

INTERNSHIP EFFECT (IVENES)S

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Internships

“Structured and career-relevant work experiences obtained by students prior to graduation from an academic program”

(Taylor, 1988, p. 393)

Facts:

More and more students engage in internships

Universities encourage undergraduate students to do internships

More and more universities reward internships with academic credits

(e.g., Clark, 2003; D'Abate, 2010; Parker, Kilgo, Jessica, & Pascarella, 2016)



Why internships?

To develop knowledge, skills and insights
that cannot be obtained in classroom settings

(Clark, 2003; D'Abate et al., 2009)

To increase students' chances on the labour market

(Nunley et al., 2016; Silva et al., 2016)



Why interns?

Interns are relatively cheap
but enthusiastic and qualified workers

(Goia, Marinaş, & Igret, 2017)

Internships are a means to recruit, select,
and groom future employees

(Dixon, Cunningham, Sagas, Turner, & Kent, 2005; Gault et al., 2000)



Effective internships

Are instrumental to students' learning and development,
and increase their opportunities on the labour market

(Stirling et al., 2014; Zhao & Liden, 2011).

Add value to the employing organization,
in terms high performance
and potential future employees

(Gault et al., 2000; Goia et al., 2017)



What makes internships effective?

Despite the growing popularity of internships, interns, educators, and practitioners have only limited insight in the factors that make internships effective

(D'Abate, 2010; Dommeyer, Gross, & Ackerman, 2016)

Indeed, “extant research provides minimal guidance for how to design an effective internship”

(Narayanan et al., 2010, p. 72)



Focus of extant research

The organization of the internship, curricular issues, grading systems, program objectives, the quality of the internship coordinator, and interns' preparations

(for an overview, see: Goia, Marinaş, & Igret, 2017)

Only little research has examined the actual work experiences interns have during their internships

(D'Abate, 2010; Dommeyer, Gross, & Ackerman, 2016; Narayanan, Olk, & Fukami, 2010)





Commentary: Not the end of the world, when you get a 'lousy internship' with mindless tasks

Tales of bad internship experiences abound, but that's no reason to give up on your transition into the working world, says one observer.



Commentary by Adrian Tan, Channel News Asia, August 15, 2018



I beg to differ...

Especially the *quality of the work experiences* affects the immediate and long-term outcomes of internships

(Brooks, Cornelius, Greenfield, & Joseph, 1995; D'Abate et al., 2009; Goia et al., 2017)

Challenging job experiences contribute the most to learning, performance, and the development of one's potential

(Marsick & Watkins, 1990; McCall et al., 1988; McCauley et al., 1994)

Because they motivate individuals to learn and provide them with opportunities to do so

(McCauley et al., 1994)



Challenging job experiences

Those “work activities for which existing tactics and routines are inadequate and that require new ways of dealing with work situations”

(De Pater, Van Vianen, Bechtoldt, & Klehe, 2009, p. 299)

Challenging experiences during one’s (pre-) occupational years are considered as one of the most important prerequisites for development and career success

(McCall, 2004; 2010; McCauley et al., 1994; Ragins et al., 1998; Van Velsor & Hughes, 1990)



Two types of challenge

Qualitative challenges:

related to the *content* of the job

(creating change, unfamiliar responsibilities, high levels of responsibility)

(McCauley, Ohlott, & Ruderman, 1999; McCauley et al., 1994)

Quantitative challenges:

related to an increased load of the job

(high volume and pace of work, time-pressure)

(Boswell, Olson Buchanan, & LePine, 2004; Tuckey, Searle, Boyd, Winefield, & Winefield, 2015)



Are both types effective?

Qualitative and quantitative work characteristics
elicit different motivational orientations, work motivation,
and work strategies

(Cerasoli, Nicklin, & Ford, 2014; Van Dijk & Kluger, 2011)

and may thus result in different work related outcomes



Studies 1 & 2:

109 / 206 Business School interns reported their work experiences 3 times a day for 10 workdays

What is the effect of daily levels of qualitative and quantitative challenge on interns' perception of their learning, job-performance, creative performance, well-being, and mental health?

