

The Role of Social Network Ties and Relationships During the Internship Assignment: Shaping Social Integration, Task Mastery, and Satisfaction.

Internships and co-ops have become critically important both as a corporate talent acquisition strategy and as an opportunity for students to gain firsthand knowledge of the workplace where they can apply their knowledge to work situations. Internships and co-ops now serve as the gate-keeper to full-time employment and a successful transition from college to work. Employer expectations on the skills and competencies gained from internships and co-ops have never been higher (Hanneman and Gardner, 2010). While some of the outcomes from internships and co-ops have been scholarly documented, the broader soft or boundary spanning abilities that are assumed to be developed are not as clearly demarcated. In fact we really do not know what fosters some of these skills (Teichler, 2009). This paper presents the initial examination into how the role of social networks, both networks an intern or co-op student brings with them into the assignment and those relationships forged during the assignment, influence the outcomes of the experience. Strong ties developed with supervisors and mentors are critical in socializing an intern into the organization, allowing them to gain mastery of tasks and assignments, to integrate into their work teams, and to enjoy greater satisfaction in what they did. Not all students, especially first generation, non-White, report positive gains which is partially attributed to smaller, less connected social networks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Our understanding of internships and co-ops is served by a rich history of research that has illuminated the benefits to students and employers (Coco, 2000; Devine, Linrud, Miller & Wilson, 2007; Gault, Redington & Schalger, 2000; Hall, Stiles, Kuzma, & Elliott, 1995; Knemeyer & Murphy; 2002; Taylor, 1988; and Thiel & Hartley, 1997, for example). Weible (2010) summarizes this literature stressing that interns improve their abilities in communication, task mastery, and problem solving. Much of this research draws upon learning and development theory which serve as the basic constructs for these studies.

Hanneman and Gardner (2010) monitored the changes employers were making in the types of skills being requested in full-time and internship/co-op position requisitions for a period between 2000 and 2009. In the middle of the decade the job requirements being requested for interns and co-ops resembled the requirements for full-time positions just several years earlier. They concluded that the internship or co-op experience pursued by juniors and seniors today is the first job a graduate was likely to hold in the recent past. This conclusion offers the opportunity for researchers to bring in theoretical constructs from newcomer socialization, social network, and contract relations to examine the dynamics of learning and organization attachment gained through an internship.

Hurst (Gardner, Chao & Hurst, 2008; Hurst & Good, 2009; Hurst, Good & Gardner, 2012) used contract theory or how well organizations fulfilled their obligations to their interns to determine the impact on the conversion of interns to full-time employees. Employers can retain their interns by fulfilling obligations by relying on supervisors and/or mentors to provide support, guidance, and feedback. An intern's success in meeting performance expectations depends on the level of involvement of their supervisor (Gardner, et.al, 2008).

Organizational socialization has been defined as the process by which an individual acquires knowledge, behaviors, and relationships necessary to participate and succeed in their initial assignments within the organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Research in this area has shown that socialization progresses through the social interactions between the newcomer and experienced staff of the organization (Feldman, 1981; Louis, 1990; Reichers, 1987). Ostroff & Kozlowski (1992) have shown that supervisors and peers can help newcomers acquire the information to learn their assignments faster. Gardner and Kozlowski (199 XXX) found that students with internship and co-op experience learn faster upon entering their organization for full-time employment. Socialization during the internship assignment can carry over into full-time employment.

For newcomers to be successful they need to be able to acquire information about the organization and information on how to perform their tasks, and information about the expectations placed upon them (Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein & Gardner, 1994; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993). Thus better socialization facilitates task mastery or how to become competent in performing one's job (Morrison, 1993). Chao and her colleagues (1994) found that establishing satisfying work relationships was important to socialization and Ostroff & Kozlowski (1992) reported that how individuals were included in their work group or team also was important. Morrison (1993) refers to this dimension as social integration.

