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*Perception and Experience of Undergraduate Students in Hong Kong***

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**University of Bristol
Graduate School of Education**

**International Internship Programme,
Experiential Learning and Career Planning:
Perception and Experience of
Undergraduate Students in Hong Kong**

LEUNG, Hang-yee

**A Dissertation Submitted in Fulfilment of the
Requirement for the Degree in
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the motivations of undergraduate students for joining international internship programmes and their experiences. A public university located in Hong Kong is selected for case study. Focusing on experiential learning, a classical education theory, this dissertation explores the discussions of Dewey (1938), Lewin (1948), Piaget (1970, 1971) and Kolb (1984, 2006, 2014, 2017), who are regarded as the founders of the theory. In particular, this dissertation attempts to review the experiential learning models of Kolb (1984) and Jarvis (1987) and investigate the unique learning experience that students gained from their international internship participations. In line with the calls for internationalisation and the urges for enhancing university graduates' employability skills in the recent decade, this dissertation seizes a unique opportunity to study the factors that determines students' internship choices and the impact of international work experiences on enhancing employability skills and intercultural proficiency. Using mixed methods research including survey and semi-structured interviews by the author in Hong Kong, a group of undergraduate students, with or without subsidies granted by a third party, were found highly self-motivated to join international internships. Many participants enjoyed immersing themselves in another culture and work environment, in which they described the work cultures in places outside Hong Kong 'more humane', 'fun' and 'less stressful'. Some of them said that they would consider moving to another country for career development in the future. However, the unforeseen challenges faced by the participants had disrupted their affected their willingness to commit and motivation to learn at work. This research concludes and argues that international internships provide opportunity of experiential

learning experience and stimulate students' thoughts about career planning, yet the classic models of experiential learning are insufficient to explain how learning occurs in an international workplace. The learning experiences in real contexts of international workplaces are far more complex and less positive than the situations described by the experiential learning research literature to do. In addition to knowledge transfer and practical skills development, cultural understandings and interactions have been found in the case study that students engaged in more critical self-reflection after travelled and stayed abroad for a while as an intern. On the whole, this research study serves as a resource for further studies on experiential learning, international internships and employability. It indicates that global work experiences not only enhance students' employability, but also strengthen their adaptation to other cultures.

Keywords: experiential learning, international internships, employability

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED:

DATE:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	2-3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Author’s Declaration.....	5
Table of Contents.....	6-8
Chapter 1: Introduction	
Introduction.....	9
1.1. Rationale of the Study	10
1.1.1 Why study the Hong Kong Higher Education (HE)?.....	10-12
1.1.2 Why Study on an International Internship Programme?.....	12-13
1.1.3 Why Study Employability and Cultural Competency.....	13-14
1.2 Aims of the Research	15-16
1.3 Research Questions	16-18
1.4 Structure of the Dissertation	18-19
Chapter 2: Literature Review	
2.1 Introduction.....	20
2.2 Internationalisation of Hong Kong’s HE	
2.2.1 Internationalisation of former British Hong Kong HE	20-24
2.2.2 Impact of Globalisation on Massification of HK HE	24-29
2.3 Internships and International Internships: Origins and Development	
2.3.1 The Changing Landscapes of Internships.....	29-34
2.3.2 Intl Internship Participation: Benefits and Challenges	34-39
2.4 International Internship as Learning Pedagogy: Theories and Models	39
2.4.1 From Cognition to Behaviour: The Learning Theory	39-44
2.4.2 Learning by Doing: Experiential Learning as Pedagogy	44-48
2.4.3 Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle	48-55
2.4.4 Jarvis’ Model of the Learning Process	56-60
2.5 Internship, Employability and Employability Skills Development	60
2.5.1 Employability and Employability Skills Interpretation	60-62
2.5.2 Employability, Internships and the USEM Model	63-68
2.6 International internships, intercultural proficiency and global citizenship... 68	
2.6.1 Culture and Culture Shock	68-69
2.6.2 Intl’ Internships & Development of Intercultural Proficiency. 69-73	
2.6.3 Intl’ Internships and Cultivation of Global Citizenship	73-75

2.7 Chapter Summary	76-77
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Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

3.1 Introduction.....	78
3.2 Philosophical Framework and Research Paradigm.....	78-81
3.3 Case Study Approach	81-83
3.4 The Case: University X	83-85
3.5 International Internship Programmes Y and Z.....	85-88
3.6 General Profile of Undergraduate Students of University X	89-90
3.7 Mixed Methods Research	
3.7.1 Rationale	91-93
3.7.2 Research Design and Data Collection	93
3.7.2.1 Phase 1: Quantitative Research Approach: Survey	
3.7.2.1.1 Overview	93-94
3.7.2.1.2 Survey design	94-97
3.7.2.1.3 Sampling, Data Collection and Data Analysis	97-99
3.7.2.2 Phase 2: Qualitative Research App.: Semi-structured interview	
3.7.2.2.1 Overview.....	99
3.7.2.2.2 Interview Design.....	99-100
3.7.2.2.3 Sampling and Data Collection.....	100-102
3.7.2.2.4 Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis	102-104
3.7.2.2.5 Step-by-step Thematic Analysis and Map	104-111
3.8 Pilot Testing	111-113
3.9 Strengths and Limitations of the Research Methods	113-114
3.10 Ethical Concerns	
3.10.1 Insider Research	115
3.10.2 Informed Consent and Participants' Right of Withdrawal ..	115-116
3.10.3 Anonymity and Confidentially	116-117
3.10.4 Researcher Access	117
3.10.5 Data storage and Reporting of Research	117

Chapter 4: Quantitative Research Findings

4.1 Introduction.....	118
4.2 Survey Findings	119
4.2.1 Demographic Data Description and Analysis	119-120
4.2.2 Internship Durations and Destinations	121-122
4.2.3 Motivation of Joining International Internship Programmes.	122-132

4.2.4	Experiential Learning Experience & Job Satisfaction	132-141
4.2.5	Employability Skills Improvement.....	141-145
4.2.6	Cultural Exchange and Understanding of other Culture(s)...	145-150
4.2.7	Career Planning and Goal Setting	150-155
4.3	Chapter Summary	155-158
Chapter 5: Qualitative Research Findings and Analysis		
5.1	Introduction.....	159
5.2	Background of The Interview and the Interviewees' Profiles	160-161
5.3	Qualitative Data from Interviews: Findings and Analysis	
5.3.1	Motivation: Participants' Motivation of Joining the Prog....	161-164
5.3.2	Commit: Participants' Commitment in their Jobs.....	164-169
5.3.3	Experience: Participants' Exploration during Internships...	169-172
5.3.4	Process: Participants' Reflections & Learning	172-175
5.3.5	Connect: Participants' Multicultural Exp. & Career Plan	175-178
5.4	Chapter Summary	178-179
Chapter 6: Discussions		
6.1	Introduction.....	180
6.2	RQ 1: What influenced students to join intl' internship prog.?	180-184
6.3	RQ 2: How did students describe process of learning?	184-190
6.4	RQ 3: Which experiences have influenced students' satisfaction?	190-197
6.5	RQ 4: Did the programmes influence students' career planning?	198-203
6.6	RQ 5: Did the programmes develop cult. proficiency & citizenship?.	203-209
Chapter 7: Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations		
7.1	Introduction	209-210
7.2	Summary of Findings	210-219
7.3	Limitations and Recommendations.....	220-223
7.4	Significance and Implications	223-224
Reference		225-241
Appendix		242-278

Chapter 1: Introduction

“All genuine education comes from experience” (Dewey, 1938, p. 25)

This is a study about international internships, experiential learning and employability. It focuses on the motivations and the impacts of international internships on changing students’ career aspirations. As part of the holistic education, many universities in Hong Kong liaise with companies from countries all over the world to offer internship opportunities for undergraduate students to better prepare for their future careers. Nevertheless, while many research studies focus on the aspect of cultural exchange, there is a lack of research on students’ international internship experiences on career planning. The experiences, presumed to be a learning process, begin when a student decides to take up a summer internship position at an organisation in another country or place. This research attempts to theorise and interpret the conceptual and empirical ideas of internships, experiential learning, and career planning to investigate the personal, intellectual, professional and cultural impacts that students experienced from participating in an international internship programme. The assumptions that underlie this dissertation are the purposes, experiences and benefits that come from the experiences of completing an international internship programme, as well as the adjustments to career plans after the international internships have been completed.

This chapter will first introduce the rationale of the study (Section 1.1) and then put forward the statement of the problem (section 1.2), follow by the aims of the research and the research questions (section 1.3). Finally, this chapter will outline the structure of the dissertation (section 1.4).

1.1 Rationale

1.1.1 Why study Hong Kong Higher Education (HE)?

Hong Kong, a city located in the south of China, is regarded as an international and cosmopolitan city due to its British colonial history. HE in Hong Kong began to develop more rapidly in the 19th century, when the British government colonised Hong Kong Island after the First Opium War. Based on the UK education system, Hong Kong students were given the opportunity to study Eastern and Western thought and language so that they could be conscious of their own culture and have a balanced international outlook (Wu and Sorrell, 2017). However, the Hong Kong secondary education have long been criticised as a ‘duck stuffing’ system. As Biggs (1995) points out, Hong Kong’s education system is driven by a deep-rooted public examination culture that relied more on memorisation than practice for selecting the so-called ‘elites’ to pursue higher education or employment (cited in Davison, 2007, p.45). Modelled on the UK’s model of public examinations, during the British colonial period all students must attempt the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) in Secondary 5 in order to decide if they were academically good enough in pursuing Secondary 6 and 7 during colonial era. After admission into Secondary 6 and then completed Secondary 7, the students had to attempt another public exam, the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKAL) for determining their eligibility to get into the university. Since the university places during colonial Hong Kong was scarce, only 18% of graduates from 17 to 20 years of age had the chance to receive undergraduate education in the 1990s (Lee, 2005). Students who received good grades in HKAL had a higher chance to receive a university degree offer, whereas students who received poorer results might choose to

attempt the public exam again in the following year, to enter the labour market or to travel to another country for further education. Regardless of the British Hong Kong government's assurance in prioritising higher in its policy agenda and enlarging the places of public-funded universities in 1988 (Education Commission, 1988, cited in Wan, 2011), the education system during Hong Kong's British colonial era was still recognised as an elitist system (Evans, 2017) because the places of the public universities were very competitive.

However, the view of education and approach taken by the HKSAR government has been found very different from the policy aim of the British Hong Kong government. Hong Kong followed the 3-year university education system of the UK model during the colonial era. But the Education and Manpower Bureau proposed a new '3+3+4' academic structure in 2004 to replace the former 5-year or 7-year secondary school education implemented in the colonial era. The new Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) is set up to replace the former HKCEE and HKALE for evaluating students' ability for admitting into a public-funded university undergraduate programme, meaning that every secondary school student is eligible to receive six-year secondary level education. In order to achieve the aim that at least 60% of secondary school leavers chose to pursue higher education (Wan, 2011). Since the HKSAR government has been devoted to the massification and commercialisation of HE, a reform has been carried out in the millennium that brought a massive and fundamental change to HE. For instance, the university education system has changed from three years to four years, and several private HEIs have been granted an 'upgrade' to private universities with degree-awarding power. The impact of the reform, though widely researched, has seldom discussed with the influence of globalisation

discourses and the trend of internationalisation in Hong Kong HE. Evans (2017) points out that it was the HKSAR government's political ideology in branding Hong Kong as "an international education hub" (p. 593) and others such as Wan (2011) the challenges posed by the globalising economy was the catalyst that fostered the HEIs to internationalise. Because it transformed itself from an elitist to a massified HE system, Hong Kong HE is worth exploration. Yet, little previous research has analysed and discussed the impact of internationalisation process on changing university students' self-perception and career planning. This dissertation, connecting the study of internationalisation of Hong Kong HE to the experiential learning pedagogy, will investigate the influence of the larger education environment that motivated university students to join international internship programmes instead of local ones.

1.1.2 Why Study on an International Internship Programme?

Traditionally, university education is conducted physically in classrooms or laboratories. Internships constitute real workplace experience that is conducted during any year of study at college or university. Stanton (1992) defines an internship as a fixed-term work experience that offers in a variety of modes, such as full-time or part-time, paid or unpaid. The notion of the internship is founded since the Middle Ages. The more experienced craftsmen recruited young adults as their trainees (Dorr, 1981). Emphasising skills training through on-the-job practice, this form of apprenticeship has been developed as a tradition for many industries to hire new blood in the workplace. Today, internship is perceived as a triangular partnership between institutions, students and employers. To accommodate the demands and pressures from the government, employers, and

parents, internships and job placements have been regarded as key indicators of graduates' competitiveness in the globalised world.

Alongside the local internships that are offered to undergraduate degree students during the summer, international internship programmes have also seen a weighty rise in numbers. Unlike the work placement, which is compulsory as part of the curriculum, international internship programmes are often non-credit bearing and non-compulsory. They are also regarded as a more dynamic and flexible form of experiential learning outside classrooms. According to Mok (2005), the government encouraged the HEIs to offer more summer internships to students to bring them "to the real world" (Mok, 2005, p. 547). As a result, more paid and unpaid global internship opportunities, as well as other forms of volunteering, including international internship programmes, have been recognised and promoted as a form of experiential education that helps equip future talents to develop their careers globally.

While previous studies honoured the learning outcomes of internships in benefiting students' knowledge and skills acquisition, few research studies have investigated the multidimensional impacts of international internships with regard to inner self discovery and cultural reflexivity to career decision making. This dissertation explores the conceptual framework of experiential learning and examines the participants' feedback on their international internship experiences. The results are useful in provoking more discussions on the relationship on experiential learning and international internships.

1.1.3 Why Study Employability and Cultural Competency?

The massification of HE has created substantial pressures on the administrators of HEIs to improve graduates' employability in the ever-changing global environment. From a utilitarian point of view, international internship has its functional aim to equip students in facing a global competitive labour market, which implies that internship programmes are a tool for the HEIs to nurture features of employability in their graduates through exposing them to a real world of practical activities by providing the knowledge and skills that students cannot obtain within a classroom setting, as well as enhancing students' personal and work relations (Adebaskin, 2015). International experience is regarded as a tool to boost the employability of undergraduate students because students are found more creative, compassionate, cooperative, and flexible when coping in a diverse and international environment (Crossman and Clarke, 2010). They are also recognised as global citizens that are "internationally savvy and equipped with the appropriate skills" (Crossman and Clarke, 2010, p. 603). Other research studies also discovered that many employers have a growing interest in hiring graduates with intercultural experiences (Orahod, Kruze & Pearson, 2004) due to their outstanding communication skills, flexibility and adaptability in a tough working environment. Drawing on the existing literature and researches, this dissertation explores the connections between international internship experience, undergraduate students' perceptions of employability, and their cultural competence. The dimensions and frameworks concerning employability skills, intercultural proficiency and global citizenship will be discussed and empirically examined.

1.2 Aims of the Research

Recent decades have seen an increasing demand for international internship opportunities. The public universities in Hong Kong, on one hand, seek internship and placement opportunities from overseas companies and organisations, and on the other hand, offer more and more vacancies for undergraduate students to obtain work experiences out of their home place. While the government and the administrators of HEIs believe that the future talents of Hong Kong are supposed to be more globally mobilised, more resources have been put into improving graduates' employability through enhancing their global experiences. Given that internship is a process of learning, the learning theory and models of experiential education suggested by Kolb (1984) and Jarvis (1987) are pivotal to the study of international internships. The unique viewpoints of the scholars are essential for exploring the investigation of internship as an educational approach that embraces learning from experience outside classroom.

In addition to the experiences that participants gained from international internship programmes, this research investigates the impacts of international internship on students' career planning and intercultural competence. Therefore, concepts of experiential learning, employability, global citizenship, intercultural proficiency, and so on, are considered relevant to this study within the discussion of international internships. However, the entire literature about experiential learning is often focused on local experience (Cheung, 2006; Chu, 2009; Cheung, 2012), and studies that have tried to focus on internships and their relations to the trend of internationalisation among HEIs in Hong Kong and other places of the world are very scarce. This dissertation, therefore, attempts to fill the current research gap by examining the motivations behind students' decisions to join an

international internship programme, their actual experiences, and reflections on the career planning. In addition to focusing on experiential learning experiences, this dissertation purposefully broadens the scope of researching international internship by studying employability and intercultural competence, providing a multi-dimensional review of literature for investigating the pedagogy of experiential learning in HE. On the whole, this dissertation about international internship programmes aims at investigating and unfolding:

1. Students' motivation to join and experience of international internship programmes
2. Students' career planning after joining an international internship programme
3. Transnational and cross-cultural understanding through joining an international internship programme

This dissertation has three main objectives: first, to explore the theoretical concept of experiential learning. Second, to examine the motivations of working abroad and how students perceive international compared to local internships. Third, to explore students' reflections and feedback on international internship programmes. Finally, to assess the links between international internship experiences, future career planning and intercultural learning.

1.3 Research Questions

This dissertation explores five general questions by investigating the perceptions and experiences of university students in an international internship programme, with particular attention given to their experiential learning experiences and future career planning.

The central research questions that shape and circumscribe this dissertation include:

1. What have influenced students' motivations to join the international internship programmes?
2. How did students describe their process of learning through participating in the international internship programmes?
3. Which specific experiences have influenced students' satisfaction on the international internship programmes?
4. In what ways did the international internship programmes influence on students' career planning?
5. In what ways did the international internship programmes develop intercultural proficiency and global citizenship in students?

The above five research questions offer a comprehensive picture about students' experiential learning experiences from the start to the finish of the international internship programmes. The first question investigates the motivations behind the enrolment of international internship programmes, and then two questions are set for interpreting students' learning experiences and their level of satisfaction on the programmes. Finally, two questions are used for examining the impacts of the international internship programmes on students' career planning, intercultural proficiency and global citizenship. The value of these questions lies in its comprehensiveness, in which they cover not only the experiential learning concept but also other concepts including employability, intercultural proficiency and global citizenship. The questions also take both

theoretical concepts and empirical findings into account, which will be of value to students, teachers, researchers, and policy makers.

1.4 Structure of the Dissertation

Following the illustration of rationales, objectives and research questions, the structure of this dissertation is organised into the following chapters:

Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature concerning the concepts of internationalisation, experiential learning, internships and employability. Without providing a concrete redefinition of the above concepts, this chapter opens up a space for critiquing the contesting views in literature and relevant research. This chapter focuses in detail on the theoretical underpinning and discusses how previous literature and research informs the present research study.

Chapter 3 illustrates the philosophical paradigm, research methodology and design. It first outlines the background of the study, including the case study. Then the chapter addresses the philosophical frameworks and mixed methods approach undertaken for the research. It explains the rationale, research design, data collection and process of data analysis for survey and semi-structured interviews. To provide a broader picture of research procedures, this chapter outlines the thematic analysis framework and the steps for handling qualitative interview findings. It also briefly highlights the results of the pilot testing and ethical considerations in carrying out an insider research.

Chapter 4 examines the quantitative research findings of a self-administered online survey. It focuses on the statistics and evidence discovered from the descriptive data of the quantitative survey and further explicates the

correlations of different survey findings with the data generated from the SPSS statistical software.

Chapter 5 analyses the qualitative research findings of semi-structured interviews according to the themes identified in Chapter 3. Quotes from the interviewees are presented and discussed.

Chapter 6 further brings together quantitative and qualitative findings in responding to the research questions. It critically discusses the findings and revisits the literature review and discusses the implications of the entire research with the concepts explored in Chapter 2.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation by summarising the major findings, addresses the limitations, and discusses the implications of the research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

*“Learning, the creation of knowledge and meaning, occurs through the active extension and grounding of ideas and experiences in the external world and through internal reflection about the attributes of these experiences and ideas.”
(Kolb, 1984, p.52)*

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the existing literature on internship and experiential education. To explore the breadth and depth of knowledge, this chapter not only reviews the concepts and theories but also the models that different scholars have explained concerning the process of learning, it also looks into the literature on the concepts of internationalisation, employability, intercultural proficiency and global citizenship.

2.2 Internationalisation of Hong Kong’s HE

2.2.1 Internationalisation of former British Hong Kong HE

Although Hong Kong’s HE system has long been developed within the Chinese context, it was rooted in British colonial rule, in which the design of the HE education and the policies were largely modelled on the UK system. During the ninety-nine years as a British colony from 1898 to 1997, the British-Hong Kong education system from kindergarten to university was largely modelled on the UK system, in which subjects such as English and European History were made compulsory in elementary and secondary schools (Grant, 2001). In addition, Hong Kong universities followed the credit-based system of the Commonwealth universities, hired faculties from Western countries, as well as encouraging

academics and students to get their work published in international scholarly journals (Fok, 2007), which could be argued to have prepared an environment for internationalisation. According to Fok (2007), internationalisation of HE system during British colonial Hong Kong was out of agenda setting because internationalisation was “taken for granted” (p. 188) because under the British colonial rule, the process “meant to be modernised, to be westernised, and in many cases, to become British” (p.187). Since the end of the World War II, the British Hong Kong government was committed to combat the communist ideology after the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, therefore the Education Department and the Curriculum Council allocated a significant amount of public expenditure into developing Hong Kong as a unique global city with extensive international connections (Grant, 2001). Subjects such as English and European History were made compulsory in elementary and secondary schools. The city was also shaped with an international outlook and citizens were nurtured with English as the second language (Evans, 2008). Therefore, the internationalisation of Hong Kong HE during British colonial period happened naturally and inherently as westernisation had been promoted at schools and in the society at large, in which the Hong Kong students were nurtured with the studies of Eastern and Western thoughts and language so that they could be conscious of their own culture and have a balanced international outlook.

The ‘westernised’ and elitism education policy throughout the British colonial period had come to end when the city was about to return the motherland China in 1997. Starting from academic year 1997/98, the Education Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government announced that most secondary schools in Hong Kong had to use Chinese as the medium of

instruction for teaching all academic subjects, but the Bureau also emphasised that English language education is still a government priority (HKSAR Education Bureau, 1997). Notwithstanding the unstable and ever-changing language policy at the Secondary education level, the HKSAR government decided to carry out educational reform and reinforced internationalisation of HEIs to maintain their global competitiveness. Knight (2004) defines internationalisation as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural and global dimension into the purpose, function and delivery of education of the university concerned” (p.11, cited in Chan and Dimmock, 2008, p. 185). According to Chan and Dimmock (2008), the study of international cooperation between institutions has long been researched, yet the strategic international programmes and activities at all levels of education are progressively recognised as internationalisation efforts. Their research on a government funded university in Hong Kong has revealed that internationalisation was a top-down government calling for action to tap the HEIs into the global HE environment and to facilitate the city’s cutting edge to “serve as a gateway between Hong Kong and China” (p. 193).

While internationalisation was taken for granted during British colonial rule, it is viewed as “a buzzword that can be found in every university’s developmental plan posted on their websites” (Fok, 2007, p. 188) after the city returned to China. To demonstrate internationalisation efforts, the mission and visions of the HEIs in Hong Kong have shifted from a knowledge supplier to “service supplier” of global recruiters. (Kelsey, 2008, p. 242, cited in Robertson, 2010, p. 20). The administrators and academics of HEIs are also encouraged to promote internationalisation and revise their curriculum in coping the changes in

global HE environment. For instance, HEIs in Hong Kong are encouraged to deepen their internationalisation efforts through expanding the admission of international students. However, much previous research studies have argued that internationalisation among HEIs failed to cultivate multiculturalism (Chan and Dimmock, 2008) and was more “mainlandised” than internationalised. As Lui (2014) criticises, the Hong Kong HE system has been overwhelmed by the admission of Mainland China students, and therefore internationalisation of HE is restricted to ‘Mainlandization’ because international students were primarily admitted from China. To validate Lui’s argument, a brief analysis has been conducted in this dissertation for investigating the demographic of students among the universities in Hong Kong. Take the University of Hong Kong (HKU) as an example: in total, 15,116 local students and 4,194 international students were enrolled in the 2017/18 academic year, with the latter accounting for 28% of the total number of students in HKU. However, among the 4,194 international students enrolled, 2,861 students (68%) were Mainland students, 1,211 students came from other Asian countries, and only 172 students were admitted from the rest of the world. This shows that internationalisation policy of HE in Hong Kong failed to bring into more multicultural exchange and intercultural exposure for local university students.

Despite the fact that the process of HE internationalisation in Hong Kong relied mostly on the supply of students and faculty members from Mainland China instead of other countries, the public universities in Hong Kong have never given up the use of English as their medium of instruction after Hong Kong’s handover from Britain to China. Tung, Lam and Tsang (1997) found in their research study that teachers and students supported to use English as the MoI

despite the fact that they felt learning was more effective if conducted in Chinese. Twenty-two years after this research was conducted, the use of English as the core medium of instruction is still employed by most of the government-funded and self-funded HEIs in Hong Kong. Chan and Dimmock (2008) argue that the continuation of using English as the core MoI among HEIs in Hong Kong after Hong Kong returned to China demonstrates the dual role of Hong Kong as “Hong Kong-China” and “Hong Kong-International” (p. 193). However, there is little empirical evidence revealing the changing landscape and scope of HE in Hong Kong, and the impact of internationalisation of HEIs on students’ perception of the world. In addition to the issues of Mainlandisation and lack of multiculturalism, it is questionable that the massive promotions of internationalisation among Hong Kong HEIs provided a genuine international education experience to students. Therefore, this dissertation explores the discussions about internationalisation of HE in Hong Kong and its impact on motivating students to join international internship programmes, which will be able to fill the gap between the scholastic researches about experiential learning and the policy discussion papers on internationalisation.

2.2.2 Impact of Globalisation on Massification of Hong Kong HE

The historical background and changes of Hong Kong education policy, to some extent, have contributed to the internationalisation of HE in Hong Kong. But the global trend of HE massification and the influence of globalisation discourses were the stimuli that brought tensions to the HEIs and pressurised them to be proactive in enhancing their involvement and visibility during the process of internationalisation.

Massification of HE is seen as a phenomenon in many places across the world. The Census of the United States reported that one out of three adults held a bachelor's degree in 2015 (Ryan and Bauman, 2016). In the United Kingdom, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) reported that universities had made a record high of 1.9 million offers and had a more than 77.7 percent acceptance rate in 2018, which was the highest rate since 2008 (UCAS, 2019). In Asia, China has implemented a policy of enrolment expansion in HE since the 1990s, which has stimulated each province in China to offer more university places for high school graduates (Ye, Wu & Yang, 2018). Among the many Asian countries, Taiwan is one of the forerunners in achieving an ideal of universal higher education enrolment. Despite the drop in the numbers of college-aged students in recent years, the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Taiwan still managed to receive a 97% offer acceptance rate in 2016 (Huang, Chang & Liu, 2018). These statistics show that HE in many countries has been massified in recent decades. For Hong Kong, the former HKSAR chief executive in his policy address stated that the government was dedicated to increasing the Hong Kong HE enrolment from 33% to 60% in ten years (Education Bureau, 2017). In order to provide sufficient places for the secondary school graduates, the government forwarded and rationalised sub-degree and self-financed degree programmes in their policy agenda since 2000, resulting the participation rate of tertiary education has been doubled to 66% in a five-year period of time (Wan, 2011). The census statistics indicated that the number of Hong Kong citizens attaining a university degree or above had surged from 469,000 people in 1996 and 921,000 people in 2006 to 1,542,000 people in 2016 (Census and Statistics

Department, 2019), showing that the Hong Kong HE has been massified in viewing the number of enrolments.

The surge of number of graduates with a sub-degree or above, coupled with the influences of globalisation discourses, have intensified the tensions of the HKSAR government and HEIs on the competitiveness of the institutions and their graduates in the global HE markets. Originally, the concept of ‘globalisation’ was coined in 1985 by Theodore Levitt, who unfolded a paradigm shift in the global economy that affected massive number of people around the world (Spring, 2008). Appadurai (1996), talking of globalisation, explains that the world is multiple, imagined worlds consisting of different persons and groups. Held et. al. (1999) state that globalisation “is neither a singular condition nor a linear process” (p. 23) that involves a diversified power structure and relations. The increasing complex transnational interactions of people across the world have gradually broken the barriers of time and space as well as the domination of nation states, which have brought the HE a two-fold impact: First, globalisation increases the mobility and interactivity of people all over the world, and governments and institutions are urged to reform their education policies and practices, which brings education into constant and rapid changes in the globalised age. Second, globalisation represents fierce competition from global markets and people, and ideologically, the tensions of globalisation and global challenges have hit on the minds of people all over the world. A reform carried out in HE of a country, for example, may have been influenced by the reform or education policy change of another country or of many other countries (Eggins, 2003), showing that power is linked, intertwined and exerted with the impact of globalisation.

Although the term globalisation is contested and no longer new in the twenty-first century, it is still a powerful discourse to represent that something happening in a place could have possible consequences in other places of the world. As noted by Fiss and Hirsch (2005), globalisation is a symbolic discourse rather than a structural process. For Hong Kong, globalisation has become a popular discourse and an agenda of internationalisation has been increasingly emphasised by the HKSAR government. With a strong desire to maintain the city as “one of the world’s most competitive cities” with “some of the Asia Pacific’s very best universities in terms of teaching and research achievements” (Education Bureau, 2017) the HKSAR government used a variety of descriptors and discourses such as “knowledge-based economy”, “global citizenship”, “innovation hub”, “smart city”, and “the Asia’s World City” to scale up the prominence of globalisation to the future of Hong Kong. Research study by Flowerdew (2012) revealed that the HKSAR government has described globalisation as a challenge to which Hong Kong “must respond” and that Hong Kong must “be able to compete” (p. 25), encouraging Hong Kong people to accept that the community must make every effort to turn globalisation into a victory of the HKSAR. Hence, soon after the handover, the HKSAR government decided to carry out educational reform to cultivate future talents to enable the building of a knowledge economy. For instance, in the year of millennium, the HKSAR government announced in the *Review of Education System Reform Proposal* that an education reform was necessary for developing the “global skills and competencies” (Chan & Lo, 2007, p. 307) among Hong Kong people for maintaining the city’s global competitiveness. The chief executive of the HKSAR had also “repeatedly emphasised” (Mok, 2005, p. 544) that nurturing future talent

was a major task of the new government and continued to put education as the top priority of the social policy agenda. Although the HEIs in Hong Kong have been putting more and more resources on academic collaborations, experiential learning activities, and cultural exchange programmes outside the formal curriculum, empirical researches about how these activities and programmes impact students' learning and their worldviews are lacked. Given that globalisation discourses and internationalisation have fundamentally transformed the development of Hong Kong's HE, it is necessary to explore the influence of globalisation discourses on HEIs, and the value of internationalisation programmes in today's competitive and complex global market environment.

2.3 Internships and International Internships: Origins and Development

Internship is regarded as real workplace experience that is conducted outside the classroom during any year of study at college or university. Traditionally recognised as apprenticeships, internships were on-the-job practical training that emphasised one-to-one mentor-intern training, which established a deep relationship between mentors and mentees. However, massification of HE in recent decades has enabled more secondary school graduates to promote to tertiary education, and therefore the willingness for them to leave school at a young age and develop their careers through apprenticeships has decreased. Today, internship programmes offered by the HEIs are either credit-bearing or voluntary in nature and are short-term on-the-job training at the workplace organised by HEIs and individuals to nurture employable and work-ready graduates with multiple skillsets and professional attributes (Rowe and Zegwaard, 2017). In coping the challenges of HE massification and globalisation discourses,

traditional “internationalisation-at-home” (Chan and Dimmock, 2008) strategies such as increasing the recruitment of non-local students and adding more international elements into the curriculum of different courses in HEIs were found not impactful, therefore, more and more HEIs expanded the organisation of “internationalisation-abroad” (Chan and Dimmock, 2008) programmes and activities such as international internship programmes to offer authentic opportunities for students to establish a global network. This part is going to discuss the origins of internship and the internship models suggested by Sides and Mrvica (2007), as well as the benefits and distresses of international internship participations.

2.3.1 The Changing Landscapes of Internships

According to Sides and Mrvica (2007), internships were mainly offered by companies or organisations in specialised areas and the interns were expected to focus on a single occupation in a particular area during mediaeval times. This *Classical Internships Model* relies on the “masters” of a specialised area. Through skills demonstration, they appeared as the experts to guide the interns towards becoming professionals. The interns had to spend a predetermined period of time observing and learning the work of the masters. Hence, the internships in mediaeval times appeared to be vocational training to assist young people to get to know the occupation before becoming fully engaged with it. By the 1980s, internship was still regarded as one-to-one mentor-intern training. As Dorr (1981, p. 5) explains:

The mentor serves as a touchstone for intellectual, procedural, and, at times, emotional support and guidance, and the intern provides the mentor with

an opportunity to make a long-lasting contribution to the labour arbitration system.

Being a ‘ghost’ of the mentor, the interns are inexperienced but expected to always be proactive so as to complete various tasks assigned by mentors, such as participation in meetings, note taking, and discussing project strategies. The mentors, on the other hand, spend time guiding the intern only if necessary, but are more devoted to evaluating the compatibility between the interns and the mentors. If the interns can instil confidence in the mentor through keeping up an efficient and up-to-standard performance, the mentors will allow the interns to stay and continue working for the mentors. Comparatively, the *Modern Internship Model* is recognised as an impactful and educational activity that supports academic programmes and progresses students from study to work (Sweitzer and King, 2014). In many countries such as the US and the UK, internships have become an established and common part of students’ lives. With various titles such as practicum, fieldwork, job placement, service learning and so on, the term ‘internship’ remains the most acknowledged and widely used. Toncar and Cudmore (2000) point out that various forms of internships, such as summer internships, sandwich year internships, industrial job placements, vacation schemes and so on, are to be seen “not as an opportunity but as a necessity” (p. 54). Until the 20th century that internships were finally coupled with HE. Through setting up standards of training and contracts of employment, the host organisations and the collaborating academic institutions specified clear responsibilities, benefits, as well as expectations to the interns before the start of the internship period. Depending on the agreement between the stakeholders, different forms of internship can be roughly identified with the following criteria:

1. Local or international
2. Credit-bearing or non-credit bearing
3. University provided or third-party provided
4. Full-time, part-time, or project-based
5. Paid or unpaid by employer
6. Eligible for financial aid or non-eligible for financial aid
7. Professional-oriented or non-professional oriented

While the *Modern Internship Model* stresses on the organisation of internship programmes by universities to encourage students to step out of the classrooms and engage in actual workplaces to get a taste of a career in an industry that they may want to enter in the future, the *Postmodern Internship Model* that grows popular in the 21st century, is considered as a lifelong learning process and a starting point of a professional life (Sides and Mrvica, 2007). The *Postmodern Internship Model* stresses that interns are expected to view the development of themselves into professionals and the continuous updating of skills and knowledge as a lifegoal. They should never give up learning even after the internship period has ended. In a nutshell, these three internship models have outlined a brief historical change of the internship modes from hands-on experience acquisitions to professional, formalised and accountable industry-institution collaborations between academic institutions and employers.

Although today's internship programmes offered by HEIs are primarily based on the *Modern Internship Model* for providing basic trainings to students in real workplace settings, massification of HE and evolvement of the labour market have transformed the way that internship programmes are organised.

International internships, compared to local internships, offer short-term global experience for students while they work for overseas companies or organisations. Rubin (2009) explains that international internship is “real-life work experience and time imbedded in a foreign country.” (p. 58). While local internships are typically offered to students of particular disciplines, such as sciences, arts, communications, recreation, education, human resources, hospitality, nursing and banking (Maertz et al., 2014), international internships or overseas internships are more targeted at students from all disciplines. In addition, unlike local internships, international internships are usually non-credit bearing due to the difficulty in tracking and reporting (Hulstrand, 2013). Studies have found that many international internships take at least two to four weeks in summer but there are also programmes that require students to spend a semester to an academic year in another country working as interns (Toncar and Cudmore, 2000; Leggett, 2006). In Hong Kong, international internship programmes are not organised by individual academic departments, but by the career centre or student affairs centre at a university level. Every year, each university opens up around 40 to 200 international internship vacancies to which all undergraduate students can apply. To maximise the global dimension of the programmes, the organisers of the international internship programmes strive to provide as many destinations for students to choose from as possible. For instance, in 2017, destinations of international internships offered by the government-funded universities covered different parts of the world, including Mainland China, Taiwan, South Korea, India, European Countries including the UK, Australia, USA, and so on (see Table 1 in Appendix I). As Bird, Chu & Oguz (2011) point out, today’s internship has been reconceptualised into four ideas: intentional, interconnected,

interdisciplinary, and international. It is apparent that the destinations of the international internship programmes provided by universities in Hong Kong have been carefully chosen with a strong global dimension characteristic, so that the participants will be able to benefit from immersing themselves in cultural environments that are distinctive from their local culture.

International internships, or overseas internships, are widely recognised as one of the major experiential learning programmes under the Hong Kong's new HE reforms in the direction of "whole person education" (Mok, 2005, p. 547). To further assist students to become globally sensitive and competitive through accumulating work experiences outside Hong Kong, all government-funded universities have been more proactive in organising various international internship programmes in destinations all over the world. A table that aggregates the information of international internship programmes of all Hong Kong government-funded universities (see Table 2 in Appendix I) shows that each university offers at least one international internship programme to students under the organisation and management by the career centre or student affairs centre of the university. Notwithstanding the expansion of international internships in Hong Kong, relevant research studies on international internship experience are still scarce. A comprehensive research study on the practical internship experiences of students will provide useful implications regarding their expectations and satisfactions of the interns, as well as the impact of non-local work experience on personal and professional growth. Using the transformation of global environment and its impact on the development of HE policy in Hong Kong as a starting point, this dissertation will discuss the organisation of international internships programmes as an internationalisation strategy of HEIs

and to investigate students' comments and reflections on their experiences of interning abroad.

2.3.2. International Internship Participation: Benefits and Challenges

Broadly speaking, internships are real workplace experience that students can obtain during any school years of their study at college or university. International internships, compare to local internships, offer an educational travel opportunity for students. By integrating learning, travel and work, the positive impacts of international internships such as enriching global experience, developing students' personal attributes, sharpening professional skills, establishing intercultural connections and so on, have been identified in the literature. Toncar and Cudmore (2007) examine five major rewards that students gain from the international internship experience, including foreign language training, development of self-confidence, a different worldview that develops from a wealth of new knowledge and experiences, professional and social interaction opportunities, as well as a brighter resumé. Although most international internships are not aimed at training students to work for a particular discipline, the understanding of multi-national cultures provides students with a competitive edge when searching for jobs globally (Rubin, 2009; Yarbrough, 2016). A study on 100 Canadians aged 18 to 30 who had completed a short-term international experiential learning/volunteer programme found that nearly all participants agreed that overseas experience helped or would help them to find employment (Tiessen & Huish, 2014).

As many students have never travelled to another place or country and do not have knowledge of a second language, foreign language acquisition and

intercultural understanding are identified as optimal outcomes of international internships. Qiang (2003) and pointed out that the most significant benefit of HE internationalisation is the enhancement of students' knowledge and skills in dealing with intercultural relations and communications. A study conducted by Wu (2017) has indicated that international internships naturally require participants to communicate with others, which cultivates an effective self-regulated language environment and a rich cultural context in which they can learn. Compare to exchange programmes, students who joined that international internship were found more open-minded, cultural empathetic and sociable. Similar investigative research in Hong Kong will be valuable for providing more insights about the benefits of international internships on personal development.

Although international internships are similar to local internships in many ways, participants face more challenges and obstacles than those participating in local internship programmes. In addition to language problems (Hulstrand, 2013), studies found that participants in international internship programmes suffered from low or no salary or wage compensation (Bird, Chu & Oguz, 2015) because subsidies by universities are not guaranteed. Hulstrand (2013) points out that airline tickets, living expenses and other expenditures can cause a huge amount of financial burden for the interns, in particular to those who work overseas voluntarily. Rubin (2009) recognised that host recruiters might have no idea of how mature and knowledgeable a foreign intern is, and therefore a mismatch can occur when a university student travels hours to work full time at a company in another place and ends up being asked to serve tea for ten weeks (p. 62). Sweitzer and King (2014), who called the pervasive feeling of losing control during internship as "the experience of disillusionment" (p. 33), have also explained such

frustration. The *Developmental Stage Model* of internships, suggests by Sweitzer and King (2014), illustrates the challenges that interns face from the beginning to the end of the internship period: Once the internship begins, it is common for the interns to realise themselves that they are no longer a student. During this anticipation stage of internship, the job responsibility, the people around, the working context, the community, and so on, may upset the interns' efforts. Sooner or later, the interns would start discovering the rhythms of learning in the exploration stage, in which they begin to show how capable they are when working as a professional. However, there are challenging moments when they find their routine work too easy to handle and start to feel bored, ultimately leading to disengagement. Before the internship ends, every intern must go through the culmination stage when they are about to say goodbye to their job and get ready for school again. The interns may feel satisfied with their achievements but may also feel sad because of the unfinished tasks or poor performance during the internship period. Some interns may devalue the job and start being late or absent from work as they feel upset before their last day arrives. Sweitzer and King (2014) point out that it is common to face psychological and emotional struggles during internships, and the solution to cope is to engage. Yet, no empirical research study has been conducted so far to validate this claim.

