Developmental relationships matter: Examining the joint role of supervisor support and mentor status on intern outcomes

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U.S. organizations seek to provide interns with positive socialization experiences such that their internships may lead to job offer acceptances. This study presents a process model examining how developmental relationships shape interns' experiences and outcomes. Utilizing a sample of 6,802 recent graduates from across 200 U.S. colleges and universities who completed an internship, the study found that supervisor support indirectly influences an intern's decision to accept a job offer through learning and intern satisfaction. Findings further show that interns benefit from developmental relationships such as mentors since mentor status buffered the decrements in learning when supervisor support was low. This study contributes to the growing internship literature that draws upon early socialization and newcomer adaptation by examining the critical role developmental relationships play in the experiences of interns.

Keywords: Internships, intern satisfaction, mentors, supervisor support, newcomer adaptation

Internships and co-ops, the primary work-integrated learning approach throughout the U.S., 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 an entryway to full-time employment and a successful transition from college to work in the U.S. This pathway receives corroboration by the fact that most employers use internship and co-op programs to identify and develop talent for full-time employment (Collegiate Employment Research Institute, 2012). Given the human capital acquisition viewpoint to internships, employers deploy considerable effort to ensure interns convert to organizational members. To this point, the burgeoning literature on intern conversion finds that employers can retain their interns by fulfilling obligations, by relying on supervisors to provide support, guidance, learning relationship building, and feedback (Hurst et al., 2012; Rowe et al., 2012) and by organizations offering quality work assignments (Drewery et al., 2019).

Although interns benefit from supportive supervisors, existing dyadic leadership theories, such as leader-member exchange, suggests interns may not all experience high quality relationships, thereby undermining their internship experiences and chances of converting (Liden et al., 1997). To address this research gap, the current study draws upon the socialization literature (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) and mentoring theory (Chao et al., 1992; Kram, 1985) to examine how the development of interpersonal relationships—in the form of a mentor—can serve as a substitute source that shapes interns' socialization experiences and acceptance decisions. Mentor relationships have a strong influence in assisting mentees with career development (Hunt & Michael, 1983; Kram, 1985) and job (internship) satisfaction (Dougherty & Dreher, 2007; Fagenson, 1988).

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Organizational socialization is the process by which an individual acquires knowledge, behaviors, and relationships necessary to participate and succeed in their initial assignments within the organization (Chao et al.,1994; 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). For instance, Ostroff & Kozlowski (1993) showed that supervisors and peers help newcomers acquire the information to learn their assignments faster. Similarly, Gardner & Kozlowski (1993) found that students with internship and co-op experience learn faster upon entering their organization for full-time employment. These findings suggest socialization during the internship assignment can carry over into full-time employment, thereby highlighting the crucial role of socialization during the internship. In the section that follows, this paper highlights key factors that contribute to the socializations of interns, which in turn shape their acceptance decision (see Figure 1 for a pictorial representation of the model). The chief mechanisms for conversion to full-time employee (job offer acceptance) are learning during the internship experience and the satisfaction gained from the internship.

FIGURE 1: Conceptual model.
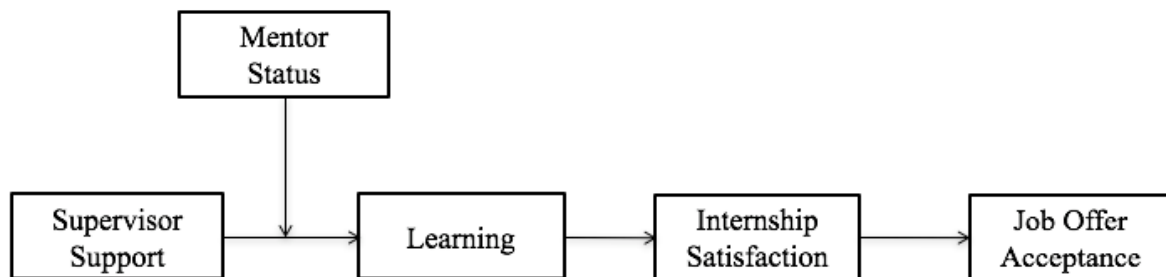
LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The Role of Supervisor Support on Learning