Morrison (2002) emphasized that social networks, the relationships between people, serve as powerful influence into the socialization process. Newcomers can have general associations with friends and associates that provide a sense of belonging (Podolny & Baron, 1997). They can also have deeper relationships with fewer people. These stronger relationships provide stronger support and sense of identify and belonging (Polodny & Baron, 1997). Social capital in the form of strong ties (such the relationship with a supervisor) and weak ties (such as friends and colleagues throughout the organization) can assist newcomers in learning and satisfaction with their job.

Lui, Xu & Weitz (2011) who were looking at emotional cues influenced on the internship experience found that social activities at work, activities which allowed the intern to get to know their co-workers and establish relationships with key people, would shape an interns satisfaction with their internship and frame their perception of the occupation they were gaining experience (in this case, retail).

Based on this body of work, the following hypothesis was posited:

1. Strong relationships with supervisor and/or mentor will have a positive relationship on social integration, team integration, and intern learning.
2. Weak or friendship based relationships will have no (null) effect on social integration, team integration, and intern learning.
3. Social integration, team integration, and intern learning will have a positive relationship with task mastery.
4. Task mastery will have a positive relationship on overall internship satisfaction.

METHODS

Sample

Data were collected from students and recent graduates at over 200 U.S. colleges and universities through a coordinated project sponsored by InternBridge.com. We were asked to join this initiative which allowed us to pursue our inquiry into the role of social capital development and influence in internships, co-ops, and practicum. This convenience sample allowed us to focus on a broad segment of students who were searching for, engaged in or recently completed one of these activities. We were restricted in the number of questions that our team could include in the survey. Enough space allowance was made so that we could begin to formulate models of influence of social integration on selected internship and co-op outcomes. The restriction unfortunately limited our ability to capture information that would provide a detailed causal social interaction model to be developed at this time.

The survey was administered in one round through each institution's career service center or internship office. All students at each institution were sent an email notification asking them to participate. Incentives were offered to those who completed the survey by a specified date. Respondents were encouraged to complete the entire survey though their participation was voluntary and they could choose not to provide a response to any question.

A total of 27,164 students completed this survey. Sixty-seven percent were seeking engagement in the workplace or professional setting at the time of the survey but had not yet participated in an internship or co-op. The 8,939 respondents who had completed or were currently engaged in such an assignment were included in the analyses that follow. Nearly 80% of the members of our sample were engaged in internships, 11% in a practicum (primarily student-teaching), and 9% in a co-op.

One-fifth of the respondents were business majors and 14% were engineering majors. Other academic fields that were prominent included Social Sciences (7%), Biological and Medical Sciences (7%), Communication (7%), Health Sciences (5%), and Psychology (5%). Sixty-six percent were female and 73% were Caucasian. Among other racial groups, 7% were Asian American, 6% were Hispanic, 5% were African

American/Black, 4% were international students, and 5% identified themselves as being of mixed races. Sixty-eight percent of the participants were seniors or had just recently graduated with an average age of 23 years. Sixty-two percent reported their grade point average (GPA) as a 3.35 or higher. Sixty-two percent reported that their family income was less than \$80,000 with 66% receiving (or did receive) financial aid. Thirty-eight percent were enrolled or recently graduated from private colleges or universities.

Measures

All scales used to measure the constructs used a 5 –point Likert-type scale, unless otherwise noted. The most common anchors ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Scales that did not employ agree-disagree statements are indicated. A higher score indicates a higher degree on the measured constructs. The estimated reliabilities (Cronbach’s alpha) are provided in the following descriptions. Means, standard deviations, and correlations are provided in Table 1.

Social Integration

The measure for social integration was adopted from the from the 7-item measure developed by O’Reilly and Chapman (1986). We used six of the items, dropping the item dealing with working a full eight hour day. This item could not be easily adapted to the wide range of working options that interns may encounter. The respondents were asked whether they were involved in their host organization from planning and managing social events, volunteering for extra assignments, and complying with the rules and regulations of the organization. The scale ranged from 1 = never to 5 = always. The reliability coefficient was .654 and the scale mean was 3.84 (variance .871).