In assessing the level of job satisfaction on an internship programme, Stansbie, Nash, and Jack (2013) have modified Hackman and Oldham (1980) *Job Characteristics Model* (see Figure 1) to measure the subsequent affective outcomes upon the motivation and satisfaction of the interns. To investigate the meaningfulness of job and the motivation of the interns, Stansbie, Nash, and Jack (2013) applied the model on a research study towards a group of hotel and tourism

management students in USA. They state that the interns will find their jobs meaningful if they are given opportunities to prove their skills and abilities through performing a variety of tasks and at the end are able to receive encouraging or practical feedback from their supervisors. They will likely be devoted and engaged at work and treat their work as a learning process. In contrast, if the interns are dissatisfied with their jobs, they will exhibit multiple negative psychological states such as detachment from work, burnout, low motivation, and even dropout. Therefore, it is pertinent for researchers to look deeper into the perceptions and psychological states of interns to complement the inadequate understanding of internship motivation and satisfaction.

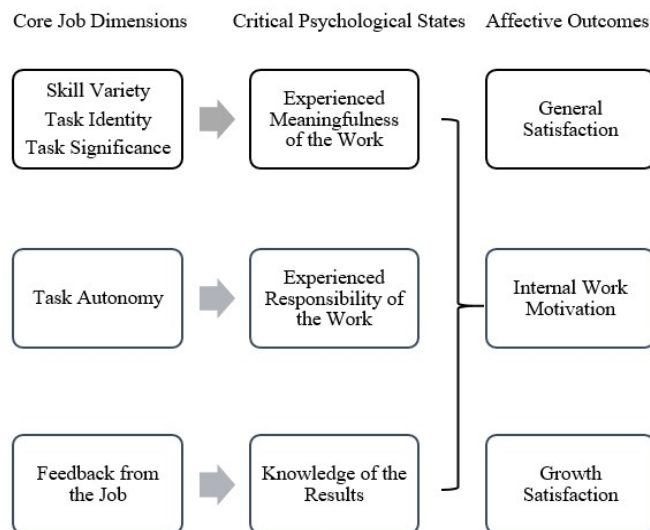


Figure 1: Hackman and Oldham (1980) Job Characteristics Model (cited in Stansbie, Nash, and Jack, 2013, p.158)

It has been indicated in the previous research that the job satisfaction of interns was twofold. According to Yusof et al. (2013), students who participated in short-term industrial training were very satisfied with their improved personal qualities, such as personal attitude, communication, working attitude, and so on. They were also more confident and more work ready than those who had not

participated in similar training. However, O'Connor and Bodicoat (2017) claim that unpaid internships and exploitation of student workers have been normalised and are “a widespread phenomenon” (p. 437), while the media reports have increasingly demonised and devalued the internships of certain types of profession, leading to a popular belief that enrolling an internship programme is a “waste of time” (p. 445) and are problematic because the interns are poorly-supervised, low-paid, and involved in low-skilled labours. A survey conducted by McHugh (2017) also showed that 65% of unpaid internships are provided by non-profit organisations or the government sector. In Hong Kong, a survey research conducted by Lam and Ching (2007) found that many students had to cope with poor communication, bad relationships with co-workers, and lack of sufficient knowledge or skills during their internships abroad. Specifically, it has identified that the interns suffered from poor relationships with their supervisors, in which they were not given opportunities for job rotation and were not fairly treated. It has also pointed out that the hazy internship goals, poor arrangement of the internship tasks, as well as uncaring management disappointed the interns. However, the quantitative survey failed to reveal the situations of the internship and the reflections of interns in detail. Another research study conducted by Wang, Chiang and Lee (2014) has discovered that the interns from Hong Kong encountered anxiety when communicating with and presenting to supervisors, as well as getting along with people from different work units during international internships. The new environment and content of the workplace also escalated the anxiety of the interns, who worried about getting on track in a new environment. In addition to the above research studies demonstrating that the interns have encountered different levels of challenges at work, internship programmes are

accused of not being able to prepare future leaders (Geer et al., 2014, cited in Deschaine and Jankens, 2017). Acknowledging the mixed challenges at work and psychological pressures that have been revealed in the previous literature, this dissertation will further investigate on the experiences of the students who completed international internship programmes and examine their reflections to reveal the perceptions, challenges as well as the benefits and rewards that they experienced from interning abroad.

2.4 International Internship as Learning Pedagogy: Theories and Models

Emphasising experiences in a workplace setting, an internship is regarded as pedagogy conducted outside of classrooms through engagement with the community (Holyoak, 2013). Reviewing the concept of learning is essential to see through the link between international internship and learning, but the past development in the ideas of learning has hastily put the study of international internship under the experiential learning concept. Learning is no longer perceived as a possession of knowledge with a curriculum in the classroom, it becomes a practice, a process and social activity involving complex interaction with the context. The following section will explore and discuss both learning and experiential learning concepts for a deeper understanding about the relationship between international internships and learning.

2.4.1 From Cognition to Behaviour: The Learning Theory

Learning is fundamentally and closely linked to the purpose of education. It is also specifically focused on the side of learners or students. The traditional model of learning, as Talbot (2019) explains, emphasises uni-directional delivery

of academic or vocational knowledge within formal settings, such as classrooms and laboratories, in which educational institutions and teachers are recognised as educators who have the ultimate power to design and deliver the curriculum. In other words, the traditional view is that learning is an educational practice for acquiring knowledge, skills, strategies and beliefs within educational settings. In line with the changes of the modern world, learning is no longer an education practice to transfer knowledge and skills, but also has a compound function of developing a range of everyday life skills and personal qualities for people and society to manage socialisation and maintain personal development (Illeris, 2003).

According to the education philosophers, learning signifies the study of the origin and nature of knowledge, which can be broadly expressed in three main categories: behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism (Schunk, 2012). *Behaviourism* emphasises that learning is connecting ideas, analysing and reasoning (Thorndike, 1913, cited in Schunk, 2012), a conditioned process within a specific environment. In the process of trial and error, learners develop an association between sensory experience and behavioural responses. They adjust and modify techniques in order to achieve goals. A person is more willing to learn if the behaviour is considered as rewarding and refuse to learn if the behaviour is punishing or a waste of time. Therefore, learning is much concerned with the connection between behaviour and outcome, in which learning is considered as successful if the behaviour achieves its goal, and unsuccessful if the behaviour fails to do so. Although international internships are not conducted in classrooms, they are conditioned processes within a workplace environment. The interns are the learners and their learning attitude may change depending on the rewards they perceive from the internship commitment. For instance, a South Korean

university has sent 10 engineering students to complete an internship at a US automobile workplace (Cha, 2019). During the internship period, the Korean interns were asked to complete a variety of English language training that took up at least 10 hours per week. The results showed that the interns showed substantial improvements in English usage, demonstrating that the learning as a process in a non-local workplace was not only rewarding but also closely linked to the environment.

Another perspective, *cognitivism*, focuses on learners' self-efficacy in learning and how people learn from their social environment. In the study of cognitivism, Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory points out that a person's self-efficacy in learning is affected by their social environment and social inputs such as teachers' feedback and social comparison between peers. Positive feedback, for example, raises learners' self-efficacy to learn. Therefore, cognitivism embraces learning as a self-motivation that can be influenced by the self or the environment, in which Bandura explains that positive values lead to outcome expectations of high self-efficacy and motivation to achieve learning outcomes. According to Schunk and DiBenedetto (2016), cognitivism is the self-efficacy that influences the performance in learning. Learners with high self-efficacy are discovered to have greater motivation, persistence and self-reliance in learning. In addition, the learners who show greater interest in learning persisted longer to achieve their goals. A case study conducted by Stronkhorst (2005) on two groups of Dutch university students found that their self-efficacy on joining international internship programmes was low because the students were anxious about going overseas to work. But another study conducted by Erickson (2012) on a group of US engineering undergraduate students found that

the participants who demonstrated high self-efficacy in a six-month overseas internship programme at an engineering company in France were technically and culturally well prepared to work. As Schunk and DiBenedetto (2016) comment, a high degree of self-efficacy would bring expected outcomes: *self-efficacy on learning* refers to the acquiring of new skills, *self-efficacy for performance* refers to the performing of previous learned behaviours, *self-efficacy for self-regulated learning* refers to the generation of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours to attain educational goals, and *collective self-efficacy* refers to the collective efforts towards achieving a common goal. While a limited body of literature demonstrates how cognitivism affects the participants' motivation to take part in an international internship, further researches about students' perceptions on international internship programmes can help examining this framework empirically.

Emphasising the importance of social environment, the final perspective, *constructivism* has roots in the relationship between learning and context. According to Piaget (1971), "if truth is not a copy, then it is an organization of the real world (p.361, cited in Derry, 2013, p. 72). Learners' cognitive development is cultivated and nurtured in a learning environment called the real world, in which knowledge is developed through learners' interactions with and responses to the environment. Vygotsky (1978), a social constructivist, advocates the concept of reflex, which refers to the meaning that the "process of learning is completely and inseparably blended with the process of development." (p. 35). The constructivists emphasise that the self and the environment are inseparable. Therefore, the interactions between the students and the contexts offer new prospects of research about how learning experience is gained and how

knowledge is transferred in the learning process of international internships. A research study about a group of Taiwanese students' internship experiences in the catering industry in Singapore revealed that the teaching from colleagues and supervisors had equipped them with the skills needed to perform at work, and thus assisted them in quick adaptation to a new work environment and established their confidence to work independently (Chen, 2015). The learning process in a workplace, a socially constructed environment that shapes and cultivates the working habit as well as the attitude of the interns, demonstrates that knowledge is a complex production involving complicated biological, psychological and sociological interactions between the self and the environment. However, previous research studies seldom highlight the visible and invisible influences of the environment on international interns' behaviours. While the influence of the workplace is often taken for granted, this dissertation that aims at investigating the complex interaction between the interns and the context will be able to fill the research gap by demonstrating the power dynamics in workplaces and the contextual impact on the interns' learning experiences.

Although the above discussion provides a brief overview of the learning theory, it may be worth highlighting that the three perspectives can all be applied to the study of international internship programmes as a learning activity. On an individual level, the behaviour of learners in a workplace can be further investigated in a non-school learning environment, where the skills and knowledge of the interns are developed in the workplace. Furthermore, the values and beliefs that represent the cognition of learners are directly linked to the motivation and persistence of the learners to achieve their goals in a workplace. As Klein (1964) explains, this is how the human ego negotiates with the objects

of knowledge (cited in Fenwick, 2000). On a social level, the context is viewed as important but independent. A workplace, for instance, is a learning space where learners learn through interactions with the surrounding people and environment. Other contexts such as public places within a country facilitate the understanding of cultures. Therefore, the exploration and discussion of three different perspectives in this dissertation about international internship experiences will open up an arena of investigation about the level of motivation that the interns feel with regard to being determined to pursue a job in a non-local company or organisation (cognitivism), the actions that make an impact in their jobs to the desired goals (behaviourism), and the knowledge and experience they gained from the interaction with the environment (constructivism).

2.4.2 Learning by Doing: Experiential Learning as Pedagogy

Learning is a continuity of experience and by having continuity experiences a learner can integrate the past and prepare for the future (Dewey, 1938, cited in Giamellaro, 2017, p. 5). International internship programmes are not only widely recognised as a form of work-based learning, but also are informed by a pedagogy called ‘experiential learning’. The term “experience” can be understood as a verb that means “experiencing” or “a process of observing, undergoing or encountering” (Boud, Cohen and Walker, 1993, p. 6). The term is also understood as a noun that signifies “what is experienced” (Boud, Cohen and Walker, 1993, p. 6). Much of the current literature connects the study of internships to the discussions of experiential learning as a pedagogy characterised by the importance of learning *in* experience (Wilson, 1993), “learning *from* experience” (Kolbs, 2014, xx), “learning-by-doing” (Beaudin and Quick, 1995),

and “learning from real-world experience” (Remer, 2007). Reynolds and Vince (2007, p.6) outline five key themes of experiential learning that are applicable to the study of international internship:

1. Experiential learning is a desire to observe the power forces in an organisation.
2. Experiential learning is a representation of complex work environments that introduce students to concepts and allow them to reflect on real situations.
3. Experiential learning is a tool for stimulating critiques by challenging the norms of thinking and the norms of working.
4. Experiential learning is a pedagogy that challenges education institutions and their teaching.
5. Experiential learning is an approach that puts forward individual learning and collective reflecting.

According to Malinen (2000), experiential learning is a term that is vague, inadequately defined, and under-researched. However, not only has the concept of experiential learning been widely adopted by the global HEIs over previous decades, scholars and researchers have also applied the term in a contesting way to show different opinions on experiential learning. Roberts (2016) cites Bass (2012) and points out that compared to a traditional formal curriculum, experiential learning as a pedagogy has been marginalised until recent decades, but the rise of participatory culture and HEIs existing to produce a learning experience instead of teaching have created a paradigm shift that have moved

experiential learning from the margin to the centre. Fenwick (2000) states that experiential learning carries theoretical and practical meaning; theoretically it means a discourse of process of human cognition, while practically it refers to a signifier of out-of-classroom learning. The learning experience that students obtain outside classrooms is regarded as active, reflective, and cooperative versus the passive, informative and inflexible classroom learning that requires monitoring from an instructor and formal instructions (Furman and Sibthorp, 2013). Emphasising experiences in a workplace setting, an internship is regarded as experiential learning out of classroom but within the community (Holyoak, 2013). Stansbie, Nash and Chang (2016) state in their research study that the internship is an experiential learning pedagogy that introduces new skills and competencies to students that are not addressed by teachers in classrooms. However, the progress of how the interns developed new skill has not been discussed in the findings. Another research study conducted by Cooper, Bottomley and Gordon (2004) has explored the reflections of a group of local and international exchange students who completed an experiential entrepreneurship project for business corporates while studying at a university in Scotland. The participants reflected that neither classroom learning, nor the hearsay that could compare to the actual experience that spirals their real feeling of what it is like in the business sector. An experiential learning experience, as Pugh (2011) explains, is an episode of transformation that starts from an idea and turns into phases of experiences. International internship, therefore, is an experiential learning pedagogy in work-situated contexts that actions of learning are capable to transform one's perception of the world.

In Hong Kong, experiential learning was not a popular term in HE until the twenty-first century. The impact of globalisation discourses and the changing job market environment have encouraged the universities to be proactive in sharpening students with certain generic attributes such as metacognitive skills, higher order thinking, communication skills, and lifelong learning abilities (Chan, 2010). Since 2012, many government-funded universities have started to reform their general education curriculum at undergraduate degree level to cultivate students' generic attributes. However, a recent research study has found that the impact of the reform was minimal, and students only grasped a basic understanding of the subject matter (Chiu, 2019). The constraints of the learning environment at the university, such as traditional classrooms and labs, obstruct students' flexibility and ability to obtain generic skills in an experiential learning environment and the overall general education curriculum at university level has been accused of being too academic, inflexible and impractical (Chan, 2010). With the growing trend of decentralisation in HE and heavy involvement of third-party organisations, experiential learning, engagement learning, and service learning have become popular terms in HE in Hong Kong. Chak and Makino (2010) used survey to evaluate the perceptions of business major students from eight universities towards the different types of experiential learning activity. The results showed that students have a strong preference for participating in overseas internships (Mean= 3.59), slightly less than for local internships (Mean=3.87) and exchange programmes (Mean= 3.8). Among all respondents, 72 percent of respondents agreed that overseas internships are a "useful" or "very useful" out of classroom learning activity, which is significantly higher than for other activities such as field trips, company visits, study tours, etc. This study implies

that international internships programme, though less popular than local internships and exchange programmes, has been gaining acceptance and popularity among HEIs' students.

2.4.3 Experiential Learning is a Process: Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle

The debates and investigations of experiential learning have resulted in over 70 experiential learning models that have been created in the past (Bergsteiner, Avery and Neumann, 2010). Influenced by a number of foundation scholars of experiential learning, such as William James (1912), George Kelly (1955), John Dewey (1938), Kurt Lewin (1948), Jean Piaget (1970) and so on, Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model is considered as the most popular, widely used and influential approach (Bergsteiner, Avery and Neumann, 2010). The work of John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (1938), has profoundly influenced Kolb's (1984) view of learning. Dewey's (1938) *Model of Learning* (see Figure 2 below) indicates that learning is a process that consists of three aspects: observation, knowledge and judgement. Observation is the going-over of the present, knowledge is the recollection of the past information, and judgment is the mixture of observation and knowledge. Kolb (2009) values Dewey's model and emphasises that learning is a process but not an outcome, and that all learning is a re-learning process where experiences are reconstructed by the active participation of learners.

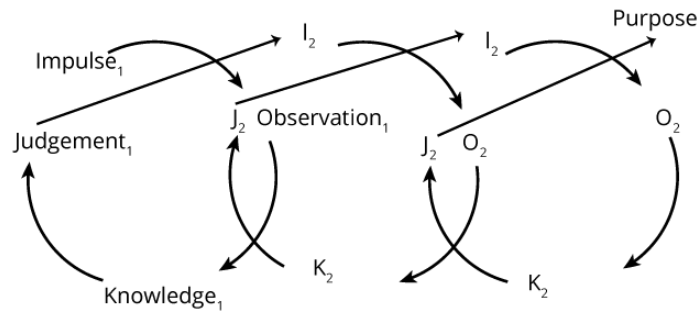


Figure 2: Dewey's Model of Experiential Learning (Kolb, 1984, p. 23)

In addition to Dewey, Kolb is inspired by Lewin (1948), who believes that learners are able to give meaning to concepts based on their actual experiences. In “*the Lewinian Experiential Learning Model*” (Kolb, 1984, p.21) (see Figure 3 below), Lewin explains that learning is a loop of actions inspired by personal experiences and abstract concepts in the human world. Through observation and reflection, learners are able to give meaning to concepts based on their actual experiences, while their reflections and feedback provide testing and validation of the concepts that can be generalised in the public and referenced by the following learners. Kolb (1984) values Lewin’s model for stimulating actions of knowledge and helping to promote social changes as well as finding solutions for problems, but the effectiveness of the model is questionable because there is no guarantee that sufficient reflections and feedback can be generated to test and validate the concepts. Kolb (2014) also argues that Lewin’s (1948) explanation of experience is not about pure personal experience, but rather the experience of decision-making in the process of changes.

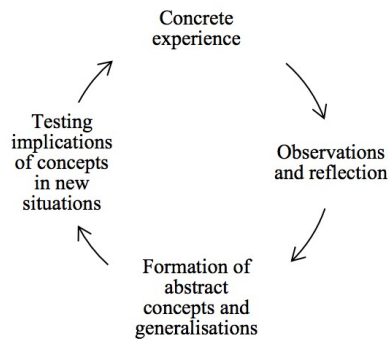


Figure 3: Lewin's experiential learning model (Kolb, 1984, p. 21)

Kolb (1984) defines learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through transformation of experience (p. 38)”. The prerequisite of learning is to understand how knowledge is created. Life experience, despite being subjective and personal, is a process of knowledge creation that can occur at any life stage. Kolb (1984) exemplifies the learning model of Piaget (1970) (see Figure 4 below) and states that the “development from infancy to adulthood moves from a concrete phenomenal view of the world to an abstract constructionist view, from an active egocentric view to a reflective internalised mode of knowing” (p. 23). The creation of knowledge, according to Piaget (1970), comes neither from the individual’s experience or possessions of mind nor from the structural development of cognition through assimilation and accommodation, but from a natural growth of the human body, where babies who know nothing will eventually start searching for the ‘truth’ since they become adolescents. However, Kolb (2009) argues that it is not because of the life stages that naturally empower people’s ability to search for knowledge and not absorb everything like a sponge, but because the synergetic transactions between people and the environment provide experiential learning opportunities that create and recreate personal knowledge. The abilities of problem solving, creative thinking and

decision making, Kolb (2009) explains, are developed from the holistic process of learning when learners adapt to the environment.

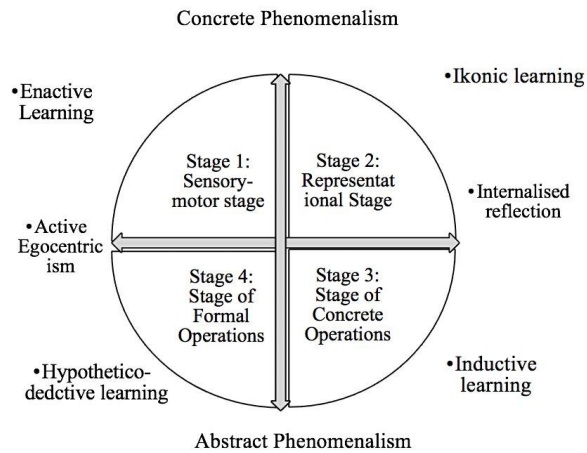


Figure 4: Piaget's Model of Learning and Cognitive Development (Kolb, 1984, p. 24)

Kolb (1984) holds a strong view that learning is a non-stop process that derives from grasping and transforming of experience. Proposed his own *Cycle of Experiential Learning* (see Figure 5 below), Kolb (1984) depicts four adaptive stages of experience – *Concrete Experience (CE)*, *Abstract Conceptualisation (AC)*, *Reflective Observation (RO)* and *Active Experimentation (AE)*. Although Kolb (1984) states that the experiential learning cycle is a recursive process that can start from any one of the four modes, *the Concrete Experience (CE)* and the *Abstract Conceptualization (AC)* are regarded to the stages about grasping experience, whereas the *Reflective Observation (RO)* and the *Active Experimentation (AE)* are regarded to the stages about transforming experience. To explain each stage further, the *Concrete Experience (CE)*, if taken as the first stage, refers to the beginning of a learning process where learners gain primary, raw, immediate and empirical (Roberts, 2016) learning experiences. By

voluntarily showing interest and willingness to engage in a concrete experience, learners discover the meanings of learning with the convergence of the preconceptions they gain from previous experiences and critically reflect on the entire concrete and immediate experience. The reflections of the learners, i.e. *Reflective Observation (RO)*, driven by an impartial reality and a personal attitude of the reality in the learners' mind, enable them to formulate and extract new concepts, and open up the stage of *Abstract Conceptualization (AC)*. The abstract concepts that assimilate experiences, emotions and reflective minds help the learners to analyse the situations, in which they will later carry out *Active Experimentation (AE)* to put the concepts into practice. Kolb (1984) explains that the application of the experiential learning cycle is not limited to problem-solving but also the decision-making process and creative execution. Emphasising the importance of the environment, Kolb (1984) calls the learners the "experimenters" (p. 34) and the real-world environment "a laboratory" (p.34). In contrast to the limited environment of books, teachers and classrooms that offers a limited and personal learning experience, Kolb (1984) argues that experiential learning is decontextualized and interactive. Therefore, the experiential learning cycle carries a dual formation of experience, including a subjective and personal experience that fulfils learners' internal state of learning, as well as an objective and environmental experience where learners not only respond to the environment but also actively create experimental situations of learning in their everyday lives.

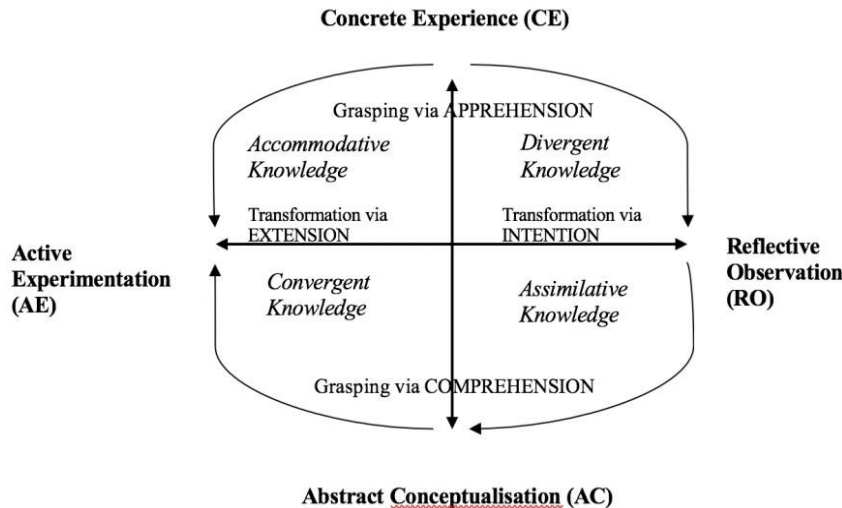


Figure 5: Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb, 1984)

Being recognised as one of the most prominent and widely adopted experiential learning approaches, internships have received growing attention by researchers. Beard and Wilson (2013) point out that internship is a practical experiential learning activity that connects the notions of experience to learning in a workplace. Gerlach and Reinagel (2016) state that internships supplement traditional learning in classrooms by providing extensive real-world experience, especially for students who lack hands-on learning opportunities. In coping with the insufficiency of practical training that creates a skills gap and expectation gap between the university graduates and the industries (Ali and Smith, 2015), HEIs in Hong Kong and many other places have been exploring more internship opportunities in order to provide students with more short-term experiential training through work. Although the international internship programmes offered by the government-funded universities in Hong Kong are voluntary and excluded from the curriculum, the design of the programmes have much followed the four stages of the experiential learning cycle. As mentioned in the previous chapter, international internship programmes have been established successfully among

Hong Kong's universities, and students from all disciplines are eligible to apply for international internship places organised by the designated office, for example the career centre or the international office of their respective university. After going through the necessary application process and interview, they are offered internship positions from non-local companies or organisations that enable them to obtain *Concrete Experience (CE)* in workplaces outside Hong Kong for two to three months during the summer holiday. The changes in learning and the living environment stimulate students' *Reflective Observation (RO)*. Without guidance from teachers or any person from the university, the challenges and changes students face in the workplace forcefully and unforcefully drive them to form an *Abstract Conceptualisation (AC)* of the situations so that they can quickly cope with any arising issues and adapt to the uncertain environment through *Active Experimentation (AE)*. Reviewing the international internship programmes offered by the government-funded universities in Hong Kong, none of them are credit-bearing, with no prerequisite courses for students, and the submission of internship reports is not compulsory unless students have to apply for subsidies (see Appendix XI). Therefore, the international internship programmes offered by the universities in Hong Kong are principally an experiential activity outside of the formal university curriculum. For instance, Wan et al. (2013) state, after conducting a longitudinal research study on a group of hospitality and tourism undergraduate students that, a workplace not only creates opportunities for mutual learning but is also a social learning process because an intern is expected to interact with the environment, and knowledge, to a certain extent, is a product of social practice.

Although few research studies in Hong Kong have explored Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle, a number of research studies conducted in other places have discussed Kolb's experiential learning cycle with the design and execution of internship programmes. For instance, Simons et al. (2012) state that internship is an experiential learning approach that can "involve active learning (i.e., learn by doing), critical reflection, and professional development" (p. 325), which is similar to the ideas of Kolb (1984). Tener et al. (2001) cited Dewey, Piaget, Kolb and others and illustrate that internship is an authentic involvement of experiential learning where intelligence is shaped and nurtured by experience. They conducted research on a 12-week internship programme where 170 engineering students looked back on what they had learned in the university and moved forward to exhibit learning abilities through gaining concrete experiences. The results showed an evident progress of learning in Kolb's experiential learning cycle: the hands-on experiences that students gained from internships facilitated their reflective observation, developed their self-efficacy in attaining better results at work, and motivated them to achieve better academic performance after returning to school. However, it was also discovered that, in the stages of abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation, some students only learned by watching others, while the majority of students learned from seeking solutions to handle different situations. This shows that the application of Kolb's experiential learning cycle requires more validation and examination with empirical research studies. Through investigating the participants' experience in an international internship programmes, this dissertation will apply the four aspects of the Kolb's cycle in the design of the research study and will further discuss the value of the cycle with the research findings.

2.4.4 Reflection in Focus: Jarvis' Model of the Learning Process

Although Kolb (1984) admits that the experiential learning cycle is ideal and hard to achieve in reality, he claims that the action-reflection process of learning exists in every human being to enable them to transform the world, and the experiential learning cycle confirms everyone's ability to reflect on their observations and experiences in a committed, responsive and objective manner. Schon (1983) states that learners are often overwhelmed by what he called "knowing in action" (p. 54), which indicates that learners keep practising without the awareness of having learned anything. To avoid overlearning, learners need "reflecting in action" (p. 55), in which Schon (1983) points out that the reflections in the learning process help an individual to understand, criticise and adjust the uncertainties and uniqueness of situations while repeating the same practices. As one of the scholars who emphasises that reflective activities help learners to discover new knowledge, Jarvis (1987) explores experiential learning from a sociological angle and argues that transformation through self-reflection is not guaranteed. According to Jarvis (1987), the Kolb experiential learning cycle is overly simple and lacks clear sequence, in which the four stages of learning are difficult to understand because questions such as "what has happened to the learner in the process?" (p. 18) and "How does the learning experience affect the next time that the individual encounter similar process?" (p. 18) remain doubtful and unanswered. Creating the *Model of the Learning Process* (see Figure 6 below), Jarvis (1987) states that learning is a multifaceted and dynamic experience, which can be understood as a journey of a new skill set, a new discovery of knowledge, a change of attitude, an altered self-concept, and a new stage of life experience.

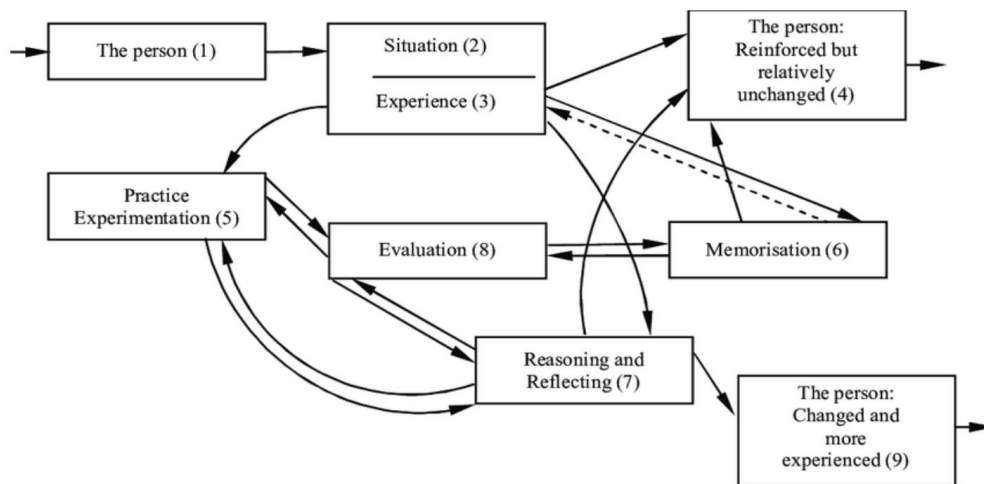


Figure 6: Model of the Learning Process (Jarvis, 1987, p. 166)

According to Jarvis (1987), human beings are “meaning seeking animals” (p. 70), but learners’ unthinking manner will lead to an automatic response in the occurrence of every similar experience. Therefore, meaning does not change unless learners reflect critically upon previous experience and seek opinions from other individuals. In other words, experience can be either meaningful or meaningless. “Meaningless experience” refers to learners taking each experience for granted with passive and inactive manners, while “meaningful experience” (1987, p. 168) occurs during the time that learners find disjuncture between their personal stock of knowledge and the rapidly changing social-cultural-temporal milieu, and try to remove the disjuncture by self-reflection on past experience as well as by interactions with other people. An example to demonstrate that reflection should not be taken for granted is that elderly people find it difficult to learn because they are trapped in “meaningless experiences” (1987, p. 167), while they take every experience for granted.

Jarvis (1987) contributes to the study of experiential learning by emphasising the impact of the social-cultural-temporal life world in constituting

a meaningful learning process. Notwithstanding Piaget (1971), Jarvis (1987) rejects the idea that experience is accumulated through age and claims that age is not a determinant factor of learning. Experience, according to Jarvis (1987), is “the process of living in society” (p. 164). The backcloth of learning are the social situations that involve people’s interactions with people, and people’s interactions with culture. In other words, experiential learning is influenced by the socio-cultural milieu, i.e. the social-cultural-temporal life world (p. 165). While Kolb states that learning is a process through transformation of *experience*, Jarvis holds an opposing view and contends that learning is a process through transformation of the *self*. In his book *Paradoxes of Learning*, Jarvis (1992) explains that life and the social context are important factors of learning. The process of learning is an intersection of the personal stock of knowledge and the social-cultural-temporal milieu; a socialised process. Individuals not only learn their own culture and other cultures, but also encounter new cultures physically and interact with different people, which enables the externalisation of knowledge or knowledge exchange. Jarvis (1992) comments that “all social processes are learned processes” (p. 31), in which language, cultures, beliefs, human practices and so on are socially constructed, but individuals are given freedom to learn as many cultures as they want and to live in a world where different cultures co-exist. Mezirow (1991) further explores this idea and states that reflection opens up the possibility for learners to make changes to meaning and action in the reflection process, which empowers transformative learning.

The key essence of Jarvis’s model is the empowerment of the self, i.e. the learners. Stressing the ability of the self in reflecting and reacting on the complex and ever-changing situations and context, Jarvis (1987, 1992) opens up the

discussions of the role of reflections in motivating self-analysis, learning and problem-solving. Bubnys and Žydžiūnaitė (2010) state that reflection is a psychic process that is formed during the interaction of the self with the environment, in which learners grasp the opportunity to revise existing new ideas and concepts and create new knowledge through reflective thinking. Cord, Bowrey and Clements (2010) point out that reflection in learning is a process where learners review their experiences in various ways, investigate what they have done and why, and examine the effect that their experiences have had on others. In exploring experiential learning and its impact on the transformation of the self, different techniques and tools of enhancing students' ability for reflection have been implemented in the HE curriculum. Rogers (2001) cited Schon (1987) and coined the term "reflective practice" (p. 46) such as keeping a reflective journal, encouraging group discussions and writing portfolios are techniques to train reflective minds. Advocating reflective learning in classrooms, Moon (2004) suggests using tutorials, essay writing and drawing to replace lecturing to integrate reflection into learning in HE. To advance a deeper approach to learning, Moon (2004) states that surface approaches to learning, such as memorisation and jotting notes in lectures, sabotages students' chances of reflection, and therefore a deeper approach to learning, such as work-based learning, placed learning and experience abroad etc. are preferred as this approach slow down the process of learning, give time to learners to connect new knowledge to previous ideas, help learners to make sense of the world through self-reflection, as well as establish a basis for them to develop employability skills. To further explicate Moon (2004)'s view, Simons et al. (2012) have conducted a research study on 38 undergraduate students from a psychology programme in the UK and found that

students actively reflected on the theories and principles they learnt from the university when participating in the internship programme. They also actively applied the new skills they acquired from work into practice, which helped develop their professional identity. In recent decades, universities have dedicated considerable efforts and resources to the design and delivery of internships as key experiential learning initiatives, therefore, Jarvis' model is considered as a supplementary model for analysis in this dissertation as his model and views are worthy to be explored in the study of experiential learning and the contextual impact on students' motivation in learning as well as career planning.

2.5 Internship, Employability and Employability Skills

2.5.1 The Concept of Employability and Interpretations of Employability Skills

With the growing impact of globalisation and increasing competition in the labour market, HEIs have been more proactive to get students prepared for their future careers so as to improve their employability. By definition, the term 'employability' refers to "skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy." (Yorke, 2004, p. 7, cited in Moreau and Leathwood, 2006, p. 308). Although the employability concept has been defined by many scholars, it is still flawed and confused. Hillage and Polland (1998) describe 'employability' as "the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment, and obtain new employment if required." (p. 1, cited in Brown et al., 2003, p. 110). Brown et al. (2003) illustrate that employability is never a synonym of "employable" (p. 110) or "unemployable" (p. 110). By citing the statistics from the UK in 2001 that over

300,000 graduates compete for less than 15,000 elite jobs (p. 111), employability is regarded as “a source of competitive advantage” (Brown et al., 2003, p. 107) that refers to people who have comparatively more advantages when competing in a hierarchy of job seekers.

The assumption that more graduates lead to greater depreciations in the value of university degrees has brought tensions to the global HEIs. Today a good degree no longer secures university graduates a satisfying job, and more employers value the job reference letter from an intern employer, or the students’ skills that are outlined in their “experience portfolio” (Morris, Kuratko and Cornwall, 2013, p. 97) or resumes. Coopers and Lybrand (1998) explain that employability skills are “traditional intellectual skills, key skills, personal attributes, knowledge organisations and how they work.” (cited in Boden and Nedeva, 2010, p. 42). The United Kingdom is recognised as one of the forerunners in putting employability into the HE policy agenda. As early as the 1990s, the UK government had already pointed out the importance of enhancing university students’ employability skills in the Dearing report (1997) and specified four major employability skills that the government considered essential to students, namely communication skills, numeracy skills, information technology skills, and the skills of learning how to learn (cited in Cranmer, 2006). However, these skills were later found to be insufficient in demonstrating the competitive edge of graduates. Therefore, in 2009, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills published a report and re-defined employability skills with a wider spectrum, including teamworking, communication, active listening, an interest in learning, problem solving, numeracy, literacy, and taking criticism (Hall, Higson and Bullivant, 2009, p. 5). Mok and Jiang (2018) point out that

massification of HE in many places of the world, such as Korea, Japan, Canada and Ireland etc. have produced too many over-qualified graduates who have to enter a not-so-favourable competitive labour market, force to be a precarious worker, or face unemployment. Their study of graduates' salary has also revealed that massification of HE in Hong Kong after year 2002 did not benefit on the upward social mobility of graduates. To secure graduates getting a full-time job, academic departments of the HEIs in Hong Kong have been more concerned about developing graduates' attributes and abilities to fit into multiple jobs. A research study conducted by Leung and McGrath (2010) in Hong Kong has identified seven employability skills that are considered important by the human resources practitioners, including communication skills, language skills, social skills, learning attitude, team spirit and problem-solving skills. Another study conducted by Noakes (2004) at a government-funded university in Hong Kong found that a personal e-portfolio system could encourage students to participate more in team-based projects and life-learning courses to develop their lifelong learning skills and career management skills. It has also discovered that the e-portfolio could help students to showcase their attributes to potential employers. Nevertheless, the actual benefits of e-portfolio in supporting students' employability as well as personal development and career planning were unidentified and under-researched. With little research studies that have gone beyond the investigation of local internships and focused on the relations between international internship programmes and employability skills development, this research study will fill the gap in the entire studies by contributing to the understanding of students' opinions about their international internship experiences and future career planning.

2.5.2 Employability, Internships and the USEM Model (Yorke and Knight, 2002)

While internships serve as an experiential learning opportunity for students to immerse themselves in real-world work settings, they are assumed to benefit from the internship experiences that promise better future career prospects compared to the other students who have no internship experience. Tomlinson (2008) points out that employability is based more upon the “social fit” (p. 58) of graduates in a hierarchical, competitive and tough-entry labour market, and therefore work experience is essential to increase the potential market value of the graduates. Many education scholars (Dewey, 1938; Lewin 1951; Kolb, 1984) also recognise that real life experience serves as an integral part in learning process. Despite not every internship is organised to prepare students for their future careers, the address of the complex relationship between experiential learning, internship and employability in this dissertation will expand the scope of current researches and contribute to the study of experiential learning outcome on university graduates’ career progression.

