Library and Information Science Internship: An Assessment of Positive Experiences

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This study explores whether Library and Information Science students from three universities who participated in experiential learning through internship programs have identical or different experiences during their internships under selected internship items and factors. The study also aims to gauge LIS interns' own personal experiences in their internships. The study results have demonstrated LIS interns' agreement with the Internship Experience Factors, indicating that the internships provided a meaningful learning experience. Interns from the University of Northern Philippines (UNP) reported better learning experiences than those from the Benguet State University (BSU) and the Ho Chi Minh City University of Social Sciences and Humanities (HCM-USSH). The correlation among the internship factors was consistently weak, except for the level of agreement among students on communication skills and the rest of the areas of the learning experience, except for the comfort with work environments item. It is recommended that an LIS Internship guide be established to improve the LIS interns' learning experience further. This guide can ensure that all interns have comparable experiences regardless of the type of library or institution to which they are deployed. Furthermore, it will make these experiences more holistic, standardized, and international in scope when collaborations are sought. A future study should also consider the exact nature of more universities.

Keywords: Experiential learning in LIS, Internship programs in LIS, Curriculum in Library and Information Science, Librarianship

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INTRODUCTION

Experiential learning provides students with a venue to observe the real working environment of their future field or profession. This type of learning allows them to apply the concepts they have learned over many years of studying at the university in a real working environment. They are exposed to the real-life atmosphere and environment of their chosen profession, where diverse personalities, cultures, practices, and varied know-how and technology are infused towards an institutional goal.

Library and Information Science (LIS) is one field that benefits from this mode of learning. While too many theories guide the practice of such a field, institutional differences often depart from such theories. Such deviations, e.g., the organization of information sources, circulation policies, service hours, etc., allow flexibility in implementing services, as different libraries and information centers cater to different types of patrons with varied information-seeking behaviors.

In the Philippines, an internship is a requirement for students enrolled in an undergraduate LIS program, allowing them to fully immerse themselves in the professional practice of the theories they have learned in their previous coursework. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order No. 24, Series of 2015, sets the highest quality standard for the education and training of library and information professionals (Balbin & Dolendo, 2023). The internships usually take place in different types of libraries, not too far from the University.

The Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) degree offered at Benguet State University (BSU) and the University of Northern Philippines (UNP) follows a designed curriculum with two internship courses taken consecutively during the final year of the degree program. Each year has two semesters and a midterm (summer). The first semester of internships is usually held within the university's own libraries. In contrast, the second semester of internships is held in cooperating local libraries (academic, public, and sometimes special and school libraries) situated near the two universities.

Similarly, the Bachelor of Arts in Information and Library Science (BAILS) degree offered by the Faculty of Library and Information Science at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh City (HCM-USSH) is a structured curriculum that includes two internship courses. However, there is a mid-course internship in the fourth semester and a graduation internship in the seventh semester. Furthermore, students should have finished the first group of professional courses before their mid-course internship. By the time of the graduation internship, the second group of professional courses should also have been completed.

The internships are also done in different types of libraries near the University (TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC KHOA HỌC XÃ HỘI VÀ NHÂN VĂN - ĐHQG TP.HCM, n.d.).

This study is conducted to explore whether LIS students engaged in experiential learning through internship programs have identical or differing experiences across select factors in internship environments, as a basis for furthering or improving existing internship programs. This study would also serve as an evaluation tool, which may help partner libraries or institutions better accommodate LIS interns and implement internship programs. In line with Binder et al. (2015), we see the academic value of internships as an indirect path to career outcomes.

OBJECTIVES

This study aims to assess and understand the learning experiences of LIS student interns based on identified internship experience factors and factor items. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Assess LIS students' internship learning experiences across six key dimensions: *Positive Internship Experience*, *Positive Work Environment*, *Improved Professional Prospects*, *New Skills*, *Comfort with Work Environment, and Communication Skills* during their internship programs;
2. Determine whether students' responses on these factors differ significantly across universities; and
3. Examine the correlations among the different areas of learning experience within the internship programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An internship course is among the most important in the curriculum because it provides students with hands-on opportunities to apply their knowledge in real-world scenarios and prepare them for their chosen professional careers (Wang, 2024). A successful internship program helps student interns integrate their theoretical knowledge with practical experience (Hussein & Lopa, 2018). Poncio (2024) posited that one advantage of internships or industrial training programs is that they help students align themselves with their career goals. Similarly, the study by Arif et al. (2018) demonstrated that students valued the program and considered it highly beneficial, as it allowed them to acquire skills, gain exposure to professional culture, develop professional networks, receive guidance in job-seeking, and attend professional development programs. These views put forward the concept of the "theory-practice gap." It is often assumed that interns sometimes lack the required competencies to handle professional scenarios effectively; this may result from a gap between the theories taught at a university and the competencies expected in practice

