Original Article

Journal of Career Assessment
2021, Vol. 29(4) 589–607

DOI: 10.1177/1069072721992758
journals.sagepub.com/home/jca
SAGE

Internship Experiences Among College Students Attending an HBC: A Longitudinal Grounded Theory Exploration

Mindi N. Thompson[1], Jessica Perez-Chavez[1], and Anna Fetter[1]

Abstract

Internships are a form of experiential learning whereby students can apply and practice their skills in a professional setting while gaining career and life experience. This study explored internship experiences among students attending an Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in the Southeastern region of the U.S. Using Grounded Theory, 18 students participated in in-person small group interviews at Time 1 and 11 participated in follow-up individual phone interviews 1 year later at Time 2. The grounded theory that emerged from the data depicts the process by which students engaged with, and made meaning from, the internship process. Participants are unique individuals with individual and contextual factors that impact the values and beliefs they bring to the internship process. The internship application process is complex, and support from important others, limitations to internship opportunities, and financial considerations impact students' experiences. These experiences shape perceptions regarding the value of internships, which informs students' future projections. In combination, the internship process is a process that unfolds over time and in which students' experiences mutually influence and inform one another. Implications for internship employers and higher education institutions, applications to career theory, and future directions for research are discussed.

Keywords

internships, historically black colleges and universities, work-based learning

Work-based learning has been valued by education researchers and learning scientists for decades (e.g., Dewey, 1997) and is touted as a key mechanism in workforce development policy around the world (Hora et al., 2017; Silva et al., 2018). Proponents suggest that hands-on experiences in authentic, real-world contexts offer learning opportunities that complement traditional academic

[1] University of Wisconsin–Madison, Madison, WI, USA

Corresponding Author:
Mindi N. Thompson, Department of Counseling Psychology, University of Wisconsin–Madison, Madison, WI, USA.
Email: mindi.thompson@wisc.edu

preparation (D'abate et al., 2009). Internships are one type of work-based learning that take place outside the classroom where students apply and practice skills in a professional setting while gaining career and life experience (Hora et al., 2017).

Internships have been praised for their contributions to a variety of positive educational and career-related outcomes, including higher grades (Binder et al., 2015); heightened career interests, self-efficacy beliefs, and career outcome expectations (e.g., Morales & Jacobson, 2018; Parker et al., 2016; Pedro, 1984); and increased clarity and certainty regarding the connection between skills and interests (Brooks et al., 1995). Internship completion also has a number of positive post-graduation benefits. It decreases the duration between graduation and job acquisition (Jung & Lee, 2017), contributes to higher starting wages (Reimer & Schröder, 2006), and relates to higher rates of call-backs for interviews (Nunley et al., 2016).

Not surprisingly, the number of graduating U.S. college students who have completed internships as part of their undergraduate experience continues to grow. The National Association of Colleges and Employers estimated that 65% of graduating college students in the U.S. completed an internship or a co-op program in 2016 (Crain, 2016) as compared to 3% in the 1980's (Perlin, 2011). The emphasis on internships has increased as higher education institutions have been tasked with addressing post-graduate employment (Silva et al., 2018) and with preparing students for the challenges of the changing job market (Jung & Lee, 2017).

Yet, access to internships is not equal for all students. To date, limited attention has been devoted to understanding HBCU students' experiences with internships (Hora et al., 2020). This is despite the fact that internship completion is anticipated to have important implications for educational and career development among students who attend HBCUs. Specifically, internships may provide opportunities to pique interest in particular professions, including those in which African American and Black individuals are underrepresented (e.g., STEM fields). Indeed, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT; 1986) highlighted the critical role of four types of learning experiences that serve as sources of self-efficacy beliefs. In turn, self-efficacy beliefs have important implications for a variety of educational and career-related outcomes, which is a core tenet of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT; Lent et al., 2000). Accordingly, internship completion may offer students exposure to important learning experiences and access to role models, thereby enhancing their self-efficacy beliefs and instilling beliefs that specific career trajectories are possible (Thompson & Graham, 2015).

Internships Among College Students Attending HBCUs

HBCUs, as defined by the U.S. government, are institutions of higher education whose mission was to educate Black students (Redd, 1998). Although HBCUs make up roughly 3% of all colleges and universities, they graduate approximately 20% of all Black graduates (Lomax, 2015) and 27% of all Black students with bachelor's degrees in STEM fields (U.S. Department of Education [DoE], 2016). In addition, HBCUs have high rates of graduating students who go on to pursue professional and graduate degrees (Fiegener & Proudfoot, 2013).

HBCUs enroll all students but have a particular emphasis on increasing access and degree attainment among Black students (Flowers, 2002). Central to their mission, HBCUs seek to empower students by facilitating a college experience in which students have opportunities to centralize their racial identity, access social support, experience belongingness, participate in culturally and spiritually sensitive learning environments, and build networks that facilitate their educational and career success (Albritton, 2012; Bridges et al., 2008; Hilton & Felder, 2014; Mobley, 2017; Strayhorn, 2020). Indeed, an investigation of Black women in STEM disciplines attending Spelman College (Perna et al., 2009) showed that the barriers to Black women's success in

STEM (e.g., financial, psychological, academic) were mitigated by a cooperative institutional culture, faculty support, and an extensive academic support system.

HBCUs are regarded for their ability to augment students' academic success, job-related skills, and transition into the workforce (Kim, 2011; Owens et al., 2020). Results from a 2015 Gallup longitudinal study of 520 Black HBCU graduates and 1,758 Black non-HBCU graduates demonstrated that in comparison to Black graduates from non-HBCU institutions, Black HBCU graduates reported higher financial well-being and were more likely to report receiving support from professors and mentors (Seymour & Ray, 2015). With regard to internship completion, approximately 41% of Black HBCU graduates had an internship or job that allowed them to apply what they were learning in the classroom as compared to 31% of Black graduates from other institutions (Seymour & Ray). Some data (e.g., Parker et al., 2016) have showed that students attending an HBCU who had completed an internship had better grades than those without an internship. Finally, internships are considered valuable opportunities for students to begin to establish career networks from which they can draw as they transition into post-graduate education or the labor market (Dailey, 2016).

Summary and Statement of Purpose

Internships among students attending HBCUs have been understudied (Hora et al., 2020). This is despite the fact that HBCUs are known to provide educational pathways for Black students (Richards & Awokoya, 2012). Given the critical role that HBCUs play in educating and preparing Black students for the workforce and equipping them with skills and resources to assist in the school-to-work transition, it is imperative to gain a more nuanced understanding of internship experiences among students attending an HBCU. Existing research has facilitated our understanding of the ways in which internships may contribute to educational and career outcomes among students attending HBCUs (e.g., Seymour & Ray, 2015), to date no research has explored students' lived experiences as they navigate the internship process over time.