Decades ago, only professional-oriented academic programmes offered internships with explicit and integral employability development opportunities, such as medical, social work and education programmes at universities, while students from other programmes such as philosophy, literature and social sciences were being left out (Harvey, 2001). However, the increasing pressure to enhance the employability of students in various disciplines provoked HEIs to organise more experiential learning programmes, such as placement opportunities that last from a few days to a year, employer-linked projects, and work-shadowing (Harvey, 2001, p. 99). Cranmer (2006) points out that the growing importance of

employability has created tensions within the HE sector, in which employability has become a key performance indicator of HEIs, which is especially reflected in all forms of league tables. Other scholars have also found that employability has become one of the major HEI performance indicators, at the same time unemployment became HEIs' but not individual graduates' problem (Harvey et al., 2002; Morley, 2001; Cranmer, 2006). Since the millennium, HEIs are under pressure to enhance the employability of students in various disciplines. Hence, various forms of employability programme, such as placement opportunities that last from a few days to a year, employer-linked projects, and work-shadowing (Harvey, 2001, p. 99) are promoted by HEIs as experiential learning activities for the benefit of enhancing employability of current students.

In Hong Kong, universities have gradually been shifting their missions and visions from a research-oriented approach to a teaching-oriented approach, which pressurised them to prioritise students' needs and expectations. While HEIs in Hong Kong have been increasingly proactive in positing an internationalised outlook, they were urged "to promote particular skills for living in the global market such as global awareness, social skill, problem-solving ability, and, especially, proficiency in information and communication technology and foreign languages" (Law, 2004, p. 501). Cheung and Arnold (2014) point out that the rapid expansion of people who attained a bachelor's degree or above, the negative news generated by the media about the poor preparation of the graduates, and the insufficiency of career guidance service in Hong Kong have provoked the HEIs to seek ways to improve graduate attributes and assist them in career exploration. Their research study on a group of university students who completed a career programme and an internship found

that career exploration behaviour such as participating in an internship programme helped students to glean multiple employability skills, and the university graduates who had working experience as an intern were found to be more decisive in career planning and willing to explore different career opportunities.

Corresponding the importance of subject knowledge and soft skills, as well as stressing on the concept of ‘capability’ (p. 264) in which university graduates not only know about their disciplinary knowledge but also have the personal qualities and efficacy to use their skills when facing challenges at work, the *USEM model* (see Figure 7 below), also named the employability model, has been developed by Yorke and Knight (2002). USEM is an abbreviation of “*Understanding*” (U), “*Skills (generic and specific)*” (S), “*Efficacy*” (E), and “*Metacognition (with reflection)*” (M) (p. 264). Citing the self-theories of Dweck (1999), Yorke and Knight (2002) argue that personal qualities and efficacy beliefs have long been devalued, unnoticed and unappreciated. They emphasise the importance of self-efficacy and self-theories in turning personal qualities into employability advantages. The malleable self-theory, Yorke and Knight (2002) explain, is more powerful than intelligence quotients in driving a person to succeed. With an assumption that intelligence is fixed, learning is the source of self-esteem and the driving force for motivating a person to cope with the problems and complexities faced in employment, thus turning the impossible to the possible. As Billett (2002) points out, the workplace is a learning environment where learners unintentionally construct their own experience through practical self-regulated learning. To improve graduates’ employability in the ever-changing global environment, administrators of HEIs such as the individual

faculty, career centres or the International Office in charge of organising internship programmes for university students have been placing more weight on international internships aimed at increasing students' mobility worldwide, as well as developing their competencies and skills for "providing evidence of work-related or experiential learning" (p. 603). Crossman and Clarke (2010) state that global experiences "ensure graduates are adequately prepared to function as 'global citizen' who are internationally savvy and equipped with the appropriate skill sin this regard" (p. 603). In addition, the students are believed to be more culturally adaptive and "are creative, empathetic and able to cooperate in diverse and international teams" (p. 602) that fit into the expectations of the employers in the twenty-first century. The idea of the USEM model is also supported by a research study conducted by Ngo and Cheung (2017) in Hong Kong, which finds that the higher the self-efficacy of employees, the more engaging and satisfying they perform at work. Ngo and Cheung (2017) point out that research studies about perceived employability were scarce in non-western countries. Therefore, how internships as experiential learning boost the self-efficacy of graduates to cope with the tensions that arise from competition and challenges in schools and in the real world requires further examination from empirical research. Engaging into the ideas about employability and USEM models, this dissertation will evaluate the impacts of international internship experience on students' career aspiration and planning.

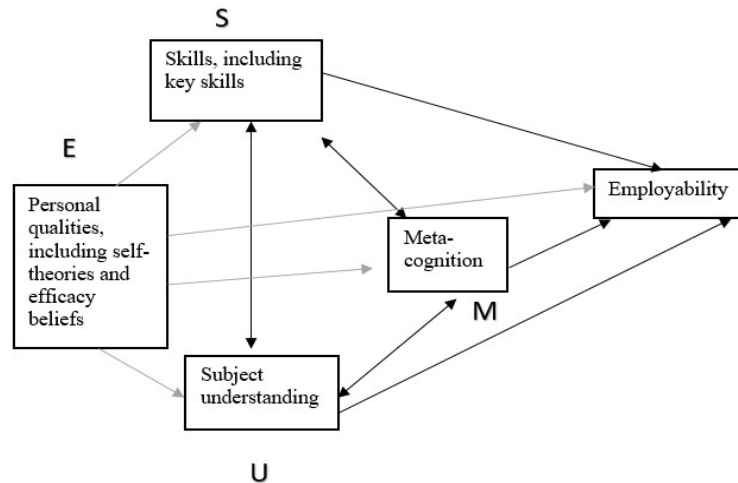


Figure 7: The USEM Model of employability (Knight and Yorke, 2002, p. 265)

Exploring the benefits of international internships in promoting and enhancing the employability skills of students, previous research studies explored the wider perception about internships and how the internship path the way towards better employability. A study conducted by O'Connor and Bodicoat (2017) in 2012 have explored the relationship between internship and employability, in which a group of undergraduate university students expressed that internships sharpened the necessary skills that are lacking in other job seekers and were helpful in securing a permanent position from the internship employer. Another research study conducted within two departments of a UK university found that 80% of respondents felt confident in their employment prospects after work placements, but they received insufficient assistance when searching for placement opportunities (Bullock, Gould and Hejmadi, 2009). Maertz et al. (2014) state that some internships provide full-time employment opportunities to potential students that increases their global mobility. Stanton (1995) has a similar view that interns have chances to be offered future permanent jobs if employers use the internship opportunities to seek a suitable person to fill a job vacancy.

According to a 5-year longitudinal research study conducted within a business school in the UK from 2004 to 2009 (Bullock, Gould and Hejmadi, 2009), placement employers were most satisfied with the ‘teamwork skills’ (78 to 85.4% competency) of students, followed by their ‘skills of managing change’ (75 to 82.2% competency). In contrast, the top three dissatisfied competencies of internship students listed by employers included were ‘networking skills’ (61 to 71.2% competency), ‘influencing and negotiating’ skills (58 to 66% competency), as well as ‘leadership’ skills (54 to 60.7% competency). The above results demonstrate that internships may positively linked to the employability skills development and career exploration, yet validation from previous research study in Hong Kong is unavailable. Therefore, this dissertation can extend the study of international internships through investigating participants’ mastery of various employability skills and their thoughts on the usefulness of the skills on career preparations.

2.6 International internships, intercultural proficiency and global citizenship

2.6.1 Culture and Culture Shock

Culture, despite its diversified, hybrid, everchanging and unpredictable nature, is performative. It is perceived that culture is cognitive and affective practices, a way of life, and a collective product that one can easily notice the change or identify the differences (Lumby and Foskett, 2016). Although the increasing mobility of people in the globalising world and the advancement of technology have given more opportunities for the world’s citizens to interact with different cultures, culture shock still occurs when a person physically transited

from one culture to another (Yang, Zhang and Sheldon, 2018). As defined by Oberg (1960), culture shock refers to the negative feelings, such as anxiety, fear, stress and disorientation in the process of culture adaptation and rejection (cited in Moufakkir, 2013). Bochner (2003) claims that the higher degree of separation in distance, the greater level of culture shocks a person encounter. For instance, Australians might feel a more serious culture shock in China than in the UK. However, Moufakkir (2013) argues that culture shock, which includes role shock, language shock and transition shock, etc., during unfamiliar culture contact, gives the chance for students to experience culture learning and personal development. Quantitative research study conducted by Westrick (2004) on 733 students of Hong Kong international schools who participated in a number of service-learning programmes in different places such as Philippines, Vietnam and China, found that students developed strong cultural sensitivity when they had a chance to study and live in very different environments compared to their own culture. However, the study did not explore on the various forms of culture shock that the participants' might have experienced.

2.6.2 International Internships and Development of Intercultural Proficiency

Since culture entails a power relationship of 'us' and 'other', intercultural proficiency development is regarded as important for strengthening students' cultural sensitivity and understanding. Hartman and Kiely (2014) state that the participants of immersive international internship programmes hardly experience "critical incident" (p. 58) and they will return to their comfort zone and culturally homogeneous home countries shortly after the programmes are completed. However, Lutterman-Aguilar and Gingerich (2002) contend that overseas experiential learning stimulates independent thinking in students' mind. Their

dialogues and interactions with locals of different races, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds are processes of culture learning where they critically analyse the new experiences with other cultures and reflect on their own culture. By definition intercultural proficiency refers to the ways, skills, attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, attitude and so on that people learn to enable them to interact with others in a multicultural context (Lumby and Foskett, 2016). It is a manifold concept as well as a philosophical and behavioural approach that implicates a person's level of "global awareness, adeptness at intercultural communication, openness to diverse people, and cultural sensitivity" (Clarke III et al., 2009, p. 174). The abilities to recognise diverse worldviews, to learn cultural skills of others and to navigate among distinctive cultural groups are regarded as intercultural proficiency that enables people to succeed in intercultural connection with others. Although Wynveen, Kyle and Terrant (2012) point out that short-term study abroad programmes "are too isolated, are poorly implemented, do not meet participants' needs and unintentionally promote stereotypical views of host cultures" (p. 355), real intercultural contact with people of different cultures in another place, compared to domestic contact, is regarded as an intercultural opportunity that constitutes a stronger and more long-lasting impact on the development of students' intercultural proficiency (Weng, 2018). Chang et al. (2012) discover in their study on a group of Taiwanese who participated in a voluntary service programme in different countries, including Panama, Belgium and Thailand, that interpersonal and intercultural connection between people of different ethnics are a transformative learning process that develops intercultural proficiency and helps participants open up their unknown self and develop potential abilities. While research studies about the association

between intercultural proficiency development and international experience receive little attention, in-depth study on the cross-cultural experiences of undergraduate students during international internships has valuable implications to the studies of intercultural communication and the contextual impact on intercultural proficiency development.

Whilst higher education becomes part of the globalisation process, experiential learning activities of HEIs are no longer bound by the territories of states. Lumby and Foskett (2016) point out that internationalisation is an exchange of cultures in any location where students who grew up in their own culture immerse themselves in other cultures. Associating cultural value and cultural capital with the benefits of internationalisation, culture is no longer merely refers to the sharing of common beliefs and behaviours within the same communities (Pincas, 2001). Culture is more complicated and complex in modern understanding, which implies a stock of skills and knowledge constructed, learned and transmitted through products, philosophies and practices in a social context (Legare, 2017). In other words, culture is habits, values, skills and competencies that can be learned through encountering as well as experiencing. Supporting the idea that culture is something that can be learned, Jacobson (1996) states that “learning culture means learning new way of making sense and appreciating value” (p. 20). Cross-cultural adaptation, for instance, is a form of culture learning. Batey and Lupi (2012) support that international internship is a culture learning process where participants immerse into the culture of others “by reading, studying, asking questions, attending cultural events, and interacting with people they come into contact with through international internships” (p. 28). The adaptation and adjustment from their own culture to a new culture requires personal expedition.

Hendershot and Sperandio (2009) have conducted a research study on some American students who stayed two weeks in Chile and Hong Kong. Their research discovered that culture learning is much more than tourism, where participants retained their own culture while they “grew to love and respect each other” (p. 49) more after learning about the other cultures.

Living and growing up in an international city, it is undeniable that the young people in Hong Kong are familiar with global cultures. The import of global media products, cultural artefacts, food, services and products unremittingly enhance their understanding as well as acceptance of global cultures. However, the culture learning opportunities through international exposure, cross-cultural interactions and intercultural communications are limited on campuses. In a context of global HE, experiential learning activities of HEIs such as international internship programmes play a significant role in developing students’ global citizenship and culture awareness in a real context. Research study by Steeves (2005) interviewed nine US journalism interns in Ghana in 2004. This study found that students encountered difficulties due to cultural shock and negative impressions towards the workplaces in another country. Yet it found that students managed to experience abundant personal growth and critically reflect on their classroom teaching with the real experiences they gained in their internship job duties. Clarke III et al. (2009) cited Schuster et al. (1998) and pointed out that students need more experiential international interactions so that they can genuinely understand a country while engaging in it. These researches show that international internships, though requiring participants to move physically abroad, have profound impacts on developing students’ positive cross-cultural competencies. In considering the lack of research about students’ unique

cultural experiences aboard, this dissertation will investigate how the undergraduate students from Hong Kong coped with cultural differences while immersing themselves in another culture during the international internship programmes.

2.6.3 International Internships and Cultivation of Global Citizenship

The implementation and promotion of non-local experiential learning activities such as international internship programme not only potentially develop students' intercultural proficiency, but also cultivate their global mindedness as well as global citizenship (Clarke III et al., 2009). Despite Hong Kong being an international city with a blend of Eastern and Western cultures, citizenship education has been downplayed across different levels of the school curriculum due to the tension driven by the long separation between Hong Kong and China during the British colonial era (Ho and Law, 2009). Global-mindedness of the university students, which refers to their sense of connection and commitment to the world communities (Hett, 1993; Clarke III et al., 2009), was deemphasised during the first ten years after the handover of Hong Kong to China because the government focused primarily on strengthening the nationalism of the students and their understanding of motherland China. However, in the recent decade, challenges of globalisation discourses and overwhelming recruitment of second tier non-local students from China have brought pressures to the HEIs to take initiatives towards true internationalisation (Lui, 2014). According to Mason and Thier (2018), the increasing devotion of HEIs to the expansion of study abroad experiences is in line with their expectation in nurturing the global citizenship of students. The key idea of global citizenship, according to Oxfam (2015), is the awareness of the wider world, the sensing of oneself as a world citizen, the

respecting of diversity, the commitment to social justice and so on (cited in Mason and Thier, 2018). Despite a large number of research studies on global citizenship having been published in recent decades, many scholars have pointed out that global citizenship is a contested term, a buzzword, and a metaphor that is difficult to conceptualise (Kishino and Takahash, 2019; Doscher and Landorf, 2018; Aktas et al., 2017). But three approaches that demystify the concept of global citizenship have been discussed in culture-relevant literature: The *neoliberal* approach recognises global citizenship as the transnational mobility of people who utilise knowledge and skills to engage in activity that conducted anywhere globally (Akkari and Maleq, 2019). However, the *critical* and *transformational* approaches reject the neoliberal approach's assumption of economic hegemony in the globalisation process and posit that an active and responsible global citizen (Akkari and Maleq, 2019) has a self-aware global citizen identity that respects cultural diversity and commits to a social responsibility of saving the world (Andreotti, 2006, cited in Aktas et al., 2017). Highlighting global citizenship education encourages students to be more accountable in promoting social justice, equality and freedom, and the critical and transformational approaches oppose the view of the neoliberal approach that global citizenship is for personal benefit of greater mobility and employability. Applying the above three approaches, this dissertation will investigate Hong Kong students' culture understanding and their self-evaluation of global citizenship after completion of international internship programmes.

The idea that the sense of identity of oneself can be learnt from social relations has been discussed and researched. Jacobson (1996) states that despite identity is a self-concept, it is inseparable from learning. Research study

conducted by Streitwieser and Light (2019) finds that global citizenship is perceived as the opportunities to experience internationally and to be exposed to the viewpoints of others. To develop global citizenship, one is expected to travel out of his or her own country. Another research study conducted by Hendershot and Sperandio (2009) on a global citizenship experiential learning programme of an American university finds that the experiences that students gained from interacting with other cultures and places through international travelling impacted most significantly on the development of their global citizen identity. They cited Schattle (2008) and pointed out that the education programmes that offer opportunities of travelling abroad cultivate the self-awareness of students as global citizens.

Focusing on the connection between global citizenship and international internships, Vance (2005) states that international internship is a field learning opportunity that develops students' global citizenship and competence. The immersion in and exposure to foreign business environments give the interns an advantage when it comes to being hired by multinational companies and starting a career that requires frequent travelling. However, similar research studies about international internships and global citizenship have seldom been conducted in Hong Kong. Drawing upon the previous publications that have focused on the diversified approaches of global citizenship and the internationalisation of HE, Cheung (2012) examines the approaches of global citizenship using an adventure-based experiential learning empirical research study and finds that the adolescents in Hong Kong were largely dissatisfied with the education system modelled on the British and American style and lacked self-awareness of global citizenship.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the concepts and models relevant to the study of international internships, experiential learning and employability. The changing landscape of higher education has been seen as an impact of globalisation and marketisation in which discourses about knowledge economy and global competitiveness influenced the policy agenda of the Hong Kong government and the development plans of HEIs. In recent decades, universities have dedicated considerable efforts and resources into the design and delivery of internships as one of the experiential learning initiatives to improve students' employability. Among the many experiential learning initiatives, internships are believed to be effective in helping students to gain competitive edges in terms of experience in a competitive globalised job market. The knowledge and skills that learners obtain from reflecting and experiencing in workplaces, supported by various research studies, are considered by both learners and employers as more valuable than traditional classroom learning because the challenges and obstacles that learners have to overcome without the assistance of teachers help them to grow and to adapt to real-world environment. The research literature on the purposes and stages of internships have offered a comprehensive review on the modes of internships and the anticipated experience that students gain from working as an intern, which will be analysed with the application of learning theory and various experiential learning models in later research about international internship programmes. It is also worth emphasising that a major variation between local internship and international internship is the cultural experience gained aboard. Hence, the concepts about cultural shock, intercultural proficiency and global citizenship will also be used as instruments of analysis in

the later empirical research study about international internship programmes and experiential learning. In the following chapter, the philosophical framework, methodological design and ethical considerations of a case study research about international internship, experiential learning and career planning will be introduced and discussed.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

“Having invested a great deal of personal effort in the case study the researcher will want to see it published and in terms of the ethic of respect for democracy will see it as essential.”
(Bassey, 1999, p. 79)

3.1 Introduction

Empirical research is significant to the study of experiential learning with regard to identifying how experiential learning occurs in non-local workplaces, what students learn from an overseas internship experience, and which barriers upset their motivations in learning. To capture and analyse opinions from students, a two-phase mixed methods research study has been carried out for collecting quantitative and qualitative data for further analysis. The entire chapter will first outline the rationale of using the case study approach and illustrate the research background – the setting and the key players of the entire study. Then, the chapter will explain and discuss in detail the philosophical paradigm, the research design, the methodology, data analysis and the ethical considerations of this case study research.

3.2 Philosophical Framework and Research Paradigm

While the learning process is shifted from a university campus to a workplace, experiences become highly individualised and unique. Lave and Wenger (1991) state that learning is a direct experience in a social context (cited in Kolb and Kolb, 2017). Habermas (1972) points out that knowledge is valid when it has constantly and instinctively been given meaning through human constructions and interpretations. The worldview of the interpretative paradigm

posits that there is no objective reality because facts cannot be detached from the values of society. The different international internship experiences therefore reinforce the premises of the interpretative paradigm that meaning is not out-there, scientific or fixed, but is framed and negotiated in everyday experience (Scott and Usher, 2011), which is similar to the interpretivists' view that realities are multiple, subjective, and mind-dependent (Arthur et al., 2012). In the minds of the interpretivists, knowledge is uncertain and value-laden (Goulding, 2005). Researchers and participants are both sense-makers and knowers who interpret the actions as well as interpreting the interpretations of the actions (Scott and Usher, 2011, p. 31). The researcher, i.e. myself, is neither an observer nor a participant in the phenomena, but an inquirer and an interpreter of the beliefs and practices of the international interns and their self-perception of employability. Despite the fact that I have the power to set interpretive frames, this does not mean that I would control or manipulate the research output. In contrast, this research study attempts to give voices to the voiceless through exposing the inimitable side of the 'self' of the interns who joined the international internship programme, who are given voices to share their multi-faceted 'reality' of overseas internship experiences and to interpret their personal assessment of employability through reflecting on the benefits and gains from the internship programme.

From the standpoint of the constructivist paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln, 2000; Schwandt, 2000), learning is a social construction of 'self'. Piaget's (1971) idea of cognitive constructivism emphasises individuals' development at different ages that empowers them to develop capability in seeking knowledge through social interactions. According to Piaget (1971), "if truth is not a copy, then it is an organization of the real world" (p.361, cited in

Derry, 2013, p. 72). Learners' cognitive development is cultivated and nurtured in a learning environment called the real world, where knowledge is developed through learners' interactions and responses to the environment. However, Vygotsky (1978) denies Piaget (1971) that knowledge is learned in social context and argues that knowledge is co-created between the self and the social environment. Guidance or a collaborative environment, as Vygotsky (1978) explains, helps learners to solve problems, but learners have the potential to solve the problems by themselves. One essential feature of the constructivist paradigm has roots in the relationship between learning and the environment, in which knowledge is developed through learners' interactions and responses to the environment. According to Fenwick (2000), learners play a significant role in creating structures of meaning through internal reflections from their own actions and interactions with the outside world. The exposure of the self within daily workplace practices constructs the identity of the interns and the reality of their experiences. In addition to the interpretation of what the interns had said or done, it is crucial to investigate the ideologies and social reality that influenced and developed the 'self' among the Hong Kong undergraduate students who worked as interns in other countries.

In a word, the methodological design of this study adopts the "interpretive/constructivist" paradigm, which strikes a balance between humanist and constructivist models of social research. An important characteristic of the interpretive/constructivist paradigm is the examination of the stories that people tell about their lives. It takes the notion that knowledge is socially constructed, and not neutral. Hence, education is an open process in a society that is experienced in diverse, multidimensional and fluid contexts. The experience in

education, therefore, is closely associated with the learners' active learning within a social context, which enables the construction of an individual understanding of knowledge through reflecting on the self, as well as collaborating and engaging with others.

3.3 Case Study Approach

This dissertation presents a case study research on the international programmes offered by a public university in Hong Kong. According to Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis (1983), a case is a "bounded system" (p.3, cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 28) that can be a teacher, a school, or a programme. Stake (1995) defines the case study approach as "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances." (p. xi, cited in Bassey, 1999, p. 27), in which cases are interconnected with the social, political, historical and personal contexts. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) suggest that analysis and interpretations of a case require thorough understanding of the setting, procedure and design of information collection. The process of research and stages of this case study will be illustrated in the other sections of this chapter.

Although a single case or multiple cases involving the investigation of a few relevant cases are both regarded as case study, this research study chooses to study a single case because the core objective is to explore the learning experiences during international internships rather than to compare similar internship programmes offered by different institutions. Yin (2009) points out that the selection of a single case should be either ordinary or unique in order to be representative, yet Thomas (2011) argues that a case is representative enough if it supports the understanding of a given context. According to Cohen, Manion

and Morrison (2007), a substantial amount of education researches in recent decades were carried out with the case study approach, which commonly demonstrates the following characteristics:

1. Case study investigates and provides an overview of the multifaceted, vigorous and untold connections between events, human and multiplicity issues in unique situation.
2. Case study distinguishes less by methodology and more by the subject/object of inquiry.
3. Case study is meaningful if the researcher has little or no interference over the event.
4. Case study has temporal characteristics; can be set in organisational or other contexts and is defined by the individuals or groups involved in the case (p. 253).

The case study approach in education research is justified by scholars. As Crossley and Vulliamy (1984) have observed, case study has been increasingly adopted in comparative and international education research to present a particularly multifaceted and challenging cross-cultural experience. The focus of a case has specific significance to the understanding, evaluation, and justification of an action or phenomenon. However, whether a case is generalisable or not remains a question of debate. Bassey (1999) criticises that a single case study statistically unfavourable because of $n=1$ (p. 24), yet Simons (1996) contend that similar cases could be linked to one another, which enable researchers to provide wider explanations and multiple viewpoints. Yin (2009) holds a similar view that

a case study is analytically transferable because empirically a single case represents a wider population. The aim of using a single case in this research study is not to achieve generalisability, but transferability (Yin, 2009). Altogether the use of single case study approach in this dissertation does not constitute a general pattern but provide a transferable evaluation tool for the international internship programmes organise in contexts other than Hong Kong.

3.4 The Case: University X

University X is a public university based in Hong Kong. Developed from a tiny private funded tertiary institution several decades ago, the university has transformed itself into a multi-campus government-funded university providing a variety of levels of programme including associate degree, higher diploma, four-year undergraduate degree, two-year local and non-local undergraduate degree for sub-degree graduates, taught postgraduate degree, research postgraduate and doctoral degree programmes. Except for the four-year undergraduate degree, research postgraduate and doctoral degree are full government-funded programmes under the financial subsidies of the University Committee Council (UGC), the other programmes are operated in a self-funded mode. Currently the university has eight faculties, including Arts, Business, Chinese Medicine, Communication, Science, Social Sciences and Visual Arts, with approximately 35 departments operating under all faculties. The enrolment number in 2016/17 was over 10,000 students. In the past decade, University X has established a research centre and affiliated institutions in different provinces in Mainland China, expanding the enrolment of students outside Hong Kong.

Despite the shrinking of public funding allocated to the higher education institutions, government-funded universities in Hong Kong have been under huge pressure to enhance their global competitiveness through various means, such as boosting the university rankings in the world, increasing faculties' research productivity and publications in top-tier academic journals, as well as recruiting international students (Lo, 2013; Vyas, 2018). In particular, many universities have strategically made use of language policy to promote the idea of globalisation and internationalisation in the undergraduate degree curriculum. For instance, HKU has offered a new common core undergraduate level courses about economics, culture and society in the context of globalisation; the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) has promoted whole person development aimed at cultivating students to become responsible global citizens. Irrefutably, HEIs in Hong Kong have been increasingly proactive in positing an internationalised outlook and to enhance students a variety of skills, such as “global awareness, social skill, problem-solving ability, and, especially, proficiency in information and communication technology and foreign languages” (Law, 2004, p. 501). With a vision to preserve Hong Kong's leading position in Asia and modernise the city towards a knowledge-based economy, “internationalisation” and “Englishization” (Kirkpatrick, 2011) have inevitably become the direction and visions of most universities, including University X. In the latest ten-year strategic plan, University X has conveyed an aspiration of being a leading liberal arts university in Asia, in which the top priority of this plan is to deliver the best student experience. In addition to the commitment to whole person development of students, University X has been dedicated to the exploration of student learning through providing more service and experiential learning opportunities, as well

as diversified and innovative pedagogy that furnishes their students with an international and cosmopolitan outlook.

3.5 International Internship Programmes Y and Z

Nurturing future-ready graduates is one of the major ten-year goals of University X. In addition to encouraging individual faculty members to foster academic collaborations and student exchanges with overseas institutions, University X has extended the role of the Career Centre from career planning and support to establishing and promoting international internship programmes. Currently the Career Centre of University X is offering three internship programmes, two of which are international internship programmes offering opportunities for undergraduate degree students to travel overseas for a no-pay internship job at a company outside Hong Kong during summer. Programme Y is initiated and managed solely by the Career Centre, while Programme Z aggregates a variety of programmes offered by third-party organisations such as the Hong Kong Jockey Club.

The application cycles for Programmes Y and Z normally start in October every year. Representatives of the Career Centre hold a few talks in different campuses of the university and deliver information to students, such as destinations, application procedures, fees, subsidies and so on during the talks, on their website and via email. Except for a tiny number of destinations that are exclusively offered to non-final year students, most destinations accept applications from all levels of undergraduate students. The only requirement of applying for both programmes is that the student should have a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 out of 4 in the first semester (for Year One students only) or

obtained a GPA of 2.0 out of 4 for students in other years of study. Unlike overseas student exchange programmes that usually take up a semester or an academic year, Programmes Y and Z are summer internship programmes that have a varied duration depending on destinations and are non-credit bearing, so do not have any assessment, grading, or credit transfer. The application deadlines for both programmes are usually set in early November, when applicants are required to make three choices from a list of destinations and submit a short personal statement in English (see Appendix IX). After a few weeks, applicants are invited to complete an online selection interview, one-to-one interview with the Career Centre staff or telephone interview with potential employers, and the result of the application is announced no later than early December. Second round application opens in late December with the same cycle of logistics. Upon successful application, the Career Centre will assist the student to apply for a working visa and conduct briefing sessions to help participants to prepare themselves before the commencement of the internship in May or June.

Programme Y is more popular than Programme Z due to more destinations being offered and because there are no internship quotas. Interested students submit their three top choices of destinations and the staff of the Career Centre match their choices with potential companies and employers (see Appendix X). After receiving an offer from an overseas company, participants have to pay a one-off lump sum programme fee that covers the roundtrip air ticket fare, airport tax and fuel surcharge, partial expense of the orientation activities and accommodation costs. In addition to the programme fee, participants have to pay for their own visa fee, local travel expenses, meals, and costs of other activities. However, participants of Programme Y are not eligible to receive any

salary or allowance from overseas companies. In other words, they work for free. There is no work agreement and contract signed between participants and overseas companies. Participants may stay behind for sightseeing after the programme has ended, but the Career Centre forbids participants to work longer than the actual programme duration. In academic year 2017/18, Programme Y gave a choice of 10 destinations to participants. Details of the destinations, durations, and programme fees for Programme Y are listed in the following table:

Programme Y Destinations	Duration	Fees	
<i>Asia</i>			
1	Australia - Melbourne	Mid-June to early August	HK\$28,000 (~£ 2,667)
2	Australia - Sydney	Mid-June to early August	HK\$28,000 (~£ 2,667)
3	China - Shanghai	Mid-June to late August	HK\$12,000 (~£ 1,143)
4	Taiwan - Taipei	Late May to mid-July or Early July to late August	HK\$12,000 (~£ 1,143)
5	South Korea - Seoul	Mid-June to early August	HK\$19,000(~£ 1,810)
6	Singapore	Late May to late July	HK\$19,000(~£ 1,810)
<i>Europe</i>			
7	United Kingdom - London	Early June to late July	HK\$40,000 (~£ 3,810)
8	Germany - Berlin	Early June to late July	HK\$33,000 (~£ 3,143)
9	Germany - Munich	Late May to late July	HK\$33,000 (~£ 3,143)
<i>North America</i>			
10	USA – Chicago	Mid-June to early August	HK\$41,000 (~£ 3,905)
11	Canada - Toronto	Late May to late July	HK\$28,000 (~£ 2,667)

The conversion to British Pounds is based on the rate of \$10.5 Hong Kong dollars =1 British pound
Table: Details of the destinations, durations, and programme fees of Programme Y of University X

In comparison, Programme Z has a clear list of destinations, company, job positions and vacancies available to interested students before they make their application decision. However, applicants have to face competition and a tough interview process in order to receive an offer. Details of the destinations, company names and quotas for Programme Z are listed in the following table:

Programme Z Destinations		Company and position	Vacancy
<i>Asia</i>			
1	China – Guangzhou	Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Guangdong – Investment Promotion Assistant	1
2	China/ The Philippines	The HKFYG Jockey Club School of Global Leadership Overseas Apprenticeship	Not specified
3	Brunei	University Brunei Darussalam - Event Marketing/ Project Management/ Research Internships	Not specified
<i>Europe</i>			
4	Germany	Hong Kong Trade Development Council – Summer Intern	1
5	Germany - Berlin	Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office – Summer Intern	6
6	Italy	Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd – Sales and Marketing Intern	1

Table: Details of the destinations, company names and quotas of Programme Z of University X

According to the policy of the programmes, participants are not allowed to withdraw once they have paid, or they have to forfeit the payment. As mentioned above, there are no quotas set for all destinations, yet the matching of internship positions of Programme Y is under the control of the Career Centre, not the participants. Except for participants travelling to Chicago, where the internship positions are required to be aligned to the major of study of the participants, there is no guarantee that the internship job positions match with the major of study of participants travelling to the remaining 10 destinations. In other words, a student majoring in science may be allocated to a commercial company and be given a marketing intern position. For Programme Z, though the details of internship positions were announced before the application opened, the limited quota of each position has ultimately directed the unsuccessful applicants to be reallocated by Programme Y.

3.6 General Profile of Undergraduate Students of University X

Undergraduate degree students of University X have an age range between 18 to 22 years. Most of them have completed high school education locally, undertaken the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) and have been admitted to University X through the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS). The others are nonlocal undergraduate degree students from other countries, or Associate Degree/ Higher Diploma graduates of local tertiary institutions. The normal duration of an undergraduate degree programme is 4 years, with the exception of some programmes that require 5 years to complete.

Following a whole person education philosophy, University X is dedicated to encouraging students' personal growth and professional development. In addition to the strengthening of General Education curriculum, University X has been committed to unlocking students' creativity and nurturing them with the attributes necessary in today's globalised world through offering wide-ranging extra-curricular activities and experiential learning opportunities. Students are free to set up societies and interest groups, and to participate in various arts, cultural, and sporting events, competitions and activities. In the recent decade, internationalisation has been recognised as one of the positionings of University X, where the university has taken more initiative to promote international cooperation and intercultural student exchanges. Using the motivation of internationalisation, University X announced in 2016 that their official MoI is English except for the courses that are granted with an exemption. Eight faculties and their departments were encouraged to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with non-local universities to open up international

collaborations through student exchange programmes, short visits, study tours, summer programmes and so on. In other words, students of University X do not lack opportunities to travel for study or work in another country while completing their degree at University X.

3.7 Mixed Methods Research

3.7.1 Rationale

This research study adopts a mixed methods design. The key characteristic of such design is the mixture of qualitative and quantitative analysis. Johnson and Christensen (2010) have constructed a mixed methods design matrix (see the table below) to show how the notation system works with concurrent, sequential and embedded research studies. As indicated in the matrix, QUAL + QUAN refers to qualitative (i.e. QUAL) and quantitative (i.e. QUANT) approaches being equality important. Nonetheless, QUAN + qual refers to a domination of the quantitative approach, and QUAL + quan refers to a domination of the qualitative approach. When applying the matrix, *time order decision* refers to the decision of whether the phases of the study in a research are organised at the same time (i.e. concurrent, or the symbol “+”) or over time (i.e. sequential, or the symbol “→”), while the *paradigm emphasis decision* refers to the emphasis of the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

		<i>Time Order Decision</i>	
		Concurrent	Sequential
<i>Paradigm Emphasis Decision</i>	Equal Status	QUAL + QUAN	QUAL → QUAN QUAN → QUAL
		QUAL + quan	QUAL → quan Qual → QUAN
	Dominant Status	QUAN + qual	QUAN → qual Quan → QUAL

Figure: Mixed methods design matrix, Johnson and Christensen, 2010, p. 435

This case study research has adopted a two-phase *sequential exploratory process* (Edmonds and Kennedy, 2017, p. 198). *Phase 1* is a survey study that involved a self-administered questionnaire distributed to all participants from University X on international internship programmes Y and Z from August to October 2018 by the Career Centre of the University via an online system, Qualtrics. The questionnaire consists of five sections with 50 questions in total. The questionnaire design and data collection procedure will be illustrated in the next section.

Phase 2 is a qualitative study using a semi-structured interview, which offers in-depth interpretations of individual participants' unique experiences of international internships.

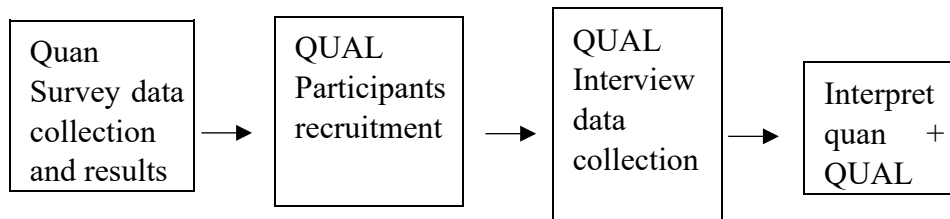


Figure: Data -validation design of the entire research based on the two-phase *sequential exploratory process* model suggested by Edmonds and Kennedy (2017)

Traditionally, case study has been considered as a type of qualitative research (Hancock and Algozzine, 2006) because of its nature of analysing and examining complex phenomena, actions, situations or processes. However, Merriem (1998) points out that “case study does not claim any particular methods for data collection or data analysis. Any and all methods of gathering data, from testing to interviewing, can be used in a case study, although certain techniques are used more than the others” (p. 28). According to Crossley and Vulliamy (1996), qualitative researchers use various techniques such as interview and observation to obtain words as data, whereas quantitative researchers seek numbers from questionnaire surveys or experiments as data. The use of mixed methods approach in this case study research is built on the purpose of *triangulation* (Greene, Caracelli, and Graham, 1989, cited in Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen, 2010, p. 561-562), which refers to the integration of evidence from various methods to investigate the same phenomenon. In the existing research studies about international internships, quantitative research design using the tool of questionnaire is commonly used by previous researchers. For instance, a research study conducted by Wake, Sison and Muir (2017) employed participatory action research to identify the common themes concerning international internships, followed by an online voluntary self-assessment survey

about international mobility. However, it did not look into the unique international internship experiences of the participants, nor did it provide any statistical analysis about international internships. Therefore, the mixed methods approach of this case study using survey and semi-structured interview could fill the gap of the existing research with a more comprehensive and in-depth investigation of international internships and employability with quantitative and qualitative data.

3.7.2 Research Design and Data Collection

The research presents in this dissertation drew upon a case study: University X and undergraduate degree students who joined international internship programmes Y and Z in year 2018. The first phase uses a survey, and the second phase applies semi-structured interviews – a mixed methods design aimed at collecting quantitative and qualitative findings for further analysis.

3.7.2.1 *Phase 1: Quantitative Research Approach: Survey*

3.7.2.1.1 Overview

Survey is a quantitative research approach that uses a systematic technique to question the individuals. According to Cohen and Manion (1985), survey is regarded as a descriptive method in education research that is usually used to describe the nature of present circumstances, recognise the standards for comparing different circumstances, and determine the relationships between specific incidents. It is also recognised as “an efficient method for systematically collecting data from a broad spectrum of individuals and educational settings”

(Check and Schutt, 2012, p. 160). Widely applied to various types of education research, survey is commonly used to develop a descriptive picture of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of the respondents regarding a variety of topics such as teaching quality, student satisfaction, policy concerns, leadership and so on.

3.7.2.1.2 Survey Design

In this research about international internship and employability, a questionnaire entitled ‘International Internship and Employability Survey’ was constructed and distributed. The questionnaire obtained responses from students who had completed internship programmes Y and Z of University X. Tymms (2012) states that an ideal questionnaire should not be lengthy, otherwise the respondents may lose interest. Influenced by the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, a self-administered questionnaire consisted of four sections with 50 questions has been produced for distribution to the internship participants. The four sections, captured the core focuses of the research questions, included: (1) motivation of students in joining an international internship programme (Questions 1-12), (2) work performance and job competence (Questions 13-34), (3) employability skills enhancement (Questions 35-40), and (4) cultural awareness (Questions 41-50). The last section of the questionnaire consisted of 13 demographic questions: (1) sex, (2) year of study, (3) major of study, (4) internship destination, (5) internship duration, (6) year of completion, (7) overall spending, (8) funding sources, (9) amount of subsidies, (10) internship company nature, (11) internship job nature, (12) internship briefing attendance, and (13) language competence.

In terms of question types and measurements, mixed types of question, including opened-ended and closed questions were used and each question was written with care to avoid problems such as leading questions and double-barrelled questions. Cohen and Manion (1985) point out that an ideal questionnaire identifies topics of interest and itemises information relating to a particular topic. Tymms (2012) suggests a variety of question formats. In this survey, respondents were asked to provide answer for mixed types of questions in order to evaluate the *motivations, job performance, employability skills* and *cultural awareness* after their participations in the international internship programmes Y and Z:

Motivations was assessed by eleven questions in an ordinal scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Somewhat Agree, 4 = Somewhat Disagree, 5 = Somewhere Disagree, 6 = Disagree and 7 = Strongly Disagree about the respondents' decision and preparation for the international internship application. Sample questions included "I made the decision of joining the programme on my own", "I have gathered as much information about the programme as I could". The final question asked the respondents to self-evaluate their motivational level in joining the international internship programme using a 10-point ratio scale (0 = Totally not motivated, 10= Extremely motivated).