(de Greeff & Els, 2024). The Library and Information Science curriculum is no different from other fields of education, using experiential learning through internship programs to narrow the gap. In the context of relational pedagogy in academic library internships, McColl and Sestrick (2024) stated that internships provide a unique opportunity for librarians to create a highly relational learning environment by developing meaningful connections with students and facilitating student-to-student and student-to-professional connections. In echoing the internship experience and career intentions framework, the study of Zhao and Mbuthia (2023) on the influence of internship training experience on Kenyan and Ugandan 'doctors' career intentions and decisions found that clinical exposure during the internship, work-life balance, aspects of workplace culture such as relationships with consultants and other team members, and concerns over future job security and professional development all influence Kenyan and Ugandan doctors' career preferences.

Correspondingly, a study on the effectiveness of library practicum in linking theory and practice found that practical training was indeed a highly effective and highly relevant educational experience, appreciated by students and meeting their expectations (Musonda, Zulu & Chewe, 2020). Despite the stated positive impacts of experiential learning through internships, satisfaction among students or interns with their actual experiences is seldom measured, whether positive or negative. Most often, student interns are evaluated only by the heads or staff of cooperating institutions based on their attendance, the quality and quantity of their output, their relations with their staff and clients, etc. They are seldom asked to assess their learning experiences during their internship. The absence of such may hinder the full positive impact of an internship as a mode of experiential learning.

Relatively, the results of Yesmin's (2024) study on LIS students' professional skills and personal competencies with internship effects confirm the impact of internship programs on personal and professional skills and competencies linked to future career-oriented employment. As such, she proposes a module to prepare students for employment, as universities offering LIS internships still lack modules or frameworks for such programs. Iglesias et al. (2023) hypothesized that having pre-professional experience in an academic library, whether through employment or internship/practicum, is significantly associated with successful job search outcomes.

This research further advances within these premises, aiming to emphasize the importance of establishing a framework or module to create a better, more uniform learning environment for LIS internship programs across institutions.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive statistics were employed to describe the data, and inferential statistics were used to analyze and interpret it. A comparison of the gathered data was conducted using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). ANOVA is an inferential test that determines whether differences observed in the sample data across experimental groups indicate differences in the populations they represent. Furthermore, a post-hoc test, Tukey's honestly significant difference (Tukey's HSD), was used to compare groups pairwise and to establish the rank of the groups. On the other hand, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to test the correlation between two factors of the Internship Experience. Pearson's r was computed to measure the magnitude and direction of the correlation between the variables. These coefficients were again tested inferentially (0.01 level of significance) to determine whether the correlation observed at the sample level could be extended to the populations involved in the study.

The respondents of the survey were Library and Information Science (LIS) students from three universities. One from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and two from the Philippines. A total of seventy-seven (77) respondents participated in the study (Table 1). Respondents were LIS students who had completed their required internships. Library and Information Science programs at BSU and UNP have been offered for a long time, producing many licensed librarians in the Philippines. On the other hand, HCM-USSH is one of the few academic institutions in Vietnam that offers a degree in LIS.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents

University	No. of Respondents	Mode of Data Collection
University of Northern Philippines (UNP)	14 (100%)	Google Form (Online)
Benguet State University (BSU/Philippines)	36 (100%)	Face-to-face (In-person)
University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City (HCM-USSH)	27/43 (62.79%)	Google Form (Online)

The number of students involved in the study is primarily limited by the number of students enrolled in LIS internships at the time the study was conducted. The researchers aimed to collect data from those engaged in LIS internship programs at the

time of the study to ensure their learning experiences remained current. While the experiences of previous students are also important, it was difficult to identify them and locate their current contact details. The relatively low survey response rate from HCM-USSH is attributable to the fact that researchers could not compel all qualified respondents to participate. A data-gathering tool was adapted with permission to fit LIS internship settings, following Gupta (2010).