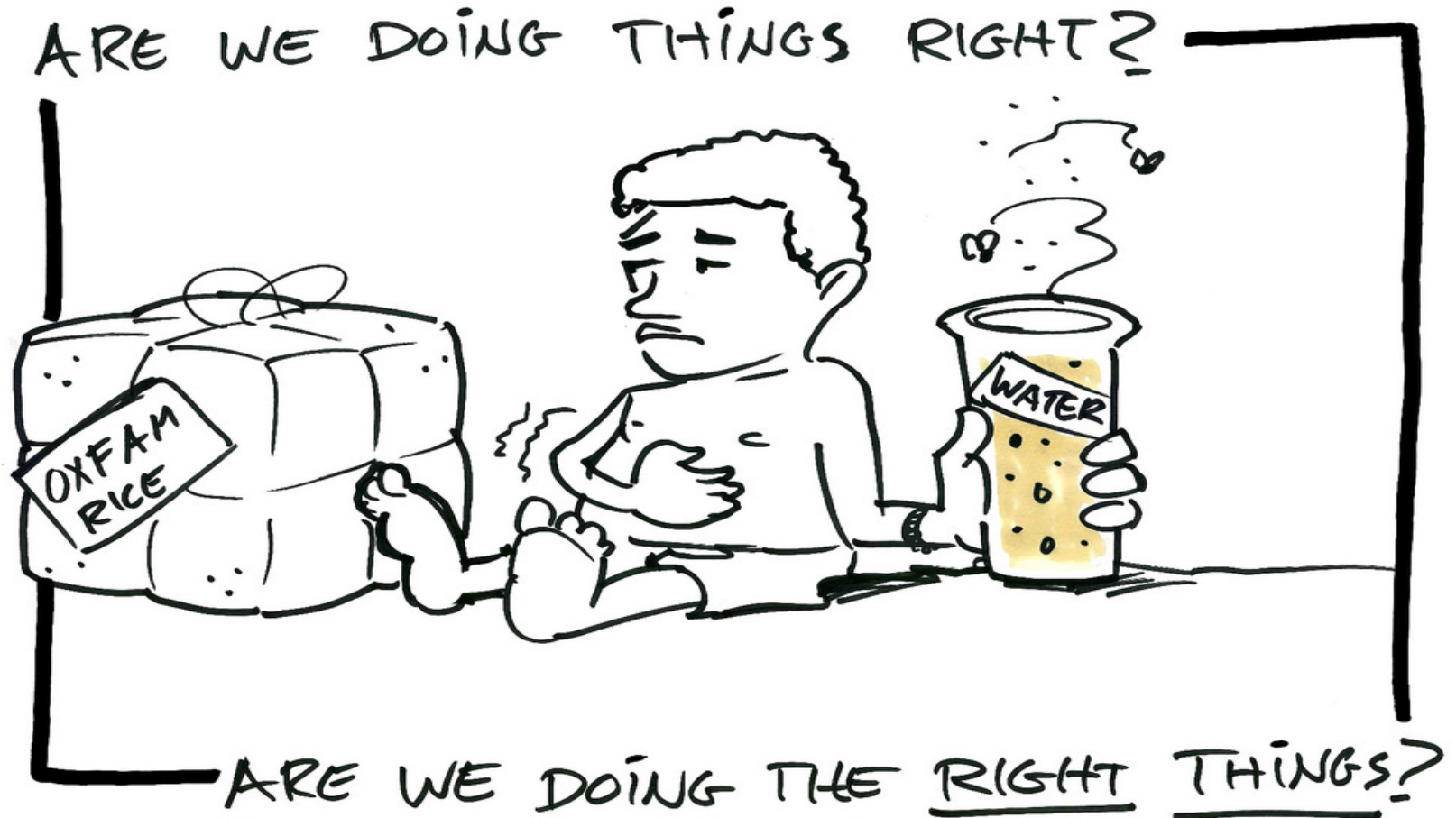


Preliminary conclusions

Intern perceptions in evening after work:	Qualitative challenge during workday	Quantitative challenge during workday
Learning	+	+
Job performance	+	+
Creative performance	+	
Mental health	+	-
Well-being	+	-



How realistic are these interns?



Studies 3 & 4

85 / 80 Business School interns reported their work experiences

Their company supervisors evaluated their in-role performance, creative performance, and potential and indicated the likelihood they would offer the intern a job upon graduation



Preliminary conclusions

Supervisor ratings	Intern Qualitative challenge	Intern Quantitative challenge
Job performance		
Creative performance	+	-
Potential	+	
Job offer	+	



Implications (1)

Interns *think* quantitative challenge is beneficial for their (career) development and might thus seek quantitative challenge.

