



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**READINESS FOR INTERNSHIP: EXPERIENCE OF UNIMAS'S
PSYCHOLOGY FIRST COHORT**

Armiza Atika Binti Jumat

Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)

2020

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SAWARAK

Grade: _____

Please tick (✓)

Final Year Project Report

Masters

PhD

DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

This declaration is made on the _____ day of _____.

Student's Declaration:

I ARMIZA ATIKA BINTI JUMAT; 68478, FACULTY OF COGNITIVE SCIENCES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT hereby declare that the work entitled, Readiness for Internship: Experience of Unimas's Psychology First Cohort is my original work. I have not copied from any other students' work or from any other sources except where due reference or acknowledgement is made explicitly in the text, nor has any part been written for me by another person.



Date submitted

ARMIZA ATIKA BINTI JUMAT (68478)

Supervisor's Declaration:

I DR. JAMAYAH BINTI SAILI hereby certifies that the work entitled, Readiness For Internship: Experience of Unimas's Psychology First Cohort was prepared by the above named student, and was submitted to the "FACULTY" as a * partial fulfillment for the conferment of Bachelor of Psychology (Honours), and the aforementioned work, to the best of my knowledge, is the said student's work

Received for examination by: _____

Date: _____

(DR. JAMAYAH BINTI SAILI)

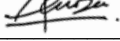
I declare this Project/Thesis is classified as (Please tick (√)):

- CONFIDENTIAL** (Contains confidential information under the Official Secret Act 1972)*
 RESTRICTED (Contains restricted information as specified by the organisation where research was done)*
 OPEN ACCESS

Validation of Project/Thesis

I therefore duly affirmed with free consent and willingness declared that this said Project/Thesis shall be placed officially in the Centre for Academic Information Services with the abide interest and rights as follows:

- This Project/Thesis is the sole legal property of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).
- The Centre for Academic Information Services has the lawful right to make copies for the purpose of academic and research only and not for other purpose.
- The Centre for Academic Information Services has the lawful right to digitise the content to for the Local Content Database.
- The Centre for Academic Information Services has the lawful right to make copies of the Project/Thesis for academic exchange between Higher Learning Institute.
- No dispute or any claim shall arise from the student itself neither third party on this Project/Thesis once it becomes sole property of UNIMAS.
- This Project/Thesis or any material, data and information related to it shall not be distributed, published or disclosed to any party by the student except with UNIMAS permission.

Student's signature:  _____
(Date)

Supervisor's signature: _____
(Date)

Current Address:

Notes: * If the Project/Thesis is **CONFIDENTIAL** or **RESTRICTED**, please attach together as annexure a letter from the organization with the period and reasons of confidentiality and restriction.

[The instrument was duly prepared by The Centre for Academic Information Services]

The project entitled 'Readiness For Internship: Experience of Unimas's Psychology First Cohort' was prepared by *Armiza Atika Binti Jumat* and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development in partial fulfilment the requirements for a *Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)*.

Received for examined by:

(DR. JAMAYAH BINTI SAILI)

Date:

Grade

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First and foremost, praise and thank God Almighty for bestowing His blessings throughout my research to complete this research.

I want to express my deep and sincere thanks to my supervisor, Dr Jamayah Binti Sali, for providing valuable guidance throughout this research. Her earnestness, sincerity and motivation are very inspiring to me. In addition, she also taught me how to conduct research and taught me how to analyze qualitative data. It is an honour to work and study under her guidance.

Plus, special thanks to my study participants for taking the time to share their information and knowledge with me. It would have been impossible for me to complete my final year project writing without their contribution.

Besides, I am very indebted to my parents for their love, prayers, attention, sacrifice to educate and prepare for my future. Thanks also to my siblings for always loving me and encouraging me to finish everything I have started.

In addition, I am also grateful to have my colleagues, especially Elvelsia, Iman Safia and Nur Hanani, for their consistent help and encouragement and for being my supporters throughout my research work.

Finally, thank you to all parties who have supported me to complete the research work directly or indirectly.

ABSTRACT

This study explored the readiness for internships among the first cohort of the Psychology program UNIMAS. Their challenges and their coping strategies are significant for the well-being of future intakes. The researcher interviewed eight psychology students virtually via the Zoom app. The findings revealed that the participants reported having challenges such as the new internship placement during the pandemic, the negative emotional consequences they experienced and adjustment of the first time experience for internships. In addition, participants applied PERMA Model as a coping strategy with elements of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishments. The participants also received emotional support, information or knowledge support and companionship support from their significant others. This study could have further implications on the psychological well-being of the future intakes of Psychology students and apply of internship in the new normal.