As newcomers to the organization, interns have a great deal of uncertainty regarding their job expectations, coworker relationships, and the prioritization of organizational events (Gardner & Kozlowski, 1993). Interns are an exceptional group of employees that receive special attention within the organization. As suggested earlier, socialization is the process in which interns assimilate to the workplace by way of learning expectations for the job and becoming acquainted with a social network (Gardner & Kozlowski, 1993). A major component of socialization is the relationship that an intern has with an assigned supervisor who disseminates useful information and guidance to the intern (Beenen, 2014). Supervisor support occurs when a supervisor acts as a role model and coach providing support, direction, and feedback regarding career plans and professional development to an intern (Carless, et al., 2012). The willingness of the supervisor to serve in this role creates the atmosphere for learning to occur (Beenen, 2014; Feldman,1990; Holyoak, 2012).

Beyond task learning, supervisors play a critical role in the professional development of their interns (Carless et al., 2012). Acting as role models and coaches, supervisors provide several instrumental resources to interns that are likely to lead to increased learning and potential job placement within the organization. According to mentor role theory, supervisors are in a unique position to provide psychosocial support and vocational facilitation. For instance, psychosocial support leads to personal

growth, feelings of competence, and professional development, while vocational facilitation enhances learning associated with the work and industry (Carless et al., 2012). Thus, supervisor support facilitates the development of professional knowledge, expertise, and identity (Carless et al., 2012; Pan et al., 2011). As such, this paper posits that increased support from a supervisor will lead to increased learning for the intern, as characterized by learning about self, about people within the organization, about the work, and about the industry (Liu et al., 2011).

Hypothesis 1. Supervisor support will be positively related to learning

Role of Intern Learning and Internship Satisfaction

Previous research has shown that employee learning results in feeling more satisfied with one's job (Ashforth et al., 2007; Liu et al., 2011; Pan et al., 2011). Drewery et al. (2019) demonstrate that work quality (learning, impact, and relatedness) influence work engagement and organizational commitment. As interns learning increases over time, their uncertainty about their work tasks dwindles, which could contribute to feelings of efficacy and overall positive regard for the job (Lee & Klein, 2002; Liu et al., 2011). The internship context is an opportunity for interns to acquire knowledge and skills through formal and informal learning. To the extent that such context can provide such opportunities, previous research suggests this would result in interns experiencing greater job satisfaction (Rowden & Conine, 2005). Indeed, D'abate et al. (2009) found that interns reported greater internship satisfaction when their internship provided significant learning opportunities. Based on the above, this paper proposes:

Hypothesis 2. Learning will be positively related to internship satisfaction

Intern Satisfaction and Conversion of Interns to Employees

Interns are in a unique position to experience a more realistic job preview than a traditional applicant who has never worked for the company. Given the talent acquisition perspective employers take regarding internships, employers may be extended an offer in which the intern will decide to accept the offer (remain with the company) or reject the offer (turnover). Thus, this paper draws from the broader job turnover and the internship literature to understand how internship satisfaction affects job offer acceptance.

Consistent with previous literature (Drewery et al., 2019; Feldmen & Weitz, 1990; Hurst et al., 2012), internship satisfaction may affect the decisions on job offer acceptance due to the intern's affective commitment to the organization. If an intern is satisfied with the internship, he or she is likely to form an organizational commitment that affectively binds him to the company and experience positive attitudes towards the overall industry (Liu et al., 2011). This commitment is likely to influence the intern's decisions regarding job offers. Indeed, job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment have been shown to lead to greater job offer acceptance intentions—an important antecedent to actual acceptance (Breitsohl & Ruhle, 2016). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment also negatively influences turnover intention (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Thus, this paper posits that job satisfaction is a pull factor whereby when interns are satisfied with their internship, they are more likely to accept a job offer from the company.

