1. What are the experiences of students who did either physical or virtual internship?

2. How do students' experiences who did physical internship compare with those who did virtual internship?

3. What are the students' views about the relevance of internship to their courses?

Scope of the Study

Geographical scope

This study was conducted at Makerere University which is located on Makerere hill in Kampala the capital city of Uganda. It was done among third year students at school of psychology. The school of psychology has two courses which are bachelor's degree in community Psychology (BCP) and bachelor's degree in industrial psychology (BIOP). In 2011 psychology became a school which currently has a total of approximately 310 students, and these did both virtual and physical internship. The study was about the different experiences of the students basing on the type of internship that they did. This will be done among only psychology students so that the difference in their experiences is not due to the differences in schools they are in but the type of internship they did (virtual or physical internship).

Theoretical scope

This literature discusses articles that have contributed to the development and understanding of the theory of existence, relatedness, and growth [ERG}. The theory is traced by Clayton Alderfer from its outgrowth of Maslow's hierarchy of needs through his efforts to further understand and expand its implications. It was made in 1969. It has helped us to understand job satisfaction and to identify its incentives.

Existence needs; This includes all material and physiological needs for instance food, water,

air, clothes, safety, physical love, and affection. This influences the experiences of these intern, and this existence will explain what happens for example those doing virtual internship will differ from those of physical as those of physical will need transport fee and even the safety as they move from home to work which will not be the same case with virtual.

Relatedness needs: this encompasses social and external esteem; this is the relationships with significant others like family, friends, co-workers, and employers. This will affect these interns especially those who might need the relationships. For the case of virtual internship, there is a limited interaction which makes it hard on those interested in forming relationships and those doing physical internship will gain it since they have more face to face and office time with colleagues at work. The experiences of the internship will be affected by this theory.

Growth; Internal esteem and self-actualization; these drive a person to make creative and productive effects on self and the environment. The experience of an intern who is more involved in work /given more work that needs their creativity will be different from one whose creativity at work is limited. This is common in virtual where you are given work that you do on your own time and in your own way which is different from physical where one is mostly given work that is just to support others and has no say in how it's done. Therefore, this theory will be important in understanding their experiences better and their point of view.

Significance of the Study

We used the findings of the research to analysis and understand students' experiences during internship which will also be important for students in understanding the skills gained during internship that they would use on their resume/CV.

Findings from this research will benefit future interns to have an idea on what experiences

they may face during their internship and so psychologically prepare them to handle the possible situations they may encounter.

Also, the findings could be used by institution policy implementers where internship is done to improve the internship experiences of the future internship students.

Makerere University could better use this knowledge in the preparation of their students as they send them to the field for internship so that they may gain the needed experiences as expected or needed.

The Government might use the knowledge of this research in enhancement of their policies to make sure that all the interns could have or get better experiences in the field/during internship.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter presents conceptual and research literatures that support present study. They are mostly drawn from a variety of sources, including books and published documents that are significant and applicable to the current investigations. The literature examined by the researchers to support this research work is also presented in this chapter.

Conceptual Literature

This part of the study consists of several readings reviewed by the researchers from various resources like books, magazines, and publications by authors and researchers which helped them to better understand the nature of the study.

Virtual internship is a fixed and remote position in which tasks, communication and feedback take place online. It comes as no surprise that many employees prefer working from home to the workplace given the development of digital technologies. Participants in these internship programs, sometimes known as interns, are given the opportunity to get job experience while working remotely. Candidates are not physically present at the job site because the internship must be completely entirely online.

Due to the pandemic (Teng, 2022)most of the countries implemented virtual internships in which students can do internship from home, During the internship, students communicate with their employers and academic supervisors through a variety of resources such as Skype, Microsoft teams, e-mail, Google meet, zoom. Despite the problem faced by educators, employers and learners, virtual or online internship have proven to be a remedy for this unprecedented pandemic (Hammoud, 2022) the transition from traditional on-the-job training (OJT) to online internships can be Avery different experience for learners, employers and educators. School systems and educators are forced to accept unprepared systems. During the

pandemic-learning tools were important in helping schools and colleges develop their student's skills during the closure of universities.