The purpose of this study was to explore students' experiences with internships among a sample of college students attending an HBCU in the Southeastern region of the U.S. In particular, we sought to advance understanding of how students make meaning of messages received from others about internships, their experience of the internship application process, the experience of completing an internship (or not), and the perceived implications of the internship on their future career trajectory. Given the complexities inherent in the internship process and the need to understand internships as a process that has implications for students over time, we used a longitudinal Grounded Theory research design with in person small group interviews at baseline and follow-up individual phone interviews 12 months later (Time 2).

Method

Rationale for Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory (GT) was selected because it allowed us to explore the lived experiences of participants (including their values, beliefs, feelings, and assumptions) and contribute to the development of a theory of the internship process over time for college students that is grounded in participants' own words (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Levitt et al., 2018; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A longitudinal design was used to gain an in depth understanding of students' experiences with internships over a 1-year period. T1 interviews explored how students understood the internship process and T2 interviews (12 months later) explored how students' perceived the completion (or lack thereof) of an internship as relevant to their educational and career development 1 year later.

Participants

Eighteen full-time undergraduate students participated in the in person interview at T1. Sixteen identified as women (one identified as a man and one as non-binary gender queer). Participants ranged in age (20–25 years) and seven identified as FGCS. Seventeen of the 18 identified as African-American or Black; one participant identified as Asian or Asian-American. Three identified as international students. Fourteen identified as heterosexual, one as gay, two as bisexual, and one as pansexual. Three participants indicated their annual familial income as less than $24,999, six as $25,000–$49,999, four as $50,000–$74,999, two as $75,000–$99,999, two as $100,000–$124,999, and one as $125,000–$149,999. Participants ranged in student standing (Sophomore to Senior) and represented a variety of academic majors, including biology, psychology, and studio art. All participants reported their average GPA as B or above.

At T1, twelve participants had completed a paid internship within the past year (nine had completed more than one internship during college). Six participants had not yet completed an internship, all of whom were in the humanities or social sciences. The majority of participants ($n = 14$) indicated that internships were not required for their academic program (one reported being unsure, and three reported that internships were required).

Researcher Approach to Inquiry

The study was conducted in a collaborative format in which the three researchers were involved in all stages of the research process. Given GT's acknowledgment of researchers as instruments (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), potential researcher bias was considered. The list of these biases included (a) personal experiences (or lack thereof) of internship and work-based learning experiences; (b) value for the role of learning opportunities in higher education and career development; (c) assumptions that experiences with racism, classism, and sexism would emerge as negative internship-related experiences; (d) assumptions that students would speak positively about their experiences at their HBCU as connected to their racial/ethnic identity; (e) skepticism toward the push for internships that may not be applicable to students' career interests; and (f) assumptions about differential access to internship experiences among students.

Researchers continuously reflected upon their identities, life experiences, and assumptions that participants would view them as outsiders (e.g., not affiliated with an HBCU, not identifying as African American or Black, affiliation with a research intensive institution in the Midwest). The first author is a professor of counseling psychology (CP). Growing up in a lower middle-class family situated within a more privileged community, she oscillated between being surrounded at school by those from more privileged backgrounds and at "home" by her extended family members who were primarily lower class. The second author is a 4th-year doctoral student in CP. Having come from a working-class immigrant family, she became aware of the many systemic barriers that ethnic and racial minority groups face. The third author is a 4th-year doctoral student in CP. The author was raised in an upwardly mobile lower middle-class family and was enculturated into the value of education as an "equalizer," particularly educational experiences that support marginalized students.

Data Collection Strategies

Participants were undergraduate students enrolled at a small, private, liberal arts, HBCU located in a rural county in the Southeastern U.S. Students were recruited as part of the College Internship Study, which is a national mixed methods study of internship participation and program characteristics on student outcomes. Students who expressed interest in participating in small group interviews about their internship-related experiences (n = 58) were invited via-email by the first author to participate

in an in-person interview. Small group interviews were used to provide an opportunity for students to share experiences and learn from one another. Small group interviews were comprised of two to three participants and one author who served as the facilitator, were 45–60 minutes, and were audio recorded. Facilitators reviewed informed consent, discussed confidentiality, and asked participants to complete a demographic form. Participants were compensated $20 and selected a pseudonym. All 18 participants provided consent to be contacted to participate in the T2 follow-up interview 12 months later.

Interview Protocol

Students were divided into small group interview categories based upon their response to the online survey: those who had and had not completed an internship. Facilitators used protocols based on the category (See Appendix). Interview questions were developed based upon existing literature (e.g., McHugh, 2017). The GT approach allowed participants to take the story where they believed important. The flexibility within this process gave participants command of the interviews to uncover nuances to their experiences.

Data Analytic Strategies

Transcripts were reviewed and coded using methods described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Charmaz (2006). Researchers engaged in a three-phase analytical process. In the first phase (open coding), researchers independently coded each of the transcripts line-by-line, staying close to the participants' words (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The second phase (axial coding) involved organizing codes from the first phase into categorical themes that emerged across all transcripts. Researchers shared their open codes, reflected upon the implicit meaning of the data, and worked together to organize the data into the distinct and higher order categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The third phase (selective coding) involved synthesizing and integrating the axial codes so that they can be incorporated into theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). During this phase, we considered the list of codes, revisited participants' incidents within codes and began extrapolating themes. We evaluated and re-evaluated the theoretical models proposed and came together to modify the emergent theoretical model (see Figure 1).

Follow-Up Interview Procedures

Twelve months following the completion of T1 interviews, participants were contacted with an invitation to participate in a follow-up individual phone interview to reflect upon their experiences a year later. Time 2 interview questions (See Appendix) included questions designed to explore how things had changed, future plans, and to gain a more nuanced understanding of themes that surfaced in T1 interviews (e.g., experiences with discrimination). Of the 18 T1 participants, 11 completed the follow-up interview (two did not reply and five emails bounced back as undeliverable). Ten identified as Black or African American and one as Asian or Asian-American and three were FGCS. Nine identified as women, one as a man, and one as non-binary gender queer. Ten identified as heterosexual and one as gay. Nine had completed an internship and two had not completed an internship at T2.