The tool consists of six (6) Internship Experience Factors. Within each factor, there are specific items as listed in Table 2. Data from UNP and HCM-USSH were collected via Google Forms, while data from BSU were collected in person. Convenience was considered in the data collection, which depended on the willingness of respondents and the teachers/librarians in charge or part of the LIS internship programs to participate in this research. A mixed-methods approach to data collection was employed because the three universities are geographically distant from each other, and the data were analyzed at BSU.

Table 2

Internship Experience Factors Items

Internship Experience Factors	Factor Items
1. Positive Internship Experience	a. I really did something worthwhile in my Library Internship.
	b. I would rate my Library Internship experience as excellent (overall).
	c. I was satisfied with the work assignments I had during my Library Internship.
	d. My Library Internship was very interesting.
	e. Based on work plans, I could recommend the same library for future interns.
	f. Based on the librarian in charge, supervisor, and personnel, I could recommend the same library/information center to other students.
	g. There is a right amount of one-on-one time with the Library Internship in charge of librarians to review activity.
	h. There is sufficient pre-deployment orientation from the librarian in charge.
	i. Assigned Library Internship responsibilities were well-defined.
	j. Assigned Library Internship work responsibilities were well-executed within the time frame. The work plans were challenging and stimulating.
	k. I proactively asked for feedback on my performance during my Library Internship.
	l. I took the initiative to get acquainted with the Library Staff/Personnel.

2.	Positive Work Environment	a.	I was well-received by the Library Internship in charge of librarians at the beginning of the Library Internship. I received respect from my co-interns during the internship.
		b.	I received respect from the Library Internship in charge of librarians during the internship.
		c.	I was treated on the same professional level as the other library staff.
		d.	I was treated on the same professional level as the other co-Library Interns.
		e.	I now feel more comfortable working with different types of people as a result of the Library Internship.
		f.	The Library Internship required the use of varied skills and talents.
		g.	My course equipped me with the necessary skills to perform tasks during the Library Internship.
		h.	Felt comfortable talking to the Library Internship in-charge or librarians regarding problems encountered.
3.	Improved Professional Prospects	a.	Students who performed well during the Library Internship are more likely to get employed faster.
		b.	Library Internship is an effective strategy for gaining employment.
		c.	I now feel more confident in finding a job faster as a result of my Library Internship.
		d.	I gained more confidence in taking the board exam as a result of my Library Internship.
		e.	In general, the Library Internship helped me have a better view of Librarianship and the professions aligned with it.
		f.	I feel my personal interests and career ambitions in Librarianship are more defined.
		g.	I feel that my internship experience gave me a realistic preview of my field.
4.	New Skills	a.	The Library Internship experience improved my networking skills.
		b.	I developed new skills and knowledge as a result of the internships.
		c.	This experience helped me clarify my career goals relative to Librarianship.
		d.	The library internship experience improved my information, communication, and technology (ICT) skills.
		e.	I enhanced my technical skills during my internship.
		f.	I enhanced my soft skills (behavior/attitude/communication, etc.) during my internship.
5.	Comfort with Work Environment	a.	Communication with and among the Library Internship in-charge or librarians improved my level of comfort in the workplace.
		b.	Communication among co-interns improved my level of comfort in the workplace.
		c.	Communication with the staff in charge improved my level of comfort in the workplace.

	d.	I was satisfied with my interactions with the Library Internship in charge and librarians.
	e.	I was satisfied with my interactions with my co-interns.
	f.	I was satisfied with the involvement of the Library Internship in-charge and librarians in the Library Internship.
	g.	The Library Internship in charge was a good professional model for me.
	h.	The librarians were good professional models for me.
	i.	The Library Internship in-charge shared personal experiences to give us an alternative perspective on our problems.
	j.	The librarians shared personal experiences to give us an alternative perspective on our problems.
	k.	The Library Internship in charge of librarians offered doable solutions or alternative perspectives to our problems.
	l.	My Library Internship work plans were beneficial to the goal of enhancing overall librarianship skills.
	m.	Learned more from my Library Internship than from other related activities set outside regular class.
	n.	I am better prepared to enter the field of Librarianship as a result of the Library Internship.
6. Communication Skills	a.	My internship experiences improved my oral communication skills.
	b.	My internship experiences improved my written communication skills.
	c.	My internship experience improved my leadership/teamwork skills.
	d.	My internship experience improved my interpersonal communication skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings are presented and interpreted in consideration of the stated objective.