This may bite them in the back and result in lower ratings of their creative performance and negative consequences for their health and well-being



Implications (2)

We have to encourage interns to *choose* to perform qualitative challenging tasks

We have to encourage interns to *assign* interns qualitative challenging tasks



Seminar for prospective interns

What is challenge and what types of challenges are there

Consequences of (types of) challenge

How to obtain challenging tasks and assignments

(Interns *choose* tasks, supervisors *assign* tasks, peers *divide* tasks)



Effect of seminar

Assessment center experiment:

Choosing three out of six
(non)challenging tasks to be performed
in an achievement setting

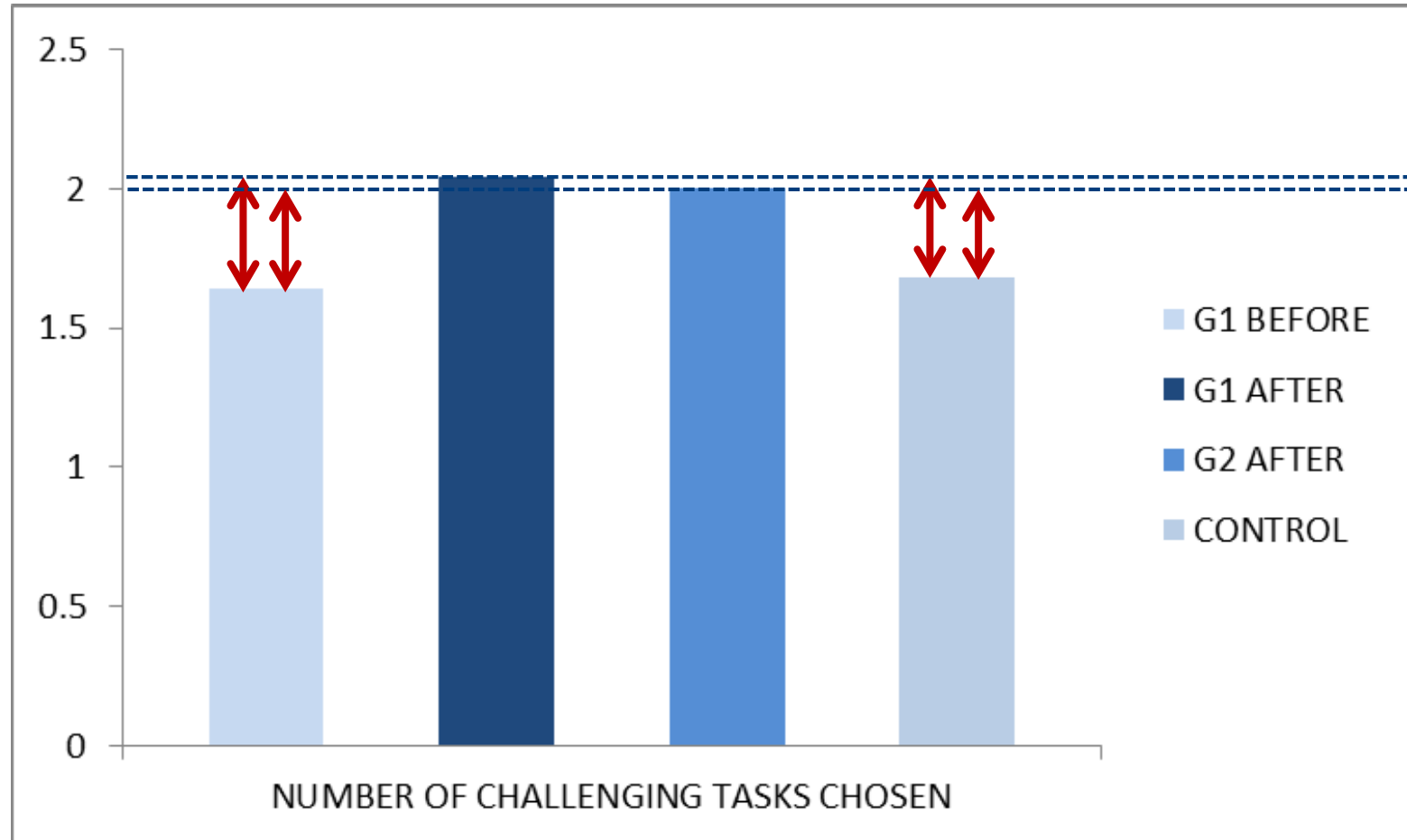
Group 1: task choice before and after seminar

Group 2: task choice after seminar

Group 3: task choice after random lecture



Results seminar



Next steps to stimulate challenge

Create awareness:

Integrate seminar in internship curriculum

Develop new seminars

*(e.g., job crafting; proactive behaviors,
from performance to mastery orientation,
overcoming fear of failure)*



Thank you!

“

I always did something I was a little not ready to do. I think that's how you grow. When there's that moment of 'Wow, I'm not really sure I can do this,' and you push through those moments, that's when you have a breakthrough.

MARISSA MAYER, FORMER CEO, YAHOO

”

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Task discretion

De Pater et al. (2009a, 2009b)

Interns		
Self: Task choice	Supervisor: Task allocation	Colleagues: Task division
43%	43%	16%

Entrance level employees		
Self: Task choice	Supervisor: Task allocation	Colleagues: Task division
33%	46%	21%