Keywords: readiness for internships, challenges, psychological well-being, support

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneroka kesediaan untuk latihan industri antara kohort pertama program Psikologi di UNIMAS. Cabaran dan strategi daya tindak mereka penting untuk kesejahteraan pelajar masa akan datang. Lapan pelajar psikologi telah di temu ramah oleh pengkaji secara maya melalui aplikasi Zoom. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa peserta kajian melaporkan mereka menghadapi cabaran seperti penempatan latihan industri yang baru semasa pandemik, mereka juga mengalami kesan emosi negatif dan penyesuaian pengalaman kali pertama untuk latihan industri. Di samping itu, peserta menerapkan Model PERMA sebagai strategi daya tindak yang mempunyai unsur emosi positif, penglibatan, hubungan, makna dan pencapaian. Peserta kajian juga mendapat sokongan emosi, sokongan maklumat atau pengetahuan dan sokongan persahabatan dari orang-orang yang penting. Kajian ini boleh memberi implikasi lebih lanjut terhadap kesejahteraan psikologi untuk pengambilan pelajar Psikologi pada masa akan datang dan permohonan untuk latihan industri dalam keadaan norma baharu.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ABSTRAK	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLE	vi
LIST OF FIGURE	vi
CHAPTER ONE	1
BACKGROUND OF STUDY	1
1.1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS	3
1.2 OBJECTIVES.....	5
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	5
1.4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS.....	5
1.5 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK	8
1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	9
1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	10
CHAPTER TWO	11
LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS	11
2.2 BENEFITS OF INTERNSHIP	13
2.3 CHALLENGES DURING INTERNSHIP.....	15
2.4 INTERNSHIPS AND JOB PROSPECTS.....	17
2.5 READINESS TO WORK	18
2.6 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AS COPING STRATEGY	19

CHAPTER THREE	23
METHODOLOGY.....	23
3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN	23
3.2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS, LOCATION, POPULATION AND PILOT TEST	24
3.3 DATA COLLECTION.....	25
3.4 DATA ANALYSIS.....	27
CHAPTER FOUR.....	30
FINDINGS.....	30
4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	30
4.2 FINDINGS	31
CHAPTER FIVE.....	42
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....	42
CHALLENGES OF INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT IN THE NEW NORM	42
5.1 CONCLUSION.....	52
5.2 RECOMMENDATION	52
REFERENCES.....	55
APPENDICES.....	63
A. SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT	63
B. SELECTED TRANSCRIPT	87
C. INFORMATIONAL SHEET.....	98
D. PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM.....	100
E. SIGNED INFORMED CONSENT	101

LIST OF TABLE

Table 1: Demographic Information.....	30
Table 2: Research Findings	32

LIST OF FIGURE

Figure 1: Research framework.....	8
Figure 2: Step by step Thematic Analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006).....	28
Figure 3: Theme 1: Challenges of internship placement in the new norm	32
Figure 4: Theme 2: PERMA Model of well being as the coping strategies.....	35
Figure 5: Theme 3: Support systems.....	40

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

The development of skilled and efficient human resources is highly emphasized. Therefore, education and skills training has undergone a change process from time to time in line with the development of national technology. Internships play an important role in improving knowledge, skills, expertise and even competence. In the planning of the national education system, the need to produce energy-efficient work is not neglected. To train this workforce requires some specialized training to form and produce a skilled workforce in various fields of employment. The skilled workforce is essential for a country for development purposes. The Ministry of Higher Education intends to produce quality TVET graduates. In realizing this goal, initiatives through industry involvement in planning and implementing the curriculum through new collaborative models and improving training delivery methods should be emphasized (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015). There is no denying that the language of higher learning in Malaysia is increasing due to the increasing number of Public Institutions of Higher Learning (IPTA) and Private Institutions of Higher Learning (IPTS) every year. The main factor in determining the direction of Higher Learning (IPT) institutions to become prominent educational institutions is from economic solid stimulus and support from the government.

