PROFESSIONALIZATION THROUGH SOCIALIZATION: STUDENT CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF INTERNSHIPS

by

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ABSTRACT

CHELSEA BEVERIDGE. Professionalization through socialization: Student conceptualizations of internships. (Under the direction of DR. LORIL GOSSETT)

Research suggests that internships lead beneficial outcomes for students, universities, and organizations (e.g., Eyler, 1992; Knouse & Fontenot, 2008), yet a large body of internship research is devoid of a theoretical basis. Previous research that has incorporated theory has positioned internships as vocational anticipatory socialization (VAS) – the period in which one is not yet in the workforce but is learning how to be an organizational member from school, family, and experiences (Jablin, 2001) – without much explanation or exploration as to its theoretical fit. There is limited research on internships, and even less research on internships as VAS. With increasing numbers of students completing internships and more universities encouraging and requiring them, it is important not only to understand what outcomes can come from internships, but why internships lead to these outcomes, if and how these outcomes can be experienced by all interns, and where internship research belongs within socialization theory. Internships offer an opportunity to understand the interconnection of multiple socialization contexts, and may serve as a particularly influential anticipatory experience. The purpose of the current study was to examine how students conceptualize internships in relation to their goals and expectations in order to more definitively understand how internships fit within socialization theory.

Key words: socialization, internships, qualitative, professionalization

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

College internships have been a common student experience for many years now (Gault, Redington, & Schlager, 2000). Research has suggested internships are valuable to students because they lead to outcomes such as better understanding of career goals and higher future job satisfaction (Eyler, 1992). Many scholars have praised the beneficial outcomes they produce, for students, universities, and organizations (e.g., English & Lewison, 1979; Knouse & Fontenot, 2008). Despite the indications that internships are an important source of positive student and new employee outcomes, much of the internship literature has been atheoretical and non-empirical, indicating a need for developing a stronger theoretical foundation for internships using inductive, data-driven methods. Thus far, some research (e.g., Garavan & Murphy, 2001; Paulson & Baker, 1999) has studied internships using the lens of socialization.

Within socialization theory, which describes the process through which people learn "the values, norms and required behaviors that allow them to participate as members of organizations" (Van Maanen, 1975, p.27), internships have most commonly been theorized as part of anticipatory socialization, the period in which one is not yet in the workforce but is learning how to be an organizational member from school, family, and experiences (Jablin, 2001). Although some researchers have used socialization as a theoretical home for internships, the role of internships within the larger context of this theory is vaguely defined and underemphasized. With increasing numbers of students completing internships and more universities encouraging and requiring them, it is

important not only to understand what outcomes can come from internships, but why internships lead to these outcomes, if and how these outcomes can be experienced by all interns, and where internship research belongs within socialization theory. The purpose of the current study was to examine how students conceptualize internships in relation to their goals and expectations in order to more definitively understand how internships fit within socialization theory.

A Review of the Internship Literature

Internship research largely falls into several areas: satisfaction (e.g., what makes an intern satisfied or dissatisfied with their experience), predictors of internship success (e.g., mentoring), outcomes of internships (e.g., greater job satisfaction), future job expectations (e.g., developing expectations for future jobs), and internship value (e.g., mentoring makes an internship more valuable). A significant body of literature has focused on individual internship outcomes (e.g., future job satisfaction), emphasizing a multitude of benefits associated with this experience. Research suggests that internships help students better define their job interests and abilities and provide a valuable learning experience (Hite & Bellizzi, 1986), lead to more informed and solidified career interests and ambitions (Coco, 2000), increase personal and social efficacy (Bernstein, 1976; Braswell and Cobia, 2000), lead to a greater sense of responsibility and career development (Eyler, 1992; Hursch & Borzak, 1979), provide more contacts and better knowledge of the job market (Coco, 2000; Groves, Howland, Headly, & Jamison, 1977), and lead to greater job satisfaction (Bales, 1979). Internships are an opportunity for students to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to “real world” situations

(Narayanan, Olk, and Fukami, 2010), while also easing the transition into the business world (Garavan & Murphy, 2001; Knouse and Fontenot, 2008).

Further, internships are an important learning experience that can be well-matched to an undergraduate education. According to Hurst, Thye, and Wise (2014):

> The internship experience (a) extends learning beyond the classroom; (b) provides opportunities to interact with industry professionals; (c) offers insight into a specific career; (d) provides an opportunity to refine communication and networking skills; and, (e) creates room for flexibility in scheduling during senior year. (p.62)

In addition, completing undergraduate internships is found to be significantly related to early career success –specifically, less time to obtain first position, increased monetary compensation, and greater overall job satisfaction (Gault, Redington, & Schlager, 2000). Internships have been called the bridge between the classroom and practice (Nevett, 1985), which depicts their great importance in undergraduate education and in preparing students for future jobs. According to Gault et al. (2000), experience – most easily attained through internships – continues to be one of the most important attributes an entry-level employee can offer an employer. College graduates entering the workforce today are facing an unstable economy and a highly competitive job market, and any advantage is useful. According to Hurst, Thye, and Wise (2014), internships are "one of the best ways" to gain relevant work experience and increase student's marketability (p.58).

Even in business schools, however, where internships have been a staple in higher education for years, internships are an understudied connection between academia and

organizations (Narayanan, Olk, & Fukami, 2010). A recent study conducted by Narayanan, Olk, and Fukami (2010) demonstrates the limitations of internship research to date. In a literature review, the authors only identified 22 published studies about internships, and of those studies, more than half included no data or limited observational data, and six of the articles did not discuss theoretical foundations, demonstrating the dearth of well-designed and theoretical research in the area of internships. As Narayanan, Olk, and Fukami (2010) state, "Simply put, the literature on internship experiences is largely descriptive and anecdotal" (p.62), demonstrating a need for more theoretical and data-driven research in this area. The current study approaches internships from both a theoretical and data-driven perspective, using a qualitative design based in the socialization theory framework.

Internships and Organizational Socialization

The experience of an organizational member begins before he or she even enters the organization (Jablin, 2001). A person's understanding of what it means to be part of an organization is a process that begins years before employment and continues for their entire membership through a phenomenon called "organizational socialization." This phenomenon is defined as the process through which people learn "the values, norms and required behaviors that allow them to participate as members of organizations" (Van Mannen, 1975, p.27). Socialization relates to an employee's understanding of their place within an organization (e.g., role negotiation, identification), their commitment to the organization, and their decision to maintain membership (e.g., turnover) (Jablin, 2001).

In examining the earliest phases of socialization, undergraduate interns offer an interesting avenue for studying organizational membership. Many interns are

experiencing a new environment for the first time – white collar, professional organizations – whereby internships serve as their first-hand glimpses into organizational life. As such, studying interns in the context of socialization can reveal new and interesting insights into the earliest phases of organizational membership, whereas socialization studies often focus on permanent, full-time newcomers. Specifically, internships are theorized within the context of vocational anticipatory socialization (VAS) (Jablin, 2001; Paulson & Baker, 1999; Tovey, 2011), the phase during which a person explores and decides upon an occupation, and chooses to join and collect information about a particular organization prior to official entry (Jablin, 2001). Even in the context of VAS, most research has studied the experiences of students prior to college. For example, Jahn and Myers (2015) examined the role of VAS in how information about STEM careers is communicated to adolescents through math and science classes, finding that school offers a "fragmented and limited" depicted of this field (p.218). The current study posits that college internships are an understudied topic area within the field of socialization research, and have the potential to offer important insight into the VAS process.

Anticipatory Socialization

Prior to entering an organization, individuals are already experiencing anticipatory socialization (Jablin, 2001). Organizational socialization begins in childhood – shaping expectations in both intentional and unintentional ways – and continues until a person enters the workforce for the first time (Jablin, 2001, p.734). By the time a young person enters the workforce, they will have developed "a set of expectations and beliefs concerning how people communicate [and behave] in particular occupations and in

formal and informal work settings" (Ibid). Family, education, part-time jobs, peers, and the media all play roles in influencing the expectations and beliefs a young person develops about their future job or career (Jablin, 1985b; Vangelisti, 1988).

The earliest models for socialization (e.g., Porter, Lawler, and Hackman, 1975; Schein, 1968; Van Maanen, 1975) proposed, in a conceptual manner, that there are static stages through which organizational members move to become further integrated into an organization and its social network. These models have since been criticized for their lack of empirical evidence and over-reliance on discrete stages to describe this highly process-based and ever-evolving phenomenon. The phase models of socialization view the phases as more concrete than they actually are (Jablin, 2001). Despite this criticism, the remnants of the original phase models have survived to become foundations for future research. Since the early stage models, scholars (e.g., Jablin, 1985) have renamed and reshaped these categories into several phases: anticipatory socialization, encounter/entry, and assimilation, culminating in the end of the socialization process: exit/disengagement. For the purposes of this project, the focus will remain on the anticipatory socialization, specifically vocational anticipatory socialization, as it relates to intern's experiences, but each phase will be briefly described to demonstrate the wider theoretical basis for the remainder of the paper.

Anticipatory socialization can be further broken into vocational anticipatory socialization (VAS) and organizational anticipatory socialization (OAS). Research has characterized vocational anticipatory socialization in multiple ways, including as a "communicative process of learning about the world of work" (Jahn & Myers, 2015, p.219), "the process of selecting a role, vocation, career or job to perform in some

organization" (Kramer, 2010, p.26), the process of intentionally and unintentionally gaining occupational information and comparing it against one's self-concept (Jablin, 2001), and as a process of discovering one's passion (e.g., Myers, Jahn, Gailliard, & Stoltzfus, 2011). Further, scholars (e.g., Jablin, 2001; Kramer, 2010) have suggested that a person develops "work-related values and interests through exposure and communication that socializes them to the value and meaning of work, occupations, and careers" (Jahn & Myers, 2014, p.87).