The authors completed the follow-up interviews via phone and interviews were audio-recorded with participant's consent. Participants were paid $40 and interviews were transcribed verbatim. We followed the data analytic strategies described above to identify new themes, areas of discrepancy, and clarification of the theory that emerged from these data. Throughout coding, we moved toward higher levels of abstraction and analysis shifted between levels of abstraction (Charmaz, 2006). In

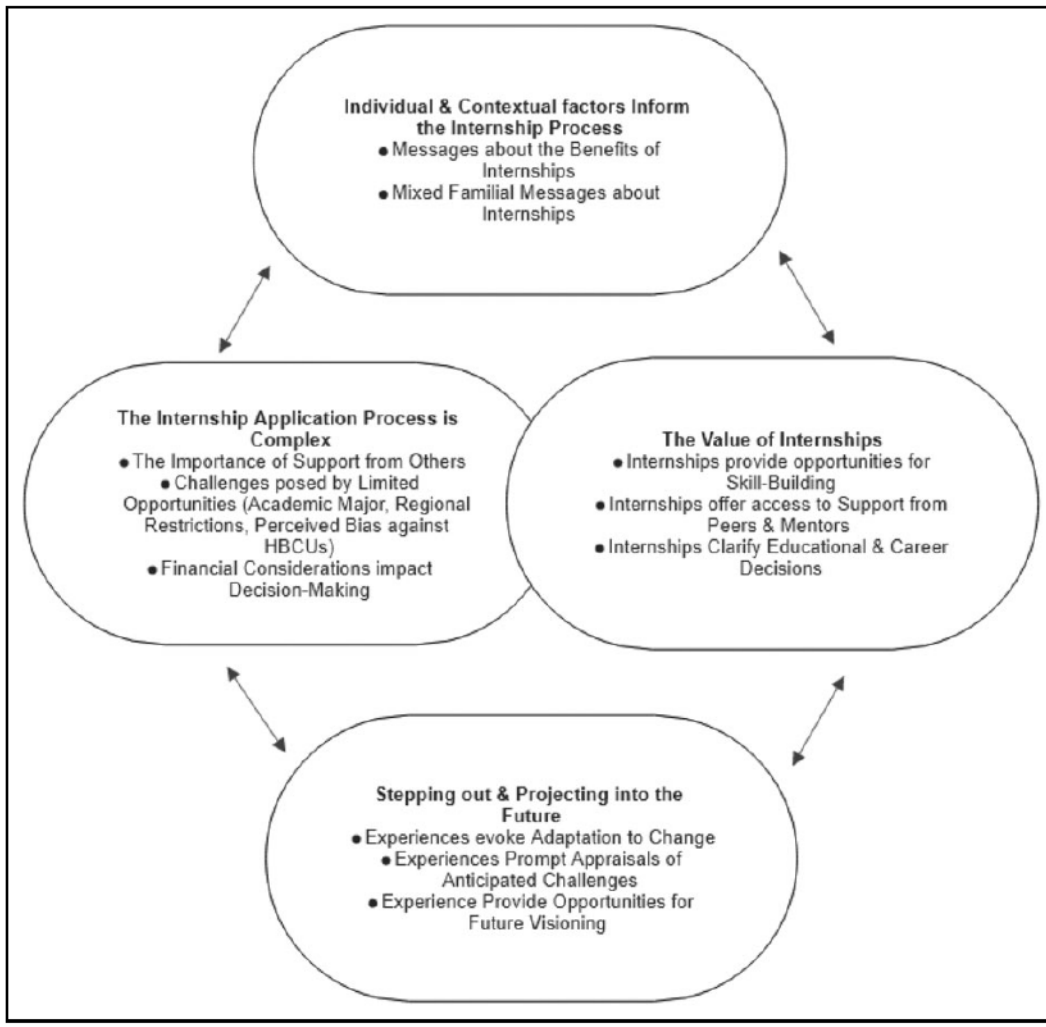

Figure 1. Grounded theory of internship process.

all stages of data collection and analysis, we maintained a detailed audit trail that included memo-writing, meetings notes, reactions to participant interactions, and discussions about biases in an effort to ensure methodological integrity (Levitt et al., 2018).

Results

A grounded theory of the process by which students engaged with, and made meaning from, the internship process over time emerged from the T1 and T2 interview data (See Figure 1). Participants are individuals with varied backgrounds, unique life experiences, and distinct families, all of which impact the values and beliefs they bring with them to the internship process. All participants shared a strong motivation to be successful in their academic and career pursuits so that they would be able to make a positive difference in the world. All participants noted that they are aware internships exist and had received messages regarding their importance, but experiences with various aspects of the internship process varied. Some completed multiple internships whereas other completed none. Yet,

experiences with the internship process, over time, had important implications for all students and informed their career-related expectations and future projections. In this way, experiences with the internship process may best be viewed as a process that unfolds over time.

Individual and Contextual factors Inform the Internship Process

Participants came into this small rural HBCU in the Southeastern region of the U.S. with varied backgrounds and unique lives that had implications for how they experience the internship process. Within each theme, identity and life experiences matter, added complexity to the narratives, and impacted their understanding of the internship process. Participants' common desire to "do good in the world" (Jane), "help other people" (Jennifer), and "make a difference" (Nikole) drove their educational, internship, and career goals. In combination, participants' desire to make a positive difference in the lives of others and internalized messages from their institution and families shape how they approach and engage with the internship process.

Messages About the Benefits of Internships

Participants seek a foothold in a future career, and they perceive pressure to complete internships in order to be best positioned for their next educational or career pathway. They expressed a belief that internships are valuable and important to success. They shared messages received from staff, advisors, and peers that internships are key résumé-building experiences. Participants felt that internships would position them for the job market or advanced degrees. For example, Hazel said, "I think my internship plays a huge role in my future career . . . I think [it will] really stand out on my applications." Participants' comments may reflect the emphasis their HBCU places on internships, something all of the participants agreed about. Jennifer stated, "When you actually get here and get into the program, it's really like I don't want to say beaten into you, but it's really heavily enforced how important [internships] are."

Mixed Familial Messages About Internships

Participants weighed messages from their institution alongside messages from their families. Some families echoed the institution, such as Giovanna's, who described the family support received as a positive motivation. She sent them pictures of herself on her internship, in a lab coat, and said "my family was so proud of me" because she would "make a difference in this world." For other participants, however, messages from family complicated their views of what was and is possible in terms of internships and future career trajectories. Ashely's family emphasized that she should stay close to home, and not pursue internship opportunities too far away. They told her, "you can always come home and just work." Michelle said that her mother, who had not gone to college, did not understand why she was working for free. Michelle acknowledged that she could "use a job," but that she did not have time or "room to bargain" because she needed to complete her internship to graduate. Although several participants shared their belief that they are motivated to do well for their families, some indicated that trying to be the first in their family to be academically successful feels overwhelming. As she shared feeling pressure from family who have not gone to college, Denise said, "They just don't know how hard it is to fill out applications or to get experience . . . . But they keep pushing and they keep pushing."