Hypothesis 3. Internship satisfaction will be positively related to job offer acceptance
Combining Hypotheses 1-3, this paper proposes the following:

Hypothesis 4. Learning and internship satisfaction will serially mediate the effect of supervisor support on job offer acceptance

Moderating Effects of Mentor Status

Up to this point, this paper discussed a process whereby receiving support from the immediate supervisor results in favorable outcomes for the intern. However, the broader literature on supervisor-subordinate exchange relationships suggests that employees (or in our context, interns) may sometimes find themselves in low-quality exchange relationships devoid of the necessary support, resources, and feedback needed to thrive (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Under these situations, this paper posits that having a mentor can act as a substitute for low supervisor support.

Before describing how mentors can play a substitute role, this paper first suggests that a mentor is uniquely distinct from a supervisor, although both may play similar roles in the socialization and learning processes for an intern. A mentor is a senior, experienced organizational member who helps more junior employees develop technical, interpersonal, and political skills (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993). Kram (1983) and Chao et al. (1992) articulate two functions to mentors in working with mentees, a career-related (providing sponsorship, coaching, challenging assignments, exposure, visibility and protection) and psychosocial (friendship, role modeling and counseling). Mentoring relations are important for career development (Dougherty & Dreher, 2007; Feldman, 1988; Hall, 1976; Hunt & Michael, 1983; Kram, 1985) and career satisfaction (Dougherty & Dreher, 2007; Fagenson, 1988, 1989; Whitely et al., 1991).

Further, organizations assign a supervisor to the intern, whereas a mentor is typically a more natural relationship (Chao et al., 1992). Literature shows that mentoring received from a supervisor is associated with greater support than in nonsupervisory mentoring due to greater opportunity for interaction (Eby et al., 2015). This is likely because supervisors are also able to give employee development and performance-related guidance that nonsupervisory mentors cannot. The role modeling provided by supervisors is also more directly applicable for employees, since they are modelled in the same workspace of the employee which may or may not be true for mentors (Eby et al., 2015).

Ideally, a supervisor would also serve as a mentor to interns. However, depending on the willingness of the supervisor to provide support, an intern may or may not receive the attention needed to develop the above-mentioned skills or learning. Interns may turn to other more senior organizational members who are more open to supporting them as mentors to fill this void. Thus, in our context, a mentor is an individual other than the assigned supervisor who may contribute additional knowledge and learning experience to the intern.

The role of the mentor in this context buffers the undermining effects of low supervisor support on subsequent learning. When supervisor support is low, mentoring theory (Kram, 1985) suggest the mentor would play an instrumental role through the provision of support, coaching and guidance to the intern. Further, social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) suggest, in the absence of supervisor support, mentors model the behavior that support the transfer of organizational knowledge to the intern. In contrast, in situations where interns are experiencing higher supervisor support, this paper

posits the advantages associated with having mentor should diminish. Thus, this paper proposes the following substitution effect:

> *Hypothesis 5. Mentor status will moderate the positive relation of supervisory support with learning such that the relationship is stronger for interns who do not have a mentor versus those who do*