Team Integration

The measure of team integration was adopted from Morrison (1993) and Chao et.al. (1994) as a 3-item scale. Examples of items included “I feel comfortable around my co-workers,” My co-workers considered my part of the team,” and “I took time to get to know my team members.” The reliability coefficient was .780 and the scale mean as 4.19 (variance .748).

Intern Learning

The measure of intern learning was adopted from Yongmei Lui (2011), using 9 items that reflect learning in the internship context. Lui covered several aspects of learning: self, people, work and occupation. As her study specifically focused on retailing, the item wording was modified to general internship experiences. Sample items include "I understood myself better through this internship," "I know the advantages and disadvantages of working in this occupation," and "The internship made me better understand how to work in a social organization." The reliability coefficient was .918 and the scale mean was 4.30 (variance .649).

Task Mastery

The measure for task mastery was adopted from the scales developed by Chao (1994) and Morrison (1993, 2002). We used 5 items which included "I feel confident about my skills and competencies," "I learned to successfully perform my internship assignment efficiently," and "I mastered required tasks." One item was reversed coded. The reliability coefficient was .791 and the scale mean was 4.09 (variance .261).

Supervisor Interactions

Seventeen items from Hurst's studies, based on the work of Rousseau (1990) and Rousseau & Schalk, 2000, were selected to capture the interactions between interns and supervisors. The scale ranged from 1 = none or not extent to 5 = always. A confirmatory factor analysis (with varimax rotation) was conducted to assess the construct validity of the measures being used. The factor analysis revealed two latent variables with 63% of the variance explained. The first factor, label SUPERINTERNAL, is composed of 10 items that captures the interpersonal relationship between the two parties. The items include "My supervisor conveyed feelings of respect," "My supervisor shared with me his/her career history," "My supervisor encouraged me to talk openly about anxiety and feelings," and "My supervisor served as a role model." The reliability coefficient is .935 with a scale mean of 3.77.

The second factor, label SUPEREXTERNAL, is composed of seven items that captures the external relationship between the two parties. Items included, for example, "My supervisor promoted my career interests," "My supervisor kept me informed," "My supervisor increased my contact with higher level management," and "My supervisor helped me finish assignments." The reliability coefficient is .889 with a scale mean of 3.41.

Satisfaction

This scale was the only one constructed for this survey based on work done by Hurst. Five items were included using a 5-point Likert-type agree and disagree scale. Item examples included "I was satisfied with my internship experience with my host organization," "I was assigned

meaningful projects as assignments,” and “I was given the opportunity to learn new skills and competencies.” The coefficient reliability was .735 with a scale mean of 4.04 (variance .711).

Network

Morrison (2002) suggested that friendship networks are configured differently than information networks. To gain a sense of the support students had in making career related decisions, respondents were asked to provide the number of people they network about career issues. For each category (faculty, advisor, classmates, friends, parents, for example), a number was provided. The total size of their CAREER NETWORK was calculated by aggregating across all categories. On average, an intern had 14 individuals in their career network.

Interns were asked how many people they knew in their host organization before they started their internship (KNOWORG). Only one-third of respondents knew someone in the organization that hosted them prior to beginning their assignment. Nearly 90% only knew one person though the average was 3 individuals.

Demographic Variables

Gender, race, class standing may influence one’s socialization and satisfaction. Majority social and ethnic groups may find it easier to integrate in social environments and may receive more mentoring from supervisors (Lui, 2011). Gender has been included with the coding of Female = 0 and Male =1. Ethnicity has been coded Caucasians =1 and non-Caucasians =0. Classing standing has also been included with Seniors (plus those who recently graduated) =1 and underclass persons =0. Other descriptor variables that were considered were grade point average (GPA) which was recorded in seven increments from less than a 2.0 (1) to 3.70 to 4.00 (7) and type of school attended with Public =1 and Private = 0. Academic major was included with the dummy code of Business =1 and all other academic majors =0. Respondents were also asked if they had a mentor during their internship who was someone other than their supervisor (about 15% indicated they had a mentor because they did not have a supervisor): having a mentor is =1 and not having a mentor = 0). Unfortunately space limitations reduced the number of questions we could ask about the mentor.