Excellent IPT will produce ambitious and dynamic products at an advanced and global level. The campus environment, which encompasses various aspects, can provide motivation and influence towards achieving that goal. Graduates should have job skills and competencies so that they are more competitive in the job market. Having high qualifications does not guarantee a person's marketability and ability to work. Instead, they should have practical experience, general knowledge of the field of work they will be involved in, soft skills, and a

positive attitude to complete it before facing real-world challenges. According to Ahmad and Ali (2009), the education system must meet commercial and industrial needs and produce a capable, innovative, productive, and skilled workforce. Internships are compulsory at all higher education levels in Institutions of Higher Learning, including at the Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor levels (KPT, 2010). The National Education Philosophy has been the core of the education system in Malaysia since 1988. The National Education Philosophy has been compiled based on the Malaysian Constitution and based on national ideologies that apply the National Principles, New Economic Policy and National Education Policy (Choong, 2008).

An internship program is one of the learning processes and requires participants to transfer information from the classroom transition to job placement training. The learning process will occur where participants have gained new knowledge from practical reflection and experience on internship placement. It supported by using learning theory based on experience, which argues that learning is understood as a process in which knowledge is acquired and produced through experience. They have been allowed to apply what they have learned in the actual workplace through learning in a conventional classroom environment to get a realistic view of the challenge. In addition, internships provide many opportunities for trainees to find career prospects in specific fields they want after graduation. Through the perceptions of interns and supervisors, the prospects of employee ability can be measured in depth.

According to the trainees' perceptions, it is hoped that they can prepare themselves and gain experience to help them adapt to the actual work environment in the future and they have bright hopes to be employed by the host organization. A study conducted by Zhao and Liden (2011) found that 60% of internships were found to get a job offer by the host organization. Those selected are participants who are quick to learn and apply it while working. In addition,

internships that are perceived to increase career prospects will make the future of their careers brighter (Wan, Yang, Cheng & Su 2013) in preparation before entering the real world of work. However until this day, the extent to which apprentice employees are willing to work and use prospective skills can be measured remains to be questioned. Exploring the perspective of participants' readiness for internships is rarely done by previous researchers. Therefore, this study will investigate the UNIMAS's psychology first cohort on readiness for internship.

1.1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

Current research focuses more on the challenges faced by the participants' psychological cohort on readiness for internships. Researchers are more focused on this aspect, as internships help participants identify job skills and develop the skills needed to increase job offers. Job ability or marketability is the ability of an individual to get a job in a competitive job market (Jalani, Mashori, Norjali, & Sadun, 2017). Readiness is a significant challenge faced by participants, and they are the first cohort. Many studies focus on the mandatory internship requirements for all participants before they graduate and enter the world of careers. Posner (2008), in his study, revealed that internships play a crucial role in preparing participants before they face the real world of work, especially to find work experience and activities involving work environment required for participants related to skills development not acquired during lessons and learning in the regular classroom. More researchers need to explore participants' readiness for internships, one of the mediums to evaluate their experience in applying for internships and placements. In this research paper, the researcher will explore the factors of readiness for internships, participants' aspirations for internships, and their experience in applying for internships and placements.

According to Warinda (2013), many studies regarding participants' readiness to internship stated a conflict between industry expectations and participants. Participants expect to be given job and skills exposure during industrial training placements. Still, the industry or company expects participants to have already the skills and knowledge acquired on campus before beginning their internship. Here the question arises, are these skills applied while participants undergo an internship? Therefore, the readiness, aspiration and experience in participants for internship and placement in UNIMAS might be different from those studies from western countries. In the west, many early university internship programs were established in business and medicine and soon, most universities set up internship programs in other courses such as psychology. The study conducted at Western Kentucky University (2011) is to study the internship experience of participants and determine whether it helps improve the ability and is there enough preparation that participants prepare to face the internship and the suitability of the place chosen by the participants to realize the intended learning results of an internship program in Sociology and Criminology at a regional university located in the southeastern United States. As Spradlin (2009) mentioned, this initial program serves as a method for participants to try and be able to practice in the future when they are already working.

Many previous studies have focused on post-internship experience, but this study is about the preparation and readiness of participants before the internship. This study is related to the researcher compared to the previous study because the researcher will undergo an internship for the next psychology cohort. This study will give participants some advantages to be applied during the internship later. In addition, this study is studied in the research faculty itself, and the information obtained will be relevant when becoming an intern later. The following psychology cohort can undoubtedly use this study as a reference for the future. What is interesting from this study is that participants can find out and get ideas about the

internship that they will go through in the final semester in the future. This study can help the relevant participants. With this study, participants will become ambitious and ready in terms of choosing an internship and the development of skills and knowledge related to the internship.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

- To identify the readiness factors for an internship.
- To explore their aspirations towards internship.
- To assess their experience in applying for internships and placement.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the readiness factors for an internship?
- 2) What are the participants' aspirations towards internship?
- 3) What are the participants' experiences in applying for internships and placement?