METHODS

Participants and Procedure

Michigan State University's institutional review board (IRB) approved this study to analyze a dataset provided by a third party, InternshipBridge, if no personal identifiers (email address or college affiliation) were included. Students and recent graduates at over 200 U.S. colleges and universities provided information through an internet-based survey. This convenience sample allowed us to focus on a broad segment of students who were searching for, engaged in or recently completed an internship. Each institution's career service center or internship office solicited participation and consent from their students through an email notification asking them to participate. Those students who completed the survey by a specified date were eligible for incentives. Though encouraged to complete the entire survey, their participation was voluntary (consent obtained through the colleges administering the survey), allowing them to choose not to provide a response to any question. A total of 27,164 students completed this survey. This study used a subsample of the total respondents. Specifically, this paper was interested in those respondents who recently completed an internship. The final sample for this study was 6,802. Our participants were mostly female (67%), White (73%), seniors (45.2%), with a mean age of 22.80 (*SD* = 5.49). At their internship site, most respondents worked more than 31 hours a week (44.4%). Respondents' internship experiences were diverse in terms of (1) type of sector (53% for-profit vs. 30.3% non-profit vs. 16.7% government), (2) organization size (ranging from 10-100 employees [34.8%] to 1,000-5,000 employees [18.3%]), and (3) length of internship (2-3 months [40.6%], 3-5 months [32.7%], 7-9 months [6.2%]). Fifty-seven percent of the respondents engaged in paid internships with 43% in unpaid assignments.

Measures

Unless otherwise noted, all scales used a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*.

Supervisor Support
Eight items that captures the interactions between interns and supervisors were adopted from Hurst and colleagues' studies (Hurst et al., 2012; Hurst et al., 2010). This measure is on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *none or not extent* to 5 = *always*. Sample items include: "My supervisor conveyed feelings of respect," "My supervisor shared with me his/her career history," and "My supervisor increased my contact with higher level management." The reliability coefficient was .90.

Learning
The measure of learning was adopted from Liu et al. (2011), using 9 items that reflect learning in the internship context. As their 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 .91.

Intern Satisfaction

This scale constructed for this survey contained four items. Previous literature informed item creation examining internship satisfaction (Hurst et al., 2012) as well as the existing literature on job satisfaction (Cammann et al., 1979). Example items included: "I was satisfied with my internship experience with my host organization," I was assigned meaningful projects as assignments" and "I was able to assume additional responsibilities at my internship experience." The coefficient reliability was .87.

Mentor Status

Respondents indicated whether they had a mentor who helped them learn about their new job. Like previous studies (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993, p. 176), interns perceive? the definition of a mentor as "someone at a higher level than you (in the organization) who has helped you by taking you 'under their wing,' even though they were not required to do so". In addition, respondents indicated whether the mentor was someone other than their supervisor. The majority of participants (59.6%) indicated they had a mentor. Mentor status was coded as a binary variable: 'mentor' versus 'no mentor.'

Job Offer Acceptance

At the time of the survey, 939 participants (13.8%) had been extended a job offer. A follow-up question asked whether they accepted the offer (0 = declined offer, 1 = accepted offer). The majority of participants (65.4%) accepted their job offer. Some students were still waiting to receive job offers while some students expressed no interest in working for their host organization. For those students who interned with education, health, non-profit and government understood that these organizations likely did not have full-time positions available and did not expect a job offer.

Control Variables

In all analyses, gender, race/ethnicity, whether the internship was paid versus unpaid, and whether the internship was full time or part time were controlled for. These covariates were included based on prior research showing their relationship with variables in our model (Liu et al., 2011). All paths reported below (see Figure 2) remained significant with these control variables included. For model parsimony, these control variables were excluded in our final model presentation, though the correlations among the controls and our focal variables are reported in Table 1.

Analytical Procedure

To test our hypotheses, this study employed path analysis using Mplus 7 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2012) with Full Information Maximum Likelihood Estimator. Model fit employed commonly used fit criteria (root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] ≤.08; comparative fit index [CFI] ≥ .95; and standard root mean square residual [SRMR] ≤.08; Hu & Bentler, (1999). Because job offer acceptance is dichotomous, Mplus reports Weighted Root Mean Square Residual (WRMR) instead of standardized root-mean-square residual.