Experiences of Students during Internship

A few weeks after the start of higher education, which was forced so switch to virtual mode by Covid -19 pandemic around March 2020, popular hands-on media permanently changed the learning environment for higher education. It is full of predictions that it is letting you; it will be in more virtual mode. (Kim, 2020): Chronicle of Higher Education 2020) Much attention has been paid to the transition to a virtual model of the accompanying internship.

Although there has been a lot of adaption to virtual internship, it is noticeable that there are still many students doing physical internship and even some universities that are still finding it hard to accept virtual internship. It is therefore no surprise that according to research about the preferred form of internship 81% of sample population sided with physical internship (Jawaid, 2021)

Students in both physical and virtual internship acquire skills relevant to their jobs as they use what they have learnt in class (Elmose, 2023)

Comparisons between Physical and Virtual Internship

Online classes or in person classes, Vaccine or no vaccine, Smaller house parties or larger zoom calls. The pandemic problem has given rise to many such issues that were previously not debated but the internships had to continue. (Zaman, 2021)Due to this, there is one battle that is going on in the mind of students: virtual or physical internships. This match (Physical and virtual) is a dilemma because the energy is not less than a match between a defending champion and a rising child prodigy.

When you first have a look at it, it looks all too good. No alarms. Conferences out of the bed Offices out of the dinner table it looks too good (2021, 2021)Really good you are cash strapped, so it is working in your favor. On the other hand, your boss (Winn, 2021) does not have to pay for another desk.

Connections that will guarantee an Intern a job or another internship experience in the future. In a research funded by RAPID America, results showed that amongst online, in-person and hybrid internships, those who interned in person were the most satisfied in terms of networking opportunities. Technology, despite its many wonders, could not help the large number of students who wanted to make the most out of online networking platforms. Surely, technology can never beat a networking opportunity over a water cooler. Hence, the whole aspect of building social capital is erased.

Skills development (Ismail, 2018) Fieldwork is extremely crucial in many fields such as engineering and STEM fields. As an intern, you are mostly expected to complete a set of tasks. While you work in person, you get a chance to contribute to 'high skilled supervised tasks' according to the RAPID study. As an online intern, your academic supervisors do not trust you enough as you work with your own timings. For a digital marketing intern, this could mean being included in a team that is working on a project for a big company. This could expose you to a firm that is doing well in its field and that itself is a learning opportunity! On the other hand, if you stay at home they will just ask you to come up with a content calendar.

Some skills require hands-on experience which cannot be acquired through a virtual internship" virtual internships is like "online unit projects where by Exposure, networking and skill development is needed for interns to grow during their time of internship.

While working for companies that may not be in your locality, you are able to make contacts in many other places while doing your internship virtually. This greatly helps in the future when you may want to look for opportunities in other places. Your network will help you get through! One example of this is seen in the Bright Network Internship Experience UK (https:www.brightnetwork.co.uk) and the Pineton Consults Africa Limited Uganda (https: www. tpcafrica.com). These internships even though only 3 days long, have networking sessions every single day of the event.

It is happening that dream of working from home at your own comfort is going to stick around. With the pandemic forcing everyone to work from home, employers learnt an interesting lesson. Closing down offices meant that people could still work from home. This meant there was no need for office space. Costs of overheads were also reduced; utilities were cut down by this move. It was a win-win situation for employers. Shopify, an e-commerce company, went indefinitely remote after the pandemic hit.

In such a case even though in-person internships teach office etiquettes, virtual internships teach internees how to adapt to the new norm. This is especially helpful when you see that the company that you would like to work for in the future is going to go remote. It teaches you how to create a workspace within your home (Roy, 2017) Interns learn time management skills. It will compel interns to become better communicators and adapt to being able to understand people through the computer screen. This lesson is crucial because online communication is different from face to face communication. This should be at the back of your mind especially if you are studying in a field where it is very easy to go remote.

You can work for your dream company without their presence in your locality, maybe you are from Saudi Arabia and you want to work for Samsung. Or maybe you are studying finance in Pakistan; you would love an opportunity to work for Goldman Sachs. Who doesn't like name dropping in their CV's and resumes? That is what sells virtual internships. You can

work for any company in the world (Marr, 2019) No need to get a visa. No need to spend on an air ticket and accommodation. No need to move to a new country. Just be able to work for a Fortune 500 right from your home office. You can learn about the work culture in Japan and connect with the top executives of your dream firm without having to think about changing your neighborhood.