The Internship Application Process Is Complex

All participants described the process of identifying, applying to, and accepting (or not) internships as complex. Themes that emerged from interviews at T1 and T2 highlighted a range of emotional

reactions elicited throughout the process. Participants shared the importance of support from others in navigating all stages. They described barriers to success in the internship application process, including complicating factors related to the availability of internships for particular majors, geographic restrictions that impact internship availability, and the perceived competitiveness of internships. All described finances as influencing the process.

The Importance of Support From Others

Participants described their reliance on others (including faculty, staff, and peers) for guidance and encouragement, information about available opportunities, and skills to increase competitiveness. Giovanna had a professor whose class assignments included submitting an application to an internship who edited her personal statement. She said approvingly, "he knew what people would be looking for." Anthony, who had not completed an internship at T1 or T2, shared his gratitude toward his advisor and faculty who helped him find ways to expand his skills by engaging in hands-on learning and focusing on building his portfolio in preparation for applications to graduate school and a museum program in fashion, his chosen field.

Peer networks had been just as valuable if not more so. Jennifer said, "It started with faculty. But as I got here and made more friends, more upper classmen friends, they give me different internships that they heard about. They tell me different places to go to, different websites, and some things like that where I can get information." She had also become a source of information for others, passing along information about internships to peers. Elise described "a huge bulletin board" in the science building that lists internships, said she compares notes with others about what might be of interest, and applies together with friends for programs with multiple positions. "[W]e do it at the same time and we're right there with each other," she explained. Peer-to-peer mentoring even occurred in the small group interviews themselves, as April offered to connect Nikole with her mother, who she thought might have contacts that could be useful based on Nikole's description of her interests in the interview.

Challenges Posed by Limited Internship Opportunities

Participants described challenges tied to their majors, regional factors, and a sense that attending an HBCU might put them at a disadvantage. Those who had not completed an internship at T1 or T2 expressed embarrassment, disappointment in themselves, feelings of failure, and a sense of not meeting the institution's expectations. Joseph lamented, "I'm *trying*! I'm not just sitting around complaining. I don't have [an internship]. I keep getting rejection letters. And it's very hard." She went on to say, "I think it's very taboo to talk about why it's such a hard process. I'm not saying that people tell you not to talk about it. But it's something that people don't talk about. Because it makes me angry a lot. It does."

Academic major. Most participants felt that humanities and social science majors have greater difficulty finding internships than STEM or business majors. Humanities and social science majors cited difficulties identifying relevant internships to apply to, sometimes leading them to give up trying. At T2, Tierra indicated that she had stopped applying to internships because she consistently was frustrated by the lack of relevant opportunities. On the other hand, STEM and business majors cited pipeline programs and nationally funded internship programs, as well as built in connections between the institution and industry through class instructors, placement programs supported by the fact that internship completion was required for their major, and faculty mentor networks. Participants who had graduated at T2 shared ways that these networks have served them in their transition to the world-of-work or to graduate school.

Regional restrictions. Participants believe the state where they attend college has limited opportunities, and as such, in-state internships are "very competitive." As Angela said, "All of [the internship possibilities] were out of state . . . I don't want to go out of state. I want to stay in state." Others were from rural hometowns, and felt they had no hope of finding an internship near home. For some, the prospect of going out of state to pursue an internship felt exciting, but many felt it would be challenging. Maya said, "Coming to college was the first time I've ever been separated from my family. . . . so I guess going up there alone, that would be different, that would be a hardship for me." Participants who had graduated at T2 discussed their need to move in order to pursue their next educational or career move.

Perceived bias against HBCUs. Several participants felt that their internship and subsequent job applications may not be perceived competitively by potential employers because they attend an HBCU. Denise said it in this way: "Being that we're at a HBCU . . . people don't look at us as having, like, the right type of education for certain internships. So, basically trying to apply for internships is like a waste time. Because they see that, OK, you all go to [name of institution] and they go look us up on the website and they see that it's an HBCU and they just like, oh, no. They probably just be like, OK, we're going to reject her because it's an HBCU." Joseph said, "When it comes to the internships, I do feel like there is a bias to which schools you go to . . . You're probably going to lose out to somebody that goes to [names R1 institutions] or some other school." Recalling one of her previous internship experiences, Giovanna (T2) said, "One of the supervisors for my internship told me that since I go to HBCU that my GPA wouldn't be the same as for another person attending a PWI . . . And, you know, I feel like that was very offensive because the program is for people who go to HBCUs."

Financial Considerations Impact Internship Decision-Making

Participants' personal financial situation and internships' compensation packages (e.g., travel reimbursement, cost of living expenses, pay) were relevant to each stage of the internship process. Some participants have access to financial support from their parents. Thus, they did not need to weigh compensation heavily. Jennifer described the luxury of turning down an internship with a higher stipend, she said, "just because I feel like other programs were a better match for what I wanted to learn." For most participants, however, compensation was a key determining factor in deciding whether to apply to and accept internships. Nikole had taken internships that did not support her career goal because they paid a stipend, and she hoped they would help her career somehow. For some, limited access to transportation and personal finances was a barrier. Joseph said, "Not everybody has a car. Not everybody has money. I can't go to New York City or go to Atlanta. . . . Because I don't have money." Some went further to express frustration with prospective internship employers who do not pay a stipend. Michelle said that interns are "work[ed] . . . to death" and expected to be cheerful. For many, these choices were considered alongside longer-term financial considerations. Jane shared her frustration toward internships that pay a stipend, but nothing else. She said, "Is the stipend going to be enough for me to pay for housing, food, and also be enough left over for the rest of the year?"

Student loans and longer-term post-graduation worries weighed heavily in these decisions at T1 and T2. As Elise said, "we still have to pay for college at the end of the day. We still have to pay off these loans. So, when we are looking at it like that, we're probably going to pick the [internship] that has the most money." Giovanna, who at T2 recalled how expensive it had been to live in D.C. when she did her internship there, shared her belief that debt and financial stress will be difficult to contend with in the future. She said, "Right now I'm in a lot of debt. And it's like they say, take out a lot of loans. But they say, you know, it's worth it?"

The Value of Internships

All participants, regardless of whether they had completed an internship at T1 and T2, believed they had value and play an important role in future career trajectories. They viewed internships as opportunities to learn new skills, build their networks, and clarify future goals.

Internships Provide Opportunities for Skill-Building

Being challenged to learn new things allowed participants to acquire comprehension, apply knowledge, and build confidence. Participants described a variety of skills learned during internships (e.g., mastering software platforms, equations, and equipment). Michelle said that she learned to use Excel when she was given a task to complete using the program with no instruction as to how: "I figured it out by myself and it was a lesson for me . . . that was a really fond learning experience that stands out for me." She said that an upper-level supervisor had congratulated her for her performance on the task, which meant a lot to her. When reflecting upon her internships (T2) Elise explained, "[my internships] are even well rounding my education because I'm learning so many things that I learned about it in textbooks or sitting in a class. But now . . . they're actually coming to life." Participants also learned professional development. Nikole described her internship as a low-pressure environment where she learned the customs associated with work with people in a professional office: "I know how to converse with them. I know certain things what to say, what not to say. Like how hard to shake someone's hand." Internships, she said, "teach you these little tiny things that are going to set you apart."