Table 1 here

RESULTS

Hypothesis Testing

We used stepwise regression analysis to test the proposed hypotheses that social networks of strong and weak ties would positively aid social and team integration and intern learning. The results are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2 HERE

We proposed that strong personal support from one's internship supervisor (a strong tie) would be positively related to social integration, team integration and learning. As seen in Table 2, supervisor variables, INTERNAL and EXTERNAL, both are significantly and positively related to social integration ($\beta = .160, \rho \leq .001, \beta = .125, \rho \leq .001$, respectively); similarly for team integration ($\beta = .241, \rho \leq .001, \beta = .228, \rho \leq .001$) and intern learning ($\beta = .249, \rho \leq .001, \beta = .157, \rho \leq .001$). For interns with MENTORS, another strong tie relationship, the results were also positive and significant for all three measures ($\beta = .053, \rho \leq .02, \beta = .186, \rho \leq .001, \beta = .170, \rho \leq .001$, respectively). We found support for our hypothesis that strong ties would lead to higher levels of integration into the host organization.

We proposed a null hypothesis for weak ties, particularly those ties outside the host organization, to social integration, team integration, and intern learning. Results in Table 2 indicate that weak ties do have significant impacts on social integration. Both CAREERNETWORK and KNOWORG were positive and significant ($\beta = .004, \rho \leq .02, \beta = .011, \rho \leq .02$, respectively). Only KNOWORG contributes to team integration ($\beta = .012, \rho \leq .02$) significantly and positively. Neither measure contributed to intern learning. Our null proposition only held for intern learning and partially for team integration.

We proposed that social integration, team integration and intern learning would positively relate to task mastery. The results are shown in Table 3. All three measures were significantly and positively related to mastery: intern learning ($\beta = .303, \rho \leq .001$), social integration ($\beta = .239, \rho \leq .001$), and team integration ($\beta = .170, \rho \leq .001$). Thus, our hypotheses were supported.

TABLE 3 HERE

Our final hypothesis was that task mastery would support higher satisfaction with the internship experience. The model results are provided in Table 4. Task mastery produced a significant and positive relationship with satisfaction ($\beta = .166, \rho \leq .001$). Our other measures also had a direct relationship with satisfaction. Six measures were positive and significant, including: Intern learning ($\beta = .324, \rho \leq .001$), SuperInternal ($\beta = .192, \rho \leq .001$), SuperExternal ($\beta = .083, \rho \leq .001$), Mentor ($\beta = .066, \rho \leq .01$), Team integration ($\beta = .066, \rho \leq .05$), and KNOWORG ($\beta = .01, \rho \leq .05$). Two measures directly entered but were negatively related to satisfaction: social integration ($\beta = -.098, \rho \leq .001$) and CAREERNET ($\beta = -.004, \rho \leq .01$).

TABLE 4 HERE

Additional Variables

We included several additional variables to gain further insights and to control for underlying demographics. We included Gender, Ethnicity, GPA, Senior, School, and Business in each of the tested models. First, Gender was significantly related to social integration ($\beta = -.085, p \leq .001$), team integration ($\beta = -.064, p \leq .001$), and intern learning ($\beta = -.157, p \leq .001$) as shown in Table 2. In each case, women showed higher integration and learning than men. Gender did not appear in the model of task mastery. However, Gender did appear in satisfaction with men reporting higher satisfaction than women ($\beta = .103, p \leq .001$) as shown in Table 4. Ethnicity produced a positive and significant relationship in each of the models (Tables 2, 3 and 4). Caucasian (non-Hispanic) interns were likely to have higher levels of integration, learning, mastery and satisfaction. Senior standing produced one positive and significant relationship with task mastery ($\beta = .052, p \leq .001$). Finally, GPA had a positive and significant relationship with satisfaction ($\beta = .021, p \leq .05$). Business did not enter significantly in any of the models.