Job performance was assessed by twenty-two questions that respondents were asked to self-evaluate their job performances in the internships. The questions measured in an ordinal scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Somewhat Agree, 4 = Somewhat Disagree, 5 = Somewhere Disagree, 6 = Disagree and 7 = Strongly Disagree investigated the attitude and behaviour of

respondents towards their jobs in the international internships. Sample answers included “I like the company I worked for”. Specifically, this part looked into the respondents’ attitude towards future career planning with sample answers including “this internship helped me to find my career goal”. Besides, the questions used to study behaviour on jobs included “I actively reached out my work supervisor to seek comments on my job performance”. The final question asked the respondents to evaluate the degree of support of international internship experiences on future career planning using a 10-point ratio scale (0 = Extremely unsupportive, 10 = extremely supportive).

Employability skills was measured by fourteen questions. Adapted from nine employability competencies identified by Hall, Higson and Bullivant (2009) that have been discussed in the literature review chapter, variables included “verbal communication”, “written communication”, “negotiation skills”, “time management” etc. Respondents were asked to rate the improvement of each competency after completion of the internships using 7-point Likert scales (1 = Much Stronger to 7 = Much Weaker). Then, respondents were asked to select the employability competencies they considered the most important and most improved. Two open-ended questions were adopted to invite the respondents to identify any competencies that were not specified in the survey. Finally, respondents were asked to rate the overall improvement on skills or knowledge using a 10-point ratio scale (0 = Not at all improved, 10 = extremely improved).

Cultural awareness was assessed by ten questions measured in an ordinal scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Somewhat Agree, 4 = Somewhat Disagree, 5 = Somewhere Disagree, 6 = Disagree and 7 = Strongly Disagree. The

questions investigated attitude and behaviour of respondents with regard to interactions with people of another culture. Sample questions included “the internship improved my ability to get along with people from cultures other than my own”. The final question asked the respondents to evaluate their competencies in exploring multicultural interactions after the completion of an international internship programme using a 10-point ratio scale (0 = extremely incompetent, 10 = extremely competent).

The final part of the questionnaire consists of several socio-demographic and general questions that are measured as control variables, including sex, year of study, destination, duration, amount of subsidy, job relevance with major study and language competencies.

3.7.2.1.3 Sampling, Data Collection and Data Analysis

The subjects of this research study are participants on internship programmes Y and Z from University X. Due to the limited number of students joining these programmes, it is quite impossible for the researcher to use the probabilistic sampling method (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, non-probabilistic sampling, or purposive sampling (Chein, 1981, cited in Merriam, 1998, p.61) is employed. Honigmann (1982) explains that the non-probabilistic sampling method does not aim at responding to the questions of how much or how often but instead aims to discover what has occurred, the implications of such occurrences, as well as the relationship linking the occurrences (cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 61). As the participation of the survey research was voluntary and optional, the total number of respondents are uncontrollable – in total, 51

responses were recorded by the Qualtrics system, of which 41 participants had successfully completed all questions in the questionnaire.

To kick start of the survey research, the researcher contacted the Career Centre of University X in May 2018 and consent was granted by the assistant manager of internship programmes Y and Z (see Appendix VII), who later handled the follow-up coordination and communication works to an assistant officer. Since the Career Centre had difficulty in distributing the questionnaire to students in person because many students had not yet returned Hong Kong from overseas countries, the researcher thus used the Qualtrics platform, a web-based survey software of University X, and migrated the questions from a paper-form questionnaire to an electronic platform. Soon after a link to the questionnaire was generated from the Qualtrics platform, the Career Centre had sent the link with email content provided by the researcher (see Appendix VII). Only the students who received the link from the Career Centre were allowed to complete the questionnaire. Participants were required to use their university email account to login the Qualtrics platform in order to complete the survey, yet the researcher had disabled the record function. Consequently, the login ID, password and email address of the students are not recorded or saved by the site in order to guarantee anonymity. After confirming their agreement in taking the survey with their consent (see Appendix II), the respondents proceeded to complete the five sections of the questionnaire and submitted it electronically through the Qualtrics system. The questionnaire, though electronically distributed, was completely anonymous. The distribution of the survey questionnaire was set for between August and October 2018. This particular period was decided upon in view of the fact that internship programmes Y and Z were completed during July and August.

After the online survey is closed, all survey data were further analysed using the IBM SPSS statistical software. All data were only accessible and downloadable by the researcher. The statistics and analysis of survey data will be presented in the next chapter in tables.

3.7.2.2 Phase 2: *Qualitative Research Approach: Semi-structured interview*

3.7.2.2.1 Overview

Research interview is defined as “a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research information and focused by him/her on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation” (Cannell and Kahn, 1968, cited in Chen and Manion, 1985, p. 291). Kvale (1996) states that interview is an interpersonal interaction not only through words, but also through voices, expressions, and body language between the researcher and the participant in a natural setting.

3.7.2.2.2 Interview Design

A formal, in-depth interview is regarded as a non-experimental, focussed qualitative research approach that seek responses, experiences, opinions, and perceptions through questioning. Cohen and Manion (1985) state that a formal interview requires the setting up of a question list and answers are recorded on a uniform schedule. A semi-structured interview is adopted using a flexible list of open-ended questions with the possibility to ask follow-up questions so as to more deeply understand the social reality and people’s life experiences. As suggested by Mears (2012), it is important to make good use of the interview guide to let the participants know about the researchers’ interest and invite them to share as

much as possible. To achieve this aim, an interview guide was constructed (see Appendix III). It consists of four sections with 48 questions drafted, and a section of demographic questions. Part A of the interview guide consisted of 13 questions about individual students' preparation before the internship programmes; Part B consisted of 23 questions about individual students' experiential learning experiences throughout their participation in the internship programmes; Part C consisted of 9 questions about individual students' comments on their self-evaluated employability after the completion of the internship programmes, and Part D consisted of three wrap-up questions. All the interview questions were designed in accordance with the questions asked in the survey, in which participants are encouraged to share more about their motivation for joining the international internship programmes (Part A), their experiential learning experience at work and development of employability skills (Part B), as well as their growth in cultural competence (Part C). Since the interview guide was designed for semi-structured interviews, the researcher did not make use of all questions in every interview and tried to ask follow-up questions when necessary.

3.7.2.2.3 Sampling and Data Collection

The qualitative interview approach is considered the main focus of this mixed methods research study. Similar to the sampling method of the questionnaire, interviewees were selected through purposive sampling, i.e. from a group of participants on international internship programmes Y and Z in 2018. Merriam (1998) states that purposive sampling is more often used than random sampling in case study research to “purposely select whom to interview, what to observe, and which document to analyse” (p.66). The interns who were invited to

the first phase survey research were also invited to participate in the second phase semi-structured interview. A total of 15 interviews were set up, but two interviewees did not show up, therefore in total 13 interviews were completed. Before the interview started, the researcher introduced the purpose of the research study as well as the risks and potential benefits. If the participant had no further questions, he or she would be asked to sign an informed consent form to agree to being part of the research study process (See Appendix V). To maintain the confidentiality of the interviewee, each of them was given a code, for example interviewee 1, interviewee 2 and so on, to represent their anonymous identity.

It is recommended by many scholars that face-to-face interviews establish the best rapport between the interviewer and the interviewees (Johnson and Christensen, 2010). According to Hancock and Algozzine (2006), an in-depth, face-to-face interview should be conducted in “a private, neutral, and distraction-free interview location”, which is more ideal for ensuring the comfort of the interviewees and thus enables the attainment of higher-quality information. Throughout the research, the researcher scheduled the interviews with each participant via an instant messaging application from late August to December 2018 after receiving their consent in the survey. Each face-to-face interview was conducted independently in the university campus and lasted around an hour. The researcher was the sole interviewer in this research. As the medium of instruction of University X is English and the participants showed their ability to complete an English questionnaire, the researcher tried to invite the participants to answer the interview questions in English, but they were allowed to speak in their first language (either Cantonese or Mandarin) if they were more comfortable using this rather than English. For the interviews that were conducted in English, the

recordings were transcribed carefully, and a member checked the accuracy and fullness of the transcripts of each interview that was adopted (Mears, 2012). For the interviews that were conducted in the participants' first language, the researcher translated the transcripts into English, and samples of the transcriptions were double-checked by a work peer of the researcher to ensure that the translated texts between Chinese and English has no discrepancy in meaning, did not have any missing content and were error-free.

3.7.2.2.4 Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

For data analysis, all interview transcripts were typed to start thematic analysis with the establishment of a thematic network. Thematic analysis is an approach used in processing and analysing qualitative information. First coined as an approach in the 1970s (Merton, 1975, cited in Braun & Clarke, 2013), thematic analysis continued to progress as a foundational analytical tool for qualitative researchers as “a method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes across a data set)” (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p.57). Supporting the realist and constructionist paradigm, thematic analysis regards meaning as a simple and straightforward presentation of experience through language, but the wider socio-cultural context and structure also affect the production of meaning and experience. While qualitative information is rich in text, it consists of assumptions, descriptions, opinions, comments, criticisms, stands and viewpoints that are often flawed, disorganised and biased, making analysis difficult. Thematic analysis remedies the above issues by detecting the commonalities of the shared meanings and experiences through exploration of the texts (Braun and Clarke, 2012). This research about

the voices of university students in sharing their international internship experiences is suitable for thematic analysis not only because it supports the interpretivist and constructivist paradigm, but also because it offers an accessible account of the reality of the international internships in which the students reflected on their experiences and made meanings of them through self-reflection and interpretation.

Setting up themes is a key task for thematic analysis researchers. A theme is a repetitive capture of ideas that are repeated in one's interview or interviews with different people. Researchers identify and develop themes to demonstrate salient views of the interviewees and make connections between the interview findings and the research questions (Riger and Sigurvinsdóttir, 2016). Thematic analysis is flexible in operation and can be conducted in various ways. Braun and Clarke (2012) introduce the inductive and deductive approaches of thematic analysis. The inductive approach is bottom-up and data-driven and themes or codes are developed through analysis of the texts, while the deductive approach is top-down and theoretical-driven and an a priori set of themes or codes are derived from theories, concepts or ideas that the researchers match with the texts. Braun and Clarke (2012) point out that it is impossible for a research to be inductive or deductive only, and therefore this research study adopts both inductive and deductive approaches, meaning that codes and themes are developed and mapped with the content of the qualitative information obtained from semi-structured interviews with 13 international internship participants (inductive approach) while the codes and themes also reflect the social constructed meanings (deductive approach). In the process of identifying themes or codes, Braun and Clarke (2006) state that the themes can be recognised as

semantic or latent. *Semantic themes* refer to the identification of the surface meaning of the texts, while the *latent themes* look into the underlying ideas, assumptions, conceptualisations and ideologies of the semantic content of the texts (p. 84). Attride-Stirling (2001), suggests another approach and identifies three classes of themes: *Basic Theme*, *Organising Theme* and *Global Theme*. According to Attride-Stirling (2001), the lowest class is known as the *Basic Theme*, which makes sense of the immediate meaning and simple premise characteristics of the texts. The middle class, recognised as the *Organising Theme*, is the middle-order theme that consolidates the Basic Themes into bunches of similar themes. The highest class, or the *Global Theme*, refers to the super-ordinate themes that consider not only the text but also the context. This research absorbs the explanations of semantic and latent themes by Braun and Clarke (2006) and the three classes of themes suggested by Attride-Stirling (2001) to develop a thematic network structure, which will be introduced later in this chapter.

3.7.2.2.5 Step-by-step Thematic Analysis and Thematic Map

To analyse the qualitative interview data of this research in a more systematic way, the “six phases of thematic analysis” introduced by Braun and Clarke (2006) will be applied in this chapter. This model of analysis not only helps identify the themes more quickly, but also allows reviewing and amending of the themes with a transparent presentation. A thematic map displaying the facets of the main themes and the connectivity between themes will be developed at the end of this section.

Phase I: Data Familiarisation

The first and foremost phase of conducting a thematic analysis is to familiarise oneself with the data. From the initial observation of the interview data, it is obvious that the participants were keen to voice their feelings, but after reading and rereading all interviewees' typescripts and transcripts, the researcher found the students, as second language learners, tended to give short responses in English. Therefore, it is not difficult to find that in many interviews, participants expressed a lot of 'I think', kept their answers short and used quite a lot of emotional words, but the good thing is that interviewees showed no difficulties in understanding and responding to the interview questions, and due to the use of their second language, they did not try to guess the second meaning of the researcher but responded to each question directly and genuinely.

Phase II: Initial coding

The initial coding stage in this research uses both descriptive and interpretive approaches to conduct a systematic analysis of all interview transcripts. Descriptive coding pays attention to the content of the interviews that provides a surface meaning of the international internships given by the interviewees, while interpretive coding identifies the meaning underneath the descriptive meaning to reveal the latent level of meaning. When determining the codes, the researcher read through every piece of transcript, and systematically coded the texts through analysis of every line. Codes were determined after consideration of interviewees' speeches and researchers' analysis of concepts and theories. Here is an example of the coded transcript of Interviewee 7:

<i>Transcript</i>	<i>Coded as</i>
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<p><i>I worked in the state government's financial department in Chicago.</i></p>	<p>Job matched in the internship programme</p>
<p><i>My job responsibilities included preparing revenue reports and writing financial analysis. (in response to the question: What was the nature of your internship? What were your job responsibilities?)</i></p>	<p>Job responsibility</p>
<p><i>Most tasks were easy but there were difficult tasks that I did not know how to do. I made a huge mistake at the beginning of the internship because I was unfamiliar with the information system. I was lucky to have some kind-hearted colleagues in the workplace who helped me to overcome those difficulties. (in response to the question: Did you find the job difficult or easy?)</i></p>	<p>Comment on the difficulty of the job</p> <p>Comment on job performance – feeling inferior</p> <p>Relationship with co-workers was good</p>
<p>I applied the knowledge I learnt from the university in this internship. As mentioned, I was responsible to prepare revenue reports, I used my knowledge from the accounting course to complete the tasks. But I discovered that I was not good at communicating and cooperating with people in the workplace. I think I am not good at speaking in English and sometimes I could not communicate well with my colleagues as I hardly understood what they said. I didn't know what to do. (in response to the question: Were there any knowledge and</p>	<p>Experiential learning experience – application of classroom knowledge</p> <p>Self-reflection on job performance – feeling inferior</p> <p>Problems with communication with co-workers</p> <p>Frustrations at work</p>

<i>skills you learnt from the university been applied into this internship?)</i>	
I never worked overtime. The working hour was not long. I worked from 8 am to 4 pm on weekdays. <i>(in response to the question: Did you have to work overtime?)</i>	Internship work was not heavy

Table: An example of the coded interview transcript of Interviewee 7

Phase III: Searching for themes

After identifying codes in the second phase, the third phase of this thematic analysis was the searching for themes, which involved the collapsing and clustering of codes for identification of broad topics or issues. To achieve this, theme patterns within each of the data sets are identified. In this phase, the researcher reviewed all transcripts again and considered how different codes shared the same features or topics so that they might be considered as a broader theme.

As Braun and Clarke (2012) explain, despite this phase being called ‘searching’ for themes, it is the responsibility of the researcher to actively “generate or construct themes rather than discovering them” (p. 63). Therefore, the researcher revisited all the codes generated in the previous phase, and put similar codes under the same theme, for instance, “Problems with communication with co-workers” and “leisure time spent with co-workers” have been combined into a theme “relationship with co-workers”. Using the software ‘MAXQDA

2018’, the codes as well as the data could be saved, so that the same codes can be reused when the researcher transits from one set of data to another.

48 Q23. Do you think this international internship was a journey of learning?

49 A23. As university students, we need to go out and get to know different places around the world. In addition to what I learnt from the internship, the programme has given me a chance to grow up and I like travelling around. I made friends, connected to people, talked to my supervisor, all these were good experience to me.

50 Q24. After this internship, do you think you are clearer about what you want to do in the future?

51 A24. I am not very clear about my future aspiration since I am still in my year 3 study, and this is my first time for me to work as an intern. I concern more about the following two years in my university life instead of my future career. But this internship is important for me to gain more work experience in the real world.

52 Part C

53 Q25. Did you improve any skills through this internship?

54 A26. At the end of the internship, my supervisor said my English has improved a little bit. On the first day, I did not dare to talk to them. In Singapore, one of their mother languages is English and they speak so fast with their own accents, it was a little bit hard for me to join their conversations. During two months of internship, I kept trying and became a better English speaker.

55 Q26. Do you want to work in Singapore in the future?

56 A26. If I have a chance, I will try to find a job in Singapore. My friend’s sister graduated this year joined the same programme as me to Singapore, her supervisor asked her to stay and work there, and the salary was quite nice.

Photo: an extract of coded interview transcript generated by the software ‘MAXQDA 2018’

Phase IV: Reviewing themes

Initially, 20 themes were generated corresponding to the coded data of the interview transcripts (see table below). A table with examples of the twenty themes in addition to a thematic map (Attride-Stirling, 2001) that connects the themes and the entire set of interview data have been generated (see Graph 2).

As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2012), two to six themes are adequate for an 8,000 to 10,000-word article. Therefore, the researcher aims at tweaking existing themes in order to better reflect and meaningfully capture the data. After collapsing a number of potential themes into a broad theme, five organised themes: “motivation”, “experiential learning – commit”, “experiential learning – experience”, “experiential learning – process”, and “experiential learning – connect” have been set up and will be used for analysing the interview findings in another chapter later (see table below). The 20 basic themes, reorganised into five organising themes, not only presented in a table format, but also illustrated with a thematic network map (see Graph 2). Though the wordings for naming the five organising themes were quite vulgar, they captured the essence of the 20 basic themes about students’ motivations, commitment, experience, knowledge transfer, and future career planning.

TWENTY Basic Themes	FIVE Organising Themes
Reasons for joining	Motivation
Motivation from parents or friends	
Motivation from the university	
Motivation from the government	
Job assigned	Experiential Learning – commit
Job interview	
Job matching	
Subsidy or grant obtained	
Job task handling	Experiential Learning– experience
Working culture or environment	
Relationship with work supervisor	
Relationship with co-workers	
Relationship with other interns	
Cultural exchange with locals	Experiential Learning – process
Application of university knowledge and skills	
Job satisfaction	
Skills or knowledge obtained	

Cultural competency	Experiential Learning – connect
Future career plan	
Comment on the internship programme	

Table: The five themes derived from twenty initial themes

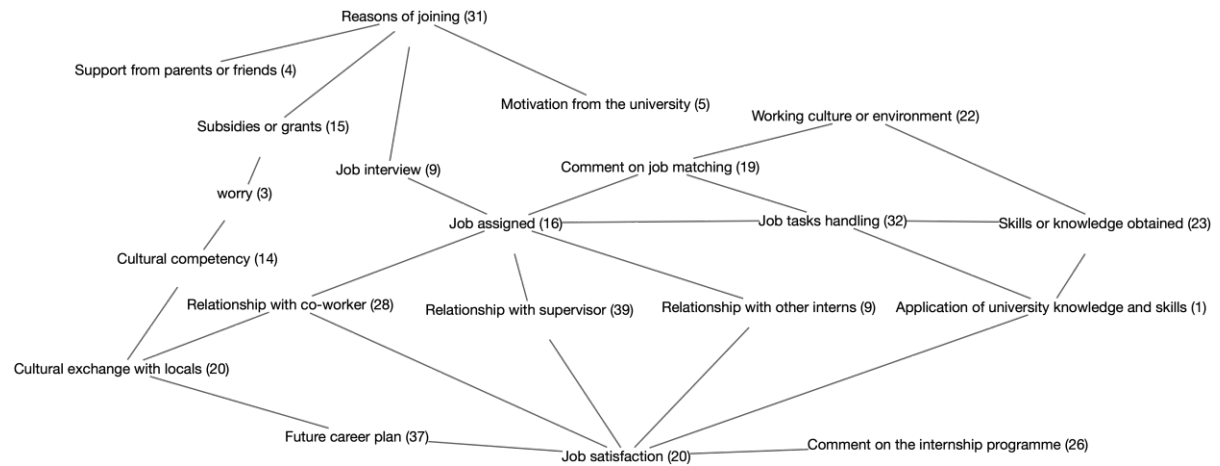


Figure: A thematic map that captures the 20 themes in five aspects (Attride-Stirling, 2001)

Phase V: Defining and naming themes

Phase IV: Writing up

Although all themes are generated, reviewed and refined in previous stages, it is necessary for the researcher to “identify the central idea of each theme” (Riger and Sigurvinsdóttir, 2016, p. 39). In this research, the theoretical framework is revisited to ensure all the themes had been fully explored and discussed in the previous chapters. The five organising themes in this research, labelled precisely to represent the descriptive, interpretative and overarching aspects of experiential learning experiences, were as follows: (1) the motivation of joining the international internship programme (motivation); (2) the commitment to the programme (commit); (3) the exploration in experiential learning (experience); (4) the reflective and reviewing process (process) and (5) the connection of the experience to future career planning and the outside world

(connect). The one-word labelling exemplifies the data and synthesises the concise meaning of experiential learning, giving the reader an immediate sense of the meaning of each theme (Braun and Clarke, 2006) in the study of experiential learning experiences.

The production of the report in the final stage goes beyond mere description of the qualitative interview data but intertwines all the five themes sensibly and evocatively to constitute a general picture of the ‘story’ within the larger and wider social context in order to make sense of the world. In the next chapter of this dissertation, the researcher will review all the interview transcripts, draw up a list of quotes under the above specified themes, and critically discuss the interview findings while addressing the key research questions in Chapter 5 and Chapter 7.

3.8 Pilot Testing

A good rule of thumb before conducting an empirical research is to conduct pilot test. A pilot study is “a trial run with a few subjects to assess the appropriateness and practicability of the procedures and data-collecting instruments” (Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen, 2010, p. 647). As Check and Schutt (2012) point out, before relying on a questionnaire, it is important to pre-test the questions on a few people to make sure the respondents understand what the questions mean. Hamilton and Corbett-Whitter (2013) also state that a pilot test helps the researchers to refine the research tool through obtaining feedback from a small group of volunteers about the clarity, tone, and suitability of the questions.

Following the think-aloud technique (Johnson and Christensen, 2010) and the steps in pilot testing suggested by Mertens (1998), a snowball sampling method was applied and three previous participants of internship programmes Y and Z were invited to complete a pilot test during May 2018 and another two previous participants to complete a pilot test during August 2018 after the questionnaire and the interview guide had been revised. In the first pilot test, respondents completed the survey in pencil/paper format, followed by a one-hour semi structured interview conducted in a café on three different days in May 2018. They reported that the questionnaire took around 20 minutes to complete. They had no confusion or uncertainty about the questions but indicated that the questionnaire placed too much emphasis on employability while there were insufficient questions about cultural benefits. After revising the questionnaire, the second pilot test was conducted in late August 2018. Respondents reflected that the questionnaire took around 15 minutes to complete on Qualtrics, and that questions were clearly worded and easily understood. No further modification was deemed necessary after the second pilot testing. For the pilot test of interviews, the noises in the café had given both the interviewees a hard time because they had to raise their voices while speaking. Such experience alerted the researcher to avoid conducting interviews in noisy places. Each interview lasted around one hour with most of the questions in the interview guide have been asked. The interviewees demonstrated good memories a year after they completed the internship programmes and were able to share their internship experiences in English. However, having weak knowledge about the organisation and arrangement of the international internship programmes, the researcher got stuck

sometimes during the interviews and asked many follow-up questions for clarification.

3.9 Strengths and Limitations of the Research Methods

The use of the Qualtrics questionnaire survey in an electronic format has the advantages of versatility, efficiency and generalisability – a cost and time-effective (efficiency) method for understanding any educational issue (versatility) from large populations (generalisability) (Check and Schutt, 2012). Despite the entire questionnaire being long enough to achieve a good measurement reliability since the longer the test, the more questions are adopted to measure a particular factor (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007), the use of purposive sampling with a relatively small population had adverse effects on the level of significance observed. The analysis of numerical or statistical data collected from the questionnaire survey is also too reliant on the frequency of responses, and therefore it is hard to use the survey to collect unmeasurable and intangible data, such as personal feelings and interpersonal behaviour (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

The qualitative in-depth interviews and textual analysis research approaches, in contrast, give “the power of others to impose their own definitions of situations upon participants” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 25). In this case study targeted at a group of undergraduate degree students who had completed international internships, the researcher was able to obtain in-depth, qualitative, interpretive and reflexive perspectives and viewpoints through direct interactions with the intern participants. In the gathering of stories, analysis of contents, discovery of patterns and sharing of results to “better understand our

world and what it means to be human (cited in Arthur et. al, 2012, p.24), this case study research contributed to the understanding of HEI's internationalisation by discovering the 'realities' of international internships from different personal experiences shared by participants.

However, compared to a questionnaire survey, the face-to-face semi-structured interviews were time-consuming and difficult to control. The researcher had to spend a large amount of time setting up individual interview schedules, conducting face-to-face interviews, transcribing and translating data, as well as double-checking and cross-checking the data. As the interview participants were voluntary, there were students who did not show up or wished to leave in the middle of the interview saying he or she had to attend classes or go to work. With only a tiny number of responses able to be directly extracted, quoted and analysed, it is difficult to be certain about the reliability of the data.

3.10 Ethical Concerns

Research ethics are the guiding principles that prevent researchers engaging in any unethical issues or misconduct. According to Resnik (2010), ethics is defined as the "norms of conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour" (cited in Hamilton and Corbett-Whitter, 2013, p. 64), in which respect and responsibility are the two major guiding principles of ethical research. In light of the importance of ethics in educational and social research, the following ethical considerations, also stated in the ethics form (see Appendix IV) address the issues in the current research study and the precautions as well as remedies taken by the researcher:

3.10.1 Insider Research

One of the issues this research to consider revolved around the identity of the researcher as a teacher of the University. According to Hamilton and Corbett-Whitter (2013), practitioner research, also called insider research, refer to the role of the practitioner being a “creator, mediator and disseminator of the research” (p. 117). As a university teacher, I was fully aware of myself as an insider, but the career centre of my university was the sole organiser and coordinator of the international internship programme. In other words, I was not involved in the international internship programme of my university, but I might have taught the research subjects (i.e. the students) due to my identity as a university teacher. Hamilton and Corbett Whitter (2013) point out that the researchers, as insiders, may have close interactions with the research subjects, who ultimately take the insider’s world for granted. To avoid such a problem, they suggest that the researchers maintain a critical vantage. In this research, I tried to avoid interviewing the participants of the two internship programmes that I teach and have taught and explained clearly my identity as a researcher instead of a university teacher when gaining the consent from the student participants.

3.10.2 Informed Consent and Participants’ Right of Withdrawal

As Arthur et al. (2012) point out, the key principles of ethical research are informed consent and protection of confidentiality (p. 23). Before the research is carried out, researchers have the responsibility to obtain consent from potential participants through a written consent agreement. Every participant was given sufficient time to read a consent form carefully and to sign it to confirm their agreement to participate in this research (see Appendix II & V). The consent form

is a one-page statement constructed in plain English explaining the research purpose, time and procedures. It also describes the protection of privacy, potential risks, as well as treatment of data and so on, to ensure the comprehension of the participants of the nature of the study and the situation the research puts them in (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). The participants were reminded that the research was an academic study of my personal interest and not initiated by the university, and that involvement in this research was purely a voluntary contribution that would have no impact on academic results or any other aspects. In addition, their identity would be kept anonymous and only the researcher would know who they were. They could opt out from the research at any time if they felt uncomfortable. At the end of the statement, the name of the researcher and contact were provided for further enquiries. The email contact of the researcher's supervisor was also inserted in case any person wishes to lodge a complaint.

3.10.3 Anonymity and Confidentially

Another important ethical concern is the privacy of research participants. Privacy, or the 'right to privacy' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007), refers to the safeguarding measures that the researchers use to protect privacy. As mentioned above, none of the identities of the questionnaire survey respondents were recorded by the Qualtrics system and each of the interviewee was given a code (e.g. Respondent 1) for identification to secure the no traceability of their identities. All specific information that may lead to identification of the students and graduates, such as study programme, year of study, student ID number,

graduation year and so on were removed from both the thesis as well as the supplementary materials such as transcriptions of the interviews.

3.10.4 Researcher Access

The meaning of access, as this thesis defines, is access to the participants' data by the researcher and access to data by the participants. In this research, permission and acceptance to research the interns was granted by the university career centre (see Appendix VI). All participants were well informed that the data collected would only be used for academic publications, including this dissertation, and no data would be transferred to any third party under any circumstances or used for any other purposes. Participants are allowed to request access to the collected data at any time through contacting the researcher or the researcher's supervisor.

3.10.5 Data storage and Reporting of Research

As Merriam (1998) points out, the researcher must keep an open mind when discovering useful documents and it is necessary to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of the documents. During the data collection and data analysis period, only the researcher involved in this research was able to access the data. To ensure the security of data storage, all data was kept on a computer in password-protected files that could only be accessed by the researcher, and the data had been securely destroyed upon completion of analysis. Participants were also allowed to point out any mistakes or typos they found and request them to be modified. A final consent was also guaranteed through assuring that the texts transcribed from the interviews were error-free.

Chapter 4: Quantitative Research Findings

*“Quantitative research generally reduces measurement to numbers.”
(Johnson and Christensen, 2010, p. 36)*

4.1 Introduction

The primary objective of this research is to investigate undergraduate students' experiential learning experience gained through two summer international internship programmes. Drawing on the previous literature, a questionnaire consisted of four sections (ibid: Section 3.7.2.1.2 Survey Design, pg. 87) that corresponded to the research questions of this dissertation had been set up for participants' completion right after the end of the internships. Using Qualtrics, a web-based survey software, a self-administered questionnaire had been created and distributed electronically. All participants of the international internship programmes Y and Z received an email from the career centre of University X in late August 2018 containing a weblink of the survey and an e-invitation letter sent on behalf of the researcher (See Appendix VII). In total, 41 valid questionnaires were collected. The data collected from the Qualtrics online survey allowed for all the responses to be compiled into one csv file for downloading. In view of the small sample size participated in this study, hypothesis testing will not be applied to the analysis of survey data. The quantitative data collected from the survey, in addition to the analysis of the data using IBM SPSS statistics software (ver. 24.0), will be presented in the following sections of this chapter: Section 2 introduces illustrates the quantitative findings of the survey and results of statistical tests; and Section 3 summarises the findings.

4.2 Survey Findings

4.2.1 Demographic Data Description and Analysis

Within the survey period from July 31, 2018 to November 30, 2018, 56 respondents attempted to complete the survey, but only 41 of them successfully completed all questions. Therefore, the valid response of this survey is counted as 41 ($n=41$). The samples were representative of the student population in the case of university X's international internship programmes Y and Z. Of the 41 completed surveys, the gender breakdown reflected that 36 (88%) respondents were female students and the remaining 5 (12%) respondents were male students [see Table 1 below]. The proportion of male to female internship participants (1:7.2) is much lower than the proportion of male to female undergraduate students (1:1.8), showing that more female than male students are interested in non-local internships.

		Sex:			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	5	12.2	12.2	12.2
	Female	36	87.8	87.8	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 1

The study year breakdown reported that 21 (52%) respondents were Year 3 students on four-year undergraduate degree programmes, 12 (29%) respondents were final year students, 3 (7%) respondents were sophomores and 2 (5%) respondents were freshmen [see Table 2 below].

		Year of Study:			Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	1	2	4.9	4.9	4.9
	2	3	7.3	7.3	12.2
	3	21	51.2	51.2	63.4
	4	12	29.3	29.3	92.7
	Graduated	3	7.3	7.3	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 2

The study major breakdown indicated that one-third (32%) of the respondents studied at the business school, 9 (22%) respondents studied an arts-related major, and 7 (17%) respondents were from the communication school [see Table 3 below]. To sum up, the demographic data showed that the majority of participants were female undergraduate students in their senior year majoring in humanities and business, while male students and students who majored in information technology as well as engineering had a relatively low participation rate.

		Major of study			Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	Arts / Humanities/ Language Studies/ Cultural Studies	9	22.0	22.0	22.0
	Business / Finance / Human Resiurces / Marketing / Management	13	31.7	31.7	53.7
	Journalism / Communication / Film / Creative Writing	7	17.1	17.1	70.7
	Mathematics / Statistics	2	4.9	4.9	75.6
	Science / Engineering	2	4.9	4.9	80.5
	Social Work / Sociology	1	2.4	2.4	82.9
	Others	7	17.1	17.1	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 3

4.2.2 Internship Durations and Destinations

In terms of destinations, participants completed their internships in a variety of destinations in Asian and Western countries. Of the 41 students who reported their internship destinations, 8 (20%) respondents had completed internships in Taiwan, 7 (17%) respondents in Melbourne, Australia, 4 (10%) respondents in Chicago, USA, 4 (10%) respondents in Shanghai, China, and 9 respondents (22%) chose ‘others’ and self-reported that their internship destinations were Singapore and Sweden [see Table 4 below].

Destination of the internship: - Selected Choice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	China – Shanghai	4	9.8	9.8	9.8
	China – Other province (please specify)	2	4.9	4.9	14.6
	Taiwan – Taipei	8	19.5	19.5	34.1
	Germany – Berlin	2	4.9	4.9	39.0
	Germany – Munich	1	2.4	2.4	41.5
	USA – Chicago	4	9.8	9.8	51.2
	UK – London	2	4.9	4.9	56.1
	Australia – Melbourne	7	17.1	17.1	73.2
	Australia – Sydney	2	4.9	4.9	78.0
	Others (please specify)	9	22.0	22.0	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 4

For the average duration of internships, 35 (85%) respondents had completed a two-month internship, while 6 (15%) respondents had completed a one-month or three-month internship [see Table 5 below]. The data reveals that English-speaking as well as German-speaking countries, including Australia, Singapore, United Kingdom, United States of America and Germany ($n=27$) are more popular than Chinese-speaking countries ($n= 14$), including China and Taiwan, as internship destinations. More interestingly, the number of students

choosing Taiwan (Taipei) was slightly more ($n=8$) than the number of students choosing Mainland China ($n=6$). The above statistics show that, despite the fact that Hong Kong is part of China and interning in China costs much less than other places, students had more desire to develop their international identity and citizenship by interning abroad in countries other than China.

Duration of the internship period:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	One month or below	3	7.3	7.3	7.3
	Two months	35	85.4	85.4	92.7
	Three months	3	7.3	7.3	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 5

4.2.3 Motivation of Joining International Internship Programmes Y And Z

While international internship programmes Y and Z are non-compulsory and non-credit based, the survey results showed that participants had high motivation to join the programmes. The overall mean score of self-motivation recorded from the survey was 8.34 marks out of 10, higher than the score of 7.59 marks ($n=41$, SD 1.5) given by participants on their perception of the supportiveness of international internships on career planning, and 6.9 marks out of 10 ($n=41$, SD 1.6) on their self-evaluated improvement of skills or knowledge after the completion of the internships [see Table 6 below].

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
On a scale from 0-10, rate your self-motivation level in joining the international internship programme. (0 = Totally not motivated, 10= Extremely motivated)	41	5	10	8.34	1.237
On a scale from 0-10, rate how much the international internship experience has supported your career planning.	41	4	10	7.59	1.516
On a scale from 0-10, rate the overall improvement of skills or knowledge you acquired specifically from the international internship.	41	1	10	6.90	1.609
Valid N (listwise)	41				

Table 6

This observation is backed up by the findings that 29 (70%) respondents reflected that they strongly preferred or preferred an international internship instead of a local one, with only 3 (7%) respondents reporting the opposite [see Table 7 below]. The results showed that international internship was not a second choice, or a back-up plan of local internships and that two-thirds of participants had a genuine interest in joining non-local rather than local internships.

I prefer an internship out of my hometown than a local internship.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	16	39.0	39.0	39.0
	Agree	13	31.7	31.7	70.7
	Somewhat Agree	9	22.0	22.0	92.7
	Somewhat disagree	3	7.3	7.3	100.0
Total		41	100.0	100.0	

Table 7

To explore the reasons that students were so determined to join an international internship programme, Pearson Correlation test results indicated that the preference of

joining international internship programmes was positively and significantly associated with the perception of international exposure, in which the medium association ($r=0.41$, $p<0.01$) demonstrated that participants preferred international internships instead of local ones had a mild tendency to believe that international exposure is important to an university student. Similarly, a positive association is found between the preference of joining international internship programmes and the desire to gain international work experience ($p<0.05$), but the association is weak ($r=0.364$). There is also a positive and mild association found between the believe of importance of international exposure and the desire to gain international work experience ($r=0.405$, $p<0.01$), showing that international exposure and international work experience are factors that motivated students to join international internship programmes [see Table 8 below].

Correlations

		I believe international exposure is important to a university student.	I regard the opportunity for gaining work experience in another country/place was the most important reason that I chose to join the programme.	I prefer an internship out of my hometown than a local internship.
I believe international exposure is important to a university student.	Pearson Correlation	1	.405**	.410**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009	.008
	N	41	41	41
I regard the opportunity for gaining work experience in another country/place was the most important reason that I chose to join the programme.	Pearson Correlation	.405**	1	.364*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009		.019
	N	41	41	41
I prefer an internship out of my hometown than a local internship.	Pearson Correlation	.410**	.364*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.019	
	N	41	41	41

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 8

A closer look at the survey findings indicated that 10 out of 41 (24%) respondents who strongly agreed the importance of international exposure had also strongly agreed that they preferred international internships than local internships. A Chi-Square test result shows that the two variables are significantly associated ($p < 0.01$) [see Table 9 below], implying that the self-efficacy of the students in joining the international internship programmes was high.

Crosstab

Count

I regard the opportunity for gaining work experience in another country/place was the most important reason that I chose to join the programme.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Total
I prefer an internship out of my hometown than a local internship.	Strongly Agree	10	4	2	16
	Agree	4	9	0	13
	Somewhat Agree	1	4	4	9
	Somewhat disagree	0	3	0	3
Total		15	20	6	41

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.225 ^a	6	.006
Likelihood Ratio	19.715	6	.003
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.301	1	.021
N of Valid Cases	41		

Table 9

Despite the high self-motivation to join the programme, only 26 (63%) respondents agreed that they received sufficient information about the programme from the organiser [see Table 10 below].

I received sufficient information about the international internship programme from the organiser.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	11	26.8	26.8	26.8
	Agree	15	36.6	36.6	63.4
	Somewhat Agree	12	29.3	29.3	92.7
	Somewhat disagree	2	4.9	4.9	97.6
	Disagree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 10

However, 30 (73%) participants who revealed that they had gathered as much information about the programme as they could [see Table 11 below], which showed that participants were determined and self-motivated to join the programme.

I have gathered as much information about the programme as I could.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	14	34.1	34.1	34.1
	Agree	16	39.0	39.0	73.2
	Somewhat Agree	9	22.0	22.0	95.1
	Somewhat disagree	1	2.4	2.4	97.6
	Disagree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 11

The result showing that the participants had gathered as much information about the programme as they could is also backed up by the 33 (80%) participants who reported that they spontaneously joined the information sessions [see Table 12 below].

Did you attend any information session of the international internship programme hosted by the organiser of your university?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	33	80.5	80.5	80.5
	No	8	19.5	19.5	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 12

Looking more closely at the hurdles that might have undermined students' motivation, 18 (44%) respondents indicated that they worried about the programme cost, whilst only 14 (35%) respondents reflected that they had never worried about the cost [see Table 13 below], which showed that money was a big issue to the students, as they had to work unpaid in another place and take care of all expenses.

I have never worried about the internship programme cost.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	14.6	14.6	14.6
	Agree	8	19.5	19.5	34.1
	Somewhat Agree	9	22.0	22.0	56.1
	Strongly disagree	3	7.3	7.3	63.4
	Somewhat disagree	5	12.2	12.2	75.6
	Disagree	10	24.4	24.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 13

The crosstabulation statistics revealed that participants who travelled to China and USA worried the least about the programme cost whereas participants who travelled to Taiwan ($n=4$), Germany ($n=3$), Australia ($n=5$) and Singapore (i.e. others, $n=5$) expressed their concern about the huge cost of participating in an international internship programme [see Table 14 below].

Destination of the internship: - Selected Choice * I have never worried about the internship programme cost.