Level of Agreement on Internship Experiences by LIS students

The evaluation of an academic internship program provides valuable input to improve the quality of LIS programs (Arif, Nunes, & Kanwal, 2018). The respondents agreed that all areas of their internship (Table 3) provided them with quality experiences, as evidenced by the mean scores ranging from 3.85 (*SD=0.53*) to 4.00 (*SD=0.48*). This result further exemplifies the importance of internship experiences. Providing future library and information professionals with what to expect during their actual deployment as full-fledged librarians. Their internship experiences allowed them to make necessary adjustments to what they can expect in their future and in their actual work environment. As posited by Kelly, Hoelscher, and Gauder (2014), when experiences are tailored to student interests, the library setting becomes a real-

world laboratory for skills training within undergraduate disciplines or career interests. Internships in academic libraries expose students to the many facets of librarianship, provide them with professional on-the-job experience, and aid in recruitment to the profession (Dahl, 2011).

Table 3

Level of agreement of LIS students in the Quality of their Internship Experiences

Areas of Internship Experiences	Mean Level of Agreement	Qualitative Interpretation	Standard Deviation
Positive Internship Experience	3.85	Agree	0.53
Positive Work Environment	3.98	Agree	0.53
Improved Professional Prospects	3.88	Agree	0.49
New Skills	4.00	Agree	0.48
Comfort with Work Environment	3.94	Agree	0.52
Communication Skills	3.86	Agree	0.76

Range 1.00-1.80 (Strongly Disagree), 1.81-2.60 (Disagree), 2.61-3.40 (Neither D/A), 3.41-4.20 (Agree), 4.21-5.00 (Strongly Agree)

Over the years, the job requirements for librarians and information scientists have become increasingly competitive. Students must go beyond the coursework to learn about relevant technologies (Laskowski, 2018). Anent, results on the level of agreement of LIS students regarding the quality of their internship experiences (Table 3) indicate that *new skills* (*M=4.00, SD=0.48*) have the highest level of agreement, followed by *positive work environment* (*M=3.98, SD=0.53*) and *comfort with the work environment* (*M=3.94, SD=0.52*). In a similar study, Coddington (2020) concludes that participants' pre-service experience provided them with knowledge, skills, and confidence to work with staff and in site collections as in-service teachers. On-the-job training and practical experience (i.e., assistantships, practicums, part- or full-time employment, etc.) are more valuable to librarians in acquiring the skills needed to succeed in academic librarianship (Smith, Daugherty & Lowry, 2024).

Learning new things is one of the advantages of experiential learning: this is where you learn by actually doing, not merely by reading or memorizing. Furthermore, the results clearly indicate that a positive workplace atmosphere provides a better learning experience for the Interns. This is assuredly desired by those already in the working environment as well. As Lingard and Turner (2023) put it, the sense of place describes individuals' perceptions of the distinguishing qualities and attributes of an environment that shape positive feelings of attachment and promote mental well-being. While it is true that applying theoretical knowledge through internships comes with initial hesitation and anxiety, these feelings are easily overcome when interns observe positivity in the workplace.

The study results show that with respect to the level of their agreement on their internship experiences; respondents from the University of Northern Philippines did not record any level of agreement below the mean result of 3.40, with an interpretation of Neither Disagree/Agree, Disagree (2.60) and Strongly Disagree (1.8) in the factor items identified under each of the Internship Experience Factors (Table 1). This result clearly indicates that the Internship Experiences of LIS students from UNP were, to some extent, better than those of LIS students from Benguet State University and the Ho Chi Minh University of Social Sciences and Humanities.

On the other hand, Benguet State University recorded two factor items with mean scores of 2.92 and 3.31, respectively (Neither Disagree/Agree), both under the *Positive Internship Experiences*. Namely, "*I proactively asked for feedback on my performance during my library internship and took the initiative to get acquainted with the library staff and personnel.*" Students are expected to receive feedback from their staff after their internship, as this has always been the practice and part of their pre-deployment orientation. Perhaps students did not bother to ask for feedback. Some staff go out of their way and provide feedback to interns when issues arise, which can help prevent errors or faults from piling up.