DISCUSSION

This study explores the role of social networks or social capital on facilitating positive internship experiences and outcomes, including social integration in the host organization, task mastery, and internship learning. This study is among a small group of early studies drawing upon early socialization and newcomer adaptation to examine the role that interns play in shaping their experiences through growth of social connections. Interns who develop strong ties to supervisors and mentors integrate to a higher level in the social fabric of the host organization which allows them to participate in social activities that surround their intern assignment. The same relationships also contribute to more integration into the project team they are a member. Weaker ties that include their network that supports their career efforts and the individuals they know in the organization prior to gaining the internship also positively contribute. An individual who has a strong external network appears to be able to use this ability to build and sustain the necessary social ties in the organization compared to those interns who have smaller, possibly less developed, networks. However, this network does not assist in integrating with team members. Internal connections pay off in social and team integration but have no impact in task mastery and a small positive impact on overall satisfaction. This career network finding may suggest that external contacts that do not have a deep understanding of the host organization may send conflicting messages about the value of the experience. Upon completion of the internship assignment, interns may find external networks have been a distraction. The real key to developing positive internship outcomes results from strong mentoring from supervisors and mentors (other than their supervisors).

Supervisor and to a lesser extent mentor relationships not only have an indirect effect on the interns satisfaction with their assignment through social and team integration and learning, they also have a direct effect which amplifies the importance of these relationships. It is interesting to note that the supervisor did not have a direct effect on task mastery where apparently the intern gains confidence in their skills through interactions with their team members and their social activities.

We laid out the null hypothesis for external networks at the study's outset. As already mentioned, career network and organizational contacts do play a positive role in social integration and organizational contacts aid in team integration. Neither have an impact on intern learning. With their strong relationship to social integration, the negative relationship of social integration on overall satisfaction was surprising. Apparently too much social interactions may distract from an internship experience. We can speculate that too many social activities and tasks that may fall outside the intern's designated assignment cause conflicts. If this is true we would have expected social integration to negatively relate to task mastery where getting assignments done on time and performing quality work are part of the measure. Social relationships whether strong or weak are important but what happens if one has too much of a good thing? We do not know enough to answer this question but certainly there may be limits to social capital in these temporary work assignments.

Others have shown that gender and ethnicity can influence social integration and social network development (Matsumoto, 1991). Because interns are temporary employees and have no official status in most host organizations (lower status than their supervisor and co-workers) interns may be reluctant to develop strong social relationships with supervisors and co-workers to reduce possible negative or possible harmful consequences for interactions with supervisor and other members of the organization (Boyce, Ryan, Imus & Morgeson, 2007; Feldman, Doeringhaus, & Turnley, 1994). We see gender and ethnicity appear to influence several of the outcomes. Women appear to integrate socially and within their team to a greater extent than men. Men were also negatively related to intern learning. Neither gender entered the model for task mastery. Even after accounting for much of the variance in the satisfaction model, men reported positive relationship to overall satisfaction. Women's satisfaction appears to be an indirect effect through their social and team interactions and learning while men appear not to consider social connections in weighing their overall satisfaction. Ethnicity enters consistently in each model. Caucasian (non-Hispanic) respondents were positively related to all outcomes measures. Non-white interns appear to have a harder time in integrating into the organization and the team, gaining task mastery, and feeling satisfied with their internship. They enter the internship with small career networks and fewer, if any, contacts within the host organization. More attention needs to be given to non-White interns to determine how purposeful networking and interpersonal relationships can be leveraged to enhance their internship experiences. Closer examination of the supervisor – intern mentoring for non-Caucasian interns would prove valuable.