It's true that, everyone likes to travel. Travelling for fun is fun. Travelling for work — meh. Moving to another country to gain experience requires adapting to the country first. Then, there will be the language barrier while dealing with the locals and there are the culture shocks. The Romans are never nice to you when you do not do in Rome as the Romans do. It takes extra time to learn their cultures and their way of life. That may not be possible if you may be doing a job in your country of stay. Or a business or anything that pays the bill as such. At the end of the day, it all comes down to your own choices and priorities. Do what holds your best interests in heart. Do what is feasible. (Jawaid, 2021)

Views of Students about Internship

To the students, internship means getting experience and putting what you have learnt in class in the field. Most of them view internship as job experiences outside the academic campus (Silva et Al; 2018 p.9)

The student's views change all the time and this depends on what they find in the field or how they are treated. Their experience during internship is the main factor that affects their views on internship.

The end result is almost always a positive experience for each of the parties (coco, 2000. P.42) which gives them a positive view on internship at the end of all of it

The role of both the host supervisor and educational supervisor is very important in the effect it has and the student's views (Holyoak,2013). Good supervisors make the students to view internship as learning moment and even end up taking as serious as their students.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter places the study within a particular methodological tradition, provides a rationale for that approach, describes the research setting and sample, and describes data collection and analysis methods. The chapter provides a detailed description of all aspects of the design and procedures of the study.

Study Design

This qualitative study employed a cross-sectional descriptive research design. This study was qualitative study because we aimed at detailed information about experiences of the Makerere university students who did either physical or virtual internship without influencing their views.

Study Population

The study population was third year students of Makerere University from school of psychology. School of psychology had two bachelor's degree courses which is bachelor's degree in community psychology (BCP) and bachelor's degree in industrial psychology((BIOP) and these were from both courses. They were 301 in total with about 160 in BCP and about 141 in BIOPS. These students did their academic internship during their second year of study at the university, and it was either physical or virtual and they did it in different places like mental health institutions, hospital, research centers, counseling centers, police stations, ministries, government organizations, non-government organizations, business entities and companies.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample size was 16 participants who were selected from the population of 301

students who did either virtual or physical internship during their second year of study at Makerere University. Purposive sampling was used to come up with 8 students each from BCP and BIOP with equal numbers who did either physical or virtual internship. This was very important in selecting only those who were qualified and were able to give the information that was in line with the study.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

All the selected participants were from school of psychology and did either physical or virtual internship. They were all students at Makerere University and were willing to participate. All these that were included completed their internship period successfully and were all supervised by the academic supervisors.

Those that were excluded are the students who were not from school of psychology and did not do either physical or virtual internship, those who were not enrolled at the university, those who did not complete their internship successfully and those not willing to participate.

Data Collection Methods

The data was collected using face to face individual audio recorded interviews. It was a semi-structured interview following a designed interview guide. During the interviews, the two researchers took turns to interview and take notes. In case the other researcher rather than the one carrying out the interview noticed something wrong or that the participant was hiding something, then would signal the interviewer who would ask probing questions for more understanding/more information.

The participants would be contacted shortly after the lectures and the time and place would be decided as fit for the participant, but the place had to provide privacy and quiet to avoid disturbances and noise free for recording the audios. The interviews lasted an average of 20 minutes.

Validity and Reliability of Data

The internal and external validity were ensured throughout the data collection. Internal validity was ensured with study planning adequate quality control and implementation strategies for example data collection, data analysis and sample size.

External validity was ensured by using broad inclusion criteria which was school of psychology and the study population that more closely resembles real-life population was like all other students who did virtual or physical internship.

The reliability was ensured by doing detailed field notes, using recording devices that were transcribed. The transcribed work was re-read two to three times and by different researchers to see if the same results are gotten.

Data Management

Since there was recording of audios for interviews, these recordings were kept safe from access by unauthorized people, the information was also transcribed to avoid losing the data if the device gets destroyed and it was deleted after the research to prevent it falling in the wrong hands.

The transcribed work was kept safely from anything that could destroy it and it would be in both soft and hard copy.

The field notes taken during the interviews would be kept from getting misplaced since this information was confidential and this could cause Bleach of the ethical conduct.