Consequently, the interns' inability to initiate or establish a working relationship with the staff may have prevented them from seeking feedback on their performance during their internships. Finally, the level of agreement among the HCM-USSH LIS students on the three-factor items was below 3.40, interpreted as Neither Disagree/Agree. However, this time, these were distributed along three Internship Experience Factors: *Positive Internship Experience*. "*The workplans were challenging and stimulating* (3.22);" *Positive Work Environment*, "*I was treated on the same professional level as other library staff* (3.37);" and *Improved Professional Prospects*, "*I gained more confidence in taking the board exam as a result of my library internship* (30.7)."

Library and Information Science graduates from the Philippines are required by Law to take the Librarians' Licensure Examination (State Board) to practice legally in the Philippines. Unlike LIS students in Vietnam, who are not legally required to take any State Board exam to practice Librarianship in their country after graduation. Possibly, there is a need for a deeper examination as to why HCM-USSH students felt, to a certain degree, of not being treated professionally at the same level as the other library staff during their internship, and perhaps that is why their work plans came out to be somewhat not that challenging during their internship. Furthermore, it is possible that perhaps the cooperating institutions did not follow the work plans, as different institutions implement different management styles or cater to different types of library users, thus offering different services. Hence, monitoring learning outcomes is

imperative, and feedback should be elicited from students, especially during their internships.

Comparison of the LIS Students' Internship Experiences in the Three Universities

While different academic institutions employ different internal standards (rules, procedures, practices, etc.) in providing internship programs to their students, it always boils down to one purpose: to let students experience what it feels like to be in an actual working environment and to see how theories learned in schools are applied in real life. Standards are designed to provide guidelines that essentially serve as directions to help determine the ends educators want to achieve. Professional Standards provide a foundation for developing skills and competencies in those we teach (Dotson & Blake, 2015). In the same way, Benjamin and McDevitt (2018) relating to their study on the experiences of student library assistants in an academic library recommend that while it is clear that library assistants learned new knowledge and skills in their roles, some learning could be more intentionally structured for their benefit, or at a minimum could be communicated/highlighted as a benefit to the position.

Table 4

LIS Students' Level of Agreement in their Internship Experiences Compared According to the

School

Areas of Learning Experiences	Mean Level of Agreement			F-value	P-value
	HCM-USSH	BSU	UNP		
Positive Internship Experience	3.68[b]	3.81[b]	4.26[a]	9.42**	0.00
Positive Work Environment	3.75[b]	4.00[ab]	4.37[a]	11.13**	0.00
Improved Professional Prospects	3.70[b]	3.83[b]	4.39[a]	11.69**	0.00
New Skills	3.87[b]	3.96[b]	4.33[a]	5.65**	0.01
Comfort with Work Environment	3.80[b]	3.89[b]	4.32[a]	7.64**	0.00
Communication Skills	3.67[b]	3.85[ab]	4.25[a]	5.57**	0.01

Note. Legend: ns: the means of the two groups are not significantly different

**: at least one group is significantly different at 1% level

"means sharing the same letter is not significantly different"

In the learning experiences, as shown in the results presented in Table 4, at least one group differed significantly from the others. This is supported by the corresponding probability values, all of which are less than 0.01, and by a high F-statistic. This test compared the groups pairwise and established each group's specific ranking. As for *positive internship experiences, improved professional prospects, new*

skills, and comfort with the work environment, the levels of agreement among students at HCM-USSH and BSU are not significantly different. However, both groups are significantly lower than those of their counterparts at UNP. This result indicates that the internship experience of LIS students from UNP was, to some extent, better. This result is quite surprising, as both universities in the Philippines were expected to share similar internship experiences, as they implement LIS curricula under the same regulations. Such a result can be attributed to the different institutions to which students are assigned for internships. Different types of libraries, management, staff composition, and library users may have caused this result. These dynamics of the work environment are beyond the control of universities, thus providing varying internship experiences.

Additionally, as previously discussed, the BAILS degree program of the Faculty of Library and Information Science at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh City (HCM-USSH) stipulates that its internships are offered twice at two different study-year levels. Whereas the LIS degree program in the Philippines offers internships over two consecutive semesters in the last year of the program. First, within the university libraries, and second, in different types of libraries located near the university.