Crosstabulation

Count

		I have never worried about the internship programme cost.						Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	
Destination of the internship: - Selected Choice	China – Shanghai	1	2	1	0	0	0	4
	China – Other province (please specify)	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
	Taiwan – Taipei	0	2	2	1	0	3	8
	Germany – Berlin	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Germany – Munich	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	USA – Chicago	2	1	1	0	0	0	4
	UK – London	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
	Australia – Melbourne	0	1	1	0	2	3	7
	Australia – Sydney	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
	Others (please specify)	1	1	2	1	2	2	9
	Total	6	8	9	3	5	10	41

Table 14

A closer look at the amount of money participants spent during the internship period shows that just under a quarter (24%) of respondents spent over HK\$ 40,000 (approx. 4,000 British pounds) during the internship period, which is equivalent to university tuition fees for a year. Only 4 (10%) respondents indicated that the approximate amount of money they spent during the internship, including the programme fee and other expenses, was less than HK\$ 10,000 (approx. 1,000 British pounds) [see Table 15 below].

Approximate amount of money spent during the internship period, including the cost of the programme:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	HKD \$10,001 – 15,000	4	9.8	9.8	9.8
	HKD \$15,001 – 20,000	11	26.8	26.8	36.6
	HKD \$20,001 – 25,000	3	7.3	7.3	43.9
	HKD \$25,001 – 30,000	4	9.8	9.8	53.7
	HKD \$30,001 – 35,000	5	12.2	12.2	65.9
	HKD \$35,001 – 40,000	4	9.8	9.8	75.6
	HKD \$40,001 or above	10	24.4	24.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 15

The Pearson Chi-Squared tests demonstrated that the association between destinations and cost of the programme was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Among all destinations, USA ($n=4$), Germany ($n=2$) and Australia ($n=2$) had participants who reported spending over HK\$ 40,000 [see Table 16 below], which is approximately a year of government-funded university tuition fees in Hong Kong (HK\$ 42,100, approx. 4,300 British pounds).

Destination of the internship: - Selected Choice * Approximate amount of money spent during the internship period, including the cost of the programme: Crosstabulation

Count

		Approximate amount of money spent during the internship period, including the cost of the programme:							Total
		HKD	HKD	HKD	HKD	HKD	HKD	HKD	
		\$10,00	\$15,00	\$20,00	\$25,00	\$30,00	\$35,00	\$40,00	
		1 – 15,000	1 – 20,000	1 – 25,000	1 – 30,000	1 – 35,000	1 – 40,000	1 or above	
Destination of the internship: - Selected Choice	China – Shanghai	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	4
	China – Other province (please specify)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
	Taiwan – Taipei	2	3	2	0	0	1	0	8
	Germany – Berlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
	Germany – Munich	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	USA – Chicago	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
	UK – London	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Australia – Melbourne	0	1	0	0	2	2	2	7
	Australia – Sydney	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
	Others (please specify)	0	3	1	4	1	0	0	9
Total		4	11	3	4	5	4	10	41

Table 16

To sum up, 32 (78%) respondents reported that they and their parents took up full or part of the costs and expenses for joining the international internship programmes. There were 14 (34%) respondents reported that they received subsidies from either the career centre or their academic programmes, or both, 8 (20%) respondents received government subsidies and 7 (17%) received private funding or scholarship. The statistics show that not every participant had applied for or granted subsidies to reduce the financial burden because of the high

programme fees. Although some participants were able to receive subsidies, only 9 respondents (22%) indicated that that they and their parents did not have to take up any programme cost [see Table 17 below].

Case Processing Summary

	Valid		Cases Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Destination of the internship: - Selected Choice * Funding source(s) of the internship (can choose more than one answer): - Selected Choice Full paid by myself/ parents	32	78.0%	9	22.0%	41	100.0%
Destination of the internship: - Selected Choice * Funding source(s) of the internship (can choose more than one answer): - Selected Choice Subsidised by the Career Centre	14	34.1%	27	65.9%	41	100.0%
Destination of the internship: - Selected Choice * Funding source(s) of the internship (can choose more than one answer): - Selected Choice Subsidised by the programme of major study	14	34.1%	27	65.9%	41	100.0%
Destination of the internship: - Selected Choice * Funding source(s) of the internship (can choose more than one answer): - Selected Choice Subsidised by the funding of the government	8	19.5%	33	80.5%	41	100.0%
Destination of the internship: - Selected Choice * Funding source(s) of the internship (can choose more than one answer): - Selected Choice Subsidised by private funding or scholarship	7	17.1%	34	82.9%	41	100.0%

Table 17

The survey also reveals that only the participants who travelled to Western countries including Germany, the USA and the UK got higher chances to receive government subsidies [see Table 18 below], but those travelled to other countries were able to receive subsidies from the university or private sources only.

		Funding source(s) of the internship (can choose more than one answer): - Selected Choice Subsidised by the funding of the government Subsidised by the funding of the government	Total
Destination of the internship: -	Germany – Berlin	1	1
Selected Choice	USA – Chicago	4	4
	UK – London	1	1
	Others (please specify)	2	2
Total		8	8

Table 18

4.2.4 *Experiential Learning Experiences and Job Satisfaction*

The Career Centre of University X was responsible for matching and recommending the participants to potential employers. However, survey findings showed that only 9 (22%) respondents reported that the companies they worked were comparable to their study major or specialism, whereas 15 (36%) respondents claimed that the nature of the companies were dissimilar to their study major [see Table 19 below].

The company I worked during international internship was...

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A company with the same nature of specialisation as my major study	9	22.0	22.0	22.0
	A company with the similar but not the same nature as my major study	17	41.5	41.5	63.4
	A company with different nature as my major study	15	36.6	36.6	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 19

In terms of job positions, only 6 (15%) respondents indicated that their internship job positions had fully matched with their study major, and conversely 11 (26%) respondents reflected that their internship positions had little similarity to their university major, and 9 (22%) respondents found their internship jobs were totally irrelevant to their study major [see Table 20 below].

The job position I worked during international internship was...

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A position fully matched my major study in the university	6	14.6	14.6	14.6
	A position partly matched with my major study in the university	15	36.6	36.6	51.2
	A position little matched with my major study in the university	11	26.8	26.8	78.0
	A position not matched with my major study in the university	9	22.0	22.0	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 20

Pearson Chi-Squared test results showed that the 5 out of 6 respondents who had internship positions fully matching their study major majored in business-related programmes ($p < 0.05$) [see Table 21 below], showing that the

international internship programme is likely over-focused on particular industries, for example, business and finance.

Major of study * The job position I worked during international internship was...

Crosstabulation

Count

		The job position I worked during international internship was...				Total
		A position fully matched my major study in the university	A position partly matched with my major study in the university	A position little matched with my major study in the university	A position not matched with my major study in the university	
Major of study	Arts / Humanities/ Language Studies/ Cultural Studies	0	4	2	3	9
	Business / Finance / Human Resources / Marketing / Management	5	4	3	1	13
	Journalism / Communication / Film / Creative Writing	0	6	1	0	7
	Mathematics / Statistics	1	0	1	0	2
	Science / Engineering	0	0	1	1	2
	Social Work / Sociology	0	0	0	1	1
	Others	0	1	3	3	7
Total		6	15	11	9	41

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29.114 ^a	18	.047
Likelihood Ratio	32.113	18	.021
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.715	1	.030
N of Valid Cases	41		

Table 21

Despite of the dissimilarity between the students' major of study and their internship positions, the survey findings showed that 85% ($n=35$) and 78% ($n=32$)

of respondents liked their companies and job positions respectively [see Table 22 and Table 23 below].

I liked the company I worked for.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	21	51.2	51.2	51.2
	Agree	14	34.1	34.1	85.4
	Somewhat agree	4	9.8	9.8	95.1
	Somewhat disagree	2	4.9	4.9	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 22

I liked the position I have been assigned to.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	15	36.6	36.6	36.6
	Agree	17	41.5	41.5	78.0
	Somewhat agree	8	19.5	19.5	97.6
	Somewhat disagree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 23

The survey results show that the participants have diverse feelings about their international internship experiences. Over 80% ($n=34$) of respondents felt capable of handling the internship job tasks [see Table 24 below] and 68% ($n=28$) of respondents felt their internship work was meaningful [see Table 25 below].

I felt myself capable to handle the job tasks assigned by my work supervisor.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	18	43.9	43.9	43.9
	Agree	16	39.0	39.0	82.9
	Somewhat agree	6	14.6	14.6	97.6
	Somewhat disagree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 24

The work of my internship was meaningful.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	16	39.0	39.0	39.0
	Agree	12	29.3	29.3	68.3
	Somewhat agree	9	22.0	22.0	90.2
	Somewhat disagree	4	9.8	9.8	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 25

However, less than 60% ($n=24$) of respondents revealed that they were being given a variety of tasks at work, meaning that many respondents felt their jobs were monotonous [see Table 26 below].

I was given a wide variety of tasks at work.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	14	34.1	34.1	34.1
	Agree	10	24.4	24.4	58.5
	Somewhat agree	11	26.8	26.8	85.4
	Somewhat disagree	5	12.2	12.2	97.6
	Disagree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 26

Working for companies and organisations abroad, one-third of the respondents (31%, $n=13$) indicated that they worked under pressure [see Table 27 below].

I felt no pressure at work during internship.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	6	14.6	14.6	14.6
	Agree	16	39.0	39.0	53.7
	Somewhat agree	9	22.0	22.0	75.6
	Somewhat disagree	7	17.1	17.1	92.7
	Disagree	3	7.3	7.3	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 27

In addition, nearly half of the respondents (49%, n=20) somewhat agreed that they had many doubts and questions during the internship period [see Table 28 below].

I had a lot of questions and doubts about my internship work.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	5	12.2	12.2	12.2
	Agree	4	9.8	9.8	22.0
	Somewhat agree	11	26.8	26.8	48.8
	Strongly Disagree	2	4.9	4.9	53.7
	Somewhat disagree	12	29.3	29.3	82.9
	Disagree	7	17.1	17.1	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 28

Despite the survey results showed that the interns encountered pressure and doubt at work, 90% (n=37) of respondents appreciated the support from their work supervisors [see Table 29 below].

I had a work supervisor who fully supported me.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	24	58.5	58.5	58.5
	Agree	13	31.7	31.7	90.2
	Somewhat agree	1	2.4	2.4	92.7
	Somewhat disagree	3	7.3	7.3	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 29

Overall, 80% (n=33) of respondents satisfied with the company [see Table 30 below], and 76% (n=31) of respondents satisfied with their job performance [see Table 31 below]. In other words, less than one-fourth of the total respondents felt dissatisfied with their own performance at their job or with the company they worked.

Overall, I am satisfied with the company that I worked for the internship.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	19	46.3	46.3	46.3
	Agree	14	34.1	34.1	80.5
	Somewhat agree	7	17.1	17.1	97.6
	Disagree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 30

Overall, I am satisfied with my job performance during internship.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	14	34.1	34.1	34.1
	Agree	17	41.5	41.5	75.6
	Somewhat agree	5	12.2	12.2	87.8
	Strongly Disagree	1	2.4	2.4	90.2
	Somewhat disagree	3	7.3	7.3	97.6
	Disagree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 31

When asked if students were committed in their internships through utilising the knowledge and skills, they obtained from university study, only 60% ($n=15$) of respondents showed agreement [see Table 32 below]. The reason students might not be able to make use of their university education at work, as mentioned earlier, is that some of the respondents reflected that their internship positions were not that related to their major of study at university.

I utilised the knowledge and skills obtained from my undergraduate study in Hong Kong to perform my job effectively.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	11	26.8	26.8	26.8
	Agree	14	34.1	34.1	61.0
	Somewhat agree	13	31.7	31.7	92.7
	Somewhat disagree	1	2.4	2.4	95.1
	Disagree	2	4.9	4.9	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 32

The survey findings also showed that only 66% ($n=27$) of respondents admitted that they had actively reached out to their supervisors to seek comments on their work, slightly higher than the 59% ($n=24$) of respondents who reached out to their co-workers for comments [see Table 33 below]. This shows that some of the participants were hesitant in reaching out to workmates for feedback in non-local workplaces.

I actively reached out my work supervisor to seek comments on my job performance.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	12	29.3	29.3	29.3
	Agree	15	36.6	36.6	65.9
	Somewhat agree	9	22.0	22.0	87.8
	Somewhat disagree	5	12.2	12.2	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

I actively reached out my co-workers to seek comments on my job performance.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	11	26.8	26.8	26.8
	Agree	13	31.7	31.7	58.5
	Somewhat agree	10	24.4	24.4	82.9
	Somewhat disagree	5	12.2	12.2	95.1
	Disagree	2	4.9	4.9	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 33

With regard to reflections on others' comments at work, 78% ($n=32$) of respondents indicated that they had always reflected on the comments of others and tried to improve their work performance [see Table 34 below].

I always reflected on the comments of others and tried to improve my performance at work.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	15	36.6	36.6	36.6
	Agree	17	41.5	41.5	78.0
	Somewhat agree	5	12.2	12.2	90.2
	Somewhat disagree	4	9.8	9.8	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 34

In seeking the impact of more or less interaction on participants' satisfaction of the programmes, associations were explored between the dependent variable - satisfaction of job performance, and the independent variables - proactivity of the interns in (1) reaching out their work supervisors and (2) co-workers, as well as (3) their reflections on others' comments. A linear regression model result showed that the more the interns reached out to their supervisors, the more satisfaction they gained from the internship experiences ($b=0.77, p<0.01$). However, no association was found between satisfaction of job performance and proactivity of reaching out to co-workers ($b=-0.11, p=0.439$) as well as reflections on others' comments at work ($b=0.241, p=0.25$). Therefore, it can be concluded from this linear regression model result that the support of supervisors has a positive and profound impact on the interns' job satisfaction while the support of co-workers as well as the behaviour of reflecting on others' comments demonstrated no effect in changing job satisfaction level [see Table 35 below].

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.580 ^a	.336	.282	1.081

- a. Predictors: (Constant), I always reflected on the comments of others and tried to improve my performance at work., I actively reached out my co-workers to seek comments on my job performance., I actively reached out my work supervisor to seek comments on my job performance.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.876	3	7.292	6.239	.002 ^b
	Residual	43.246	37	1.169		
	Total	65.122	40			

- a. Dependent Variable: Overall, I am satisfied with my job performance during internship.
- b. Predictors: (Constant), I always reflected on the comments of others and tried to improve my performance at work., I actively reached out my co-workers to seek comments on my job performance., I actively reached out my work supervisor to seek comments on my job performance.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.154	.396		2.913	.006
	I actively reached out my work supervisor to seek comments on my job performance.	.770	.194	.754	3.973	.000
	I actively reached out my co-workers to seek comments on my job performance.	-.110	.141	-.127	-.783	.439
	I always reflected on the comments of others and tried to improve my performance at work.	-.241	.206	-.223	-1.170	.250

- a. Dependent Variable: Overall, I am satisfied with my job performance during internship.

Table 35

4.2.5 Employability Skills Improvement in the International Internship Programmes Y and Z

The mean scores of the 10-point ratio scale question showed that respondents gave themselves 6.9 marks out of 10 [refer to Table 6] on their

improvement of skills and knowledge through the international internship programme ($n=41$, SD 1.2), lower than the 8.34 marks recorded for the students' self-motivation in joining the programme. However, when asked about their self-perception on learning, 73% ($n=30$) of respondents expressed that they learnt a lot of knowledge and skills from the internship that could not be obtained from the university [see Table 36 below], which is quite contradictory to the relatively low mean score that the interns have given on their improvements from learning.

I felt that the internship had provided me a lot of knowledge and skills that I could not learn from my university study.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	16	39.0	39.0	39.0
	Agree	14	34.1	34.1	73.2
	Somewhat agree	7	17.1	17.1	90.2
	Somewhat disagree	4	9.8	9.8	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 36

Further investigating the impact of interaction on self-perceived improvement of knowledge and skills among participants, a linear regression model was used to investigate the relationships between their reflection on others' comments, their motivation in seeking supervisors' feedback, and their motivation in seeking co-workers' feedback. The one-way ANOVA test result showed a significant result ($F = 13.052$, $p < 0.01$) that indicated a strong and positive relationship between perception of learning and self-reflection ($t=3.251$, $p < 0.01$). However, no significant relationship was found between the participants' perception on knowledge and skills and their proactivity of reaching out to their supervisors ($p > 0.05$) and co-workers ($p > 0.05$) [see Table 37 below].

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	30.222	3	10.074	13.052	.000 ^b
	Residual	28.558	37	.772		
	Total	58.780	40			

a. Dependent Variable: I felt that the internship had provided me with a lot of knowledge and skills that I could not learn from my university study.

b. Predictors: (Constant), I actively reached out to my co-workers to seek comments on my job performance., I actively reached out to my work supervisor to seek comments on my job performance., I always reflected on the comments of others and tried to improve my performance at work.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized		Standardize	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence	
		Coefficients		d			Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower	Upper
1	(Constant)	.536	.322		1.665	.104	-.116	1.188
	I always reflected on the comments of others and tried to improve my performance at work.	.543	.167	.530	3.251	.002	.205	.882
	I actively reached out to my work supervisor to seek comments on my job performance.	.311	.157	.321	1.976	.056	-.008	.630
	I actively reached out to my co-workers to seek comments on my job performance.	-.114	.114	-.138	-.996	.326	-.345	.118

a. Dependent Variable: I felt that the internship had provided me with a lot of knowledge and skills that I could not learn from my university study.

Table 37

To explore the specific skill(s) that participants improved through the international internship experiences, this survey adopted the employability competencies suggested by Hall, Higson and Bullivant (2009) to investigate the

learning outcomes of international internships. Results showed that verbal communication was the competency that respondents regarded having improved the most ($n=6$, 30%), followed by written communication ($n=6$, 15%) and self-development ($n=6$, 15%). The least improved competencies were time management ($n=1$, 2%) and managing change ($n=1$, 2%) [see Table 38 below].

Pick ONE employability competency you consider the most improved one during your internship.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Verbal communication skills	13	31.7	31.7	31.7
	Written communication skills	6	14.6	14.6	46.3
	Influencing other people	2	4.9	4.9	51.2
	Self-development	6	14.6	14.6	65.9
	Time-management skills	1	2.4	2.4	68.3
	Customer awareness	2	4.9	4.9	73.2
	Managing change	1	2.4	2.4	75.6
	Critical thinking	2	4.9	4.9	80.5
	Problem solving	3	7.3	7.3	87.8
	Networking skills	3	7.3	7.3	95.1
	Negotiation	2	4.9	4.9	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 38

In an unfamiliar international workplace environment, students might have been motivated to communicate with people of different ages, social statuses, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, which opened up new opportunities for students to sharpen their communication skills. A closer look at the survey result revealed that 24% ($n=10$) of respondents had ‘much stronger’ verbal communication skills [see Table 39 below].

Verbal communication skills – before versus after internship

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Much stronger	10	24.4	24.4	24.4
	Moderately stronger	21	51.2	51.2	75.6
	Slightly stronger	7	17.1	17.1	92.7
	No change	2	4.9	4.9	97.6
	Slightly weaker	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 39

However, only 17% ($n=7$) of respondents felt that their written communication skills were ‘much stronger’ after completion of the internship [see Table 40 below], which is significantly lower than the improvement of verbal communication skills as rated by the respondents. The above results show that despite verbal and written communication skills were the two competencies that the interns improved the most, but the verbal communication skills were subject to more improvement than the written communication skills.

Written communication skills – before versus after internship

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Much stronger	7	17.1	17.1	17.1
	Moderately stronger	12	29.3	29.3	46.3
	Slightly stronger	16	39.0	39.0	85.4
	No change	5	12.2	12.2	97.6
	Slightly weaker	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 40

4.2.6 Cultural Exchange and Understanding of Other Culture(s)

Cultural exchange is regarded as an alternative experiential learning experience in this research. The mean scores of a 10-point ratio scale question showed that the respondents gave themselves 7.88 marks out of 10 [see Table 41 below] for their improvement of cultural competencies through participating in the international internship programme.

Statistics

On a scale from 0-10, rate how competent you rate yourself in exploring multicultural interactions after completion of international internship programme.

N	Valid	41
	Missing	0
Mean		7.88
Median		8.00
Mode		8
Percentiles	25	7.00
	50	8.00
	75	9.00

Table 41

In general, the respondents identified themselves more culturally competent after the completion of the international internship programme, in which 76% ($n=31$) of respondents agreed that the international internship programmes had developed their cultural awareness [see Table 42 below].

Overall, the international internship experience has contributed to the improvement of my cultural awareness.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	16	39.0	39.0	39.0
	Agree	15	36.6	36.6	75.6
	Somewhat agree	9	22.0	22.0	97.6
	Somewhat disagree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 42

When asked about their understanding of people with different ethnical background, 76% ($n=31$) of respondents admitted that the international internship programmes had strengthened their understanding of other ethnic characters [see Table 43 below].

The internship strengthened my understanding of other ethnic character(s).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	15	36.6	36.6	36.6
	Agree	16	39.0	39.0	75.6
	Somewhat agree	8	19.5	19.5	95.1
	Somewhat disagree	2	4.9	4.9	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 43

In assessing the programme’s effectiveness in enhancing students’ intercultural competency, descriptive statistics showed that 76% ($n=31$) of respondents admitted that the programme had strengthened their respect of other cultures [see Table 44 below], showing that the interns not only recognised and acknowledged cultural differences, but also acknowledged other cultures through immersion and adaptation in a non-local workplace.

I am more respectful of other culture(s) after completion of the internship programme.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	14	34.1	34.1	34.1
	Agree	17	41.5	41.5	75.6
	Somewhat agree	8	19.5	19.5	95.1
	Somewhat disagree	2	4.9	4.9	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 44

It is also revealed by the survey result that 83% ($n=34$) of respondents developed a greater level of cultural comfortability in getting along with people from other cultures [see Table 45 below], which demonstrated a change in cultural discernment among the interns.

The internship improved my comfortability to get along with people from cultures other than my own.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	16	39.0	39.0	39.0
	Agree	18	43.9	43.9	82.9
	Somewhat agree	6	14.6	14.6	97.6
	Somewhat disagree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 45

Similar results have also been demonstrated in a crosstabulation matrix. A significant relationship was found between respondents' self-evaluation on their cultural awareness level and their respect for other cultures ($p < 0.01$) [see Table 46 below], which demonstrates that the international internship programmes not only improved students' cultural awareness but also their respect of other cultures.

Overall, the international internship experience has contributed to the improvement of my cultural awareness. * I am more respectful of other culture(s) after completion of the internship programme.

Crosstab

Count

		I am more respectful of other culture(s) after completion of the internship programme.				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Total
Overall, the international internship experience has contributed to the improvement of my cultural awareness.	Strongly agree	12	2	2	0	16
	Agree	2	12	0	1	15
	Somewhat agree	0	3	6	0	9
	Somewhat disagree	0	0	0	1	1
Total		14	17	8	2	41

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	55.954 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	44.418	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	18.596	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	41		

a. 12 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05.

Table 46

The encountering of cultural differences by the participants was noted in the survey. Only 61% ($n=25$) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they were more empathetic towards ethnic minorities after the completion of international internships [see Table 47 below], implying that the behaviour of the students might not have been modified after direct interactions with people of other ethnicities.

I am more empathetic on ethnic minorities people after completion of the internship programme.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	10	24.4	24.4	24.4
	Agree	15	36.6	36.6	61.0
	Somewhat agree	14	34.1	34.1	95.1
	Somewhat disagree	2	4.9	4.9	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 47

In addition, the survey result showed that only 68% ($n=28$) of respondents admitted that they encountered no problem while interacting with people of other culture(s) during the internship, meaning that about one-third (32%) of respondents might have experienced difficulties in collaborating with co-workers at workplace due to cultural differences [see Table 48 below].

I encountered no problem to interact with people in a workplace of another culture.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	10	24.4	24.4	24.4
	Agree	18	43.9	43.9	68.3
	Somewhat agree	9	22.0	22.0	90.2
	Somewhat disagree	4	9.8	9.8	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 48

In sum, concerning the cultural competencies through international internships, the participants of two international internship programmes largely agreed that the internship opportunities increased their cultural and ethnical awareness. Many of them also revealed that they had more respect on the people of other cultures. Nevertheless, the survey results showed that around one-third of the total participants might have experienced cultural differences at workplaces during the internship period, which revealed that the university and the employers provided insufficient assistance to the interns on cultural adaptation.

4.2.7 Career Planning and Goal Setting

The mean scores of the 10-point ratio scale question showed that respondents gave themselves 7.6 marks out of 10 [refer to Table 6] for the international internship programme’s support on students’ career planning ($n=41$, SD 1.5). Among all respondents, 78% ($n=32$) of them showed their willingness to work in a multi-cultural company after completion of the international internship programmes [see Table 49 below].

I am more willing to work for a multi-cultural company after completion of the internship programme.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	17	41.5	41.5	41.5
	Agree	15	36.6	36.6	78.0
	Somewhat agree	9	22.0	22.0	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 49

After obtaining work experience abroad, 68% ($n=32$) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that international internship experiences offered them a stronger resumé [see Table 50 below].

Overall, the internship experience has offered me a stronger resume.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	16	39.0	39.0	39.0
	Agree	16	39.0	39.0	78.0
	Somewhat agree	8	19.5	19.5	97.6
	Disagree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 50

However, under half of the respondents (49%, $n=20$) strongly agreed or agreed that the international internship experiences helped them to realise their future career [see Table 51 below].

This internship helped me to find my career goal.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	7	17.1	17.1	17.1
	Agree	13	31.7	31.7	48.8
	Somewhat agree	13	31.7	31.7	80.5
	Somewhat disagree	6	14.6	14.6	95.1
	Disagree	2	4.9	4.9	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 51

The survey findings also demonstrated that many participants were not able to find clearer career goals through their international internship experiences. Only 53% ($n=22$) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they had clearer career plans after the completion of the international internship programme [see Table 52 below].

I have a clearer career plan in mind after the internship completed.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	8	19.5	19.5	19.5
	Agree	14	34.1	34.1	53.7
	Somewhat agree	12	29.3	29.3	82.9
	Somewhat disagree	7	17.1	17.1	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 52

To examine the relationship between job positions and participants' future career planning, a crosstabulation result showed that, among the 6 students who had been assigned a job position that fully matched their major of study, 83% ($n=5$) strongly agreed or agreed that they had a clearer career plan after completion of the programme, whereas of the 9 students who had been assigned a job position that did not match their major of study at all, 67% ($n=6$) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had a clearer career plan in mind after the completion of the internship [see Table 53 below]. The results demonstrated that the participants who had been assigned a job position that fully matched or partly matched their major of study more strongly agreed that they had a clearer career plan than those who had job positions that matched only a little or did not match their major of study.

I have a clearer career plan in mind after the internship completed. * The job position I worked during international internship was... Crosstabulation

Count		The job position I worked during international internship was...				Total
		A position fully matched my major study in the university	A position partly matched with my major study in the university	A position little matched with my major study in the university	A position not matched with my major study in the university	
I have a clearer career plan in mind after the internship completed.	Strongly agree	3	5	0	0	8
	Agree	2	6	3	3	14
	Somewhat agree	0	4	5	3	12
	Somewhat disagree	1	0	3	3	7
Total		6	15	11	9	41

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.460	.141	3.235	.002 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.511	.127	3.717	.001 ^c
N of Valid Cases		41			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Table 53

Similar results were also found in the crosstabulation between job position assigned and the helpfulness of the internships in identifying students' future career goal. A positive and significant relationship between assigned job positions and the helpfulness of the job in identifying future career goals was found ($R=0.422, p<0.01$) [see Table 54 below]. In other words, the more comparable the internship positions with the major of study of the students, the more helpful the internships in helping participants to find their future career goals. The participants who had internships partly matching with their major of study had the strongest agreement on the helpfulness of the internships in helping them to find their future career goals, with 73% ($n=11$) of the 15 students strongly agreeing or agreeing, and only 1 (6%) student disagreeing. However, one-third

(33%, or 3 out of 9) of the participants who had internships that did not match at all with their study major responded that the programme was not able to help them establish their future career goals [see Table 54 below].

This internship helped me to find my career goal. * The job position I worked during international internship was... Crosstabulation

Count

		The job position I worked during international internship was...				Total
		A position fully matched my major study in the university	A position partly matched with my major study in the university	A position little matched with my major study in the university	A position not matched with my major study in the university	
This internship helped me to find my career goal.	Strongly agree	3	4	0	0	7
	Agree	0	7	3	3	13
	Somewhat agree	3	3	4	3	13
	Somewhat disagree	0	0	4	2	6
	Disagree	0	1	0	1	2
Total		6	15	11	9	41

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.422	.122	2.906	.006 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.431	.131	2.982	.005 ^c
N of Valid Cases		41			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Table 54

Additionally, a crosstabulation was used to ascertain the impact of job positions on the establishment of an international social network. However, the statistics showed that there was no significant relationship between the two variables ($R=-0.054$, $p>0.05$). In other words, there was no relationship between the job positions and the international social network development [see Table 55 below].

I have built a stronger international social network through the internship. * The job position I worked during international internship was...

Crosstab

Count

		The job position I worked during international internship was...				Total
		A position fully matched with my major study in the university	A position partly matched with my major study in the university	A position little matched with my major study in the university	A position not matched with my major study in the university	
I have built a stronger international social network through the internship.	Strongly agree	2	4	5	3	14
	Agree	2	7	5	1	15
	Somewhat agree	1	4	1	5	11
	Somewhat disagree	1	0	0	0	1
Total		6	15	11	9	41

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.054	.186	-.339	.737 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	-.005	.176	-.028	.978 ^c
N of Valid Cases		41			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Table 55

All in all, the survey revealed that the participants did not feel the international internship experiences helped them in finding their career goals, and many participants did not feel themselves that they had a clearer idea of what they wanted to do in the future. The results demonstrated that, in the participants' mind, international internship programmes did not contribute much in helping students to identify and determine their future career goals.

4.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented and analysed the quantitative data of the survey. In terms of demographic data, the statistics showed that more female than male students had participated in the international internship programmes Y and Z. The internship destinations offered by the university covered nearly ten countries.

About 80% of the participants were in their third year or final year of undergraduate study, and around 50% of the participants majored in business or arts-related programmes. It was revealed that the students who majored in science, technology and engineering-related academic programmes had less or even no interest in joining international internships. When assisting the researcher to distribute the survey to participants, the career centre of university X was reluctant to reveal the actual number of students who joined the international internship programmes Y and Z in 2018. The response rate of this survey research hindered that the overall participation of the international internship programmes might be low because only 56 participants had attempted filling in the survey, in which only 41 completed questionnaires had been recorded by the Qualtrics system in view of over 6,000 students admitted into the undergraduate programmes of university X in 2018.

Despite the low participation rate of the programme, high self-motivation in joining the programme was found, with over 70% of respondents indicating that they preferred international internships over local ones and they actively prepared themselves for the internships through attending seminars and gathering relevant materials. However, many revealed that the programme costs and other expenses had put pressure on them. Although a number of subsidy schemes were available for students to apply for, only one-third of participants indicated that they had successfully received grants from one or more subsidy schemes (see Appendix XI).

In terms of job satisfaction, the survey found that over 50% of participants were offered a position that had little or no relevance to their major of study at

the university. Although over 80% of participants indicated that they felt capable of handling the internship jobs and felt satisfied with their companies, about one-third to a half of the participants found their job monotonous, unmeaningful or difficult. Over 90% of participants responded that their supervisors were helpful.

In terms of skills acquisition, using the employability competencies suggested by Hall, Higson and Sullivan (2009), the survey found that participants felt their verbal communication skills had improved the most, followed by written communication skills and self-development, in which over 70% of participants sensed they had learnt a lot of knowledge and skills from the internships which they expressed could not have been obtained from the university.

In terms of cultural exchanges and understandings, the survey found that international internship programmes Y and Z strengthened students' cultural awareness and their understanding of other cultures. Over 75% of participants indicated that the international internships had deepened their cultural and ethnic understandings of others, as well as making them feel more comfortable working with people from other cultures. Their confidence to work in a multicultural company in the future had also been revealed in the survey, with over 80% of participants agreeing that they would be confident in doing so. However, around one-third of the participants encountered glitches while interacting with people of other culture(s) during the internship period, in addition to 60% of participants who felt they had more empathy towards people from other ethnicities, showing that cultural shock might have been countered by participants.

Exploring the relationship between international internship experiences and future career planning, around 70% of participants appreciated that the

international internships offered them a stronger resumé, but the proportion of participants who found themselves having clearer career plans or goals after the internships was less than 50%. The crosstabulation results showed that the less relevant the internship positions to the major of study, the lower the proportion of participants who found clearer career plans and goals. In the following chapter, the qualitative data of the interviews will be examined and analysed to unearth the unique voices of participants concerning their motivations to join the international internships, their experiential learning experiences in the workplace, their cultural exchanges with the locals, and their identification of future career plans.

Chapter 5: Qualitative Research Findings and Analysis

“Even when we present a lot of short extracts of data, however, seemingly reporting quite closely what participants said, the analysis always moves beyond the data.” (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p. 67)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses and discusses the qualitative research findings from the semi structured interviews with the participants of international internship programmes Y and Z. The key objective of using semi-structured interviews was to capture the unique experiences of experiential learning through international internships, as well as to deconstruct university students’ specific views and opinions concerning the international internship programmes Y and Z. In total, 13 participants took part in a semi-structured, face-to-face interview individually on the campus of university X from September to December 2018 (see Appendix VIII). All interviews have been fully taped and transcribed after they were conducted. Assisted by a text mining software MAXQDA, a thematic network has been established in Chapter 3 to display the descriptive and recurring themes (the codes) in the interviews. Five themes, including (1) “motivation”, (2) “experiential learning – commit”, (3) “experiential learning – experience”, (4) “experiential learning – process”, and (5) “experiential learning – connect” have been identified for further discussion with the interview transcripts in this chapter.

This chapter is divided into four main sections: Section 2 provides the background of the interviews and the descriptive data of the interviewees’ profiles; Section 3 exemplifies and discusses the quantitative interview findings; Section 4 summarises these findings.

5.2 Background of the Interview and the Interviewees' Profiles

The qualitative interview was designed to investigate the unique experiential learning experiences of international internship programmes Y and Z offered by university X in Hong Kong. Thirteen students who completed the survey agreed to participate in face-to face, semi-structured interviews that lasted between 45 minutes to 1 hour each. To secure confidentiality, interviewees are represented by a random number from 1 to 13.

The profiles of the 13 interviewees are indicated in the following table:

<i>Participant and Reference</i>	<i>Major and Study Year</i>	<i>Internship destination</i>
Interviewee 1	Mathematics and Statistics, Year 3	Singapore
Interviewee 2	Chemistry, Year 4	Berlin, Germany
Interviewee 3	Psychology, Year 4	Taipei, Taiwan
Interviewee 4	Biological Technology, Year 2	Melbourne, Australia
Interviewee 5	Mathematics and Statistics, Year 2	Shanghai, China
Interviewee 6	Social Work, Year 5	Sweden
Interviewee 7	Applied Science, Year 3	Chicago, USA
Interviewee 8	Marketing, Year 4	Singapore
Interviewee 9	Humanity, Year 4	Taipei, Taiwan
Interviewee 10	Government and International Study, Year 4	Singapore
Interviewee 11	Translation, Year 4	London, UK
Interviewee 12	Translation, Year 4	Shanghai, China
Interviewee 13	Media and Social Communication, Year 4	Melbourne, Australia

On the whole, 13 students of university X who participated in the international internship programmes Y and Z during summer 2018 had been interviewed individually. To assure confidentiality, all personal identifiers, such

as names and sex of the students have been removed. Nevertheless, two external identifiers, including internship destinations and the relevance of the job to the study programme, are presented in the table to better reflect the work experience that the students gained from the international internship programme without providing any specific information that links to their identity.

5.3 Qualitative Data from Interviews: Findings and Analysis

The primary aim of the qualitative interviews was to explore the unique experience of university students who had completed an international internship programme. This chapter will present the findings from the interviews with 13 participants of the international internship programme, with the interviewees labelled with a number from 1-13. Based on five selected themes identified in the thematic analysis of the methodology chapter, the following part will report and analyse the findings from the interviews under the five themes. The chapter will conclude with a short summary of the findings. The emerging issues revealed in the qualitative interview and the quantitative survey will be discussed in the next chapter.

5.3.1 Motivation – Participants’ Motivation of Joining the International Internship Programmes

When addressing the reasons for joining the international internship programme, many participants showed a strong willingness to gain learning experience in a real context:

I study business in the university, and many companies in Singapore are finance, insurance and trading-oriented, which matches my major perfectly. In addition, I hope I can gain some work experience in the marketing field or in other similar industries. (Interviewee 8)

It is reflected by the interview findings that globalisation discourses stimulated students' interest in joining international internship programmes. The participants expressed a strong fantasy that staying in a non-local city would be better than Hong Kong in terms of culture and social environment, which motivated them to confirm their decisions. For instance:

I wanted to have an internship alone in Taiwan in order to experience life and culture there. (Interviewee 9)

Some participants explained that they joined international internships because they could not find an internship position in Hong Kong, or they already had local experience. Therefore, this provides them with a reason to participate in an international internship programme instead of a local one. For instance:

My department offered some local internship opportunities, but it is very hard for me to get an offer, so I decided to join this international internship programme. (Interviewee 1)

The interview findings also support the idea that the motivation of joining an international internship is linked to their determination in enhancing the employability skills, showing that discourses about global competitiveness in Hong Kong had an intense impact on students' desire of enhancing employability skills through gaining international work experiences (Crossman and Clarke, 2010). Some participants were determined to reach their academic or career goals, and others were fascinated in exploring the socio-cultural environment of other places. For example:

With this internship, I hoped to see if I am interested to pursue my future career in Germany. (Interviewee 2)

From investigating and analysing the motivational factors of the international internship programme participants, it was revealed that the participants were self-motivated to join the programme despite having concerns about their safety. For instance:

Before I travelled to Melbourne, my friends reminded me that Australia has the most dangerous animals and insects in the world. If the apartment was dirty, there would be a big chance for me to get sick or get an infection because of those animals. (Interviewee 3)

The fear of travelling to an unknown place, however, was not the most discouraging issue undermining students' motivation of joining the international internships. The non-competitive and non-exclusive international internship programme was initially designed to offer as many opportunities as possible for students who were interested in applying, yet many participants pointed out that they were asked to pay thousands for the programme fee, which put heavy financial pressure on them. Some were lucky to have subsidies granted but the others had to pay by themselves or asked their parents to pay for it. For instance:

It is a bit difficult for a student to pay such a high price. Therefore, my family had to support me financially because I really wanted to try an internship in other countries. (Interviewee 1)

An essential feature of the constructivist paradigm concerns the influence of context on individuals. Schunk and DiBenedetto (2016) claim that persuasive information, for example encouragement from teachers, is a source of motivation. This research study has found that the participants had sufficient self-efficacy to make independent decisions. Their motivation was high enough to override the

anxieties of travelling to an unknown place and the financial pressures the programme fees put on them.

In general, the interview findings showed that all participants of the international internship programme had high self-motivation to join the programme and had carefully considered the potential risks. With strong desire to explore the ‘outside world’ and to improve the employability skills, the participants had thoroughly and independently evaluated the benefits of joining the programme, for instance career development, and the risks, for example safety. Despite some of them failing to obtain subsidies, they were determined to enrol in the programme by managing the financial risks and ensuring the fees were settled.