Data Analysis

To understand the study, we undertook thematic data analysis which was to identify, examine and analyze the patterns of the data. The thematic data analysis had six steps and we took all these steps as follows,

Step one: Become familiar with the data.

At this stage we re-read through the transcribed data as two to three times to be able to understand what the participants are saying and write down a few notes where necessary.

Step two: Generate initial code.

At this stage there was coding each segment of the data that was relevant to or captured something interesting about our research questions/internship experiences of the students.

Step three: Search for themes

The codes were examined and fit them together to come up with the themes which was the pattern that captured those relevant to our research questions.

Step four: Review themes

On this step, we reviewed the themes to see whether they work in the context of the data set.

Step five; Define themes

We identified the essence of what each theme was saying and what was the theme saying.

Step six: Write up

In this step, we did the final write up of the research findings and dissertation.

Procedure

We got permission from our supervisor to go ahead to the interviews after he had approved the interview guide. Then the consent forms were given to the participants and signed and then did the interviews.

Ethical Considerations

   The participants signed consent forms to give permission for the recordings and using the information since they were above 18 years of age. The participants' identity was kept confidential as the questions asked did not reveal their identity. The privacy was ensured and the interview was carried out in a private place.

Chapter Four

Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents demographic information and experiences of the 16 participants in this study. It formulates experiences according to objectives and research questions and elaborates on the different experiences from the participants stories. It takes note of similar and different experiences that are part of the stories shared. We recorded the semi-structured interviews, transcribed them verbatim and read through carefully several times. We therefore established clear links between the results and research questions.

Table 1 presents demographic information

Participant	Course	Type of internship	Internship placement
Participant 1	BIOP	Physical	District Headquarters
Participant 2	BIOP	physical	Iganga District Headquarters
Participant 3	BCP	Physical	Uganda Red cross Society
Participant 4	BIOP	physical	Childs Care Ntinda
Participant 5	BCP	Physical	Children of Sun Foundation
Participant 6	BIOP	Physical	Uganda Red cross Society Rubaga Central
Participant 7	BIOP	Physical	Yao Wan
Participant 8	BIOP	Physical	Mulago Department of Mental Health
Participant 9	BIOP	virtual	The Pineton Consults Africa Limited
Participant 10	BCP	virtual	The Pineton Consults Africa Limited
Participant 11	BCP	virtual	The Pineton Consults Africa Limited
Participant 12	BIOP	virtual	The Pineton Consults Africa Limited
Participant 13	BCP	Virtual	The Pineton Consults Africa Limited
Participant 14	BCP	virtual	The Pineton Consults Africa Limited
Participant 15	BCP	virtual	The Pineton Consults Africa Limited
Participant 16	BCP	virtual	The Pineton Consults Africa Limited

Themes were derived and guided by the study objectives and research questions. We used participant's direct statements at interviews and preceding field notes to back up their experiences and illuminate their perspectives. Those experiences gave us insight and context into the types of internships they did. Below we present the themes that emerged from the interviews.

Theme 1: Circumstances and accessibility

While conducting our study, we asked participants about their interests when choosing internship placements and most of those who did physical were due to the circumstances and accessibility since they were having internship and lectures at the same time. This made those who did physical choose places near to the University or campus and those of virtual decided to do it since they would have time to do their internship and attend their lectures in time.

Regarding the choice of internship placement, participants were asked a question on why they chose that place. All of them reported that their choices were influenced by circumstances and accessibility of the placement site. The circumstances were attributed to the fact that internship was running concurrently with semester two activities and therefore the students planned to have both run smoothly.

Most of those who did physical internship chose a placement near the university where they could be able to easily access work and go to attend lectures at campus.

"I chose red cross because it was near university" (participant 3 physical)

"I chose red cross because I knew that from Red Cross I could go to the university" (participant 6 physical)

''We happened to have our internship when the semester was running so we were required to always do internship and attend classes which also in most cases happen during the same time.'' (Participant 9 virtual)

"I chose this internship because I had little time because we were going to study and still attending lectures" (participant 11 virtual)

Also, the other circumstance that they talked about was the courses they had

covered now of the internship since internship was in their second year of study; they had covered all the course units and therefore chose places which they found they could use their covered some of the course units. This also explains more on the internship placement choice. "They could use their covered courses"

*"I covered developmental psychology, child disorder and delinquency so I chose my internship due to that…" (*Participant 2, physical)

"I wanted to practice the course units I hand covered like communication skills" (Participant 7 physical)

Theme 2: Variations in roles according to place

The roles of the interns varied according to the place of their internship placement and the type of internship that they did. This theme is mainly on the roles of interns during their internship and questions like did the type of their internship affect roles.