OAS is the phase of socialization that occurs once a person has already decided upon a career and is actively pursuing employment in that field (Jablin, 2001), making OAS a distinct but related piece of the socialization process in regard to VAS. Research (e.g., Bian, 1997; Granovetter, 1995) suggests that job seekers collect information from organizational literature, such as job ads and brochures, as well as from interpersonal interactions with interviewers, employees, and even other applicants. Previous studies examining OAS have largely focused on recruiting source effects (e.g., the impact of different sources of contact/information during recruitment), job or organization expectations, and the interview process (Jablin, 2001). On the topic of internships, it is possible that interns learn similar information during an internship that they might during the applicant process, including information about specific organizations or jobs and developing expectations for future careers; however, internships frequently do not lead to jobs after graduation (Feldman & Weitz, 1990), and interns may not be actively seeking a position, or even be certain what vocation they want to pursue. Nevertheless, OAS was considered as a potential framework in the current study but VAS had a more natural initial fit with internships.

After a person has chosen their career (VAS) and begun seeking a position in an organization (OAS), s/he enters the organization, beginning the phase of assimilation. During assimilation, individuals deepen their knowledge of the organization, its people and its expected behaviors. Further, employees are able to "innovate and create roles for themselves within the organization" (Waldeck & Myers, 2009, p.319). Once again, internships have some features of assimilation – entering an organization, learning behaviors and expectations – but internships are designed to be short-term organizational experiences, rather than long-term employment. Further, it may be argued that interns are not in the organization long enough to actually assimilate, as many internships last one summer or semester and socialization research suggests assimilation takes at least six months (e.g., Settoon & Adkins, 1997). It is likely that interns have similar experiences at organizational entry as other types of newcomers, but that they do not fully experience the assimilation process that would follow. As a result, the current study considered these three phases of socialization – VAS, OAS and assimilation – when examining how internships are conceptualized and the where they fit best within the theoretical framework of socialization; however, as VAS has previously been used to frame internships, it will be the focus of this literature review.

Vocational Anticipatory Socialization

A person experiences VAS through contact with multiple sources, namely: family members, educational institutions, part-time jobs, peers, and the media (e.g., Jablin, 1985b; Jablin, 2001; Vangelisti, 1988). Within this framework, internships are frequently placed within the context of educational institutions. Research has shown that educational activities are one the most influential sources of vocational information early in life

(Jablin, 1985a). Early school experiences facilitate organizational information gathering that continues until they enter the workforce. Once a person has entered high school and college, they have already collected valuable information about jobs and careers from various classes and educational activities (Jablin, 1985a). Education is an important aspect of exploring vocational options, understanding work, and choosing a career path; however, it is just one aspect.

While education itself plays a major role in developing occupational expectations, beliefs, and knowledge, other school-related activities are influential as well. In particular, research suggests that internships enable students to clarify understandings and perceptions about different fields, assess skills and abilities, hone particular career interests, and develop basic knowledge and strategies for behavior in the workplace (e.g., Feldman & Weitz, 1990; Staton-Spicer & Darling, 1986). Although internships are often associated with educational institutions, largely due to their increasing role in graduation requirements and the creation of internship courses, not all internships are completed in association with colleges. In fact, internships exist somewhere between education, part-time work and the "real world," pointing to one issue in VAS research highlighted by Jablin (2001): the contexts influencing VAS (e.g., family, education, media) "are usually interconnected . . . Unfortunately, most research has tended to treat each microsystem as an independent source of influence" (p.734). Internships are somewhat unique within the VAS framework in that, by the time students are pursuing these experiences during the junior and senior years of college, they have already chosen a vocational direction (i.e., a major). Jablin (2001) suggests after students have chosen a vocation, and the related field-specific education, they are guided and constrained by the communication styles

and norms learned during their previous education. As such, it is important for educational institutions to ensure students understand the behaviors and norms in their fields. If not, internships may serve an opportunity to guide or course-correct students' behaviors and field knowledge.

Finally, student conceptualizations are important in how internships are theorized within socialization framework. Previous research has positioned internships as vocational anticipatory socialization without much explanation or exploration as to its theoretical fit. For instance, internships are placed under the umbrella of education, but they also fit the description of part-time work while also having unique characteristics as well. There is limited research on internships, and even less research on internships as VAS. Further, research on VAS through educational institutions usually focuses on primary and secondary school experiences, often neglecting the socialization experiences of undergraduates. However, how students understand the experience could affect its outcomes (e.g., expectations, preparation), as well as how other stakeholders should approach internships. Internships offer an opportunity to understand the interconnection of multiple socialization contexts, and may serve as a particularly influential anticipatory experience.

In order to better understand how internships fit into socialization theory and what implications this fit may have on practical outcomes, the current study sought to answer two research questions.

Research Question 1: How do students conceptualize internships in terms of their expectations and goals for future jobs and/or careers?

Research Question 2: How do internships fit within the vocational anticipatory socialization framework?

CHAPTER 2: METHOD

The current study used qualitative methods (i.e., semi-structured interviews and open-ended survey responses) to examine how students conceptualize internships, and how these conceptualizations fit within the socialization framework. Data was collected from interns majoring in Communication Studies at a university in the southeastern United States. Students in this major may take a course to receive academic credit for internships, and some tracks in the department (i.e., Mass Media, Public Relations, Health) even require internship credits for graduation. The data collected includes interviews and open-ended survey questions collected over the course of two semesters.

Participants and Interview/Survey Instruments

Participants were Communication Studies majors and minors enrolled in an undergraduate internship course. Examining interns from Communication Studies is both useful and timely. First, a great deal of previous internship research (e.g., Callanan & Benzing, 2004; Gault, Redington, & Schlager, 2000; Pedro, 1984) has focused on business interns, to the neglect of interns from other majors. Further, Communication Studies is a major spanning both the humanities and the social sciences, offering data from a population that is both understudied in the internship literature and which represents a broad range of internship experiences, in both the field (e.g., journalism, public relations) and industry (e.g., health care, banking). As the prevalence of internships across all college majors grows, the need for studies that focus on non-

business majors' internship experiences becomes more vital. As such, the participants offer rich and varied insights into internships, which is beneficial both theoretically and practically. Pseudonyms were randomly assigned to all participants who are quoted in this manuscript to protect their anonymity.

For sensitizing purposes, the researcher observed eight group interviews, which are led by the Internship Director for the Communication Studies department, during the semester prior to starting data collection. These group interviews were attended by interns at the end of the semester during which they completed an internship and were required for course credit. Each group interview lasted one hour, and a total of approximately 120 interns attended the group interviews observed by the researcher. The discussion focused on their overall experience and the relationships they developed with their supervisors. Research questions, interview protocol, and open-ended survey questions were informed by the observations from the group interviews.

In addition to being required to attend the final group interviews, students enrolled in the internship course were also required to complete a "Final Evaluation" survey. The current study used open-ended responses from this survey as one source of data. In addition to four open-ended questions written by the instructor, the researcher added five additional questions (see Appendix B). All changes to course materials were approved by the instructor and the university's institutional review board. Open-ended responses were collected from a total of 85 interns and 40 single-spaced pages of data were analyzed.

While the open-ended questions offered a method of data collection that could gather information from a large number of interns in a short period of time, 14 phone

interviews were conducted to increase the depth of information. Interview participants were mostly female (approximately 86% female), which is consistent with the demographics of the Communication Studies department as a whole. Interviews were conducted with students who had completed the internship course during their junior or senior year of college. Interviews ranged in length from 20 to 45 minutes and produced 125 single-spaced pages of data. Participants were recruited through email using a list of emails provided by the Internship Director. The interviews were triangulated with the open-ended responses to increase the interpretive validity of the findings.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), meaning the data were examined and revisited repeatedly throughout the process to reveal larger patterns and themes. During analysis, interview data was transcribed and then inductively analyzed line by line with open coding, allowing for specific yet efficient coding. Data was set aside for several days and then evaluated to decide whether more coding was required. After open coding the interviews, the open-ended responses were coded separately a week later.

Open coding involved making comparisons between sections of data and repeatedly re-evaluating whether the existing codes fit the data or if additional codes were necessary. Once the open codes were developed, axial coding was used to condense categories into smaller, more interpretive categories, which in turn revealed larger themes. Categories and themes were redefined throughout the analysis process. When possible, *in vivo* codes were used to categorize the data, a keeping the codes close to the participants' actual to preserve the emic nature of interpretive research.

Although the resulting categories revealed that students do conceptualize internships as VAS, a negative case analysis was conducted, in which the data was coded for conceptualizations of internships that do not fit the VAS framework, to gain a more nuanced perspective. Negative case analysis is the process of actively seeking out where one's data does not fit with hypotheses and revising one's argument to fit with all data (Tracy, 2013). Negative case analysis addresses several of Tracy's (2010) "big tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research, including self-reflexivity and multivocality, as it allows for multiple viewpoints to be captured in the analysis. The current study also seeks to include the criterion of rich rigor by relying on socialization theory as a guide, collecting data from multiple sources, using an interesting and relevant sample, and acknowledging the context in which it occurs. Further, credibility is established using triangulation of data collection (interviews and open-ended survey) and thick description, through the heavy reliance on exemplars, which allow the data to tell the story. By using Tracy's (2010) criteria as a guide, the current study sought to produce high-quality qualitative research using rigorous, credible and sincere methods.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

The current study sought to understand how students conceptualize internships, particularly in relation to socialization. The results suggest that student conceptualizations of internships were consistent with VAS theory, and in fact, internships are highly influential as well as greatly interrelated with other sources of VAS, which has not been depicted in previous research. However, the analyses also revealed that in some ways, internships can extend beyond VAS, acting as a bridge between environments (school and work), and between VAS and other forms of socialization (e.g., assimilation) through the process of professionalization. In this section, a framework for professionalization is developed and proposed. Each category discussed in the results was created based on the data from both the interviews and the open-ended survey questions. Exemplars from each data source are presented to support each category defined and presented in the results, as is indicated by labeling each exemplar as "interview" or "survey" at the end of a quotation.