Further, prior to testing our hypotheses, confirmatory factory analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the distinctiveness of our focal measures. Specifically, three different measurement models were compared against each other: a three-factor model separating supervisor support, learning, and intern satisfaction; a two-factor model with supervisor support as separate and learning and intern satisfaction loading onto a single factor; and a single-factor model whereby all the items loaded onto a single factor. The fit statistics provided an acceptable fit for the three-factor model as indicated by the fit indices, (χ^2 = 10777.59, df = 186, RMSEA = .09, CFI =.88, SRMR = .05) with all factor loadings larger

than .70 and statistically significant ($p < .05$). This three-factor model fit the data significantly better than the two-factor model, ($\Delta\chi2 = 6085.28$, $\Delta df = 2$; $p < .01$) and the one-factor model, ($\Delta\chi2 = 15261.04$, $\Delta df = 3$; $p < .01$). According to the CFA results, our focal variables are distinct elements that all capture various aspects of the internship experience.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables.

TABLE 1: Means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	.33	.47								
2. Race/ethnicity	.73	.45	.01							
3. Paid internship	.53	.50	.15**	.04**						
4. Hours worked	.46	.50	.13**	.02	.41**					
5. Mentor status	.60	.49	.01	.03*	.15**	.19**				
6. Supervisor support	3.71	.90	.00	.00	.05**	.10**	.24**			
7. Learning	4.27	.66	-.08**	.04**	.06**	.12**	.26**	.59**		
8. Internship satisfaction	4.27	.82	-.02	.05**	.08**	.09**	.21**	.61**	.67**	
9. Job offer acceptance	.65	.48	.01	.00	.10**	.07*	.12**	.24**	.11**	.22**

Note. N = 6,802. Gender: 1 = male, 0 = female; Race/ethnicity: 1 = White, 0 = Nonwhite; Paid internship: 1 = yes, 0 = no; Hours worked: 1 = full time, 0 = part time; Mentor status: 1 = mentor, 0 = no mentor; job offer acceptance: 1 = accept offer, 0 = reject offer. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$

Men were more likely than women to be in paid internships, primarily because of their academic disciplines. Men tended to be concentrated in engineering, computer science and business where the majority of internships (over 75%) were paid. Women were over represented in humanities, arts, communication, and social sciences where internships are generally unpaid. Men, despite being paid, reported lower learning and intern satisfaction than women. White students were more likely to be in paid internships than students of color (Black, Hispanic/Latina or Asian) and reported higher learning and satisfaction scores. Students in paid internships, those who were White, and those who worked more hours per week tended to have a mentor.

Figure 2 provides standardized path analytic results for the proposed relationships. The overall model had a good fit to the data: ($\chi^2 = 34.48$, $df = 8$; RMSEA = .02; CFI = .99; WRMR = .77). Since the model utilizes a maximum-likelihood estimation method, the entire sample was used ($N = 6802$) even when considering our dependent variable (job offer acceptance) included a subset of the sample ($N = 939$). This paper found support for Hypothesis 1: a positive relationship between supervisor support learning ($B = .59$, $p < .01$). Hypothesis 2 predicted that a positive relationship between learning and internship satisfaction. Consistent with this prediction, this paper found that learning was positively related to internship satisfaction ($B = .42$, $p < .01$). Further, Hypothesis 3, which stated a positive relationship between internship satisfaction and job offer acceptance, was supported ($B = .21$, $p < .01$). As stated in the control variable section, we did control for gender, race/ethnicity, whether the

internship was paid versus unpaid, and whether the internship was full time or part time in all our models and our path analytic results remained significant.