1.4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

1.4.1 READINESS

Conceptual definition:

Meuter, Bitner, Ostrom, and Brown (2005) stated the idea of 'readiness' is a conceptual structure that has been used during marketing literature. For the study conducted by this researcher, readiness is defined as the preparation of internship workers to adapt to the work environment in which they are skilled before being hired as employees.

Operational definition:

Readiness is the willingness to do something. Be prepared in terms of knowledge as well as physical and mental.

1.4.2 INTERNSHIP

Conceptual definition:

‘Internship’ is represented as job placement, industrial training, short-term learning experience in the workplace, or practice designed to enable participants to apply the knowledge learned in the classroom to practice in a specific and professional work environment (Hee, 2016).

Operational definition:

Internships are defined as short-term industrial training in 3 months to 6 months in the psychology sector.

1.4.3 EXPERIENCE

Conceptual definition:

As mentioned by Dewey J. (1938) identified that ‘experience’ is always like the duration of a transaction taking place between the individual. By adapting to the above position in education, he argues that learning from experience creates a two-way relationship between what humans act on and things that humans enjoy consistently or suffer.

Operational definition:

‘Experience’ is a fact that has been influenced by or acquired knowledge through direct participation or simply by observation.

1.4.4 FIRST COHORT

Conceptual definition:

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), 'first' is a person or thing that comes before others in order, time, quantity, quality, or importance. As determined by the Oxford Learners Dictionary (n.d.), a 'cohort' is a group of people with similar characteristics or aspects of behaviour.

Operational definition:

The operational definition for the term first cohort in this research can be described as the first batch or the beginning of a series of events.