5.3.2 Experiential Learning – Commit: Participants’ Commitment in their Jobs

After the participants had settled the programme fee, the career centre of university Y gave the participants a list of companies and asked them to rank their preferences. In addition to the arrangement of job interviews, the career centre provided other administrative assistance such as visa application, accommodation and orientation. In other words, the career centre of university X was the facilitator of the internship programme who mapped the participants with their potential employers and made sure that everyone was offered a job in a company or organisation, an air ticket and accommodation. Although the participants had a passive role in the interview and selection process, many of them demonstrated dedication and commitment to the enrolment. For instance:

When I got the offer, the only thing I knew was that I could go to Melbourne. After a few months, the Career Centre asked me

to choose a company that I wanted to work for, and I chose a magazine company. (Interviewee 3)

During the interviews, the participants of the international internship programme provided details of their work responsibilities. For example:

My major duties included updating travel guides, making organic posters for marketing, as well as translating different texts into Chinese. (Interviewee 6)

I worked in the state government's financial department in Chicago. My job responsibilities included preparing revenue reports and writing financial analyses. (Interviewee 7)

When asked about the comments on the companies and positions that the career centre matched them with, many participants expressed disappointment and dissatisfaction on the job duties of their role as an intern. For example:

I was not satisfied with the offer because the job duty was different from what the company had told me. (Interviewee 1)

The job nature was related to marketing, which I had not studied anything about before. (Interviewee 5)

In coping with a new workplace environment with a new identity as an intern, many participants suffered from emotional turbulence. The feeling of incapability was sparked when they found that the job was challenging but they lacked the relevant knowledge and experience. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, Rubin (2009) recognised that host recruiters may have no idea of how mature and knowledgeable a foreign intern is, and therefore this causes a mismatch between employers' expectations and employees' expertise. Some participants of the international internship programme found it difficult to commit

and they were dissatisfied with the career centre for allocating them to take up job positions that they had no prior knowledge or experience. For example:

It was a little bit hard for me to complete the tasks assigned by my managers and I think the company should be more considerate when assigning different tasks to me. (interviewee 5)

In addition, it was revealed in this research study that English language is a barrier that obstructs the Hong Kong students in their attempts to be committed at work. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, Hulstrand (2013) points out that foreign language acquisition will be necessary to adapt to the working environment in another country. Although English is the main medium of instruction of university X, students were given little chance to practise English in their daily lives. Nearly all participants of the international internship programmes claimed that they suffered from language barriers, in which many participants emphasised that their English language ability was a big hurdle that obstructed them in getting the job done and collaborating with others in the workplace. The issue of language barrier was more significant to those travelled to English-speaking as well as German-speaking countries, including Singapore, UK, US, Australia, Germany and Sweden compared to the participants that travelled to China or Taiwan. For example:

The main challenge was my English language speaking. I wish I had better English language skills so that I could handle the job more easily. (Interviewee 6)

In the very beginning, I was embarrassed because of the language barrier. They all spoke fluent English with Singaporean accents. My English speaking is not good. (Interviewee 10)

However, not all participants were so disappointed with their jobs and their job performances. Jarvis (1992) states that that potential experience develops from active experimentation, in which some participants express their excitement of receiving an offer from their ‘dream jobs’ and try to commit as much as possible. Some participants remarked that their internship experiences were fulfilling, and they were satisfied with the companies and job positions assigned to them. For example:

I was excited to get the offer from this company as I wanted to work for green NGOs in the future. I felt good to have this precious opportunity and experience. (Interviewee 2)

One of the key differences between a classroom and a workplace is that the action-oriented learners actively participate and engage in a social setting (Dewey, 1938, cited in Roberts, 2016). As highlighted in the literature review, experiential learning in a workplace is active, reflective, and cooperative, in contrast to the passive, informative and inflexible classroom learning. The interview findings showed that experiential learning is not a taken-for-granted extra-curricular activity. The more active and self-motivated participants’ learning is, the more fulfilling the experiential experiences that can be achieved. Many participants strived to commit into the internship work through active engagement and application of the knowledge they obtained from the university. For example:

I used my knowledge from the accounting course to complete the tasks. (Interviewee 7)

However, commitment does not come up naturally in an experiential learning environment. Some participants of the international internship

programme demonstrated disillusion at work, as stated in the developmental stage model of internship (Sweitzer and King, 2014). They felt that their expectations were not met, and therefore they refused to commit and lost their interest in the internship jobs. For instance:

I was asked to do simple data analysis on fan's favourites and some other typing works. I was a little disappointed to do something which was not what I expected. (Interviewee 1)

During the first few weeks of the internship, there were lots of things that I was curious about. But after a period of time, I started to feel bored doing the same type of job every day. (Interviewee 3)

By and large, the participants of the international internship programme were not very committed to their jobs. The transition from classroom learning at a university in a familiar local city to workplace learning in an unfamiliar city initially provided a fresh and brand-new learning experience to the university students, but a number of participants complained that they rarely found the internship experience rewarding or enjoyable. The career centre abruptly matched the participants with the organisations after one or two informal interviews, resulting in a lack of serious communication between the participants and the organisations before the job commenced, which made some participants feel disempowered and frustrated. Many participants had also suffered from English language barriers, adding extra difficulty for them in completing the job tasks efficiently. Although some participants managed to actively engage into the job and apply the knowledge they obtained from the university courses, others found their jobs boring and unfulfilling because they could not utilise the knowledge

they had obtained from university, or they were bored by the repetitive and simple work tasks.

5.3.3 Experiential Learning – Experience: Participants’ Exploration in Experiential Learning during International Internships

As highlighted in the literature review, experiential learning provides practical experiential learning opportunities that connect the notions of experience to the learning in a workplace (Beard and Wilson, 2013), or “learning through work” (Billett, 2002, p. 4). The first phase of Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle, Concrete Experience, accumulates with the commitment and time that the participants spend in the learning process. Sweitzer and King (2014) point out that the exploration stage of an internship is often full of challenges. While putting most time and effort into learning how to work, interns often find that their anticipations are dissimilar to real experiences. They may get stuck into their work, face relationship issues with co-workers and clients, as well as feel discouraged due to ruining the work. The interview findings therefore have demonstrated that, while devoting themselves to their jobs, many participants faced challenges with the work tasks they were assigned to do. They found themselves not sufficiently capable to handle daily tasks because of their insufficient knowledge and ability, for instance:

The nature of the company was about organizing activities for youngsters. But my major is all about cultures, themes and philosophy, in which the knowledge of my major could not be applied to this job. (interviewee 9)

Without much prior work experience, many participants found it difficult to cope with the challenges at work. They commented that their workloads were heavy, subjecting them to job-related stress and burnout. For instance:

I could feel the pressure when my workload was too heavy.
(Interviewee 3)

During the internship, I was always under stress, but I wanted to perform well in everything. (Interviewee 10)

In facing challenges and emotional stress at work, the supervisors, co-workers and other interns at the workplaces were the ‘coping systems’ of the participants. The participants of the international internship programme remarked that the support from their supervisors was a determining factor in their motivation at work. For example:

Since I did not have any work experience in updating the company website, I asked my manager for help. My manager taught me the way to use the system and went through it with me. From this experience, I gained the knowledge and skills about website construction and editing. (Interviewee 6)

As mentioned in the literature review, Sweitzer and King (2014) point out the importance for the interns to be proactive to let their supervisors know that they can achieve more than they are asked to do. This research study reveals that not every participant was lucky to have a helpful supervisor. Some participants expressed that their supervisors were too busy, making them feel unsupported in the workplace. For example:

He (supervisor) was always busy, and I did not have any chance to talk to him...Whenever I completed a task, I just informed him through WhatsApp. He usually sent me a short reply such as “good” or “ok”. (Interviewee 8)

My company had a scheme called “one on one” that encouraged colleagues to have a conversation with the supervisors to get advice. But I don’t think I benefited from it because my supervisor was too busy. (Interviewee 9)

In his *Model of the Learning Process* (Jarvis, 1987), Jarvis points out that learning itself is a socialised process. Learners gain “meaningful experience” (1987b, p. 168) between their personal stock of knowledge and the rapidly changing social-cultural-temporal milieu through interacting with other people. The tutoring and assistance from co-workers were found to be important to the participants in coping with the obstacles they encountered at work. The participants also stated that they maintained good relationships with other interns who shared precious moments with them within and outside of work. For example:

I was lucky to have some kind-hearted colleagues in the workplace who helped me to overcome those difficulties. (Interviewee 7)

Broadly speaking, the international internship programme provided the participants with concrete experiential learning experiences (Kolb, 1984). Since the participants were assigned to a job that required them to use a more advanced level of knowledge, they had to learn by doing. Heavy workload and other hardships were also found to be physically draining but also emotionally distressing to the participants. In dealing with the work stress of the interns, some participants received support from supervisors, co-workers and peers so that they were able to manage and handle their work. However, some other participants, unfortunately, did not receive much help from their busy supervisors, which made them feel stressed and less motivated at work.

5.3.4 Experiential Learning – Process: Participants’ Reflections on the International Internship Programme and Learning

Reflectivity is a critical process in learning. As discussed in the literature review, a reflective mind helps a learner to learn. The reflective process, termed as Reflective Observation in the second phase of Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle, refers to the constant reflection on previous experience while learning new knowledge (Kolb, 1984). According to Yusof et al. (2013), students who participated in short-term industrial training revealing their personal qualities such as personal attitude, communication, working attitude etc. were better. They were also more confident and more work-ready than those who had not participated in similar training. When asked about what they had learnt from the international internship experience, they voiced that they had learnt a lot of new knowledge and skills from work, which they would have been unable to obtain from the university. For instance:

I have learnt how to communicate and deal with clients. At the university, teachers seldom teach us how to communicate with clients in a professional manner. (Interviewee 8)

When illustrating what they had learnt from the job experiences, many participants revealed that their employability skills had been improved. This has also been discussed in the findings of the survey: verbal communication (32%) was the employability skill that participants felt they had improved the most, followed by written communication skills (15%) and self-development (15%). During the interviews, the participants mentioned that their job-related skills, communication skills and job networking skills had been improved, all of which they regarded as ‘useful’ employability skills in the global labour market:

I learnt the way to speak nicely and politely when attending formal events. (interviewee 9)

An insightful discovery from the interview findings is that this international internship programme boosted the confidence of the participants. As time went by, they no longer felt like passive students or frustrated interns, but more confident in general. For instance:

I feel more confident because the internship encourages me to communicate with different people and make friends, and I am more confident in speaking English now. (Interviewee 13)

The above findings support the Developmental Stage Model suggest by Sweitzer and King (2014). During the early stages of the internships, the participants were confused but had to face challenges independently. In the later stages, they re-gained their confidence, excitement and sense of accomplishment that they had lost in the early stages. This research study found that many participants were self-reflexive on their personal changes after the internship completion and commented on how they felt they had ‘grown up’ and become a mature and disciplined person. For instance:

I think I have made the right choice of participating in this internship programme and I have grown up a lot. (Interviewee 2)

The third phase of Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle, Abstract Conceptualisation (AC), is not recognisable in the findings as the participants showed little willingness to conceptualise the advice they took from others. Having discussed in the previous part, some participants received support from supervisors, co-workers and peers but some did not. For the participants who were

able to receive comments at work, many of them acknowledged the feedback but did not take them seriously nor put effort in seeking future improvement. For example:

Before I left my job, he (supervisor) recommended me to change my attitude because I looked anxious all the time. (Interviewee 8)

In the process of reflecting on their internship experience, it is noteworthy that some participants looked up to their supervisors as role models because of the good qualities that they discovered when interacting with their supervisors. For instance:

My team leader was a smart lady who tried her best to excel in the job. I think she is a good role model and I want to be as successful as her in the future. (Interviewee 5)

As my manager is a gentle, understanding, friendly and knowledgeable woman, she is my role model, I want to be like her in the future. (Interviewee 6)

It is stated by Kolb (1984) that learning is not only a process but also an outcome. Sweitzer and King (2014) also point out that the satisfying and meaningful aspects of the experience are the part of memory the interns always reflect on and celebrate. Reflecting on the worth of the international internship programme, all participants responded that it was worth joining the programme despite the imperfections of the programme design, job matching, language barriers and so on. They appreciated that the programme gave them a chance to broaden their horizons, meet with multicultural people, as well as experience working in a nonlocal organisation:

It is worth to have an internship overseas because you can experience different cultures and meet different people.
(Interviewee 7)

As a result, although the experiential learning journey of different participants was unique, all of them had experienced the practical learning process at work. While a workplace no longer stresses on receiving, compiling and memorising secondary knowledge but is more focused on constant reflecting, many participants felt hard to adjust their learning style and to cope with stresses. Notwithstanding the complaints about various imperfections such as challenging job tasks, insufficient care from supervisors and co-workers, as well as unfamiliar workplace culture, the majority of participants reflected on the feedback they obtained from supervisors, co-workers and peers, which made them feel the programme was worth participating in because of all the learning opportunities offered by the internship job. They realised how much the international internship programme helped them to 'grow up'. They commented that their employability skills, language communication skills, confidence level and so on were much improved after completion of the programme. Therefore, it can be concluded that reflectivity in experiential learning is an important factor for learners to make sense of the situation. With constant reflections on the interactions with surrounding people and the environment, the participants discovered knowledge through reflectivity in experiential learning. Yet, many of the participants did not aware the benefit of reflecting on the feedback given by the others, therefore they missed opportunities to comprehend new information or to try to transform themselves from a university student into a mature working adult.

5.3.5 Experiential Learning – Connect: Participants’ Multicultural Experiences and Their Self-Perceived Future Career Plan

Before the programme commenced, many participants had no idea about the place where they were going to stay, the organisation where they were going to work, and the people they were going to meet. During the interviews, the participants compared their impressions of Hong Kong with their internship destinations. For instance:

I think Hong Kong is quite a stressful city and everyone just focuses on their work. When I was in Singapore, everyone was so relaxed. (Interviewee 10)

Hong Kong is a very busy city, but Melbourne is not. Australians are friendlier than Hong Kong people. (Interviewee 13)

On completion of the programmes, the participants exhibited greater confidence and determination to explore their future career. They felt themselves to be more competitive and prepared to seek a job. For instance:

I think I have an advantage in my future job applications. When companies find that I have internship experience in Australia, I think they will appreciate it. (Interviewee 3)

I want to find jobs that are related to my profession. However, the qualifications of a social worker in Sweden are different from that in Hong Kong, so it may be very difficult for me to find social work relevant jobs in Sweden. Therefore, I may seek a job in other industries, for example, customer service in tourism or travel agencies. And I am learning Swedish to prepare myself for the future career. (Interviewee 6)

The confidence of the participants in planning their future career was also contributed to by the encouragement of their work supervisors. Some participants

stated that they were very happy to have received compliments or appreciation letters from their employers, which boosted their confidence and gave them a feeling of security in their future career planning. For example:

My manager was satisfied with my performance and gave me a reference letter with good comments. (Interviewee 7)

When I finished the programme, my supervisor gave me a reference letter and a farewell lunch. (Interviewee 13)

When expressing their future career planning and aspirations, some participants hoped to find a graduate job that had a nature similar to their internship. For example:

I am planning to apply for jobs in green NGOs, for example, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Green Power.....etc. I have applied to some and am currently waiting for their reply. (Interviewee 2)

It is remarkable that some participants were determined to seek a graduate job in another country outside of Hong Kong. They expressed that they wanted to work internationally or go back to the country where they interned to find a graduate job in the future. It showed that the international internship programme has changed the career plan of some participants. For instance:

I told my supervisor that I wanted to go back to Berlin and work there, she said they would always welcome me to re-join the company as a full-time employee. (Interviewee 2)

In sum, the interview findings showed that experiential learning is much more than just skills and knowledge transfer. The remarkable changes of this socialised learning process are not only recognisable from the discovery of new cultures, but also from the setting of career goals. By immersing themselves into

a new culture, the participants not only discovered the distinctiveness of a culture that they had never experienced before, but also actively reflected on their own culture. Their cultural understanding and competence were improved through direct interactions with the locals. In addition, the participants considered the non-local work experience and the recognition of their former employers a boost to their competitiveness in the labour market. Given the boost given to their job seeking skills after completion of the programme, some participants were determined to develop their careers in a certain area and others were ready to seek a graduate job in places other than Hong Kong.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter explores the qualitative findings from semi-structured interviews with 13 participants of university X who had completed international internship programmes Y and Z. The qualitative interviews have predominantly found that the participants of the international internship programmes Y and Z were self-motivated to join the programme. Although the programme fees were prohibitively expensive for some of them, they did not give up on the opportunity. However, many participants were dissatisfied with the job offered and felt dissatisfied with how the career centre of university X coordinated the application process. They claimed that the jobs did not match with the study major of their academic programmes, making them feel frustrated and helpless due to the challenges they encountered at work.

Briefly revisiting Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle and literature relevant to experiential learning and employability, this research found that the participants had low self-efficacy and struggled with communication in English.

In undergoing the transformation from the school to the workplace, a few participants were proactive enough to adjust themselves through learning, but many of them turned to the support system of their supervisors as well as co-workers, who were seen as the mentors of the participants. The interactions between people at work and outside the workplace provided many opportunities for the participants to reflect on the learning at the university as well as their own culture. After living and working in a new place for a few months, the participants had a clearer idea about their career. They regarded themselves as more competitive and some of them were passionate to travel back to their internship destinations for graduate job seeking in the future.

Chapter 6: Discussions

“As a person is always in the world, so our experiences are constructs of our perceptions and awareness of the world – our experience of this external world are within us.” (Jarvis, 2012, p. 197)

6.1 Introduction

This study about international internship programme not only contributes to the knowledge about experiential learning, but also link theory to practice. Exploring a variety of concepts such as experiential learning, employability, intercultural proficiency and global citizenship, this chapter revisits the five research questions of this dissertation and critically discusses the relevant theoretical strands as well as the findings from quantitative and qualitative researches. In the following part, each of the research question will be addressed, follow by the analysis and discussion that exemplify the significance of the findings on the study of international internship programmes, experiential learning and career planning.

6.2 Research question 1- What have influenced students' motivations to join the international internship programmes?

Both quantitative and qualitative research findings have demonstrated that the participants had high self-motivation to join the international internship programme, but it is worth discussing further the motivational forces that drove the students to enrol in the programme. The survey results indicated that the participants gave an overall mean score of 8.34 marks out of 10 ($n=41$) for their self-motivation to join the programme, which is the highest score among the four research areas investigated through the questionnaire (ibid: Section 4.2.3,

Motivation of Joining International Internship Programmes Y And Z, pg. 114).

The findings from the semi-structured interviews further explained their unique rationales, for instance:

I think the internships in Hong Kong are so simple and boring as interns are just required to copy documents or buy coffee for their supervisors. Sometimes all you need to do is to pretend that you are working when you are not. Joining an overseas internship is more meaningful because I may have special experiences and I can meet different people. (Interviewee 9)

The internationalisation initiatives of the university X have paved ways for students to obtain more international exposure, yet such a top-down initiative does little to explain why the students were self-motivated to join the programme. Previous research studies on internationalisation of Hong Kong HE discussed in the literature review (Mok, 2005; Mok and Neubauer, 2014; Lui, 2014) focused more on the discussion of the Hong Kong government's policy agenda and the impact on institutions' decisions, but little attention has been given to the impact of globalisation discourses on changing the worldview among university students, in particular the Asian students. This research study reveals that the impact of globalisation discourses was not only a driving force for the Hong Kong government and HEIs to enhance the internationalisation profile of local universities, but that the discourses have also influenced the students to take a step out of their comfort zone for exploring an imagined world. As two participants mentioned:

I chose Berlin in Germany because I have many German friends and I really like their country. Therefore, I wanted to see how nice it would be as I had a lot of imagination from what they had told me about their country. (Interviewee 2)

I heard that Australia is a very clean country with fresh air.
(Interviewee 4)

The survey results demonstrated that 100% ($n=41$) of respondents made the decision to join the programme on their own, and 71% ($n=39$) of respondents said they preferred an international internship instead of a local one. With a strong desire to learn about the outside world and cultures, the participants were determined to join the programme without hesitation. As discussed in the literature review, the *Postmodern internship model* (Sides and Mrvica, 2007) considers that internship is the starting point for a professional life. Despite the participants having to pay the programme fee by themselves and working as free labours, they still regarded the opportunity as valuable because they would be able to get hands-on-experience in a non-local workplace and interact with people of different cultures. As a participant mentioned that:

The reason that I chose an international internship is that I wanted to work with people from different countries. (Interviewee 3)

It is worth pointing out that the perception of internationalisation by the Hong Kong government, HEIs and student is based on an imagined context of 'The West', which consists of the predominantly English-speaking nations. As examined earlier, English is a second language in Hong Kong, but the majority of public and private universities set their medium of instruction to English. Based on this policy, university programmes are conducted in English unless exceptions are specified, and students are required to complete course assessments in English. However, as mentioned earlier, a research study conducted by Evans (2008) found that students had very little to no chance of using English outside of academic study. Their lack of opportunities to use

English, accompanied by tensions of globalisation, have driven the students to seize the opportunity to better their English standard to obtain an edge as they strive for success in the globalised world. The survey statistics revealed that two-thirds of the participants (66%, $n=27$) chose an English-speaking country such as Australia or the US for their international internship destination, while the remaining one-third of participants (34%, $n=14$) chose a Chinese-speaking country such as China or Taiwan as destinations. As one of the interviewees stated:

As a Chinese, my English is not good, therefore I decided to have an overseas internship in order to improve my English. My friend who is attending a university in America said it is worth to get job experience in the US. (Interviewee 7)

The price for students of using an international internship opportunity to improve their English ability is that the programme fees of the destinations in Western countries such as the UK, the US, Germany and Australia were much higher than the Asian destinations such as China and Taiwan, which means that students had to bear this high cost if they were not able to get subsidies. As the survey results show, only one third of the participants (34%, $n=14$) have never worried about the programme cost, and one participant commented:

I hope the programme can offer accommodation in some other places that charge a lower rate for rental so that students can pay less. The apartment I lived in charged HK\$ 7,000 per person a month even though it was shared with four other girls, so I think it is quite expensive. (Interviewee 2)

As stated on the university website, every year the programme recruited around 200 students. However, according to the statistics released by university X, the

total number of undergraduate students enrolled in 2017/18 was 7,027 people, which means that less than 3% of undergraduate students participated in the international internship programmes. Despite the actual number of University X's undergraduate students who joined the international internship programmes, compared to the total number of undergraduate students enrolled, was as little as tip of the iceberg, the findings of this research study showed that the participants were highly self-motivated. The low number of students seeking an internship abroad might have been scared away because of the limited subsidies available for application, and the expensive programme cost as well as living expenses that the interns have to prepare for staying in another country during the internship period.

6.3 Research question 2 - How did students describe their process of learning through participating in the international internship programmes?

The influence of internationalisation has pressurised the HEIs to nurture students with a global vision and develop a reflective understanding of their own country and the world. Through providing a variety of extracurricular activities and learning opportunities, such as student unions, clubs, international exchanges, internships, seminars, mentorship programmes, community services and so on, university X is dedicated to cultivating students into confident and socially responsible leaders. As discussed in the literature review, an international internship programme offers experiential learning opportunities to students outside the classroom (Runbin, 2009; Toncar and Cudmore, 2000; Leggett, 2006). Under the global trend of HE massification, University X, on one hand, makes use of the organisation of international internship programmes Y and Z to boost its international profile. On the other hand, University X seizes the chance to

develop the employability skills of their students by offering them experiential learning opportunities in workplaces outside their hometown.

Revisiting the concept of experiential learning, it is expected that students were given opportunities to learn *in* experience (Wilson, 1993) and to gain knowledge through noticing, inquiring, and experimenting with the problems in a workplace (Boud and Walker, 1991; Schon, 1983). Survey results show that 73% of participants ($n=30$) agreed that the internship programme offered them knowledge and skills that they would not have been able to learn from the university, and one of the participants mentioned:

I learnt a lot about how data was being used in marketing, and I don't think I could have learned these skills from my major at the university. (Interviewee 5)

Both Kolb (1984) and Jarvis (1987) illustrate that experiential learning is a process where learners must go through the stages of experiencing and reflecting. The survey result shows that 78% ($n=32$) of participants actively reflected on the comments of others and tried to improve their performance at work. The qualitative interviews also found that the participants reflected on what they had learnt from the programme, for instance:

I learnt how to communicate with others, and I became more mature when making decisions. (Interviewee 9)

International internship programme is not only an experiential learning opportunity, but also a whole person education. By immersing with the people and culture of the workplace in another country, the participants experienced a whole person development through experiential learning. The survey result shows that 85% ($n=35$) of participants liked the work culture of their companies, and

they reflected on what they had learnt from the work culture of the companies, as one participant mentioned:

I think I know more about the working culture and the most valuable working rules of a company. This could not have been learned from doing a project with teammates at the university. (Interviewee 11)

While some participants on programmes Y and Z reflected that they had learnt a lot from the internship experiences, others stated that they had not learnt much. The survey found that 68% ($n=28$) of participants found the internship job meaningful, and less than 60% ($n=24$) of participants were given a variety of tasks at work. As indicated by the findings of this research study, experiential learning is far more complex than classroom learning because the learning is situated in a social context. There was no pre-determined learning outcome expectation, no syllabus, no assessments and not even a teacher. Jarvis (1987) points out in his *Model of the Learning Process* that learning itself is a socialised process in which language, cultures, beliefs, human practices and so on are socially constructed. This research further explicates that international internships are social learning opportunities where students learn to be a person in society (Illeris, 2017) through on-the-job training and interaction with people. A participant specified:

In the university I do not have to care much about my relationships with teachers and schoolmates, but I have to build a good relationship with clients and colleagues in a workplace, which is quite challenging. (Interviewee 8)

As the constructivists point out, experiential learning is a meaning-making process where knowledge is discovered through observing, reflecting and interacting with the wider environment of the outside world (Jarvis, 1987; Fenwick, 2000). Nevertheless, the academic programmes of university X fail to

equip students with the ability to adapt to a non-classroom setting learning environment. As reflected by the participants, they found hard to commit themselves into their internship jobs. A participant stated:

Sometimes I felt difficult to communicate with others as my major is social work and the internship did not exactly match with my major. (Interviewee 6)

In addition, the career centre's 'mismatch' of students' major of study and their internship positions escalated the difficulty for the students to learn by doing (Beaudin and Quick, 1995, Remer, 2007). Hoover, Giambatista, Sorenson, and Bommer (2010) argue that learners' engagement is very important because "learning does not occur until the learner makes it happen" (p. 194), emphasising that educators can only lead the learners to learn but cannot make them learn. The research studies in this dissertation support this view but find that some participants were reluctant to engage. The survey results show that 66% ($n=27$) and 59% ($n=24$) of participants admitted that they had actively reached out to their work supervisors and co-workers respectively for feedback. As indicated in the Hackman and Oldham's Job Satisfaction Model (cited in Stansbie, Nash, and Jack, 2013, p.158), effective outcomes of a job (satisfaction) are produced by high quality of work (meaningful of job) and a high level of psychological state (motivation). Sweitzer and King (2014) also emphasise that engagement is the key to overcoming psychological and emotional struggles during internships. During the interviews, many participants revealed that they found timid with regard to engaging, bottled up their emotions while refusing to actively engage in overcoming the hardships. For instance:

I think I was not proactive enough, but my supervisor didn't provide a good working experience to me so I couldn't tell much. (Interviewee 12)

It is further asserted by the survey findings that not only the participants were passive learners who were shy and obedient, some of them had also taken their bad feelings to heart and just maintained a wait and see attitude. The survey results demonstrated that only 66% ($n=27$) and 59% ($n=24$) respectively reached out to their supervisors and co-workers frequently. During the interview, a few participants disclosed that they were anxious to reach out due to their shyness and hesitation in communicating with others, for instance:

I did not tell my supervisor that I felt so embarrassed to speak English. (Interviewee 8)

I ended up having little to no communications with the customers, and the managers didn't even tell me how to talk to them. (Interviewee 12)

According to Kolb's experiential learning cycle, learners are expected to conceptualise their learning at work and actively experiment with it after reflection. However, only 22% ($n=9$) of participants indicated that they had raised questions and expressed doubts when they faced challenges at work, while most participants did not know how to cope with problems and felt that they got stuck at work. For instance, a participant noticed:

I had to use data in my job, like my university major and similar to what I read on the website. But the analysis of data was different. I think it was much more difficult than what I expected, and I did not have such knowledge. (Interviewee 5)

Kolb (1984) experiential learning cycle states that new concepts would be formulated and extracted after reflections, so that the learners would try to

actively experiment with them. Jarvis (1987) Model of the Learning Processes shares a similar view but emphasises that the learners internalise and evaluate their learning instead of conceptualising it. Despite the participants had reflected on themselves and their learning experience while interning aboard, neither conceptualisation as Kolb (1984) anticipated nor internalisation as Jarvis (1987) predicted have been found in this research study. The survey results show that among 41 respondents, less than one-third, or 27% ($n=11$) of participants, found that their self-development competency improved, and 26% ($n=8$) stated that they had better critical thinking skills. During the interviews, the participants shared how frustrated they were when facing the challenges at work. For instance:

I am a person who gets tired easily, so it is hard for me to read loads of books. In addition, I had to search for articles and translate every single technical legal term in order to finish my work, which was challenging for me as a science major student. (Interviewee 2)

Both survey statistics and interview findings showed that many participants encountered various challenges and difficulties in the learning process. The participants who interned aboard were found incapable to conceptualise or internalise their learning when they faced challenges or pressure at work. As discussed in the literature review, Sweitzer and King (2014) state that it is common for the interns to overlook small matters and appear to be disconnected from others, resulting in disillusionment, while their eagerness to learn and grow diminishes with the decision not to engage. Despite Kolb (1984) and Jarvis (1987) emphasise that one of the keys that lead to successful experiential learning is engagement, it is discovered in this research study that engagement could be discouraged if a learner's self-efficacy in learning is low. The self-perceived ability to learn and confidence in learning, for instance, have

not been further explored in Kolb (1984) and Jarvis (1987)' learning stages nor discussed in previous empirical research about experiential learning. But one of the key findings was clear – the acknowledgement on students' talents and expectations as well as continuous support contribute to the reduction of discouraging factors on learning, which can help boosting students' self-efficacy in learning and encourage active engagement.

6.4 Research question 3 - Which specific experiences have influenced students' satisfaction on the international internship programmes?

Generally speaking, the participants were satisfied with the international internship programmes (see table below). Self-rated by 41 respondents of the survey, the highest score was given on their self-motivation of joining the programmes (average score: 8.34 marks over 10), followed by the benefits of intercultural interaction (average score: 7.88 marks over 10) and employability skill enhancement at work (average score: 7.59 marks over 10). Yet, their satisfaction on the benefit of the programmes in helping them to search for future career goals received the lowest score (average score: 6.9 marks over 10), slightly lower than the average scores of the other areas.

Survey questions	Mean score (out of 10 marks)
On a scale from 0-10, rate your self-motivation level in joining the international internship programme.	8.34
On a scale from 0-10, rate how much the international internship experience has supported your career planning.	6.9
On a scale from 0-10, rate the overall improvement of skills or knowledge you acquired specifically from the international internship.	7.59

On a scale from 0-10, rate how competent you rate yourself in exploring multicultural interactions after the completion of international internship programme.	7.88
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Table: Summary of the mean scores of the four major areas recorded by the survey

Although the survey findings about participants' satisfaction with the programmes are quite positive, the diversified opinion and comment collected from the semi-structured interviews made it hard to tell whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the international internship programmes. Exploring the interview findings, many participants expressed that they enjoyed the internship work and the time they spent with the people they met in the overseas' workplaces. As discussed in the literature review, learning, in the perspectives of behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism (Schunk, 2012), supports positive changes such as acquisition of skills, knowledge, strategies and beliefs (Talbot, 2019). Through interacting and responding to the environment, many participants described how satisfied they felt when they realised that the international internship programmes not only provided a unique opportunity for them to learn outside the classroom. According to Illeris (2017), experiential learning has replenished itself from "learning to be me" (p. 37) to become a deeper level of "learning to be a person in society" (p. 37). The survey results show that 73% ($n=30$) of participants agreed that the internships not only provided them with a lot of skills and knowledge that they could not have obtained from traditional teaching at the university, but also benefited them with cognitive and behavioural changes. For instance:

I started waking up very early every weekday during the internship and I have established a healthy lifestyle (Interviewee 5)

During the internship, sometimes I felt hard to communicate with other people. But after the internship, my communication skills and social skills have been improved, which allow me to build a better relationship with people. (Interviewee 8)

Citing an old Confucian philosophy: I find my teacher among the three people that I walked along with. An essential factor that contributed to job satisfaction and self-efficacy in learning were the ‘teachers’ including their supervisors, co-workers who offered constructive advice to the interns. Through letting students to “know what they are learning and why, and to know how to develop the claims of achievement that make them more employable” (Knight and Yorke, 2003, p. 14), this research study discovered that the participants were satisfied with their relationship with the supervisors. A linear regression model of the survey result showed that the more the interns reached out to their supervisors, the more satisfaction they gained from the internship experiences ($b=0.77$, $p<0.01$). As Vygotsky (1978) points out, knowledge is co-created between the self and the social environment, and maximisation of the effectiveness of experiential learning requires the interactivity of learners and also that the power agents in social contexts, such as their supervisors and co-workers, work tightly in setting learning goals and achieving them together. The survey shows that 90% ($n=37$) of the participants agreed that they had a supervisor and co-workers that fully supported them, which had boost up their satisfaction level of the international internship programmes:

The restaurant’s cleaning part was outsourced to a cleaning service company, so I didn’t really need to do the cleaning things. I learnt to make drinks and had basic communication with the customers. I was grateful that my colleagues were willing to teach me. (Interviewee 12)

In addition to actual support, some participants explained how satisfied and motivated they were after receiving emotional support from their supervisors.

For instance:

My supervisor gave me lots of freedom in my job and didn't set many deadlines to push me to work. (interviewee 9)

As indicated in the literature review, Yorke and Knight (2002) claim that learning conducted in an informal setting is six times more effective than in a formal setting. The survey results showed that 85% ($n=35$) of participants liked the work culture of their companies, which was slightly more than their satisfaction with the job to which they were assigned (78%, $n=32$). Their satisfaction was high because of the open, comfortable and stress-free work culture offered by the companies. By voluntarily showing an interest and willingness to engage in a new environment, the participants drew out the meanings of learning with the convergence of the preconceptions they gained from previous experiences and critically reflected on the cultures of workplaces. They were more relaxed and enthusiastic to become engaged in the cultures of the workplace, which brought them new and fresh learning experiences. For instance:

I could go for a coffee break or have a walk during working hours. It was also so nice that the company also allowed colleagues to bring their dogs to the office. (Interviewee 2)

In particular, growing up in the busy and crowded city of Hong Kong, the participants recalled many memories about their enjoyment of working in the relaxing work culture of another country, for instance:

My employer, who was from Scotland, asked me to have breakfast tea every day, and my colleagues always talked about the weather in Scotland with him. (Interviewee 4)

We always had meetings with music and wine, making the working atmosphere so comfortable. (Interviewee 8)

This research study significantly has showed that the majority of participants had a very good and clear understanding of ‘other cultures’ through interaction with people in their workplaces or the social environment of the places they travelled for the internship programmes, which was supported the data collected by the survey study that 76% agreed that they had a better understanding of other cultures after the internship period. When sharing about their satisfaction on cultural learning, many participants could tell specifically what they learnt about the culture and society of another country through experiencing life there. For example:

I used to think the air in Australia would be fresher than Hong Kong, but after living in the CBD area in Melbourne for two months, I found that the air condition there was more or less the same as in Hong Kong because people travel a lot with private cars. (Interviewee 4)

My impression on the Americans is positive because they were very friendly, and they helped me a lot. This is same as my expectation before I travelled to the America. (Interviewee 7)

The constructivism perspective of the learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978) as well as Jarvis’ Model of the Learning Process (1987) stress on the importance of the learners’ interaction with the environment. Similarly, Kolb (1984)’ experiential learning cycle advocate reflection and active experimentation of the learners. The international internship experiences, in constructivism perspective, is an opportunity for students to learn through a continuous interaction with the environment. Considering the majority of participants who were at their 20s and travelled to another country to work for the first time, the international internship experience, they claimed, was more rewarding than being a tourist or spectator.

The immersion of the self into other cultures contributed significantly to the satisfaction of the job and the participants' impression on the internship programmes.

...working in a German NGO made me feel that I had done something that positively impacted the world, so I like my job in Germany more than the local one. (Interviewee 9)

However, the results of this research study were not one-sided positive. The dissatisfactions and negative opinions shared by the participants were as much as, even slightly higher, than the positive ones. Much of the dissatisfaction were related to the internship job, including application and interview arrangement, number of subsidies, actual work tasks, as well as assistance from supervisor and co-workers etc. To illustrate further, many participants expressed at the beginning of the interviews that the one-size-fits-all job application process and matching system offered restricted choices of companies for participants and barred them from fully understanding the job responsibilities before their applications. Although 73% ($n=30$) of participants emphasised in the survey that they proactively gathered as much information about the programme as they could, many expressed dissatisfactions with the application procedure and selection process of the internships. Once the participants confirmed their destinations, they were asked to select their preference from a list of around 20 companies, but neither a job position nor a description had been provided. Some of the participants were lucky to be interviewed by the companies by telephone or Skype, but others only received an internal interview by the career centre, for instance:

The career centre gave me a website link with 20 companies. I had just one interview from the career centre and they gave an offer to me after a few weeks. (Interviewee 13)

The random interview system and job selection procedure did not give the participants a chance to gain a thorough understanding of the companies and the job offerings. They were only allowed to rank the countries and job nature preference according to their preference, but they were not provided with any specific information about the job title and duty. When the participants reported duty and started working, they found that the jobs were different from what they expected. They felt dissatisfied with the job allocated and their self-efficacy sharply declined when they were asked to complete job tasks that were unrelated to their major of study at the university. For instance:

The weakness of the internship programme is that, although it cooperates with different companies, I could not make my choice of which company to work for. It would be better if my job was relevant to my major. (Interviewee 6)

As discussed in the literature review, the *USEM model*, also named the employability model (Yorke and Knight, 2002), stresses that completion of tasks at work depends not only on the disciplinary knowledge, but also on the personal qualities and self-efficacy of the person. The findings of this research study show that some participants in the programme were neither offered a job that let them use a variety of skills and talents, nor did they attain achievements that significantly impacted an organisation or other parties. The lack of subject knowledge and subject-related skills made the participants frustrated and disappointed with their jobs, and negatively affected their motivation and self-efficacy to engage in the experiential learning opportunities at work. Although scholars such as Dewey (1938), Kolb (1984) and Jarvis (1987) stress that the

desire for experience is the driving force of learning and observation and judgement of learners transform desires into action, this research study denies that the desire for learning could be found in every learner, especially those who lack motivation and self-efficacy. During the interviews, a few participants complained that the unsuitable jobs made them unmotivated, detached and burnout. One of the participants mentioned that:

I had told my supervisor that doing so many typing tasks was so boring, and I was not very good at typing.
(Interviewee 1)

In the mind of many participants, the reasons for them to travel miles away for participating in an internship programme was the desire to seize opportunities for improving English in another country. However, they ended up feeling very dissatisfied when they found themselves unable to adapt into the work and social environment aboard due to poor English ability. As two participants expressed that:

I felt frustrated whenever I could not express myself in English... When I talked, people did not understand what I was talking about. When the others talked, I seldom understood what they were talking about. (Interviewee 7)

Discussed in the literature review, Jarvis (1992) holds the view that individuals think they are free to choose within different cultures, yet in reality the legitimacy of power uses language to symbolise culture and creates cultural substitutions. The context is unstable and full of power agencies that affect both the learning experiences and the ways that learners react and proceed in the learning process. This research study finds that language usage was the main source of the participants' struggles in the workplace context. The difficulty in expressing themselves in English had made them feel dissatisfied with their own

performance at work and undermined their confidence in fulfilling the expectation of the internship job as well as communicating with others. The lack of confidence in English communication also further demonstrates that, the “internationalisation” and “Englishization” (Kirkpatrick, 2011) discourses have influenced the perception of students and convinced them to improve their English ability and get to know more about the outside world. But the worries of the students can be seen as an alert that the internationalisation policy in Hong Kong and the implementation of English as MOI for decades have little impact on making students to feel themselves internationalised and confident in speaking with English. indicating that HE in Hong Kong is no longer elite-oriented but massified (Mok and Jiang, 2018). While the HEIs around the world have been putting more resources into designing experiential learning programmes, the programme designers and policy makers in Hong Kong can put more effort into cultivating a good learning culture in the university that supports the experiential learning of international internship programme.

6.5 Research question 4 - In what ways did the international internship programmes influence on students’ career planning?

It is discussed in the literature review that global HEIs have been pressurised to enhance students’ employability through various measures, such as providing more internship opportunities. The increasing emphasis on the concept of employability while expanding work based training (Cord and Clements, 2010) as well as experiential learning and extra-curricular work-related activities (O’Connor and Bodicoat, 2017, p. 435) implies that the HEIs have a strong desire to enrich students’ profiles to give them better job opportunities. To enhance

students' employability, job-acquired skills and psychological preparation are framed as necessary competencies in the globalising labour market.

