Student Ratings of Internship: Influence on Self-Determination

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Fehribach Center Professional Internship Program

• Created in 2014 as a partnership between Ball State University and Eskinaze Health to provide high quality, paid, internship experiences to students with physical disabilities
  • As of summer 2021, 131 students, representing 25 colleges and universities in Indiana have completed 255 internship experiences (Gregory S. Fehribach Center, 2021).

• Students complete an 8-week internship at a participating employer-matched based on their professional interests with access to career development supports, housing, and transportation as needed (Gregory S. Fehribach Center, 2021).
The Center Internship Program - Key Features

- Center staff provide information and technical assistance on important topics such as The Americans with Disabilities Act- As Amended (ADA-AA), accommodations, accessibility, and best practices on employing people with disabilities (Parker & Markle, 2021).

- Interns are offered additional programming to enhance their personal growth and development, including opportunities for professional networking, designed to increase their confidence for work and career.
Students with Disabilities and Employment

• Significant inequity in employment rates, quality, and pay between college graduates with and without disabilities (Gillies, 2012; Kessler Foundation, 2020; Williams, 2008).
  • Disproportionate negative impact of ableism for individuals with visible disabilities who may need to request accommodations - lower pay, fewer opportunities

• Internships are a valuable career-development activity for all students - increases competitiveness in the job market
  • In an experimental study of fictitious resumes, those with internships more likely to be called for an interview (Baert et al., 2021)
  • Internships predictive of greater job and career satisfaction, career support, and faster promotion (D'Abate, 2010)
Why Consider Self-Determination and Internships?

- Benefits of internships extend to increased self-knowledge of interests, what is a good "fit" for me, what I do and do not want in a job, meeting expectations of work and social habits in professional settings.
  - Consistent with self-determination, an "ingredient" in career success
- However, not all internships are created equal and would be expected to result in personal growth.
- Understanding students' perception of the internship helps inform what leads to growth, can provide feedback to team and sites, and inform future expansions.
Study Goals

1. Assess students’ perception of the quality of their internship experience.

2. Assess pre and post changes in self-determination corresponding with the internship experience.
Assessment Timeline

- Self-Determination
  Before Internship Start
- Internship Quality
  End of Internship
- Self-Determination
  8 Weeks after Internship Ends
Participants

- 38 college students with a diagnosis of at least one physical disability completing an internship over summer 2021
- Mean age=22.89 years, range=19-33
- 57% female, 39% male, 4% transgender
- 25% in their second year of college, 21% in their third year, 25% in their fourth year, and 27% in their fifth year of college or higher
- 77% identified as White, 11% identified as Latinx or Hispanic, 4% identified as Black or African American, 4% Identified as Asian, and 4% identified as 2 or more races
How do students rate internship quality?
The Quality of Work Experience inventory

- Rates three critical aspects of perceived quality, that align with Self-Determination theory: **autonomy, belonging, and competence**.
- 12 items, strongly agree -> strongly disagree
- Includes items regarding fit, training, experiences with supervisors and coworkers, and growth.
  - “My internship gave me more confidence in my ability to work”
  - “My internship gave me a better idea of the kind of job I want to do in the future”
  - “My supervisors and coworkers allowed me to decide how to best do my job”
  - “My supervisors and coworkers made me feel like part of the team”
- Achieved similarly good results in an independent transition-aged youth with disability sample, internal consistency = .872 (N=56)
Findings- Ratings of Internship Quality

- Interns showed high levels of satisfaction with their internship experience
  - Average = 42.27, highest possible score = 53

- Interns were somewhat to extremely likely to recommend the internship program to their peers
  - Average = 4.84, highest possible score = 5
Remote vs On-site Format?

- Does internship satisfaction rating depend on format of internship? Remote or Onsite
  - Remote vs on site vs both. (n=41)
    - Results from a one-way ANOVA indicated no significant differences in internship satisfaction between remote interns, on-site interns, and interns who worked both formats (F=.315, df=2, p=.732)
Did students report an increase in self-determination?
Self-Determination Assessment-Internet (SDAI; Hoffman, Hoffman, & Sawilowsky, 2015)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know yourself and your context</td>
<td>Developing a thorough understanding of one’s strengths, weaknesses, needs and preferences, as well as the opportunities and barriers in the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value yourself</td>
<td>Believing in oneself and the right to pursue what one desires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Setting goals, planning actions, and anticipating results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act</td>
<td>Taking action, accessing resources or support, being persistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience outcomes and learn</td>
<td>Comparing outcomes or performance to what was expected and making adjustments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Paired T-test SDAI Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value (2 tailed)</th>
<th>Cohen’s D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know Yourself</td>
<td>.176</td>
<td>.716</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>1.436</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>.160</td>
<td>.246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Yourself</td>
<td>.382</td>
<td>.652</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>3.419</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>.537</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>1.277</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act</td>
<td>.294</td>
<td>.524</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>3.273</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience Learning</td>
<td>.088</td>
<td>.668</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.770</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>.447</td>
<td>.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentile Score</td>
<td>8.588</td>
<td>17.623</td>
<td>3.022</td>
<td>2.842</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.487</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

- Interns rated quality as high and are likely to recommend the experience to others.
- No difference in satisfaction ratings based on internship format.
- Growth in several aspects of self-determination- total, their belief in themselves and their value, and ability to take action towards their goals
Implications

• Purposeful matching, technical assistance for employers, and personal development opportunities may be key features of internship programs that influence self-determination and student experience on site

• Disability Resource offices as potential partners / facilitators between students and employers
  • Expertise in ADA, accommodations, disability disclosure not available (generally) in other campus offices

• Remote work as a possible option if needed, can be a satisfying experience if done well
Discussion?

Questions?
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