1.5 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

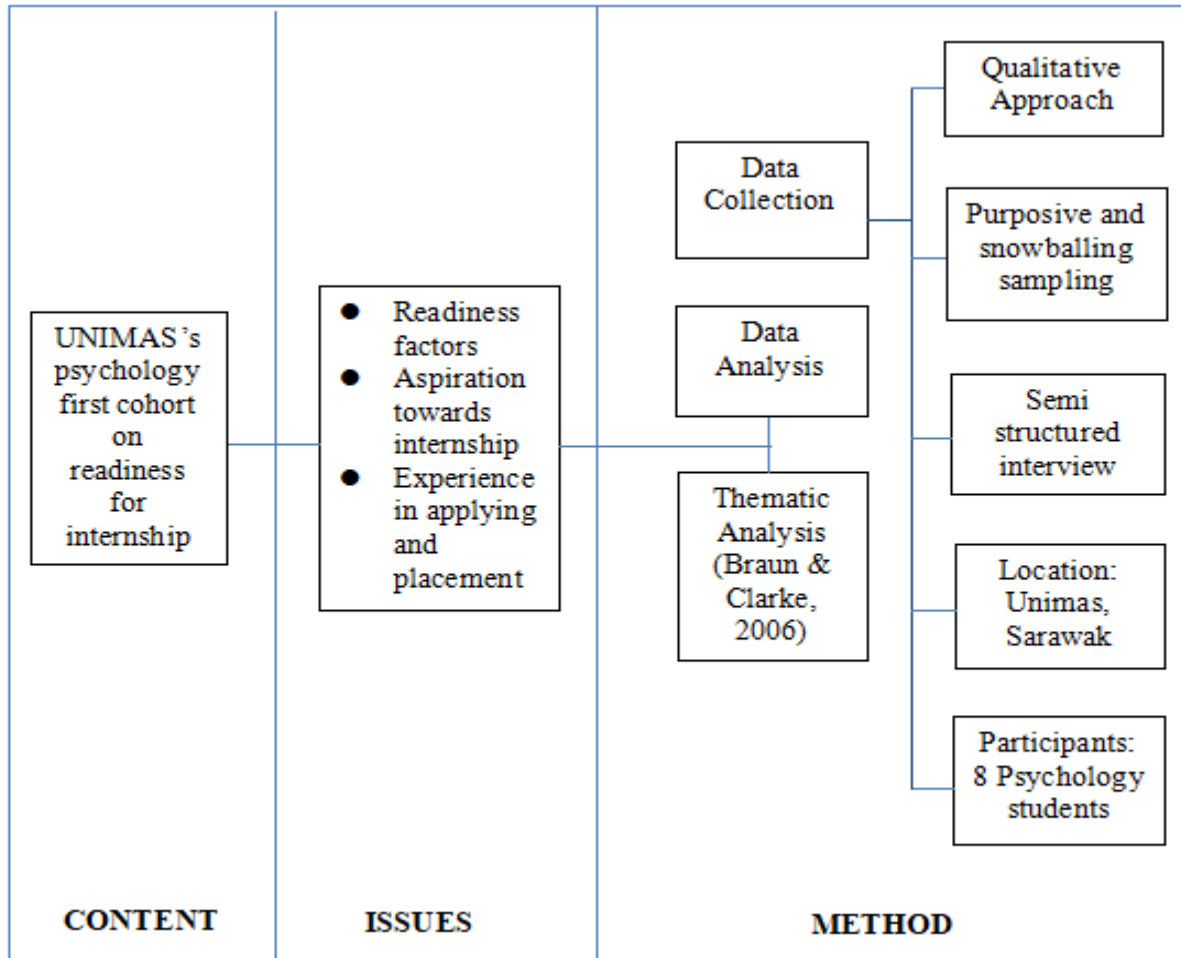


Figure 1: Research framework

From the context of participants' readiness for an internship, the researcher will focus on readiness factors, aspirations for internships and experience in applying and internship placement.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research is essential because it gives the reader knowledge and views on participants' readiness for internships. This study is beneficial, especially for participants from the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development, Unimas, because they can use this study, especially junior participants, to reference during an internship. In addition, this study can also find out more about how participants will face new things even if they are the first cohort to undergo an internship. The following participants will know and get a better insight into the internship. Participants will be better prepared if there is accurate reference material, and they can be a better cohort for the following internship.

Furthermore, the researcher can also apply this research in future studies. Topics on readiness for internships need to be studied more precisely so that future participants can gain better knowledge and get ideas on applying and getting placement for internships. In addition, this study can be further analyzed as there will always be the possibility of discoveries and the development of theories found. This study will be a reference material for researchers who will conduct research related to this study in the future.

The findings of this study can be used as a guide to the next cohort or refer to other participants related to internships. Thus, these guidelines can alleviate them and provide insights into what they can do or how they will react when faced with a particular situation.

Last but not least, this research can help future participants obtain rough data on participants' readiness for internships. As a result, the data obtained will enable the faculty or university to make more effective intervention efforts such as specialized programs, such as providing initial training before the internship and providing more information related to internship programs to benefit participants.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this research, there are also some limitations. First, this study is highly dependent on the researcher's perception and only relies on the educator's evaluation as the researcher uses qualitative analysis. Furthermore, the response from participants is also challenging to obtain. Moreover, during this COVID-19 pandemic, participants only undergo online learning. The informants will also probably be a bit in a hurry as they have a lot of work. In addition, the informants involved find it quite difficult to answer each question honestly during the interview session to avoid misunderstandings. Therefore, the information presented may be confidential and not confidential. Things like this can influence this study.

In addition, the interview method is likely to be biased by the informant because the informant tends only to satisfy the researcher during the interview session. There will also be questions that the informant cannot answer honestly and truthfully because the presence of subjectivity is challenging to avoid. Therefore, informants who believe in researchers will share their information honestly and in a more detailed way. In contrast, informants who do not have a sense of tightness with researchers will share informants only at a rate or just on the surface.

The results of the limited study obtained from the study sample will limit the researcher to obtain the necessary information. From the results of the study, the ability to generalize the findings for this research is limited. This study will probably use a long time because there is a need to transcribe everything that has been recorded in the interview session. After all, the transcription process requires the researcher to write every word that the informant has presented as evidence in the interview session.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the researcher discusses previous research related to participants' readiness for internships. In addition, the researcher will discuss the theory of positive psychology in this chapter.

2.1 INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS

The historical moment of UNIMAS began when it was announced on 1 October 1992 by the then Minister of Education, YB Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Haji Daud appointed Professor Dato Zawawi Ismail as its founding Vice-Chancellor and established on 24 December 1992. UNIMAS is the eighth and first public university established after Vision 2020 was inspired. Initially, there were only about 30 academic staff, UNIMAS began accepting the first group of 118 participants on 8 August 1993. participants enrolled in two pilot faculties, namely the Faculty of Science and Resource Technology and the Faculty of Social Sciences. In the following year (1994), four more faculties were established for degree courses, the Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development, the Faculty of Information Technology, the Faculty of Engineering, and the Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts. Two other faculties, the Faculty of Economics and Business (1996) and the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (1995), began to take their respective groups of pioneer participants. Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development (FCSHD) is one of the faculties established in August 1994. The Psychology Program is designed to produce graduates with extensive knowledge in psychology that includes personality diversity, human

development, social behaviour, abnormal behaviour, cognitive neuroscience, and human physiological aspects.