Internships as VAS

Internships occur in a unique space, wherein students who participate in these experiences have chosen a college major and general vocational direction but are less likely to have chosen a specific job or career to pursue in the future. As a result, internships act as a sort of trial run in which students can evaluate options and personal fit with future careers. Students described internships as opportunity to explore career options, as one intern (*Nicole*) said, "It's just a good way to kind of test it out and see if

that's what you like without committing to a job I guess" (interview), and another intern (*Abby)* shared, "My main goals were to gain experience and knowledge by observing and learning through the employees who are already in the healthcare field" (survey). Throughout the interviews, students in this study consistently portrayed internships as opportunities to gather information about occupations (Jablin, 2001), comprehend the value and meaning of work (Jahn & Myers, 2014), find one's passion (Myers et al., 2011), and test out and decide on career directions (Kramer, 2010). An intern (*Cam)* stated, "I want to figure out what I want to do after I graduate and internships are the only way to explore options and figure that out" (survey), which was further supported by *McKenna*, "I hoped to meet clients and vendors and learn the behind the scenes of the business" (survey), *Lauren*, "I wanted to know what it's actually like to work in this field, like is this right for me? Will I be able to handle it?" (interview), and *Jeremy*, "If I have a passion for it, why would I not want to be doing that all the time?" (interview).

Students' experiences served to clarify career directions in several ways. Some internships helped validate students' choices, like *Nicole*, "I still like PR a lot. I think there's just so much you can do with PR and you can kind of be everywhere. I just need to be able to narrow it down to the specific parts of PR that I like" (interview), and *Emma*, "I still plan to work in the entertainment industry . . . However, I feel that this internship has [given] me confidence to know that I can accomplish anything I put my mind to" (survey). In other cases, internships helped to redirect career paths, as was experienced by interns like *Camille*, "I had always thought I would end up in Broadcasting, but after working in an office setting, in a company and department as this one, I realized this is where I belonged" (interview), and *Megan*, "This internship has

clarified to me that I really need to be in the sales industry" (survey). Finally, internships also helped eliminate options, as other interns, like *Kasey,* described, "My internship has made me realize I do not want to work for [a] nonprofit" (survey), and was mirrored by *Kim*, "After the first week I realized that's not what I want to do but I was there for a whole month, and I was like, surgery was like 7 hours. It was just, it got annoying but it was still enjoyable looking at the bigger picture, but from a day to day basis I was like, I couldn't do this every day for the rest of my life." Even when students had not made a definitive vocational choice by the end of their internships, they left with greater knowledge of their fit within a field and their career preferences.

Students were also able to increase their understanding of career fields and industries, which led to decision-making and increased access. Internships provide general knowledge and skills for getting a job, as was the case for one intern (*Travis)*, "I know what to look for in a job now" (survey). Another intern (*Kaitlin)* also expressed feeling prepared for the job search: "I learned through an internship I've learned pretty much the basics for getting a job, so I actually have some experience under my belt" (interview), as well as enhanced job knowledge and clearer designations of how to enter particular fields. These experiences suggest that in addition to career and vocation insights, internships also provide general workplace skills for how to get a job – regardless of profession. Particularly in a competitive market, industry and field knowledge can be beneficial in gaining access. In some cases, interns gained knowledge about how an industry is run, like *Kaitlin* who went on to share how she came to understand how news markets are ranked:

> Going into it I didn't know that the news market was, it was divided 1 to 200, like New York and LA are 1 and 2, and um, I think Charlotte's like 24, and I think Wilmington was 134, so I didn't know that. I didn't really know what it meant and it was like market size, and if you're a smaller market, like when I'm applying I wouldn't go and apply to the number 1 market. (interview)

Having gained this knowledge, the student can enter the market with a targeted and realistic idea of where her career can start. For other students, internships did not just inform them about a job, field, or industry, but opened doors to other options. One intern (*Bridget*) stated, "Well luckily with PR, if there's something like I don't like the agency there's like 10 other routes I can go down" (interview), and other interns shared similar experiences, like *Bailey,* "I thought that marketing communication would be something that I wouldn't really be interested in, but now I can see that there's many different opportunities I could take advantage of that relate to my personal interests" (interview), and *Wendy,* "This internship has impacted by my future career plans by broadening my horizon to the many different career paths available in the health field" (survey). Importantly, internships offer opportunities to explore multiple career fields, allowing interns to see how well their interests and skills fit, as was the case for one intern (*Carly)*: "I originally wanted to do sales, but after my experience at my internship I think marketing more suits me" (survey). Relatedly, *Bailey* expanded upon how her experience describes this phenomenon:

> It helped me to consider career fields that I've been in before and I wasn't exactly sure what route, I knew that there were different routes I could take toward my interest but now, seeing how this opportunity has really made me, I guess I would

> say more marketable, and it's allowed me to have hands-on experience before I actually pick a career. It gave me the option to delve into career opportunities before actually setting on a career. (interview)

Interns' experiences helped them gather useful knowledge to inform their vocational choices and gain necessary skills and knowledge to enter their desired fields or industry.

Finally, many students discussed the competitiveness of the job market and their concerns about gaining access, like *Bailey*, who stated, "I feel like college students should take advantage of internships because it can be hard to get into the job market, especially with so much competition in the field. I feel like with any field of study, an internship allows you to gain experience" (interview), as well as *Jeremy*, who said, "I think I just realized how hard it was going to be, even more so, to get a job after. Not impossible, but difficult" (interview). Some students saw a need to gain more experience, like one intern (*Mathew)*: "My internship has shown me that I will need more experience before I go into PR as a full-time career" (survey). Many students remained optimistic, believing that their internship experience would help them find jobs. *Jeremy* further described how industry insiders recommended he work toward the editor position he wanted: "Obviously, just coming out of college without a big wealth of experience, it's kind of hard to find an actual news editor position, so mostly involving who you should talk to about freelancing at places X,Y and Z" (interview). In some cases, internships even led to post-graduation job leads, as in one case where *Bailey* received a job tip from her supervisor: "I believe she was at a conference or whatnot, and she learned about the startup and so she thought of me and said that she wasn't sure if I was interested in the energy field in particular but that this could be a good opportunity for me" (interview).

Students' internship experiences within the fields and industries they are considering after college allowed them to gather information, obtain necessary skills, and understand how to access these workplaces. Through these experiences, interns were able to observe and participate in vocations they were considering – an opportunity not offered through other source of VAS in which students experience a sort of "trial run" for potential careers. The extent to which students' conceptualizations of internships fit within the VAS framework can also be clearly illustrated by the amount interconnection between internships and other sources of VAS, including: family, peers, educational institutions, and part-time work. Additionally, interns conceptualized internships in terms of professionalism. In the following section, internships will be discussed as they related to other sources of VAS. Then, student conceptualizations of internships as "professionalization" will be presented.

Internships and VAS Sources

Students' internship experiences revealed strong connections between internships and other VAS sources, and yet presented internships as a distinct source of VAS. Students conceptualized internships in relation to most of the VAS sources outlined by previous research; with the exception of the media, interns connected their internship experiences with their family, peers, educational institutions, and part-time or previous work experiences.

Family

Consistent with VAS theory, internships are impacted by family, and in turn, both internships and family impact vocational choice and exploration. Some students were influenced by their parents' career choices indirectly. One intern, *Lauren,* explained how

she had planned to follow her mother's footsteps into education, but an internship experience made her realize it was not the career she wanted (interview). Even still, her mom's influence persisted: "I was so dead-set on being like her, you know, education, traveling, being several places, and like these little villages and teaching children how to read, and then I was like, that'd be great to do on my free time, not as a job." An internship experience led *Lauren* to choose a career path unrelated to those of her parents, but she still wanted a vocation that she was passionate about: "the way she feels about teaching children is the way I want to feel about what I wanted to do in life" (interview). Her mom was the initial influencer, but her internship helped sway her final decision on what direction to take her career.

Parents do not always directly influence career decisions, but they do frequently influence students' decisions to pursue internships. Some interns experienced more insistent encouragement, like *Lauren*, "My parents were very like, pressuring me "internship, internship!" So they were encouraging me like that" (interview), while in other cases parents were just one voice among a crowd of encouragement, as was *Kim*'s experience, "I mean, like all my friends were like, oh you should get an internship! And then my mom and all my advisors and stuff, everyone, ever since day one of going to college, everyone's just like internships! internships! internships!" Parents can be a powerful source of influence in terms of students' career exploration and advancement through internships.

Interns can also be influenced by other family members, like one intern (*Beth*), who followed in her sister's footsteps: "Well my twin sister did. Well she had applied and she had gotten accepted to the program but she told me to apply and I was going into it

without much knowledge. I just wanted to get internship credit so I can graduate but I didn't do one that I'm passionate about" (interview). In this situation, the intern followed in her sister's footsteps without doing her own research or finding an internship that suited her interests. She later depicted how internships are not always useful in terms of career development, but can have positive consequences: "It wasn't really helpful for me. It was good in a way because I became stronger mentally and physically, but it wasn't good for what I want to do." Even when internships do not serve to propel students' toward their desired careers, many students claimed to have benefited from the experience. For some students, family encouragement was needed to push them to explore careers as interns.

Peers

Peers are another powerful source of influence on VAS. Peers and friends often serve as sounding boards and provide influential feedback about particular jobs and career directions (Jablin, 2001). Internships are no exception, with peers both inside and outside of the internship organization influencing students' decisions. Peers can function "as significant others who confirm or disconfirm the desirability of occupations" (Peterson & Peters, 1983, p.81).

In this study, some interns were encouraged, or discouraged, by other students to pursue particular internships. When asked what made her decide to complete an internship, one intern (*Kristen*) stated: "Just hearing people after graduation, you always hear people who just went for any job and I really don't want to do that. I want to enjoy what I do. So hearing the horror stories after college, of not having a job" (interview). In her case, she was propelled toward completing an internship for fear of facing an

uncertain fate, like students before her. Other students gained valuable information from peers prior to choosing an internship. Another intern (*Darren)* recounted how he had decided not to seek out an internship with a local sports team: "I probably could have gotten an internship with [a basketball team] . . . that would have been a way bigger name than the [soccer team], but I know that, from their interns, that I would have been doing tedious work, paper clipping, bringing coffee to bosses" (interview). The information he received from previous interns greatly informed his decision of which internship to pursue and enhanced his ability to pursue a career-relevant, developmental experience, rather than a mediocre experience with a well-known team.