Another question that was asked to the participants is the key roles that they did during their internship and theses were found to differ for those who did virtual and those who did physical internship. These were because they did their internship from different places.

Although according to the type of internship they did, it was discovered that those of the same type of internship had some similarities in their key roles. All who did physical key roles included counseling and training and those who did virtual was in line with Trello and scrum methodologies.

All the participants who did their internship from the Pineton consults Africa limited which is 8 out of all the 16 participants those who did virtual internship had something to do with a project management tool which is Trello and they all talked about scrum methodologies that they were trained in during their internship (Training). Their roles

included training others, overseeing projects and presentations on the scrum methodologies.

"I specialized in Trello so that was preparing the backlog and other project management tools." (Participant 1 virtual)

"I was making sure that we delivered and monitored our progress using Trello" (participant 16 virtual)

All who did physical internship their roles included training and counseling even when they were in different places, and this could be because all our participants are doing psychology (BCP and BIOP). Some are trained Trello for virtual and for physical they are trained sex health.

Theme 3: Benefits and Social Cultural Influenced the Experiences of the Interns

While doing the interviews, we were interested in knowing how their overall experiences were and they were said to be due to the benefits and social cultural factors that influenced them.

The study also included a question on their overall experiences during the internship and all participants who answered this question whether virtual or physical internship said it was both positive and negative and the positive side was due to their gains or benefits from the internship while the negative is due to the people they worked with or their supervisors at work.

The participants clearly explained their positive experiences in relation to what they gained from it, and this didn't differ for both physical and virtual internship.

Benefits that they gained from the internship made it positive as said by participant one virtual,

"I got to know big people and got experiences on how to work with them." (Participant 1 physical)

This same participant explained the negative side of her experience because of how her colleagues treated her due to bias and misjudgment because of her university which is Makerere. She explained that they used to say she is proud because she is from Makerere University.

"Those would always make me feel small and spread rumors about me that am proud from Makerere and isolated me. (Participant 1physical)

Participant 3 physical like the other participants also talked about is being positive because of what he gained from the internship but the reason for it being negative was more on the organization where he did his internship. Talks about how they were unable to give him enough training since most of their staff and their activities were not for psychologists and the only one skilled enough was usually not around.

"It was lacking, I expected to do more psychological work but along the way I knew that maybe the organization was somehow lacking in skilled staff resource of psychology.'' (Participant 3 physical)

"To the side of learning personal skills increased and interpersonal skills like communication skills" (participant 5physical)

However, the same participant found it negative because there was little supervision, and this made it had to get all the needed information that would have been helpful.

Those who did virtual found it positive with no negative experience and these were 6 of all the 8 who did virtual that participated in the study. Also, like all their counterparts who did physical their positive experience was due to the benefits from the internship that they

did. This was the same for all of them.

The two for virtual who got negatives and that is participant 9 and 15. These had different reasons that their experiences were negative and participant 15 said

"It was challenging because I had never worked online and used computers." (Participant 15virtual)

This means according to this the negative experience is not due to the social culture but due to the exposure of the participant at the time of internship and participant 9 virtual also that due to the planning or college program since according to the participant, the internship was short.

Theme 4; Hands on Experience and New ways of working.

One of the questions of the study was comparisons between the type of internship they did, and the other type of internship (physical or virtual) and many answers were given by different participant both who did either virtual or physical.

The biggest problem with them having to compare was the fact that they all understood their kind of internship and had little knowledge on virtual internship. The fact that those who did physical thought that those who did virtual did not interact with people and those who did virtual thought that those of physical could not balance their time yet one of the participants was even able to do two internships and this made it hard for them to compare. Each preferred the kind of internship that they had done and felt that it was the best.