The results indicate that GPA has no significant relationship with social and team integration, intern learning, and task mastery, However, GPA was positively related to overall internship satisfaction. Higher GPA students usually have a wider array of options than lower GPA students so they can be more selective in choosing an internship. They may select one that presents challenging work and less involvement with co-workers; in other words, they may have more autonomy than other interns. Further research that focuses on some of the discrepancies in the demographic variables' impacts on outcome measures may be warranted to discern factors that may be driving these inconsistencies.

Finally, it seems that social capital in its various forms plays an important role in influencing the desired outcomes of an internship experience. A positive experience depends on social integration in the host organization (but not too much), team integration and opportunities to master skills and develop skills. Good relationships with the intern supervisor and a mentor, if the intern opts to seek one out, are the cornerstone of any excellently designed internship program.

Limitations of Research

Even with a very large sample that provides robust statistics, several limitations to this study warrant caution when interpreting the results. The convenience sample drawn for the study may not be representative of all students engaged in an internship, co-op or other form of WIL. Because the research project was a collaborative effort, restrictions on the number of questions on social integration caused several key measures to be poorly specified or omitted altogether. For example, we attempted to track the number of relationships the intern made in their host organization, these connections' roles in the organization, and the frequency of interactions. We could not adapt Morrison's (2002) approach easily to the survey format we were using. Thus, we were only able to capture information on the interns' strong ties with their supervisor and some limited information on their mentors.

The large sample size begs structural equation modeling (SEM) for data analysis which would have allowed us to estimate the proposed relationships simultaneously. Our SEM work was interrupted by staff changes and personnel reassignments. We will resume this line of analysis when new assignments are finalized.

We have some concern that the Intern Learning construct may not be specified correctly in our model. This construct may be influenced by social and team integration, as is task mastery, with both intern learning and task mastery influencing overall internship satisfaction. We are considering alternative models using SEM to assess this possibility. Another option would be to reverse the causal directions between internship outcomes and intern socialization.

Finally, the variables were all collected at one time. To really understand the causal inferences, we would be better served with a longitudinal study that tracked social interactions and their development during the internship experience. This is theoretically possible but the actual administration would be difficult and the sample would have to be confined to a very small number.

Contributions

This study makes several contributions to our understanding of the dynamics of work-integrated learning programs. Specifically we have attempted to examine how the development of social relations (both strong and weak) influence specific intern outcomes. While we know about the importance of supervisor in their role of fulfilling the contract between the host organization and intern (Hurst et.al. 2009 and 2012), this study illustrates the important role that the supervisor plays in social integration through personal engagement that internalizes the internship experience. The role of strong ties, both from supervisors and mentors, points to how to improve the internship experience for both the student and the organization. The outcomes measures incorporated items that defined success for both organizations and the interns. The findings offer insights into how host organizations can improve their programs and interns can take better advantage of their opportunities.

This study introduces constructs from early socialization and newcomer theory that aids in our understanding on the development of early task mastery and team integration. These are both key components for a successful internship. While social integration and networks have been demonstrated to be influential in individuals in the workplace (Morrison, 1994 and 2002, and Chao et. al., 1994), this study is among the first to examine how social integration influences internship learning and mentoring behavior of supervisors.

Direction for Future Research

The possibilities of this data set have been unfilled. We still have additional information that can be incorporated in a more advanced SEM or Markov model. More details are available on the supervisors' and mentors' positions within the organization. Supervisors tended to be pulled from staff that had between ten and twenty years of experience but not necessarily positioned in a management role. Mentors, on the other hand, tended to be from upper management. The frequency with which the intern communicated with this network and social contacts was also captured. The types of contacts (friends, faculty, parents, classmates, for example) which make-up the intern's career network, as well as, the people the intern knows within the host organization are known and can be incorporated in advanced models. Missing, however, is more detailed information on the social interactions during the internship assignment. Morrison (2002) was able to capture specific information through an elaborate process which could not be replicated in this study. Her approach could be adapted to studies with much smaller sample populations where the interns can be monitored throughout the entire assignment.