FIGURE 2: Path analytic results.
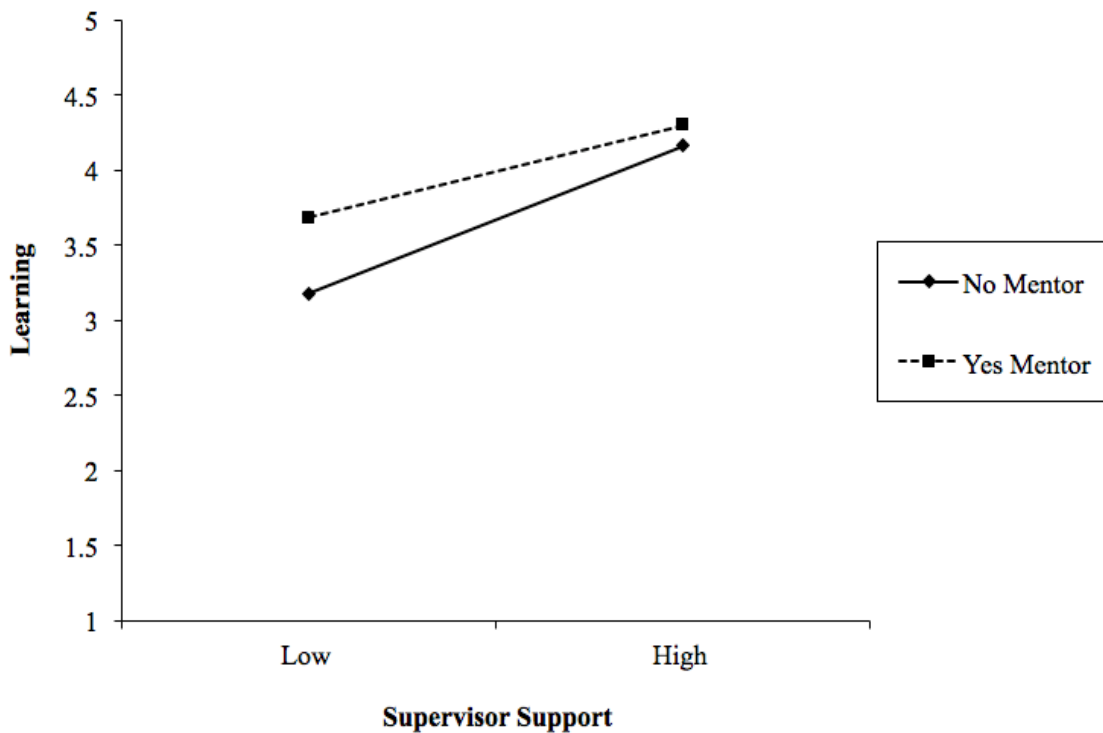

Note. * $p < .01$

Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis 4 stated that learning and internship satisfaction would serially mediate the relationship between supervisor support and job offer acceptance. To test the indirect effects, this study used the model indirect function in Mplus with 10,000 bootstraps iterations. The indirect effect proved significant when the 95% confidence interval (CI) does not contain zero. This study found full support for this hypothesis such that learning, and job satisfaction serially mediated the relationship between supervisor support and job offer acceptance ($B = .053$, $SE = .013$; CI: .027, .079). As a supplementary analysis, we considered alternative pathways for the mediating effect (i.e., the effect for learning or internship satisfaction separately while controlling for the factors) and the effects were not significant.

Moderation Analysis

Lastly, Hypothesis 5 stated that mentor status is a moderator for the relation of supervisor support on learning such that this relation is stronger for interns who do not have a mentor versus those who do. For Hypothesis 5, the interaction between supervisor support and mentorship status was significantly related to learning ($B = -.23$, $p < .01$). In line with our prediction (see Figure 3), simple slopes analysis revealed interns without a mentor benefitted from higher supervisory support ($B = .63$, $p < .01$) versus those with a mentor ($B = .51$, $p < .01$).

FIGURE 3: Mentor status moderated the effect of supervisor support on learning.

Note. For supervisor support, low and high are one SD below and above the mean.

DISCUSSION

The data provides support the positive relationship between supervisor support and learning. Further, this paper established a positive relationship between learning and internship satisfaction, which is in turn positively related to job offer acceptance. Data also provides support that learning, and internship satisfaction serially mediate the relationship between supervisor support and job offer acceptance. Furthermore, the data supports that mentor status serves as a moderator for the relation of supervisor support on learning.