Those who did physical felt like they had got the hands-on experience which they felt like their counter parts who did virtual missed out. According to their explanation those who did virtual missed out on the hands-on experience since they feel like online is still theory or not hands on.

"It is incomparable, it is practical unlike virtual" (participant 2 physical)

"Got hands-on experiences like first aid training which is best done physical" (participant 4 physical)

The participant who had done physical internship felt that they missed out on the technology part that the ones who did virtual like computer skills and the new ways of working.

For those who had done virtual, they were able to use the technology to their advantage and were able to easily balance internship and classes which were on going which most of their counterparts missed apart from the computer skills that they missed.

"With this I was able to understand the new ways of working which is online" (participant 15 virtual)

"The online internship enabled me to gain computer skills." (Participant 10 virtual)

Those who did virtual explained how they were introduced to some tools and used to work online. They kept talking about Trello and scrum methodologies which are all in line with new ways of working. This is explained by participant three virtual

"I gained computer skills and was able to learn Trello which we used in tracking our projects" (participant 13 virtual)

Those who did physical explained that those who did virtual missed out on going to places physical since they were working online and those who did physical internship had a lot of movement and this was the best part of the internship and that those who did virtual should not have missed out.

The mean two were hands on experience and new ways on working for physical. The hands-

on experience felt like it was worth it for those who did physical and their counterparts who did virtual felt hat virtual internship is the best since they were introduced to a new way of working which is online with technology.

Theme 5: Disadvantages and advantages of both Physical and Virtual Internship

The study found out that those who did physical recommended it for future interns giving the advantages of physical as the reasons why they recommended it and those who did virtual gave the disadvantages of physical and advantages of virtual as the reasons why they recommend virtual internship.

All those who did physical talked about things like hands on experience, going the field and it being good for the psychologists. This means that the advantages of physical made those participants who did physical internship to recommend it for a future intern.

The felt like its better if future interns do physical internship since it's important to get hands on experience and think that virtual internship does not provide that. This is no surprise since they all seemed to think that virtual lacks in that. Some of those participants of physical said,

''*I interacted with people, go to places, and put on Uniforms which made me feel like I was working''* (Participant 7 Physical)

''*It is more tangible, and you go to the field and get to learn from your mistakes''* (Participant 8 Physical)

When it came to those who did virtual internship, they recommended it their reasons being the disadvantages of physical internship. This makes sense since virtual is new trying to solve the problems of physical internship.

They talk about things like time saving, low costs, no transportation costs, supporting multitasking and even the problems experienced on the way to work. All these were

advantages of virtual internship and disadvantages of physical. This is not a surprise since virtual internship came to solve some of the problems that were caused by physical internship like the expenditures and tiredness.

' 'You don't meet transport costs and reaching work when you are already tired''

(Participant 14 virtual.)

' 'It is easy to plan for your internship and use the rest of your time to do other things'

(Participant 11 virtual)

Chapter Five

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

The chapter begins with a section on demographic information and internship experiences of the participants. It is further divided according to the study objectives. It discusses and infers primary findings and relates such findings to previous literature. It discusses issues and justifies differences in the findings and come up with conclusions accordingly. It ends with recommendations for courses of action that maybe undertaken to address the issues cited as well as for further research.

Overview of the Study

The study was a cross sectional descriptive and contextual qualitative study. We adopted phenomenology approach to achieve the objectives of the study. Unstructured qualitative interview was carried out with 16 students who were third year students of Makerere University and did their internship either virtual or physical and they were selected purposefully. The interviews were conducted in English and recorded then transcribed and analyzed.

Validity and reliability of the data was ensured through quality control and analyzing the data by two researchers, transcribed the recordings and took field notes which were re-read two to three times before analyzing it.

The findings and recommendations described below are centered on the experiences of 16 participants, the research questions, the objectives, and the themes imagined from data analysis. The research question to be asked was the experiences during internship of students who did either virtual or physical internship.

Demographic Information of the Participants

The results of this study according to the field notes taken indicated that eight out of 16 participants came from Bachelor of community Psychology (BCP) and eight came from Bachelor of Industrial Organizational Psychology. Six of the 8 who do BCP did virtual internship and two of them did physical. BIOP, two did virtual and six did physical internship. All the participants who did physical internship had different internship placements while all those who did virtual were in the same internship placement for them despite their different courses of the study.