Regarding *positive work environment* and *communication skills*, the students from UNP had a significantly higher level of agreement compared to their counterparts in Vietnam. At the same time, BSU students' level of agreement was not substantially different from the other two groups. The seemingly greater display of UNP's agreement with the different Internship experiences suggests their efforts to maximize learning during their internship and perhaps their regard for the relevance of an internship as part of their pre-employment exposure. By fostering a positive work environment and encouraging open communication, different institutions can help interns overcome their anxiety, allowing them to become more engaged in their assigned tasks. This also helps them develop a better understanding and appreciation of their future profession.

The disparity in these results may be attributed to the lack of a common or similar standard, manual, or guide on how cooperating libraries or institutions in LIS internship programs should handle their interns. This standard may provide a levelled or identical experiential learning experience for the interns, regardless of the school they come from and the library they intern with. While learning may vary across institutions, the presence of LIS internship guidelines for cooperating agencies might offer a similar learning experience for all interns. These guidelines should be designed with the LIS curriculum in mind. Furthermore, interns may be permitted to evaluate the institutions to which they were deployed to improve their learning experience further. Currently, there is a lack of a standardized evaluation guide. The assessment is

typically conducted by institutions for their LIS interns, either during or after the internship. It is essentially a grading or rating mechanism of the intern, to some extent.

Correlation Between and Among the Areas of Learning Experience in the Internship Programs

The correlation between two factors of internship experience in the internship programs is presented in Table 5. In all cases, the coefficients were significant (p<0.01), indicating that the observations on the sample could be extended to the population. Similarly, all coefficients computed across all cases are positive, implying that as one variable increases, the other tends to increase as well, and vice versa. This means that the stated learning experiences complement or are somewhat correlated with each other. The discussion continues with pairs of variables that are strongly correlated, followed by pairs with weaker correlations.

Table 5

Correlation Between and AMONG THE Different Areas of Learning Experiences

Areas of Learning Experiences	Positive Internship Experience	Positive Work Environment	Improved Professional Prospects	New Skills	Comfort with Work Environment	Communication Skills
Positive Internship Experience	—	0.78** (Strong)	0.60** (Strong)	0.57** (Moderate)	0.69** (Strong)	0.38** (Weak)
Positive Work Environment	—	—	0.55** (Moderate)	0.57** (Moderate)	0.75** (Strong)	0.25** (Weak)
Improved Professional Prospects	—	—	—	0.66** (Strong)	0.52** (Moderate)	0.26** (Weak)
New Skills	—	—	—	—	0.62** (Strong)	0.31** (Weak)
Comfort with Work Environment	—	—	—	—	—	0.55** (Moderate)
Communication Skills	—	—	—	—	—	—

Note. Legend: ** Correlation coefficient is significantly different from zero at 1% level (p<0.01)

Ranges of r : ±1, ±0.80-±0.99, ±0.60-±0.79, ±0.40-±0.59, ±0.20-±0.39, ±0.01-±0.19, 0.00

Strength of Relationship: Perfect, Very Strong, Strong, Moderate, Wear, Very Weak, No Correlation

The results show that between *positive internship experience* and *positive work environment*, the correlation is strong (*r=0.78, p<0.01*). This means that when levels of agreement on *positive internship experiences* increase, there is a strong chance that agreement will also increase, and vice versa. This result strengthens the idea that a

positive internship experience is bolstered by library personnel displaying positive attitudes towards their interns before and during the internship program.

Mentoring is considered a crucial process in LIS, particularly for the development of new LIS professionals. Librarians can assist students in developing appropriate workplace attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, during mentoring, student workplace skills are developed rather than theoretical knowledge (Campbell-Meier & Hussey, 2016). These results are similar across *positive internship experience* and *improved professional prospects* (*r=0.60, p<0.01*), between the former and *comfort with the work environment* (*r=0.69, p<0.01*), between *positive work environment* and *comfort with the work environment* (*r=0.75, p<0.01*), between *improved professional prospects* and *new skills* (*r=0.66, p<0.01*), and between *new skills* and *comfort with the work environment* (*r=0.62, p<0.01*). Correspondingly, Oliver and Prosser (2018), in examining the characteristics and motivations of academic library professionals, concluded that prior work in an academic library is a substantial motivating factor for entry into the field (LIS), not only for traditional academic librarians, but also for academic library professionals who do not possess a degree in librarianship.