Our study contributions in several ways to the intern socialization literature. One important takeaway that this paper finds consistently in the broader socialization literature is supervisors who provide the support, resources, feedback foster intern's learning and thus directly link to job offer acceptance. This study highlights the importance of fostering developmental interpersonal relationships that set the stage for learning to occur, which in turn permits interns to evaluate their internships more favorably resulting in job offer acceptance. Our process model also extends newcomer socialization literature since our findings hold when considering individuals with temporary and short-lived status in the workplace.

The importance of mentors in helping individuals 'learn the ropes' has been well demonstrated in the literature (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993). Our study found the importance of interns developing strong supervisory exchange relationships in advancing the positive outcomes for interns. However, not all individuals may develop meaningful high-quality exchange relationships with their assigned

supervisor. Our findings showed interns having a mentor helped with situations when interns reported lower supervisory support thus acting as a substitute. This finding adds to the intern literature by suggesting multiple organizational agents could be utilized to ensure interns acquire the learning development needed to create a favorable experience that enhances the conversion of interns to employees.

This study has several useful implications for internship advisors and host organizations for arranging meaningful internship experiences for students. First, our results underscore the importance of having a supportive supervisor. Interns who have a supervisor with whom they can share the fears, anxieties, aspirations, and emotions have outcomes that are more favorable. While interns benefit from supervisors who can introduce them to other organizational members, this advantage is often trumped by supervisors who provide a comfortable environment for interns to express themselves. Organizations that host interns need to carefully select staff members who will sponsor and support the intern. Second, in the event this matching is unsuccessful, our findings indicate this is where a mentor can play a pivotal role building upon and extending what the intern's supervisor does. Therefore, organizations that allow interns to seek out mentors during their assignment to gain stronger relations will aid with converting them to full-time employees later.

Both the host organizations and universities can encourage and initiate mentor-mentee relationships. Organizations may develop and provide interns with formal mentorship programs by matching and assigning mentors with similar functions, goals, and interests. Organizations can also develop programs or events in which interns meet and engage with senior employees such that informal mentorships can form. College counselors in career offices or internship advisors can also assist in the matching process by collaborating with host organizations before the start of the student's assignment. Organizations can also encourage senior employees to reach out to interns as mentors and encourage or train supervisors to provide proper support to their assigned interns.

Though our study design had several strong features (e.g., large sample size, diverse student representation from different educational institutions), our study is not without limitations. Our first limitation is the cross-sectional nature of study. To understand further the causal linkages presented in the current study, a longitudinal study that tracks the development of our focal constructs during the internship experience would strengthen the results. This is theoretically possible, but the actual administration would be difficult, and the sample confined to an exceedingly small number. Some of the concerns of common-method bias as found in cross-sectional studies are also alleviated in our study by our moderation finding, which is hard to detect when common-method variance is a problem (Siemson et al., 2010).

Despite these limitations, future research can build on the current work in several ways. One area for further development is to consider mentor type as it related to intern experience. Mentorship is often based on an informal relationship formed between a more senior employee and a junior employee. However, many internships also offer formal mentorships, assigned by the organization. Chao et al (1992) found that interns perceive more career-related support from informal mentors than from formal mentors. However, those with mentors are not shown to have significant differences in the amount of psychosocial functions (Chao et al., 1992). Thus, one might expect that interns who are formally assigned mentors or who informally create mentorship relationships could lead to differential amounts of learning, which in turn can influence the conversion process. Another future research consideration is examining how socialization experiences during internships relate to early on the job experiences once the intern has been converted to an employee. Furthermore, the use of qualitative research could

augment this study to further explain the mechanisms. Additional research can be conducted to investigate the significance of gender with being paid, hours worked, and learning. The internship literature needs to expand the criteria from short-term outcomes (i.e., job acceptance) to more distal outcomes (e.g., job performance). In addition, even longer time horizon constructs can be examined such as how internship experiences can set the stage for early and long-term career success.