Nine employability skills suggested by Hall, Higson and Bullivant (2009) have been outlined in the literature review. They are regarded as 'soft' skills or personal competencies that employers appreciate the most when they recruit new blood in today's global competitive economy. This research study indicated that the participants gave an overall 6.9 marks out of 10 for their improvement of skills and knowledge through the international internship programme. Among the nine employability skills, the survey results show that 27% ($n=11$) of the participants evaluated themselves as having a much stronger self-development competency after completion of the programme, followed by 24% of participants who believed they had much stronger verbal communication skills ($n=10$) and networking skills ($n=10$). The results demonstrate that the immersion and stimulation from work-based or problem-based learning in authentic work settings help these millennial learners to develop capabilities through transformative experiential learning experiences. The participants mostly found themselves to be more open-minded and willing to communicate with others, but for other employability skills, such as negotiation skills, critical thinking, problem solving, as well as time management skills, fewer than 20% ($n=8$) of participants agreed that these skills had been improved after they had completed the internship period. One of the participants noticed the improvements in employability skills and illustrated that:

I have learnt to work with other people, such as to communicate with them in a nicer and more friendly way. Also, I have become more comfortable to express my

feelings and thoughts since I joined the internship.
(Interviewee 4)

It was mentioned in the literature review that some scholars such as Boden and Nedeva (2010) as well as Cranmer (2006) argue that employability is a questionable and problematic discourse that undermines the values of learning. However, many participants in this research study explained the improvements of their employability skills, which rejected Boden and Nedeva (2010)'s statement that employability "reduces education to a set of technical skills and factual knowledge acquisition, rather than the development of the mind" (p. 50).

As two participants reflected on their internship learning experiences:

The transcript tasks (in the internship) made me understand more about the people around the world, there were some cases that actually happened in real life. This usually does not happen in the classroom because teachers just focus on letting us (students) know how problems should be solved.
(Interviewee 3)

My computer skills have been improved a lot. For instance, my colleagues taught me the skills of using excel. They also taught me how to send emails to different people.
(Interviewee 9)

It is clear that experiential learning is unique because independent and reflective individuals immerse and actualise themselves progressively in authentic experiences. As discussed in the literature review, students' employability, job-acquired skills and psychological preparation are framed as necessary competencies in the globalising labour market. Mok and Jiang (2018) state that HE in Hong Kong is no longer elite-oriented but massified, therefore, international internship is no longer regarded as optional but essential to university students. O'Connor and Bodicoat (2017) have found a positive

relationship among internship, employability skills and competitiveness in career. They emphasise that an international internship opportunity not only benefit students' employability skills but also sharpen their resumes. This research found that 78% ($n=32$) of participants acknowledged that the international internship experience offered them a stronger resumé. Two of the participants commented:

This experience has surely enriched my CV. It is good evidence to show my problem-solving skills and independence. (Interviewee 9)

I think I have job advantage after having this internship overseas because I have little working experiences in Hong Kong. (Interviewee 13)

Although Crossman and Clarke (2010) point out that the students who participated in unpaid internships are less willing to consider future employment in the same organisation than the paid interns, the findings indicated a contradiction where many participants appeared to have found their dream jobs and expressed a strong interest to seek a graduate job in the places where they had completed their internships. For instance:

I want to work in Taiwan if I have a chance. I really enjoy the culture and the lifestyle there. (Interviewee 9)

The stimulation of interest in seeking jobs internationally after completion of overseas internships is still under-researched, but the results discussed signpost that students who gained international internship experiences may consider themselves to have better global mobility. They exhibited high self-efficacy in developing a future career outside of Hong Kong. Although the survey found that only 46% ($n=19$) of participants expressed that they were more passionate towards look for similar jobs in the future, some participants conveyed a clear

determination to seek an employment opportunity in the internship country despite the fact they were unsure about what kind of job they were interested in doing. For instance:

After joining the internship, I realised that seeking a job in Sweden is easier than in Hong Kong, so I am currently learning Swedish to prepare myself and I hope I can find a job there one day. (Interviewee 6)

The unique work experience in a non-local workplace is considered an asset of a brilliant CV by the participants, and a short-cut to understanding one's global mobility. Many participants declared a great interest to return to the internship country or place to seek a graduate job. However, the survey results indicated that less than half of the total participants (49%, $n=20$) admitted that the programme helped them to find their career goals. Commented by a participant:

I think the internship was so short. I have not yet set my career goal, but I want to know more people from other countries in the future. (Interviewee 11)

However, qualitative and quantitative findings about career planning have revealed that a number of participants still had an unclear career goals after internship experience. The survey findings show that there were only half of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they had clearer career plans after the completion of the international internship programme. This may be due to the fact that some participants worked in internship jobs that were unrelated to their major of studies, causing them to be insecure in making career plan decisions. As the survey findings indicate that there was a positive and significant relationship between assigned job positions and the helpfulness of the job in identifying future career goals was found ($R= 0.422, p<0.01$), the mismatch of jobs with students'

major study, consequently, made the participants felt confused on their ability to work in a new sector with no expertise and were uncertain about what they could do in their future job with a short period of internship experience.

6.6 Research question 5 - In what ways did the international internship programmes develop intercultural proficiency and global citizenship in students?

Living in a fast-paced cosmopolitan international city, the young people in Hong Kong are nurtured in a dynamic cultural and ethnic environment. With an assumption that the participants have been growing up in diversified cultures, their intercultural proficiency would have supported them to adapt and adjust in the complex and unfamiliar cultural environment of other countries. However, the survey and interview results of showed that, beyond this assumption, the participants were culturally and ethnically unprepared for intercultural connections outside of Hong Kong. The survey results showed that only 68% ($n=28$) of participants admitted that they encountered no difficulties in their workplaces. Their lack of experience in multicultural interactions meant they had a hard time adjusting to a culturally distinct work environment. Two participants illustrated their uncomfortable feelings as follows:

Some Australian colleagues did not give a task to me until it was ten minutes before the deadline, which I did not expect. Therefore, I think the Australians are not as efficient as the Chinese in the workplace. (Interviewee 4)

I was frustrated during the beginning of the internship. At that time, I was not close to my colleagues because they were all Europeans and lived in Europe. They shared a common western culture and it was hard for me to fit into their conversations. I felt lonely because I did not have any close friends to share my feelings with. (Interviewee 6)

As discussed in the literature review, culture shock is perceived as negative emotions such as distress and hostility driven by disorientation regarding the new culture. The disintegration between one's own culture and the others' culture, the inability to adjust to a new culture, or unexpected cultural or ethnical interactions may trigger culture shock, which is presented in the form of role shock, language shock and transition shock (Moufakkir, 2013). While the majority of participants ($n=34$, 83%) expressed that they felt more comfortable getting along with locals of another culture, they shared how they coped with language shock, role shock and transition shock when adapting to non-local work environments during interviews:

It is quite strange for me because in Hong Kong, co-workers always have lunch together. However, in London, they would rather have lunch alone, and they want to have rest time or get out of the company and the job during the lunch break. (Interviewee 11)

There is a big difference in lifestyle between these two places. The shops in Australia close at 5pm when most of us are still in the office. In Hong Kong, the shops close at around 10pm. (Interviewee 13)

The findings of this research support Moufakkir's (2013) view that culture shock does not necessarily cause the evolution of negative emotions. Although there was short-term amazement following the acknowledgement of cultural differences, no negative state of emotion was found from the reflections of the participants. Against the view that culture shock produces culture confusion (Hottola, 2004, cited in Moufakkir, 2013), the experiencing of *role shock*, *language shock* and *transition shock* provided the participants with opportunities for cultural learning. They were more pleased than upset to find themselves learning a new culture when reflecting on their own culture as well as critically evaluating the others' cultures. However, in contrast to

Bochner (2003)'s view, this research study discovered that there was no significant relationship between distance and culture shock. A crosstabulation by SPSS statistical software finds no association between the improvement in participants' culture awareness and their internship destinations ($p=0.885$, $p>0.05$). The interview findings also showed that the responses collected from participants in short distance destinations such as Taiwan were neither distinctively positive nor negative compared to the responses from participants in long-distance destinations such as Australia, Sweden and the UK. As two participants mentioned:

I think the Taiwanese youngsters are down-to-earth. Once I was hiking alone and I wanted to find someone taking photos for me, the Taiwanese young people were so eager to help. (Interviewee 9)

The Australian were really nice. People treated me so well even they knew nothing about me. (Interviewee 4)

Much of the literature examined in the literature review supports that study abroad programmes, including international internships, facilitate transformational learning and cultural learning experiences of students, as well as developing their intercultural proficiency and global citizenship. However, previous research studies focusing on the cultural engagement of participants in an international internship programme were scarce. The survey results of this research study showed that the participants noticed their cultural sensitivity, awareness and knowledge had improved. To highlight the key findings, 76% ($n=31$) of participants reported that their cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness and understanding of other ethnicities had been deepened. A number of participants revealed their 'cultural discoveries' during the interviews. For instance:

Before I travelled to Sweden, I knew nothing about the Swedish. However, after joining the internship, I found that they were very friendly and also open-minded. (Interviewee 6)

The post-experience research results validated the effectiveness of international internship programme in developing students' intercultural proficiency. With little prior intercultural communication experiences, the participants not only demonstrated the curiosity regarding others' cultures, but also their reflexivity in learning them. They developed a stronger worldview and understanding about others' cultures and ethnicities. They also learnt to accept and appreciate the cultural differences between 'us' and 'other'. As presented in the previous part, most participants were satisfied with the international internship programmes through immersing themselves in contexts of different cultures such as the workplace and community, the participants found themselves more open and confident to communicate with people from diverse multicultural and multi-ethnic backgrounds. The enhanced intercultural proficiency, such as confidence and openness with people, enabled students to open themselves up and establish communication with people in a cross-cultural environment. In particular, a few participants pointed out that their English language speaking was improved, and they had overcome the anxiety under the transformative learning and cultural learning processes. For instance:

I became more confident in using English for daily conversation. As I had to go shopping in the supermarket every day, there were so many chances for me to speak and listen to English. (Interviewee 4)

It is still unclear whether the development of intercultural proficiency through an international internship programme is short-term or long-term.

Despite a number of scholars claiming that study abroad programmes have a long-term impact on developing the essential attributes and intercultural proficiency of a student, so far little research has conducted follow-up studies to validate such claims. Therefore, this research proposes that more longitudinal studies with larger samples would offer a more in-depth investigation of the long-term impact of international internships and the intercultural proficiency changes on students. With regard to the development of global citizenship, it is insignificant that the career centre of university X has used the concept as a metaphor for marketing the international internship programmes Y and Z. However, reflections and comments from the participants implied that the neoliberal perspective was more dominant than the critical and transformational perspectives. The survey results revealed that 71% ($n=29$) of participants agreed that the international internships built a strong international social network, and 78% ($n=32$) of participants said they were more willing to work for a multicultural company after graduating. Many participants, in fact, used the programme as a fast-track opportunity to accumulate overseas work experience and enhance their global work mobility. As illustrated in the qualitative interview findings, the participants appreciated the programme that offered them greater global mobility, enhanced their employability skills, and sharpened their CV. Many of them expressed that they were interested in seeking a graduate job at their internship destinations in the future. For instance, one of the participants displayed an eagerness to seek a job globally if chances were available:

I may travel to the US and get a job there if I have a chance,
but it is fine with me to develop my career in other places.
(Interviewee 7)

The above shows that the neoliberal perspective of global citizenship has a significant impact on students' worldview and career aspirations. They no longer limited their career options to the local area, but enthusiastically considered the option of international career development, and even started planning it. This provides a new insight into the study of the neo-liberal perspective of global citizenship. However, reviewing the transformational and critical perspectives that regard global citizens as responsible and empathetic people who strive to promote good universal values such as social equality, democracy and justice, 61% ($n=25$) of participants revealed that their empathy towards ethnic minorities had improved. The results demonstrated that, while some participants focused more on the suitability of the jobs, others looked for a job that valued cultivating a better human world and promoting social good. For instance:

I have once visited the people in need with my colleagues, which allowed me to realise that even in such a modernised place like Singapore, there were still a lot of poor people living a hard life and they really needed help. (Interviewee 1)

In closing, rejecting the further discussion of global citizenship at a conceptual level, the findings of this research reaffirmed that intercultural proficiency and global citizenship are not taught but learned from experiences.

Chapter 7: Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations

“As an old saying in Chinese says: “life is worth more through exploring the world rather than just reading books”. Travelling around the world should be a part of life. If your school provides you with a chance, you should treasure this opportunity.” (Interviewee 4 of this dissertation research)

7.1 Introduction

Theory and research on experiential learning have received substantial attention for many decades. Advocated as an alternative to the teacher-centred, intransigent and academic ways of learning, experiential education in HE is characterised as an education philosophy and a student-centred, holistic, engaging, reflective, transformative and community-focused pedagogy. Internship, championed as a high-impact experiential learning activity, integrates concepts and skills learned in the classroom with real-world practicum. Internship programmes organised or facilitated by HEIs are either local or international, full-time or part-time, credit based, or non-credit based, paid or unpaid work opportunities fulfilled over the summer between two academic years or during the term time of an academic year. Influenced by internationalisation of HE and globalisation discourses, a heightened awareness has been brought to the connection between internship and experiential learning. While a number of key authors point out that internship, an experiential learning pedagogy, enhances students ‘employability skills’ and enables them to have more career options, relevant studies on international internship programmes are nevertheless inadequate. Selecting Hong Kong, a renowned international city and multicultural ‘Asia’s World City’, as branded by the government, this dissertation has examined the influence of globalisation discourses on the internationalisation

policy among HEIs as well as explored students' motivation for learning, their international internship experiences, and the impact of internship on individuals' intercultural competence.

This concluding chapter of the dissertation first presents a summary of findings, followed by a discussion on the contributions of the study. Finally, this chapter closes with a critical review of the limitations and provides recommendations for future research.

7.2 Summary of Findings

This dissertation set out to empirically examine an international internship programme of a public university in Hong Kong. The central aim of the research was to investigate the contributions of international internship programme to students' experiential learning, career planning, and intercultural proficiency.

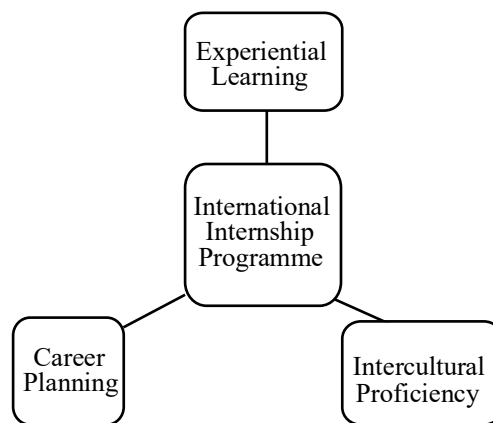


Figure: A proposed model outlining three dimensions of benefits (experiential learning, career planning, and intercultural proficiency) of international internship participation

Framed by a case study of University X, this dissertation adopted a mixed methods research approach based on interpretative-constructivist epistemology.

As illustrated in Chapter 3, a group of undergraduate degree students who had

completed international internship programmes Y and Z in 2018 were invited to participate in the research. The first phase of the research was a quantitative self-administered survey where 41 questionnaires were collected. The second phase of the research was an individual semi-structured interview with 13 participants. Chapter 4 presented the findings of data collected from a quantitative survey and examined with statistical software SPSS, while Chapter 5 demonstrated the steps of thematic analysis of the qualitative interview as well as the codes, themes and outputs generated with assistance from the text mining software MAXQDA.

As a university teacher, I found that experiential learning was seldom applied as a pedagogy in the classroom, but it has been an increasingly popular idea among HEIs in Hong Kong. I was curious to approach this concept and its application in HE as a practitioner researcher (Schon, 1983) despite not being involved in any experiential learning activity organisation myself. It is important to point out that experiential learning has been progressively promoted among HEIs in line with the call for strengthening HE internationalisation in Hong Kong. Chapters 1 and 2 have examined the influence of globalisation discourses on the government's advocacy of internationalisation policy after Hong Kong's handover from the United Kingdom to China. To maintain global competitiveness in the process of HE massification and to equip future talents with the necessary employability skills in support of the city's transition to a knowledge economy, HEIs were under pressure to develop Hong Kong as an education hub (Lo, 2018). Despite international internship programmes, similar to overseas exchange programmes, having long been offered to university students by individual institutions before 1997 when Hong Kong was still a British colony, it was not until recent years that international internship programmes were brought to

attention as an experiential learning pedagogy that gives students plenty of opportunities to broaden their horizons through internships abroad.

My interest in studying the relationship between international internship and experiential learning was accelerated after attending a promotion talk on international internship programmes at university X, where I started exploring the literature about the origins and development of internships and theories of learning and experiential learning. As discussed in Chapter 2, internship and experiential learning are contested concepts used in previous studies. Unlike the majority of local internship programmes in Hong Kong that are paid but competitive, international internship programmes Y and Z researched in this dissertation were voluntary. All undergraduate degree students from all disciplines of university X are able to apply for programmes Y and Z. The career centre of university X was the sole organiser and manager of the programmes, taking up the responsibility of securing internship vacancies from various non-local companies and allocating students to fill the vacancies based on the applicants' preferences. Applicants are requested to choose the country where they wish to complete the internship, and they are guaranteed a job offer from a company or organisation in the selected country once they have settled the programme fee with the career centre for the costs of the air ticket and accommodation. With no syllabus, intended learning outcomes and assessments, it is revealed in this dissertation that programmes Y and Z followed the 'postmodern internship model' (Sides and Mrvica, 2007) that embraces professional, formalised, and accountable industry training. In terms of the pedagogical design, the programmes are experiential learning activity outside the normal curriculum of the university. Chapter 2 reviewed the theoretical debates

and models of experiential learning. Two classic experiential models of Kolb's (1984) *Cycle of Experiential Learning* and Jarvis' (1987) *Model of the Learning Process* were explained and applied in this research. Kolb (1984) points out that experiential learning progresses through a four-stage cycle that can start in any stage: Concrete Experience (CE), Abstract Conceptualisation (AC), Reflective Observation (RO) and Active Experimentation (AE). Jarvis (1987) states that learning cannot be separated from the social context and experiential learning requires interaction between the self and the environment. Developed on the interpretative-constructivist epistemology and affirmed by the results of quantitative survey as well as qualitative interviews, the international internship programmes Y and Z were processes of learning that students gained experiences in a socially constructed environment, which stimulates the reflection of the self, and successively changes their emotion and actions. As discussed in Chapter 5 and 6, the participants from university X showed high self-motivation in joining the international internship programmes Y and Z. Most of them had high expectations on making use of the internship opportunities abroad to acquire more knowledge and better skills for preparing future career. They engaged in concrete experience at workplaces abroad and had frequent contact with the environment. However, the research findings showed that, while the participants engaged in an experiential learning environment, some of them did not reflect much on their experience, and the others refused to keep learning when they found that they could not apply the knowledge they had learnt from school at work. Those who fell out of the learning cycle or stages were the participants who alleged that the internship positions were dissimilar to their major of study at university. Therefore, this dissertation observes that experiential learning is never a natural

process, and the cycle of learning can be disrupted by low self-efficacy of learners: Once they had found that the job tasks were something that they had never learnt or done before, they held on at the experience stage and declined to progress their learning through reflection, interaction, or conceptualisation. The process of learning, hence, is more complex than the process of learning that Kolb (1984) and Jarvis (1987) have illustrated. Since every learner is distinctive, the experiential learning cycles may or may not work on the learner for various reasons, which requires careful research and analysis of the unique experiences of the learners.

Arguing that the experiential learning theory and models present a rough idea of how learning progresses, this dissertation found that multiple factors could obstruct the progression of the experiential learning process. As discussed in Chapter 2, Sweitzer and King (2014)'s *Developmental Stage Model* of internship and the *Job Characteristics Model* (Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Stansbie, Nash, and Jack, 2013) have both indicated that interns have to cope with various problems and challenges arising from the job responsibility, the people around, the working culture, and so on. If they are unable to cope with or to change the situation, they may undergo emotional ambivalence, frustration, sadness, anger and so on. Affirming the abovementioned models, Chapters 4 and 5 presented quantitative and qualitative research findings on different challenges and obstacles experienced by the participants of international internship programmes Y and Z – dissatisfaction with the programme design, disappointment due to unrelated job positions to their major study at university, stress from work, poor relationship with supervisors or co-workers, and so on. This dissertation found that the biggest challenge the interns encountered at work was the language

barrier, followed by unfamiliar work tasks and lack of confidence. Working in real companies or organisations with experienced people, the participants experienced challenges they had never encountered before as a student, and while some of the participants maintained high self-efficacy and successfully overcame the challenges by themselves, some received guidance from supervisors and co-workers, and the remaining participants were frustrated and did not know what to do. As evaluated in Chapters 4 and 5 with further discussion in Chapter 6, the traditional model of learning, or the learning theory (Schunk, 2012) explained in Chapter 2, is applicable to the investigation of international internship, especially for the relationship between the interns and their supervisors as well as co-workers. In the perspective of behaviourism, some interns expressed that their supervisors always reached out to provide guidance, but others said their supervisors seldom reached out because they were too busy. In the perspective of cognitivism, some interns regarded their supervisors as role models, but others disliked their supervisors as they assigned them the tasks that they were incapable of accomplishing. In the perspective of constructivism, the workplace environment had either facilitated or obstructed the participants' collaboration with co-workers. Some expressed that their co-workers were friendly and helpful while others had limited contact with their co-workers. Compared to the teacher-student relationship at the university, the relationships between the participants and their supervisors as well as co-workers are assumed to be more like a mentee-mentor relationship, in which experiential learning was expected to have accelerated if the participants received valuable advice from their supervisors as well as co-workers and practised self-improvement.

In addition to the question of ‘what experiential learning experiences did students gain from the participation in international internship programmes?’, this dissertation has explored further the question of ‘how the programmes changed students’ career planning and modified their world view?’. The review of HE policy development in Hong Kong as well as other places in Chapter 1 has concluded that employability has been regarded as more important than a university certificate under the massification in global HE. Discussed in Chapter 2, the determinant of a graduate’s competitiveness for a job position has been shifted from the academic result they achieved to the employability skills they have acquired during their study, and the enhancement of employability has set as a policy agenda in many countries of the world. Despite there being a number of researches focusing on the relationship between internships and employability, research studies on the self-perceived employability of students who have international internship experiences were scarce. Hence, this dissertation fills the gap concerning the lack of research about international internships and employability and explores the impacts of globalisation on HE with empirical studies of international internship participants. The concept of employability was introduced and nine career-related employability skills (Hall, Higson and Bullivant, 2009) discussed in Chapter 2 were examined in the survey illustrated in Chapter 3 to investigate participants’ self-perceived improvement of skills. Chapter 4 presented the survey data and Chapter 5 presented the findings from semi-structured interview research. Both quantitative and qualitative researches have shown that career exploration and enhancement of employability skills are two major motivating factors for students to participate in international internship programmes, yet many participants disagreed that they have any clearer career

goals and plans after the internship experience. Despite the self-perception of many participants that international internship programmes boosted their confidence in job hunting, as well as strengthening their CV and competitiveness in the labour market, many of the participants having no idea about which career path they should pursue in the future. Chapter 6 applied the USEM model (Yorke and Knight, 2002) discussed in Chapter 2 and contended that many participants did not find that they had benefited from the programmes in terms of understanding industry knowledge, development of metacognitive skills, and establishment of self-efficacy. The mismatch of the internship positions also caused some of the participants felt frustrated and directionless. All of these not only contribute to the limited research output about employability but also create new discussions regard to the impact of international internship on students' future career planning.

Chapter 6 further discussed the influence of globalisation discourses on students' self-perception of employability and career planning. As revealed from the research findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5, the globalisation discourses and the adoption of internationalisation policy in HE in Hong Kong have given students an impression that they have to sharpen their English language skills, understand different cultures of the world, and that they must be more adaptable in the changing global environment for better preparation of future career. Chapters 4 and 5 revealed that the participants regarded oral communication as the skill that was most improved in the international internship programmes, followed by written communication. Some participants also expressed that the programmes enabled them to meet different people while working abroad, thus boosted their confidence in using the English language. Further discussed in

Chapter 6, the summer international internship experiences, in addition to the recommendation letters and compliments they received from their supervisors and co-workers, gave the participants' a self-perceived advantage in exploring their career options globally, though many of them had no clear plan or goal straight after completing the internship programmes.

Immersing oneself in another culture distinguishes international internships from local ones. It is also the researcher's interest to investigate the cultural impact of international internships on the participants. To narrow the scope of intercultural competence, this dissertation selected intercultural proficiency and global citizenship for further investigation. Chapter 2 introduced the above two concepts and discussed previous research studies on whether cultures can be learned through immersion in other cultures (Hartman and Kiely, 2014) and experiential learning abroad (Lutterman-Aguilar and Gingerich, 2002). Chapters 4 and 5 further empirically investigated the participants of international internship programmes Y and Z, in which the participants commented that the cultures they experienced in other places were very different from the culture in Hong Kong. Nearly all participants noticed that the working culture in western countries, for instance, the UK, Australia and Germany, is more flexible and relaxing than in Hong Kong. They also pointed out that people of western countries are more friendly than people in Hong Kong. All of these are valuable findings about intercultural proficiency development through international internship participations, which have never been investigated in Hong Kong. More importantly, some participants revealed that they would like to travel back to the countries where they interned to seek a graduate job because they liked the culture

and people there, which is an interesting research finding missing from previous research on international internships. In contrast to their internship jobs, it seems that the participants reflected more frequently on the cultures and people of the country. They showed proficient cultural sensitivity and were able to point out many distinctive characteristics of other cultures. As discussed in Chapter 6, culture shock and difficulties in cultural adjustment were insignificant among the participants. Many of them admitted that the international internship opportunities offered them a unique and eye-opening experience in living, working and spending time with the locals. They appreciated having such an opportunity to broaden their horizons and establish their global citizenship through enhancement of their global mobility. However, as discussed in Chapter 6, most participants showed insensitivity and disinterest with regard to areas that irrelevant to the self, such as global issues and international relations, only a few participants declared their willingness and dedication to utilise their global citizenship identity for transforming the world in a good will.

Despite the programmes had already ended during the research period, many participants expressed that they were still keeping in contact with people they met during their internships abroad, and a few of them planned to fly back to the internship destination to visit their companies in the future. It is beyond the scope for this dissertation to assess the participants' intercultural proficiency with a framework or a model, yet the participants' sharing on their unique international internship experiences and their reflections on the ideas and practices of intercultural communication have profound implications on the study of experiential learning and international internships in the future.

7.3 Limitations and Recommendations

Looking back, this dissertation has three major limitations: use of single case study, limited in scope and small sample size. Recommendations to improve the design of similar research in the future are provided after the specifications of each limitation.

First and foremost, use of a single case study in this dissertation is unrepresentative and unable to be generalised. While this study has focused on researching the international internship programmes of one of the public universities in Hong Kong, the case studied in this dissertation, university X, is not representative enough and the research findings may hardly be able to generalise to the other places outside Hong Kong. Although Zainal (2007) claims that a single case allows the researcher to closely explore issues within a specific context, it is questionable that a single case is sufficient to make sense of the complex relationships among international internship programmes, experiential learning, employability and intercultural competence. It is also suspicious that the findings of this research study can hardly to be generalised in places other than Hong Kong as the international internship programmes and the participants were all invited from the same university. Bassey (1999) describes an education case study leads to a “fuzzy generalisation” (p. 14). The focus of a single case in this dissertation gives up the opportunity to compare different international internship programmes, and without an all-round investigation of various international internship programmes in Hong Kong, this dissertation suffers from a limited and similar opinions shared by students of the same university. Since every international internship programme has its unique design, objectives and learning

outcomes, therefore, more comprehensive investigations on the variation of internship programme design and the diversified impact of different international internship programmes can be carried out in the future for getting deeper understanding of international internship experiences shared by students of different universities and places of the world.

Second, the scope of the research in this dissertation is limited on the participants who completed the international internship programmes Y and Z of university X in 2018. The other stakeholders of the internship programmes such as the other students of university X, the teachers, the staffs of the career centre, the university management, the education policy representatives in Hong Kong, as well as the employers of the participated interns were all excluded. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) state that the investigation of a situation through the eyes of various stakeholders is able to offer multiple perspectives and causality to an education research. However, this dissertation offers a one-sided scope of views of the participants only, it fails to provide the explanations on the internationalisation policy agenda by the university management. It also fails to illustrate the rationale of the programme design of the career centre, and the feedback of the employers on the performance of participants. The start time of the research after the internship period was over has consequently barred the researcher to recruit a group of students who did not participate in the international internship programmes as a control group, thus the research study was unable to demonstrate a thorough picture on the outcomes of international internship participation. All in all, in view of the limited number of stakeholders involved in the research study of this dissertation, future researches may consider

bringing more voices into the research of international internship programmes so that different voices, views and opinions can be heard.

Last but not least, the sample size of the mix-method research in this dissertation is small. Mentioned in previous chapters, the average number of students joining the international internship programmes Y and Z are around 40 to 200 per an academic year. While the researcher was unable to obtain the total number of participants joined the two programmes in 2018 from the career centre, the number was assumed small. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) point out, the larger the sample size the better, and the number of respondents in a statistical research should be larger than 30. The survey research of this dissertation was fortunate to obtain 41 responses but was far less than the ideal number of at least 300 respondents. The small sample size in this survey not only increased the difficulty in generating statistical results using SPSS software, but also affected the validity as well as reliability of the results. In view of the above, this research gave up hypothesis testing since the researcher doubted that the small sample size would not support the acceptance or rejection of a hypothesis. In addition, the purposive sampling of the survey as well as the internet-based questionnaire distributed posed a great challenge on confirming the reliability of the data. Another research method, the semi-structured interview, recruited and interviewed 13 participants. Although the number of participants is less important than the knowledge discovered in a qualitative research, few internship destinations were found having no interns participated in the interviews. The research findings, in consequence, were partial because the voices of those participants were left out. To cope with the challenge of small sample size, the future researches may try to enlarge the sample size in different ways, for instance,

increase the number of cases from one to two or more, conduct longitudinal researches, and involve more intern participants of previous years. These are the ways that will help obtaining a larger and boarder base of samples.

7.4 Significance and Implications

Although Hong Kong is recognised as an international city, the core cultural value and demographic are still Chinese dominated. Through analysing students' international internship experiences, this dissertation contributes to the study of international internships in facilitating students' personal, intellectual and professional growth. The findings of the study on experiential learning through international internships, employability and students' career planning will bring about new knowledge and understanding on the study of internationalisation of HE and experiential learning pedagogy.

For future education research in HE, this study provides a deeper understanding of how internships constitute experiential learning experiences outside of classrooms. The investigation of students' international internship experiences offers a critical examination of the experiential learning, globalisation, marketisation of HE and employability literature. Through investigating students' internship experiences and future career plans, this study also facilitates an enriched understanding of how internships transform experience into knowledge, value and behaviour (Lee and Schottenfeld, 2012). This study that focuses on students who completed international internship programmes generates an in-depth analysis on the study of students' motivation and engagement in experiential learning activities outside a local context, which

also potentially enhances the quality of teaching and learning for internship programme designers.

For policy makers, this study unleashes the tension of globalisation discourses and reveals the dissatisfactions of students towards the entire HE system. Despite the literature emphasising that internships are to be thought of “not as an opportunity but as a necessity” (Toncar and Cudmore, 2000, p. 54), little research has been conducted to investigate the voices of students concerning the value of internships in their university life, and the continuity impacts of international learning experiences on whole person development as well as career planning. As mentioned earlier, different terms such as “information age” and “knowledge society” become popular alongside globalisation, and many of these terms are constructed and promoted by policy makers. This study goes beyond the traditional discussion of internship programme design and explores how knowledge is developed through learners’ interactions and responses to the environment. In particular, the international internship opportunities are viewed as socially constructed activities, and reflections of students upon their unique internship experiences contribute to the understanding of the interaction between experiential learning and social constructivism, as well as the development of skills and knowledge in the globalised world.

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Appendix

Appendix I

Table 1:

Recent development of international/ overseas internship programmes for undergraduate students of UGC-funded universities in Hong Kong (as of July 2017)

Name of University	Name of International Internships Programme(s)	Name of Organiser(s)
University of Hong Kong	Overseas and Mainland Internship	Centre of Development and Resources for Students
Chinese University of Hong Kong	Global Internship Programme (GIP)	Career Planning and Development Centre
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	HKUST Internship Network (iNet)	Career Center of Student Affairs Office
Hong Kong Baptist University	Metropolitan Attachment Programme (MAP) and Global Attachment Opportunities (GAO)	Career Centre of Office of Student Affairs
City University of Hong Kong	Global Work Attachment Programme	Career and Leadership Centre
Hong Kong Polytechnic University	International Work-Integrated Education (WIE) Programme	Office of Career and Placement Services
Lingnan University	International Internship Programmes	Student Services Centre
Hong Kong Education University	Career Development Internship Programme (Overseas)	Student Affairs Office

Table 2:

Destinations of the international/ overseas internship programmes for undergraduate students offer by UGC-funded universities in Hong Kong (as of July 2017)

Name of University	Name of International Internships Programme(s)	Destinations
University of Hong Kong	Overseas and Mainland Internship	China, Taiwan, ASEAN, Japan, India, USA, Europe, The Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland etc.
Chinese University of Hong Kong	Global Internship Programme (GIP)	Over 100 cities in Mainland, Asian and Overseas countries
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	HKUST Internship Network (iNet)	China, ASEAN, USA, Australia, UK, Colombia, Spain and other European countries
Hong Kong Baptist University	Metropolitan Attachment Programme (MAP) and Global Attachment Opportunities (GAO)	Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Norway, South Korea, Southern Sweden, Taiwan, UK, USA
City University of Hong Kong	Global Work Attachment Programme	Australia, China, Germany, Japan
Hong Kong Polytechnic University	International Work-Integrated Education (WIE) Programme	ASEAN, Russia, Turkey, Australia, Europe, Canada, Japan, Middle East
Lingnan University	International Internship Programmes	Ireland, France, Germany, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Chile, Lithuania, UK, ASEAN, China

<p>Hong Kong Education University</p>	<p>Career Development Internship Programme (CDIP) (Overseas and Greater China Region)/ (ASEAN Module)/ (USETO Module)/ (Europe ETO Module)</p>	<p>Africa, Australia, Germany, New Zealand, South Korea, USA, China, Taiwan, Europe, ASEAN</p>
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Appendix II

Survey on International Internship, Experiential Learning Experience and Employability

The survey is part of the dissertation titled '*Voices from undergraduate students: Do international internships support experiential learning and prepare their future employability?*' conducted by Ms LEUNG Hang Yee, a doctoral student of the Bristol University School of Education. The information obtained from this study will help the researcher to understand how international internships expedite experiential learning experiences and how students feel themselves changed in terms of employability attributes after completion of an international internship.

To be eligible to participate in this survey study, you have to confirm that you are:

- A participant of international internship programme and have successfully completed the programme within three years from the date of this research
- A local, full-time undergraduate degree student at the time of your participation of the international internship programme
- Able to read English

As a participant, you will be asked to complete a printed questionnaire attached in this document, which consists of a series of questions about your motivation, attitudes, behaviours, thoughts and feelings regarding your international internship experience that correspond to the in-depth interview. The questionnaire will take you approximately 20 minutes to complete with a total of 8 pages.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate in this survey study will involve no penalty. But once you have completed and submitted the questionnaire, it is not possible to withdraw or modify the data. Data from this survey will be aggregated and will be analysed for academic study only. Your personal data, such as your name and student IDs will not be collected. During this time the researcher will be the only person to access your data. All data will be kept confidentially. If you have any questions regarding this research, you may contact Ms Leung at edhyl@bristol.ac.uk.

By putting a tick in the box, you indicate that you have read and understood the above consent form and confirm your willingness to voluntarily take part in the survey study:

I have read the above statement of research. I hereby confirm my eligibility and consent to participate in this survey study.

Section A: Motivation in Participating an International Internship

The following questions ask about the motivating factors that facilitated your participations in the international internship programme. Please consider yourself as the former 'you' who were making decision in joining the programme. This section will take about 5 minutes to complete.

Please select the most accurate description for each statement:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I made the decision of joining the programme on my own.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I believe international exposure is important to a university student.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I had my own preference of the country/place that I wanted to work at.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I regard the opportunity for gaining work experience in another country/place was the most important reason that I chose to join the programme.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I feel more fascinated than worrying when I made the decision of participating in the programme.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I received sufficient information about the international internship programme from the organiser.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I have never worried about the internship programme fee.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I received sufficient information about the subsidy/s that I could apply.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I have gathered as much information about the programme as I could.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I prefer an internship out of my hometown than a local internship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

On a scale from 0-10, rate your self-motivation level in joining the international internship programme. (0 = Totally not motivated, 10= Extremely motivated)

Answer:

Section B: Self-evaluated work performance and job competency

This section is about the employment opportunity that had offered to you, and your self-evaluation of work performance and job competency.

The following questions ask about your experience and feelings about your job and your company of the international internship. This section will take about 8 minutes to complete.

Please select the most accurate description for each statement:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I like the company I worked for.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I like the position I have been assigned to.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I like the working culture of my company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I had a work supervisor who fully supported me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I found myself capable to handle the job tasks assigned by my work supervisor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I felt confident to complete the job tasks assigned by my work supervisor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I utilised the knowledge and skills obtained from my undergraduate study in Hong Kong to perform my job effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I had lot of questions and doubts at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. The work of my internship was meaningful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I was given a wide variety of tasks at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. I actively reached out my work supervisor to seek comments on my job performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. I actively reached out my co-workers to seek comments on my job performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. I always reflected on the comments of others and tried to improve my performance at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. I felt no pressure at work during internship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. I felt that the internship had provided me a lot of knowledge and skills that I	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

could not learn from my university study.						
16. This internship helped me to find my career goal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. I have a clearer career plan in mind after the internship had completed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. I feel more passionate to look for a similar type of job even though my internship had ended.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Overall, I am satisfied with the company that I worked for the internship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Overall, I am satisfied with my job performance during internship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Overall, the internship experience has offered me a stronger resume.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

On a scale from 0-10, rate how much the international internship experience has supported your career planning. (0= Extremely unsupportive, 10= Extremely supportive)

Answer:

Section C: Employability skills

This section is about the knowledge and/or skills you acquired from international internship.

The following questions ask about the employability skills that you have obtained or improved during international internship. This section will take about 5 minutes to complete.

Hall, Higson and Bullivant (2009) have identified nine employability competencies in the global competitive economy. Two competencies have been restructured for better specification below. Please indicate how much each competency you consider yourself improved from the job of the international internship.

	Much stronger	Moderately stronger	Slightly stronger	No change	Slightly weaker	Moderately weaker	Much weaker
1. Verbal communication skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Written communication skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Influencing (other) people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Negotiation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Customer awareness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Self-development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Managing change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Critical thinking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Problem solving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Time management skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Networking skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please select the most accurate description for each competency:

Pick ONE employability competency you consider the most improved one during your internship.

Answer:

This is an open-ended question. Are there any qualities/knowledge/skills that you would like to improve from international internship but were not able to achieve?

Answer:

On a scale from 0-10, rate the overall improvement of skills or knowledge you acquired specifically from the international internship. (0= Not at all improved, 10= Extremely well improved)

Answer:

Section D: Self-perception on cultural awareness

This section is about your cultural awareness after the completion of the international internship programme.

Some of the following questions adapted from the Multicultural Sensitivity Scale (Jibaja et al. 2000) will ask about your change in cultural awareness. This section will take about 5 minutes to complete.