The psychology program at UNIMAS has just been established in 2017. This participant is the first cohort to undergo an internship in 2021. Fifty-three pioneer psychology students will undergo an internship in their last semester in the fourth year. Through an understanding of the principles of psychology, it is hoped that the graduates of this program will have the expertise and skills in dealing with and improving the living standards of society. This degree's program is comprehensive through a combination of lecture methods, tutorials, case studies and practices by the code of ethics in the profession of psychology. In addition, participants will be exposed to the real world through industrial training, social work to industry, hospitals, schools and communities, and experimental studies. This program is also a preparatory program for participants to further their studies to graduate level and a future career path with a psychological background. The internship program is vital because it will allow undergraduates to provide participants with a seamless transition experience from academic to work (Mohaidin, Sidek, Ibrahim, & Supar, 2016). In addition, trainees learn jobs related to skills and knowledge in the workplace because an internship is a method of experience to move from university to company or industry (Maertz, Stoeberl, & Marks, 2014).

Bakar, Harun, Yusof, and Tahir (2010) and Idrus, Mohamed Noor, Salleh and Mohd Hashim (2010) argue that participants can combine theoretical knowledge in the academic world natural work environment and apply it in practice through internships. Therefore, they need to get involved in planned and supervised work in a specific environment in the real world (Alexei, Galina, & Tamara, 2013). participants will have practical skills that can improve job ability and their understanding of essential issues for a particular job by undergoing this internship program, thus giving participants real hope to provide training, providing

satisfaction with internship experience and internships are prerequisites significant as a fortune-teller as an undergraduate. Therefore, to learn about the roles and tasks related to the field, internships provide unique opportunities for participants to learn to experience and at the same time increase their knowledge related to their field of study. Furthermore, regardless of gender, all participants need to run an internship program and a must or prerequisite. Some studies show no significant difference between the sexes who undergo this internship. It means that regardless of the gender of the internship, it is essential for both male and female graduates.

2.2 BENEFITS OF INTERNSHIP

All participants must conduct the internship as a mandatory condition to qualify participants to receive a Certificate, Diploma or Degree according to the major taken. However, how it is implemented and the real benefits of internships remain an ongoing question and debate (Narayanan, Olk, & Fukami, 2010). As studied by Narayanan et al., 2010, this study aims to enhance discussion by prioritizing the values available to internship academics and their direct impact on the results of the study. It meets the requirements and provides awareness of the actual situation in the world of work. It can also build self-confidence with the experience and knowledge available. It is effortless and comfortable to perform the work that the supervisor will give later. An internship is essential because such training can expose participants to the real world of work. It can also develop and improve skills and knowledge of techniques and theories that participants should apply. Previously participants only gained theoretical knowledge and only practised as additional training to understand something. Still, when participants follow this training, participants can learn more things and needs during continuous work.

Job-related preparation and practical training are necessary for participants to improve their personal and career growth and establish strong relationships with leading organizations in internship programs (Schambach & Kephart, 1999). However, most of the research carried out until recently has centred on the development of awareness and benefits for participants in internship programs upon completion. Although my research emphasizes preparing participants for an internship, participants also need to consider any new things they will learn later during the internship. It is not uncommon for there to be things they have not learned in class that they will do during the internship. Furthermore, participants can learn about emerging technology or talents where any of these abilities are not available in current teaching, so there are some items that participants can acquire through internships. Internship services help educational institutions build a reputation by improving their relationship with the world of work, obtaining research grants, receiving constructive input on their instruction from businesses and growing career prospects for their participants (McDonald, Birch, Hitchman, Fox, & Lido, 2010). In addition, this internship also exposes the candidates themselves to supervisors and peers in terms of skills, ability to perform assignments and attitudes. This preparation will stress the willingness of participants to work hard and work with total commitment to offering the employer a good mindset. This preparation is also necessary because it will eliminate participants' low self-esteem. Still, when participants are interned, they are likely to meet with high officials or attend formal meetings and provide foreign workers with assignments. In this mission, through prior experience, participants will deal with issues wisely. The value of respecting the people around will arise if the participants conduct internship training wholeheartedly and sincerely.