As *Darren* put it, peers can serve as a "measuring stick" during internships, demonstrating how well an intern compares to others in their field, or even acting in supportive roles (interview). During her experience, *Kim* was able to see how poorly she fit within the field because she was able to observe and interact with medical students: "they were super excited and I was sitting there like oh my gosh, I'm going home. And even small things, like the monitors beeping and she's like oh my gosh that's so sweet, that means someone's still alive! And I was like, it's giving me a headache." The medical students were a clear gauge on which to measure the intern's interest in the field. By seeing their reactions, she was able to fully comprehend her own lack of enthusiasm and reconsider following that career path.

Finally, fellow interns can simply serve as friends and support. Research suggests that peers like to interact in ways that take into account others' points of view and personal goals and demonstrate concern for relationships (Burleson, Delia, & Applegate, 1995). This was the case for *Darren* who occasionally worked alongside his peers:

> I worked with other interns a little bit because we had plenty of them. Like 5 or 6 of us. And interaction wise, I wouldn't say that it was competitive but we all have the same goal in mind, which is to do as much as possible and I think it was interesting to be around a bunch of people who wanted to go into the same field as mine. So it was more so peers. Like I never really hung out with them outside of work but I was, I was friends with them and we spoke to each other about what we, like what we were hoping for this internship, how we ended up getting it. (interview)

In the context of internships, peers play an important role by offering support, sharing knowledge, and highlighting fit within an organization or field. It is likely that peers can also serve as competitors within internships, but the participants in the current study did not share such experiences, suggesting that peers are often a positive source of influence in internships.

Educational Institutions

While family and peers act as sources of influence on interns, internships are often categorized as the educational institution source of VAS. Research and practice have strongly aligned internships with universities and learning outcomes. In fact, VAS literature generally theorizes internships as part of the educational institution category; however, students in this study depicted internships as a distinct source of VAS. Internships offer opportunities to meet graduation requirements and apply knowledge, but even when they are not required, professors often encourage students to pursue these experiences, like *Darren*, who said, "I've heard from my professors the most successful people have internship experience" (interview).

Some interns expressed feeling highly prepared for internships due to their university coursework, like *Bridget* who praised her PR writing course: "In that class I learned how to write literally anything under the sun. . . I actually knew how to do most of the stuff they were asking me to do with the exception of a few things" (interview). Many interns were able to both apply and add to their knowledge and skills learned in school. Interns also noted that certain college courses were especially useful when they completed internships, including *Wendy* who called for students to take particular courses: "I would say that Leadership and Group Dynamics should be a requirement for all students that are required to take an internship because I have been able to apply a lot of the things I learned in that class during my experience as an intern" (survey). Not only did courses influence interns' experiences, but they also helped prepare them to enter a vocational field and made them reflect on how education influenced their understanding of work.

Although internships acted as a test center for much of the knowledge and skills students acquired in college, interns also suggested that internships expand learning in ways that could never be achieved in a university setting. *Camille*, an intern at a large manufacturing company, praised the education she had received outside the classroom: "I have learned more in the 6 months that I have been at [this company] then I have in all of my schooling, and I am forever grateful" (interview). She later expanded on this sentiment, stating: "I am the type of person that I learn much more from being thrown into situations. I knew I would not find my ultimate potential in a classroom, and needed to have hands-on work experience." Interns' education acted as a foundation to vocational exploration through internships, but internship experience was a unique

opportunity to learn content not taught in a classroom. While education and internships go hand in hand, students suggest they each have distinct roles to play in VAS.

Part-time Work

Internships are similar and yet distinct from part-time work. Part-time work varies in its applicability to careers, as many of these jobs require minimal skills and knowledge, and do not necessarily offer learning outcomes or career advancement (Greenberger & Steinberg, 1986). Many scholars (e.g., Barling, Rogers, & Kelloway, 1995; Greenberger, Steinberg, & Ruggiero, 1982) have emphasized the inconsistent outcomes of part-time work, suggesting that part-time jobs will influence adolescents and young adults in different ways and to differing degrees. While some students in the study could pinpoint important skills or knowledge they had gained from previous jobs, other students were not able to clearly describe beneficial outcomes.

Students in the current study were asked why they pursued internships rather than getting jobs, and how internships and part-time jobs are different. Their responses revealed a clear distinction in the way these two VAS experiences are viewed, like *Lauren*, citing levels of responsibility, “I wanted an internship because, this is going to sound really bad, a job is not as much a responsibility” (interview), and suggesting that one experience is more relevant to them, like *Bailey*, “I think it’s the relevant experience, like working retail, something with food, not related to my interests. This was actually related to my educational experience, there were things I could do with this” (interview). Students illustrated a hierarchy between part-time work and internships, with internships appearing more prestigious and part-time jobs being a necessary experience to financially support oneself. Further, students often referred to white collar work environments as the

"real world," depicting jobs in these organizations as "real jobs." This distinction not only mirrors the divides between part-time, temporary, and blue collar jobs and full-time, white collar jobs (e.g., Clair, 1996), but it also suggests that internships are a more privileged experience than part-time work, aligning with higher education and career aspirations.

In addition, internships may be more feasible than jobs for university students. Even if a job can offer important insights and experience in a field, students are often unable to attain such jobs, particularly in a recessed economy with a competitive job market. According to Levine and Hoffner (2006), jobs within career-related fields can offer more vocation-focused outcomes (e.g., networking, motivation), but gaining entry to such jobs is often difficult for undergraduates, outside of internship experiences. *Bailey* also experienced this barrier: "because I don't really have the time to get a full time job or whatnot, so I feel like this internship as a part-time job was more than a part-time job like at a restaurant or something. So I felt like it was more valuable and also for course credit of course. Something that would be helping toward my education" (interview). Where internships are "relevant" and student-friendly, part-time jobs are often irrelevant, not valuable, or infeasible from the perspective of college students.

Further, internships were represented as a stepping stone to career advancement and field entry after college, in ways that part-time jobs never could be. *Kristen* shared the concerns she faced toward the end of her college career at the prospect of entering the workforce with only job experience:

> I was just kind of realistic that it was my senior year and I didn't have anything besides serving and I knew how that would look. I think what hit me one day, [a

> professor] had his alumni panel and they all sat up there and agreed that you're not going to get a job with just having serving on there, so I kind of freaked out and I went to the job fair that fall and I'm like, I'm just going to get an internship! (interview)

Internships are not only viewed by students as being superior to jobs, but this sentiment is also shared by employers. In some cases, failure to complete an internship can be a barrier to job entry post-college.

An emphasis on how internships tie into higher education may be one part of why internships are privileged and desired over college jobs, while jobs that can be obtained without a college education – or simultaneous with receiving one – are viewed simply as a means to an end. Internships are associated with learning and are a gateway to careers. Internships offer a unique VAS experience that not only teaches students about the world of work and assists them in making vocational choices, but also prepares students in ways that align with education and provide major-relevant developmental opportunities.

The strong connections to other sources of VAS support Jablin's (2001) claim that the sources of VAS are "usually interconnected with one another," despite researchers' tendency to ignore these interrelated influences on socialization. Students' conceptualizations suggest that internships not only epitomize this interconnectivity, but also provide a unique source of vocational exploration and decision-making apart from other VAS sources.

Students' Expectations and Goals

The first research question guiding this study was "How do students conceptualize internships in terms of their expectations and goals for future jobs and/or

careers?" Through the course of analysis, it became clear that students developed and defined their expectations and goals for future jobs and careers during internships. While students' explicit expectations and goals for internships were largely tied to skill development and gaining experience in potential career fields, students also demonstrated gaining clearer insight into what it means to work in a white collar environment, like one intern (*Tina*) who said "I wanted experience in a corporate setting" (survey), or *Quinn* who described the same idea in a specific field, "I want to learn about public relations and marketing techniques and how they apply to the real world" (survey), further demonstrating how internships fit within VAS. Arguably, if internships fit better with other sections of socialization theory (i.e., OAS or assimilation), then their goals would be less focused on understanding or deciding upon a career and more focused on gaining entrance or learning the behaviors and norms of a particular organization.

To further analyze the findings, the data was examined to determine if any interns did have specific permanent job expectations for their internships by using negative case analysis. This process revealed that some interns did expect or hope for permanent positions in their internship organizations, like one intern (*Allie)* who said, "My goal was to get a job within the company when the internship ended" (survey), or another intern (*Jessie*), "My biggest goal for this internship was to impress my advisor and get hired after the internship for a permanent position" (survey). This finding suggests that some interns may enter these experiences with a set career or even organization in mind; thus, internships do not exist in isolation within VAS but may serve as a bridge into later socialization phases, like OAS and assimilation. However, not all interns who sought jobs in their internship organizations were offered positions at the time of the study. Further,

the bridging effect of internships is more limited to senior students who may have completed other internships prior to the time of the study, suggesting that the timing of internships may be highly influential in how they fit into the socialization process. Examination of this issue is beyond the scope of the current project but offers an interesting avenue for future inquiry.

In addition to redefining expectations and goals for future employment, interns began learning to be professionals. As will be discussed in the next section, internships enable students to begin the ropes of being professionals in a white collar environment. Although all career fields may require a certain type of professionalism, the interns in this study represent the experience of professionalization in white collar fields. Next, professionalization is explained, including its multiple category framework, and presented as an explanation for why internships lead to such beneficial outcomes post-graduation.

Learning to be a Professional

Internships have been described as a "bridge between students' academic experiences and professional careers" (Hurst, Thye, & Wise, 2014, p.59), demonstrating the developmental impact these experiences can have on students. However, research often stops short of describing this professionalization process. Internships are not simply a bridge to get from point A to a discrete point B; they involve the process of understanding, transforming, and honing one's identity to be prepared for the workplace. Within this process, young adults begin the transition from "student" to "professional." Internships offer an opportunity to observe professionals as well as to act like a professional. As Hammer, Berger, Beardsley, and Easton (2003) state, "Acting

professionally is not the same as being a professional" (p. 546). Although students do not complete internships and suddenly emerge as professionals, they do begin the process of doing so by learning to act professionally. In contrast, students who do not complete internships may only begin the process of observing and acting like professionals once they enter the workforce, giving interns a leg up. Through this internship professionalization process, students also begin to begin preparing for future work experiences that moved beyond vocational exploration and choice to learning important behaviors, values, and beliefs associated with work. Although professionalization does not quite extend to organizational assimilation – wherein an employee is both being socialized by their organization and learning to adjust their work environment and role to suit their own behaviors and values (Jablin, 1987) – but it may act to ease the transition between these phases.