Please select the most accurate description for each statement:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The internship improved my comfortability to get along with people from cultures other than my own.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I encountered no problem to interact with people in a workplace of another culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. The internship strengthened my understanding of other ethnic character(s).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I am more empathetic on ethnic minorities people after completion of the internship programme.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I am more respectful of other culture(s) after completion of the internship programme.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I have built a stronger international social network through the internship experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I keep contact with the people I met during the internship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I am more culturally sensitive after completion of the internship programme.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I am more willing to work for a multi-cultural company after completion of the internship programme.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Overall, the international internship experience has contributed to the improvement of my cultural awareness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

On a scale from 0-10, rate how competent you rate yourself in exploring multicultural interactions after the completion of international internship programme. (0= Extremely incompetent, 10= Extremely competent)

Answer:

Section E: Demographic questions

1. Sex:
 Male
 Female

2. Year of study:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Others, please specify: _____

3. Major of study:

- Arts / Humanities/ Language Studies/ Cultural Studies
- Business/ Finance/ Human Resources/ Marketing/ Management
- Mathematics/ Statistics
- Hotel/ Hospitality
- Journalism/Communication/ Film/ Creative Writing
- Science
- Technology
- Education/ Sports/ Physical Education
- Chinese Medicine/ Medicine/ Nursing
- Social Work/ Sociology
- Others, please specify: _____

4. Country/city travelled for the international internship:

- China – Beijing
- China – Shanghai
- China – Guangzhou
- China – other, please specify the city: _____
- Taiwan – Taipei
- Germany – Berlin
- Germany – Munich
- Germany – other, please specify the city: _____
- USA – Chicago
- Australia – Melbourne
- Australia – Sydney
- Korea – Seoul
- Others, please specify: _____

5. Duration of the internship period:

- One month or below
- Two months
- Three months
- More than three months

6. Year completed the international internship programme:

- 2016
- 2017
- 2018
- Others, please specify: _____

7. Approximate amount of money spent during the internship period, including the cost of the programme:

- HKD \$10,000 or below
- HKD \$10,001 – 15,000
- HKD \$15,001 – 20,000
- HKD \$20,001 – 25,000
- HKD \$25,001 – 30,000
- HKD \$30,001 – 35,000
- HKD \$35,001 – 40,000
- HKD \$40,001 or above

8. Funding source(s) of the internship (can choose more than one):

- Full paid by myself/ parents
- Subsidised by the Career Centre
- Subsidised by the programme of major study
- Subsidised by the funding of the government
- Subsidised by private funding or scholarship
- Others, please specify: _____

9. Refer to the above question, approximate subsidies received:

- None
- HKD \$1 to 5,000
- HKD \$5,001 to 10,000

- HKD \$10,001 – 15,000
- HKD \$15,001 – 20,000
- HKD \$20,001 – 25,000
- HKD \$25,001 – 30,000
- HKD \$30,001 – 35,000
- HKD \$35,001 – 40,000
- HKD \$40,001 or above

10. The company I worked during the internship programme was ...

- A company with the same nature of specialisation as my major study
- A company with similar but not the same nature of specialisation as my major study
- A company with different nature of specialisation from my major study

11. The job position I worked during the internship programme was...

- A position fully matched with my major study in the university
- A position partly matched with my major study in the university
- A position little matched with my major study in the university
- A position not matched with my major study in the university

12. Did you attend any information session of the international internship programme hosted by the organiser of your university?

- Yes
- No

13. My language competencies (Native, Fluent, Average, Below Average, Not Competent)

- Cantonese
- Mandarin
- English
- Japanese
- Korean
- German
- French
- Spanish

Thank you for your participation in this survey!

Appendix III

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction:

I am here with interviewee ___ (use code), who has participated in the international internship programme offered by University X and have completed the programme successfully. The purpose of this interview is to know more about the experiential learning experience of the interns, and their unique experiences of working overseas.

Part A. Preparation for the international internship programme

1. What is your current year of study, and your major?
2. Why did you choose an international internship instead of a local one?
3. Which year did you complete the internship programme?
4. Which country did you choose? What made you choose this country?
5. While choosing the destination of your internship, did you have any concern about the price since you have to pay for the air ticket, visa fee, and accommodation etc.? If yes, what was your major concern? How did you overcome it, say, did you apply for any subsidy?
6. To what extent has your academic experience influenced your decision on choosing an internship?
7. How did you complete the application and get the offer?
8. Did you encounter any problems or difficulties during your application process? If yes, can you share more?
9. Were there any helps provided by the university to better prepare your internship before travelling? Including subsidy (previous point above)?
10. How did you prepare yourself for the internship?
11. Prior to the experience, what did you hope to gain from the internship?
12. What were your feelings before you travel?
13. Did you have any worries before you travel? Any examples?

Part B. Experiential learning experience through international internship programme

1. What was the name of the company/ organisation of your internship?
2. Describe the organisation.
3. When did the internship begin and when did it end?
4. What was your job title?
5. What were the specific tasks/responsibilities/projects of your job?
6. Was your job responsibility during the internship what you expected?
7. How would you describe your internship experience?
8. What knowledge and skills did you gain from the internship experience?
9. In your opinion, what are the differences between classroom learning and learning at a workplace?
10. Do you regard the knowledge and skills you learnt from your job were unable or uneasy to be learnt in the setting of a classroom/ university?
11. How would you describe your performance in the internship?
12. Can you give examples of your best and worst performance in the internship?
13. How often do you reflect on your performance during the internship period? Tell me more about your reflections.
14. How did you cope with the challenges facing in the internship programme?

15. How did your manager and colleagues comment on your work performance, if any?
16. Did you reflect on their comments and make some changes? How?
17. In addition to work, what were the other activities that have been included in the international internship programme?
18. Did you encounter any homesick? Please share your experience.
19. Did you have any cultural shock? Please share your experience.
20. What strengths and limitations do you see in an overseas internship?
21. Were there any situations where you have drawn upon any understandings, knowledge, or skills that you think you would not be able to do so in a local internship programme?
22. Overall, how far do you agree that an international internship is a journey of learning? Please share your thoughts.
23. Do you have any other comments to add?

Part C. Employability enhancement through international internship programme

1. Do you regard yourself more 'employable' by having an international internship experience? Why?
2. What is your current career goal and plan?
3. To what extent your career goal or choice has been impacted by the internship experience?
4. Do you have any specific experience(s) from the internship that has influenced your career plan, or ways you would like to see yourself to grow in a certain industry?
5. Hong Kong is an international city full of career opportunities offered by multinational companies, how far do you think an international internship experience give you a competitive edge on applying for these companies?
6. How do you see yourself working with multicultural people before and after the internship?
7. What are some important employability skills in your perspective?
8. In what ways have you equipped or improved these skills through the internship?
9. Overall, do you think an international internship experience benefit an undergraduate student? Share your view.

Part D. Wrap-up

1. Thus far in the international internship programme, what was your most memorable experience?
2. Do you think it is worth to participate in the international internship programme? Why?
3. We have discussed a lot of topics related to your international internship experience during the interview, is there anything else you would like to tell me about yourself and your internship experience?

Thank you for taking time to participate in this interview

Appendix IV

SoE RESEARCH ETHICS FORM

It is important for members of the School of Education, as a community of researchers, to consider the ethical issues that arise, or may arise, in any research they propose to conduct. Increasingly, we are also accountable to external bodies to demonstrate that research proposals have had a degree of scrutiny. *This form must therefore be completed for each piece of research carried out by members of the School, both staff and students*

The SoE's process is designed to be supportive and educative. If you are preparing to submit a research proposal, you need to do the following:

- 1. Complete the form on the back of this sheet**
A list of prompts for your discussion is given below. Not all these headings will be relevant for any particular proposal.
- 2. Arrange a meeting with a fellow researcher**
The purpose of the meeting is to discuss ethical aspects of your proposed research, so you need to meet with someone with relevant research experience. Discussants are encouraged to take the role of critical friend and approach the research from the perspective of potential participants.

Track the changes in how your thinking has changed as a result of your decisions; this form is designed to act as a record of your discussion and any decisions you make.
- 3. Upload a copy of this form and any other documents (e.g. information sheets, consent forms, materials) to the online ethics tool at: <https://dbms.ilrt.bris.ac.uk/red/ethics-online-tool/applications>.**

Please note: Following the upload you will need to answer ALL the questions on the ethics online survey and submit for approval by your supervisor (see the flowchart and user guides on the SoE Ethics Homepage).

If you have any questions or queries, please contact the ethics co-ordinators at: gsoe-ethics@bristol.ac.uk

Please ensure that you allow time before any submission deadlines to complete this process.

Prompts for discussion

You are invited to consider the issues highlighted below and note any decisions made. You may wish to refer to relevant published ethical guidelines to prepare for your meeting. See <http://www.bris.ac.uk/education/research/networks/ethicscommittee/links/> for links to several such sets of guidelines.

1. Researcher access/ exit
2. Information given to participants
3. Participants right of withdrawal
4. Informed consent
5. Complaints procedure
6. Safety and well-being of participants/ researchers
7. Anonymity/ confidentiality
8. Data collection
9. Data analysis
10. Data storage
11. Data Protection Act
12. Feedback
13. Responsibilities to colleagues/ academic community
14. Reporting of research

Be aware that ethical responsibility continues throughout the research process. If further issues arise as your research progresses, it may be appropriate to cycle again through the above process.

Name(s): LEUNG Hang Yee

Proposed research project: Voices from undergraduate students: Do international internships support experiential learning and prepare future employability?

Proposed funder(s): None

Discussant for the ethics meeting: Ms. CHARM, Yee Chong Caroline (EdD candidate, University of Bristol)

Name of supervisor: Dr. Lisa Lucas

Has your supervisor seen this submitted draft of your ethics application? Y/~~N~~

Please include an outline of the project or append a short (1 page) summary:

Traditionally, university education is conducted physically in classrooms or laboratories. Yet, massification of higher education as well as the impact of globalisation and marketisation in recent decades have resulted in an unprecedented growth of student enrolments in universities in many countries. To enrich students' learning experiences and to meet the demands and pressures from governments, employers and parents and ensure graduates are more 'employable', more universities are offering international internship programmes for enhancing students' competitiveness not only in the local labour market, but also in the global ones. This study attempts to theorise and interpret the conceptual and empirical ideas of internships, experiential learning, and employability. Focusing on the experiences of university students of a university in Hong Kong who had participated in an international internship programme, this study reviews several experiential learning models suggested by various scholars and investigates the unique experiences of overseas internships as well as their impact on shaping students' employability and career perceptions.

International internship programmes in higher education are commonly recognised as holistic, career-oriented, and non-curriculum-based. Using a case study and the interpretive/constructivist research approach, the entire research is framed on the assumption that learning is a social practice influenced by history and culture, in addition to the subjectively defined and interpreted human behaviours. The entire case study is an international internship programme initiated by the career development centre of a local university in Hong Kong. The case offers an invaluable opportunity for researching international internships as a form of experiential learning, as well as the voices and inner reflection of the participants who provide a wider explanation of the reality embodied in the growing number of Chinese students who are interested in an international than a local internship.

Using a concurrent triangulation mixed-method approach (Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen, 2010), the research adopts in-depth semi-structured interviews, textual analysis and survey to collect qualitative and quantitative data about the students' experiences in the participation of international internships and their self-perceptions of employability. Scott and Usher (2011)

state that voices of participants not only represent the raw data of a research, but also reconstruct stories of individuals' unique social experiences. This research is about an educational case study of an international internship programme coded as Y offered by a university in Hong Kong coded as X. The mixed method approach with a concurrent framework (Johnson and Christensen, 2012) involves: (1) semi-structured, face-to-face in-depth interviews, (2) textual analysis of individual participant's social media posts or internship reflection reports, and (3) a survey that consists of 50 questions (and an additional 12 demographic questions). The design of mixed method approach is to investigate individual unique overseas internship experiences through qualitative research approaches of interviews and textual analysis, and to broadly indicate the employability perception of participants through the results of a questionnaire.

According to Scott and Usher (2011), purposive sampling, also named theoretical sampling, is much used in case study educational research. The entire research is sampled on a small number of interns who completed international internship programme Y. The sample size targeted for this research is 12 to 15. All participants are expected to sign a consent form to confirm their willingness to participate in the research voluntarily. Further ethical considerations will be discussed in the following part.

Ethical issues discussed, and decisions taken (see list of prompts overleaf):

Ensure you have addressed all the relevant ethical issues mentioned above and perhaps have key sections that show clearly how you are addressing them.

Information given to participants

In the pursuit of this research study, it is noteworthy that the researcher/interviewer of this case study carries an insider role as an academic of the university. This brings both advantages and challenges to the research process. Hamilton and Corbett-Whitter (2013) define the research led by a teacher as insider as "systematic, intentional inquiry about their own classrooms, schools and communities underpinned by an emic (insider) approach which has the scope to gain rich insights and also to aid change, reform and policy" (p. 121). Citing the support by many scholars such as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) and Stenhouse (1985), they state that the many forms of practitioner's research are transformative in nature and highly innovative because the insider views of the researcher help inaugurating a clear aim for the research, thus facilitating a more reflective and systematic design of research tools. The findings of the research are also recognised as more verified knowledge subject to the professional role and self-reflection of the teacher-researcher. Other scholars such as Reinherz (1992) and Oakley (1981) also argue that the insider identity of the interviewer can have advantages in that the interviewees may feel more comfortable to reveal more information to an insider interviewer than a stranger interviewer (cited in Mertens, 1998, p. 137).

Despite of the fact that I am personally not involved in organising and coordinating the international internship programme of my university, an inherent challenge of trust exists in this research as participants may misunderstand that this research is a teacher-led research for the university. As Mertens (1998) cites Babbies (1990) and emphasises that, a neutral role of

the interviewer is often assumed in an interview, the insider identity of the researcher may impose unaware power pressure on the participants, leading them to make assumptions on the best answer and response in the way that they assume the researcher would prefer.

Participants right of withdrawal

To avoid ethical problems arising from my teacher identity, I have stated very clearly my identity as a Bristol University doctoral student research on every communication between myself and the potential participants – from email exchanges, consent form, to survey agreement, I introduced myself as a Bristol University doctoral student and provided my email contact as well as my supervisors name and email contact to them. I also make a verbal guarantee to the participants that this was an academic research of my personal interest and the study was not initiated by the university, involvement in this research is purely a voluntary contribution that would have no impact on academic result or any other aspects.

Anonymity/ confidentiality

According to Mertens (1998), the identity of the research participants should always be kept confidential, meaning no one, except the researcher, is expected to identify who the participant is through tracing the information provided in the research. To protect the privacy of the participants, the name of the university, the international internship programme researched, and the names of the participants are replaced by random code numbers. All specific information that may lead to identification of the students and graduates, such as study programme, year of study, student ID number, and graduation year etc. will be removed from both the thesis as well as the supplementary materials such as transcriptions of the interviews.

Informed consent

To obtain full consent of participation from the research subjects, a consent form has been constructed for the signature by every participant, and they were reminded that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw from the research at any time without penalty. The consent form will be attached in the dissertation.

As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) point out, after gaining full permission and informed consent by reaching out to the official department of the targeted community, researcher needs to establish contact with the administrator of responsible person for communication. In this research, permission and acceptance for researching the interns has been granted by the university career centre. Supporting document (email exchanges between the researcher and the university career centre) would be attached in the dissertation.

Complaints procedure

The consent form serves as an agreement to confirm the subjects' willingness in taking part in each research component with informed consent. They were free to opt out the research at any point they wish. If any participants would like to lodge a complaint, they can contact the supervisor of this doctoral thesis research, and an email contact has been included at the end the consent form.

Data storage

During the data collection and data analysis period, only the researcher involved in this research will be able to access the data. To ensure the security of data storage, all research data will be kept in a computer and password-protected files that can only be accessed by the researcher, and the data will securely be destroyed upon completion of data analysis.

Data Collection and Data Protection Act

A part of this research is about the participants' social media posts on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram during the internship period. The Data Protection Act 1998 has outlined good practices of confidentiality and anonymity maintenance during collection and dissemination of information. The website of the Economic and Social Research Council have also provided some guidelines on handling social media data. Following the helpful guidance from the above mentioned, social media data of this research will not be considered as public data but private data. All social media data will be collected in a fair and responsible manner. Full consent to access the social media will be obtained from participants. The researcher will not access the social media accounts of the participants without permissions. To handle sensitive and private information on social media ethically, all data will be anonymised and protected securely. The posts to be selected for analysis will be strictly limited to the international internship and irrelevant data will not be used for analysis to avoid any intrusion. The data will be used for academic publications, including the dissertation, and no data will be transferred to any third party under any circumstances or used for any other purposes. Participants are allowed to request access of the collected data anytime through contacting the researcher or the supervisor of the researcher. No original social media post and photo will be directly captured from screen to minimise the risk of identifying the participants.

Responsibilities to colleagues/ academic community

Another ethical challenge of this research is the researcher's bias during the data analysis stage, in particular the set of values that the researcher may hold as a higher education teacher. To avoid biases in data collection process, the interview guide and questionnaire are set in a fair and neutral manner that contain no leading question or wordings. During the data analysis process, the researcher will cross-check the data collected from different approaches, as well as to maintain a critical, reflective, and self-monitored perspective when doing the analysis of the research data. For instance, writing up and analysing the data with a critical mind, showing contrasting and competing viewpoints, as well as interpreting the data with concepts and ideas from literature.

Feedback

To avoid personal bias as well as one-sided representation and interpretation of data, analysis and further discussion of data will be based on the actual research findings instead of the researcher's personal view or experiences. Before finalising the write-up of the thesis, the researcher will seek feedback and final confirmation of consent from each participant through a process of member checking. A password-encrypted file containing the transcript of the interview, a scanned copy of the completed survey, as well as the texts collected from social media or internship reflective reports will be given to each participant individually to ensure that they are comfortable with what data have been collected throughout the research process.

Participants are allowed to point out any mistakes, typos, and errors they found and request for modification. A final consent will be guaranteed through assuring that the texts transcribed from the interviews are error-free.

This research follows the above principles and strives to be as ethical as possible.

If you feel you need to discuss any issue further, or to highlight difficulties, please contact the GSoE's ethics co-ordinators who will suggest possible ways forward.

Signed: (Researcher) LEUNG, Hang-yee

Signed: (Discussant) CHARM, Yee-chong Caroline

Date: August 28, 2018

Appendix V

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

I would like to express my willingness to participate in the research for a thesis titled *‘Voices from undergraduate students: Do international internships support experiential learning and prepare their future employability?’*

The purpose of this research is to investigate the perceptions and experience of interns who participated in an international internship programme organised by a local university in Hong Kong. The research is interested in understanding the unique experiential learning experience of international internships and the impact of international internships on students’ self-perception of employability.

I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I will be participating in an in-depth, face-to-face and digital recorded interview that take approximately 45 minutes. I will also be asked to complete a “Survey on International Internship, Experiential Learning Experience and Employability”. Completion of the survey will take approximately 20 minutes.

I fully acknowledge that my identity will be kept anonymous throughout the study and will not be disclosed in any publication. I will not be asked to write down my names on the questionnaire. I also understand that only codes or numbers will be used for identification, and information that have possibly linked to identification of myself will be removed. To assure confidentiality, all research data will be kept in a computer that can only be accessed by the researcher, and the data will securely be destroyed upon completion of data analysis.

I understand that this study will be beneficial to global higher educators and experiential learning researchers. Through revealing the inner and unheard voices of undergraduate students who have completed international internships, the study will benefit the policy makers in provisioning the development of future higher education, and managers of the internship programmes will also be able to improve the planning of experiential learning activities.

I am aware that my participation in this research is voluntary and I have the freedom to opt out at any time without penalty or prejudice. I fully aware that the researcher is a teacher of the university but personally have no contact with me. I am also be informed that no known risk is associated with this research study.

I confirm my willingness of participating in this research study, and I have received a copy of this consent form. I understand that if I have further enquiries regarding my rights as a subject of this research, I can contact the researcher [Name Omitted] at [Phone Number Omitted] or send an email to [Email Omitted].

Signature

Appendix VI

Email to the Career Centre of University X

u.edu.hk>

Programme Survey Link and Email Draft to Students

To: Ai [redacted] u.edu.hk> at 2:57 PM
[redacted] u.edu.hk>

Dear [redacted]

This is [redacted] [redacted] ion. As spoken over the phone, I would like to invite the participants [redacted] ar [redacted] Programme to to complete an online survey relates to my doctoral study about international internships. I have already constructed the survey at the Qualtrics platform. The link is: [https://\[redacted\].ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dgs0AABujfBF14B](https://[redacted].ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dgs0AABujfBF14B).

I am grateful if you can help distributing the online survey to all participants of [redacted] O Programme via email. To facilitate the distribution of the survey, I have drafted an email of invitation as attached.

Thank you very much for your kind assistance. Should you have any further updates, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,
[redacted]
Lecturer
School of Communication [redacted]
+852 3411 5111
[redacted]@hk.hku.edu.hk

Appendix VII

Email Draft to Participants [Sent by the Career Centre of University X]

Dear [Name Omitted]:

This email is sent on behalf of Ms [Name Omitted], lecturer of [Name Omitted].

You are invited to complete an online survey relates to an academic study of international internships. You receive this email because you have participated in the [Name Omitted] programme and you can help contributing to an academic study relevant to a topic about international internship, experiential learning and employability.

As a student who have benefited from the [Name Omitted] programme, your input is vital. I would appreciate it if you would complete a questionnaire right after the completion of your [Name Omitted] programme by clicking the following link:

[https:// \[Name Omitted\].qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_51ozKNrk9n1HRs1](https://[Name Omitted].qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_51ozKNrk9n1HRs1)

The questionnaire can be completed on desktop computer or mobile devices. The information requested in this questionnaire will remain confidential and will only be used for statistical research purposes.

Should you have any enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher [Name Omitted] at [Email Omitted].

Thank you in advance for your co-operation and contribution.

Best Regards,

[Name Omitted]

Appendix VIII

Interview Transcripts (Sample – Interviewee 1)

Transcript of Interviewee 1 – Original transcript

Part A

Q1. What is your current year of study and your major?

A1: I am now a year 3 student major in in Statistics and Mathematics.

Q2. Why did you choose an international internship instead of a local one?

A2. I chose the international internship instead of a local one because I could benefit more from it. When I explore a new environment, I had to face more challenges, and I needed to find ways to solve problems and to improve myself. This could help me to explore my future career, and maybe I would choose this city to start up my career. Also, I could have a great chance to experience different cultures when travelling around the country in my spare time.

Q3. Which country did you choose? What made you choose this country?

A3: I chose Singapore as my first choice for the internship programme. People of this country mainly speak two major languages - Mandarin and English, and I can have good communication with others and live there with ease.

Q4. Is this your first time travelling to Singapore? Why did you choose this country but not the other places?

A4. This is my first time to travel Singapore. Although there are other options like the USA and Australia, Singapore is the only place that is very similar to Hong Kong, so that I could have a good chance to observe and compare the circumstances between these two places.

Q5. While choosing the destination of your internship, did you have any concern about the programme fee?

A5. I think the overall fee was a little bit expensive because the internship programme just last for two months, but it costed about HKD\$20,000. It is a bit difficult for a student to pay such a high price. Therefore, my family had to support me financially because I really wanted to try an internship in other countries. Moreover, the daily expenses in Singapore is quite high and even higher than Hong Kong.

Q6. Did you apply any subsidy from the university? Did your department provide any subsidy to you?

A6. I applied for a scholarship from my University department and received HK\$7,000. My department offered some local internship opportunities, but it is very hard for me to get an offer, so I decided to join this international internship programme.

Q7. How did you complete the application and get the offer?

A7. I applied the international internship programme in December 2017 and got the job confirmation from the company during March and April 2018.

Q8. Did you satisfy with the job offer you have received?

A8. The job offer was within my expectation but still I felt worried until I got the job confirmation. I was not satisfied with the offer because the job duty was different from what the company had told me. When I joined the company, I learnt about how the company was operated and I knew that the business structure was very simple - it was a charity that raised funds. The company has an online platform to raise money for people in need. I applied for this job that was responsible for doing analysis for business development. But when I started working in the company, they said they did not want me to do such kind of work. I was asked to do simple data analysis on fan's favourites and some other typing works. I was a little disappointed for doing something of not what I expected.

Q9. Did they explain the job responsibilities when they conduct interview with you?

A9. During the interview they offered me some information about their company structure. Actually, they were not secretive about their company, so I didn't ask much during the interview.

Q10. Did they provide any living place for you?

A10. The living place was provided and the teacher (programme staff from the university) led us there. There were a group of students living in the same flat together and we shared the rental fee.

Q11. Was the living place near your office?

A11. For me it was quite near, but for my roommates who work in other companies, the apartment was far away from work. We all worked at different companies.

Part B

Q12. When did you start and finish the internship?

A12. The internship began in early June 2018 and ended in July the same year.

Q13. How did you prepare yourself for the internship?

A13. I studied the company's website to understand their business. However, I found that the website was inaccurate because the website said the company was in Africa. It (The company on the website) was a totally a different company or maybe the two companies had some connections. I couldn't find any further information through the company's website and therefore I sent an email to ask my supervisor for knowing if there was anything I could prepare, but he told me to relax because I could do it well.

Q14. Any skills and knowledge have you applied in this internship?

A14. Before going to Singapore, I expected that I might use the knowledge I learnt from the university and put it in actual practice. But my duty was about summarizing data, inputting many words, and doing some basic analysis. I think I didn't use much knowledge and skills of my major. Instead, I have asked to do many other things out of my professional, for example, searching information.

Q15. Did you tell your supervisor? How did he/she respond?

A15. I had told my supervisor that doing so many typing tasks was so boring, and I was not very good at typing. After I finished the work, I told him that the job duty was not what I expected. He sincerely told me that this was how the company worked. Also, the nature of the company did not match my profession. My supervisor tried to find some works that would fit me, I thought it was fine and I tried to find something to learn.

Q16. Did you share your works with other teammates in that company?

A16. Everyone in the office did their own work, and actually the works of every colleague were not related to each other. Therefore, everyone worked independently and seldom communicated.

Q17. Did your colleagues try to know more about you?

A17. We had staff lunches two or three times in total and were quite enjoyable. We did not talk much but they got to know more about me and my homeland Hong Kong. We discussed the similarities and differences between the Singapore and Hong Kong, and they recommended some tourist spots for me to visit. I think they were warm-hearted people as they helped me and made me feel comfortable. The atmosphere in the office was quite good and everybody was nice.

Q18. How would you describe your performance in the internship?

A18. My work was not very important to them, maybe I only helped them a little by analysing the trend of data. I finished everything my supervisor had given me.

Q19. Did you encounter any difficulties and challenges in this internship?

A19. The most challenging part was that there were many ‘cases’ that I had to type, including the stories about the people in need and some other information, the quantity of the typing work was a bit too much for me. As I mentioned before, I talked to my supervisor after I finished most of the tasks, I think I needed to express how I felt about this work and my expectations. By talking to my supervisor, I think I solved the problems.

Q20. After you express your feeling and expectation, did your supervisor assign other jobs to you?

A20. Yes, my supervisor really tried to find other things that fit me to do.

Q21. Did you engage in other activities with other people or students from Hong Kong? A21. I and my flat mates studied in the same university. Although we have never met before, we became very good friends because of this internship, and we are still keeping in touch now. We were not very busy as an intern, so we had much time to visit around. Singapore is a good place for us to travel around and to experience the multi-culture. I and my flat mates enjoyed taking photos and we have been to many places, for example, the Universal Studio, and we always have meals in new restaurants.

Q22. Did you encounter any homesick?

A22. No, I didn’t have homesick since I contacted my family on phone very often.

Q23. Do you think this international internship was a journey of learning?

A23. As university students, we need to go out and get to know different places around the world. In addition to what I learnt from the internship, the programme has given me a chance to grow up and I like travelling around. I made friends, connected to people, talked to my supervisor, all these were good experience to me.

Q24. After this internship, do you think you are clearer about what you want to do in the future?

A24. I am not very clear about my future aspiration since I am still in my year 3 study, and this is my first time for me to work as an intern. I concern more about the following two years in my university life instead of my future career. But this internship is important for me to gain more work experience in the real world.

Part C

Q25. Did you improve any skills through this internship?

A26. At the end of the internship, my supervisor said my English has improved a little bit. On the first day, I did not dare to talk to them. In Singapore, one of their mother languages is English and they speak so fast with their own accents, it was a little bit hard for me to join their

conversations. During two months of internship, I kept trying and became a better English speaker.

Q26. Do you want to work in Singapore in the future?

A26. If I have a chance, I will try to find a job in Singapore. My friend's sister graduated this year joined the same programme as me to Singapore, her supervisor asked her to stay and work there, and the salary was quite nice.

Q27. What is your current career goal and plan?

A27. I am still a university student, but I want to learn something more about data and analysis. In the future, I may work in the finance industry.

Q28. If you have a chance to work in Singapore again, and you can choose your dream career, what type of company and job do you want to choose?

A28. I may want to do a job about consulting, but this is a big problem for me. To get a job in either Hong Kong or Singapore sounds good, but Singapore seems better because I like the weather in Singapore more.

Q29. How do you feel about Singaporean? What was your impression about them?

A29. Singaporeans' accents were very funny. They knew many languages, for example, Cantonese and Mandarin, and they were very nice. They have more tolerance than people in other places, they also wanted to know more about other places such as the European countries.

Q30. Any skills and knowledge that you never used before, but was important for you in Singapore?

A30. Singapore was a totally new environment to me, I needed to be braver in trying new things because I didn't know anyone there. Also, I needed to push myself to learn more new things.

Q31. How would you describe the company you work for?

A31. They needed somebody to help telling stories about the people in need. My company was a charitable organisation. The staff wrote stories and posted them on the website, so that people could donate money to them. The salary of the staff was offered by a rich boss. As the company was a non-governmental organisation, the donations would benefit to those in need. The staff needed to talk to different people. I have once visited the people in need with my colleagues, which let me realise that even in such a modernised place like Singapore, there were still a lot of poor people living a hard life and they really needed help. Although the job nature was not what I expected, I am glad that I knew about another face of Singapore.

Part D

Q32. Thus far in the international internship programme, what was your most memorable experience?

A32. When I left my job on the last day, my colleagues gave me a bunch of flowers and several packs of snacks. I was really touched. I had never thought that would happen because I was not an important person in the office. But they treasured my work. If it is possible, I would like to keep contact with them.

Q33. Do you think it is worth to participate in the international internship programme? Why?

A33. I think it's really worth. In the future, I would like to join more international internships. When you live in another country, you can plan and study with other students. It is suitable for young students because the internship is a voluntary, non-pay programme, so the companies will not have any expectations on the students and the works are not heavy. As I am a year 3 student now, it is vital for me to gain more work experience and keep thinking about what I should do in the future. I think it is good for year 1 or 2 students to travel and gain work experience in a foreign city for a period of time.

Transcript of Interviewee 10 – an extract of coded interview 10 transcript from the software ‘MAXQDA 2018’

	1	Interviewee 10
	2	<u>Part A</u>
	3	Q1. What is your current year of study, and your major?
	4	A1. I am a final year student and my major is Government and International Studies.
	5	Q2. Why did you choose an international internship instead of a local one?
Reasons of joining	6	A2. I think international exposure would be beneficial to my future career as I can learn more by seeing things from different points of views. I also wanted to learn how to respect others, so I chose an international internship.
	7	Q3. Have you participated in any local or international internship before?
	8	A3. No.
	9	Q4. Why did you choose to participate in an international internship?
Reasons of joining	10	A4. I wanted to try interning in another country before graduate. I chose Singapore because it is similar to Hong Kong. Many foreign people work in this country and people use English and Mandarin to communicate like the Hong Kong people do. As I completed an exchange programme in Malaysia before, I wanted to choose another country that not only use English but also another language.
	11	Q5. Did you have any concern about the programme fee since you have to pay for the air ticket, visa fee, and accommodation etc.? If yes, what was your major financial concern? How did you overcome it?
Subsidies applied and grants	12	A5. I think the programme fee was quite expensive. I paid HKD\$20,000, which was hardly affordable to me. Luckily, I successfully applied the “Reaching Out Award” scholarship and received HKD\$10,000 from the HKSAR government.
	13	Q6. How did you complete the application and get the offer?
	14	A6. I applied for the programme in December 2017 and I had been invited to participate in three interviews in total. The first one was conducted by the career centre and the second one with a recruitment agent. Both asked about my interest and what kind

of industry I wanted to work for. The last interview was conducted by the NGO that gave me offer. The career centre asked me to list the companies that I was interest in through an online system. I was interested to work in a charity or NGO, but there were not many choices as the companies in Singapore are more financial-oriented. I was lucky that I got an offer from one of the top three choices, which was a friendly and funny NGO.

15 Q7. How did you prepare yourself for the internship?

16 A7. Honestly, I didn't prepare myself for the internship. I tried to contact the NGO and asked what I should prepare for the job, and they just sent me a job description.

17 Q8. Did you think the job meet your expectation?

18 A8. I think the application process was quite complicated. I remembered that I had to list my preference, including the companies and countries I preferred, and then I had to go through a few interviews. The process was not stressful, but could be simplified.

Comment on the internship p

19 Part B

20 Q1. What was the nature of the company?

21 A1. It was an NGO that focuses on youth leadership training, which offered a series of leadership trainings for teenagers in local secondary schools. My title was academic intern and there were a few local interns from universities in Singapore. We worked as a team to plan different kinds of leadership training programmes for students.

Job assigned

22 Q2. How would you describe your internship experience?

23 A2. I really enjoyed the internship, as I am a kind of person who likes to interact with different people, and this internship was an awesome opportunity. In the very beginning, I was embarrassed because of the language barrier. They all spoke fluent English with Singaporean accents. My English speaking is not good, but all interns were at similar age, so they were very nice to me and never annoyed by my poor English. While the secondary school students learnt from us, we also learnt from them.

Comment on the internship p

Challenges at work

24 Q3. Do you think you have applied the knowledge you obtained from the university in the internship?

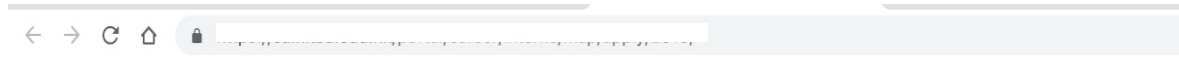
25 A3. My major is Government and International Studies, but the

Comment on job matching

Comment on job matching			internship did not match my major. I could not apply what I learnt from the university in this internship.
	26		
Self-evaluation on job perform	27		Q4. Have you ever felt anxious or stressful at work? A4. Although the internship programme did not match my major study, I am a positive person and always keep myself open-minded. I tried not to get too nervous when I got stuck at work. I was lucky to have met Singaporeans, Malaysians, Chinese as well as people from other foreign countries, I got along with them very well. Therefore, I didn't find my job stressful.
Cultural exchange with loc			
	28		
Job assigned	29		Q5. What was your daily responsibilities in this internship? A5. I worked five days a week, which required lots of travel to different schools for conducting leadership training. Sometimes I stayed in the office with other colleagues and interns. We prepared materials of the trainings and tried to brainstorm different activities and games. My employer asked me to think about new leadership-related activities, so I had to prepare a presentation to my supervisor and let her know about my ideas.
Job assigned			
	30		
Job assigned	31		Q6. Any knowledge or skills have you used in your daily work? A6. I had to communicate with different people at my job, especially the secondary students. I needed to apply my communication skills and talk to them every day, but sometimes I faced language barriers and cultural differences. I learnt to accept my imperfections and I tried to use different approaches when interacting with people. My supervisor wanted me to learn something new. She asked me to edit a video for an activity. I refused at first since I hadn't had any experience in editing video. However, she encouraged me to try and told me that I could seek advice from the communication team of the organization. Ultimately, I finished the video successfully.
Challenges at work			
Self-evaluation on job perf			
Relationship with supervisor			
	32		
Relationship with other intern	33		Q7. What did you enjoy the most in the internship? A7. I enjoyed working with other interns and interacting with different people. I never imagined that an NGO have to recruit so many interns – 20 interns altogether. This definitely was a valuable experience and we became friends. Working in Singapore is less stressful than in Hong Kong, though sometimes I felt pressured when things didn't go well. The other interns always told me to relax and be positive, but this is very different for Hong Kong people. Also, the other interns educated me a lot about the Singaporean cultures. Since our age was similar, we
Working culture or environme			
Relationship with other int			

Appendix IX

List of destinations of Programme Y (2019 intake)



Online Application

Section 1. Destination

Please indicate your preferences - 1 for the most preferred location and 10 the least

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Section 2. Personal Data

Official English Name (as printed on your ID card):

Date of Birth: (e.g. 01JAN2001)

Residential Tel Number (HK):

Address:

Type of Passport:

Student I.D.:

Name in Chinese:

Non BU Email:

Mobile Number:

Gender:

Cumulative GPA:

Section 3. Short Questions

Q1. Do you accept non-paid work attachment? Yes No, reason:

Q2. Do you accept work attachment that is not related to your major or preferred job nature? Yes No, reason:

Q3. Do you accept a total travelling time of more than two hours every day to and from your workplace? Yes No, reason:

Q4. Have you ever been to other countries (study, for leisure, etc.)? Yes, Please list all the countries and the purposes of travel:
 No:

Q5. Have you ever applied for the visa of the destination countries? Yes, Please list all the countries and the result:
 No

Appendix X

List of company choices of Programme Y (2019 intake)

Section 4. Your Internship Preference and Your Skills

Preferred Industry / Job Nature:

-
-
-

Language ability:
(e.g. Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin), English, French, German, Latin, etc.)

Computer skills that you may contribute:
(e.g. Word/Data Processing: Microsoft Word/Excel/Powerpoint
Design Software: Adobe Photoshop/Illustrator
Programming Languages: Java, C/C++, Python, PHP, etc.
Database Package: Oracle, MySQL, Microsoft Access
Updating websites: HTML, Adobe Dreamweaver)

Other special skills that you may contribute:
(e.g. knowledge of social media, professional photography, video production, translation, etc.)

Section 5. Please submit your Resume (.doc/.docx/.pdf).

English Resume: No file chosen

Chinese Resume (Optional): No file chosen

Total file size should not exceed 10MB.

Please wait after pressing the Submit Application button for uploading your files.

Appendix XI

Subsidies available for students' application for Programme Y and Z – SSS Scheme and Reaching Out Award

SSS – Student Scholarship Scheme

- Full-time UGC-funded undergraduates who have not been granted MOEF before will be invited to apply for SSS under the name of
- Not applicable for participants receiving other internal sources of funding with a total amount equal to or more than 50% of the programme fee.
- You may check whether you have been granted MOEF before via
(available for checking from 15 October 2019 onwards and will be updated from time to time).
- The calculation of SSS is based on the programme fee, and is therefore subject to change if the actual programme cost differs from the estimated programme fee.
- The amount of SSS will be 10% of the **actual programme cost**. A scoring mechanism would be applied. The selection criteria are as below:
 - Participation in extra- and co-curricular activities and programmes;
 - Financial hardship (if applicable);
 - A strong academic standing; and
 - Contribution to the university/community services.

* All criteria will be considered and each criterion weighs a certain proportion of marks.
- The amount of SSS will depend on the approved budget of the funding source MOEF.
- To avoid double benefit, the amount of SSS may be adjusted if the student receives other internal sources of funding under the name of Hence students are encouraged to apply for external sources of funding (e.g. ROA).
- Recipients will be required to satisfactorily complete (including but not limited to report submission) before the scholarship is reimbursed.

NOTE:

There will be the **Student Scholarship Scheme Plus (SSS Plus)** offering a maximum amount of 20% of the **actual programme cost**, on top of SSS. Eligible candidates will be invited to apply for SSS and SSS Plus in
mid-April 2019.

All scholarships are NOT guaranteed, except SSS for full-time UGC-funded undergraduates (partially).

ROA – Reaching Out Award by HKSAR Government

- A HK\$10,000 ONCE only scholarship.
- Participants who meet the following criteria are **eligible** to apply:
 - Studying full-time degree or above level programmes;
 - GPA/cGPA of 3.00 or above; and
 - *UGC-funded students*, or *Bachelor of Education (Primary) / Education students* enrolling in internship programmes that are conducted outside Mainland China or Hong Kong; or
 - *Bachelor of Education (Primary) / Early Childhood Education students* enrolling in overseas or Mainland China programmes (for work attachment programmes, preferably related to applicant's major of study); or
 - *Other* students enrolling in overseas or Mainland China programmes.
- Inquiries:
 - *UGC-funded students* and *Bachelor of Education (Primary) / Education students* please contact [redacted]
 - *Bachelor of Education (Primary) / Early Childhood Education students* please contact [redacted] / refer to Student Information System (SIS).
 - *Other* students please contact [redacted]

NOTE: All scholarships are NOT guaranteed, except SSS for full-time UGC-funded undergraduates (partially).