Internships Offer Access to Support From Peers and Mentors

Internships provided professional development opportunities, which were regarded highly across participants at T1 and T2. Morgan referenced meeting professionals working in various types of organizational environments and learning how to work in differently sized organizations. For most participants, a key component of professional development included the ability to access support from peers and mentors during and after internship.

Contact with fellow interns was a source of vicarious learning, encouragement, and support post-internship. Ruby said that observing her fellow interns being successful reinforced her own confidence: "If they can do it, I can do it too." Giovanna said, "When I felt overwhelmed, [my fellow intern] would come and pray with me . . . saying, just keep God first. You got this. Stop stressing yourself about it." Some of the people she met on her internship later helped Giovanna prepare for medical school applications and to take the entrance exams.

Access to supportive mentors also was a key source of professional development. Mentors provided encouragement, direct feedback, and opportunities "for hands-on learning." Hazel shared, "The thing that I loved the most [about my internship] was, we got individual attention. . . . That was the first time that a mentor actually put that much attention on me and showed me how to do things, step by step, and then told me where I was going wrong or how to improve myself and all of that. And for me, that was really great." Several participants cited positive encouragement from mentors as an essential contributor to their success. When reflecting upon her internship experience 2 years later, Hazel (T2) said, "The mentorship that I received from the internship was something that I could like—I'm sure I can hold on to forever."

For some, the racial climate on internship was an important component that contributed to positive mentoring experiences. April said that she believed she had been awarded her internship in part due to "affirmative action," but that she felt comfortable. She explained, I felt that [my internship mentors] were genuine about wanting to have us there. I felt like they were

caring. . . . They didn't make me feel like I'm just another number." On the other hand, a few participants had negative experiences on internship due to discrimination based upon their gender, race, and age. April, at T2, said she experienced sexism from an internship mentor. She shared a story in which, as the sole woman on her team, she "put in the work and I did hard work versus my other team members who were all guys didn't really do anything." Yet her male internship gave all of his attention, praise, and offers to help support her male peers, which was discouraging. Janet, at T2, reflected experiencing discrimination based upon her age from supervisors and coworkers, which she described as "pretty hard to deal with."

Mentors continued to play a positive role post-internship. Jennifer explained that a key benefit of an internship is "meeting new mentors that can help us get to where we want to be that we wouldn't have met otherwise." Participants described internship mentors who emailed to check in, provided funding to help support travel to attend or present at conferences, offered advice on graduate school and job applications, offered job shadowing opportunities, and celebrated milestones. April summed up the benefits of accessing mentors in this way: "A lot of times it's not about what you know, it's about who you know. So, I feel like when you go out to these internships you make different connections, which could help you in the long run. Your grades could not be the highest or your score on whatever admission test you need may not be the highest, but because that person knows you and knows your work ethic and knows your personality, you could easily be in there."

Internships Clarify Educational and Career Decisions

Internship completion provided participants clarity on their educational and career trajectories. For example, Morgan's internship confirmed her choice of major. Hazel and Ruby said although they had positive internship experiences, those experiences made them realize they needed to change majors. Jennifer echoed this sentiment when reflecting back on an internship at T2. She said, "I think what stands out to me the most is it was an opportunity for me to learn what I didn't want to do . . . That was just a perfect time for me to learn, you know, okay, it's okay to test the waters in certain things and everything isn't going to work. But that doesn't mean the experience was in vain or anything like that."

Stepping Out and Projecting Into the Future

The story doesn't end with the completion of internship; rather participants view internship experiences as relevant to their next story. For some, that meant completing another internship. For others, it meant preparation for their post-graduation transitions. At T1 and T2, participants were clear they are at a particular moment in time, and that their career trajectory is just beginning even if they have completed multiple internships or graduated and started a job. As participants reflected upon the ways that their experiences with the internship process had affected their trajectories, they described opportunities to adapt to change, gain a realistic appraisal of future challenges, and connect to visions of themselves in the future.

Experiences Evoke Adaptation to Change

Participants shared ways that internships contributed to their personal growth and development over time. This included stories at T1 and T2 about what it was like to be on their own for the first time, to stretch themselves by living in a new place, and to learn to adapt to new contexts. Jane said, "On internship you're going to be in a different lifestyle. You're going to have a different day-to-day routine . . . [Internships] seem like a way to adapt to different situations." At T2, when describing ways that her internship helped her prepare for her job, Janet said, "That internship was very

challenging because it was a new environment. So, it kind of prepared me to understand that coming out of college, a lot of things are going to change. And you have to be able to adapt to that in your environment and not only are you just adapting, but you have to thrive. Because honestly when you leave college, you have to make a living. And the only way you can make a living is whether or not you do your job well." These experiences prompted participants to think carefully and be realistic about the future.

Experiences Prompt Appraisals of Anticipated Challenges

Participants believed that experiences with the internship process provided opportunities to gain a realistic understanding of anticipated future challenges related to work-life balance and coping with bias in the workplace. Jennifer, who held a "positive outlook" toward her career goal of a job in academic medicine, appreciated the ways her internships helped her to gain a realistic sense of potential challenges as she observed internship supervisors modeling the realities of "trying to balance a very demanding career with also trying to balance a family, and hobbies."

While most participants indicated that they have not experienced discrimination in the internship process, several said that their internship experiences prompted them to realize that they will likely experience bias based upon gender, race, and age in the future. For example, at T2, Morgan shared that although she had not yet "had any discriminatory problems" she anticipates having to contend with bias in the future as she pursues her goal of becoming a "chief financial officer or director of finance." She said, "I'm a female in the business world and so there's already a lot of stigma there. People who make it high can be judged or have bias against them. And then I'm an African-American female so discrimination may be a problem in the future." Jennifer's (T2) perceptions were similar: "I want to go to medical school, but I also want to go into higher level science research. And most of the time those spaces are very white and very male, and I'm not either of those things." She explained, "In the different schools and things that I want to, they're all primarily white. And so just being conscious of that and readjusting is something that I'll have to get used to again." Indeed, some participants expressed a need to develop strategies to cope with anticipated bias. Hazel, who identifies as Muslim and wears a hijab anticipates having a hard time getting a job due to stereotypes from potential employers. At T2, she said, "In the future I'm sure that I will encounter some other discrimination. And I personally would need to kind of find ways to navigate through it and not take it seriously."