Students experienced professionalization by first entering a white collar work environment, then through gaining an understanding what it means to be a professional. Analyses revealed that the four facets of being a professional were learned during internships: technical competence, work values, workplace behaviors, and self-awareness. According to *Merriam-Webster's* dictionary, a "professional" is defined as being "engaged in one of the learned professions," "characterized by or conforming to the technical or ethical standards of a profession," and "exhibiting a courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike manner in the workplace." Relatedly, "Professionalism" is defined as "the skill, good judgment, and polite behavior that is expected from a person who is trained to do a job well" (*Merriam-Webster,* n.d.). These definitions suggest similar facets of professionalism as those experienced by interns. Interns in the current

study suggested that internships enable students to begin taking on a professional role or identity by offering entrance and experience in a professional environment and, through observation, interaction, and behavior in this environment, internships increase students' understanding of what it means to be a professional. In addition, students suggested professionalism is something that cannot be entirely in class, but requires first-hand experience.

Entering the Professional Work Environment

Prior to understanding how to be a professional, students needed to enter a professional environment. According to Knouse and Fontenot (2008), "Many have touted college student business internships as highly beneficial experiences that facilitate transitioning into the real world of business" (p.61). For many students in the study, this internship was their first experience in a white collar environment. For instance, Sally shared that her internship "has definitely helped me gain experience in a professional office setting" (survey). For others, their most recent internship offered an environment that differed from previous experiences. Students portrayed workplaces as environments that they were unfamiliar with, yet interested to experience, like *Darren* who said, "And I think it's an enjoyable experience, having a taste of the 9 to 5 corporate world" (interview), and as a necessary aspect of being prepared for future jobs, like *Bridget*, "So they want to know that you can handle the environment just in general. So if you don't have the internship, any internship experience there's no way for you to prove that you can handle the situation" (interview). Another intern (*Nina)* illustrated how internships help students understand which environment characteristics are suited to them: "It has

helped me realize I will need a job where I am able to go into an office and interact with people" (survey). Without first-hand experience, students cannot know what to expect from a professional environment, let alone how to find a profession in an environment that suits them.

Kristen came to realize that not all work environments are as formal as she expected, describing her experience of learning how to be a professional as occurring "in a very relaxed setting" (interview). Through this experience, her expectations for professional environments were either challenged or confirmed: "we had pizza on Fridays, and it wasn't like you had to dress up, or anything like that, I mean you had to wear business causal but it wasn't, it was like what I would still wear to school. Anyways, but it was still like they had expectations for you and you had to figure that out." Experience in a professional environment opened the doors for interns to learn about working, professional behavior and expectations, and even about themselves. Physically being present in the world of work was the first step for these interns toward becoming professionals. The next step was observing and interacting with professionals in that environment, as well as beginning to take on professional values and behaviors.

Professionalization

Most of the research discussing professionalism in the context of students or young workers has been conducted in the medical, pharmaceutical or teaching fields. Although some of this research is specific to these fields (e.g., dealing with patients), other studies are more relevant in the context of internships and socialization. For example, Hammer et al.'s (2003) discussion of student professionalism in the pharmaceutical industry bears relevance to students in other fields: "If technical

competence exists but not the necessary attitudes, values, and behaviors of the professional, then our graduates may "wear the trappings of that profession, but would no longer be a representative of the profession" (p.544). Hammer et al. (2003) emphasize that being a professional is not simply having necessary skills and knowledge to complete the tasks in one's field; professionalism extends to "attitudes, values, and behaviors," which students learn through the vocational anticipatory socialization. Specifically, internships are an influential part of the professionalization process. According to Coco (2000), internships are "a real differentiator, a symbol of maturity and competence" (p.41). Internships do not just enhance students' technical knowledge and skill, but they also influence their understanding of what it means to be a professional and how to become one.

Some students demonstrated awareness of internships' role in learning to be a professional, and even though other interns were not explicitly aware, all experienced some elements of professionalization. Students' conceptualizations of internships in the current study demonstrated the integral connection between internships and student professionalization, as was the case with *Darren*: "I've heard from my professors the most successful people have internship experience, etc. etc. So that kind of motivated me but I think as I got more internships, and I feel like I have a solid resume, it's just been more so to develop myself as a professional" (interview). Based on students' experiences, a framework of professionalization was developed, which includes four categories: technical competence, work values, workplace behaviors, and self-awareness. Descriptions of each part of professionalization will be provided, followed by a discussion of how this framework fits within socialization theory as well as the

implications that this addition has both theoretically and practically. The framework is presented in Appendix D.

Technical Competence

For many years, researchers have emphasized the beneficial technical outcomes of internships, including critical thinking, time-management, leadership, teamwork, analytical skills, and communication skills (NACE, 2011). Today, many interns complete internships with the simple goal of gaining new skills and knowledge that will help them find a job after college. However, students in the study suggested that the technical competence they gain extends beyond learning to create a spreadsheet or posting to social media.

Skill acquisition was certainly an important piece of the internship, as expressed by *Kristen*, "I learned so much more about social media than I thought was even out there" (interview), *Tony*, "I expected to come in and build a portfolio," and *Bridget*, "I had expected to build on what I had learned from my previous internship and then come back with new skills. Luckily I did do that. I learned how to use different programs, learned how to email pitch, which I didn't do in my first internship" (interview). Yet interns also described developing more general workplace skills, such as time management, multitasking, and prioritizing tasks, including one intern (*Lena*): "I has shown me what working in an office is like and that it is very important to manage your time wisely when you have multiple assignments" (survey). Another intern (*Sierra)* depicted how difficult such skills can be to refine: "Time-management skills and stress management skills are the two things that I feel like students struggle with with internships (and further employment opportunities)" (survey), and similarly *Kristen* said,

"Just learning how to work, set a schedule for yourself . . . how to really prioritize things I need to do throughout the day and make sure everything gets done. I was able to see how they did it and it was really helpful in that" (interview). Through internships, students developed technical and soft skills necessary in the professional world.

Although internships are a place to gain new skills and knowledge, they may in fact be well suited for testing what students already know and teaching professional softs skills (e.g., time management). Since internships occur during a time in which many students may not have decided on a career or specific job, or may be weighing their options, internships are ideal for obtaining broad skills that can be used in many fields, industries, or jobs. Students are likely to benefit from general skills that can be used in all professional situations, especially as they experience VAS.

Work Values

In longitudinal study examining internship evaluations, Pedro (1984) found that "students changed their self-perceptions, their preferences regarding their ideal jobs, and some of their instrumental and more encompassing values" (p.89). The definition of professional encompasses a person having good judgment and following ethical standards. Further, a person cannot be a professional without workplace values befitting their job and organization (Hammer et al., 2003).

Students in the current study demonstrated the development and refinement of work-specific values during their internship experience. Multiple interns made related comments, such as *Nicole*, "So you just have to be on top of things and be ready to handle whatever is thrown at you" (interview), *Beth*, "you may not think your job is important when you're looking at the bigger picture but everyone is dependent on

everyone and everyone needs to be the most punctual so that the goals of the group can be accomplished" (interview), and *Kate*, who sought to "tackle every task with excellence" (interview). Such comments suggest that students refine their own perceptions of work ethic during internships, and gain deeper understanding of how their job affects other organizational members. *Kaitlin*, who interned at a newsroom, a fast-paced and competitive environment, illustrated how the values of other employees were shared with her: "And you know sometimes people will be like oh yeah that's good let's go, but they were like, no you're going to take your time, you're going to do this and we're going to be good so you can learn" (interview). In this simple statement, the employee demonstrated that despite working in a fast-paced and competitive environment, a professional values learning and high quality work.

Interns expressed a range of work values, from being successful, like *Celeste* who wants "to become as successful as possible and take advantage of all of the opportunities in my field" (survey), to helping others, like *Jenna*, who shared her calling to be a spokesperson in her field, "to work with patients and people in healthcare to ensure that quality healthcare is being given and received" (survey). Internships offer the opportunity for students to develop their own values by experiencing work first-hand, and for established professionals to share organizational, field, or industry values with newcomers. Value development during internships not only enhances the student experience but it can also improve their ability to assimilate into other workplaces and moves them one step closer to being a professional.

Workplace Behaviors

By enacting the behaviors of employees at their internship, students are practicing the accepted behaviors of professionals within that field. Internships are an experience during which students are "learning how to work" by observing, interacting, and modeling behaviors (Pedro, 1984). Some students were able to compare acceptable workplace behaviors to behaviors in other contexts. One intern (*Lauren*) recalled worrying about when and how she was able to ask questions: "In a business setting, like in school that's perfectly okay but in a business setting, that was my first time wondering if that was okay or if I'm annoying her so it took me a little while to figure out, what does she think is annoying, or when to stop asking questions" (interview). During her internship, the student worried about the appropriate way to seek information, but by the end *Lauren* understood acceptable behavior in this context: "But I actually learned at the end of the internship I probably could have asked her a lot more questions. I spent a lot of time tip-toeing, instead of just going in and getting things done" (interview). Other interns like *Bailey*, "asking if, you know, I desire something, just asking for it because I never know if I'll get a yes or not" (interview), and *Ben*, "I did not learn as much as I wanted to in the producing aspect mainly because I just did not ask enough questions" (survey), similarly realized they should not be as hesitant as they had been in her internship. Interns were able to reduce their uncertainty and begin to develop appropriate and empowered workplace behaviors.

Even though the interns in this study were receiving degrees in Communication Studies, and likely had better communication skills than interns in other fields, learning how to interact effectively in the workplace was an important takeaway for many interns.