All who did physical internship had little knowledge about virtual internship. For example, how it's done and even how you get it and those who did virtual had more knowledge about physical since it is the mostly known or the normal internship.

The findings above are therefore in line with (Jawaid, 2021) results which showed that most people were more knowledgeable about physical than virtual and therefore 80% of the surveyed participants had sided with it.

Summary of the Data Collected

There are five themes that emerged from the data that was collected, and these are: Circumstances and Accessibility, Variations in roles according to place and time, Benefits and social culture, Hands -on experiences and new ways of working, Disadvantages and advantages of both Physical and Virtual internship.

Experiences of students doing either physical internship or virtual internship

All students get different experiences but according to our student we noticed that all who had good experiences were due to the benefits or the gains that they get from the internship. All those who explained it as positive were giving the gains as the reason it was good.

Those who did virtual talked about the fact that it was after covid-19 and the virtual skills were marketable and their experiences were good because they gained those skills (Kim,2021)

According to those who did physical, the emphasized hands on experience as the reason they did physical. Internship gives students hands on experience ([Https://www.cla.au-burn.edu](Https://www.cla.auburn.edu))

During internship, the role of the supervisors and contribution can either enhance or inhibit the extent to which meaningful learning is achieved(Holyoak,2013)

Comparison of physical with virtual internship

The circumstances and accessibility we both influential in choosing place of internship by those who did virtual and physical internship All of them had this in common. This is because those who did physical needed a place near campus and those who did virtual would be able to attend classes at campus and do work online. All those who did virtual didn't have to meet the costs like transport and even it as fixable (Jawaid, 2021)

Views of students towards physical and virtual internship

The views of the students on internship were affected by the benefits of internship and the problems that come with internship make their views difficult. One of the participants found it bad because of the way that the workers were treating her there. (Elmose, 2023) The views of the students who did virtual was positive since they were able to manage their own them and do work in their own homes (Roy, 2017)

Conclusion

This study found out all students who did internship had a positive experience even though there were few negatives. This was for those who did either physical or virtual internship and that all of them gain experience and learnt new skills despite the type of

internship that they did.

Overall, this has been useful experience because we gained new knowledge and met many participants who had achieved solve goals however for some of the conditions did not permit. We got insight into professional practice and learnt the different facets of working with in different Organizations of which participants gave. Related to our study, we learnt more about the experiences of the students and realized that there is still a lot to discover and to improve. The methods used now are still not standardized and developed especially when it comes to students doing their internship. We have seen that students who did physical internship can contribute a lot when it comes to hands on experiences and for those who did virtual internship have more knowledge when it comes to computer skills.

Furthermore, we experienced that it's of importance that the internship is an objective and that you must be aware of the view of other colleagues. Internship is not one sided but is a way of sharing knowledge, ideas, skills, and option. Internship is also gone to find out what your strength and weakness are. This helped us to define what skills and knowledge the participants had and what to improve in the coming time.

Also, we noted that the students find the preparation by the university for internship inadequate since they are not will prepared in how to choose internship places and what to expect during the internship and some of them end in places that don't have the necessary skills and opportunities that the students are interested in.

Also, students suffer a lot during internship due to the high costs for facilitation during internship that they must provide themselves, yet they work long hours and do a lot of work and sometimes don't even get meals hence affecting their performance and health.

As during our study, we discovered that little is known about the virtual internship

and yet this is very important especially since know the Ugandan education is aiming at producing graduates with the skills to compete in the global working world which has gone virtual. The skills gained during virtual internship will be important since they will be able to work with corporate organizations outside Uganda without them changing their location hence solving the shortage of jobs in Uganda.

After our bachelors we think that we could start our working careers in relation to internship. However, we could perform certain tasks in research better if we practice/know more of the research methodologies applied in certain studies. It would also be better if we can present and express ours more confidently.

At last, this research has given us new insights and motivation to pursue a career in ecological research abroad.

Recommendations

Recommendations to the participants

The negative experiences during their intern period should be lessons to learn from but they should not let it affect their view about work, themselves, and even their interests towards their future careers. They should not let those experiences to define them.