Experiences Provide Opportunities for Future Visioning

In spite of these anticipated challenges, participants remained optimistic as they envisioned their futures. Some who were frustrated with the internship application process were more optimistic about the future, such as Joseph who expressed hopefulness about getting a job in the future "Because you can be more confident with your degree." For some, completing internships provided motivation and an opportunity to try on a version of their future selves. Jennifer said: "The moment I realized that this is actually what I want to do after graduation . . . it kind of gave me a push, like, I can actually do this one day." Giovanna recalled, of her internship, "They had a medical school library. And I sat in there forever. I was like, this is me. This is something I want to do. I . . . I feel like I could fit in there. Like I could see myself walking down the street with my lab coat on."

Discussion

Findings depicted a GT of the process by which individuals engage with and derive meaning from experiences with internships over time (See Figure 1). Themes from in person small group

interviews at T1 and follow-up individual interviews 1 year later at T2 with college students attending an HBCU in the Southeastern U.S. revealed complexities inherent in the internship experience. The GT depicted a process by which individual, contextual, and systemic factors mutually interrelate and influence one another over time. Student's values and desires were informed by their experiences as unique cultural beings with varied life experiences. Their desire to do good and make a difference in the world, combined with messages from important others about internships and career development, inform how students approach and consider internships. Support from important others, limitations to internship opportunities, and financial considerations impact students' experiences with the application process. These experiences shape students' perceptions regarding the value of internships, which mutually informs and relates to students' future projections as they envision themselves stepping out into the future and imagining their career trajectory.

Findings revealed that all participants, regardless of whether they had completed an internship, believed doing so was valuable. They described feeling some pressure to complete internships on their campus, which aligns with the broader landscape within higher education that has pushed for internship completion to prepare undergraduate students to transition to work (e.g., Jung & Lee, 2017; Silva et al., 2018). Participants believed that completing internships would lead beneficial outcomes and that internship completion provide opportunities to learn, practice, and apply skills while gaining career and life experience. This suggests that internships can provide access to learning experiences for students who may otherwise have limited exposure to such opportunities (e.g., Thompson & Phillips, 2013).

Participants highlighted the importance of support from others throughout the internship process and described internships themselves as providing opportunities to establish supportive networks. Mentorship and support from peers, faculty, staff, and internship supervisors emerged as a key factor throughout T1 and T2. Those who had completed internship shared ways that support from others impacted their development. In combination, this reinforces suggestions (e.g., Dailey, 2016) that internships assist students in developing networks from which they can draw as they transition into post-graduate education or the labor market.

Despite the fact that all participants had internalized a belief that internships are valuable, they described the internship process as emotional complex. A key finding that emerged from these data related to students' unique experiences that impact their approach to, and decisions about, internship application and completion. Familial messages and financial considerations emerged as important factors that impacted how students thought about internships and the types of internships they sought. In combination, findings revealed that students must balance competing motivations and demands when making educational and career-related decisions, such as applying to and completing internships.

Throughout T1 and T2 interviews, participants articulated barriers to internship completion that made the process challenging. These barriers related to geographic and regional restrictions in available internships, financial limitations, lack of support or pressure from family, the perceived competitiveness of getting an internship, and a sense that internship employers hold biases against students attending HBCUs. That participants perceived attending an HBCU as a barrier to success in securing internships, attaining jobs, and getting into graduate or medical school is concerning. This concern is heightened by the fact that some participants had received explicit messages to this end from advisors and internship supervisors. While outside the scope of this study, further research is needed to understand and address these beliefs, especially in light of recent media attention to precarious financial landscape facing some HBCUs (Smith-Barrow, 2019). For example, students' felt sense of bias in internship and job applications may intensify if negative media attention continues to be directed toward HBCUs.

The majority of participants indicated that they have not yet experienced racism but expect to in the future. Many attributed their limited experiences with racism to the fact that they were attending an HBCU. This finding is consistent with prior research indicating the role that HBCUs play in promoting African American students' sense of belonginess on campus (Kim, 2011; Seymour & Ray, 2015). That students anticipate experiencing racism and other forms of discrimination in the future and are looking for ways to cope with these experiences is not surprising and highlights the need for further attention to understanding students' past, present, and anticipated experiences with discrimination in order to identify supportive interventions to cope with discrimination. This seems especially important for HBCU graduates entering the workforce because African American students who graduate from HBCUs are likely to enter professions in which they are underrepresented (Richards & Awokoya, 2012). Further research is needed to explore how experiences with discrimination affects the internship process.

Although all participants indicated a desire to complete an internship and described their attempts to do so, they viewed internship completion as only one step in their broader educational and career trajectories. This fits within Super's (1957) theory highlighting career development as a lifelong process and with Savickas' (2005) career construction theory that articulated processes by which individuals construct their careers and adapt to environmental and interpersonal constraints over time. As such, findings reiterate the need for campus stakeholders to consider the importance of promoting messages regarding internship completion *alongside* messages regarding the broader arc of their career and educational trajectory.

Implications for Higher Education and Career Counseling

Themes highlight the need to gain a richer understanding of students' experiences of the internship process and to develop ways to intervene. Participants' unique life experiences and identities had implications for their experiences (e.g., FGCS and students from lower social class backgrounds were more impacted by financial considerations throughout the internship process). Institutions are encouraged to attend to the ways in which students' motivation, expectations, barriers, and decisions regarding internships are impacted by factors such as family, finances, and hometown and to consider needed resources to address disparities in access to complete internships. Career practitioners and advisers are encouraged to engage in conversations with students about familial support, expectations, and responsibilities that impact their educational development and the internship process. Hiring agencies and universities are encouraged to acknowledge that internship accessibility for many students is dependent upon compensation packages. Competitive pay and other incentives (e.g., assistance with relocation, housing, transportation) will likely attract a wider and more diverse applicant pool. As such, campus stakeholders are encouraged to provide information about compensation packages to students when sharing information about prospective internships, to increase their own awareness of financial limitations that act as a barrier to students' abilities to apply to or accept particular internships, and to advocate on behalf of their students with potential internship employers or create campus-based incentives (e.g., tuition waivers associated with field experiences, campus-based stipends for internship completion) that will enable students to complete internships.

Universities and internship sites are encouraged to identify individuals within their programs and organizations to provide support and mentoring to students. Campus initiatives to offer professional development workshops to support faculty and staff in understanding how to be an effective mentor to intern applicants and to help facilitate students' application of internship experiences to didactic course content are needed. In addition, campus staff are encouraged to work with prospective internship employers to develop clear expectations for supervisors working with interns that promote positive mentorship experiences (e.g., level of involvement and engagement; see Hora

et al., 2017), including how to mentor and support interns from diverse backgrounds (e.g., Williams et al., 2020).