Interns described learning how to use particular communication formats in a work environment, including *Bridget* who shared:

> It taught me how to you know write an email professionally, how to respond back to emails, I did a couple of conference calls, so how to handle a conference call when you don't meet each other in person or if you experience a technical difficulty, how to just power through it so people don't get distracted by the fact that my powerpoint's not working so you just kind of go with the flow. (interview)

Although students had experience with emails, presentations, and phones, learning how these tools fit within the work context is vital to communicating effectively in the workplace. Interns do not necessarily have to learn all new behaviors, but they do need to appropriately transition familiar behaviors into the realm of professionalism. Particularly when dealing with different audiences, like clients or customers. One intern (*Kyra*) stated her goal was to "learn how to communicate with college students on a health educator level being that my experience has been with younger children" (survey). The workplace offers new communication avenues not experienced in other contexts.

In some cases, interns were able to learn how and between whom communication occurs for specific tasks. *Darren* described how he learned about communicating through the hierarchy from other organizational members:

> I learned a lot about going through different channels. Because even though he was a communications top guy, before he posted a story, before which I would send him my stories, before he posts a story, before he posted an article, before he did anything, he went through the president. He went through the top guy in

> marketing. So, I learned a lot about, you know, being under someone and kind of, working with other people because you know, in PR they're not just going to put you in there and say okay send this press release. You have to send it to an editor. (interview)

The intern learned that in any job, there are certain protocols you must follow and approvals you need to get before you can complete certain tasks. By talking to professionals, the intern was able to develop knowledge and understand behaviors within the workplace.

Many interns needed to adapt to the dress codes and the formality (or lack thereof) in their specific industries. Students' expectations for what professionals in their fields wore and what happened in their day-to-day life were often altered during their experience. *Darren* stated, "I thought I was going to have to be there, like at 10 am, I'd have to be there at 10 on the dot but they were really laid back. I wore jeans plenty of the time. After the first day of wearing a tie they told me to wear jeans" (interview). Another intern, *Kaitlin,* had to adapt to a more formal setting:

> Like every day I would have to like look like I was going on TV but like you know I wasn't. Like full dress, hair, makeup, everything. So like every day I'd have to get up and do that. It's hard because in college I'd just throw on like a t-shirt and throw my hair up and I'm good to go, but it totally taught me that I'm going to have to get out of that comfortability of just getting up and going and that I'm actually going to have to take the time to like look like a human being I guess. (interview)

Interns learned that adapting one's wardrobe to a particular work environment, although simple, is an important part of fitting into and embracing a field or organization, as well as looking the part of a professional.

Finally, some interns needed to change the way they presented themselves in order to fit with the professional atmosphere of their internship, like *Nate*, whose goal was "to really just put myself out there and learn as much as I can. Also to not be afraid to ask questions" (survey), and *Kim*, "it taught me about being a professional because it was just interesting to see, like, I guess I can be silly, even at work but it wasn't always a serious vibe, so it wasn't always like that but people knew when they could be serious and when they could kind of be more relaxed" (interview). By observing how other workers conducted themselves, she was able to learn how she should behave in particular context. Another intern (*Lauren*) had a similar realization, being instructed by her supervisor to act differently in meetings with clients:

> Yeah, she was just like look okay, this is serious. We're talking about money, we're talking about you know buying ads, this is a very serious matter and so I think that was where I was like okay, and I had to learn this is serious, don't laugh, don't make remarks, just kind of sit back and observe. I could watch her and see how she's being professional about things and that's where I was like okay I can do this but still be bubbly but not as like ditsy. (interview)

Through observation, critiques, and behavior modifications, students began acting in ways expected in the professional world. Sometimes field or industry differences became apparent, which informed students how to behave in similar organizations in the future.

Self-awareness

Although much of the professionalism gained through internships is work-specific, one aspect of professionalism that students gained through these experiences is more general in nature: self-awareness. Admittedly, self-awareness is learned throughout one's life and is not limited to VAS; however, interns' experiences suggested that it may be an important outcome of experiencing professionalization. Sometimes self-awareness came in identifying one's own strengths and weaknesses, or overcoming anxiety: "I expected to be doing a lot of hard work, and I was a little nervous at the beginning." Other times self-awareness came in the form of investigating one's career interests, like *Nicole,* who said she felt that internships were for "learning what you like to do and what you don't like to do" (interview), or identifying one's limits, like *Lauren*, "I learned not to put too much on my plate because [my supervisor] was really good at saying like this week I need you to do this that and is that okay? Like, can you handle it? And I think, I learned to be like well, I can do this but I can't do that" (interview). In talking about what he learned during his internship writing for a magazine, *Jeremy* explained: "I think this is something a lot of writers have a problem with . . . even if you think it's not good enough, you should go find somebody who will give you some feedback on it because it might be excellent and you're just being too hard on yourself" (interview). During his internship, this student came to understand his strengths and weaknesses, and that he was not the only person who experienced this problem. His increased self-awareness about how he approaches his work allowed him to increase his professionalism and prepare him to make necessary changes.

Kim, who shadowed a surgical team at a hospital, shared that she felt indecisive at the start of her internship and struggled to figure out which career direction she wanted to

pursue. Finally, her self-awareness was affected by the advice of others in the hospital, who encouraged her to become more focused in her goals and interests: “people tell me something and it peaks my interest and it’s like, well, you gotta focus on something because you can’t do everything. And that’s when I really tried to start realizing, okay I… you know, I gotta be more practical with my hopes and dreams” (interview). Realizing she was bouncing from interest to interest enabled this intern to step back and refocus so she could learn more deeply about a narrower set of jobs within the field. Another intern (*Camille)* was also able to gain self-awareness and refocus her career interests by experiencing a different organizational context: “I aspire to be a strong businesswoman and make a name for myself. Interning for such a large company has opened my eyes to the potential I have and the magnitude of different things I can accomplish within one department of one company” (interview). Both interns’ self-awareness allowed them to find better vocational direction and better define the options they have within their fields.

Students were able to learn how they carried themselves or approached their work and make comparisons to how a professional in their career should carry themselves or approach work. By receiving feedback and making observations, students gained greater self-awareness in a work context, which can help them adjust to future work environments and jobs.

Learning Professionalism

Although students can gain vast knowledge and enhanced skills in the classroom, or from other VAS sources, certain aspects of professionalism must be learned within the workplace. Prior to entering the workforce, some aspects professionalism are taught

through other sources of VAS, and then validated through the internship experience (e.g., dress code), while other aspects of professionalism are only taught in the internship context by observing and communicating with workers within their field. Barnett (2012) states, “The experiential nature of internships allows students to live firsthand those aspects of work that are not necessarily taught in the classroom or gathered from other sources” (p.2). The experiences of interns in the current study corroborate Barnett’s (2012) argument. The current study found that most students felt prepared by school for internships and jobs, but many stated that internships taught lessons they could not have learned in the classroom.

Where the classroom is theoretical, conceptual, and case study driven, the internship is hands-on learning and an opportunity to apply and add to classroom learnings. Internships offer experience with “real-world problems,” which are more ambiguous and complex than problems faced in the classroom (Coco, 2000). Even if some aspects of professionalism can be taught in the classroom, many are either not being taught or need to be applied in a real world context to truly sink in. An intern (*Natasha)* demonstrated this when she said: “My expectations for my internship were to use what I have learned in public relations and apply it to the real world” (survey). Students understood internships as learning opportunities, emphasizing organizations’ expectations based on messages they had received, like *Jeremy* who remarked: “they want you there to participate, not necessarily there to produce” (interview), and “we just want you in there to learn first.” For example, as Communication Studies majors, many students in the study had taken classes in which they learned to write a press release or news article, yet there was still more to learn during their internships. One student (*Ryan)*

said, “I have learned so much from this internship, from how to go about contacting journalists for a potential story to writing social media posts and request grants for one of our NPO fundraisers” (survey). This suggests that simply knowing how to write a news story, social media post, or grant proposal is only one piece of the puzzle. Professionals in these fields must also know the proper channels and stages to go through to make requests and accomplish tasks.

In the survey data, there was some disagreement among students about whether Communication Studies courses at their university were adequate preparation for internships and future employment. While 54% of the interns surveyed did not suggest any changes to the curriculum – “I think the current courses suffice as preparation for future employment” and “I felt prepared from the communication courses I took” – other interns (46%) saw room for improvement. *Sadie* stated: “There is so much practical hands-on learning that can be taught in our courses that’s just not being offered right now. But I definitely believe that an internship is the best way to learn and practice these skills” (survey). Another intern, *Emma*, suggested that her program make changes to teach students more about professionalism:

> I would recommend classes that teach students about professionalism and how to adapt to different work environments. Many students don't know how to properly write a resume letter or how to fully prepare for an interview. Although we have the career center on campus, many students are not aware of it or don't take the time to visit. If we had a few classes that would teach professional skills, students will probably learn more that will actually benefit them in their future careers. (survey)

It is not that educational institutions lack any methods for students to learn professionalism, but students often do not take advantage of them or need additional support. Further, learnings offered on campus are often limited to technical skills or basic job hunting (e.g., interviewing, cover letters). As the results of this study suggest, professionalism extends beyond knowledge and skills, and educational curriculums would be wise to reflect that.

Students emphasized the need to interact with representatives from the "real world" more often during their courses of study, like *Mathew* who stated: "Have a course where "real world" employers speak and hold a workshop with students. Several of the communication courses that are taught are theory based courses. Yes, students need theory courses as a foundation; however there needs to be more concrete "real world" concepts and applications" (survey). Another intern (*Cam)* called for "More courses preparing you for the real world, the event planning class and PR writing had definite correlations to this internship" (survey). These suggestions highlight the importance of internships at present, as they are often students' first or only access to the professional work environment prior to officially entering the workforce, and act as an extension or substitute for learning certain aspects of professionalism.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to understand how students conceptualize internships in terms of their expectations and goals for future employment, as well as to examine how internships fit within the socialization framework. Two research questions were posed: "How do students conceptualize internships in terms of their expectations and goals for future jobs and/or careers?" and "How do internships fit within the vocational anticipatory socialization framework?" The results suggest that these questions go hand-in-hand. Internships are an important piece of vocational anticipatory socialization that helps students decide on career directions and refine their expectations and goals for those particular careers. Further, internships provide students an early introduction to professionalization – the process of becoming a professional, including the technical skills and knowledge, behaviors, values, and self-awareness necessary to be a competent participant in their chosen field.