How long does an internship experience need to be so that the student can begin to develop the boundary spanning or social competencies (teamwork, cultural interaction, functional interaction, communication, and critical thinking)? This is a challenging question. We know that mastery of academic content skills (accounting or engineering, for example) can be gained in short assignments of three to six months. We also know that to gain mastery in competencies that involve social interactions, crossing functional, organizational, and cultural boundaries takes longer. In a research brief to be released shortly by the Collegiate Employment Research Institute, over 2,000 employers indicated that they would prefer that students had 10 to 12 months of full-time experience prior to graduation (varies by academic discipline to some extent). More

than 35 per cent would prefer that would be gained in one experience (even though their organizations do not offer full year internships). Yet, we know little about the implications of the length of assignment on development of these competencies. Programs that offer a full twelve month professional experience, such as those in Canada, UK, and Australia, for example, provide a rich opportunity for comparative studies on program length.

An even more fundamental issue has been raised by Ulrich Teichler (2009) in that little is known on what fosters the development of the skills and competencies that are deemed relevant for the transition from university to employment. It is assumed by many that higher education can equip students with the range of knowledge and competencies required for employability. The problem is that “we do not know well which substances and processes of teaching and learning foster these competencies most successfully” (p. 291). Again, the research on internships and co-ops is rich with studies on program effectiveness and immediate gains for participants. However, little has been done in demonstrating how the experience is integrated into the fabric that is being woven by the students through a variety of other co-curricular engagements and classroom learning. Robert Kegan (Immunity to Change) contends that this is one of the most important elements of education and Wenger (Social Learning) would argue the same from a social learning perspective. This study peeks into the broader relationships that students rely upon to gain success. We still treat internships as singular events. Research that addresses the boundary spanning aspects of work-integrated learning can capture this integration.

In the best of all worlds, research we are advocating should be longitudinal in scope. We are restricted by funding, thus resorting to convenience based samples for the most part. However, the lag effects of learning (Teichler pointed out lags in study abroad, for example) in practice suggests that much of what we think we are observing actually does not manifest itself until the intern has entered full-time employment and broadened the work context they have to deal with. I know very few recent studies that have been able to pursue interns and co-ops over time to see how competencies emerge, form, and reform through the work process. To have higher education be responsible for the acquisition of competencies, such as the one addressed in this paper, begs research on whether we actually achieve these results.

Implications for Internship Coordinators, Sponsors, and Students

This study has several useful implications for internships advisors and host organizations for arranging meaningful internship experiences for students. First, a student’s career network, more than is network of contacts within the host organization, shapes the experience prior to, during, and afterwards. Students are taking cues from their network constantly. Internship advisors will be in some student’s networks, as will faculty, former interns with the host organization, alumni and parents. Thus, it is very important that student and employer expectations and the learning and professional outcomes be clearly laid out before starting the internship. Networks can help with this clarification. Students will seek advice from their networks on which internship to pursue and on how to obtain their preferred opportunity.

Second, the supervisor plays the pivotal role in the experience. Interns who have a supervisor with whom they can share the fears, anxieties, aspirations, and emotions have more favorable outcomes. While interns benefit from supervisors who can introduce them to members throughout the organization, this advantage is trumped by supervisors who provide a comfortable environment for interns to express themselves. A confident intern will contribute to a higher level than interns who do not have this level of comfort. Organizations that host interns need to carefully select staff members who will sponsor an intern.

Third, mentors also play an important role. This study does not provide the parameters of the intern – mentor interaction but we can expect it to build upon and extend what the intern's supervisor does. Organizations that allow interns to seek out mentors during their assignment to gain stronger relations with their interns that will aid in converting them to full-time employees at a later date.

Finally, an internship that is built upon strong social interactions (both strong and weak ties) allows the intern to feel greater satisfaction during their internship, to gain great mastery of their assignment (skills and competencies), to gain a greater commitment to the organization and to enhance their learning.