The correlation between *positive internship experience* and *new skills* (*r=0.57, p<0.01*) is only moderate. In other words, if students' agreement on a *positive work environment* increase, there is a moderate chance that their agreement on new skills also increases, and vice versa. The same can be concluded regarding the correlation between a *positive work environment* and *improved professional prospects* (*r=0.55, p<0.01*), between the latter and *comfort with work environments* (*r=0.52, p<0.01*), and between *comfort with work environments* and *communication skills* (*r=0.55, p<0.01*).

Finally, the correlation between students' level of agreement in *communication skills* and the rest of the learning experience areas is seen to be consistently weak (*r=0.25-0.38, p<0.01*), except for *comfort with the work environment*. This means that when the level of agreement on the development of communication skills increases, there is only a weak chance that their level of agreement in other areas will increase as well, and vice versa.

In particular, the factor items identified under the communication skills were limited to oral communication, written communication, leadership/teamwork, and interpersonal communication. In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order Number 24, series of 2015 (CHED CMO no. 24, s. 2015), section 6.1.b, articulates that graduates of BLIS in the Philippines should have the ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing, in both English and Filipino. Section 6.2.g highlights the BLIS graduates' ability to work in groups and to seek ways to contribute towards collective team effort to solve problems and achieve common goals. Moreover, section 4.6.4.A.1/3 of the same memorandum emphasizes that foundational

competencies that BLIS graduates should acquire include good oral and written communication skills and leadership. However, in both UNP and BSU library internships, the emphasis has been on developing communication skills during the internship, as reflected in the internship plan or activities, which are covered under *personal competencies*. There is an absence of a specific activity related to the development of communication skills in the interns. Similarly, the same situation has been observed in the BAILS program of HCM-USSH, where the acquisition or practice of communication skills has not been detailed in their Graduation Internship Content.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Library and Information Science (LIS) students, the respondents in this study, have solidified the claim that experiential learning through internships is a crucial component of the learning process for LIS students. It allows them to apply the knowledge or theories they have learned in school firsthand in real life. With the six identified Internship Experience Factors *(positive internship experience, positive work environment, improved professional prospects, new skills, comfort with the environment, and communication skills)*, all students agreed that these factors provided LIS interns with a sensible, actual learning experience. Perhaps their level of agreement can be equated with their level of satisfaction with their internship experiences. Participating libraries, as hosts for the internships, are also providing the interns with a positive learning environment.

In addition, a more specific work plan can be prepared to cover certain areas of the programs in detail, such as communication skills. A detailed or specific work plan was found to be absent in this regard. Thereby leaving the host libraries implementing activities with a broader learning perspective or based on their own routine activities. These leave the interns learning from one another, as different libraries have different objectives depending on the type of patrons they serve and the institutions to which they belong. In some instances, where vital library activities, such as information literacy programs and marketing, requiring extensive use of communication skills, were being conducted, interns' involvement was found to be minimal. This happens when host libraries lack confidence in their interns' capabilities. Particularly, when they do not have enough time to conduct in-depth orientations or when there is a very low tolerance for errors, during library activities that entail high visibility and full accountability.

The LIS Interns from the University of Northern Philippines had better learning experiences than those from the other two Universities. While it is not the primary purpose of this study, it is worth noting that the disparity can be attributed to the absence of a more consistent/uniform internship manual or guidelines. This is despite the universal knowledge that most processes involved in library operations or librarianship are guided by International Standards, most of which are recognized by

libraries worldwide, whether in professional skills or personal competencies of library professionals. Consequently, when these learning experiences were correlated, the results show a complementary effect, except in communication skills, where the relationship was weak. In contrast, the rest had moderate to strong relationships. This outcome exaggerates the implications of the lack of a more standardized LIS internship manual, or perhaps of its total absence.

The findings recommend and highlight the importance of having an established LIS internship manual. The manual must contain organizational information, internship program details, policies and procedures (including work plans covering all stated factors, or new ones as deemed appropriate), and information regarding the supervision and evaluation process. A manual that, besides providing a structured or uniform learning experience to all LIS interns, regardless of the type of library where they are deployed, must also provide a two-way feedback mechanism. A mechanism that allows interns to evaluate their experiences, and not only be assessed by the partner or cooperating libraries or institutions. Such a manual would enable and prepare LIS interns for their future career in library and information sciences and for any international library and information science internships. Moreover, there is a need for further research involving more universities and a larger population sample of LIS interns.

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