Recommendations to University

With internship being the first working experience for the students, the university should put more time in preparing them both physically and psychologically on some of the challenges and conditions that they will find in their places of work since lack of enough preparation affects their experiences for example one of the participants had little knowledge on how to use computers which made her experience negative.

The time given for internship, (four to eight weeks) is a short time for students who are in second year to put what they have learnt in two years in practice. The university should

increase the time since students need time to adjust to the working environment and start the actual training since most of the first weeks are spent in adjusting to the culture of the company or organization they are working in. The participants complained about that as they felt they didn't learn enough and get used to their roles which affected their experiences.

The University should put in place programs that facilitate interns during their time of internship since most Organizations and companies where they do their internship from do not facilitate them and yet this is still time for them to study. Students have had bad time during internship due to lack of facilitation like some of the participants found the meals to expensive and therefore could not do their work well. The facilitation will enable them to focus and learn instead of worrying on how they will manage to do internship. Most of the participants especially for physical found it hard to manage since they weren't given transportation, and feeding allowance yet they worked from morning to evening.

Recommendations for government policy makers

The Government should put in place policies to ensure that companies and organizations prefer working with interns by giving these companies benefits on all the interns that they take in. This can be done by reducing on the companies tax paid if 60% of the workers are interns.

The government should provide wedge subsidy to offset their workers wedge costs so as to enable companies and organizations to take in more interns and facilitate them since it will have reduced on their workers wedge costs.

The government should work hand in hand with organizations and the universities in ensuring that internship is beneficial for the interns and protect the interns during internship from over exploitation and mistreatment at work since the policies of the university don't protect them during internship in the organizations and companies.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further research should be carried out on the following.

How to help student's response positively to new internship model (virtual), Before Covid 19, virtual internships particularly in ecology were uncommon. Indeed, NSF REU experiences in biology were required to occur in person prior to 2020.However there is growing support that postsecondary online learning and mentoring opportunities do not yield differential learning gains and provide more accessible opportunities (Armstrong etal,2020, Falconer etal, 2019 compared to STEM fields, virtual internship opportunities in business enterprises have been increasing global.

What are the challenges faced by students who do virtual internship during and after their internship?

University and students responses to virtual internship after the outbreak of covid_19

Are these students going to places in relation to their course of study during their time for internship?

Best way for the university's to prepare students for their internship.

Recommendations for Future Interns

Most companies and organizations take in interns but not all of them give what is needed and therefore when interns are looking for internship placements, they need to be selective with their choice. With a lot having changed after covid19 and the ways of working are changing the intern should have this in mind and look for places which offer opportunities and skills that are needed in new setting.

During their internship there are some things they must put in mind after getting their internship placement. Most companies/Organizations employ the interns after their internship period and therefore during internship, it's the right time for them to show their full potential

by being, supportive in the office and beyond, be held accountable Fit in the culture of the organization, be professional, keep track of your projects, manage your time wisely, and meet your co-workers.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

This is Natuhwera Gloria and Ninsiima Ameria from Makerere University doing Bachelor's degree in Community Psychology. As an academic requirement in regards to the third year academic results we were given a task to conduct a research study around the experiences of the students who did either physical or virtual internship. Therefore, we wish to interview a couple of students to find out their experiences.

Do note that this information will be used solely for the purpose of our research and achievement of understanding experiences of students who did virtual or physical internship. We do not intend to victimize anyone with the outcome

We request that you are open to giving your feedback and any other information that you feel could help us meet our objectives

BIO DATA

Questions

  Answers

a) Which course do you do?   **BCP**

  BIOP   ☐   ☐

b) Did you do internship?   **Yes**

  NO   ☐   ☐

c) If yes, what type of internship did you do?   **Physical**

  Virtual   ☐   ☐

d) Where did you do your Internship from? **………………………………………**

Appendix II: Consent Form

I**………………………………………………………………………**give my

consent to Gloria Natuhwera and Ninsiima Ameria to record an audio of the interview which

will only be used for the research study purposes.

Signature: ……………………………………………

Date: ……………………………………………

Appendix III: Interview Guide

1. Tell me about how you chose the internship placement (interests, Expectations)?

2. What did you do for your internship (Key Roles)?

3. Over all how was your internship experience?

4. How would you compare your internship with someone who did (Physical or virtual)?

5. What type of internship would you recommend for a future intern and why?