The findings address the first research question in two ways: by identifying what goals and expectations students had for their internships, and by examining what goals and expectations students had for future employment after completing their internships. Although most students entered internships expecting to develop skills, gain knowledge, and make contacts, they left their internships having achieved additional and potentially more impactful goals, including: improved field and industry knowledge, clearer career direction, and, most importantly, enhanced professionalism. Even though students did not

expect these outcomes, they were commonly experienced among the students in this study, suggesting that internships lead to unexpected consequences for many interns. Although research may understand the benefits of internships, students do not fully grasp what can be gained from internships in practice.

Research (e.g., Coco, 2000; Narayanan, Olk, & Fukami. 2010) suggests internships lead to many positive outcomes in part because internships act as a bridge between academia and the workforce. The current study adds that internships lead to positive outcomes because these workforce newcomers have already started the process of becoming professionals. Previous research has often neglected to consider how internships affect socialization and early-career experiences. Before entering the workforce, individuals obtain career information from many sources (e.g., Jablin, 1985; Vangelisti, 1988), yet many new employees still experience surprise and disappointed because their initial expectations about work are not met (e.g., Holton & Russell, 1997; Nelson & Sutton, 1991). Barnett (2012) argues that internships can help alleviate some of this initial shock: "As students move through their internship experience, they define their perceptions about work based on their current experiences – not their preconceived notions about work, as many of those notions may quickly become obsolete . . . What students thought they knew about work is challenged, and new meanings are created based on their actual lived experiences" (p.3). If one is to believe Barnett (2012), then internships may be the key to testing prior expectations and understandings about work developed throughout childhood and adolescence through VAS, weeding out misinformation and unrealistic expectations prior to entering the workforce after college. Students who complete internships may achieve the beneficial outcomes suggested by

prior research because they are one step closer to being a professional because they have clarified their knowledge of work and have acted the part of the professional in ways that students who do not complete internships are unable to do prior to entering the workforce.

The findings in this study provide a four-part framework for understanding the nature of professionalism (Appendix D), which is both theoretically and practically useful. This professionalization framework is the first attempt to label and define this process in the organizational literature. Internships have been described as a "bridge between students' academic experiences and professional careers" (Hurst, Thye, & Wise, 2014, p.59); however, research often stops short of describing this professionalization process. To the author's knowledge, there have been no previous attempts at developing a professionalism framework. Internships are not simply a bridge to get from point A to a discrete point B; they involve the process of understanding, transforming, and honing one's identity to be prepared for the workplace. Within this process, young adults begin the transition from "student" to "professional." Internships offer an opportunity to observe professionals as well as to act like a professional. As Hammer et al. (2003) argue, being a professional means more than merely playing the part. Although students do not complete internships and suddenly emerge as professionals, they do begin the process of doing so by learning to act professionally. In contrast, students who do not complete internships may only begin the process of observing and acting like professionals once they enter the workforce, giving interns a leg up.

Several points should be made in regard to the findings. First, professionalization is not a distinct form of socialization so much as a process that bridges several phases of

socialization, which will be further discussed in the theoretical implications. Second, since all white collar jobs require some amount of professionalism, the results suggest that internships teach general knowledge that can be applicable in many vocations. A benefit of using a sample of students who have a less defined career path based on their major is that it became clear, even when an intern did not want to pursue the career field in which they interned, they still gained technical competence, work values, workplace behaviors, and self-awareness that can be applied to any careers they choose. By gaining an understanding of what professionals know and value, as well as how they behave, internships are able to assist students' transitions into professional life in a variety of organizations, roles, fields, and industries.

Theoretical Implications

First, internships should be recognized as a distinct source of VAS. Although internships have previously been discussed in this context, they are often only considered within the context of educational institutions (e.g., Jablin, 2001). Despite connections to universities, the results of this study suggest that internships are not only interrelated with multiple sources of VAS, but are also a distinct source in their own right. Even in this current study, which has a sample of students who received more university oversight than many interns, with two required meetings throughout the semester-long internship, universities are often not directly involved in internship choice, design or progress. While many universities are requiring internships or at least offering course credit for internships, organizations and students are the main stakeholders in how the internship actually progresses. Internships are educational in the sense that students are learning but learning is not an experience limited to the classroom, particularly as learning is

increasingly emphasized in organizations and offered through mobile and online means. Internships take classroom learning and allow students to apply and move beyond their university-learned knowledge and skills.

Internships offer “real world” and “hands-on” learning, which mirrors the recent trend toward the 70-20-10 learning method, developed by The Center for Creative Leadership. This method, increasingly used in many organizations for learning and development, and backed by 30 years of research (Rabin, 2014), suggests that people learn best when training or education occurs through 70% on-the-job training, 20% developmental relationship, and 10% formal, classroom training. Although this method was designed for organizational training and development, it suggests that internships, which ideally involve both on-the-job training and developmental relationships (e.g., managers, mentors, faculty supervision) are well-suited to current trends in organizational learning. Further, this method supports the distinctiveness of internships and college education, as well as the importance of gaining internship experience prior to entering the workforce rather than relying solely on classroom education. Finally, the 70-20-10 method might indicate why internships and part-time work should be distinct; both incorporate on-the-job training, but internships are more specifically designed to integrate on-the-job, relationship, and formal training in one experience. As a result, future research should theorize internships as a sixth source of vocational anticipatory socialization in order to capture what has become a widespread and highly influential aspect of a young person’s journey toward choosing a vocation and understanding the world of work.

Second, the impact that internships have within the socialization experience extends beyond VAS and begins connecting students to later phases of socialization (e.g., assimilation). Students argue that internships offer socialization experience no other source can provide due to the professionalization process they inherently begin. Socialization theories and future research should consider how internships offer opportunities for students to start the transition from being a student to being professional by teaching and enhancing the four categories of professionalization: technical competence, work values, workplace behaviors, and self-awareness. By adding the professionalization framework to socialization theory, future research may be better able to understand how internships bridge the gap between school and the world of work. Internships do more than provide resume fodder and teach students a few new skills. In fact, they may be one of the biggest factors in finding a job after graduation, particularly during economic recessions, due to the role professionalization plays. Professionalization may be the key to why interns experience the beneficial outcomes suggested by prior research – outcomes not experienced by students who work part-time jobs or do not pursue non-school activities.

Research focused on outcomes has often stopped short of delving into professionalism, focusing on outcomes such as future job satisfaction (Gault, Redington, & Schlager, 2000) and the time it takes for interns to get jobs post-graduation (Hurst, Thye, & Wise, 2014). Some research has tapped into the technical competence of professionalization, emphasizing the skills and knowledge gained from internships, but the other facets of professionalization (i.e., work values, workplace behaviors and self-awareness) have often been under-emphasized or represented narrowly (e.g., studies just

focusing on efficacy). By emphasizing all four facets of professionalization in internships, future research can further understand how internships link multiple phases of socialization, and what makes these links stronger or weaker. Jablin's (1985) socialization framework has been criticized for being too discrete, but identifying processes like professionalization help demonstrate the connections and the processual nature of socialization without abandoning Jablin's (1985) framework.

Practical Implications

The current study offers many practical implications that are noteworthy for students, universities, and organizations. First, students should gain internship experience in college, no matter what their major is. Internships are not only an easy way to earn credits and develop résumé fodder, but they are also an impetus for the professionalization process – and all careers require some amount of professionalism. Previous research has praised internships for their beneficial outcomes (e.g., English & Lewison, 1979; Knouse & Fontenot, 2008) and the results of the current study help fill in a missing piece of why internships have demonstrated such positive outcomes: professionalism. Not only do applicants with internship experience have more contacts and content for their résumés, but they also enter the application process with an understanding of how to present themselves in their field, and can knowledgeably talk about work environments, job-specific tasks and the field at large in ways that students without internship experience cannot. Students have better chances of not only finding jobs, but finding jobs better suited to their interests (Coco, 2000) and more quickly (Knouse, Tanner & Harris, 1999) when they have had internships, due to the professionalization process. Future research is required to more thoroughly study this

connection, including the circumstances under which it is the strongest. Encouraging students to complete internships will be beneficial to students, universities, and organizations in the long-run.

Second, while universities are an important source of VAS that enhances technical professionalism and provides some information about work, internships serve as the major source of professional interaction and growth prior to entering the workforce. Nevertheless, universities should provide more professional preparation by offering opportunities for students to interact with local professionals and by developing workshops or courses to develop professional skills, such as networking. In addition, universities should take steps to ensure all students in a field of study gain experience in these areas, removing some of the self-selection that occurs now with only the most proactive students seeking out assistance from faculty or career centers. Students do receive VAS through undergraduate coursework, but universities could do more to prepare students for internships and future jobs, and thus play a larger role in professionalization.

Third, organizations should approach internship program development and facilitation with professionalism in mind. Internship programs should share the organization's and employee's work values, guide and correct interns' work behaviors, develop marketable skills, impart knowledge, and assist with self-awareness (e.g., provide feedback). By focusing on professionalism, organizations can not only make students better prepared to join their own organizations, if that is an option, but they can also provide more beneficial experiences for interns. Even if the organization does not

hire interns, providing students with a positive and developmental experience helps with branding, university relations, and finding new interns in the future.

Limitations and Future Research

The total number of interviewed students in the current study is relatively small ($N = 14$), though the data set as a whole is larger than data sets in previous internship research and the results were triangulated with open-ended survey responses ($N = 85$), resulting in a rich data set for analysis. The current data set is also limited to the experiences of students in Communication Studies, who may not have the same experience as students in other majors, but interpretive research is intended to be context-rich, making generalization less of a concern. Nevertheless, the professionalization framework could be tested in other student intern populations to better understand differences in experience across majors.