CONCLUSION

This study drew upon information provided by students engaged in internships throughout the U.S. The internship approach is the primary approach to work-integrated learning in the U.S. though other approaches are emerging such as renewal of apprentice programs, non-degree-based credentials, and creative learning-work environments. Still the U.S. lags the U.K., Europe, Australia, and Singapore, for example, in embracing a broader range of learning and work opportunities (Merisotis, 2020). U.S. faculty resist further efforts to vocationalize the curriculum and include academic based efforts such as service learning, study abroad and community engagement under the work-integrated umbrella (Bok, 2020). Fortunately, our study transcends these constrained views of work-integrated learning, being applicable to any learning-work situation where the work host provides supervisory and mentor support to the student. One would hopefully obtain comparable results in other learning-work environments.

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About the Journal

The International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning (IJWIL) publishes double-blind peer-reviewed original research and topical issues dealing with Work-Integrated Learning (WIL). IJWIL first published in 2000 under the name of Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education (APJCE). Since then the readership and authorship has become more international and terminology usage in the literature has favored the broader term of WIL, in 2018 the journal name was changed to the International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning.

In this Journal, WIL is defined as "*an educational approach that uses relevant work-based experiences to allow students to integrate theory with the meaningful practice of work as an intentional component of the curriculum. Defining elements of this educational approach requires that students engage in authentic and meaningful work-related task, and must involve three stakeholders; the student, the university, and the workplace*". Examples of practice include off-campus, workplace immersion activities such as work placements, internships, practicum, service learning, and cooperative education (Co-op), and on-campus activities such as work-related projects/competitions, entrepreneurships, student-led enterprise, etc. WIL is related to, but not the same as, the fields of experiential learning, work-based learning, and vocational education and training.

The Journal's main aim is to enable specialists working in WIL to disseminate research findings and share knowledge to the benefit of institutions, students, co-op/WIL practitioners, and researchers. The Journal desires to encourage quality research and explorative critical discussion that leads to the advancement of effective practices, development of further understanding of WIL, and promote further research.

The Journal is ongoing financially supported by the Work-Integrated Learning New Zealand (WILNZ; www.wilnz.nz), and the University of Waikato, New Zealand, and received periodic sponsorship from the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) and the World Association of Cooperative Education (WACE).

Types of Manuscripts Sought by the Journal

Types of manuscripts sought by IJWIL is primarily of two forms: 1) *research publications* describing research into aspects of work-integrated learning and, 2) *topical discussion* articles that review relevant literature and provide critical explorative discussion around a topical issue. The journal will, on occasions, consider good practice submissions.

Research publications should contain; an introduction that describes relevant literature and sets the context of the inquiry. A detailed description and justification for the methodology employed. A description of the research findings - tabulated as appropriate, a discussion of the importance of the findings including their significance to current established literature, implications for practitioners and researchers, whilst remaining mindful of the limitations of the data, and a conclusion preferably including suggestions for further research.

Topical discussion articles should contain a clear statement of the topic or issue under discussion, reference to relevant literature, critical and scholarly discussion on the importance of the issues, critical insights to how to advance the issue further, and implications for other researchers and practitioners.

Good practice and program description papers. On occasions, the Journal also seeks manuscripts describing a practice of WIL as an example of good practice, however, only if it presents a particularly unique or innovative practice or was situated in an unusual context. There must be a clear contribution of new knowledge to the established literature. Manuscripts describing what is essentially 'typical', 'common' or 'known' practices will be encouraged to rewrite the focus of the manuscript to a significant educational issue or will be encouraged to publish their work via another avenue that seeks such content.

By negotiation with the Editor-in-Chief, the Journal also accepts a small number of *Book Reviews* of relevant and recently published books.