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Table 1: Variable Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations (N = 8,XXX)

Variable		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	Satisfaction	4	0.74														
2	Social Integration	3.84	0.61	.32**													
3	Task Mastery	4.09	0.64	.47**	.47**												
4	Intern Learning	4.26	0.67	.58**	.49**	.61**											
5	Team Integration	4.14	0.78	.53**	.50**	.58**	.80**										
6	Super Internal	3.77	0.93	.57**	.43**	.42**	.58**	.57**									
7	Super External	3.41	0.97	.49**	.42**	.35**	.52**	.54**	.77**								
8	Mentor	0.59	0.49	.19**	.17**	.16**	.25**	.26**	.19**	.23**							
9	Career Network	14.5	6.85	.05**	.11**	.07**	.10**	.11**	.11**	.13**	.09**						
10	Know in Organiz.	1.05	2.35	.05**	.07**	.04*	.04**	.07**	.06**	.05**	.03**	.05**					
11	Ethnicity	0.73	0.44	.05**	.03**	.07**	.04**	.03*	0	.03**	.03**	0.01	.03**				
12	Senior Standing	0.68	0.47	0.02	.03**	.05**	.02*	.03*	0	0.01	0.01	.03**	0.02	.04**			
13	Private Institution	0.38	0.47	0.02	0.02	0.02	.025*	.023*	0	0.01	.05**	.05**	0.01	.16**	.05**		
14	Gender	0.34	0.47	0	-.08*	-.06**	-.08*	-.06**	.04**	.03**	0.01	.02**	0.01	0.01	0	0.05	
15	GPA	5.77	1.15	.04**	0.02	0	-0.02	-0.04**	0.01	.04**	.06**	0.02	0.01	.11**	0.01	.04**	.07**

Two-tailed test: * $\rho < .05$ ** $\rho < .01$

Table 2: Regression Analyses for Social Integration, Team Integration, and Intern Learning

Dependent Variable	Social Integration		Team Integration		Intern Learning	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Constant	2.674**	.052**	2.322**	.056	2.697**	.049
Independent Variables						
SuperInternal	.160**	.019	.241**	.021	.249**	.019
SuperExternal	.125**	.019	.228**	.021	.157**	.019
Gender	-.085**	-.021	-.064**	-.024	-.157**	-.019
Ethnicity	.085**	.023	.092**	.026	.087**	.023
CareerNetwork	.004*	.001				
KnowOrg	.011*	.004	.012*	.005		
Mentor	.053*	.022	.186**	.025	.170**	.022
Model F	94.642**		223.814**		273.194**	
R ²	.201		.347		.352	

* $\rho < .02$ ** $\rho < .001$

Table 3. Regression Analysis for Task Mastery

Dependent Variable	Task Mastery	
	β	SE
Constant	1.057**	.073
Independent Variables		
Internal Learning	.303**	.024
Social Integration	.239**	.019
Team Integration	.170**	.021
Ethnicity	.083**	.020
Senior Standing	.052**	.020
Model F	374.180**	
R ²	.427	

** $p < .001$

Table 4: Regression Analysis for Satisfaction with Internship

Dependent Variable	Internship Satisfaction	
	β	SE
Constant	.818 ^{***}	.107
Independent Variables		
Intern Learning	.324 ^{***}	.030
SuperInternal	.192 ^{***}	.020
Task Mastery	.166 ^{***}	.024
Gender	.103 ^{***}	.022
SuperExternal	.083 ^{***}	.023
Social Integration	-.098 ^{***}	-.073
Ethnicity	.078 ^{***}	.024
Mentor	.066 ^{**}	.024
Team Integration	.066 [*]	.025
CareerNetwork	-.004 ^{**}	.002
GPA	.021 [*]	.009
KnowOrg	.010 [*]	.031
Model F	163.370 ^{***}	
R ²	.201	

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$