The fact that not all students who were interested and who had applied to complete an internship were able to do so is concerning. It is critical to begin to attend to how internship opportunities are dispersed. Students would benefit from gaining knowledge of internships available in their field of interest and institutions would benefit from determining factors that contribute to students' unsuccessful attempts to secure an internship. Discrepancies in available internships and support to complete internships across academic majors were evident in these findings. Institutions are encouraged to evaluate majors that receive the most and least support in the internship process and identify mechanisms to increase equity in access to work-based experiences for students across majors.

Finally, findings revealed that students who were not able to secure and complete internships experienced a host of challenging emotional reactions. These reactions, coupled with already high incidences of mental health distress on college campuses (Pedrelli et al., 2015), highlight the importance of career counselors being attuned to students' experiences with rejection to best support them in this process. Career practitioners could offer psychoeducation about career development as a lifelong process and validate rejection as a common experience when applying to internship and job opportunities so as to augment students' coping efficacy.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

It is important to interpret these findings within the participants' academic, geographic, and social context. The concerns regarding availability of local internships may be specific to students attending college in rural areas. Nevertheless, they highlight the importance of considering the local labor market in which institutions are situated. Future research is needed in order to examine economic and geographic factors that may act as barriers to internship completion. Second, only one participant in this sample identified as a man. Further research with African American and Black men attending HBCUs is needed in order to articulate the lived experiences of internships among men who have and have not completed internship.

Additional limitations concern the research design. We relied upon participant definitions of whether or not they had completed an internship rather than using a formula to determine whether or not all internship experiences met standardized qualities. Although the interview questions were based upon prior knowledge (e.g., Routon & Walker, 2018), the inclusion of some questions and exclusion of others may have influenced responses. As such, future research is needed to disentangle themes that emerged from these data (e.g., exploring the experience of discrimination on internships, identifying high-impact components of supervisory relationships).

It is possible that participants who participated are unique in some way and there may be differences within the sample among students who did not participate in the T2 interviews from those who did (i.e., it is likely that the five participant emails that bounced back as undeliverable were no longer students at the institution). As well, the majority of the participants who had completed an internship reported being satisfied with their experiences and all of the students who had not completed an internship had previously applied for internships. Future research that examines student unsatisfactory experiences or lack of interest in internships is warranted.

Conclusion

The qualitative nature of this study deepens our understanding of internship experiences among college students by providing one of the first in depth explorations of HBCU students' experiences with the internship process over time. Given the critical role that HBCUs play in supporting the career development of African American and Black students in the U.S. (e.g., Richards & Awokoya,

2012) and the documented links between internship completion and future career outcomes (e.g., Morales & Jacobson, 2018), it is critical to direct attention and efforts to support the completion of well-designed and supported internships among students attending HBCUs. The grounded theory that emerged from these data highlight the iterative processes by which students' contextual experiences impact the internship process and their future projections. Findings can inform institutions' integration of resources and supports for students.

Appendix: Interview Questions

Time 1

- Please briefly describe your academic program and/or major, and why you decided to enroll in this program, including any people, events or experiences that influenced your decision?
- Please describe how the program going for you, and whether there are any issues, events, or situations that you would consider an obstacle to your academic success?
- What messages have you received about internships?

  [Students who had completed an internship]

  - Tell me a little bit about your internship—where you did it, how long it lasted, and whether it was paid or unpaid?
  - Tell me three memories that stand out to you from your internship experience.
  - Why did you decide to complete an internship?

  [Students who had not completed an internship]

  - You indicated that you have not yet taken an internship. Are you planning to do an internship? Why or why not?
  - What are some obstacles to your pursuing an internship opportunity?
  - Do you have any concerns about doing an internship?

- How do you define success as you think about your educational and career development? What are (and have been) challenges or barriers to these successes?
- What role do you think internships will play in your future?
- What do you think it will be like to try to get a job when you complete college?
- Are there any last observations or thoughts you'd like to share with me before we wrap up?

Time 2

- Please tell me a little about what your life has been like over the past year.
- Are you currently a college student? If no, how have you been spending your time? If yes, have there been any changes in your academic track since last year?
- Have you applied to and/or participated in an internship in the past year?

  [Students who had applied to an internship]

  - Tell me a little about your application process.

  [Students who had not completed an internship]

  - Please describe your perception of the pros and cons of completing an internship.
  - Do you believe you'll participate in an internship in the future?

[Students who had completed an internship]

- Tell me about your experiences completing the internship.
- Looking back, what stands out from your experience in the internship?
- What do you think you gained from the internship? What would you change?
- What role do you think your internship has played or will play in your future?

- How do you define success as you think about your educational and career development?
- What are (and have been) challenges or barriers to these successes?
- How do you describe experiences with discrimination based upon race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.
- What do you think your future will be like? What are your career goals?
- Are there any last observations or thoughts you'd like to share with me before we wrap up?

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research and/or authorship of this article: National Science Foundation.

ORCID iD


Mindi N. Thompson https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8195-0427

References

Albritton, T. J. (2012). Educating our own: The historical legacy of HBCUs and their relevance for educating a new generation of leaders. *The Urban Review*, *44*(3), 311–331.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Prentice-Hall.

Binder, J. F., Baguley, T., Crook, C., & Miller, F. (2015). The academic value of internships: Benefits across disciplines and student backgrounds. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *41*, 73–82.

Bridges, B. K., Kinzie, J., Nelson Laird, T. F., & Kuh, G. D. (2008). Student engagement and student success at historically Black and Hispanic-serving institutions. In M. Gasman, B. Baez, & C. Turner (Eds.), *Understanding minority-serving institutions* (pp. 217–236). SUNY Press.

Brooks, L., Cornelius, A., Greenfield, E., & Joseph, R. (1995). The relation of career-related work or internship experiences to the career development of college seniors. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *46*(3), 332–349.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. SAGE.

Crain, A. (2016). Understanding the impact of unpaid internships on college student career development and employment outcomes. https://careerservices.nmsu.edu/files/2017/03/the-impact-of-unpaid-internships-on-career-development.pdf

D'abate, C. P., Youndt, M. A., & Wenzel, K. E. (2009). Making the most of an internship: An empirical study of internship satisfaction. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *8*(4), 527–539. https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.8.4.zqr527

Dailey, S. L. (2016). What happens before full-time employment? Internships as a mechanism of anticipatory socialization. *Western Journal of Communication*, *80*(4), 453–480.

Dewey, J. (1997). *Experience and education: The kappa delta pi lecture series*. Touchstone.

Fiegener, M. K., & Proudfoot, S. L. (2013). *Baccalaureate origins of US-trained S&E doctorate recipients*. National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics Info Brief. https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/infbrief/nsf13323/nsf13323.pdf

Flowers, L. (2002). The impact of college racial composition on African American students' academic and social gains: Additional evidence. *Journal of College Student Development*, *43*(3), 403–410.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Transaction Publishers.