Students in this study only represent one major, meaning their internship experiences may not be the same as students in other majors. However, professionalism is beneficial in any career field, so if students in other majors are not experiencing professionalization during their internships then universities and organizations should adjust their programs. Further, Communication Studies majors pursued internships in a wide variety of fields and industries, indicating that this study's findings are likely to be applicable in a multitude of contexts. Communication studies majors provided the opportunity to see professionalization in a less constrained context than might be possible with accounting majors, for instance. Students in the sample were not all required by the university to complete an internship, and were not necessarily set on one career path. A potential implication regarding majors could be that interns with more defined majors

may have internships experiences that fall less within the VAS because they have already decided upon a definitive career path. Some interns may experience more OAS or assimilation because they are more decisive about their career path and have a major that constrained alternatives, such as pre-med or marketing. Communication studies was a good major for identifying and understanding the bridging process and role of professionalization in internships and socialization because students had a wide range of career decisiveness. However, future research should examine similarities and differences in professionalization across majors as well as the role of student career decisiveness.

Finally, students in this study were enrolled in specific internship course, meaning they may have had more hands-on guidance and school influence than interns not enrolled in an internship course, or enrolled in a course that does not have assignments or multiple meetings throughout the semester. As a result, the student sample represented a more standardized amount of guidance and interference from the university, which further supports that even when the university is heavily involved in the internship process, students perceive that internships offer learnings, experiences, and outcomes not available at the university. Nevertheless, the professionalization framework should be studied with other samples of interns in order to examine similarities and differences across fields and refine the framework for broader use.

Future research should also examine the effects of timing on internships. Specifically, do internships completed during a student's sophomore or junior year of college have the same outcomes as those completed during the senior year or post-graduation? How does completing multiple internships impact students in the long-run, particularly in terms of VAS, career preparation, and first job obtained after graduation?

Is one internship still enough? Gaining greater understanding of when and how students should approach internships during the course of their undergraduate career will shed great light on how internships operate within the socialization framework (i.e., bridging effects), how to best enhance students' professionalism prior to entering the workforce, and how to design internship curriculum to be most beneficial to undergraduates.

Conclusion

Internships are an influential part of socialization, playing a role in vocational anticipatory socialization (VAS) and in bridging VAS with other phases of socialization (organizational vocational socialization and assimilation). Findings suggest that the socialization literature is missing a piece of the puzzle – professionalization, which includes four facets: technical competence, work values, workplace behaviors, and self-awareness. By adding this framework to theory, researchers can better understand and clearly examine how internships lead to beneficial outcomes, what students gain beyond experience and contacts, and what makes some internships better or more helpful than others. In addition, professionalization helps demonstrate the process nature of socialization and indicates there may be more processes that bridge the phase gaps in Jablin's (1985) model. Future research and practice should consider professionalization when seeking to understand, design, and evaluate internships.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today! I'm really interested to hear about your internship experience. Before we begin, please read the consent form I have given you. If you agree to participate in the study, then we will begin. I will be recording this interview for research purposes. Do you have any questions before we begin? At this time I will turn on the recorder (*turn on device*).

First I would like to start out by asking some questions that will give me some background information about you.

1. Is Communication Studies your major? Do you have a concentration?
    a. Why did you choose Comm?
    b. What do you hope to do with this major?

2. Where do you see yourself working after you graduate?
    a. Specific organization? Job? Industry?
    b. Where do you see yourself in five years?
    c. Do you have career goals? What are they?

3. Have you had a job before?
    a. What job? When?
        i. Do you currently work?
    b. Did/does this job prepare you for future jobs? Why or why not?
        i. Is this job related to your major?

4. What are your parents' jobs?
    a. Did they go to college?
    b. Are you a first generation college student?
    c. Did you feel that your parents' jobs affected your decision to go into your chosen major?

Thank you for answering those questions. That gave me a good idea of your background and your previous experiences. Now I'd like to transition to talking about your internship experience.

5. Tell me about your internship.
    a. What field?
    b. What did you do?
    c. How did you decide upon this internship in particular?

6. Why did you complete an internship?
    a. Did anyone encourage you to complete an internship?
        i. How did this affect your decision to complete one?
        ii. Did this affect the type of internship you pursued?

7. Why an internship? Why didn't you get a job?
    a. What does an internship offer you that a job wouldn't?
    b. Are internships expected?
        i. By whom?
        ii. Why?
        iii. For all students? Students in your major?

8. What did you expect to gain from your internship?
    a. Did you have goals for the internship?
    b. What were these?
    c. Do you feel that they were met? Why or why not?

9. What did you know about this field prior to your internship?
    a. Did you know anyone in the field?

10. Tell me about a time during your internship when you felt like you were part of (fit into) the organization.
    a. What made you feel this way?
    b. Who made you feel this way?
    c. When did you experience this feeling?

11. Can you describe a time when you felt like you didn't fit in/ felt like an outsider?
    a. Why did you feel this way?
    b. Was this a common feeling?

12. What kind of interaction did you have with other organizational members?
    a. How much?
    b. Who?
    c. Were you able to ask questions?

13. Were there other interns at your organization?
    a. Did you work with them?
    b. How did this affect your experience?

14. At the end of your internship, were you comfortable communicating with others in the organization? Why or why not?
    a. What would have made communicating easier?

Let's transition now to talking about how your internship affected you now that's it is (nearly) over.

15. What is the most important thing that you learned during your internship?
    a. Why was it important?
    b. How can you use this information/skill in the future?

16. What is your current view of this particular job field?
    a. Did your view of the job field change because of your internship?
    b. Why or why not?
    c. Would you consider a job in this field?
        i. Why or why not?

17. Do you feel that your internship taught you about being a professional?
    a. What did your internship teach you?

18. Did your internship change your expectations for your job after graduation?
    a. How so?

19. What goals do you have now that your internship has ended?
    a. How did you develop these goals?
    b. Did these goals change during your internship?

20. What expectations do you now have for future jobs?

21. How does this internship fit into your future job plans?
    a. Do you have a better idea of what you want to do?
    b. Do you have long-term career goals?

22. Is there anything else about your internship that you would like to share that we haven't already discussed?

Finally, I would like to ask you some basic demographic questions.

23. What is your year in school?
24. Do you have a job for after graduation?

Thank you so much for talking with me today! This has been incredibly helpful and I appreciate you sharing your experience with me.
At this time I will turn off the recorder.

APPENDIX B: FINAL EVALUATION OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. What was your primary reason for completing an internship?
2. What (or who) influenced your decision to complete an internship?
3. What skills did you use?
4. What were your expectations for your internship? What goals did you have? Were these expectations and goals met? Why or why not?
5. Could you sense personal/professional growth? (Yes/No) Explain.
6. Do you think our communication courses should be changed to better prepare students for internships and future employment? (Yes/No) What suggestions can you offer?
7. Did your site supervisor provide any advice for future internships or employment?
8. How has your internship affected your plans for future jobs? What goals do you have now?
9. Would you be willing to be interviewed about your internship experience?

Note: Questions added by researcher include 1, 2, 4, 8, 9

APPENDIX C: EXEMPLAR PSEUDONYMS KEY

Pseudonym	*Major Concentration*	*Internship Type*	*Data Source*
Bailey	English, Comm. Minor	Marketing	Interview
Beth	Public Health	Community Outreach	Interview
Bridget	Public Relations	Marketing	Interview
Camille	Public Relations	Corporate	Interview
Darren	Public Relations	News/Media	Interview
Jeremy	English, Comm. Minor	News/Media	Interview
Kaitlin	Mass Media	News/Media	Interview
Kate	Psychology, Comm. Minor	Community Outreach	Interview
Kim	Public Health	Healthcare	Interview
Kristen	Organizational Comm.	Realty	Interview
Lauren	Public Relations	Small Business	Interview
Nicole	Public Relations	Event Planning	Interview
Allie	Public Relations	Corporate	Open-ended Survey
Abby	Public Health	Healthcare	Open-ended Survey
Ben	Mass Media	News/Media	Open-ended Survey
Carly	Public Relations	Small Business	Open-ended Survey
Celeste	Organizational Comm.	Corporate	Open-ended Survey
Cam	Public Relations	Corporate	Open-ended Survey

Emma	Mass Media	Law Firm	Open-ended Survey
Jenna	Public Health	Healthcare	Open-ended Survey
Jessie	Public Relations	Agency	Open-ended Survey
Kasey	Public Health	Healthcare	Open-ended Survey
Kyra	Public Health	Healthcare	Open-ended Survey
Lena	Public Relations	Corporate	Open-ended Survey
Mathew	Public Relations	University	Open-ended Survey
Megan	Public Relations	Small Business	Open-ended Survey
McKenna	Public Relations?	Event Planning	Open-ended Survey
Natasha	Public Relations	Realty	Open-ended Survey
Nate	Mass Media	News/Media	Open-ended Survey
Nina	Organizational Comm.	Corporate	Open-ended Survey
Quinn	Public Relations	Corporate	Open-ended Survey
Ryan	Public Relations	Agency	Open-ended Survey
Sadie	Public Relations	Corporate	Open-ended Survey

Sally	Organizational Comm.	Realty	Open-ended Survey
Sierra	Public Health	Research	Open-ended Survey
Tina	Public Relations	Agency	Open-ended Survey
Tony	Public Relations	Corporate	Open-ended Survey
Travis	Mass Media	News/Media	Open-ended Survey
Wendy	Public Health	Healthcare	Open-ended Survey

APPENDIX D: PROFESSIONALIZATION FRAMEWORK

Professionalism Category	Definition
Technical Competence	Developing both hard and soft skills, knowledge, and capabilities that are necessary to perform effectively in a job, workplace, or career. May range from general (e.g., email) to career or industry-specific (e.g., writing press releases, software programs).
Work Values	Honing one's own work ethic and values, as well as considering how one's behaviors impact others in the workplace by observing and understanding the values of coworkers, supervisors, organizations, and/or industries.
Workplace Behaviors	Learning, adopting, and adapting to the norms, expectations, and best practices for behavior in a field, organization, or industry through observation, practice, self-reflection, and modification.
Self-awareness	Becoming aware of one's appearance and actions as well as the perceptions of others. May be accompanied by behavioral modification or self-acceptance.