Hilton, A. A., & Felder, P. P. (2014). Why HBCU graduate persistence is important. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, *31*(22), 18.

Hora, M. T., Forbes, J., & Preston, D. (2020). *What do we know about internships at HBCUs? A review of the literature and agenda for future research*. University of Wisconsin–Madison, Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions. http://ccwt.wceruw.org/documents/ccwt_report_What%20do%20we%20know%20about%20internships%20at%20HBCUs.pdf

Hora, M. T., Wolfgram, M., & Thompson, S. (2017). *What do we know about the impact of internships on student outcomes? Results from a preliminary review of the scholarly and practitioner literatures*. Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions, University of Wisconsin–Madison. http://ccwt.wceruw.org/documents/CCWT-report-Designing-Internship-Programs.pdf

Jung, J., & Lee, S. (2017). Impact of internship on job performance among university graduates in South Korea. *International Journal of Chinese Education*, *5*(2), 250–284. https://doi.org/10.1163/22125868-12340070

Kim, M. M. (2011). Early career earnings of African American students: The impact of attendance at historically black versus white colleges and universities. *Journal of Negro Education*, *80*(4), 505–520.

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (2000). Contextual supports and barriers to career choice: A social cognitive analysis. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *47*(1), 36–49. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.47.1.36

Levitt, H. M., Bamberg, M., Creswell, J. W., Frost, D. M., Josselson, R., & Suárez-Orozco, C. (2018). Journal article reporting standards for qualitative primary, qualitative meta-analytic, and mixed methods research in psychology: The APA Publications and Communications Board task force report. *American Psychologist*, *73*(1), 26.

Lomax, M. (2015). Six reasons HBCUs are more important than ever. *Medium*. medium.com/@DrMichaelLomax/6-reasons-hbcus-are-more-important-than-ever-6572fc27c715

McHugh, P. P. (2017). The impact of compensation, supervision and work design on internship efficacy: implications for educators, employers and prospective interns. *Journal of Education and Work*, *30*(4), 367–382.

Mobley, S. D. Jr. (2017). Seeking sanctuary:(Re) Claiming the power of historically Black colleges and universities as places of Black refuge.*International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *30*(10), 1036–1041.

Morales, N., & Jacobson, S. K. (2018). Assessing natural resource internships: A social cognitive analysis of national diversity programs. *Applied Environmental Education & Communication*, *18*, 96–112. https://doi.org/10.1080/1533015X.2018.1435320

Nunley, J. M., Pugh, A., Romero, N., & Seals, R. A. Jr. (2016). College major, internship experience, and employment opportunities: Estimates from a résumé audit. *Labour Economics*, *38*, 37–46.

Owens, L. J., Smith-Lewis, E. B., & Preston, D. (2020). *CPI mid-term report*. UNCF Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute.

Parker, E. T. III, Kilgo, C. A., Sheets, J. K. E., & Pascarella, E. T. (2016). The differential effects of internship participation on end-of-fourth-year GPA by demographic and institutional characteristics. *Journal of College Student Development*, *57*(1), 104–109.

Pedrelli, P., Nyer, M., Yeung, A., Zulauf, C., & Wilens, T. (2015). College students: Mental health problems and treatment considerations. *Academic Psychiatry*, *39*(5), 503–511. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40596-014-0205-9

Pedro, J. D. (1984). Induction into the workplace: The impact of internships. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *25*(1), 80–95.

Perlin, R. (2011). Five myths about interns. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-interns/2011/05/09/AFbWmT2G_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.b45e4b7734d2

Perna, L., Lundy-Wagner, V., Drezner, N. D., Gasman, M., Yoon, S., Bose, E., & Gary, S. (2009). The contribution of HBCUS to the preparation of African American women for stem careers: A case study. *Research in Higher Education*, *50*(1), 1–23.

Redd, K. E. (1998). Historically Black colleges and universities: Making a comeback. *New Directions for Higher Education*, *102*, 33–43.

Reimer, D., & Schröder, J. (2006). Tracing the gender wage gap: Income differences between male and female university graduates in Germany. *Journal for Labour Market Research*, *39*(2), 235–253.

Richards, D. A., & Awokoya, J. T. (2012). *Understanding HBCU retention and completion.* Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute, UNCF. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED562057.pdf

Routon, P., & Walker, J. K. (2018). College internships, tenure gaps, and student outcomes: A multiple-treatment matching approach. *Education Economics*, *27*(4), 383–400. https://doi.org/10.1080/09645292.2019.1598336

Savickas, M. L. (2005). The theory and practice of career construction. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counselling: Putting theory and research to work* (pp. 42–70). Wiley.

Seymour, S., & Ray, J. (2015). Grads of historically black colleges have well-being edge. http://news.gallup.com/poll/186362/grads-historically-black-colleges-edge.aspx?g_source=CATEGORY_WELLBEING&g_medium=topic&g_campaign=tiles

Silva, P., Lopes, B., Costa, M., Melo, A. I., Dias, G. P., Brito, E., & Seabra, D. (2018). The million-dollar question: Can internships boost employment? *Studies in Higher Education*, *43*(1), 2–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1144181

Smith-Barrow, D. (2019, October 21). Opinion | H.B.C.U.s' sink-or-swim moment. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/21/opinion/hbcu-college.html

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research techniques*. Sage Publications.

Strayhorn, T. L. (2020). Measuring the influence of internship participation on Black business majors' academic performance at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. *Journal of African-American Studies*, *24*, 573–585. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12111-020-09501-7

Super, D. (1957). *The psychology of careers*. Harper.

Thompson, M. N., & Graham, S. R. (2015). Self-efficacy beliefs. In P. J. Hartung, M. L. Savickas, & W. B. Walsh (Eds.), *APA Handbook of Career Intervention, Volume 2: Applications* (pp. 171–182). American Psychological Association.

Thompson, M. N., & Phillips, J. C. (2013). Promoting college retention in first-generation college students. In E. Vera's (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of prevention in counseling psychology* (pp. 330–346). Oxford University Press.

U.S. Department of Education. (2016). Fact sheet: Spurring African-American STEM degree completion. https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-spurring-african-american-stem-degree-completion

Williams, K. M., Thompson, M. N., & Hora, M. T. (2020, July). Supporting black interns through vicarious racial rrauma: policy recommendations for employers and postsecondary institutions. Policy Brief #1. Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions. University of Wisconsin-Madison. http://ccwt.wceruw.org/documents/CCWT_report_Supporting%20Black%20Interns%20through%20Vicarious%20Racial%20Trauma.pdf